

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

### Wednesday, 20 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*

### **MOTOR VEHICLES (NUMBER PLATES) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 30 August 2023.)

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (10:35):** The government opposes this measure by the member for Narungga for reasons I want to articulate to the house, if I may. I understand what the member for Narungga is attempting to do. A number of people feel very nostalgic about their black numeric numberplates. They also have a value. What, in effect, this bill is doing is creating a property value for people who have paid no consideration to the government for these plates. There are a number of people who have bought at auction numeric plates who, for all intents and purposes, own a freehold right on these plates.

For the government, through this legislation, to then award these people the plates, simply by purpose of registration or expired registration on their vehicles without paying a value for them or a market value for them, would be inherently unfair on people who have bought them at auction for considerable amounts of money.

I am not sure how much of the house follows the media, but you would have seen recently that the number 8 has become available. That will fetch, in my opinion, well past \$1 million in value. This legislation would give people who have paid no consideration for these numeric plates a property right that automatically gives them a dramatic windfall gain. These plates are the property of the people of South Australia. They are not the property of the people who have registered their motor vehicles or had them registered on their motor vehicle. They were simply assigned these numbers; they have not purchased them.

I know it is difficult and I know what the member for Narungga is attempting to do. I have tried to find a way through this. This is a very difficult situation. I know former ministers have tried to look at this. One aspect that I did think of doing was having a range of auctions for all categories of numeric plates, from single digit, double digit, three digits, four digits, five digits, up to six digits, working out the average cost of those plates and then offering people who wished to have them, who have had them on their vehicles, to pay the average market value for those plates.

That would be unfair because it would not be put to the test at an auction where someone else might have an affinity to that number. So I do not know a way through this other than to say these are owned by the people of South Australia and they should be auctioned in a free contest to allow people to purchase them as they see fit. I know it is emotive. I thank the member for Narungga for bringing this to the attention of the house, but the government cannot support it.

**Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (10:38):** I would like to start by thanking the government for forming a position on this bill and, in so doing, I acknowledge what the minister has said. The earnestness with which he has attempted to solve the problem has been appreciated. Likewise, before him, we

had meetings with previous ministers from a former government who also appeared willing to solve the problem but were unable to find a means by which they could do so. I thank the minister and would like for the *Hansard* to show that he has considered this issue with an earnestness to endeavour to try to solve the problem but, as it currently stands, has been unable to chart a course through that.

I sincerely hope that as we progress forward, the government will continue to consider this issue and, hopefully, come up with a way in which they are able to grant those people who go to great lengths to restore historic cars the ability to purchase or procure the numberplate with which that car is associated. That is to say that a car that can be proven to have had an original numberplate might have easier access to that numberplate so as to maximise the historical value of that car.

I think in this case, in my personal view—and it does not appear to be the majority view of this parliament—the historical value of those numberplates and the restoration of that car should outweigh the benefits that the state receives by selling what have become quite valuable numberplates to private citizens. I hope that there will continue to be work done on this issue. I hope that there will be an answer soon for those people in my electorate and around the state who confront this issue in trying to restore historical cars, and I hope that we will be able to make it easier for them to access them.

Before I finish closing the debate, I want to bring particular attention to one constituent of mine from whom this idea originated. I have talked about him in this place before. Peter Donaldson has owned a family truck for generations. He has a 1964 tipper truck that has never left his family's possession and has been on his family's farm for the entirety of its life with that same numberplate attached to it. It is a six-digit black-and-white numberplate, number 506129. Unfortunately, when Peter's parents passed on and they bequeathed to him in their will that truck and that numberplate and he then tried to register it in his name as a result of that bequeathment, he was unable to do so. Service SA prevented him from doing so and asked that he register it with a new numberplate.

That truck has been on their farm for the entirety of its life, that numberplate has been attached to that truck for the entirety of its life and it was the subject of a will that bequeathed it to Peter, but somehow he is unable to attach it to that truck for the next part of its registered life. I find that tremendously disappointing.

That is one of the problems that I have attempted to solve with this bill. I know it might not be perfect, but I had hope that we might be able to amend and alter it to find a workable solution. Alas, that does not appear to be the case. I hope that people like Peter, in a situation as I have just outlined where they physically have the truck and physically have the numberplate but are not permitted to re-register that truck, might be able to have that problem solved in the future.

Making it all the more painful for Peter is the fact that, at the same time in the same will, he was bequeathed a different car. This was a 1966 Ford sedan with the same black-and-white six-digit numberplate of 592156. He was able to transfer that numberplate to his ownership for \$200. So on the one hand we have this 1964 tipper truck on the farm with a numberplate attached, but he is unable to register that numberplate in his name despite it being bequeathed to him in a will, and on the other hand we have this Ford sedan from 1966 with the same numberplate and he was able to transfer it for a mere \$200.

So we have these two situations which are difficult to reconcile, and I do not quite understand the finer details of why one was able to be done and the other was not, but I would like to think that there is a solution to allow Peter to keep that numberplate on that truck so that he can continue to use it as it has been used for the entirety of its life on his farm. He has proven ownership of the truck and plate over generations, actual possession of both and evidence of the testament to documentation of its bequeathment that Peter can point to.

Here is hoping—I will continue to take up Peter's issue even after this bill fails today. I do intend to call a divide for the purposes of completeness, but I would like to reiterate my thanks once again to the minister for the earnestness with which he entered into his attempt to try to find a solution that was workable for Peter and the other constituents for whom I have been trying to advocate.

The house divided on the second reading:

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

#### AYES

Basham, D.K.B.  
 Ellis, F.J. (teller)  
 Pederick, A.S.  
 Tarzia, V.A.  
 Whetstone, T.J.

Batty, J.A.  
 McBride, P.N.  
 Pisoni, D.G.  
 Teague, J.B.

Cowdrey, M.J.  
 Patterson, S.J.R.  
 Pratt, P.K.  
 Telfer, S.J.

#### NOES

Andrews, S.E.  
 Boyer, B.I.  
 Clancy, N.P.  
 Fulbrook, J.P.  
 Hughes, E.J.  
 Michaels, A.  
 Pearce, R.K.  
 Szakacs, J.K.

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

Bignell, L.W.K.  
 Champion, N.D.  
 Cook, N.F.  
 Hood, L.P.  
 Koutsantonis, A.  
 Odenwalder, L.K. (teller)  
 Savvas, O.M.

#### PAIRS

Speirs, D.J.  
 Thompson, E.L.

Stinson, J.M.

Gardner, J.A.W.

Second reading thus negatived.

#### *Motions*

#### **HARMONY WEEK**

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (10:51):** I move:

That this house—

- (a) notes 18 to 24 March is Harmony Week; and
- (b) acknowledges the range of valuable activities undertaken in our community under the theme of 'everyone belongs'.

This is an important opportunity for this house to acknowledge Harmony Week, a week of celebration that recognises our diversity and brings together Australians of all different backgrounds. I think Australia and South Australia are strengthened by our cultural diversity. It is remarkable, really, the way that we, as a people, come together and make everyone feel welcome, regardless of their background. We live and breathe this theme of Harmony Week—'everyone belongs'—every day.

Immigration and new citizens are a very big part of who we are as a nation. Nearly 30 per cent of our population was born overseas and nearly one in two Australians have a parent born overseas. South Australia is home to people from 200 countries speaking 180 languages and practising 90 different faiths. We are very much a state and a nation of migrants, which is why Harmony Week and other events like it are so important.

Harmony Week's mission is to celebrate our rich diversity and bring Australians of all backgrounds together. It is about respect and it is about a sense of belonging—or, as this year's theme so succinctly captures it, 'everyone belongs'. Harmony Week's origins are tied to that of Harmony Day, which itself is tied to the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. That is a day that was introduced after the horrific and racially motivated Sharpeville

massacre which took place in South Africa on 21 March 1960. It was a day that was introduced to try to build a world where something like that would never again be possible or seen.

With this laudable goal of social harmony and celebrating diversity at its core, Harmony Day was introduced in 1999 to celebrate the rare achievement of Australian multiculturalism. Since its introduction 25 years ago, Harmony Day has been a major success, with over 80,000 events being held by schools, community groups, churches, businesses and local, state and federal government agencies. It is for this reason that, in 2019, on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Harmony Day, the event was expanded into the Harmony Week that we now know today and that we are seeking to celebrate through this motion.

Celebrations are registered right across the country. They are recognisable by their signature vibrant orange colour, often worn on ribbons and traditionally symbolic of peace and social diversity. Anyone can register an event, which often ranges widely from morning teas to lessons at school to sports matches and everything in between. There is a plethora of event planning and promotional kits on the Harmony Week website, and I highly encourage and recommend that everyone, if they can, attend an event of some sort this week.

A number of events are taking place in my own local community. The City of Burnside is holding a Harmony Week concert this Friday at the Regal Theatre. Tomorrow at the Glenunga Hub the Pepper Street Arts Centre will also be holding a Harmony Week celebration. I had the pleasure of attending a City of Burnside Harmony Week celebration event last year, which featured traditional Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Iranian cultural performances by very many talented local artists.

The United Nations Association of Australia (SA) is also holding an event this weekend. They are collaborating with St Peter's Cathedral and Andrew Baines this Saturday to celebrate Harmony Day through music, and promising a multicultural upbeat choir with well-known songs, so I would encourage families seeking to celebrate Harmony Day to head along to that on the weekend. I take this opportunity to commend my constituent Lidia Moretti, the President of the United Nations Association of Australia (SA), recognising the remarkable job she has done in organising this event on the weekend but also what she does all year round in that very important role in our local community.

I would encourage people to try to go along to one or more of the Harmony Week events. Those are just a couple of examples of events taking place right across the state and country, examples of events that take place not just in Harmony Week but throughout the year celebrating multiculturalism in our society, including in my electorate where we have a number of Chinese cultural events that I have been lucky enough to attend over the past couple of months celebrating Lunar New Year.

I think I must have been to nearly 100 Lunar New Year events over the past couple of months. It is an important celebration for my local community. Indeed, one in 10 of my constituents speak Mandarin or Cantonese at home and it has been a genuine pleasure being able to engage with that community over the past couple of years.

I had the pleasure of visiting China last year as part of the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Australia China Youth Dialogue in Chengdu. I also visited Beijing and Shanghai, which was a really good opportunity to learn more about Chinese culture and trade opportunities for South Australia with China, but also to learn about the important contribution that Chinese Australians have made to our story and to our state. It was also a great opportunity to eat some delicious hotpot in Chengdu and, importantly, visit the pandas in Chengdu. We are very pleased pandas will be sticking around in Adelaide a bit longer.

I take this opportunity again to wish all of those celebrating Lunar New Year in my local community and beyond a very happy Year of the Dragon, and commend all those organisations that have done a lot of work organising local Lunar New Year events in my community, particularly the City of Burnside and the Overseas Chinese Association of South Australia for their celebration at the Burnside Ballroom.

I have also attended a number of Indian community events over the past little while. The Indian community represents about one in every 20 people in my electorate; it is one of the fastest-growing communities in my electorate. It was wonderful to experience all of their culture at a number

of Diwali celebrations late last year. The Festival of Lights celebrates goodness over evil and light over darkness and was celebrated right across the world but in particular in my local community.

Whether it is our Indian community, our Chinese community, our Italian, Greek or Vietnamese community, our local area is made up of immigrants from all around the globe. I said in my maiden speech that I want to try to foster an environment where we have a sense of belonging and acceptance amongst these diverse groups of Australians. To this end, I was really pleased late last year to be able to jointly host with the former member for Dunstan a new citizens' event here at Parliament House where we welcomed new Australians from our two electorates in the eastern suburbs over the past year. We met families like that of Heshan Welgolle, who was just so proud to live in this beautiful country of ours. It was a genuinely heartwarming night.

I think one of the genuine privileges of this job is being able to welcome new citizens to Australia and South Australia. The day someone becomes a new citizen is no doubt a very important and special day for that person, but I think it is also a really important, special day in the story of Australia and for our local community, because we are all the beneficiaries of our multicultural story, and we are all the beneficiaries of what is being brought into our state and local community.

That is really what Harmony Week is all about: enjoying and celebrating the cultural experiences which can be found right here in South Australia. Whoever you are, wherever you come from, whatever you believe, everyone belongs here in South Australia. That is why I am a very proud supporter of Harmony Week, and I am very pleased to move this motion.

**Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (11:01):** I rise in support of this motion and thank the member for Bragg for bringing it to this place. My family gets very excited in the lead-up to Harmony Week. Just on the weekend, my children—Audrey and Ned—and I were madly running around the local shops to try to find any version of clothing in the colour orange in preparation for Prospect Primary's Harmony Parade this coming Monday. We did not have any luck at Target. Unfortunately, all the orange in my children's sizes had sold out, but thank you to Best and Less at Sefton Park for having some leftover orange in my children's sizes. We were able to deck them out for this Monday's parade.

During Harmony Week we recognise and celebrate the immense cultural and linguistic diversity of our community. Our shared Australian values of respect, equality and freedom are what make our state such a harmonious and culturally aware place to call home. In the middle of Harmony Week on 21 March, the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is commemorated. This reminds us that we each have a role to play in combating racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, not just this week but every single day. I congratulate the many schools, workplaces and community organisations for participating in Harmony Week events and activities across our state.

South Australia is proud to have its first intercultural city in the City of Salisbury. As a refugee welcome zone, the City of Salisbury will be hosting a Harmony Week event to welcome the existing and emerging communities that call Salisbury home. Here in Adelaide, the United Nations Association of Australia (SA) will be holding a celebration on 23 March at St Peter's Cathedral. It will be a vibrant display of the culture, music and costumes to champion the theme 'everyone belongs'.

On Tuesday next week, I will have the great honour of attending my children's school and both of their classes to teach the children about my own heritage. I am very proud to have come from Scottish heritage and will be undertaking a Harmony Day activity where children get to design their very own Scottish tartan. As a member of the Naracoorte Highland Pipe Band, this is heritage that I am very, very proud of. The Hoods made up a third of the Naracoorte Highland Pipe Band. My grandfather Lindsay, my father Robin Hood, my brothers Ben Hood and Toby Hood and myself were all very proud members of the Naracoorte Highland Pipe Band as both bagpipers and snare drummers, and I was a tenor drummer.

It is a great opportunity to reflect on being able to throw on our tartan and play the music of our heritage. One of my very first experiences of Adelaide High was going up to the state championships to compete. I competed in my category, in the tenor drum and bass category. I am very proud to have actually come second. What I do not tell people is that there were only two competitors in the competition, but I am still very proud to have come second in that category.

I am very much looking forward to sitting down with the kids at Prospect Primary, designing our own Scottish tartan and celebrating that heritage, along with all the other cultures that we have in my local community: Indian, Chinese, Greek, and also Italian along with the many others.

The Malinauskas Labor government acknowledges and deeply appreciates the diverse range of experiences, skill sets and knowledge of our multicultural communities. They are truly one of our state's greatest assets. That is why upon coming into government we committed an additional \$16 million over four years to the multicultural affairs budget. We are embedding that 'everyone belongs' sentiment, having developed the very first South Australian Multicultural Charter, which provides key guideline principles to promote a harmonious and inclusive community.

Our government is progressing the charter from a document to a way of doing business through our pilot Multicultural South Australia Ambassador Program. The ambassador pilot program is being led by a diverse group of respected South Australian organisations such as the RAA, Cancer Council SA, Mitsubishi Motors SA, City of West Torrens and PKF. These organisations are demonstrating how they are embedding the principles of cultural awareness and inclusivity in their workforce, business practices and service delivery. This will ultimately lead to increased cultural and linguistic inclusion in the way business is done in our state.

Whether it is at your local footy match, in your workplace or sitting around the dinner table, we all have a role to play in cultural awareness and calling out racial discrimination. The message of respect and belonging should go well beyond this weeklong celebration and be lived by each of us every day. I wish everyone a happy Harmony Week, and commend this motion to the house.

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (11:06):** I rise to commend the motion, and commend the member for Bragg for bringing it to the house, and join with those who have spoken already in support of the motion. It is important that the house recognises Harmony Week, and that is an occasion in turn to recognise the great achievements that are really at the core of what we are proud of in South Australia and, indeed, in Australia as a nation. I think it is particularly true to say that in South Australia we can be very proud that at the core of our strength as a state has been our capacity to welcome and to benefit from the range of different migrants over the entire journey.

While there remains challenge and complexity in terms of the postcolonial history, and a better and more complete understanding of our Indigenous South Australians, those Aboriginal South Australians who are descended from tens of thousands of years of presence in this place, I hope that Harmony Day and our reflection on our capacity as a state to draw strength from our diversity is something that we have very much at the front of our mind, and it is not to be taken for granted.

This matter of the welcome and support for, and then in turn benefitting particularly from those who have come to our country, and more particularly to our state over recent generations, is a matter that at times has been the subject of controversy, and it is well that we recognise the capacity to speak up for what makes us strong.

I do not do this so terribly often but on this topic I stand here the proud son of a father who spoke throughout his public life always about the central importance of our multicultural heritage. So while we take that for granted, as a kid I remember it was a pretty common event back in the days of the landline, that I would pick up the phone and have heavy breathing on the other end of the line. There was a moment in the mid-eighties, when there were people in public life speaking up on multicultural matters, that someone's shed got burnt down. Tragically, there was the event of someone in public life being attacked. I remember saying, with the spirit of youth to a father who was at some distance, 'Look, don't worry Dad, they haven't burnt the shed down.'

So it is something that I got to take for granted growing up. I am particularly close in terms of that childhood experience to our Italian communities. I have many uncles in the Italian community, as I was brought up to address them with affection, none more than Mick Gallomario and those wonderful people of the community of St George. In amongst those migrants, particularly coming from Vietnam post war, is, of course, our former Governor the Hon. Hieu Van Le. He and Lan remember well the welcome that they received on arrival in the Northern Territory but then more particularly as they made their way to South Australia.

So there is a lot to be proud about, there is a lot to continue to speak up for, and just in a hard-headed, state development way, there is a lot to be clear-eyed about in terms of how we plan the way in which we engage with both those who are here and, as the member for Bragg in particular has reflected upon, those communities that are part of our region and around the globe.

In terms of the way that we have addressed these matters by legislation in this place, the task of the parliament, I think it is important to reflect on the work of the Marshall Liberal government in this respect. The South Australian Multicultural Act 2021 is a key document, the work of the previous government, because it set out an articulation for the next generation, including the South Australian Multicultural Charter. I am very pleased that the incoming government, the minister, has carried that forward and we see the South Australian Multicultural Charter articulating our values in terms of how we see multicultural South Australia.

Of course, the charter acknowledges Aboriginal peoples as the traditional owners and occupants of the land of South Australia and that is central very much to the charter. It further recognises the achievements and challenges of the generations who came before us, who together with us are working towards shaping South Australia's identity, and it is very much about now and into the future. So I salute the work of the Marshall Liberal government in terms of both the act and the charter. It is a proud legacy of the former member for Dunstan, who I know at every occasion reminded us that this is an essential part of the core strength of what we define ourselves to be as South Australians.

If I permit myself one further personal reflection—I do this from time to time at citizenship ceremonies—I am particularly proud to stand alongside my wife, Maria, who was born and raised in Sweden. She came over here with me and she has taken Australian citizenship. She has gone the journey and she has done that as an adult. Our children very much share the heritage immediately of both Sweden and Australia, as well as, of course, those aspects of my multicultural background, albeit Cornish and German, not so rare in this place. So I salute Maria.

If there is a chance to make one further reflection, I know I did rather enthusiastically in the last sitting week on the day of the announcement of Electric Fields as Australia's representative at the upcoming Eurovision contest. That will be a celebration and they will do Australia proud. I have said to everybody: do yourself a favour and at least watch it if you cannot get yourself to Malmo on 11 May.

The song that they will sing, the song that Zaachariaha Fielding will sing, *One Milkali*, is a work of art. That is exercise of creative genius. There is a very serious expression there: one blood, we are united and we can work towards ever more unity and togetherness. If there is a serious message associated with the theme of this year's Harmony Day, 'Everyone belongs', I think there is nothing more appropriate than the theme of Electric Fields' song, *One Milkali*. I commend the motion and look forward to opportunities to continue to work together in an area that is so much at the core of South Australia's strength.

**The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (11:17):** I rise in support of this motion and thank the member for Bragg for bringing it to the chamber. Harmony Week is a celebration that recognises our diversity and brings together Australians from all different backgrounds. We are diverse by our cultures, we are diverse by our faith, we are diverse by our gender, we are diverse by our sexuality. Even within the Anglo-Australian community there is diversity as well, let alone the diversity from people who have actually come from other nations to this country, and I will get to our First Nations people in a moment.

The focus of Harmony Week is on reflecting and also celebrating inclusion, respect and a sense of belonging for everybody. I think that last bit is so important, that for everybody who is here in this country—whether you are in the cities or the suburbs or the country areas; it does not matter where you live—there should be a sense of belonging.

Whether, like myself, you are in some way celebrating Lent or you are celebrating Ramadan or you are soon to celebrate the Passover, irrespective of our faith we should all respect our differences and see them for what they are. They are the strengths of our country. That also includes people of no religious faith. We should also respect people who have no religious faith. We need to respect all people.

When I was looking at some of the websites to see what people are saying about Harmony Week, these are some of the things that I read. It is interesting that, despite some of our imperfections as a nation, most people see us as a very successful multicultural nation, which I believe we are. These are some of the quotes from the websites:

Australia is one of the world's most successful multicultural countries and our cultural diversity is at the heart of who we are.

We also acknowledge that:

Over half of Australians were born overseas, or have at least one parent who was born overseas.

I am one of those; not only my parents but I also was born overseas. They go on to say:

That's why it's so important that we celebrate our country's diversity through Harmony Week.

It is about inclusion, respect and belonging for all Australians from the traditional First Nations people until today.

One thing we often do not wish to acknowledge sometimes—and I do not know why—is that this country, since people have roamed in this country, has been a multicultural nation; we have been a diverse nation. Going back 60,000 years, we have been a multicultural nation. Then we added some Europeans to our nation with the First Fleet and we have added a lot of other people from other nations as well since that time. But the reality is, even though it is more recent in government policies for the last 50 years, we have been a multicultural society going back 60,000 years.

I think it is important to say that, because we also need to understand and respect the differences in our First Nations people as well. They are not just one person, just like the Italians are not one person, they have a whole range of different views and beliefs, etc., so we need to respect that. Another comment is:

And celebrating that no matter where you come from, we're united by the Australian values of freedom, respect, fairness, democracy and equal opportunity.

They are important values. I think in the main we do have that in this country. We do have some imperfections from time to time, but in the main we do have that. I would also like to quote some of the things our federal Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs has said recently:

[the] week...reflects the fact that Australian society is made up of many parts—each adding to the richness of our diverse and wonderfully multicultural nation.

He goes on to reinforce, which I am glad he has done:

Of course, we share our vibrant land with the world's oldest continuing culture. Our First Nations people have cared for country for more than 60,000 years, and contribute so much to our sense of national identity.

We can be diverse, we can be multicultural, a whole range of differences, but we can still have a strong sense of national identity.

I think this is where we do it better than a lot of other countries, we do it better than the USA and some other countries as well. We do it much better. We have had waves of migration to this country. Like I said, I am a migrant to this country as well. Yes, initially, there is always some friction in those waves of migration, but over time we integrate. We learn from each other and we develop a truly multicultural nation.

Before the Italians, it was people from Eastern Europe, post World War II. We have had people from Asia during the seventies and eighties. Yes, initially there was some friction but now we look at each other, we look around and we just think we are all Australians. Certainly, the children of people who have migrated here see themselves as Australians. Sometimes their accent is more Australian than Anglo-Australians.

Apart from all those good things I have just talked about, it is important that we also need to recognise and acknowledge that for many Australians this year it is a difficult time to celebrate Harmony Week due to the ongoing conflicts overseas that have touched the lives of many within our community. At this point in time, while we quite rightly celebrate our diversity and all the good things that happen in this country, there are people in Australia who have family or friends in the middle of conflicts overseas—and some devastating conflicts at that.



It is at this time that it is crucial we remember what our shared values are: respect, unity and compassion, that underpin our multicultural nation and reflect on how these principles can guide us towards peace and understanding.

What we say in this place, what other community leaders say and what people in business say is important—it is important. We cannot, by our words, change what happens overseas and which affects the people who live in this country who have family and friends overseas in these conflict areas—the obvious one at the moment being the conflict in Israel and Palestine—but what we say here can help with integration, can help with that sense of belonging, which is a theme of Harmony Week. It is about making sure we all belong. What we say will give those people born overseas that sense of belonging. In my view, a lot of our political leaders have, in this regard, failed that test in the sense that what we have said about this conflict has not actually meant, for a lot of people, that they feel like they belong to this country.

Kosmos Samaras, who works as a researcher for RedBridge, has just recently published some research he has done with the Muslim community in Australia in different states, and he has found that a lot of Muslim people feel abandoned by our governments—and I say governments because it is not just governments at the federal level but at the state level as well. They feel abandoned by them. They do not feel a sense of belonging not because of what they have said but what they have not said.

Silence on this issue from some of our political leaders has been as damaging as some of the inappropriate comments made by others because we have not actually reached out to make sure that we understand and express our compassion for the grief and pain they are feeling in this community, our community, about their brothers and sisters in Palestine and Israel. I say Palestine and Israel because there is quite a bit of grief amongst our Jewish community for what happened in Israel on 7 October.

I think in some ways, we have dealt with the 7 October matter better than we have dealt with the post 7 October matter. Quite rightly, our leaders made sure that people of Jewish background felt that Australia could be their home, and that was appropriate. Sadly, I do not believe that has extended to our Muslim community and they do feel like they have been shunned, they do feel like they have been abandoned. Interestingly, Mr Samaras' research shows that that feeling is even stronger amongst women than men. Muslim women and girls feel this isolation, if you like, more so, and that, in some sense, makes sense. But I think it is important that we understand that.

We have been a successful migrant country but I think we also need to make sure that when conflicts do occur overseas, it is not a case of taking sides, it is making sure that we stand on the side of justice, irrespective of who the people are.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:27):** I rise to support this motion by the member for Bragg:

That this house—

- (a) notes 18 to 24 March is Harmony Week; and
- (b) acknowledges the range of valuable activities undertaken in our community under the theme of 'everyone belongs'.

This happens as 21 March, which happens to be my eldest son's birthday—I better remember that—tomorrow, is Australia's Harmony Day, which celebrates the country's cultural diversity and it coincides with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and that is vitally important.

If it was not for the many, many hundreds of thousands, into the millions, of migrants that have come to this country since the late 1700s, 1800s, we would not be the multicultural country we are. It is just amazing what all these cultural groups add to the diversity of this country alongside the First Nations people.

Coming from a family of early migrants from 1840, coming out from England, to see the amount of diversity that is through our community now is fantastic, and none more so than in the seat of Hammond where, essentially, many hundreds of jobs, whether they be in retail, the service sector or food processing, have been taken up just in my electorate. We would not do our area or

our state justice without this vital contribution from these people who are working there and whose families are fortunate enough to come and reside in the area to support these people as well.

It has been going on for a long, long time—many decades now. We have many jobs in the agriculture sector, whether it is in the meat industry, processing meat for Thomas Foods, processing for Big River Pork. I note that Thomas Foods are on the big rebuild of their staff. They have built the beef plant and are waiting on the lamb plant to be built, and they have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on building that new plant from that tragedy that happened all those years ago at the start of 2018 with the fire.

We just would not have the work completed if we did not have the many migrants that came out. We have seen waves of different migrants come through, whether they be Afghans; whether they be the Chinese, and especially the Chinese at the time, when there was Kevin Excell and his bike shop who when he sold out of bikes had to just keep ordering them in until the migrant workers steadily progressed through to getting drivers licences and driving cars locally; or whether they be among the many other community groups, such as Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Sudanese, Africans, a whole range. There are dozens of cultural groups in my area.

It is not just in that food processing area as far as meat is concerned but in the horticulture business. I salute the Pacific Islanders that have come out in recent times. I note that during COVID we were trying to get 100 out from the Pacific Islands, but as they got to the plane they found that 12 had COVID and so had to be left home, but we got the others here, and we sponsored their quarantine accommodation, and they came in and helped with many industries.

I look at companies that I did look after in my electorate but still hold dear: Parilla potatoes or Zerella Fresh, who have upgraded their plant up there at Parilla, with many tens of millions of dollars. It is mainly potato packing but they do carrots and onions as well. They have a lot of overseas people working for them. I know there are a lot of people from Papua New Guinea there. As a lot of groups in the employment sector have found—and I know Darren Thomas from Thomas Foods has said to me, 'I'm not a housing person, I'm a food processor.' But they are all learning that they have to get involved in the housing to make sure that people can live locally and contribute locally.

I note that Zerella Fresh have been building their own houses in Pinnaroo and Lameroo, and that is enriching those areas out in the Mallee so that they can have those workers locally. I know that Thomas Foods have a dedicated staff member on this role of making sure that the appropriate housing is put together so that many hundreds of migrants that they need to service their facilities can live comfortably in the Murray Bridge region. They are facilitating that work, notwithstanding that their lamb slaughterhouse is still up at Lobethal.

Other groups that are in the area include Costa mushrooms, who recently spent \$90 million in doubling their facility. There are a lot of recent migrants who work there, and some of them live outside the area; well, that is fine. They are contributing to this great state. Ingham's chicken enterprise several years ago spent \$50 million on a feed complex, and every chicken shed that gets built is probably well north of \$1 million now. They are over 100 metres long. There is a great contribution from these chicken sheds that are built locally, whether close to Murray Bridge or Monarto or out towards Karoonda.

They have a hatchery not far from my place at Coomandook. I am referring to the valuable contribution of people in these areas, but it is not just these areas of work that contribute to society but the culture these people bring in: the restaurants, the colour and the vibrancy. It is magnificent because it gets you away from the steak and chips, even if that is your staple diet.

A lot of people come into my office because we are the main area for justice of the peace signing and many people come in for various things. I will never forget a bloke coming in with his partner and I think one or two kids. He looked very solemn as we did the justice of the peace service for him. I did all that and said, 'There you go.' He said, 'How much?' I said, 'No, it's free mate. Don't worry about it.' His face lit up. It is so good to have them in the area.

I want to acknowledge the Murraylands Multicultural Network. On Sunday I will be there, and I acknowledge that the minister will be there as well, for a great day of performances and exhibitions

by the many multicultural groups across the Murraylands and elsewhere in South Australia. It is always a great day.

I am sure my multicultural friends, as they did last year, will come and attempt to drag myself and the mayor up to dance with them. It may be no surprise that I did get up and dance. The mayor refused to. I said in his ear, 'If you get asked this time, you better get up.' It will be a great day on Sunday, and it is so great as a community to embrace all nationalities and migrants who in the past have contributed so much to the great network of our community and our state and will continue to do so well into the future.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (11:36):** I also rise to speak on this motion and commend the member for Bragg for bringing it to the house. It is one of those times when we all get to agree in a very positive way. On the weekend I travelled up to Quorn to unveil a plaque for an Aboriginal woman who was the first woman to represent Australia nationally back in the 1950s in the Australian cricket team. That woman was Faith Thomas.

She was born in Nepabunna and at the age of three moved to Quorn. When you consider that in the 1950s an Aboriginal woman got to represent Australia, given where she was from—not just the fact that she was a woman but that she was Aboriginal—was an amazing achievement and something we wanted to recognise. Good on the Flinders Ranges Council for deciding to shine a light on this woman. She did go on to do other great things, as she was also the first Aboriginal nurse to be employed by the Public Service.

Upon arriving in Quorn at the oval to take part in this recognition, the cricket was in full flow. I walked in and straight off a Sikh gentleman came up and said, 'The Pakistan cricket team is here.' There was a competition going on that involved people from Pakistan, India, Aussies—the whole works. It was a team largely made up of people from Pakistan, mainly living in Port Augusta, who won the B-grade on that day.

It was that idea that you turn up to a community. We know that the archaeological evidence of people inhabiting the Flinders Ranges goes back 40,000 years, and here we have some of the people who have come most recently to this country to make a contribution. It struck me. That night I went to Port Augusta and took part in the Iftar dinner in Port Augusta as part of the holy month of Ramadan. Good on the Port Augusta Islamic Society. They brought together people from all religious faiths, nationalities and cultures to share food and to celebrate at the dinner. This is the living, practical example in our communities of how people do get together. People do rub along here, irrespective of some of the tensions—and more than tensions in some of the countries that people come from.

I look at my heritage. With an Irish mum and a Scottish dad of Irish descent, I was born in England and now I am an Aussie citizen. I look at my kids. My daughter's partner is from Pakistan. She recently went over to Pakistan and was warmly welcomed by the family over there. They went over for a wedding. One of my sons is now the partner of someone from a very extended Greek family, which is fantastic because the food is great. You just look at your own life and you look at your communities where people have come together.

In Whyalla, during its peak years, there were 64 nationalities, mainly from Europe but also from the Middle East and from a whole range of other countries. It continues to be a multinational community. When I am in Whyalla I often go to help the Filipinos celebrate. They always celebrate in a fantastic fashion. I am always a little bit resistant getting up on the dance floor. I am a terrible dancer, and I do not particularly share it on Facebook. Anyway, you get up and do your bit and you do your dancing. Please, no-one search for it, and I hope you do not find it.

I like to say to the Filipino community that the Aussies are still the biggest group in Whyalla, and then it is the English and then the Scots, and now it is the Filipinos. I said, 'You are going to have to get your skates on. You are going to have to get more people here. You are going to have to breed a bit more because the Indians are building up in numbers.' It is just interesting over the years to watch the waves of people come in, the different occupational categories that they fill and what they then ultimately contribute to the community.

Another very multinational community in my electorate is the community of Coober Pedy. Once again, it has people from all over the world. A lot of Europeans moved to Coober Pedy after the war to make their fortune, and that community at its peak had a population of over 3,000. It is always great to go to Coober Pedy. Now Coober Pedy actually has a Sri Lankan cricket team that is knocking off the other few cricket teams in the area. They are very good cricketers. I said they should play against the team that is mainly made up of people from Pakistan in Port Augusta and see how that turns out.

We have people from all over making a contribution. Sometimes that is a little bit dangerous. I went up to the celebration for the anniversary of the Serbian church in Coober Pedy. I thought I had no functions on this weekend. My riding instructions were to represent the Premier and the tourism minister. With no speeches, no anything, I thought I could have a very relaxing weekend. When I got there at 11 o'clock on the Saturday, the Serbs insisted that I have a few shots. They ended up being quite a few shots over the course of that day.

I turned up on the Sunday fairly bright. Once again, they started that sequence, only for someone to come over to me, who happened to be the Serbian bishop for Australia and New Zealand. He said, 'Eddie, we want you at the front table, and we want you to give a speech.' By that time, I had already had a few shots. They sat me next to the Serbian ambassador. I thought, 'This wasn't in the riding instructions.' Fortunately, I was able to provide a speech that provided a little bit of entertainment and acknowledged that, of all of the national groups in Coober Pedy, it was the Serbians that built an underground club. There are some underground churches, but they are the only ones to build an underground club, so I was able to say, 'The Serbians left the others for dead by the fact that they did go underground, very appropriately, in Coober Pedy.'

If you have not been to the Serbian church and club in Coober Pedy, I would advise that you do. The club and the church are next to each other. Both are underground, and the church, with some of the internal sculptures and the other work that has been done, is really worth going to and having a look at. All of the communities in one way or the other have embraced multiculturalism.

I need to finish off on the APY lands, and the people who have been there now for thousands upon thousands of years, and the contribution that they make to our state and the nation. Through the APY Art Centre Collective, which, contrary to some of the things that have been said, is Anangu run, it does some incredibly good work, and it is mainly as a result of the talent of the Anangu people. The artwork that is produced is of an international standard, and it is why it is being exhibited in galleries around the world. The best of the artwork of the APY lands is just absolutely outstanding, so we should be doing what we need to do to defend the vehicle that has helped that come to the fore.

I am incredibly proud of the communities that I represent, the way in which those communities rub along together. No society is perfect. Every society has its tensions, its contradictions and its differences, but when you live in this country in some ways we sometimes take it for granted. We are incredibly fortunate.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (11:46):** I, too, stand to support this motion moved by the member for Bragg. It is very much a motion about where Australia is today. Of course, Australia was not always the multicultural country that it is. As a matter of fact, it was a very monocultural country. Statistics will tell you that about 28 per cent of Australia's population are born overseas currently, and then 20 per cent of people born in Australia claim to have one or both parents who were born overseas.

It has not really changed a lot because we are part of the New World. We are a migrant country, but it is from where those migrants come from and the dramatic shift of the source of those migrants after World War II that has substantially changed the migrant mix and added so many more cultures coming to South Australia. Before then, we still had some cultural diversity, but they were treated with hostility by those predominantly Anglo-Saxon migrants who came to the colony of Australia and settled here and started their new lives here.

One of the things that I learnt about very early when I was in the furniture trade was that furniture used to be stamped with a big black ink stamp on it: 'Made from European labour only' because of the unions' concern about how efficient the Chinese were in the furniture factories here

in Australia. It was not because they were working for less; they were actually, on a very small scale, dividing labour. Instead of one cabinet-maker making the whole piece of furniture, one would specialise in making the drawers, one would specialise in making the overall carcass and another one would specialise in turning the legs. Of course, that brought in efficiencies. Unfortunately it became about marketing because of the hostility towards people who looked different and had different work practices, and people who were buying furniture wanted to see that stamp that the furniture was made from European labour only.

Then, of course, there were small groups of Italians, Greeks and Germans. They were here in small numbers before the First World War, and then a few more arriving after that before the Second World War but they were interned during those wars. Even though they themselves may have been very well established as citizens of Australia, committed to Australia, they were interned during the war because of their cultural heritage.

The Second World War finishes and we have an economic boom here in Australia and we need labour, and so we saw the relaxation of the White Australia Policy so people with European complexions, rather than simply the British complexion, were able to come to Australia. We saw waves of people coming from Italy and coming from Greece in particular, and those people settling in the newer suburbs being developed, but also the suburbs where industries were changing, where people were moving from the old inner suburbs like Unley, for example, and out to the new suburbs, out to the member for Bragg's electorate for example, or to the post-war suburbs developing in the northern and southern suburbs.

People were moving out of the inner suburbs, those who were established in those areas, and we saw large migrant communities moving into the inner western suburbs, and into suburbs around Norwood and Unley. It made a significant change to lifestyle in those areas and people started to embrace that lifestyle. I grew up in Salisbury. It was a country town when my father-in-law was born there. He is now 85. I do remember quite a large Italian community and the establishment of a place called Sam's Deli. If you are interested in the history of processed food, Australia led the world in processed food, mainly because of the heat and lack of refrigeration.

When you walked into Sam's Deli, you could actually smell the food because it was fresh food—salamis, cheese and bread. The Anglos gave it the nickname 'the smelly deli' because they were not used to smelling food unless it was being cooked. For years it was called 'the smelly deli' and it was an institution. It was really the first time that people from an Anglo background had the opportunity to try things because back then we were not the world travellers that we are now, because we were so far away.

Just imagine what it was like for those Greek and Italian migrants, and anyone who came from Europe. What did they have to deal with when they got here? First of all, they did not have English. Secondly, they were used to the metric system. They had to learn about pounds, shillings and pence for their currency. They had to convert or learn about feet and inches, pounds, ounces and stones. As an Italian migrant, my father ended up working at GMH as a toolmaker, and he was working in thousandths of inches as a toolmaker, somebody for whom the metric system was natural. It must have been like going to the moon, coming all the way to Australia, and of course when you made that trip you did not expect to return, because I think it was over a month on the boat.

I recently used the opportunity on the way to Canberra to pop into Bonegilla migrant camp, which was a big military camp before the war but after the war became a migrant camp. One in 20 Australians has a family connection to an arrival at Bonegilla. It is more or less Australia's Ellis Island. There is a museum there now.

The dominant communities that came to Australia from the late 1940s were mainly refugee type migrants, and then in the 1950s there were migrants who came here on government contracts, two-year contracts with the government. The government would pay your way to Australia and you had to make yourself available to work where the government wanted you to work; obviously, you got paid.

Those migrants had a much higher standard of what they expected from that accommodation. Because of the recession that hit at the time, people were there for much longer than they wanted to be, and because of the standard and the very Australian food—boiled meat,

boiled vegetables, usually all in the same pot—there were food riots. They got so bad that it is the only time and the only place in Australia's history when the army was brought in to deal with people on its own soil.

Contracts were torn up. The government said, 'We can't give you any work. We will give you bus tickets to go wherever you want to go—Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide or whatever.' It is an amazing history. All of those people who came through Bonegilla ended up contributing enormously to this state, both culturally and economically.

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (11:57):** I want to thank all members for their contributions and personal reflections on this motion, a happy occasion when we are in fierce agreement, acknowledging and celebrating Harmony Week, celebrating the success story that is South Australian multiculturalism, celebrating our migrant communities, our First Nations communities and the fact that everyone does indeed belong.

Motion carried.

### FRIENDS OF PARKS GROUPS

**S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (11:57):** I move:

That this house—

- (a) notes the significant impact Friends of Parks SA groups have had on the South Australian environment;
- (b) expresses thanks to the over 5,000 member volunteers who protect and enhance South Australia's flora and fauna; and
- (c) notes the work of the Malinauskas Labor government to support biodiversity and the regeneration of parks.

Our environment is so precious, whether it is our national parks, our reserves, our street trees, our beaches or our own gardens. Biodiversity is the incredible tapestry of life on our planet, including different species of plants, animals and microorganisms, and the ecosystems they form. We need functioning biodiversity for clean air, healthy soil, modern medicine, food on our plates and a resilient earth that can respond to threats like climate change.

In South Australia, more than 1,100 of our plant and animal species are listed as threatened with extinction. The Malinauskas government made a commitment at the 2022 election to introduce the state's first Biodiversity Act, making sure conservation outcomes are fully integrated into how we all live sustainably for the long term. The first round of consultation has just finished, and the department is currently collating the feedback received to inform the drafting of the bill. Consultation on this draft bill will commence in the second half of the year, and I look forward to it coming before parliament.

This Labor government has established BioData SA, with an \$8 million investment in the 2023-24 state budget. This sees the creation of a new biodiversity data system to transform how South Australia captures, manages and shares its biodiversity data with scientists, governments, businesses and the community. This will significantly improve the time lines and evidence base for environmental, social and economic decisions. Additionally, a \$3 million biodiversity unit has been established within the Department for Environment and Water to focus on targeted species recovery, biodiversity monitoring, tackling pests and weeds and using science to protect nature. This unit has the creation of the Biodiversity Act as its priority.

Whilst our environment is pretty good at regenerating itself, it does need assistance to repair the damage of humans. And that is where the over 5,000 volunteers that are members and friends of parks groups come into their own, getting out into our parks, reserves and along our shores to protect and enhance our flora and fauna. I am lucky to have two of these dedicated groups in my community: the Friends of Minda Dunes in North Brighton and the Friends of Sturt River Landcare Group, who work along the Sturt River. Members of both groups join us in the gallery today, and I welcome them and thank them for their work and care for our environment and biodiversity.

The Friends of Minda Dunes was formed five years ago and has members mostly from the Brighton Dunes retirement community who commit their time every Tuesday morning to regenerate

the dunes. The impact they have made during their first five years is transformative, from degraded dunes full of grass to dunes packed with thousands of native plants. I encourage members to check out their Facebook page. I always enjoy joining them for a morning of weeding and planting, to improve our environment.

Between 2019 and 2021, they introduced 17,000 new plants to the primary and secondary dunes. Each year, they have added thousands more seedlings to achieve their vision for the revegetation of the sand dunes and the re-establishment of the former coastal ecosystem. In addition to this work, in June last year they reclaimed a new area at the edge of the coastal park from a weedy lawn and planted it with 950 seedlings to create a habitat for the many butterflies that visit and inhabit the dunes. There is a particular butterfly which has disappeared from much of Adelaide's metropolitan coast.

The volunteers planted over 100 *Adriana quadripartita*—and Lindy will let me know if I have pronounced that correctly—or coastal bitter bushes to provide habitat for the bitter-bush blue butterfly. I am pleased to report that, after caterpillars of the bitter-bush blue butterfly were placed on the plants in January, the butterflies have been seen as well as a new generation of caterpillars, so breeding is successfully underway.

We also have another group with us: the award-winning Friends of Sturt River Landcare Group, who look after an entirely different environment in my electorate and are doing equally impressive work. This group took out the 2022 Green Adelaide Urban Landcare Award. Wariparri ('windy river') is the Kurna name for the Sturt River, which runs from the Sturt Gorge Recreation Park to the Patawalonga Creek. The Friends of Sturt River Landcare Group have adopted six reserves adjacent to the river, and several more planting sites along the Sturt River Linear Park are planned.

Their long-term goal is to connect up biodiversity planting by the Sturt River Linear Park and drainage corridor wherever it is possible to do so. The group support work at the Oaklands Wetland, Kenton Avenue Reserve and Oaklands Reserve in my electorate, and have more recently revegetated three reserves in Glenelg North. As with the Minda Dunes Group, the transformative nature of the group's work is clear to see. I encourage members to check the photos on their website which show the significant change.

Beneath the canopy of the old red gums and other beautiful trees that line the Sturt River along the Sturt River Linear Park trail, the group have planted, and will continue On World Environment Day this year to plant, perennial tussock grasses, wispy sheoaks and other native grasses, wildflowers, salt bushes, herbs and butterfly attracting-plants, as they work to recreate a nature-filled native grassland and sheoak grove.

The group holds fortnightly working bees for two to three hours on a Sunday morning and winter weekday working bees for shift workers and retirees. They also have 'walk, talk and squawk' and 'out and about with birds' so that the community can learn more about the 80 bird species that inhabit the Oaklands Wetland. The group has established more than 90,000 seedlings in the past 10 years.

I would also like to acknowledge Samantha Kerr. Sam was runner up in the 2023 Westfield Local Hero Awards. Sam has united more than 1,200 people to maintain and re-establish native plant communities for biodiversity and climate resilience and received \$5,000 for this work.

The state government supports the Friends of Parks groups through Landscape SA and the Department for Environment and Water. This financial year, 32 friends groups received grants of up to \$5,000 through the SA National Parks and Wildlife Service's Friends of Parks—Small Grants Program to work on 41 projects across South Australia. This included the Friends of Minda Dunes, who received funding to increase the habitat and biodiversity of the Minda Dunes 2.

Regarding our parks, the Malinauskas government is committed to honouring the pivotal role Aboriginal people have played in managing our landscapes for thousands of years. We have made a \$5 million commitment to employ 15 new Aboriginal rangers in our parks so that Aboriginal people and culture are at the forefront of our parks' network.

I encourage all members to join their locals Friends of Parks group, as I have done a few times now, and to hang around and share morning tea. I also encourage community members to watch the Facebook pages of these groups to see the fantastic work that these members do, and for anyone who can join in. We will improve our environment for future generations if we all do a small amount. That can ultimately change the world. I would like to thank you so much for coming in today and I really appreciate and value the work of our Friends of Parks. Thank you.

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (12:06):** I move to amend the motion as follows:

That this house—

- (a) notes the significant impact Friends of Parks SA groups have had on the South Australian environment;
- (b) expresses thanks to the over 5,000 member volunteers who protect and enhance South Australia's flora and fauna; and
- (c) congratulates the work of the Marshall Liberal government on their significant investment in South Australia's national parks and their practical commitments to support biodiversity and the regeneration of parks.

I think this is a very important motion and I thank the member for Gibson for bringing it to the house today because it is a really important opportunity for us as a parliament to acknowledge and celebrate the role of the volunteer in caring for our environment, something that is so often overlooked in this place. I want to join with the member for Gibson in welcoming the Friends of Parks groups who are joining us here in the chamber today.

I thank you so much for your contribution to your respective local communities. I commend the work you have done. I will definitely be checking out your Facebook pages and would love to come down and check out the work you have done in your own local communities, because the fact of the matter is that without thousands of volunteer hours from groups such as your own, so much work in enhancing our local communities and also in boosting and protecting biodiversity and protecting our environment more generally simply would not happen. So thank you for your work.

I want to use this as an opportunity to thank all those Friends of Parks groups right across the state, including several from my own area being the Friends of Ferguson Conservation Park in Stonyfell, the Friends of Mount Osmond Conservation Park and the Friends of Cleland National Park, which, of course, is one of our most recent national parks, being proclaimed two years ago as part of the previous Liberal government's record expansion of national parks that was underpinned by a record investment.

I want to take a moment just to talk about Cleland National Park because it takes up about half of my electorate and is a really important site for preserving bushland and the Adelaide Hills Face Zone with a lot of native wildlife. In fact, despite only being about a thousand hectares in size, Cleland is home to over 800 different species of flora and fauna and performs a very important environmental role and also, I think, a very important social role with the park attracting hundreds and thousands of visitors every year from right around the world who come to enjoy not only the amazing environment and biodiversity but also the walking trails, the cycling trails, attractions such as Waterfall Gully, Mount Lofty Summit, and Cleland Wildlife Park.

Indeed, just on the weekend, I did a wonderful walk around Chambers Gully and Woolshed Gully and enjoyed everything that that has to offer. I think there are about 600,000 people who enjoy the Waterfall Gully to Mount Lofty Summit walk each and every year. But, again, it would not be what it was without the volunteers and it would not be what it was without the role that the Friends of Cleland National Park play, who have been operating there for I think over 25 years now. They have done everything from restorative work to the natural landscape to monitoring the endangered southern brown bandicoot with infrared cameras and learning more about the rich biodiversity in this area.

It was a pleasure to join that group late last year on what turned out to be a very wet, rainy and windy day when we planted a number of trees around the Woolshed Gully Trail, which I did on the weekend. It was a pleasure to see some of them on their way already growing. They have spent many thousands of hours over 25 years now to enhance what I think is one of our greatest assets in the state, which is Cleland National Park.



They and the groups that are in the chamber today were the very happy beneficiaries of the previous Liberal government boosting Friends of Parks grants to \$750,000 per annum, which supported these groups right across South Australia. I understand that the grant scheme was previously just \$60,000 per annum, so it was a huge boost to our volunteer organisations that protect our environment. Of course, they were assisted by professional park rangers. We saw a 45 per cent increase in the number of park rangers employed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which conducts that really practical on-the-ground task of caring for our national parks.

It is lucky we saw this record investment during the previous Liberal government because it was accompanied with a record expansion of our national parks, including the establishment of Glenthorne National Park, which became Adelaide's second metropolitan national park after Belair; the establishment of the Hindmarsh Valley National Park; the purchase of Field River Valley to incorporate into Glenthorne; and, of course, increasing the protection of a number of conservation parks by turning them into national parks as well, from Deep Creek to Seal Bay to Cleland National Park in my own electorate.

It is a great opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the work of the former Liberal government in this environment space as well as the work of the now Leader of the Opposition and then environment minister, who very deliberately set out to perform a record expansion of our national parks and very deliberately had money on the table to underpin that record expansion with a record funding boost from infrastructure in our parks to park rangers, and, importantly, with respect to this motion, to funding volunteer groups like the Friends of Parks.

I hope that this will continue because we want to continue to celebrate the work of the volunteers. Can I close by thanking the many thousands of volunteers who devote many thousands of hours to caring for our local environment, for protecting our parks and for enhancing our local community.

#### *Parliamentary Procedure*

#### **VISITORS**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the next speaker, I would like to formally acknowledge, on behalf of the parliament, in our gallery today Friends of Minda Dunes and Friends of Sturt River Landcare. Welcome to our parliament and we thank you for your work.

#### *Motions*

#### **FRIENDS OF PARKS GROUPS**

Debate resumed.

**Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (12:14):** Whilst those opposite are here to celebrate themselves, I am here to celebrate our volunteers. To those who do take the time to get out in nature and look after our parks, I want to thank you for all of the work that you do.

As the member for Waite I have quite a number of friends of groups, and I will just quickly list them: the Friends of Belair National Park, the Friends of Sturt Gorge, the Friends of Shepherds Hill Recreation Park, the Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve, the Friends of Brownhill Creek Recreation Park, the Friends of Old Government House, the Friends of Blackwood Forest and the Friends of Waite Arboretum—whilst not required in my electorate I tend to spend a bit of time with them too. I know all of the work they do is absolutely incredible, and we thank them.

I am very proud, actually, to be the member for Waite, having so many—to be shrouded by incredible national and also significant parks which are full of native vegetation. They take a lot of work to maintain, through both extensive weeding but also replanting and then infrastructure renewal as well, and I am super thankful for the volunteers who give so freely of their time and efforts to conserve and improve our parks.

The Friends of Belair National Park, for example, under the leadership of David French, and one of our bigger groups, not only work on sections of the park, battling olives, broom and other noxious weeds, but also work to educate our young people. With bush buddies, we see environmentalists born and that is something that we can all celebrate.

At their recent AGM we heard that the friends contributed 5,000 volunteer hours done by 250 members, with 3,338 of those hours having been straight bush care. That is hard manual labour, especially in the Belair National Park. They have 135 active members, and the hours they contribute equate to 2.7 FTE. I know that our rangers in our park and our community are very thankful.

The Friends of Sturt Gorge, who have their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary coming up in May, scale the very steep terrain of the gorge, working to eradicate the weeds in there. With 44 members, the volunteers contribute time to patches of the park that they have real connection with. They racked up 3,587 hours in the past year under the leadership of Amy Blaylock.

The Friends of Brownhill Creek Recreation Park and the Brownhill Creek Association have worked hard to regenerate whilst respecting the Indigenous heritage of that area. Earlier this year I attended and celebrated the success of the Kaurna Shelter Tree Project, a project that was brought together, including local elders, where we planted all sorts of grasses and shrubs and rushes that were in tune with what it was previously. We also built a bridge to get over the beautiful creek that had been regenerated. It was just a wonderful opportunity to show our respect to this area.

Whilst not operating in a park necessarily, the Friends of Old Government House also are a very special group of volunteers, lovingly caring for our state's heritage and ensuring the gardens that surround Old Government House are looked after and kept in a beautiful condition. Even better, you are always guaranteed a delicious scone and a cup of tea when you go there when they have their open days.

I took a tour not last year but the year before. I remember as a child going there. I remember this massive swimming pool inside Old Government House. It was huge. When I went there for my tour, and I saw it, I said, 'Where's the swimming pool?' and it was this tiny little plunge pool. It is amazing how your perspectives change as you grow up. But it is an incredible place, and if you have not been there, and if you have not been on a tour through there, I encourage you to do so.

Our Friends of Blackwood Forest look after not only the forest but also the grasslands and the manager's office that is there. They care for it and, recently having started to regenerate and refurbish the manager's office, the termites took over and took away the floor, and I was really glad to be able to help them to secure the funds they needed to get a new floor put in and deal with the termites that, given they live so close to the creek, are a real problem.

They also care for the grass and the forest and also the beautiful walk that goes through there, with fruit trees all the way along the side, that celebrates one of their members who has passed. Dog walkers are kept safe by keeping the grasses down, although I know the group now are currently in desperate need of a ride-on lawnmower, and they are doing all they can to find a grant to help them to be able to get that.

The Friends of Shepherds Hill Recreation Park was established in 1999, and they work in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Water and national parks. Having had a fire recently break out there they know too well the importance of keeping down the weeds and keeping down the grasses. They are especially passionate about the area, because it has heritage-listed grey box grassy woodland that skirts the Hills face.

Finally, our Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve battle it out with the feral deer. Running up the back of the Waite Research Institute, they have all sorts of trouble with the deer and they work very hard to not only try to control that but also all the weeds in the area, including the broom and the olives. The olives are a particular problem for them, as well as for the Brownhill Creek group.

The grey box throughout my area is incredibly important to my community and it is heart warming to see so many volunteers doing all they can to regenerate and look after it. I am pleased to support these friends of groups in their work, and I am so proud that our government extended the grants to help them continue their work whilst we improve and support biodiversity in our parks. It is not just about weed removal.

At a recent trip to the park with the Natural Resources Committee we heard that it would be easy to just drive in the bulldozers and pull out the olives, but that would cause environmental carnage to the biodiversity that is underneath. Hence, drilling and poisoning and allowing the plants

to die in situ allows the undergrowth to flourish. It also protects the biodiversity of the soil and the structure and allows native plants to flourish.

Finally, and not quite in my electorate, how can I leave out the Friends of Waite Arboretum, who take such great care of it, hosting tours, events and lectures so that our community can learn about the beauty, history and significance of this area. It is such a beautiful, well-maintained asset, and I thank the volunteers for always being so welcoming when I attend their events. It is also a living tree museum, and the volunteers work hard, grow their own trees and plants by capturing seeds and protect the native stock.

I was pleased recently to see how far the resurrection of the gatehouse is going. It looks fabulous and it will be a welcome home for the friends of group and I know they are very excited for it to be finalised so that they can move in. Our friends of groups battle with weed mitigation every day, and I thank them so much for their commitment to our parks and community. I encourage anyone who likes to get out into nature to consider joining a friends of group. You will only be supported, welcomed and feel the benefit of being in nature and being with others.

Thanks again to all our friends of groups and to our national park rangers who work so closely with the groups to make sure that their dreams and what they see as being important is realised. I know the rangers are forever grateful; so are we and all of our community. I thank the member for her motion and commend it to the house.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (12:22):** I also rise to add a few words in support of this motion. Obviously I have a vast electorate and a number of conservation parks in that electorate, not all of which I have been to at this stage. The one I have been most heavily involved with over many years has been the Wild Dog Hill conservation park just outside Whyalla. If you have not been there, I would encourage you to take that short drive out of Whyalla to go to the Wild Dog Hill conservation park. The most prominent feature of the park is the sandstone outcrop. You go to the top of that and the views are absolutely amazing. You can see for many, many kilometres. The park itself is a good example of what the semi-arid lands have to offer.

The dominant tree species is the myall tree, a very long-lived tree. There are also sheoaks, some sugar gums (far fewer in number) and quandongs, which are always good. It is saltbush and bluebush country, with a fair amount of eremophila as well, especially in the parks. It is well worth a visit.

I want to talk about the sheer voluntary effort that has been around that park now since it was gazetted. It was gazetted back in 1971 and was nearly degazetted because of the amount of vandalism occurring. Some people in Whyalla stepped in. Clinton and Marg Garrett—Marg Garrett had the great misfortune of being one of my teachers—were incredibly committed to a conservation effort. They stepped in, got other people involved and as an adult I ended up being involved as well in looking after the park not far from Whyalla.

It is interesting that Clinton moved to Adelaide and now the amount of work he does at the Waite conservation park is absolutely amazing. He is a man now in his early 70s, and the physical work he does in terms of building trails, building flying foxes to get gravel and other stuff down to lower-lying areas that you cannot access with a car, building steps, doing furniture and undertaking feral control is testimony to Clinton and all the years he has put in when it comes to looking after the park.

When it was originally gazetted, the park was 1,011 hectares. Back in 2003, a further area, I think it was about 900 hectares, was added after BHP left Whyalla. They had a lot of indenture land. Some of that indenture land was gifted to the park. Volunteers still look after the park outside of Whyalla. I have some personal very pleasant memories of going out on patrol to see if everything was going okay. It is one of those parks that you were not allowed in after sunset. In those days, you still had to empty the bins. You no longer have bins. It is all done on the basis of whatever you take in you take out.

Some of the work that had to be done was around rabbit control. I got to learn a few things. We did not go in and rip the warrens, but we did cover the warrens, put in a bit of PVC tubing and used gas that was used in World War I. It was a tablet that you put down the PVC tubing, followed

by water to create the reaction. It is not very good for the rabbits, but given the damage that the rabbits were doing in the park, it was something that needed to be done.

Of course, it is always a constant to try to keep on top of invasive plants and feral animals in order to prevent the damage that they do. At the end of the day, in our conservation parks, without the volunteer effort that goes in, irrespective of the government and the numbers of rangers, the rangers would not be able to do all the work that is required, so we need rangers working in conjunction with our volunteers.

One of the other great conservation parks in my electorate—technically it might not be—is just outside of Quorn. It is something that I would advise people to go to. It is Dutchmans Stern. The Heysen Trail goes through that area, but there is a loop that goes up Dutchmans Stern. It is one of those gentle zigzag loops to the top. Once again, the views from the top are fantastic. The flora and fauna that exist within that park and the wider area are always worth checking out. I commend the work of the volunteers and all that effort that is put in by a lot of people over the years. Without you, our conservation parks would not have the quality that they have.

**S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (12:28):** I would like to thank members who have spoken on this motion this morning: the members for Bragg, Waite and Giles. It really is fabulous to hear how much you value and appreciate our volunteers. But of course I would like to give my biggest thanks to the volunteers in our Friends of Parks, who make a real and enduring difference to our environment. I look forward to the biodiversity act coming before this place, another first by this Labor government. I commend this motion to the house.

Amendment negatived; motion carried.

### AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:29):** I move:

That this house—

- (a) recognises the significant value of the agricultural industry and thanks those primary producers who secure over \$17 billion per annum to the South Australian economy;
- (b) notes that the sheep industry is forecasting the worst fall in prices since 2014, policy-induced disruptions to the sector, and the highest cost of doing business in history; and
- (c) calls on the Malinauskas Labor government to condemn the policy actions of the federal government, which is harming the sheep industry and the agricultural sector more broadly.

We do need to acknowledge our primary producers and, as I have many times before, acknowledge that my forebears have farmed in South Australia since 1840, setting up in Plympton first, then moving out to Gawler River and Angle Vale, and then presently at Coomandook where I am in the twentieth year of leasing my property out, and still happily live there and try to keep the motorbikes up to my two boys.

The people in agriculture are all risk takers. They do not need to go to the casino to gamble. They take a gamble every year. Prior to this last 12 months, it is something we probably have not seen in history. Certainly, my father, who left us nine years ago at the age of almost 95, had never seen it, where there was probably about five years in a row where things were pretty good; wool was up, meat prices were up and grains were up. You still had to work diligently to get those rewards, but all the satellites were aligning, which I can assure you pretty well never happens. It never happens. Obviously, that depended if you got rain or you had access to water for irrigation—if that is what you are into—and there have certainly been, notwithstanding, some key struggles in the wine sector.

Just on the wine sector, for the last vintage—and I hope it is better this vintage on the news that perhaps China is getting back on board—grapes from my area in Langhorne Creek were being harvested and put on the ground in some places, and we can also note that the Barossa had the same effect, and this was probably happening in most winegrowing areas. This is a scary thought—but noting the glut of wine. There are about four years of wine in vats across the state and the country, so there is no quick fix for that anytime soon.

Agriculture is getting to be a very expensive pastime to be involved in. I saw on one of these wonderful channels that most of us watch now on Instagram that the new John Deere tractor of

830 horsepower is \$US1.2 million, so I would say that is about \$2 million here. Obviously, you would want to have a fair operation to be buying one of those, but that just goes to show the level of input that some people have to do, and that is just for a tractor.

I note a lot of my friends at home have upgraded to self-propelled spray units. A lot of these now are retailing at \$900,000, close to \$1 million new, so they are buying second-hand units where they are still paying \$300,000, \$400,000 or \$500,000. You can well and truly put a harvester in the paddock for about \$1 million. I have a friend of mine who has a Gleaner. We call them whiz-bangs. They go whiz and then they go bang. Look, they can reap a lot of grain, but the problem with something like that Allis-Chalmers is that there is not a lot about, and so it is hard to get parts. It is hard enough for anyone at harvest time to get parts. I know from history.

Equipment is expensive. It is a massive input on your land, and buying land, and it is alright if you are getting out of farming, but land is reaching huge prices, and it is the big farmers who probably most of the time have only got the ability to expand. Certainly in our area if you do not have probably a minimum of 3,000 or 4,000 acres, you are not going to make it, and that is going to be a small farm or it probably is already. I know people who started from scratch years ago and they have built up to 9,000 acres and they will have to keep going because they have said, 'We want to put both our son and daughter on the farm,' which is very commendable.

The inputs keep on going. If you look at not just the inputs for machinery but also the inputs for chemicals, obviously the more acres or hectares you do, whatever language you want to use, the more you have to spend, and if you have a dud year you can go down the tube pretty quickly. I have seen major corporations in farming in Western Australia that have been cropping 80,000 acres fall over because they have had a couple of bad years and cannot keep paying the bills. If it is not chemicals, it is fuel and it is fertiliser, and that can be a lottery sometimes. You have to be right on it, making sure you have the orders in to get that in.

With shearing sheep—I do not think I will do another day of it because that might kill me—but now just for the shearer it is about \$5 a head. Someone said to me the other day that to pay for the sheep going through your shed costs about \$13 per head. That is why some farmers are going to sheep that do not need to be shorn, sheep that shed wool, and I certainly commend the young blokes and ladies who are involved in the industry locally. They are real go-getters who have got into the industry and you can tell they are successful as they are driving Dodge Rams and other vehicles. They are getting in there and having a go in a tough job. I am really pleased that people are willing to either pick up the handpiece or work in the sheds as roustabouts.

Last year we saw a dramatic decline in prices for both sheep and cattle. Cropping held up pretty well, notwithstanding the seasons, but sheep and cattle plummeted during last year, and especially towards the end of the year in regard to sheep. They have had some level of recovery. A lot of people are in the business of trading stock, and a lot of people, especially with big mobs of cattle, got really caught out. They paid too much for cows and calves, pregnancy tested, and they just had to find a way to hold them to get out of them because, otherwise, if they sold them they were going to lose hundreds and hundreds of dollars per head and it would probably almost sink their operation. We have people who operate major feedlots across the state and work hard to turn out stock to put into meat processing facilities.

So there have certainly been some drops in the sheep and cattle markets. Some of that, as I said, has come back, but it is tough. It is a tough business out there. It is about making sure that you have the feed to feed them and, if you have had a bit of a tough year, you will not have the feed, and if you have not grown the hay, you will have to purchase it. One thing that is affecting stock prices is the constant attacks by federal Labor policy on the live sheep or live cattle trade. It was disturbing to find out that footage that I think the ABC aired was to do with a worker on one of these live cattle boats who took a major bribe to set up some footage.

That is disgraceful behaviour, because live cattle and live sheep boats have moved a long, long way from where they were 40 years ago. I went on a live boat here in Port Adelaide about 40 years ago just to have a look. That was doing the job with the technology they had then. I do not know how many wheelbarrows they had on board but that is the way they distributed feed to the thousands of sheep that were transported back then.

Now they have a lot of technology, with the waterers on board, the feed on board and, obviously, the people who look after the stock, whether it be sheep or cattle. There are vets on board and in many cases, if not most cases, the stock come off in better condition than when they got on board.

We have seen different attacks by Labor on the live cattle job up to Indonesia. We saw it happen when I was the shadow minister for agriculture about 12 or 14 years ago. The issues were around live cattle going to Indonesia. Some spokespeople from the federal scene of Labor were saying, 'Yes, they have refrigeration, the end-users, so it's all fine.' I got on the radio and corrected that, and then they had to come back and correct it themselves.

Yes, there is a lot more boxed product going overseas, but there are still a lot of countries. We have \$1 billion worth of trade with the Middle East that we still need to support so that we can support our farmers. Certainly, we recently saw a ship turned around and sent back to Perth. There was a lot of media carry-on about this, but a lot of it was politically based. I can assure you that the only money in stock is livestock. That is why it is called the live sheep and live cattle trade. We see the federal Labor Party taking active measures to kill this trade.

What that does is kill the incomes of sheep producers across Australia. Certainly, in Western Australia it has had a dire effect, with people having to shoot thousands of sheep, and people have had to shoot sheep here as well. It is not as bad as the scene we had in the early 1990s, but still many sheep get killed.

These things have flow-on effects where sheep have to, by nature, then be transported to South Australia. That is fine. It is done by stock transporters who know what they are doing. They can get to Nundroo and stop overnight there and unload, and they get watered and fed in yards at the Smith family's operation there. I have seen that; it is a fantastic operation to rest stock overnight and send them on their way.

That is a direct consequence, in many cases, of what is happening in Western Australia with the federal Labor government attacking the live sheep job. The Malinauskas Labor government here needs to stand up for our producers, because it has a direct flow-on effect. I remember years ago when we were running wethers and they were only taking wethers down on the live job. At one stage, the price was about \$28 a head, so you knew that was going to be the floor price in the local sheep markets. You certainly need that; you need more competition to make sure everyone gets the right outcome.

I salute our sheep farmers, our beef farmers and our croppers. Alongside the sheep issues at the moment is the electric identification tags, which are quite expensive. I think they are about \$3 each. I know there is some proposal about subsidising the tags for \$1 each, but someone said to me the other day that it is only for the black and white tags. If you want to tag them by colour—which many people do, so they can either identify stock from their lambing year or whether they are wethers or ewes—it is quite important to have them tagged appropriately.

I was talking to a grower the other day who has 10,000 sheep. He will have a fee of \$30,000, because that is where he wants to go. People can argue that it is not much per head, but when you have a lot of little heads running around out there, it is a lot on the bottom line. We must support our farmers. They do a magnificent job in tough conditions and I must say that with the technology what they do with stock is fantastic, as is what they do with grain.

I drive past the grain stacks most days per week at Taillem Bend when I am not up here in Adelaide. You only have to see the amount of grain that is in those stacks that was wrecked in a tough year when there was no spring rain—it was all saved up for summer, when it was not that flash. Obviously, the use of technology to keep the weeds down in summer just shows what farmers can do to adapt, but the thing is the farmers need to adapt across this state. They will adapt. They have to, to keep being successful so that they can profit and look after the generations into the future.

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (12:44):** First of all, I thank the member for Hammond for his motion, bringing awareness to an industry that is dear to my heart, but, not only that, one that I am well and truly connected to. Before I start, regarding governments—any government, whether it be a state jurisdiction or a federal government—you would wonder and you would think, if they wanted

to understand a sector or an industry, they might go and ask someone who is connected to that sector and industry to understand where the issues might lie and how we fix them.

The sheep industry is one of those industries which has had some huge fluctuations, as the member for Hammond has alluded to. I think his dates were a little out, but I am not going to be critical of that because you have to go a long way back to remember exactly what happened, but I will take it to you very clearly and precisely because we suffered it, we wore it and we lived it. In 1991, sheep were worth \$2 a head on the market and they were worth \$6 in the paddock if you shot them. There were 160 million sheep in Australia in 1991. Today, we have around 70 million to 80 million sheep in the country.

We took 20 years, when we had a generation of sheep producers, managers and staff who did not pursue the sheep industry, when it was nearly considered a poisonous chalice if you inherited the family sheep farm rather than finding an occupation in the greater, wider world. On top of that, what I want to speak to and be really blunt and clear about, without making it personal, political, but actually addressing an issue that is important, is that this is an export sector that feeds not only Australia but feeds the world, and it has its ups and downs.

As the member for Hammond alluded to, we have just seen a massive correction in the mutton and lamb price that probably started around June or July last year. What is missing in this motion is at paragraph (c), where he clearly wants to identify the Labor Party and the government being the issue because of the live sheep trade ban mainly from Western Australia's point of view, but it used to reach South Australia and Victoria. It may do one day, but that ban does not come in until 2025. That is a fact. The boats are still calling into the ports of Western Australia and taking sheep over there.

Can I also add, with my knowledge of that live sheep trade, that they used to talk about percentages of deaths on boats. It was too high, it was unacceptable, but the deaths now are not even recognised as a percentage. They are a number of head, and the deaths are so few that the sheep are probably safer on the boat today than in the paddocks where they originated on the properties. I say that with fact rather than making it up. It is very sad that the sector can change and turn the tide on a trade that is now going to be closed because of actions and outcomes that were not acceptable to the social understanding of Australians, and now it is absolutely world's best practice on any sort of live sheep trade around the world.

The other thing I need to capture here, though, is this correction the member for Hammond has alluded to, which is significant. It was a 70 per cent correction on lamb and mutton in June–July that extended right through and did not turn until December. It has corrected slightly, not to 70 per cent, not back where it was, particularly on the mutton, which is anything older than a year old. Lamb has probably corrected maybe nearly 70 per cent; it is probably now 20 per cent down. I can tell you, as a lamb producer, if I can get a heavy enough lamb out there at the moment for \$150 to \$200 a head, I know we can make money at that sort of level.

What is most unfortunate, though, is the fact that we saw this massive correction but the consumers of Australia never got to taste it, eat it and take any benefit from it. What do I mean by that? I can tell you that, across the mutton, lamb and beef sector, we did see 70 per cent corrections in our market prices for producers. We saw a cow go from \$2,500 dollars a head to back down to \$1,000 a head. We saw a mutton, a sheep, a wether go from \$150 down to \$20 and \$30 ahead. We saw lamb come back down from \$250 to \$200 to about \$70 a head. You know what? On the supermarket shelves, it is a 12 per cent change at best and it took four, five, nearly six months to even see that 12 per cent.

The investigation at the moment around the monopoly in our supermarkets may be necessary around fresh food farmers, fruit and vegetable producers, I am just not quite sure the supermarket chain should be blamed for this meat price. Why do I say that? We are an exporting nation of beef, lamb and mutton. We do consume a fair amount of it, but the export markets did not collapse. The New Zealand export market did not collapse. The American and European trade for beef, lamb and mutton did not collapse, yet our market collapsed.

That was on the basis of a long-term forecast of El Niño and a dry period. It was on the basis of some negative news about the live sheep trade closing in 2025, but that did not affect the market

in June 2023. What happened and what we then saw was processors not coping with the demand to kill animals. We then saw a bottleneck and we saw the abattoir processing industry reduce the price, hoping that farmers would not put their stock into the system. That did not happen; it exacerbated it, it got worse. Farmers panicked. They wondered whether they were going to go from their \$100 sheep down to a \$10 sheep or no value at all, so the demand into the processing works got even worse.

It may not have been calculated but what was really poor timing—and I am not going to name the works—is there is a flush in Australia between around September through to December when a lot of animals come onto the market and this was the period when we saw this massive correction as well, when we saw a meat processor close its meatworks down for maintenance for two months. One would have to ask: why would they do that when they know there is a greater demand in that period? Anyway, it happened.

Another thing to ask is: why did the meatworks have this glut? What would they have normally done and how would they have remedied it? Normally what would happen is they would put on one, two or three shifts in their meatworks and run them longer to take up the huge demand to process, but they could not get workers. If they found the workers, they could not house them because we have a housing problem in this country. Then it just became a massive backlog and a whole collapse of a market. I can tell you, there was a billion-dollar correction in this market, at least a billion, if you take all three sectors.

I think there are two things that would have helped and this is taking a neutral political position. We saw a COVID response where we made it hard for backpackers and visa workers to stay in this country, unlike other countries such as New Zealand, who looked after their itinerant workforce. So our meatworks have found it very hard to reattract that worker base back. Secondly, we had this housing issue in this country, not just in the last 12 months, two years, but we have evidence of Bordertown, which is a meatworks town with a lamb and mutton processing business in it, that goes back to 2002.

We know that the Coalition sat on \$700 million to spend on affordable or some sort of housing build but did not come up with anything to solve that back then. We are now still seeing governments not able to move and address the housing issue because everyone is rather scared not to waste money or to have it spent the wrong way. There is a belief that the market should do this, private investment should come along and build a thousand houses in Bordertown because we need a thousand extra workers to run two or three shifts, but it is not going to happen. To blame any one particular government over this is not fair.

Secondly, this movement of in and out workers needs to be picked up again; otherwise, this sort of collapse is likely to occur again when there is a glut. We need visa workers, backpackers, itinerant workers to come in under 457 visas, whatever they are, and it needs to be as easy after COVID as it was prior to COVID. Then we may be able to, let's say, address these sorts of massive issues that arise because of oversupply and lack of processing works. Just finishing that, the sheep industry has its challenges. I wish for all sides of politics to find those answers and hopefully sheep producers will prosper in the future.

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:54):** I, too, rise to support a very important motion moved by the member for Hammond and to recognise the importance of agriculture, to recognise the economic contribution that agriculture makes to the South Australian economy, and also to recognise some of the challenges for many on this side of the chamber. We have MPs who have vast experience in regional settings in South Australia as farmers, as being part of the ag sector. I do not think there is anything more important than having a good, prosperous economic base here in South Australia, and that is agriculture—it has been and always will be. It is a renewable commodity.

In every direction that you look, whether it be standing crops, whether you look at the forestry industry, whether you look at fisheries, all of these sectors are renewable. All of these sectors are there to generate economy but they are also there to put stability into our regional settings. It is about farmers, farmers' families, the farming community. It is about the ports, it is about the transport and logistical network that it also supports, but it is also about supporting a reputation that Australia has held so dearly to its chest for many centuries.



If you look across the spectrum of the larger sectors within agriculture, standing crops, grains is by far and away one of the biggest contributors. In 2022-23, field crops yielded about \$5.1 billion. It was a good season for the farmers. Prices were buoyed by some of the conflict internationally, but it had been a fairly lean road for a long period of time. As I quite openly say, farmers are the eternal optimists when it comes to driving an economy, dealing with the vagaries of weather, dealing with the commodity upturn and downturn in prices.

It shows that the diversity within agriculture is what is keeping it front and centre. If we look at the opportunities here in South Australia, it provides \$17 billion to the local economy. We do see some precious metals that are worth a lot of money to the state's economy. We see a current government that continues to press on some of these ideologies that it wants to push along. You cannot eat hydrogen, you cannot eat copper, you cannot eat a lot of those mining products but you can eat and thrive and prosper on making sure that you have good, reliable, safe food delivered to the tables of every Australian, every global customer that is consuming some of South Australia's agricultural products.

Of course, it would be remiss of me not to talk about other sectors. The forestry sector is a hugely important contributor to our economy. It is very disappointing that the former Labor government here in South Australia sold the majority of ForestrySA out of public hands to the tune of about \$600 million to pay for Adelaide Oval. Sadly, that buyer bought those forests and paid it off in two years.

It just goes to show how out of step the government was in the sale of that forest and what it meant to a private enterprise to come in, pick it up, harvest it, harvest it hard and export a lot of that product. There was a lot of controversy over the sale of those forests. But what I would say is it supports a majority part of the South-East. Those plantations in the Green Triangle are some of the best forest products in the world. I think they are doing a magnificent job down there.

The fisheries sector, part of the primary make-up of the economy, is also a very important part. It is a \$200 million economy. Tuna appears to be the number one contributor. Then we go down to oysters, finfish, abalone and some of the other exotics that are part of driving that sector of agriculture. What needs to be stated is that agriculture is made up of a lot of components, not just the forests and the fish. Horticulture is also a very important contributor.

It should also be noted that the export sector is what keeps the majority of South Australians employed. Yes, we have seen a lot of our ag product go as a bulk commodity, whether it goes into hulls of ships, whether it goes into containers. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

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

#### *Petitions*

### **WESTERN HOSPITAL**

**Mr COWDREY (Colton):** Presented a petition signed by 1,733 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to ensure the future of the Western Hospital at Henley Beach, and in particular, ensures that the land on which the hospital sits remains zoned for health care services into the future.

#### *Parliamentary Procedure*

### **PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007 (South Australia), Report on the Operation of the

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

## Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Amendment 2023—Report

*Ministerial Statement***ROBERTS, MR J.**

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:04):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** It is with great sadness that I inform members of the recent passing of a South Australian mining veteran, John Roberts AM. Quietly spoken but hugely instrumental, John graduated as a geologist from the University of Adelaide in the 1950s to embark on a nearly 60-year career in the resources industry, culminating in his chairmanship of several exploration companies, including Mithril Resources.

As a strong advocate for his industry, John was president of the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy for 13 years, retiring in 2015. In 2014, he was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours for his service to the mining industry. His ascension to the presidency coincided with the launch in South Australia of the Plan for Accelerating Exploration (PACE), a government initiative to stoke international interest in the state's mineral potential.

His influence both locally and internationally led the government to appoint John as an inaugural member of the South Australian Minerals and Petroleum Export Group or SAMPEG. It was this group of mining veterans that were tasked with promoting PACE and the other benefits of investing in South Australia to a world audience. Through the work of SAMPEG, South Australia forged an international reputation that has led to the state climbing up the ranks of the Fraser Institute's survey of mining companies.

Former South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy chief executive Jason Kuchel said of John that his experience provided a deep well from which he could always draw a helpful story or example. In describing his mentor, Jason said, 'He was not one to thump the table nor did he speak the loudest, but when he spoke, he commanded attention.'

John had a truly remarkable career that has left a legacy in terms of the exploration carried out by the companies he led but also the advice he provided to his colleagues in the industry and to policymakers in government. Department for Energy and Mining Chief Executive Paul Heithersay said of John that he 'wielded considerable influence in nurturing the local resources industry and emphasising the vital role of exploration in fostering discovery and resource development'.

After many years of promoting South Australia's mineral potential, there is one observation John made on his retirement that I would like to share with the house. John cited the iron ore, copper and gold discoveries at Prominent Hill and Carrapateena as critical breakthroughs in the history of exploration in South Australia. Those two discoveries proved that Olympic Dam was not alone but part of a copper province. Like John Roberts, I agree that demonstrating the existence of a copper province in this state was a watershed moment for the prosperity of South Australia. The government's condolences go to his wife, Judith, his family and his many friends. Vale John Roberts.

*Parliamentary Committees***LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (14:08):** I bring up the 40<sup>th</sup> report of the Legislative Review Committee, entitled Subordinate Legislation.

Report received.

*Parliamentary Procedure***VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call questions without notice, I acknowledge the presence in the chamber today of year 11 and 12 legal studies students from Charles Campbell College, guests of

the member for Hartley. Welcome to parliament. It is good to have you with us. I also see in the gallery the Hon. Graham Ingerson, former Deputy Premier and member for Bragg, and Grace Portolesi, former member for Hartley.

*Question Time*

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES REVIEW**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:09):** My question is to the Premier. Has the government completed the independent review into the death of Ms Julie Seed? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Julie Seed was allegedly murdered last year by a man armed with a knife and a hammer. He had been released from psychiatric care two days prior. Following the tragic death, the government committed to performing an independent review into the circumstances of her death, including the health system's involvement in the case.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:09):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I think everyone on the government side and everyone across the parliament shares the shock and distress of the entire state at the awful events that occurred in relation to this matter. Obviously, this is being taken extremely seriously by South Australia Police and they are making the appropriate considerations in relation to taking this matter to the courts, and I hope that it is pursued through the courts to the fullest extent of the law.

When this event occurred, the government immediately announced that we would also be undertaking an independent review in relation to this matter. This has been commissioned through the Chief Psychiatrist, Dr John Brayley, and he has engaged two interstate experts to lead this work: Dr Sophie Davison, who is the Chief Medical Officer at the Mental Health Commission in Western Australia, is leading the review and is working with Dr Sandra Keppich-Arnold, who is the Director of Operations at Alfred Health in relation to nursing, mental and addiction health in Victoria.

This is a matter which is still ongoing. The government has not received the report to date. The expectation is that it is likely to be received within the coming weeks, at which time the government will be meeting with the family and discussing the details of the recommendations and the report in detail with the family involved. Of course, we will subsequently be releasing that report publicly as well, and we will be treating those recommendations extremely seriously.

**UNMET NEEDS REPORT**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:11):** My question is again to the Premier. Will the Unmet Needs Report be funded in its entirety? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** In 2023, the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist released the Unmet Needs Report, instigated by the former Liberal government, which identified that 19,000 South Australians are living with unmet psychosocial needs and the cost to deliver those services is \$125 million per annum.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:12):** This is a very similar question to the member for Frome's question, I think, in the last sitting of parliament. This is something that the government is taking extremely seriously and has already taken action on in terms of increasing the funding for our mental health care services. What happened over the course of the previous term of the parliament and the previous Marshall Liberal government was we saw psychosocial NGO services for mental health being cut in this state—absolutely disgraceful.

Between 2018-19 and 2020-21, funding for NGO-commissioned mental health services by the South Australian government was cut—not by 5 per cent, not by 10 per cent, but by 19 per cent by the previous government.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mrs Hurn interjecting:*

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

*Mr Whetstone interjecting:*

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

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

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Morialta is warned. The minister will be heard.

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** How many health ministers have closed hospitals?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Morialta is warned for a second time.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** While the Leader of the Opposition was sitting around the cabinet table, was the cabinet secretary, was on the budget committee of cabinet—

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** You were the existing Minister for Health who closed the hospital.

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

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —there was a 19 per cent cut to these mental health services—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —here in South Australia. Absolutely disgraceful.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mawson!

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** There is a contrast, and I am happy to lay out the contrast, because in our first year of government this government increased funding to NGO-commissioned mental health services by 11.8 per cent just in our first year—so a 19 per cent cut over the course of the previous government and an 11.8 per cent increase in funding—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —under this government.

*Mrs Hurn interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** Thanks to you, thanks to you.

*Mrs Hurn interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Schubert, you are on a second warning and close to your third. The minister has the call.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** Cuts have consequences, and those cuts have had a consequence in terms of—

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** How about when you closed the Repat?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Morialta is on a second warning.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —people being able to access those services, and that's why we are putting additional funding in. On top of that additional 11.8 per cent funding—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Morialta, the minister has the call.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —the government, through the Mid-Year Budget Review, put additional funding in place that, together with recontracting of services, is going to see another 1,000 people being able to be helped by these services.

In addition to that, through negotiations at national cabinet there is now work underway in relation to unmet needs for people who are unable to access the NDIS, enabling foundational support services for them for mental health and also for other disability services. That work is ongoing, as well as a federal unmet needs report. This government is taking that extremely seriously. We have a different approach than the previous government, in that we are not cutting these services; we are putting more funding into them, because we know how important that is.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** Not only are we investing in over 100 additional mental health beds in our hospitals to make sure we have the acute end provided for but we are also investing to reverse those cuts that were made to psychosocial services in the community, to make sure that people can get the support that they need for mental health across the community.

#### GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:15):** My question is to the Premier. What does the government have to say to Dr Danny Byrne? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** *The Advertiser* has published a letter to the editor from Dr Danny Byrne—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** —immediate past president of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, who says that the government's GP tax, and I quote:

...is just the stupidest health policy since Transforming Health...The modelling predicts a four per cent increase in ED attendance which would overwhelm an already stretched ED system.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:16):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As we discussed yesterday during the course of question time and I am happy to reiterate, of course the government hasn't changed any policies in respect to our payroll tax regime. There has been no change to the law, no change to rules, no changes to regulations.

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** No additional revenue?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** That being said, I have taken the time to familiarise myself with the representations of Dr Byrne. I acknowledge his contribution, as I acknowledge all contributions from general practitioners throughout the state. We see primary health care as being a critical arm of the health system more broadly, and we want to work closely with general practitioners to make sure we are getting the desired outcomes. The Treasurer, naturally, has been engaging with the college representing general practitioners. I have spoken to the college myself, and I look forward to meeting them in the not too distant future.

The college, in my conversation with them this morning, which I was very grateful for, was very quick to acknowledge the work that the Treasurer has undertaken in establishing what has been a nation-leading reprieve for GPs, with a five-year amnesty regarding the arrangement, and putting

in place a nation-leading approach in terms of how this situation will be addressed in South Australia in the medium term. This, of course, is in stark contrast to what we see in other jurisdictions in Australia and that is something that, again, the Royal College was keen to note with me on the phone just today.

As the Treasurer has committed, I think, on almost countless occasions now and I endorse, we as a government are very keen to continue to collaborate with the college representing general practitioners. I think it is well known amongst GPs, as it is well known amongst all health professions throughout the state, that this is a government, as is evidenced by the remarks just given by the health minister, that is making unprecedented investments in public health in South Australia—unprecedented investments. They leave governments before us in our wake in terms of the amount of effort, the amount of active dollars, the amount of new money that is being invested in infrastructure, being invested in clinical services, being invested in clinicians, in mental health, physical health, child health, every aspect of health, and emergency first responders in respect of health. Every single element has got more new money from this government.

I think that GPs appreciate that. They also understand that their place in the system is essentially entirely governed by the commonwealth, being a primary health care delivery agency, which is why we know they have been grateful for, again, a Labor government, this time of a federal context, seeking to ameliorate the serious impact that a freezing of the GP rebate had, which those opposite have been silent about for a very long time.

So we will continue to work with the college. I look forward to that ongoing productive relationship continuing into the future and I look forward to meeting them in the coming days and weeks.

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (14:20):** My question is to the Premier. Is the Premier satisfied that his department is responding appropriately to any freedom of information request for access to documents? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TEAGUE:** In an application under freedom of information laws, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has identified and I quote 'more than 400 documents' relating to the firm of Citadel Secure, Mr David Searles, Ms Cressida O'Hanlon or Mr James O'Hanlon dated from 17 March 2022 to 29 January 2024. On 22 February, the senior FOI officer was granted an informal extension of time until 14 March 2024; however, to date, has refused access to the documents.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Sir, on a point of clarification, is it appropriate to ask for opinions rather than actual seeking answers to facts?

**The SPEAKER:** That is a difficult matter of fine judgement.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

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

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of opposition business, member for Morialta under 134.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The form of words 'Is the minister, Premier, whoever, satisfied that their department has' has been taken as accepted in the past. I am fairly sure the member for West Torrens has asked questions that have been accepted in that form before himself.

**The SPEAKER:** I will allow the question. Premier.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:22):** The direct answer to the shadow minister's question is yes, I am satisfied with the work undertaken by my department. In fact, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has a number of responsibilities and chief amongst them is policy: policy delivery and policy development. To that end, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, led by CEO Damien Walker, has been so very busy—so very busy—because this is a government that has a big, bold, ambitious policy for the future of our state.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Morialta is warned for a third time. The member for Florey joins him. Member for West Torrens, order! It may be that the Premier has concluded his answer. No, he is still on his feet. Very well, the Premier has the call.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I made pretty clear upon our election that we would have genuine expectations of the Public Service. That was particularly true for me and my relationship with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, as one would expect. I made it clear that we had expectations for them to deliver and we needed them to step up to the plate because what was going to make this government so distinct and different from its predecessor was the fact that there was a big agenda. There was actually a plan for the future of our state.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** An ambition to realise all of the potential that South Australia has before it.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morphett!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Whether it be the potential around a decarbonisation of industry globally—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Whether it be the potential the state has around the decarbonisation of the global economy and our capacity for a clean energy future to deliver jobs for the future generations of our state; whether it be our ambition and our plans to invest in education to actually reform our education system to do new things so that young people can attain new skills to be able to participate in the economy tomorrow: university amalgamations—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —technical colleges, universal access to three-year-old-preschool, mid-year intake—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Colton!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** You name it: a publicly run, publicly invested-in TAFE. It is a big program.

**The Hon. A. Koutsantonis:** Undoing their privatisations.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Undoing privatisations after backflips and broken promises from the former government—a big effort. We know how hard it is to undo a privatisation, but this is a government that is getting it done. We are executing and delivering on those commitments, and at the same time bringing the budget back into surplus and reducing the debt-to-revenue ratio that was left to us by those opposite.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Florey! Member for Colton! There is a point of order from your colleague, the member for Morialta, which must be heard under 134.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Standing order 98: the question was about whether DPC was fulfilling its statutory obligations to the people of South Australia—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** —under freedom of information laws.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Chaffey is warned for a second time. I have the point of order. I will listen carefully. It may be that the Premier's answer, having been expansive, can now turn to the question. Premier.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** There is a big ambition that this government has with a serious agenda, and DPC has the responsibility as a central agency—the principal central agency of government—to be across all of it. DPC works collaboratively with other agencies to fulfil that mandate and fulfil those tasks.

With respect to FOI, as I started my answer with, yes, I am very grateful for the fact that DPC is doing all of that work, and I haven't mentioned a whole range of other efforts. If I look down the line of ministers, what we are doing in tourism and major events; what we are doing in child protection and sporting infrastructure across the state, particularly for female facilities; what we are doing in the public housing sector under the leadership of Minister Cook. It goes on: what we are doing in housing, an area that was neglected by the former government. DPC is doing all of that work, and on top of that they are doing a great job responding to whatever FOIs you might have.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heysen and then the member for Elizabeth, who has been waiting patiently.

#### CITADEL SECURE

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (14:27):** My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. With reference to the minister's answer to the house yesterday regarding his meeting with Citadel Secure on 5 September 2023, did Mr O'Hanlon or any other representative of Citadel attend with and/or for and on behalf of any third parties or clients? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

*Members interjecting:*

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

Leave granted.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Citadel Secure's website explains that, and I quote, 'We deliver direct engagement with government agencies at all levels.'

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (14:28):** As I told the house yesterday, I had a meeting on 5 September at 10.45 for 30 minutes. Mr David Searles attended—I talked about him yesterday, I think he did 20 years in the Australian Army serving his country, including a tour in Iraq—as did Mr James O'Hanlon, who served our country in Rwanda, Timor and Afghanistan. They are both individuals whom I regard highly and they were welcome in my office. The meeting was organised by my office. We had a 30-minute meeting. There were some outcomes of that meeting, which I told the house about yesterday. They were representing their company. We talked about communications infrastructure—

**An honourable member:** No others?

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** No others; it was exactly as I outlined yesterday.



**STATE ECONOMY**

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (14:29):** My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the house on changes to the South Australian economy since the election of the Malinauskas Labor government?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:29):** I am very grateful to the member for Elizabeth for this question because it is a really important question two years after the election of the Malinauskas Labor government: how the state's economy has performed. It might be a laughing matter to the member for Schubert, but this is something which is really important to many, many thousands of South Australians. For example, the extra 40,000 South Australians in a job now who weren't in a job—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —when she was the principal adviser to the failed premier, the former member for Dunstan, Steven Marshall. Forty thousand more people are in work compared to her time of superintendence of public affairs, which is a remarkable record. Even better, more than half of them—23,000 of those 40,000—are in full-time work. What it means—

*Mr Cowdrey interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —is the unemployment rate is nearly a full percentage point lower now than what it was the last time they were in government.

*Mr Cowdrey interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Colton!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** It is nearly a full percentage point lower, and you can hear the shadow treasurer whingeing about the good economic news. He's only happy when it rains but it's good news for the state's economy. You don't have to take my word for it, Mr Speaker. The CommSec State of the States report lists us as the best-performing economy in the nation. Number one. The ANZ Stateometer lists South Australia, along with our very well-funded friends, Western Australia, as being the two states leading the nation in economic performance—really, really good news.

Even those close, close comrades of the Labor movement—the Institute of Public Affairs—last week ranked South Australia as the second-best performing economy with per capita economic growth. Of course, nationally, economic commentators say that our nation is in a per capita recession but they have listed us in South Australia performing well for per capita economic growth, for business investment, for productivity growth—really, really good news.

Of course, last year in 2023, South Australia was ranked the best place in the nation to do business by none other than the Business Council of Australia.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** So those people who know about the economy—

*Mr Cowdrey interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —in contrast to the member for Colton, screaming his head off against this good news, have been ranking us as performing strongly. One of the other reasons is because in the last financial year South Australia led the nation, led all states, for economic growth. Now, that is a position that our state has not enjoyed for a very, very, very long time. You only have to talk people out on the street. There is now a buzz around South Australia which was lacking during the doldrums—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Colton is warned for a final time.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —of the Marshall years—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —of land tax, when they drove business investment and confidence through the floor because they mishandled the treasury benches. It has been two years—

*Mr Brown interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Florey!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —of great economic performance, of us investing in the economy and, pleasingly, South Australians reaping the rewards.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Colton, the member for Morialta and the member for Florey are on final warnings.

### STATE RECORDS

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (14:33):** My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Has the minister's office and department at all times undertaken appropriate preservation and management of official records in the conduct of their business under the State Records Act 1997? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TEAGUE:** An email dated 19 September 2023 from the executive director of Invest SA and the Department for Trade and Investment to a ministerial liaison officer in the minister's office states, and I quote, 'James mentions a briefing pack below—can you share that?' The minister's office responded on the same day, and I quote, 'I only have an A3 hard copy I will drop off this afternoon.' In a release of documents—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TEAGUE:** —by the Department for Trade and Investment on 28 February 2024—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heysen must be heard.

**Mr TEAGUE:** In a release of documents by the Department for Trade and Investment on 28 February 2024, the A3 briefing pack was not identified in the document schedule associated with the FOI release.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for West Torrens! The minister has the call.

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (14:34):** The answer to the opposition member's question is yes, we have always met our obligations under the State Records Act. The second part of his question is easily answered. As I understand it and I am advised, the member for Unley's freedom of information request, which was sent to the department and not to my ministerial office—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** Do you want the answer or not? The answer is very simple.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, the house does not permit quarrels.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Morialta is on a final warning. The minister has the call.

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** The member for Unley's FOI request, as I am advised, used the phrase 'all electronically searchable documents'.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** I don't want to give you any advice, but far from giving you any advice—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister!

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** I didn't administer the FOI.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, I am on my feet. Members to my left and right, there is a wall of noise. Despite the directional microphones, it is not possible for the Chair to hear the minister's answer, therefore it follows that it may be difficult for Hansard, therefore it follows that I must intervene.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The house will come to order.

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** As I understand it, that phrase was used. The department very diligently followed all of the protocols under the FOI Act and fronted up with all of the relevant documents.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Treasurer! Member for Mawson!

#### STATE RECORDS

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (14:37):** Supplementary: in light of the minister's answer, can the minister indicate whether all documents received by the minister's office are electronically logged as required by the act?

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (14:37):** Actually, it's quite easy. If the opposition had FOI'd my office, for instance, as the member for Chaffey often does—FOI my diary—they would find an electronic copy in the diary entry.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Florey! Order! We will wait.

#### CITADEL SECURE

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (14:37):** My question is to the Minister for Small and Family Business. Has the minister ever met with a representative of Citadel Secure and, if so, with whom, when and why? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heysen has the floor, and he got in well within time. Leave has been sought; is leave granted?

Leave granted.

**Mr TEAGUE:** A minute signed by the minister on 23 May 2023 advises: 'You have agreed to attend a morning tea with members of the Norwood Parade Precinct Committee. The Hon. Reggie Martin MLC and Ms Cressida O'Hanlon, Senior Associate, Citadel Secure, are scheduled to attend.'

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (14:38):** Yes, I did attend a meeting of the Norwood Parade Precinct Committee on 31 May last year. I often attend meetings at the request of members. This was requested by the Hon. Reggie Martin of the other place. One of his staff members is Ms Cressida O'Hanlon. She was present at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to meet with the Parade precinct committee.

I did have very engaging conversations with the committee on a range of issues, including the supports for small business provided by the Malinauskas government. They were very pleased to hear of the engagement we were then undertaking to create the Small Business Strategy 2023-2030, which is now out and for the public record. It has some good long-term visions for small business in South Australia.

We did discuss the parade and the trade circumstances of the parade, including through COVID, and other matters, and I did generally discuss how their businesses were going. I do love to engage with small businesses, particularly those in the Dunstan electorate, as these particular traders were. There was a meeting on 31 May with the Norwood precinct committee.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Supplementary from the member for Heysen and then the member for Waite, who has been waiting patiently.

#### CITADEL SECURE

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (14:40):** In light of the minister's answer, referring to Ms Cressida O'Hanlon as a member of the staff of the Hon. Reggie Martin, was the minister surprised to learn, on reading the briefing minute, that Ms O'Hanlon would attend the meeting with the Norwood Parade Precinct Committee and in the capacity of senior associate, Citadel Secure, whose business is based in the City of Adelaide?

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (14:40):** I was not surprised for Ms O'Hanlon to be there as a staff member of Reggie Martin from the other place, as he is the one who asked for the meeting.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS:** I was more interested in that briefing to know of the Norwood Parade traders who I was meeting with, and I was very interested to know and learn from them about their businesses.

#### VISITOR ECONOMY

**Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (14:41):** My question is to the Minister for Tourism. How is the state's visitor economy progressing after two years of a Malinauskas Labor government?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:41):** Thank you very much to the member for Waite. The expenditure on the South Australian visitor economy has never been stronger. We know that tourism suffered an incredibly difficult time during COVID and we have been committed to investing in those businesses that took that sacrifice and were hit so heavily. Month after month we can see the results of a government that understands the significance of investing in our visitor economy: full hotels, busy restaurants, bustling cellar doors and the spend in the regions staying above pre-pandemic levels.

Just last month we saw the highest ever occupancy night for our CBD, breaking a record that was set just weeks before that. Since coming to government that record has been broken time and time again. We are now weeks away from awesome April, for the second Gather Round, which looks bigger and better than last year. Then we will welcome LIV Golf back, again, an event that has been the most talked about golfing event we have ever seen.

That takes us to magic May—and the Matildas are here on 31 May with already sold-out tickets, and that is on the back of another million-dollar Fringe and hugely successful Adelaide Festival. On Monday, I announced that the tickets were on sale for the British and Irish Lions, who will visit in July next year, bringing with them thousands of fans from the UK, Ireland and New Zealand for the final tour match against the Anzac XV. We are expecting that that will also sell out and bring about 40,000 people who would descend here, loving our wine, loving our gin, loving our golf and loving South Australia.

Shortly, the program for Illuminate Adelaide will be launched, and we have just secured WOMADelaide for another five years, making Adelaide the longest continual destination for WOMAD in the world. We are inviting Australians to travel our way with our new marketing campaign, a campaign that captures the energy, the momentum, the sense of adventure and the unique wilderness that we have to offer, a campaign that shows us at our best, a campaign that is paying dividends already.

This is a government that supports tourism across portfolios, with my colleagues understanding that this is an industry that is a serious economic driver. My colleague the Minister for Education has included tourism and hospitality into fee-free TAFE. My colleague the Minister for Recreation and Sport has invested in grassroots sport on the back of the success of rugby, soccer and football events that have come to our state. My colleague the Minister for Environment has invested in our national parks and visitor centres and supported the Experience Nature Tourism Fund, not to mention, not to forget the globally significant World Heritage classification for the Ediacaran fossils of Nilpena.

The Treasurer has included the tourism industry in the first round of the Economic Recovery Fund, supporting the development of regional accommodation and products. Of course, the Premier has delivered, bringing in massive major events that have put us on the map and giving people a compelling reason to visit South Australia—in two short years, at \$10.2 billion of visitor value. More people are talking about South Australia now than they have for a decade. May I thank the member for Mawson, the King of Rugby, who is working to maximise our opportunities for the British & Irish Lions.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! No, member for Flinders, we go to the crossbench about this time.

#### **ROYAL COMMISSION INTO DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (14:45):** My question is to the Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. Can the minister advise if the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence will visit the regions? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr BELL:** With the recent announcement of Natasha Stott Despoja as the royal commissioner, will Ms Stott Despoja be travelling to Mount Gambier and other regional areas to hear directly from regional communities about their experiences with domestic violence?

**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) (14:46):** Thank you very much to the member for his incredibly important question. I was very pleased to stand with the Premier and our now announced royal commissioner, Natasha Stott Despoja, to share the terms of reference and details of the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence just a few weeks ago.

This royal commission sits alongside our government's comprehensive set of commitments in the legislative space, in the policy space, in the service space, to ensure that we are doing all that we possibly can to help to prevent and help to traverse that long journey to the eradication of domestic, family and sexual violence. I am certainly happy to fill the member and the house in further at every opportunity about that comprehensive agenda.

In speaking about the terms of reference and announcing the royal commissioner herself, we did make it very clear that this royal commission will identify any gaps in services and systems. It will also be a really important opportunity to raise community awareness, to ensure that there is deep community discourse and to ensure that survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence have an opportunity to be heard.

The short answer to your question is that the royal commissioner will be seeking to meet with community members, including in regions and in remote areas. She will be obviously setting out that program of visits and the schedule for those visits and exactly which locations. I will very proactively be sharing them with this house and in the media also, as will the royal commissioner herself, so I will certainly be very happy to keep you up to date, obviously particularly about your region, in terms of the opportunities for those brave survivors to be heard and also for those incredible service providers to be heard.

I know that we share a mutual friend and acquaintance in Susie Smith, who has been an absolute stalwart of the service system in the domestic, family and sexual violence space. Susie is also the co-chair of Embolden. I know that she has taken, rightly, a very, very keen interest in the announcement about the royal commission, and I am sure she will also share your view that of course we want women and service providers in the regions to be heard. We will make sure that opportunity occurs for individuals, but also we look forward, as I said, to the commission finding those opportunities to raise community awareness through their visits and their discussions that they schedule.

One of the terms of reference in the royal commission relates to how we can tackle gender inequality that we know is a key driver of domestic family and sexual violence. I certainly also look forward to that discussion in communities right across our state and also that discussion in here. I will certainly keep you up-to-date about impending visits to the South-East. As I said, I know the commissioner will be having her own program of announcements in relation to that as well.

#### **RURAL MOBILE BONE DENSITY SERVICE**

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:50):** My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the government upgrade the travelling bone density bus to make it accessible for those with mobility issues? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr McBRIDE:** The rural mobile bone density service for people living in rural South Australia visits on average 18 towns a year. On its website, it says its goal is to make the service accessible to country patients who find it difficult to travel to the city. However, access to the bus via two steps and a handrail is making the service unusable for people who can't climb steps.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:50):** I thank the member for MacKillop for his question, and I note his significant passion about these issues in his own local electorate. I note that he has raised these with me, and this particular issue as well, and he has raised it with the service involved, the Central Adelaide Local Health Network.

As the member outlined, SA Medical Imaging, which forms part of CALHN, operates the bone density bus through their Department of Nuclear Medicine PET and Bone Densitometry at the RAH. It is one of the largest providers of bone density testing in Australia. It has operated for some 30 years and scanned some 35,000 patients, visiting 15 to 18 regional sites a year for one to four weeks. It provides around 1,500 annual scans per year. The main focus is to screen people for potential osteoporosis and requires a referral from a GP.

I am aware of the issue the member has raised in that to gain access to the bus—which I am advised is about the size of a mid-size caravan and has obviously been operational for some time—

there are three steps to enter the bus and then there is another step to stand on in the scanning process. That has become a barrier for a number of patients, particularly the constituent of the member for MacKillop, who sought to gain access.

The health service has looked at this, as to whether there is an easy way that this can be modified. That has not been identified yet. There is also an issue in the way the bone density bus operates, in that it is staffed by one staff member, the nuclear medicine technologist, who provides that service. To provide additional access for people with mobility issues would likely require additional staffing; that would have to be considered. This is going to continue to be considered over time, if there's some modifications or, down the track, if there's new bus arrangements to be put in place.

In the short term, for anybody who would be impacted in not being able to access the bus, of course there are fixed sites where people can access this service. We also have the PAT system that can help people from regional South Australia to access those fixed sites if need be. I appreciate the member's question. It will continue to be examined. Obviously, we would want all of our health services to be as accessible as possible. This is one where there are some particular limiting factors that have made that difficult, but it is a worthy consideration for the future.

#### EYRE PENINSULA DESALINATION PLANT

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:52):** My question is to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water. Has SA Water used or are they planning to use seismic testing as part of their process for a desalination plant ability at Billy Lights Point at Port Lincoln? 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) (14:53):** I think a very similar question was asked in the last sitting week of parliament, and I undertook to take that question on notice. People may be aware that a small amount of seismic testing was undertaken as part of doing the bathymetric assessment for what the seabed is like as part of designing the plant. If I took the question literally, I would say that, as part of the operation of the plant, the way that the plant will operate, seismic testing is not necessary, but it is part of the assessment. It was concluded some time ago, though whether there is more to be planned, I don't know. But I am happy to take that on notice.

#### EYRE PENINSULA DESALINATION PLANT

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:54):** My question is to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water. Is the minister aware of any reports of a whale death in Boston Bay, Port Lincoln, and, if so, has she sought advice that SA Water activities were not a contributing factor in the death? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TELFER:** Last week, the media reported the stranding death of a pygmy whale found in Boston Bay, which was discovered within days of reported SA Water seismic testing associated with their proposed project at Billy Lights Point.

**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) (14:54):** Yes, there was a media report, although the media report was that there was no evidence of any connection. When the seismic testing was undertaken, I am advised that there was an effort to see if there were any whales around, and that there weren't. It is also true that it is quite frequent for whales, at this time of year, to wash up dead around that area. There had been one a couple of months earlier and then the one sometime after the seismic testing. There is no reason to consider that there would be a connection between the two, is the advice that I have received.

**HEALTH SYSTEM**

**The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (14:55):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister update the house on policies to improve the health system and any recent feedback from senior clinicians?

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** The dumbest policies since Transforming Health.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:55):** Thank you to the member for Light for his question. I particularly note the very recent opening of the new emergency department at Gawler hospital, which has already seen a significant additional capacity in his local region and some of the first of our 150 beds to come online through the course of this year.

As the member asked about the health policies, we have a very comprehensive suite of health policies that we are delivering to the people of South Australia—and this stands completely opposite to the absolute zero health policies put forward by our political opponents—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members to my left and right! Minister.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —chief of which is creating additional capacity in our hospital system. Today, the Premier and I saw the progress at the Lyell McEwin Hospital, where we are building an additional 48 beds as part of this government's commitment to expand our hospital system. Those beds are on track to be open and staffed in September this year, providing much-needed additional capacity for the health system. That is part of a suite of policies covering everything from additional inpatient beds to additional mental health beds. A key part of the blockages that we face in our emergency departments is people not being able to get a mental health bed when they need it. There are over 100 additional mental health beds being delivered across the city and state as part of our plan.

Of course, it's not just the city where we are investing in our hospitals, we are also upgrading country hospitals as well, with very significant upgrades going into hospitals such as Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Kangaroo Island, Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Whyalla: critical upgrades to those local services that have been ignored previously. We are making sure that we are delivering for people not just in the city but those critical upgrades in the country as well.

We have put in place, just in recent weeks, upgrades to our pharmacy services. People are now able to get access to three 24-hour pharmacies across the metro region. These have been very well received in the Salisbury, Clovelly Park and Norwood areas, with many people utilising those services other than having to go to an emergency department. We have also expanded the scope of services that pharmacists can do, to enable them to assist with UTIs to provide those medications when people would otherwise have to go to an emergency department because they couldn't get access to a GP.

Of course, we have policies to expand the new women's and kids' hospital and put that on a bigger site with many more beds. All of these policies were paid close attention in some feedback from a senior clinician this morning, who wrote a letter outlining their thoughts in relation to the policies of this government versus the policies of those opposite. It was in the paper this morning from Professor Warren Jones, who is—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —no historical friend of the Labor Party.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** He says:



[The Malinauskas] mid-term government is in the process of injecting massive and unprecedented funds and resources into the health and hospital systems.

Ambulance response times are more critical than ramping and these have been halved since the Liberals left office. As the influx of hospital beds and staff escalates later this year, ramping will surely diminish.

Any comparison with a meaningless resignation promise by David Speirs is trivial and spurious. And he will surely be protected from any criticism of broken promises, since he has no health policies.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

### ROAD SAFETY

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (15:00):** My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Will the minister implement better road safety outcomes at Gorge Road, Paradise? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Following major accidents on a stretch of this road, including one reported by *The Advertiser* in July 2023, basic safety measures have been implemented. However, another accident occurred last Friday, as reported by local resident Kosta on ABC radio.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:00):** I am glad the shadow minister is raising local constituent matters in question time. It shows that he is a diligent and hardworking local member of parliament. He seem a little bit worried.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** None of us noticed. None of us have noticed that the sandbagging has already started.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** None of us noticed, but it is an important issue. I did hear Kosta, I think it was, on the radio. The department met with locals on 6 November, along with representatives of the Campbelltown City Council and the shadow minister. Following that meeting, the department has installed all of the agreed measures—they were put in place on 15 February—which include the installation of a raised pavement, marking, upgraded signage to advise motorists of the upcoming curve in the road, and two unidirectional hazard markers to deter motorists.

We have completed our committed works and are now waiting for the council to plant trees along that section of the road, which will assist in improving safety along the verge, we are told. The shadow minister wrote to me about this matter as well, and I understand his constituent, who was on the radio, has written to me as well. He wrote to me on 6 September with concerns that the proposed measures were inadequate.

Following this, an onsite meeting was held with local residents. As I said, we did the raised pavement, the signage to advise motorists of the upcoming curve in the road, and the unidirectional hazard markers. On 7 February, I committed to additional measures, and council has agreed to install mature trees at the location. I understand also that the speed limit on the road—60 km/h—is not disputed by the local member, but if there is a change to that opinion I am happy to consider it.

My view is that the department is doing what we can. I know that Kosta is not happy with all the measures we have put in place. I am happy to work with the shadow minister to come up with a solution that could be useful, but ultimately it gets difficult to the point where the measures we keep on putting in place to try to make this road safer will reach a point where we may not satisfy the shadow minister's constituent.

I am happy to engage. I am happy to continue to work with him on this, because I think it is an important issue for the local community. I want to make sure that Gorge Road is safe and that the

shadow minister is satisfied that we have done all we can. I am happy to take any suggestions that the shadow minister might have to assist the agency.

Protection in these areas is often more about satisfying people that we have done all we can. The independent engineering tells us that the road is safe, but if there are other measures that the shadow minister thinks could be useful I will contemplate them. I have not yet been asked, I think—but I will double-check—about changing the speed limit to 50.

**The Hon. V.A. Tarzia:** You will get another letter.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I will get another letter soon about that?

**The Hon. V.A. Tarzia:** You will get another letter.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Okay. If the shadow minister is happy to publicly call and ask to change the speed limit on Gorge Road from 60 to 50, I will actively consider that. I will be entirely frank: I think he knows that road better than I do, and I am happy to take advice from the agency.

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

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** If I see the member for Hartley sandbagging, calling out 'bollards; please help, I need bollards' I am up for—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister's time has expired.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** That is a shame, sir, but I am happy to consider bollards.

#### **PATIENT ASSISTANCE TRANSPORT SCHEME**

**Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (15:04):** My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister confirm that the fuel subsidy for the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS) will now increase annually in line with CPI? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr BELL:** Two weeks ago, I put forward a private members' motion calling for an increase in the accommodation allowance for the PAT Scheme and for all subsidies to be tied to CPI. The motion was amended by the member for Elizabeth and passed this house with the following change:

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

Can the minister please confirm that the fuel subsidy will now increase annually in line with CPI?

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:05):** Thank you very much to the member for his question. As he well notes, the government in our first 12 months in office doubled the fuel subsidy from 16¢ per kilometre to 32¢ per kilometre and made it, from my understanding, the most generous fuel subsidy in the nation.

In relation to the member's question, I will certainly seek further advice, but my understanding is that it is now our intention to make it an indexation in line with the standard indexation through the government that takes into account both CPI and also other variables that Treasury has a formula for. That was not previously the case. So there was no indexation that applied to this and there will now be indexation that will be applied in the future. I will double-check that and I am happy to correct that if I am incorrect. I think that will help to make sure that this keeps pace with increasing costs into the future.

#### **REMARK POLICE STATION**

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:06):** My question is to the Minister for Police. Can the minister update the community of Renmark when the government plans to reopen the Renmark Police Station? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** Renmark has a population of more than 10,000 people and they have the right to a local police station that is open.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (15:07):** What I will do is give a more fulsome answer on notice for the member and report back to the house. But the assertions that the member makes in his question are both incorrect and not a true reflection of the fact that there is a very strong presence in the Riverland, including in his own community of Renmark. But I will get a full answer particularly around some of the mechanics and administrative matters up there and return to the house.

### **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SMALL BUSINESS**

**S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (15:07):** My question is to the Minister for Small and Family Business. How is the Malinauskas government supporting South Australian small businesses?

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (15:08):** I thank the member for Gibson for her question and acknowledge her ongoing support of local businesses in her electorate. We know that small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy in South Australia. That is why two years ago the Premier undertook to have a dedicated small and family business portfolio. It is a portfolio I am very proud to have.

This government wants our small and family businesses to thrive. We have heard just now from the tourism minister about all the events that are bringing Adelaide and South Australia alive. We have just had a record-breaking festival season that has had a huge impact on our small businesses in hospitality and retail. They drive up foot traffic, they bring dollars into our local businesses and are one way of us supporting small and family businesses.

We are also further committed to supporting small and family business operators and that is why this year we will be supporting a new small and family business week. I am excited to unveil the 2024 Small Business Week program today. Small Business Week will be running from 29 April to 3 May. The program boasts a packed program of free in-person and online workshops, webinars, tours, and networking events, all designed to support our state's small businesses to grow and develop.

The week-long program will include more than 30 events being held across metropolitan Adelaide and also in our regions, including the Adelaide Hills, Yorke Peninsula, the Mid North, Eyre Peninsula, the Riverland and Kangaroo Island. For those who run or work in one of South Australia's 155,000 small businesses, Small Business Week is the perfect opportunity to connect with others. It is an opportunity to learn from experts and be inspired to take their businesses to the next level.

This year's theme will be 'Helping You Get on with Business', and a highlight of the week is the free full-day Small Business Expo that will be held at the Entertainment Centre on Thursday 2 May. Alan Kohler will be in attendance as the keynote speaker and will share his insightful analysis of Australia's economy and the outlook for South Australian small business owners in particular. It is a session that is not to be missed.

Expo attendees will receive tailored advice and referrals to appropriate supports and services through the Small Business Commissioner's Gov to You exhibition. Gov to You aims to connect business owners with representatives from across a wide range of government agencies, industry associations and partner organisations, all in the one convenient location.

Small Business Week will conclude on 3 May with the continuation of the Malinauskas Labor government's highly successful Women in Business program, with an immersive learning day for female business owners and leaders that will be held in the Adelaide Hills again, Mr Speaker, at Paracombe Wines.

These events will be complemented with a suite of online resources that will allow business owners access to the information they need when they need it. These resources will be published throughout the week and will remain accessible to small businesses via the resource centre on the Office for Small and Family Business website: [www.business.sa.gov.au](http://www.business.sa.gov.au). The full program is now up on that website. I hope it will be a great success and I hope it will be of significant assistance to our

small business owners. Of course, it comes off the back of other successful programs, including the Women in Business program, our fundamentals program, our cyber program, and many more in support of our small businesses.

*Grievance Debate*

**O'HANLON, MS C.**

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (15:11):** One could just about feel some sympathy for the much maligned Labor candidate for Dunstan after the recent weeks that we have traversed, in part due to the number of people and entities who have been very quick to speak up for and on behalf of her and on behalf of an entity that she has been publicly associated with by the name of Citadel Secure. When issues were first raised about the candidate and about Citadel Secure, we were quick to identify that an unnamed Labor spokesperson—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TEAGUE:** —was in a position to speak for and on behalf of both her—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TEAGUE:** —and on behalf of the company, without further explanation.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TEAGUE:** What we know on the written record is that—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Heysen, be seated. Minister, you will cease interjecting. Member for Heysen.

**Mr TEAGUE:** What we know on the written record is that through the course of 2023 only—and by reference to the sleuthing that has been necessary to be undertaken over recent weeks, because the Labor candidate for Dunstan appears to be on the one hand interested in transparency, about public information about candidates, but on the other hand very slow to reveal any information at all except for denials in relation to her publicised involvement with Citadel. We are left to trawl the publicly released documents and enter here from, on the one hand, unnamed Labor spokespeople and on the other hand, from time to time, representatives of the government speaking for and on behalf of both the candidate and her husband.

We see that on 7 February last year an email was sent between Mr O'Hanlon and Ms O'Hanlon in relation to the matter of Citadel and under the topic 'Talking points', with the purpose of seeking a meeting for Citadel with a minister or chief of staff to discuss a proposal. That has been characterised by the Premier, no less, as a communication simply between a husband and a wife. So, on 7 February, the government tells us we are dealing with the wife of a director of Citadel.

On 13 April, the Minister for Trade and Investment, Mr Champion, indicated publicly that he met with Cressida O'Hanlon. We are not entirely clear in what capacity. By May of last year, the subject of a minister's minute dated 17 May, which the minister signed and noted on 23 May, we saw Ms O'Hanlon being described, not only by title but by biography as well, as a senior associate of an entity called Citadel Secure.

As recently as question time today, we had the Minister for Small Business indicate, 'Yes, I have participated in a meeting and it was attended by Cressida O'Hanlon who was a staffer of Reggie Martin.' In response to questions about whether she was surprised to learn that this person was held out as a senior associate of Citadel Secure, the minister had nothing more to say. We know that from a historical record of Citadel Secure's website, taken as recently as October last year, Cressida O'Hanlon is held out as a senior associate of Citadel.

All the way through last year, and right now to the present—and notwithstanding those public statements—Cressida O'Hanlon denies that she was ever a senior associate of Citadel, no less than the member for West Torrens on the radio on Monday morning denied that this was ever the case and, in fact, blamed a government official for inserting a Citadel Secure biography in the minister's briefing note on 17 May.

The best that we are told about Mr O'Hanlon's business, Citadel Secure—which appears to be associated with its senior associate, Cressida O'Hanlon—is that Mr O'Hanlon's business does not engage in lobbying, nor is it required to be registered as a lobbyist, and the business has not received any money from the state government. That is despite the fact that Minister Champion indicates that on 5 September he had a half-hour meeting with David Searles and James O'Hanlon, and we have seen from the documents that that has led all the way to opportunities for introduction to Don Farrell.

There was a hard-copy document that was associated with the meeting that has not found its way into the public record, it appears because it was not logged electronically, and questions are raised about records. So we are left—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TEAGUE:** —without any public transparency about who Citadel Secure is, why they were meeting with the minister, and in what capacity was Cressida O'Hanlon described as a senior associate of that company throughout the bulk of 2023. All these questions remain unanswered.

*Mr Brown interjecting:*

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

**FINIZIO, DR A.**

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:17):** It is interesting to understand the internal workings of the Liberal Party after seeing the spirited defence by the bravest lawyer in South Australia who cannot make any of these accusations outside of parliament—such a brave, brave counsel for the prosecution—but I have been making all of my statements about Ms Finizio outside of the parliament, and I will continue to do so.

I do note that, today, Ms Finizio admitted to having signed a statutory declaration and claiming that she had actually not—

**Mr Cowdrey:** You just said you wouldn't do this.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I am saying this outside as well.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Unlike the bravest lawyer in South Australia, the member for Heysen, who hides in parliament like a coward. The statutory declaration Ms Finizio has now confirmed that she signed stipulates that she has 'never been involved either as a shareholder or a director in a company that is or was at any time (a) under administration, (b) in receivership, (c) under investigation by [ASIC] or (d) in the process of being wound up'.

In an interview this morning on radio, David Bevan asked Ms Finizio and got out of her, reluctantly, that she had admitted to actually signing this statutory declaration. We know it is a document that she signed because Mr Bevan quoted it to her. He held it up to her to read, and she said, 'Yes, I've signed it.' I will give you the quotes, and this is from Bevan:

Bevan: Did you tell the Liberal Party when you were signing your declaration to become their candidate for Dunstan that you had applied for a job with the Labor Party?

This was Finizio's response:

Finizio: David, you know that process is confidential—

which is code for 'No, I didn't tell them I wanted to work for the Labor Party to bring down the Marshall government.' It is the sort of thing you might want to say in a preselection, one of those things you want to find out. Then he goes on and says:

Bevan: I've got the document in front of me that says 'I have never been involved either as a shareholder or a director in a company that was at anytime under administration or receivership.' Now you had to sign that document.

Finizio: David, once again this is an internal confidential process that the party does.

Bevan: I'm just asking you, did you sign the document?

Finizio: You know that I've signed the documents, this is an internal confidential party process...there's an internal party process and I've already answered the question.

Bevan: And you've answered that you have signed the document that says that.

Finizio: I've signed the document that's required of me for that process.

Bevan: Which included this?

Finizio: Yes it did.

Statutory declarations in South Australia are dealt with under the Oaths Act, which stipulates that:

Any person who wilfully makes any declaration...knowing that declaration to be untrue in any material particular, shall be guilty of an offence, and shall be liable, upon conviction thereof, to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding four years.

Finizio has signed a statutory declaration saying that she has not been a director in a company that at any time has been in administration. It is not true: she has been. She has signed a stat dec, and the Liberal Party are keeping this statutory declaration secret. Whatever happens on Saturday does not change the fact that Finizio has signed this statutory declaration. This will not be over on Saturday. If Ms Finizio is elected, she could be almost immediately again ineligible to sit in parliament, causing another by-election. Given the consequences of making a false statement, it is open to South Australia Police to investigate this matter, of course unless the Liberal Party provide a statutory declaration that she has signed that is different from the one that has been leaked to the government.

**Mr Cowdrey:** How many stat decs did you falsify with your speeding fines?

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** What?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Sir, I ask that the member for Colton withdraw and apologise immediately.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Colton, you are aware it is a subjective standard, and I counsel you to withdraw and apologise. However, you are also out of your place. You will need to return to your seat first before addressing the chamber.

**Mr COWDREY:** Sir, it was a question, but I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** And apologise. I would strongly counsel you to. That has been the custom. I am giving the member the best advice I possibly can.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! We are going to give the member the opportunity to follow the custom.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**Mr COWDREY:** I apologise for asking a simple question of the member.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Florey is warned. Member for Chaffey!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, be seated. Member for Florey, you will depart—10 minutes. Member for Chaffey, you are not far behind.

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

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** It is pretty clear that Ms Finizio was a director in a company that went into administration. Businesses go into administration. It is part of the entrepreneurial process that some businesses fail. What we are concerned about here is that it was not declared, and signing this statutory declaration raises further questions. I would encourage the Liberal Party, if they are the party of small business, to release this statutory declaration to clear it all up.

Of course, they will not. They will do everything they can to keep it hidden. I have been told by some conservative members of the Liberal Party that there is a lock and key around this statutory declaration and it will not be released. I would urge them to think about the damage that they are doing to other entrepreneurs who might wish to one day run for parliament because the damage that they have done in the way they have treated this matter has really hurt Ms Finizio, her campaign and the integrity of the Liberal Party.

### PLANT PROTEIN MANUFACTURING

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:23):** I rise to speak about a great loss to South Australia's economy. This current state Labor government and federal Labor government have walked away from a Modern Manufacturing Initiative program that had huge potential for South Australia's economy. For those who are not aware, South Australia is the capital of pulses and plant protein opportunities, and we have had opportunities to be a world-leading plant protein manufacturer through this Modern Manufacturing Initiative.

The former Minister for Trade and Investment had carriage of the funding, and it was a large amount of funding between state, federal and private money. There was \$113 million of federal money and \$65 million that was committed by the former Liberal state government, but the \$200 million of private money that was going to be put on the table for this plant protein initiative has now gone missing because this government has walked away from an opportunity. It seems to be a trend that, when it comes to food production, anything that happens in a region, anything that happens on a farm, the Labor government go missing. Whether it is plant protein, whether it is live exports or whether it is farm initiatives, again, they continue to go missing in action.

This is a huge opportunity. South Australia produces about 75 per cent of Australia's lentils, 40 per cent of fava beans and almost 35 per cent of field peas. The global demand is increasing at a huge rate. Currently, India has surged by 500 per cent in importing pulses into their food chain. Looking at the reasons why South Australia can be a stronger trading partner with India is just the tip of the iceberg. It is about value adding that protein-based opportunity. It is not just about the food: it is about beverages and it is about protein as a stable food source.

We all know that globally we are seeing malnutrition as an absolute major global issue. Protein is a major fix for those populations that are looking for the protein. Again, we see the opportunities in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Egypt, China and the EU, but the Labor government have walked away—\$65 million that was going to be invested into a \$378 million program and the opportunities and the jobs that it was going to create.

Jobs is another issue that we all should be aware of—generating about \$4 billion in exports by 2032 and 384 new direct jobs. What we are missing out on now is 8,500 full-time positions. Nationally, it is an absolute disgrace that the Labor governments, both state and federal, have walked away from a huge opportunity.

It is estimated that plant protein increases are 20-fold across the value chain and that domestic and international demand will continue to grow. My most recent trip to India—and I thank the Minister for Trade and Investment for that opportunity—showed me that India is calling on South Australia to increase the opportunities with pulse production. They know that in their country they are seeing much more of their high-value land now being converted to other crops, more high-value crops. So they are now planting pulses in less productive country. We are dealing with global warming, we are dealing with the vagaries of the weather, and India now have more of a reliance on exporting those pulse crops into the food chain, and that can come from South Australia.

South Australia not only grows the best pulses, the best lentils, the best beans and the best peas but they also had the opportunity to value add, and that value-add opportunity has gone amiss. I know that many of our primary producers are absolutely gutted that the government has walked away from something that is staring them in the face because they are not interested in investing more into an economy that is a renewable economy. It is an economy that feeds the world and it is an economy that will drive 8,500 jobs. It really does beggar belief.

What really does make me wonder is that now that we have lost that \$65 million out of the state government, where will that money be committed? Where will we see that \$65 million invested into our state's economy? Will it be invested into a regional initiative? Probably not. Will it be invested into a food source? Probably not. Where will that \$65 million go? I hope the Premier goes away and has a good, hard think about the fact that he has taken away the opportunity here in South Australia. The plant protein Modern Manufacturing Initiative has gone missing here in South Australia.

### **MARION TENNIS CLUB**

**S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (15:28):** I stand today to show my support for the Marion Tennis Club. Three weeks ago, the Marion council met behind closed doors, had a confidential meeting and determined to bulldoze the Marion Tennis Club. Two weeks later, last Wednesday night, they had a meeting with the president of the Marion Tennis Club to let them know that the club was no longer welcome on Marion council land, where it has been home for 90 years. This is outrageous. Twelve hours later, they put out a media release letting the community know that the Marion Tennis Club was going to be bulldozed.

There was no consultation. No-one had an inkling that this was coming. It is a club with a proud 90-year history. Why are they doing this? To their credit, South Adelaide Basketball Club, a successful club which I support in our community, is getting an expansion, and all credit to them for winning government funding and local council funding for the expansion, but what that has meant is that the council intends to build the courts on Marion Tennis Club land.

Of course, no sports club wants to see another sports club sacrificed. We are all here for the same reasons—for participation, for competition, for a healthy lifestyle, for mental wellbeing and to encourage our kids to play competitive sports. There is a sport for everybody, and every sport should be welcomed and supported in the Marion council, and that is not the case.

In fact, the council has form. I have only been in this job for two years, and in these two years this is now the second sports club that the Marion council has demolished. It was only about 18 months ago that they got rid of the croquet club. Once again, it was deemed insignificant—not enough members—and therefore not worthy of being supported by the Marion council. They did this so that they can build an ice arena on the grounds of the Marion Croquet Club. The ice arena is a private venture, which means the council looks to be bringing in 42 years of rent off that site.

There are lots of sports clubs on this land, and they are growing. They all have great plans for the future because people want to participate in everything they have to offer, but, because the council is so invested in this ice arena, the clubs that want to grow are all on hold and have been for 18 months. The cricket club has not been able to put up the nets that it wants to because the council is still not able to tell them what the ultimate plans will look like.

This ice arena, whilst worthy in possibly another location, is not in the right location there on Sturt Road, and it is not supported by the local community. Many of you will know that the Marion Road and Sturt Road intersection is the worst in Adelaide for crashes. The stretch along Sturt Road has a very high number of rear-end crashes right where people will be coming on and off to access the ice arena. Of course, local residents are worried about parking. Lots of our elderly people use the community club as well, and they are worried about their safety. There is not a lot of support in the community for the ice arena at this location.

The Marion Tennis Club has a proud 90-year history. They have just appointed a new coach who has a history with the club, and everyone is very excited for the skills that he can bring to the club. Of course, it is not just competition tennis that gets played on these courts. There are juniors, social tennis and cardio tennis, so lots of people in our community are accessing these clubs. Unfortunately, the consultation did not even stretch as far as the Norfolk Estate retirement village,



which is next door. Next door, there are 136 properties of elderly people, who also have concerns about the expansion of the basketball club right next door to them.

This is a large space. There is room for all sports clubs in our community. The Marion council needs to prioritise our community clubs and not just go after the big dollars of the ice arena. People should be able to participate in the sport of their choosing, and they are all available in the Marion area until they are bulldozed by the council. I was so pleased to be at the clubrooms last night. The club is going to fight this, and I stand with them.

### REGIONAL SERVICES

**Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (15:33):** I rise today to bemoan the fact that in 2024 we still experience difficulties in regional and remote areas accessing the basic services that those people in the city take for granted. I would like to highlight the example of Wool Bay as a means to illustrate that point. Wool Bay has been experiencing intermittent power outages over the past couple of weeks. For about two weeks, residents have had power switching on and off throughout the day, and it is causing tremendous headaches for the people who live in that wonderful coastal community. And it is not just headaches; it is putting lives at risk. There are people there who rely on different medical machines and devices to sustain their life that are having to put that faith in a power system that is not delivering reliable outcomes.

Mary Talent lives in Wool Bay. Her daughter came to visit recently with her husband, who requires an oxygen machine, and found that the oxygen machine was switching on and off as the power switched on and off, thus putting his life and access to that oxygen at significant risk. That is tremendously dangerous. Similarly, David Norton uses a CPAP machine, which obviously requires electricity to run, and puts himself at significant peril without reliable power. As an aside, David Norton—not so life-threatening but just as inconvenient—has had a number of appliances that have fallen by the wayside as that power is switched on and off. The surges have resulted in his aircon going on the fritz, which has cost \$2,900 to replace. His printer has needed to be replaced at \$500, his bread machine at \$400 and a pool pump at \$1,900; all had to be replaced as a result of those power surges.

We have had other people in the community just as frustrated as well. I know that Karen Nixon has contacted our office with some significant concerns about how her community is suffering. Just up the road, suffering from similar issues, Rob Rankine at the Dalrymple Hotel has been the victim of a number of power outages at Stansbury. On the long weekend recently, on the Saturday night, with a full hotel, he suffered from an extended power outage that lasted for the entirety of the night. I called Rob the next day, and he told me that it was about 25,000 bucks worth that he was out of pocket. That is an extraordinary amount for a small business to bear.

He got through that, furious no doubt, mad about the situation, but then two days later, 48 hours later, he experienced another extended power outage, with a full dining room. On that Monday night, he was again in the situation where he could not provide food or drink for the patrons that came to visit. If you add on top of that the fact that the Stansbury Cricket Club won the flag that weekend, and he might have expected to see them for three consecutive days, he missed out on that patronage as well. Congratulations to the cricket club nonetheless.

Those service outages on the southern Yorke Peninsula, which might be a long way by road but is not that remote compared to other parts of our state, highlight the fact that we need access to more reliable services in regional and remote areas. We constantly get complaints from people who suffer from Telstra outages and do not have adequate phone service. We often get complaints about Service SA and the tyranny of distance in accessing their nearest Service SA centre, having to drive their cars or trucks all the way up to Kadina from Yorketown, Corny Point, or thereabouts, to get their registering done. Also, of course, the health system; the further you get away from Adelaide, the more perilous it gets.

I would just like to make this point as powerfully as I can, that in 2024 we need to redouble our efforts to provide reliable services to regional communities that need them so much. As I have tried to articulate, there are life-changing situations that require consistent power. Hopefully, we can make inroads into that soon so that the people like David Norton and Mary Talent's son-in-law can access that power.

I also rise today to celebrate something, and that is the fact that the Upper Yorke Road will now benefit from significant road funding. A couple of weeks ago, we had the announcement that there would be \$600,000 committed to patchwork on the Bute to Port Broughton stretch of Upper Yorke Road. The community and I said that that is not enough, that it is not sufficient for the works that are required on that stretch of road and that we need to go back to government to get more. Thankfully, government have listened. It's been a long road.

There have been many, many years of advocacy by the people that live and work on that road. Sunny Hill Distillery I know have been advocating for a long time to try and get that road fixed. All the farmers that use it to deliver their grain to port have been advocating for a long time and, more recently, over the last year or two we have had GPSA come on board and lend their support to that advocacy. Finally, we have had a result. I look forward to seeing that work take place.

The government has been a little bit cagey about the nature of the works that will occur, but I am led to believe that it is a significant investment, with tens of millions of dollars. I hope that they do us a proper rebuild from the base up to make sure that that road will last for many generations. My understanding is, based on the feedback from the community, it was built around 1950 and has not been touched since, so hopefully they will build a road that will last for another 50 years.

### LIGHT ELECTORATE

**The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:38):** Last week, I held a forum for various ex-service organisations that service my area, not only in my electorate but also the region, so this area would cover the Barossa, Gawler and Northern Adelaide Plains. The forum was held because I have been receiving a number of representations from veterans and defence personnel about the lack of services and support available to veterans in the region. One of the major obstacles, it appears, is the lack of communication and the lack of support from government agencies to the various veterans' groups and ex-service organisations.

Sometime last year, there was an announcement that there was going to be a Veterans' and Families' Hub established in the northern suburbs, and I understand that is going to be open sometime this year in Elizabeth. Certainly, that announcement has been well received by ex-service organisations and also veterans, because it is going to make an important contribution to the delivery of services and support for veterans in that region. The issue the ex-service organisations raised was that while this is good, they actually want to know and understand what their role is, how their role might change and what contribution they can make to service delivery.

There is a whole range of organisations out there which provide existing services and support to veterans and defence personnel in the region, and they want to know how they can complement what is being proposed for the Veterans' and Families' Hub. They are concerned about the lack of communication on this proposal between the people behind the proposal and the ESOs, but they are really keen to be involved to support and complement what is proposed at this Veterans' and Families' Hub.

The other issue which was raised by ex-service organisations was the statewide issue of the lack of access to doctors and specialists, particularly mental health services and particularly in the northern area where my electorate is based. The wait times to receive services can be anywhere from six months up to two years, and often for veterans who are doing it really tough, that is an unacceptable time frame. I do not know what the answer is, but we need to find ways to attract more doctors and specialists to the region.

Part of the reason I held the forum was to get a better understanding of what the issues are that veterans and defence personnel are facing, and that was useful. They were quite open about the issues they raised. There are also a lot of services that are city-based or based in the south, even though a lot of personnel do live in the north, so we are working out ways that we can have outreach services to better support our service personnel.

For some veterans, driving 40 or 50 kilometres to a facility means the service is not accessible, but also it is important to understand that some defence personnel and veterans find it hard to go into what you might call health settings. They are just not psychologically prepared for that, so we need to work out ways we can deliver services in local communities. It was a very good

forum. I learned a lot and I am working closely with the ex-service organisations to support our veterans and defence personnel who are doing it really tough.

Last week, along with the mayor, I was very fortunate to do a couple of sod-turning ceremonies in my community. Together, we did a sod-turning for the \$4.8 million redevelopment of the Gawler and District Netball Association and also a \$600,000 play space at Reid, one of the communities in my electorate. Both these projects were election commitments. I am proud to say that we have been able to deliver on these two election commitments and improve the lives of women, in terms of sport, and families and children in relation to the play space.

With the few seconds I have left, I would like to formally welcome the new Catholic priest to our parish. It took a while to get his work visa in place, but the new Gawler Catholic priest, Father Sefo, started his duties late last month. Father Sefo is a member of the Salesian Order and is from Samoa. We wish him well in our parish.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:44):** I rise to inform the house about the issues surrounding the boardwalk at Thorndon Park. It has been an issue since 2020. The boardwalk that goes around the reservoir is a very popular walking track for residents in Morialta and Hartley. The park is obviously situated within Hartley, and the member for Hartley has been very active in this project as well.

In September 2020, council wrote to the former Minister for Environment, Minister Speirs as was, now Leader of the Opposition. Following that, a number of meetings between the Department for Environment and Water and council took place, because the park is on Crown land but managed by the council in effect, so the structural challenges on the boardwalk were theoretically the responsibility of state government.

The department engaged a consultant to do a detailed design, and as a result of all that work back and forth with council, in February 2022 a project was approved. Funding was approved by the minister, Minister Speirs, the development of the design was completed, and council was given a copy. Funding was all good and the project was set to start—until the state election came along and everything slowed down.

The department took a long time to get back to the Campbelltown council, who have been chasing the minister, as have the member for Hartley and I, for a long time now—two years—and finally this week it has been announced that funding has finally been again approved for this project to commence.

We cannot wait for the boardwalk to once again be accessible for all residents in Morialta and Hartley and all the people who enjoy using Thorndon Park. Well done to the council for persisting. Thanks to the member for Hartley for helping and to all the local residents who have lent their support for this campaign. I am really looking forward to the work being completed.

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (15:45):** I rise today to reiterate my commitment to ensuring that the government and local health networks continue to provide accessible community health services in Lucindale, Coonalpyn and Tintinara. As you are aware, Mr Speaker, Country Health Connect has changed the way it delivers community nursing services in these towns. This has, quite rightly, angered me and many locals who rely on these services. They can no longer book locally or receive certain treatments. Some are being forced to wait days to see a nurse or travel up to 100 kilometres to Murray Bridge or 50 kilometres to Naracoorte.

I have had productive talks with the health minister and the local health networks. They were left in no doubt of my strong feelings about this issue. They have committed to setting up working groups to get a clear understanding of the issues. They admitted that something is not working. They have assured me that this was not a budget-cutting measure and that the intention was never to reduce services. They say they are committed to providing access to nursing care closer to home.

It is my aim to keep the government and the local health networks accountable. It is my aim to see towns like Lucindale, Coonalpyn and Tintinara have access to community nursing care when

they need it. We have a doctor shortage in regional towns. We have medical clinics no longer taking on patients because they cannot keep up with demand. Now, more than ever, we need to expand community health nursing services to work in conjunction with GPs, not make it more difficult to access nursing care. I look forward to updating the house on the outcomes of this review and will push to see this completed as soon as possible.

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:47):** I rise to speak on an issue that is of much concern to much of the farming community right around the state, but it is impacting significantly on farming practices in the seat of Chaffey, impacting on neighbours next door and far away. That is spray drift. Spray drift is having a serious impact on neighbouring crops that have seen significant damage through a careless act of the neighbouring farmer.

What I must say is that the former Liberal government, with myself as the minister, installed the Mesonet weather station network, and that funding has now been taken away. That weather station network was put in place for a simple reason: to give farmers who are spraying crops the understanding of when to spray and when not to, through weather conditions and forward forecasting. What we are now seeing is significant damage.

I am calling on this Labor government to reinstate the Mesonet weather station network and to have primary producers comply with the advice from the app-based info service, because before much longer people are going to start testing their rainwater tanks. They are going to find 2,4-D in their rainwater tanks, 2,4-D and ester. We are going to see MRI tests into our food chain that will see contamination.

I am not blaming individuals, but I do know that there needs to be a level of compliance by farmers in the way that they practise management of spraying on their farms. It is something that you are going to hear a lot more about with me here in this chamber.

**Mrs PEARCE (King) (15:49):** I rise to speak about an exceptional member of my community, Kevin Ryan, fondly known as Kev. Kev is a station officer at the Golden Grove Fire Station and has served our community proudly through the South Australian MFS for 38 years. I understand that prior to that Kevin was with the Army and this April will mark 50 years of service in the line of danger to help keep communities safe.

Over his time with the MFS, Kev has fought bushfires across our state and across the nation. He has faced confronting scenes at house fires and car accidents. He has raised awareness at countless community days and schools. He has empowered others through running drills and training sessions. He has rescued children from floodwaters, animals from trees and drains and everything else in between.

He has been exposed to horrific workplace accidents and dangerous chemical leaks and assisted other emergency services and rescue operations. He has supported his workmates as a peer support officer and is a well-known friend and mentor to many in our community, something he believes is the greatest honour that can be bestowed on any one person.

Kev is a man who has saved lives, one who has comforted people in their darkest and sometimes final moments, and a man who has always provided this with only the most sincere love, kindness and pride. He has loved serving our community and there is only love and appreciation for all the hard work he has done. Thank you, Kev, for all your hard work and efforts over the years. We wish you all the very best for your next endeavour.

#### *Bills*

### **STATUTES AMENDMENT (NATIONAL ENERGY LAWS) (WHOLESALE MARKET MONITORING) BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 19 March 2024.)

**Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (15:51):** I rise to continue my remarks from yesterday. I was speaking of a trip down memory lane and some of the things that were said during the debate when a former

Liberal government privatised ETSA and our state's electricity assets. I was speaking about how the former Treasurer of that time and then of the previous Marshall Liberal government, Rob Lucas, had said that privatisation would 'lead eventually to lower prices for industry and business'.

Yet, as I was saying, more than 2½ decades later, privatisation has most definitely not delivered lower prices for households, industry or business. As a result, here we are today debating a bill that is needed because the market bodies that oversee the electricity system are calling for more powers to rein in the rapacity of the profit of the private market.

I also want to recall what Labor leadership said at the time when that privatisation occurred more than 25 years ago. Firstly, the other side of politics had clearly failed to keep its promises. The then opposition leader, Mike Rann, noted that the Liberal Party had gone to the 1997 election promising that they would not privatise ETSA. The then Liberals promptly did an about-face and put all our state-owned electricity assets on the auction block.

Of course, that was all ominously similar to the 2018 election, when the then Liberal leader, Steven Marshall, promised, 'We don't have a privatisation agenda,' before going on to privatise the public rail transport network and the state-owned emergency electricity generators and also investigate privatising other government services.

Mr Rann also had much clearer insight into what would happen under a privatised electricity market. Mr Rann said:

Battling South Australians would pay for Premier Olsen's privatisation agenda many times over. First, there is the loss of a huge income generating asset. Then there are the cuts to essential services that would come from the loss of that income... Then there are the higher prices consumers will be charged by the private owner, and there will be nothing consumers will be able to do about it.

He also went on to say:

Privatisation is a policy that will expose South Australians to more and more risk, more and more liability. That is the Government's policy: privatise the profits; socialise the risk.

Those comments were made by Mike Rann on 26 May 1998. Time has proved Mike Rann was right: privatisation has hurt consumers, it has ended a steady but modest source of revenue for government, and it has not shielded the public from the risks in the electricity system.

So, how will this bill before the house today help us clean up the mess that was created by the Liberals' privatisation of the electricity system? Let's consider the purpose of the market bodies, particularly the Australian Energy Regulator (AER), which will gain greater powers of market monitoring under this bill. The regulator's role is to ensure energy consumers have access to a reliable and secure market and that they pay no more than necessary for energy to their homes and their businesses.

The regulator sets maximum revenue allowances for monopoly networks and pipelines and sets an annual default market offer (DMO) for electricity consumers. The DMO is a price cap for consumers on basic contracts, which are otherwise known as standing offers, and acts as the reference point for all other contracts for households and small businesses, also known as market offers. To do its work, the regulator monitors wholesale, network and retail market performance.

However, it has faced formidable barriers to doing its work as effectively as it can, because much of the contracting and trading occurs behind closed doors. Ultimately, these trades determine the prices that consumers pay. In calling for the reforms in this bill, the regulator says:

The proposed changes will greatly enhance the AER's ability to assess performance, competition and efficiency in the wholesale energy markets and ensure consumers are not unduly impacted by high energy prices due to an uncompetitive market.

To ensure consumers and policy makers have confidence in our energy system, it is vital to understand the drivers and impact of participant behaviour and subsequent market outcomes. In electricity for example, participant behaviour can be influenced by a variety of factors, including their portfolio of technologies, prevailing market conditions, weather, fuel availability, and particularly their risk management strategies and positions. Every megawatt hour of electricity is traded multiple times in the secondary markets, and the cumulative value of this trade is worth many multiples of the settled spot market price. Participants also use a range of additional contract products to manage wholesale market risk such as fuel contracts, power purchase agreements, weather derivatives, and carbon abatement contracts.

Let me repeat part of that sentence: every megawatt hour of electricity is traded multiple times in the secondary markets—so, unlike a system which is owned and operated by government where prices would be based on actual costs, the electricity system is run by companies with complex webs of intersecting contracts and deals, with lots of players taking their clip of the ticket for being in that financial web rather than for being in the physical business of supply and demand for energy. It is no wonder consumers are being stung. This is the price for so-called private sector efficiency that the former Liberal governments hailed 25 years ago, and that is why this bill is needed: to lift the veil of secrecy and see where the money is actually going.

This bill is part of the national energy reforms for which the South Australian parliament has the honour of being the lead legislator. Giving the AER these powers will benefit all jurisdictions, but this reform will be particularly useful in the South Australian context. One of the regular tasks of the AER is to set the annual default market offer (DMO)—that is, the ceiling price for consumers on standing offers from retailers and the reference point for market offers from retailers to consumers who shop around for a better deal.

In an issues paper published by the AER as it works on the 2024-25 DMO, the agency draws attention to the South Australian trading situation. The AER says that its usual approach to estimating what the wholesale electricity price will be for the forthcoming financial year is to examine the publicly available ASX trade data to price futures contracts for base, peak and cap contracts. It says this methodology relies on a vibrant, liquid futures market to give a valid perspective on what to expect in real-time wholesale prices.

However, the AER has observed there are liquidity concerns in every jurisdiction where it sets the DMO, most particularly in South Australia—and the situation has been worsening. In South Australia, it found there has been a steady decline since 2019 in publicly visible base contracts being held. The AER says that this:

...indicates that liquidity is worsening as new contracts are not being opened at the same rate existing contracts are closed. This may be an indication that retailers are purchasing different contract products to minimise their exposure to the South Australian spot price.

To set the annual DMO—a benchmark, which has a real impact on household bills—the AER has a stack-building system to set the final price. It takes the wholesale price, plus the network cost of poles and wires, plus the cost of any government schemes, plus the cost of the retailer providing a service, plus a reasonable profit margin for the retailer. The two biggest components of the price stack are the wholesale costs and the network costs. Networks mostly function as monopolies, and the AER determines a revenue allowance for the network service providers so that those costs can be estimated accurately, but wholesale prices are volatile and far more difficult to estimate.

Without a complete picture of wholesale prices, there is a real risk the AER estimates, which are fed into the DMO process, will end up with consumers paying far more than they should be. That is why the AER wants the powers to inspect the annual contractual arrangements that retailers are using. It is a power that has been necessitated by the foolish decision to privatise the market. It is a power we must support in the interests of consumers.

I also rise today to welcome the fact that electricity prices for households and small businesses will start to fall in July. The cuts of 2.5 per cent or \$57 for the average household and 8.2 per cent or \$481 for small businesses were announced yesterday by the Australian Energy Regulator in their draft ruling. The price reductions are in stark contrast to the outrageous claims and fearmongering by the Liberal opposition, who were claiming that the regulator would announce rises of as much as 25 per cent. I would recommend that the shadow energy minister perhaps sack his psychic because it was very far off the mark.

With increasing renewable energy generation in South Australia, wholesale electricity costs have fallen dramatically. Lower wholesale costs are the main factor in the regulator's draft decision to cut prices, and I very much welcome these energy cuts going through and flowing through to consumers. With those comments, I commend the bill to the house.

**Mr BROWN (Florey) (16:02):** It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak on the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Wholesale Market Monitoring) Bill 2023. Electricity and gas prices are a concern shared by just about every South Australian. Certainly, in my electorate, people

are frustrated with the prices that they are paying, despite the good news from yesterday, and that is a more than reasonable way to feel. The Malinauskas government is keenly aware that electricity and gas prices are putting further pressure on South Australians amid a time when many if not most in our community are experiencing significant cost-of-living stress.

The Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Wholesale Market Monitoring) Bill, introduced by the minister late last year, is actually quite an important element in the suite of reforms which have been proposed through the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council which, for any members who may be unfamiliar, is a forum bringing together the commonwealth, Australian states and territories and New Zealand to work collaboratively on issues of significance and key reforms in the energy and climate change sectors. Governments from each of the affected jurisdictions have agreed to this bill being presented to the South Australian parliament, with South Australia acting as the lead legislature.

The bill seeks to add to the capabilities and responsibilities of the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) in order to assist the AER in fulfilling its role of ensuring markets are performing competitively. In short, the bill proposes to allow the AER to access information on electricity contract markets as well as to require the AER to monitor and report on competition in the wholesale gas markets. The AER's remit has it responsible for ensuring that consumers have access to reliable, clean and secure energy and that they pay no more than is necessary for energy delivered to their homes and businesses.

The AER's role is to, firstly, set the annual default market offer for electricity. This is a price cap for consumers on basic contracts, also known as standing offers, and acts as the reference point for all other contracts for households and small businesses, which are known as market offers. The AER determines the maximum revenue that monopoly network business can earn. In SA, these are SA Power Networks, ElectraNet and Australian Gas Networks. It also monitors markets and performance and enforces compliance with energy legislation.

Under current arrangements, the AER relies on information about electricity market trading that is publicly accessible, namely the auction process run by the Australian Energy Market Operator and the futures market run by the Australian Securities Exchange. A significant issue is that much of the trading, especially in the electricity market, is done through private, bespoke, over-the-counter contracts between generators, financial intermediaries and retailers.

Being kept in the dark in this way makes it very difficult for the AER to accurately estimate what retailers are paying to buy the energy that they then turn around and sell to households and businesses at the prices consumers actually see. This has a particular impact on the AER's setting of the default market offer and its role in monitoring and promoting effective competition in the market. Wholesale costs make up about a third of the final retail bill that consumers pay. One should make no mistake as to whether the wholesale figures are material to outcomes for consumers.

The reforms before us have undergone two rounds of public consultation. The consultation paper released in April 2023 offers a great deal of insight that supports our understanding of the need for these reforms. In its overview, this consultation paper explains:

The price and quality of energy services that consumers pay for is impacted by the level of competition and efficiency of electricity and gas markets. Costs associated with electricity and gas wholesale and contract markets comprise a significant proportion of a consumer's energy bills. Wholesale costs made up around 32% of the price charged to retail electricity customers in [the 2021-22 financial year]. Effective competition in electricity and gas wholesale and contract markets will promote efficiency and ensure that consumers pay no more than they need to for these services. Increased competition should also increase innovation and investment, which are needed to secure an efficient transition to a low-carbon energy sector. The amendments to the NEL [National Electricity Law] and the NGL [National Gas Law] set out in the draft Bill that accompanies this consultation paper are designed to ensure there is an appropriate level of visibility over competition in these markets, and a greater understanding of the factors that may be impacting or limiting effective competition.

To date, the AER's ability to undertake its electricity wholesale market monitoring (WMM) responsibilities has been limited by provisions in s. 18D of the NEL that place significant restrictions on the AER's ability to gather, use and disclose information. These restrictions were intended to ensure the costs of the WMM function are minimised, and to protect commercially sensitive information. In practice however, these restrictions have hampered the AER's ability to gain sufficient visibility of the market, which is increasingly important for understanding market participant behaviour as market conditions evolve alongside the energy transition.

The electricity contract market is a crucial link between generators and retailers. It is the means through which retailers manage wholesale market price volatility for their customers, and generators reduce risk relating to future revenue, including revenue streams that can underpin investment in new generation. The events during winter 2022 demonstrated the risks that energy consumers are exposed to when there is a lack of visibility of electricity contract markets. The energy system came under extreme pressure due to unprecedented high prices and price volatility in the spot market due to the war in Ukraine, high international fuel prices, fuel supply shortages, and generator outages. As a result, retailers struggled to access electricity contracts to hedge their retail load against high spot prices, and several retailers failed. Without an ability to gain information about electricity contracts markets trading and liquidity, the AER and the Commonwealth had incomplete information throughout this crisis.

It goes on to read:

The AER currently has no official function requiring it to monitor competition in the east coast gas market. This leaves the AER with no ability to assess competition in the wholesale gas markets, determine whether parties are exercising market power, or identify factors that are detrimental to effective competition in gas markets. As in the electricity sector, the winter of 2022 saw unprecedented high prices in the gas market, due to global increases in gas prices following the war in Ukraine, higher than anticipated demand by LNG exporters and gas-powered generators, and lower than expected supply from some sources.

The gas market will continue to evolve and adapt as Australia's energy transition progresses. Declining production in legacy basins in the south, which are forecast to be offset by gas coming from Queensland and the Northern Territory, is anticipated to occur at the same time as consumption is forecast to become more volatile. This reflects the integral role of gas as a flexible fuel which can be used to firm renewables, particularly during extended periods of reduced output from wind or solar generation. These factors, combined with forecast reductions in overall demand due to electrification and energy efficiency measures present difficulties to producing long term outlooks.

The reforms to the AER's [wholesale market monitoring and reporting] WMMR function will provide the AER with the visibility it needs to identify and investigate issues in a timely and well-informed manner and make an ongoing assessment of whether these markets are operating competitively. It will also enable the AER to better monitor electricity and gas markets to understand the drivers of volatility and the level of liquidity in the market, to better anticipate and provide information in the event of future crises. Enhanced information gathering powers will also equip the AER to monitor the progress of the energy markets as they adapt and innovate as part of Australia's energy transition. This will better enable the AER to provide information that can inform more targeted and effective long-term policy and regulatory reform.

As the report outlines, these are reforms that are manifestly and substantially in the public interest to progress. Enacting reforms that will produce improvement in the experiences of households and businesses who are consumers of electricity and gas is something that every jurisdiction should rightly be interested in acting upon, and these reforms enjoy broad support and approval.

I will quote from submissions to the consultation process, including from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission:

The AER receiving the power to monitor the electricity hedging contracts market will improve transparency and aid policy development. This will protect competition and facilitate the effective functioning of the electricity market by supporting the provision of risk management options to smaller, non-vertically integrated retailers.

From Energy Consumers Australia:

Our extensive survey data overwhelmingly demonstrates that consumers primary concern in the energy system relates to affordability. The present electricity market is not delivering electricity at prices consumers consider affordable, and accordingly we applaud the overall direction of the proposed marketing, monitoring and reporting reforms.

From the Public Interest Advocacy Centre:

PIAC considers these changes to be in the long term interests of consumers, bringing greater transparency to the market and encouraging more efficient and competitive market outcomes.

Transparency is essential for consumers to have faith in the system and to understand whether or not they are getting a fair deal. There is no doubt that, at the moment, there is a distinct lack of transparency, and South Australian consumers do not believe they are getting a fair deal.

Professor Allan Fels, a former chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, puts it rather well in a report published earlier this year; that is, in February 2024. The report, 'Inquiry into price gouging and unfair pricing practices', was commissioned by the Australian Council of Trade Unions because, as Professor Fels says, the union movement is concerned about 'the impact of prices on the cost of living of ordinary Australians'.



Professor Fels chaired the inquiry, which looked in detail at specific sectors, as well as providing an overview. These sectors included food and groceries, aviation, pharmaceuticals, banks and electricity. On electricity, the report says the wholesale market has a bidding process that is intended to encourage efficiency and reflect the true cost of supplying electricity at different levels of demand. The process is that generators submit bids to AEMO, which then creates a merit order for dispatch, starting with the lowest price bids and ending with the final bid under which the aggregate supply will meet the expected total demand at that period in time. Then, all dispatch generators are paid at the rate bid by the final generator, even if their bids were at a lower price. Fels' report says:

However, complexities arise in the system. For example, generators can rebid their capacity at different times of dispatch. This flexibility is meant to account for a change in conditions, like unexpected plant outages or demand surges. Yet, it can also be used strategically by generators, especially those with significant market power, to influence market prices. This has led to concerns about the potential for price manipulation, or 'gaming'.

The report noted the work of the University of Sydney Professor Lynne Chester that this rebidding can take place right up to a few minutes before generators are required to supply electricity and that 'the incentive to gouge is enormous'. Professor Chester asserts that derivatives trading is a significant factor in the bidding and rebidding strategies of generators. The Fels report says:

The fact that the volume of derivatives trading surpasses NEM demand (and has for quite some time) is indicative of the speculative activity about future wholesale and retail electricity prices plus the role being played by non-NEM participants such as speculators and hedge funds.

This imbalance between the physical delivery of electricity and the speculation in the financial markets can be seen clearly in the numbers. Futures trades were worth more than \$109 billion at face value in calendar year 2023, according to the ASX's 2023 market review report. This is considerably more than the traded value of physical electricity. The Australian Energy Regulator report on the state of the energy market for the 2022-23 financial year recorded turnover on the NEM at \$27.2 billion—that is, roughly four times as much trading is taking place on the financial market than the physical market. That is only the publicly visible financial data, not the private arrangements being made in the over-the-counter trade.

Clearly, somewhere along the line, someone is making a lot of money, and this is happening at the same time as the electricity bills consumers pay have been rising. That is why we must give greater powers to the AER to shine a light on where the money trail leads. It is highly consistent with our responsibilities to the South Australian people—and it is just sensible policy—to progress these reforms. I commend the bill to the house and look forward to its passage.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (16:16):** I also rise in support of the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Wholesale Market Monitoring) Bill 2023. I guess a number of people have touched on the fact that one of the reasons for this bill and a whole series of other bills and the various regulatory changes over time is as a result of largely dealing with a privatised electricity market within the National Electricity Market.

I think it would be very fair to say that, if our assets had not been privatised, we would not be having this debate today. There is a very clear compare and contrast example when it comes to electricity pricing. South Australia, the Eastern States and Tasmania are all on the National Electricity Market. Most of the assets in that market, as I said, have been privatised. The generating assets, the transmission and distribution assets and retail are nearly all in private hands—there is a bit of an exception up in Queensland.

But the compare and contrast is with Western Australia, which is not on the National Electricity Market. The Carpenter Labor government, way back, did not privatise electricity assets. In addition to not privatising electricity assets, it also introduced a domestic gas reserve scheme, where a percentage of the gas produced in Western Australia had to be used domestically. At the time they introduced that scheme, the Howard government went on a full-on attack on the Carpenter government. He called them the Venezuela of Australia, amongst other things. The multinational fossil fuel companies that were operating in Western Australia said, 'We will not invest in Western Australia if this was to go ahead.' It went ahead, and guess what? The companies still invest in Western Australia, and the Howard government was wrong.

When you compare and contrast, given the recent significant price increases on the NEM last year and the year before—and it could have been far worse if the Albanese government had not intervened—we are talking 20 per cent to 25 per cent or higher increases with regard to the states on the National Electricity Market; at the same time in Western Australia energy prices rose 1 per cent to 2 per cent. There is a living world example of why privatisation is bad and why a domestic gas reserve scheme, especially if you are a big gas producer like Western Australia, is a very sensible approach.

The bill before us, the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Wholesale Market Monitoring) Bill 2023, is a reform that will benefit consumers. As I said, it is a reform that is needed because of the nature of the system that we have.

Energy bills are a significant cost for household budgets, particularly for families and individuals on lower incomes. The report by the advocacy group Energy Consumers Australia provides some insightful data about energy bills and how there is a different impact based on household income. This national survey, published last August, found that households with income above \$150,000 a year were paying the most in average energy costs, at \$236 a month for electricity and gas. This equated to about 1.5 per cent of those households' income.

Lower income households were paying less in dollar amounts per month: \$184 a month for households earning between \$60,000 to \$80,000; \$142 a month for those on \$20,000 to \$40,000; and \$159 for households earning below \$20,000. Where the pain really comes in is the proportion of the households' income needed to pay for electricity and gas. The \$60,000 to \$80,000 group's energy bills used up 3.1 per cent of income. That is twice as much as the wealthier families were paying by proportion. The \$20,000 to \$40,000 group had to allocate 5.7 per cent of their money to energy bills. For households below \$20,000 a year, some 12.7 per cent of earnings went to keeping the lights on and, hopefully, keeping cool and keeping warm, but there is no guarantee that that was happening.

As lawmakers, we must do everything we can to lower costs, particularly for those on lower incomes and despite the constraint of the energy markets being privatised; and privatisation is a big constraint. The board and executives of private companies must act in the interests of their shareholders and, typically, shareholders want companies to maximise profits. When it comes to maximising profits in this country, much of the profit is repatriated overseas, given the penetration of overseas companies in the electricity market. We know energy companies have been very successful at making profits.

While the company executives act for their shareholders, we must act in the interests of our constituencies, the households and businesses we represent. Accordingly, we must provide the Australian Energy Regulator with the powers that that agency has requested to extract information on all of the trades in the wholesale market and thereby ensure consumers are getting a fair deal and that the market is competitive.

The powers proposed in this bill will let the AER look beyond the publicly available trade information and examine the private over-the-counter (OTC) hedging and other arrangements which ultimately consumers pay for. Encouragingly, there are positive signs and trends of the costs falling in the public markets, and it is probable that those trends are occurring in the OTC markets. Whether we look in the rearview mirror or towards the future, prices are falling in the wholesale markets.

The wholesale energy markets were viciously impacted by a confluence of events in 2022. The biggest driver for the sudden upward surge in prices was the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia. This caused a global shock to gas prices, which in turn affected coal and electricity prices. It is often interesting to reflect on the denial that goes on when it comes to what happened with those in the Coalition at the federal level and indeed the opposition at this level, denying somehow the invasion of Ukraine and the disruption to gas markets. This is not the reason. Of course, the reason was, just by coincidence, that there was a federal Labor government elected, and that is absolute nonsense. In fact, if it was not for the intervention of the federal Labor government when it came to these massive price increases we would have been in a far worse situation.

These—largely multinational—fossil fuel companies were more than happy to gain windfall profits at the expense of consumers and, indeed, at the expense of the manufacturing industries that we still have here in Australia. It was the intervention of the federal Labor government that put a cap

on black coal prices and gas prices, and the federal Coalition squealed about that. They would rather have had companies making windfall profits at the expense of consumers and businesses in Australia. Fortunately, we had a federal Labor government that was willing to intervene.

The biggest driver for the sudden upsurge in prices was, as I said, the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia. This caused a global shock to gas, which in turn affected coal and electricity prices. Australia has been left vulnerable to these shocks for a decade due to a decade in the doldrums while the Liberal-National Coalition held government in Canberra and did nothing. It sat on its hands for a decade. It was a complete failure when it came to energy policy. In all those 10 years, there was no coherent energy policy, and they have not learned the lesson from that.

With the whole nuclear gambit that is going on at the moment—and I talk about this as someone with the largest uranium mine in the country in my electorate—I do not have a reflexive approach to nuclear in terms of being good or bad, but what I do have is the ability to call out the absolute nonsense, the time that it would take and the enormous cost overruns that we see around the world, especially in the Western world, when it comes to nuclear. It is not just the massive increase in cost for these plants but the time it takes to deliver these plants.

Indeed, when you talk about small modular reactors, there is not a single one to be found commercially operating anywhere in the Western world. Some of the high profile proponents, companies that were proponents in the United States, have now gone to the wall. So we need to get on with the transition, and if we are going to get on with the transition, it is about renewables and firming renewables with the technologies that we already have here in Australia.

At the same time as these pressures were going on as a result of global conditions, coal-fired power stations interstate were hit by floods in coalmines and the increasing failures of ageing generator machinery. This was compounded in South Australia by complacency from the Marshall government, which expected that a transmission link to New South Wales would reduce prices. The unfortunate reality is that New South Wales wholesale electricity prices have been higher than they are in South Australia over the last quarter and some other quarters.

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has identified a growing price divide between expensive wholesale power in the black coal states of New South Wales and Queensland, and lower prices in the southern states in the National Electricity Market. In January, AEMO published its report for the December quarter of 2023. AEMO said:

Wholesale spot prices across the NEM averaged \$48 per megawatt hour (MWh), a 48% reduction from \$93/MWh over Q4 last year. While all regions experienced significant price reductions, there was clear separation between the regions, with prices in Queensland (\$68/MWh) and New South Wales (\$66/MWh) double those in South Australia (\$33/MWh) and Victoria (\$26/MWh).

The Liberal solution was to link to a state with prices averaging double the prices here in South Australia. I will acknowledge that wholesale prices over quarters do fluctuate and there is a whole range of reasons for that. There is a whole range of variables at work. But the long-term trend in South Australia, with a shift to renewables, will ultimately deliver cheaper electricity in South Australia compared to those states with a greater dependence on black coal and, to a degree, gas. I acknowledge that gas will play a role in South Australia for some time to come.

Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see the AEMO report recording that across the board there has been a near halving in the wholesale price between quarter 4 of 2022 and quarter 4 of 2023. The AEMO paper was followed just days later by a quarterly report from the Australian Energy Regulator which showed the same trend.

The Australian Energy Regulator uses a slightly different methodology, taking a volume-weighted average and looking at a rolling annual as well as quarterly changes. The Australian Energy Regulator reported average annual wholesale prices fell between 44 per cent and 64 per cent, depending on the state.

Clearly, prices are falling and these costs must be passed through to consumers, just as retailers were quick to pass through price increases from the energy shocks of 2022. We do notice that. We do notice in the energy field how quick the companies are to put on the increases and how

slow they are to give us the reductions. We get that at the bowser all the time when it comes to petrol and diesel. It is not good enough.

The AEMO and the energy regulator reports are a look in the rear mirror, a look at the quarters and the years of the past. If we turn to the years ahead, the best publicly available information comes from the energy futures traded on the Australian Securities Exchange. There, too, the signs are encouraging. The 2022 price crisis effect was clear on the futures market. Back at the end of June 2022, the price of average base futures contracts in the National Electricity Market on the exchange for the following four years stood at \$144 per megawatt hour. This was a near threefold increase from June 2021, when the average was \$52 a megawatt hour.

Since the 2022 shock, prices have been easing. In June 2023, they were down to \$109 a megawatt hour, and in December 2023 down to \$93 a megawatt hour. The latest average base futures are down further, standing at \$85 a megawatt hour as at the first week in February for contracts through to the December quarter of 2027.

It is one of those things. When you try to explain to people who have no awareness about the electricity market, what they look at is what they are paying at the end of the day. It is just the complexity of this market when it comes to wholesale pricing. In the days of ETSA, there was not that complexity. It was all very straightforward, and straightforward in a way that was to the benefit of the state and the benefit of consumers and, indeed, to the benefit of the public purse, with transfers of money to the state from ETSA.

Of course, wholesale prices—that is, what retailers pay to buy the energy which they then sell to households and businesses—only make up part of the cost stack of the final retail price. The retail price includes network costs of poles, wires and transmission; a small component for environmental levies; the retailer's costs of doing business; and the retailer's profit margin.

Indeed, when it comes to transmission assets and distribution assets, they are all natural monopolies. The logic of privatising natural monopolies is absolutely beyond me, but there we have it. People have said that Playford must be looking down and not be overly happy. Part of that history of Playford acting in the public interest was that he was enabled to do so by the Chifley Labor government that provided the financial wherewithal to nationalise the electricity assets in this state.

Wholesale prices are a significant part, and they are the component which drove the extraordinary increases in prices which have hit consumers. The most recent report in the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's ongoing inquiry into electricity prices summarised the cost stack. The ACCC's report published in December broke down average annual bills paid by a residential consumer in the National Electricity Market. The ACCC reported an increase of \$100 a year to \$1,494 in 2022-23 compared with the year before. Of that \$100 increase, \$99 was caused by an increase in wholesale costs.

Under normal circumstances, it is a fraction, but in this case, when it came to the cost increases, it was incredibly significant. One of the Australian Energy Regulator's most important rules is setting the annual default market offer, which acts as a ceiling for the basic standing offers from retailers and acts as the reference point for market offers from retailers to customers who are shopping around for the best deal. I would encourage people to shop around, even though it can be somewhat complex.

In setting the default market offer for this financial year, 2023-24, the Australian Energy Regulator said it needed to allow for higher wholesale costs. The Australian Energy Regulator uses fully accounted wholesale prices, including the effects of hedging contracts taken out by prudent retailers, not just the spot market prices.

For South Australia in 2023-24, the Australian Energy Regulator allowed retailers to charge for a 68 per cent increase in wholesale costs for customers on flat rate tariffs and a 51 per cent increase for customers with a controlled load arrangement, for example, an off-peak hot water or pool pump system. In South Australia, network costs were stable, although they were up by as much as 10.5 per cent in other regions.

The Australian Energy Regulator said environmental costs were falling in all jurisdictions. Clearly, wholesale costs were the driver for the increases in retail prices of 20 per cent to 25 per cent

in the default market offers set by the Australian Energy Regulator. Now that wholesale prices and future contracts are coming down, that needs to be handed on to consumers. I commend the bill.

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (16:37):** I rise today also to support the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Wholesale Market Monitoring) Bill 2023. This bill represents a critical step forward in enhancing the capabilities and responsibilities of the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and equips it with the tools necessary to ensure a competitive and transparent energy market.

As it stands, the AER is responsible for ensuring consumers have access to reliable and secure energy and that they pay no more than is necessary for energy delivered to their business or their household. It sets the annual default market offer for electricity, which is the price cap for consumers on basic contracts and serves as a reference point for all other contracts for households and small businesses. Additionally, the AER determines the maximum revenue that monopoly network businesses can earn as well as monitoring the markets and performance and enforcing compliance with energy legislation.

One of the biggest issues we are currently facing is the efficacy of the AER's oversight is dependent upon its ability to accurately estimate what retailers are truly paying to procure energy. Currently, much of that trading, especially in the electricity market, occurs through bespoke contracts that are private and not accessible to the public.

The current system requires the AER to rely on publicly accessible information, making it very difficult to accurately estimate what retailers are actually paying to buy the energy and what they should then be charging households and small businesses. This, in turn, also affects the AER setting the default market offer and its role in monitoring and promoting effective competition in the market. That is why we have this bill before us, to amend these issues and provide clarity and transparency in the energy market.

At its core, this bill aims to allow the AER to access information on electricity contract markets and requires the AER to monitor and report on competition in the wholesale gas markets. It does this firstly by requiring the AER to produce regular reports on market monitoring, at least every two years. Moreover, the bill mirrors the AER's function for the electricity markets in the National Gas Law. This will enable monitoring and reporting on the competitive functioning of the wholesale gas market and will improve the competition and efficiency within the market.

This bill equips the AER with new information-gathering powers, including Market Monitoring Information Orders and Market Monitoring Information Notices to gather information from individual businesses. In addition to empowering the AER with enhanced monitoring capabilities, the bill introduces transparency and accountability measures to ensure appropriate and transparent performance of market-monitoring functions.

Crucially, the bill mandates a review of the reforms after four years and six months to assess their effectiveness. This demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and ensures that the regulatory framework remains responsive to the evolving needs of businesses and consumers alike.

Lastly, the bill grants the South Australian minister the power to make rules for consultation requirements in developing guidelines and Market Monitoring Information Orders, with potential amendments allowed by the Australian Energy Market Commission.

In my capacity as Minister for Small and Family Business, I have witnessed firsthand the substantial impact of inflation and the increased cost of doing business on small businesses throughout South Australia. These challenges have placed a strain on businesses, underscoring the pressing need for assistance. This proposed legislation offers a chance to alleviate the burdens faced by small businesses and stimulate their growth. By specifically addressing the transparency and affordability of the energy market, we can deliver tangible relief to these essential contributors to our economy.

I was pleased to hear the announcement by the energy minister that electricity prices for both households and small businesses are set to decrease come July. Small businesses are poised

to benefit from an 8.2 per cent reduction, amounting to on average \$481, with households set to see a 2½ per cent reduction of an average of \$57. Whilst we are now seeing a decrease in wholesale electricity costs in South Australia, which can largely be attributed to our expansion in renewable energy sources, it is imperative that these reductions in wholesale costs are passed on to South Australian households and businesses. This, along with the reforms outlined in this bill, marks a positive stride towards addressing this and ensuring that energy prices continue trending in the right direction.

Of course, this is not the only initiative by the Labor government in the energy space to help reduce costs on households and small businesses. The Energy Price Relief Rebates, which were rolled out in July last year, were another vital initiative aimed at alleviating cost-of-living pressures for more than five million households and one million small businesses right across Australia. In response to escalating energy costs, the state government allocated \$127 million for the National Energy Bill Relief Plan in the June state budget last year. This was matched dollar for dollar by the commonwealth, totalling \$254 million for the rebate scheme.

The plan aims to provide tangible benefits to South Australian households and small businesses, offering energy bill reductions of up to \$500 for eligible households and rebates of up to \$650 for eligible small businesses. These reductions were directly applied to recipients' energy bills during the 2023-24 billing year, offering immediate relief to those struggling with rising utility expenses.

Furthermore, the state government agreed to extend the \$650 energy bill reduction to thousands of additional businesses on embedded networks, such as retailers and shopping centres. Businesses on embedded networks risked missing out solely because they did not receive their bill directly from an energy retailer. Of course, our government listened and, together with the Treasurer, we made the changes necessary to extend that support to small businesses on embedded networks.

For small businesses in South Australia, the energy bill reductions provided a much-needed reprieve, enabling them to redirect funds towards essential business operations. I have heard personally from many small businesses throughout my time as minister, and we have all seen stories in the media of the tough times that some of them are facing. We have seen some small businesses who have voiced their concerns about rising costs through the media and the pressures they face to keep their businesses afloat, and that is why our government is implementing these measures to help.

We know that small businesses play an incredibly vital role in our economy. They contribute \$49 billion to our state's economy and employ nearly 40 per cent of our workforce. On top of the energy cost relief that we are providing and the measures outlined in this bill, we have also allocated additional funding and support through the Small Business Strategy. The strategy comes with a \$14.25 million investment over four years and reflects a commitment to provide practical measures to help our small businesses.

The strategy comprises six core themes aimed at bolstering small business capabilities and fostering resilience. The themes emphasise strengthening business capability and enhancing skills and workforce, both of which are particularly crucial for small businesses facing significant pressures. Additionally, navigating the digital landscape and mitigating cyber risks, fostering sustainability, embracing diversity and facilitating access to government services are amongst the key themes. Under these themes, 20 initiatives have already been identified for implementation by 2026.

Notably, the Women in Business Program and the Cyber Uplift Step Program have garnered substantial interest. A significant allocation of \$1.7 million has also been dedicated to the fundamentals program, aimed at enhancing essential business skills, such as cashflow management, financial management and marketing skills, which are vital for small business success. Efforts also extend to addressing mental health and wellbeing for business owners and, importantly, the strategy remains dynamic and responsive to evolving business needs. This will ensure we have ongoing support for South Australia's small business community, with a commitment to adaptability and relevance through to 2030, the end of the strategy period.

I understand that South Australia is a small business state. Along with our government, I am working very hard to make life better for small businesses, and this bill is a step in that right direction.

It is important legislation aimed at enhancing the AER's capacity to oversee a competitive and transparent energy market. By addressing the challenges of estimating true energy procurement costs and promoting transparency, this bill ensures that consumers are protected from excessive energy prices and can help put money back in the pockets of small businesses.

Furthermore, the bill complements existing initiatives, like energy price relief rebates, to alleviate financial strains on households and small businesses. This bill signifies a substantial move towards fostering a resilient, supportive environment for small businesses and our households and ensuring a brighter future for all. With that, I commend the bill to the house.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (16:46):** I thank all members who have given a contribution today on this important piece of legislation. As I said in my second reading explanation, nothing is more important than transparency. Giving the AER the tools that it needs to monitor the market, especially the wholesale market, and report its findings is an important function for the AER to have. I thank the opposition for their support, and I thank them for a speedy passage through the house.

Bill read a second time.

*Third Reading*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (16:47):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**DISABILITY INCLUSION (REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 14 September 2023.)

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (16:48):** I rise today to contribute on a very important issue: the Disability Inclusion (Review Recommendations) Amendment Bill. Since being elected to this place, I, like others in this chamber, have engaged with many in our community who have varying levels of disabilities and abilities. From campaigning for the seat and later becoming a member, we are all given insight into the challenges that face many South Australians.

A lot of the issues we hear are challenging, and what is often not talked about is the emotional toll that people living life with disabilities go through. We cannot forget the fact that families are often primary carers and go through so much as well. I think many of us would say that, in terms of individual issues, matters relating directly or indirectly to disabilities would be a significant number of the people who come through the doors of our electorate offices.

When I was first elected as the member for Ramsay, the National Disability Insurance Scheme was not even legislated in federal parliament, so we have definitely come a long way in respect to the varying issues that impact South Australians with disabilities. What has been clear since the legislating of the NDIS is the importance of making our society a more inclusive one. It gave us a lot of perspective that more needed to be done across the board: federal, state, local and generally in the community. Particularly, we have had a lot of focus on business and employment and a recognition that people with disabilities have challenges in gaining and sustaining employment.

That is why in 2018 this parliament passed the Disability Inclusion Bill. It was a major step forward in dealing with the challenges of promoting human rights and improving inclusion in the community. This bill and subsequent act sought to clarify South Australia's role in supporting people with disability, with a focus on rights and inclusion in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the National Disability Strategy.

With respect to my role as Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the act has a number of principles that are observed in the operation and enforcement of the act, which include:

- (g) people with disability have the right to access information in a way that is appropriate for their disability and cultural background, to enable them to make informed choices;
- (h) people with disability have the right to respect for their cultural or linguistic diversity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious beliefs;

These principles in the act are vital because they highlight that often those from a multicultural background do not have the linguistic ability or the cultural connectivity that would allow them to be included, even if they did not have a disability.

Going back to the essence of the act, it promotes the recognition of essential human rights in South Australia in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and interacts with Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031. This is very much a good thing. Many people may be born with a disability; other disabilities are acquired through injury, accident or disease. We know that each and every one of us may need this accessibility. We are often familiar with increased mobility issues as we get older. We may face hearing and eyesight challenges. This is why these conversations are important: how we include people, how we recognise that barriers we might not even think about prevent people from involving themselves in all aspects of life.

Part of the act was the State Disability Inclusion Plan, also known as Inclusive South Australia. In addition to the overarching statewide plan, the act requires almost 100 state authorities, including government agencies and all 68 local councils, to develop their own disability access and inclusion plans, which are referred to as DAIPs. This is an important step in making sure that the state government, as a model citizen, looks to make sure our communities are included and, above all, has the ability to respond to the ever-changing needs of the community.

The benefits of Inclusive SA and the disability access and inclusion plans have seen requirements that agencies consult with the community, critically analyse their services and processes and commit to actions that improve responses to people with disability. But in this area, there is a continued need to make sure things are working well and any other considerations that need to be contemplated. Particularly in this area, there is a need for review, because as our society adapts to widespread changes, we need to make sure that the act is current and that we remain an inclusive society.

It was really interesting, in my other portfolio of tourism, that just last week the Fringe Festival won the Australian Tourism Award for accessibility to a major event. How we define accessibility has changed over time. Traditionally, it might be about mobility issues or wheelchair access, but it is also about making sure that there are ticket prices at lots of different levels as well, so that it is accessible for people on lower incomes or fixed incomes to attend. We think about the autism charter that has been tabled this week, about the awareness of space and time out and quiet rooms to give people who want to enjoy different experiences the opportunity to do so and be supported at the same time.

We have some really great leadership in this area, and to be awarded the gold medal just last weekend was fantastic, but we must keep asking ourselves: what does inclusion mean; what does accessibility mean? That is why, when we do these reforms and look at these reviews, we should ask ourselves these questions as we go on.

Before the fourth anniversary of the act's commencement, a review was undertaken by Richard Dennis AM PSM, which included consultation with the community. The report that came out of this review proposed some amendments. As I understand it, 30 of the 50 recommendations were not for legislative change and so are outside the scope of the bill. A number of them have already been actioned and completed. Since the Dennis review, the minister and the department worked with parliamentary counsel to deal with 14 of the 20 legislative recommendations leading to this Disability Inclusion (Review Recommendations) Amendment Bill.

The development of the bill also brought about further consultation. What was important in coming out of the consultation was that the draft bill had no significant changes that were required. This is a testament to the work done in the report, and the department have made sure to reflect the



needs of those whom this impacts the most. As the minister discussed in the house, these are the key tenets of this bill:

- to enact provisions currently appearing in the Disability Inclusion Regulations 2019 as provisions in the act;
- to include a definition of 'barrier' in the act, given the significance of the concept of barriers, the definition of disability and the wider issue of achieving greater inclusion.
- to include new paragraphs within the act to provide expressly that people with disability, regardless of age, have a right to be safe and to feel safe through the provision of appropriate safeguards, information, services and support;
- to amend sections within the act and to enhance clarity and/or definitions as they relate to people with significant intellectual disability who have high levels of vulnerability due to their disability;
- to amend sections within the act relating to the reporting requirements and time frames for the state plan and state authority Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, as well as the specific functions of the chief executive of the Department of Human Services; and
- to require consultation with people with lived experience and to authorise the formation of groups to facilitate consultation.

I would like to take the opportunity to talk about a couple of these changes. I believe the minister, in her second reading speech, touched on barriers, detailing why this definition was included. As I mentioned, there are many barriers that impact the community. This is not just important to the local community but also to those in multicultural communities, because there are barriers that need to be considered. Acknowledging these barriers by way of defining them will ultimately mean that the act will be more inclusive.

Barriers that I have seen, and continue to see, in the multicultural communities include language and cultural understanding. Not having information provided in a way that is understood because of language and because of cultural differences is a known barrier to the multicultural community, and this can be further advanced if you have a disability.

For example, in the multicultural space, we are looking into the underutilisation of skilled migrants. It is an election commitment to conduct a report into this. I am keen to see the results of the report, because we know that people in diverse communities are facing barriers in getting employment in their field or being underutilised in their fields. When you have additional barriers as well, this could increase that challenge.

I do support the defining of the word 'barrier' in the act. Another key proposed area of amendments relates to the right to participate in the design and delivery of inclusive policies and programs. This also fits with what I have been talking about with respect to barriers with multicultural communities. Specifically, it has been proposed additional paragraphs be included under section 9(1) as follows:

- (p) people with disability, and their families and representatives as appropriate, have a right to participate in the design and delivery of inclusive policies and programs;
- (q) insofar as people with disability may not be able to find out about their rights, or may not be able to understand their rights, because of their disability, State and local government should take reasonable steps to assist them to learn about their rights and to develop ways in which they can, or their families or representatives can, report violations of those rights.

This seems a reasonable move and should be fully endorsed. When reflecting on the essence of this amendment and the act, as I said, let's talk again about accessible tourism.

As minister, I am constantly wanting to do better in terms of inclusiveness. I want to take this opportunity to invite those interested to visit to [southaustralia.com](http://southaustralia.com) website, where you can look at options for planning a trip around South Australia that caters for specific needs. When entering the website, if you click on the 'Plan a trip' bar and it will expand a list of options to click. From there you can click on 'Accessibility'. The [southaustralia.com](http://southaustralia.com) accessibility page has collated some of

the best places to see or stay if you have accessibility needs. Some of the information provided has been collated by accessibility experts, who have written very informative blog posts of what to see and what to do.

The website provides attractions to visit, potential accommodation that caters for accessibility needs as well as transport options. It is an excellent tool to assist people in planning their visits, whether you are a local, interstate or international visitor.

There are also companies that provide holiday planning assistance, including Holiday Explorers and Leisure Options. Leisure Options offer a dedicated holiday planner with a list of upcoming planned group tours available and the ability to search for tours with filters such as extra assistance mobility, extra assistance personal care, independent and physical disability. Holiday Explorers has a focus on assisting people with intellectual disabilities and offers seniors and teams tours.

Additional assistance can be found when planning your trip to South Australia through downloading the Pavely app. The Pavely app is a known tool in the community, which provides a look at South Australian venues and the accessibility features of the venues. For example, are there stairs or lifts? Are the entrance doors automatic or sliding? What is the width and length of the doors? What material is it made of? What are the amenities that are available? Users of the app can provide ratings in terms of their overall experience, staff attitude and mindset and whether the information provided through the app was informative and accurate. Obviously, like all things, we need to continue to look into this space, because this can also present the state with an incredible opportunity.

In December last year, Austrade published an analysis into the accessible tourism opportunity. Data from Tourism Research Australia's national visitor survey showed that in 2021, travel groups, including people with a disability or a long-term health condition, in Australia accounted for: \$13.5 billion (17 per cent of total) of total domestic day and overnight trip spend; and one million domestic trips (19 per cent of total). We cannot ignore the numbers and nor should we.

We need to make sure our state is accessible to our community, but it should also be open to those who want to travel to South Australia—something that more and more people want to do. We want to make sure they are not forgotten. When reflecting on this amendment and the act more broadly, this is an area that needs to be continually improved because we can always make improvements. We know that changes in technology offer us great options.

When I look around the chamber today, as some of us increase in age, we know we sometimes have to have larger handwriting or larger screens and texts. It is always a bit of a shock when that happens. Sometimes it is harder to hear, or, if you are a bit like me and you have a bit of a bung hip, all of a sudden things that you could do so easily become more complicated, and you make decisions around those limitations. It catches us sometimes, quite unsurprisingly. Technology also offers many solutions, and we need to make sure that people know that this is available and accessible.

The changes in this amendment have been professionally reviewed and well-consulted and, I believe, will make a significant impact in terms of disability inclusiveness in the state. I look forward to broader reviews, whether federal or state, that will help shift the needle for those with a disability. There has been a lot of movement made with respect to the disability sector. Can I recognise, Deputy Speaker, your role as the former minister for disability. In fact, I recall the day we signed the agreement for the NDIS with the federal government. We were one of the first states to have a particular cohort of people—I think children—to transfer over to the federal system. It was a big decision; there was some nervousness.

We know the costs are substantial. What we often see, particularly in South Australia, is the opportunity for us to get in earlier with intake assessments, for people to be identified and assessed earlier, and then provide the kind of therapeutic support that they require to maximise their opportunities in life. Whether it is language support, hearing or the ability to control one's emotions and anger, these are great opportunities, particularly for children. South Australia has that opportunity in that area to transfer that to children first.

Ultimately, what we want to see is inclusiveness at the heart of how we live in Australia. To some extent, these are some of the great reviews that federal Labor has brought in over time, whether it be the National Disability Insurance Scheme or, of course, My Aged Care. We know that, in terms of ageing in place, ageing at home, many people would like to spend their remaining years in the comfort of their own home, but that will only happen if they get the support they need.

When I look back at major reforms that have happened—Medicare, superannuation—they are key reforms that federal Labor have put forward. Just last week, of course, there was the expansion of paid parental leave. We are still not equal to Canada or the UK, but we are getting there. These are fundamental reforms. Sometimes they are challenging. Sometimes they take time to implement and transition. It is when we do these reviews and look at amendments in the recommendations that it shows us what progression we have made. For me, enabling people to live their best life and be supported to have their best life is the most important thing that we can do.

When we look back at these massive changes, with national disability and particularly My Aged Care, other nations will talk about us and they will look to what Australia has done. They will look to the leadership that we took as a nation to support people when they needed the help the most: when they were young, to see their potential to develop; and as we age, to make sure that we care for people adequately at the right time and when they need it. I support the bill.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (17:09):** I am pleased to support the Disability Inclusion (Review Recommendations) Amendment Bill, although in doing so I note that the opposition has kept open the possibility that we may be open to supporting amendments in the Legislative Council, depending on further consultation, but, certainly, we are happy to support this bill.

The minister's speech encourages me to reflect on a couple of things. I sometimes observe that there are, in many ways, few people in the course of human history as fortunate to be living in this time and in this place as a South Australian right now. In any number of places around the world at any other place in time—despite the complexities of modern life, despite the difficulties of mental health and anxiety challenges that seem more prominent in this day and age than they have in the past, despite the trauma experienced by many people who come to South Australia from places in the world with great difficulty, and despite the particular plight of certain segments of our community—by and large, at any other point in time in history and at any other place in the world, similar experiences for most people would be experienced, and similar difficulties would also be experienced. I feel fortunate to be in South Australia.

At this time, it is a particular area of consideration for people living with a disability in our community. A child born today in South Australia compared to at another time or in another place—not in every circumstance, but in many cases—will have a much better chance of living a fulfilled life, living their best life and fulfilling their potential in every way. That is a good thing, and it has not been without the efforts of a large number of people along the way seeking at every point to have their voices heard, whether as a person with a disability or with a family member with a disability, or people who seek to support people with a disability or have sought to support people with a disability in terms of their rights and expectations in society.

The opportunity for inclusion to be not just a goal but an expectation in life was behind the work done by the Hon. Michelle Lensink as minister on behalf of the Liberal Party as government, on behalf of the whole parliament which supported the bill and on behalf of so many advocates and people within South Australia who had endeavoured to have the original bill passed in 2018. That expectation of inclusion carries with it responsibilities of government, of local government and of many people in our community. That act also expected that there would be a review; a review that was conducted by Richard Dennis, as we have heard, in 2022 and was tabled in September 2022.

Reflecting back slightly to when I was elected 14 years ago today—along with the member for Chaffey, the Hon. Jing Lee, the member for Elizabeth, the Hon. Tammy Franks and if there is another, then I forget—when I first became the member for Morialta, government was still working in many ways to improve our expectations, to improve our anticipation and to improve the inclusion that we expected.

I had the great opportunity to be the shadow minister for disability services, appointed by former Leader of the Opposition Isobel Redmond. Along with families and communities and housing and youth, she asked me to be the shadow minister for disability, and it was a privilege to be able to be part of that portfolio. At first, I was shadowing the Hon. Ian Hunter, from memory, and secondly shadowing yourself, sir, as a minister. I recognise the work you did in disability law reform, particularly after my time as the shadow, when I think Duncan McFetridge was the shadow minister. I am sure that he provided the support that was necessary to ensure that work proceeded in a sensible fashion.

I reflect on this briefly to express my gratitude to all of those people who gave me education and advice as a new shadow minister, as I was then, to inform me in this portfolio of how I could best support South Australians with a disability and, indeed, all members of our community to have the best support they could from the government. The topic of the NDIS had then been the subject of a Productivity Commission review, but it was very early in those discussions. Indeed, as I recall from my discussions with Stephen Wade, who was a former disability shadow, it had been an iterative process. Many people worked towards what we expect for people with a disability in their interactions with government.

I thank all of those people, not all of whom I would agree with on every aspect of policy, not all of whom would agree with us on every aspect of policy, but who all gave generously of their time, people like Rick Neagle, David Holst, Sam Paior, Judy Curran, Dell Stagg, Simon Schrapel, Robbi Williams, and Phil Menz from the Physical Disability Council. There were others as well. That is just off the top of my head, the people who immediately occurred to me, who gave me hours of their time in helping provide useful advice. That has informed my perspective.

The work that was undertaken by the Hon. Kelly Vincent, former member of the Legislative Council, also bears regard. Kelly was also elected on this day 14 years ago in that election. At 21, she was the youngest person ever elected to this parliament and the impact that she had as a member of the Legislative Council was significant. I pay tribute to her and those who supported her in her election.

Obviously, the circumstances of her election were tragic, as she filled a role that would have otherwise gone to their first candidate, who passed away during the campaign, but Kelly's election was significant and she worked very hard to be a voice and a legislator of power and integrity. I think that the work she did over the course of her eight years in the parliament certainly saw fruit in a number of legislative reforms during her time and post her time as well.

At the time that this legislation was being drafted initially in 2018, the earlier iteration of it, it is worth noting that Kelly was working in the education department as a senior adviser in our disability support area. It is with that in mind that I want to turn my attention more directly to the bill at hand. I will come back to education; it is the point of segue, I guess, I was just making.

The bill is looking to make changes in response to the Dennis review, the review that was required by the act. It made 51 recommendations, including adding paragraphs to expressly state that people with disability regardless of age have a right to be safe and to feel safe through the provision of appropriate safeguards, information, services and support, including the definition of 'barrier' in the context of access and inclusion for people living with a disability; clarifying the principles of the act as they relate to people with significant intellectual disability or high levels of vulnerability due to disability; enacting provisions currently appearing in regulations as provisions in the act; and adjusting reporting requirements and time frames for Inclusive SA and state authority disability access and inclusion plans.

As you can gather from the tenor of the list I have just read, some of these are more significant reforms and some of them are modest but necessarily potentially worthy. Specifically, the bill will enact provisions currently appearing in the regulations as provisions in the act in terms of what the government has actually chosen to proceed with.

Fourteen of the 20 legislative recommendations include the definition of 'barrier' in the act. They include new paragraphs within the act to provide expressly that people with disability regardless of age have a right to be safe and so forth. They amend sections within the act to enhance clarity or definition of principles. They amend sections within the act relating to reporting requirements and

time frames. They require consultation with people with lived experience and authorise the formation of groups to facilitate consultation.

I am not criticising the bill when I say that there is more to do. There are recommendations that have not been addressed in the bill, and it is going to be critical for the government to be clear about whether there are going to be further legislative changes proposed or whether they do not propose to go down that path. It is going to be important for the government, in my view, to respond to the non-legislative recommendations.

As Minister Cook has stated, 30 recommendations are not legislative. Some of those are very important and I believe that some of them, potentially, could be included within the context of the legislation. It would certainly not be novel for the parliament, should it choose to do so through an amendment to this bill or consideration in a further bill, to enhance what we do for people with a disability in South Australia, and indeed working with people with a disability in South Australia, that we would consider those. I note Purple Orange, for example, has already suggested amendments. I am sure that there will be further discussion in the Legislative Council in terms of specifics.

I want to turn my attention to a particular recommendation, recommendation 46. It is not an unreasonably long passage from the report, and I think it will set the scene perfectly for a commentary I would make about education. Page 51 of the report states:

An important aspect of disability inclusion is highlighted by the Commissioner for Children and Young People's report, being that children and young people living with disability want to blend in and engage with other children and young people their age. The report continues:

When young people with disability are placed in situations where their differences are highlighted over their shared experiences or common interests, their capacity to blend with kids their own age becomes problematic.

This is particularly relevant when it comes to issues associated with children and school, and during the course of the review it was noted that an inclusive education (with any necessary and appropriate support for the child) not only benefits the child, but also allows other children at the same school to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing children living with disability.

It is clear that it is essential that children living with disability must be given the best opportunity to receive the best education so that they can maximise their potential and make the most of life as they advance into adulthood (so, for example, to have the best chance to apply for, and compete for, a job like any other person). In connection with this, other children around the child living with disability may be given more of a chance to develop into adults who respect people living disability, and who have a much better understanding of social inclusion. The more that this occurs, the more community attitudes in relation to disability inclusion can change over time.

As has been said, social inclusion is more than physical presence—it's also a sense of feeling that you belong, are connected and are surrounded by a range of relationships. An important part of the experience for children at school is therefore to focus not only on their education, which is of critical importance, but also on their well-being and the social aspects of school.

The reviewer appreciated the opportunity to discuss the work being undertaken by the Education Department to implement its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, and various other initiatives, procedures and policies that the Education Department has in place to improve the learning and development outcomes for students living with disability in South Australia. This work is also consistent with Priority 10 in the State Disability Inclusion Plan.

A significant factor in recent times has been the work of the Royal Commission in reviewing the experience of children and young people with disability in different education settings.

It is obviously not for this review to replicate or pre-empt the work of the Royal Commission, or to provide advice in relation to specialist areas associated with the education of children and young people living with disability. However, there is no doubt that the more that the Education Department can support these children and young people to have an educational experience that occurs within the mainstream of education, the better.

As previously mentioned, children constitute a specific priority group under section 9 of the Act, and this report includes recommendations that are intended to improve the focus on these groups, including in relation to addressing the principles and risks identified, in the case of children, under section 9(3) of the Act. In view of the interest in the extent to which mainstream activities and support has generated interest as part of the review, it would be an excellent outcome if the Education Department could provide a specific report on the work of the department to support and enable children living with disability to successfully participate in mainstream learning and social experiences and outcomes while at school.

The recommendation goes on to say, and this is also listed as recommendation 46 of the 51:

The Chief Executive—

and I assume the Chief Executive for the Department of Human Services, but it could be read as cabinet, for all that it would make a difference; I think the point is the action—

should request the Education Department to include specific information in its annual report on the operation of its disability access and inclusion plan for the 2022/2023 financial year on the extent to which children living with disability are able to participate in mainstream learning and social experiences at school. It is requested that this information include: (a) an outline about how the success of initiatives, procedures and programs designed to assist children living with disability is measured, especially in relation to learning outcomes and wellbeing; and (b) recent results against those measures.

It may well be that the reviewer was talking about the education chief executive. I note the education chief executive is actually responsible for the publication, through the minister, of that report, so in any case it is more than possibly within his power—I say 'his' because it is Martin Westwell at the moment.

The recommendation is a good one. It may or may not require legislative reform to do it; it may be that this is something that the government can undertake without it needing to be included in the act. I certainly hope that it does so, because I think that one of the key parts of this is not just in terms of outlining a priority of the success of reforms to support students with disability, but their effectiveness: helping our young people to live full lives. That is not just for supporting children and students with disability, but for all children. We want to ensure their education system is best equipped to enable them to reach full lives, their best potential, get the most out of their potential pathway towards a job, a career or whatever it is they wish to do in life.

I am not exaggerating when I say the Department for Education is responsible for thousands of programs throughout schools, preschools and central office to assist us to do that. The settings for a child with a specific disability or a specific set of circumstances in one town may be an entirely different response from the education department if they are in a suburb in the city or a different suburb in the city, depending on a range of factors: the built environment of the school, how old it is, the programs that exist in that school, the specialisation and the experience of the teachers in that school or preschool, the support staff that are relevant, the proximity to a regional office with appropriate expertise. Indeed, regional offices have vacancies at high levels in some areas and low levels in others.

The point is that there is a vast swathe of programs operating, and when a government implements a new set of programs, particularly in this area, the experience for young people is going to be very different. I note that the government has the Autism Inclusion Teachers program, a day or half-a-day a week, in a range of primary schools around South Australia. Such a recommendation, if implemented, I think would provide very useful advice about the efficacy of those roles and that expenditure. It may well give them a big tick; it may well identify how they could be improved or enhanced. At any rate, I think analysing new policies and new approaches is always worthwhile.

In my experience, during the four years that I was the Minister for Education I particularly pay tribute to a public servant by the name of Ian May, who was the Director of Disability Policy and Programs throughout most of that four years, if not all of it, and who has recently retired from the department. He is an excellent public servant.

The Gonski agreement that I signed with the federal minister, Dan Tehan, in 2019 unlocked automatic extra funding going to the department for students with disability. Until we signed that—until the state Liberal government under Premier Marshall and myself as education minister signed that document—such funding might be anticipated to be applied to a school after the fact, once they applied to head office. But the department would have a series of processes to go through that were much more complex than they are now, now that we can automatically get from Treasury the funding that is required if somebody is eligible under the nationally consistent collection of data and the Gonski funding flows automatically.

That enabled us to reduce the number of students awaiting a placement in a junior primary school, a primary school or a high school at the beginning of the school year—whether they required extra support through assistance in the mainstream classroom or a special class if they needed an extra bit of support or a placement in a special school or a disability unit if they needed that extra level of adjustment to their program. That flowing automatically was very important, and being able to place those young people early was very important.

There is still a discussion to be had in education about the nature of inclusive education, and there are complex, difficult and controversial discussions to be had there. I do not propose to present a solution to any of those discussions right now. However, as the starting point, what we expect, each one of us, for the outcomes for young people through the schooling system—as for people with disability in any circumstance within our society—is that they be able to live full lives, unencumbered and supported as necessary to live their best life. This is a great starting point. I support the bill but acknowledge that there will be further discussion, potentially about amendments and in committee stage, in due course.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

**SUMMARY OFFENCES (NAZI SALUTE AND SYMBOLS PROHIBITION) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

At 17:31 the house adjourned until Thursday 21 March 2024 at 11:00.