

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 18 June 2024

The SPEAKER (Hon. L.W.K. Bignell) took the chair at 11:00.

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

The SPEAKER read prayers.

Bills

APPROPRIATION BILL 2024

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 6 June 2024.)

The SPEAKER: Can I ask the leader if he intends being the lead speaker on this?

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (11:02): Yes, that is my intention, so I get slightly more than 20 minutes.

The SPEAKER: We can kick back and listen to you for hours.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: A lot of people say that, Mr Speaker. It is my privilege to be the opposition's lead speaker today in providing the opposition's budget reply contribution. I want to firstly begin by acknowledging the Treasurer for his contribution to our state. I think it is important to do so and to thank him and his officials and staff for their development of this budget. It is an important role, and while there are many aspects of our state's policy platform in this budget that we may not agree on, equally there are many things that we do agree on. I work collaboratively with the Treasurer on numerous things and thank him for that.

As I did in my contribution to last year's budget, I want to highlight some things that it is critically important that the opposition and the government support one another on. There are a range of things in this budget that we acknowledge, we are grateful to see in the budget, and that are important to build South Australia's future—no more so than support for the AUKUS agreement. This is a nation-building initiative; an initiative so important for our nation's security that it is too significant to fail.

We will work hand in hand where appropriate with the government in the fulfilment of South Australia's contribution to AUKUS, acknowledging the very significant challenges that face our state, that face this government, and that face future governments with regard to the heavy lifting required by South Australia.

But I do think it is important to put on the record that, while we will carefully scrutinise the journey towards South Australia's contribution to AUKUS, we do support with a high degree of bipartisanship that final outcome: that South Australia as a jurisdiction plays an incredibly significant role in our nation's security and, also, will gain very significant economic development opportunities if we can rise to this occasion.

The Premier has rightfully identified significant challenges particularly with regard to skills, and there will be others along the way, but this opposition will work appropriately and hand in hand with the government as we move towards that. The Premier and I have had the opportunity to visit AUKUS-related sites in the United Kingdom, myself over recent days. Each time I have visited, and I believe the Premier shares this view, we have seen the momentous challenge that will be required by this state. This budget begins to respond to those challenges, both with infrastructure contributions

and skills development opportunities. More will be needed in the future. The opposition will highlight those things where appropriate, but it is good to see this budget make the start of that contribution.

Another area of significant bipartisan support that we will offer this government is around the Northern Water initiative, renamed by the government as the State Prosperity Project. This is a significant nation-building project for our state. It was initiated under the previous Liberal government, and we will work with the government as they seek to fulfil the potential that Northern Water has. There are aspects of that initiative that require more scrutiny over time, particularly with regard to hydrogen. But in terms of unleashing the potential of the resources sector in the heart of our state, this is an initiative worth pursuing, and it is good to see this initiative supported in the budget as well.

Other initiatives around business events, skills, housing and interchange upgrades at Mount Barker are just a few of the things that we think are worth highlighting as worthy aspects of the state's budget. It is important that the opposition provides support to these sorts of initiatives. We cannot be an opposition for the sake of opposition, whingeing and carping at every initiative of the government. While often what is projected through the media for justifiable reasons are points of disagreement, it is important to stand here today and highlight that there are many times when governments and oppositions agree. They have conversations about how that agreement can be forged and they deliver a degree of bipartisanship that is future-focused for our state.

It is, however, important for me as Leader of the Opposition to highlight the areas of difference between the opposition and the government when it comes to this budget, and we do believe there are a range of areas where this budget misses the mark. I want to talk about those areas while providing various areas of focus that we would do differently if we occupied the Treasury benches.

The 2024 state budget is Labor's third budget since being elected to office and, in many ways, I would characterise it as a budget from the Weatherill era: a budget which too often treads water, fails to respond to some of the significant challenges of our times and which is unfortunately backed up by media and social media spin. It shines a light, I believe, into a government that has missed some significant opportunities and feeds a fairly narrow base of vested interest while perhaps failing to respond significantly to the needs of some of South Australia's most at-need groups.

One thing that is for certain is that this is a government that believes all it needs to do is throw money at problems, and spend money telling people it is throwing money at problems, rather than taking on some significant reforms. As an opposition we believe that reform opportunities are particularly being missed when it comes to taxation reforms, reforms within our health sector and reforms within the area of energy security in South Australia.

The government, I believe, is reform shy, preferring to keep its head in the sand when it comes to some of those bigger issues that confront the state. The government is happy to take credit for good news but it ignores, distracts or disappears when bad news confronts our state. We know there are significant global headwinds confronting Australia and South Australia at the moment. The Treasurer alluded to those in his budget speech. The good times cannot continue and unfortunately it appears that this budget, through borrowing, attempts to sustain those good times closer towards the 2026 state election while failing to grasp some of those key areas for reform.

When a reporter or commentator makes negative comments about this state we do not tend to hear about it from the government, we do not get a response, but when there is a positive contribution from a commentator or analyst it gets trumpeted loudly from social media and media releases. You only need to take a look at the Premier's social media platforms to see that in full flight.

There are tough times increasingly approaching South Australia and in many ways they are already here. We know that the average South Australian household is some \$20,000 worse off than they were just 18 months ago. That is a combination of higher interest rates, energy bills, groceries, fuels and other essentials that people have no way of avoiding spending their hard-earned money on. It is difficult for people to get a hold of an extra \$20,000 a year. That can mean very significant sacrifices; in some cases it can mean losing businesses or losing their homes

Some of these issues have global contributions that have resulted in that additional expenditure needing to be achieved by the average household. However, some of those challenges

are homegrown and we know that inflation in Australia is increasingly homegrown by significant expenditure at both federal and state levels.

There is a gulf between the Premier's social media mirage and life on the ground in the communities that I come across as I travel around our suburbs and regions. Just take a recent post on the Premier's Facebook page trumpeting, and presumably taking credit for, the comparative economic outlook which ranks South Australia favourably against other jurisdictions. The comments under the Premier's post were telling: 'I find that a little hard to believe, mate', 'Really? Talk to a small business owner. Cost of living is killing all of us', 'Pop-up Pete's fantasy land. I think he's breathing too much hydrogen', 'This bloke's lost touch with the public', 'They're on a completely different planet.'

These statements show the government's tenure when it comes to what everyday South Australians are enduring. Life is hard at the moment and the government would be well advised to dial back the arrogance on the social media platforms and show a little empathy.

It is incredibly important for a political party of any ideological persuasion to be very clear in 2024 about what and who they stand for. The Liberal Party of South Australia must be clear about those things and be up-front with South Australians that if elected we will govern for everyone, and there are particular groups who can expect us to have their backs; there are particular groups of people who can expect us to be their strong voice and advocate within the parliament when leading this state.

It is also important that those groups and the broader community know exactly what the Liberal Party of South Australia stands for and knows what our values are. We will be the party of opportunity, forging pathways where people can be proud of investing a little bit of their money, a bit of their energy and a bit of their skill to get ahead and to create opportunity for themselves and perhaps a little bit of wealth for themselves, for family members and for their community through the creation of economic activity and through the creation of jobs. We must be the party of opportunity.

We must be the party of freedom, the party that acknowledges that people have inherent potential to get ahead and that they do not necessarily need the government to give them a handout at every step of the way. We do not want people to be addicted to government handouts. We want people to stand on their own two feet, and I believe that it is inherent to the human psyche that they want to do that themselves as well.

We value people and their freedom beyond identity politics. We have to avoid the cancer of identity politics, which I believe is paralysing modern democracies across the Western world. It should not matter your gender, your sexuality or your socio-economic status. It should not matter your race, which is why we are so strongly opposed to race-based politics, as characterised by the proposed Voice to federal parliament and, of course, the State Voice, which was initiated here in South Australia, I believe against the wishes of many South Australians. We must avoid identity politics and the victimhood that is injected into identity politics, which potentially keeps people addicted to government support, and instead value the individual, lifting them up and giving them pathways to opportunity and success, pathways to freedom.

We must be the party of home ownership. The dream of home ownership is slipping away from too many Australians under the age of 40, and we must keep that dream alive because we know that when Australians invest in a home, when they buy their home, they invest in a community as well: they invest in a local school, they invest in the local parks, they invest in local sporting clubs, and they invest psychologically, they invest spiritually and they invest financially. Home ownership is an incredible part of the Australian dream, and having your little patch of Australia is an important part of that.

There is nothing wrong with renting. There is absolutely nothing wrong with renting and we need to look for ways to support renters as well, but pathways to home ownership for people from all walks of life is so critically important. That is why we put on the table, a couple of weeks ago, our policies around stamp duty reform. We were pleased to see the government make a decision in this budget to remove the upper threshold for access to stamp duty relief for first-home buyers of newly constructed homes, but we do believe there is need for some relief for first-home owners making that initial decision to buy an established home, because we know that is the vast majority of home

owners. The vast majority of first-home owners start off with a small unit, and that is something we need to provide some support for as well.

That is why we have made the decision to take to the 2026 election—unless it is committed to before that by the government; it does not appear that it will be—provision of stamp duty relief of up to \$10,000 to first-home owners who decide to purchase an existing home within our state. It is so important to acknowledge and to highlight that we are now in fact the only jurisdiction that does not have that relief in place for existing properties. We do need to align to other states. We do need to keep the dream of home ownership alive.

We want to be the party of the family, and that can take many different forms in 2024, many different forms. We believe that the family, in whatever form it takes, is the best place to raise children and is the best place to make decisions for children and for the communities in which those families are located.

In the coming months, we will have a lot more to say about the child protection system. I am working with the member for Heysen, the shadow minister for child protection, on ideas that will build more resilient families and will work to keep families together. Families are important and we must be the party of the family.

We must be the party of less government intervention, less government bureaucracy and, as an extension of that, the party of less taxation. That is why we have put on the table the payroll tax policy, which would see the payroll tax threshold in South Australia rise from \$1.5 million to \$2.1 million and exempt trainees and apprentices from the calculation towards payroll tax thresholds as well.

These are important policies to support small and medium-sized businesses in our state. They are powerful policies that will release many, many businesses in this state that have found themselves unexpectedly paying payroll tax due to wages growth across our nation. It will free them from this payroll tax, enable them to take some of that money home and, importantly, invest some of that into their business to grow in other ways. It is perverse that payroll tax is a handbrake on business growth in this state, on the employment of people in jobs that could transform their lives.

I hear time and time again people who decide to sell components of their business or not grow their business at all because it will push them into the payroll tax thresholds. That means it is a tax on jobs, it is a tax on opportunity and it is a tax that actually hurts vulnerable people who do not have job opportunities perhaps more than business owners themselves.

I said a moment ago that it is so important that any political party governs for all South Australians but is very clear about the people they specifically stand for, the people who we will advocate for, if fortunate enough to form government. In the case of the Liberal Party, we will be the greatest advocates you will find for small and family businesses in this state. We have a heritage of being the party of small business and we must ensure we are continually the party of small business.

That means the party of our tradies, the party of apprentices, people who aspire to create small businesses of the future, the party of start-ups, the party of entrepreneurs. We must be clear about that. We must signal to those people that we are the party for them, we are the party for their families, we are the party for their employees—those are the people who we stand for.

We respect them for their contribution to our state and we acknowledge that they take their work home with them every single night. Small businesses are not nine to five jobs; small businesses are at the dining room table. Small businesses are in the bedroom, they are in the backyard, they are on the school run. Small businesses dominate the lives of small business owners. That can be a good thing in the good times, when a passion is being turned into a source of income but, when things get tough, it can be incredibly difficult. That is why small business needs to be able to rely on a party within this building that will have their backs and be their voice.

We are the party of regional South Australia. We must be clear about this. We must continually advocate for our regions, and we must visit our regions. We must build up knowledge and understanding of our regions in order to represent those regions effectively. There is no such place, really, as regional South Australia. There are many different communities that are not homogenous,

communities which have different challenges and shared challenges. Those shared challenges wrap around the tyranny of distance and access to resources and services, often government services.

However, there are many, many benefits of living in regional South Australia as well. They are beautiful places. They are places with high degrees of community, a sense of belonging, a sense of purpose. Regional South Australia lifts well above its weight, not just from an economic point of view but in terms of contributing to the very fabric and DNA of South Australia. We are the party of regional communities. We are the party of our farmers, the party of our food and fibre producers.

We know that in recent years many of our farmers have had good times and we celebrate that with them, but we know that that is a cyclical process and with challenges around our climate and the variability of our climate there are, no doubt, difficult times on the horizon. My signal to our food and fibre producers across our state is we are there for you.

We are the party of our veterans: people who have served our nation. We must be their voice. Too often, they return from service or from training with significant challenges, challenges obtained in their personal lives as a result of serving their nation. That extends to their families as well. We must be their voice.

We are the party, I believe, of our multicultural communities, the party that will stand up for their faith, their stories, their customs, their traditions and their languages. Multicultural communities, migrants, give so much to South Australia. Almost everyone in our parliament can trace their families back a couple of generations, maybe six or seven but not many more than that. We are a nation of migrants, we are a state of migrants, and it is what makes our state such a great place. We must ensure that they feel comfortable and that what they bring to Australia is supported, celebrated and protected.

Across all those different categories of certain groups that I have highlighted that the Liberal Party stands for, above all we stand for people who want to work hard, want to invest in our communities and want to give back to Australia and South Australia. We want to reward merit, we want to reward the ethic of work and we want to ensure that people who do that feel rewarded and can continue to do so.

That frames what the Liberal Party stands for and some of the groups we will particularly support through our policy agenda. I want to reflect particularly on some areas of focus that we think that the government is not necessarily responding to from a reformist point of view and that this budget did not necessarily support, as it should have.

Our health system is in crisis. There is no doubt about that. It was not the Liberal Party that set the metric in the lead-up to the 2022 state election, that 'we' would fix the ramping crisis. That was the Labor Party's metric and it was a decision that they took to create an impression in the state of South Australia that they had a silver bullet to fix the ramping crisis.

I could go through lots of statistics today, but I will only go through one at the moment; that is that, in February 2022, some 1,500 hours were lost by our paramedics and patients to the hospital ramp in South Australia. In the month of May 2024, the most recent recordable month of ramping statistics in this state, that figure has stood at close to 5,000 hours.

That figure, that statistic, is translated into real people, it is translated into vulnerable patients in ambulances waiting for care and it is translated into paramedics and other clinicians struggling to do their jobs in the face of ramping being out of control. Our emergency departments are too often in Code White. Our hospital system is too often in Code Yellow, in a permanent state of emergency, in a permanent state of crisis.

I do not believe that this is just about throwing money at the problem. We welcome additional funding for hospital infrastructure and hospital personnel. That is needed, but it is clear that something more is needed because money is not moving the dial when it comes to outcomes. Outcomes are going dramatically backwards across a range of metrics. We need more than that: we need system reform.

There are particular areas which the opposition would focus on. I have outlined them before and I will briefly touch on them today because they were not focused on in this state budget as much as I would not only have liked but as much as I thought they would have been.

I was surprised that our mental health system in South Australia did not get more attention from this state budget. I was genuinely surprised by the budget papers, which announced an additional \$5 million or so over the next half decade in mental health support when we know that we need tens of millions of dollars of additional support in our mental health system in this state. That is known as our mental health's unmet need.

The shadow minister for mental health and myself have been focused relentlessly on this, working with the sector. We have made a very clear commitment that if elected we will work to meet the unmet need in our mental health system. What does that unmet need look like? It looks like almost 20,000 patients not getting access to the support and services that they need.

That is 20,000 people with family members and other people in their communities who are also vulnerable because of their mental health challenges, vulnerable in terms of their safety—and too often we see that bubble out in the public domain—but also vulnerable in terms of coming up with ways to support family members and friends and other contacts, even colleagues at times, in a way that they do not feel equipped to do and that they are, quite frankly, simply not able or qualified to do.

The unmet need in this state's mental health system is a disgrace and a crisis, and this opposition is determined to work towards fulfilling that unmet need. We are working with stakeholders, particularly the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia, to understand how that unmet need can be fulfilled and what that looks like in terms of the distribution of infrastructure and personnel on the ground so that we can provide to South Australians a robust mental health policy platform over the coming weeks, months and years.

The role of the general practitioner in South Australia is a critical role. It is a critical role across the whole of our country, and we know that too often our GPs are not feeling supported, not feeling protected in their jobs, not feeling celebrated—not that they do the job to be celebrated. Across a gamut of reasons, GPs are leaving the sector or choosing not to follow that profession in the first place.

We have to do immense work in building up the traditional role of the GP, ensuring that there are enough GPs in metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia, because the further you get from Adelaide, the problem which is present in Adelaide just gets worse and worse and worse. We know that in some regions—I highlight Eyre Peninsula in particular—it is almost impossible to find a GP within an acceptable time frame.

We need to work alongside GPs to provide them with support and to ensure that they have access to the resources that they need to do their job. We need to look for ways that we can get out of their way and give them the freedom to do their job appropriately and in a financially viable way as well.

We know that the state government's decision to charge payroll tax to general practitioners is a potentially threatening situation for the viability and sustainability of many general practitioners across our state. A decision by the government taken in the lead-up to this budget to exempt bulk-billing GPs from payroll tax was a welcome decision, but it is the opposition's very firm view, and the firm view of many general practitioners and their representatives across the state, that that simply did not go far enough.

I can signal today that if elected in 2026 the Liberal Party will broaden that exemption to include all GP consultations, not just bulk-billing consultations but all GP consultations, to ensure that there is no situation where GPs are having to charge between \$10 and \$20 more for a consultation, which could put a significant number of people off going to see their GP, could threaten the very viability of GP practices across our state and, as a consequence, could push people towards the hospital ramp, towards the emergency department and towards a situation of vulnerability that we believe is simply unacceptable. Our general practitioners in South Australia deserve our support.

We will be the voice for general practitioners in this state, and we will exempt them from this payroll tax decision.

South Australia is not as safe as it should be. Across a whole range of categories of crime, South Australians are enduring more crime than they have in recent years. There may be many reasons for that. Some people ascribe it to the cost-of-living crisis, but that cannot be used as an excuse. No government or aspiring government—and the government has not done this, nor will I—should ascribe soaring crime rates to cost-of-living challenges.

It is not acceptable to put that excuse on the table, and the Liberal Party will not. Instead, we need to find ways to fight crime and to discourage crime, and the opposition is incredibly focused on working with stakeholders, including South Australia Police and their representative bodies and organisations like Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers, to ensure that we get in front of this crime wave that is grabbing hold of particular parts of our state.

South Australia's police force has endured considerable pain in recent years. Our police men and women were asked to do things during the COVID-19 pandemic that they never signed up to do, and the morale within the police force is shattered. Those things were unexpected and there were a range of reasons for those, but with morale so low, too many people are leaving our police force—too many senior officers, too many officers with very significant experience, too many officers who are mentors to younger officers.

With too many good police officers leaving the police force, the secondary problem that we are facing is that the pipeline of new recruits is far too insignificant. The number coming in the front door as others leave through the back door simply is not sustainable. Our police force is around 200 police officers short of where it needs to be to have a full complement of active police in this state. In fact, our police force could easily do with several hundred more police officers to reach a point where it can work towards a sustainable level of policing which ensures that morale is high and mentoring across the police force is sustainable as well.

Headline funds in the budget for a digital police station and telephone resolution capability are, quite frankly, embarrassing at best. This should be core business within our police force, not something to shout from the rooftops. We need more police on the beat, not a website. Across our state, our police force is exhausted and stretching to breaking point. We need incentives on the table to encourage people to stay in the force through pay and conditions and to attract police officers to South Australia from interstate and, in particular, overseas.

We know that there have been successful overseas recruitment processes in the past. We know that there is a seemingly quite successful recruitment process flagged at the moment. We need to make sure that the proof is in the pudding with regard to that recruitment process, that officers stay in the force once they become part of it and that they commit to a fulfilling career as police officers in this state. We also need to appropriately resource our policing, no more so than in regional South Australia, and I will talk a little bit more about that in a moment.

South Australia is currently navigating the energy trilemma: energy security, emissions reduction and energy affordability. Things are not going well in this state as we attempt to navigate that trilemma. Households are nearly \$700 worse off per annum and small businesses more than \$1,250 worse off since Labor was elected to office in this state. The former Liberal government reduced power prices by over \$400, with the situation quickly, perhaps unsurprisingly, unravelling since the change in government.

The Liberal Party supports a sensible pathway towards emissions reduction, but we believe that achieving net zero by 2050 is currently impossible in Australia without dramatic advancements in technological solutions or the deployment of a nuclear energy strategy for our nation. The Labor governments at both state and federal level have taken a very different approach to the challenge of energy security, emissions reduction and affordability, with the holy grail of hydrogen being touted as a saviour. While the Liberal Party acknowledges that hydrogen is a fuel of the future, we simply do not know what this looks like nor when in the future it will eventuate.

While I said earlier that we support the Labor government's Northern Water initiative and many of the other outcomes that could very well be spurred by that investment, the Labor Party's

pursuit of their hydrogen power plant in the Upper Spencer Gulf region has too many question marks above its financial viability, its delivery dates and its ability to deliver the outcomes that we expect for it for us to actively support. One thing we do know by the government and the Premier's own admission, is that it will not reduce energy prices in South Australia and I fear, having talked to industry stakeholders across our state, nation and the globe, that this could end up being a white elephant in our state.

In my 2023 budget reply speech, I canvassed that, in light of the groundbreaking AUKUS agreement and with nuclear-powered submarines being built in South Australia in the coming decades, it would be prudent to undertake the serious consideration of the establishment of a civil nuclear energy program in our state through the possible reopening, or a second chapter, of the Scarce royal commission into the nuclear fuel cycle. It has been eight years since the final report of the royal commission and technological advancements and the broader acceptance of nuclear energy as a low emissions and stable energy source have seen a change in the mood within the community over that time.

Today, I can announce that, if elected in 2026, a Liberal government will establish a royal commission into the creation of a civil nuclear energy sector in South Australia. This could include undertaking a review of the Milestones Approach, as set out by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and supporting guidance to ensure that the state is well informed about the process should the federal prohibition on nuclear energy be removed. This is about nuclear readiness, and we would refer to this royal commission as South Australia's royal commission on nuclear readiness.

The review could investigate the economics and system costs for the South Australian energy grid, as well as any other economic opportunities a civilian industry would provide for the overall South Australian economy. Countries looking to introduce civil nuclear power are guided by the IAEA Milestones publication, which requires approximately 10 years of preparatory work to the first reactor coming online.

This is what needs to be done now because things could change in the future. Those could be technological advancements with regard to small modular reactors, they could be significant changes in public mood—and we believe that public mood is already swinging significantly in that direction—or it could be a realisation by the Labor Party that they have this all wrong. Whatever the reason, we should be prepared for this and now is the time to begin that work.

Critics in Labor argue cost barriers and lack of Australian-based skills in nuclear energy are the reasons we cannot advance this work. I would counter that there are likely more barriers to the success of Labor's experimental hydrogen frolic than there are to proven nuclear technologies currently in place right across the globe. It is time for Australia to mature in our relationship with the nuclear fuel cycle and, with the AUKUS deal advancing in a way that I think most South Australians—and certainly most parliamentarians—are exceptionally proud of, there is surely no better time to move towards a nuclear-readiness future.

I have already mentioned in my contribution today that South Australia's regions give so much to our state. They produce world-class food and fibre, provide us with amazing destinations which attract visitors from all over the world, and are an amazing place to call home. Since becoming leader of the Liberal Party of South Australia I have travelled the length and breadth of our state many times over, visiting Mount Gambier 10 times, the Limestone Coast region 12 times, Eyre Peninsula and the Riverland five times and the Upper Spencer Gulf region some eight times.

However, these numbers alone are meaningless, because it is the depth and quality of the visits that matter. Almost all my trips to regional South Australia have been overnight visits, some up to three nights. They have involved meeting with local business owners, with community champions, with progress associations, with agricultural bureaus, with RDAs, with local councils, with mayors and council CEOs, with tourism operators and with farmers in their paddocks.

Respecting regional South Australia means turning up; it means turning up for longer than it takes to have a selfie taken in a paddock and heading back to Adelaide in your shiny R.M. Williams boots. It means building real relationships, relationships very different to what our Premier is willing to build in regional South Australia. It means being their voice and their advocate, and turning up again and again and again.

I signal very clear policy directions today that the Liberal Party is setting out for regional growth, regional roads and regional policing. We should be ambitious for growth in regional South Australia. Our regional cities should and can be bigger than they currently are, but they can only grow with a corresponding health, transport, housing and education infrastructure developed and rolled out alongside any population growth plan. They should also be shaped by economic imperatives tailored to specific regions along the way.

I have asked the shadow minister for regional population growth, Sam Telfer, to develop a plan for regional population growth across our state, and we will work with local councils and other stakeholders to ensure that our growth targets and strategies are both realistic and meet the needs, expectations and ambitions of our regional communities.

We have seen a debacle unfold far too close to Adelaide when regional population planning is not achieved well. That has happened just up the South Eastern Freeway in the town of Mount Barker. This is a case study in regional planning done poorly, and we cannot have that occur in this state again. It cannot happen in our peri-urban communities and it cannot happen in our truly regional communities.

It must not happen on the Fleurieu Peninsula around the communities of Encounter Bay, Victor Harbor, Port Elliot, Middleton and Goolwa. The announcement that Goolwa is to absorb several thousand additional homes over the coming years could, in some ways, be welcomed by that community, but not if it is not backed up by appropriate community infrastructure, and I am working with the member for Finniss to explore policy solutions for his region in particular, because that is the next Mount Barker, brought to us by the Labor government, if we do not get that right.

Hand in hand with regional population growth, but also not even attached to regional population growth because the importance is so current, is the need to invest in our regional roads. If elected in 2026, the Liberal Party of South Australia will spend more on regional roads than the Labor government. We will spend more on regional road construction and we will spend more on regional road maintenance.

When I travel around regional South Australia, the top two issues raised with me are regional health—I have talked today about some of the things we would do in health service provision across the state, and we have a shadow minister for regional health in this shadow cabinet providing a clear signal that regional health will be at the heart of our health solutions for this state—and the second most common thing I hear raised in regional South Australia is the condition and viability of our regional roads.

We need to invest more in our regional roads. We need people travelling to and from our regions, travelling across our regions and moving freight in and out of our regions. We need them to be able to do so confident that they can return home to their families, and we also need them to do so in a way that enhances the productivity of our regions as well. Our regional roads are not up to scratch.

We have commenced a community engagement campaign called Report Your Road. I have been working on that with the Hon. Nicola Centofanti and the Hon. Ben Hood, and Adrian Pederick in this place, to ensure that we have a good understanding of where the investment is needed, where the community expects the investment to be made and where our roads need to be improved urgently from a safety point of view. The Liberal Party of South Australia is the party of regional roads. We will invest more in regional roads.

There are too many regional police stations which are closed today. Their doors are shut, the shutters are down, there is a sign out the front but there are no police officers operating in them. The member for Chaffey continually raises concerns in his Riverland community about police stations which are not operating at capacity. We know that there are many examples of police stations without officers in charge on Eyre Peninsula and in the South-East of our state.

Regional policing needs to be respected, it needs to be supported and it needs to be promoted, once again, as a career of choice—which it is not at the moment, because police recruits and police graduates know that if you end up in regional South Australia, it is a lonely, unforgiving job too often. We need to get back to the role of the regional police officer in the same way, as I have

alluded to, that we need to get back to the role of the traditional regional general practitioner. Too often, these roles have been forgotten. They have been allowed to wither on the vine.

The Liberal Party of South Australia will work alongside the Police Association of this state to define what a regional police officer looks like, the resources they need and the investment that is needed in our regional policing infrastructure to ensure that our regions are safe places to call home. Regional South Australia matters to this party, and we will be the party that invests in our regions, not ignores our regions.

South Australia's levels of debt are of exceptional concern and of growing concern to too many South Australians. South Australian businesses understand what it means to carry too much debt. Increasingly, South Australian households are feeling the pain of carrying too much debt, and that pain will soon be exacerbated as opportunities are limited for people in this state, particularly future generations, if we do not get a debt reduction strategy in place for South Australia.

The Liberal Party has always been the party that has an eye to debt reduction. There have been times when debt is good, when debt is useful and when cheap debt has enabled this state to grow; it occurred under the leadership of Thomas Playford and it occurred under the leadership of Steven Marshall. There is opportunity to build this state and to create nation-building and state-building infrastructure when debt levels and borrowing rates are low, but we are getting to the point where South Australia's debt levels are painfully high and the handbrake on future generations is becoming scary.

It is imperative that in the coming budget in 2025, our state Treasurer outlines a debt reduction strategy for this state. The Liberal opposition will certainly be putting on the table strategies for debt reduction into the medium term because there are many reasons to borrow today. There will always be many reasons to borrow. There will always be more reasons to borrow more but, unless we have an eye to debt reduction in the future, we will be punishing future generations by saddling them with generational debt, which may end up unaffordable and unsustainable.

The Liberal Party has a reputation for responsible economic management. That is what South Australians expect of us, but it should not just be for us to do that. There is a key role going forward for the government to outline how it is going to get the expenditure of government departments under control. In the last two budgets we have seen outrageous overspending by government departments. Their budgets are not even guidelines for their expenditure programs anymore. They spend, the debt is forgiven, and they spend again. We saw it in the 2023 budgetary period. We have seen it in the 2024 budgetary period, and it seems to be projected as a method of doing business by our government agencies and our chief executives well into the future.

There is a fiscal ill-discipline built into this budget, and we must stop forgiving poor fiscal behaviour, poor fiscal discipline, and start seeing strategies in place for pushing down our debt levels in this state. We cannot continue in this trajectory with \$44 billion worth of debt on the books headed into 2028. But will it be \$44 billion? With the budget overruns that we have seen in the last couple of years it will end up much, much higher than that. It will push \$50 billion, based on this trajectory, by next year's budget I am sure. This is scary for our state. It is time that this government started to employ the principles of sound money, acting like a household or a small business, getting their house in order, so that future generations are not saddled with levels of debt that are simply unsustainable.

I highlighted a range of issues in this budget that we agree with, because we are not going to provide opposition for the sake of opposition. I have highlighted what this party stands for, and who we seek to provide high levels of advocacy for, and I have outlined some of the areas of deep concern that we have for this budget, and policy proposals that we will take to the 2026 state election and beyond.

We are a serious opposition. We are doing significant policy development in an active and energetic shadow cabinet. We are engaging with peak bodies and stakeholders from every corner of this state and, over the coming months as we get closer to the 2026 election, we will build on the themes that I have outlined today, the specific policies that I have outlined today, and take a policy platform that reforms this state around the principles and values that you should expect of a Liberal

Party in this state and this nation. I commend the opposition's approach to the house, and look forward to hearing from my colleagues as they make their contributions over the coming hours.

Mr BROWN (Florey) (11:58): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2024. The occasion presents an excellent opportunity to highlight some of the initiatives in the government's third state budget that will benefit the people of my electorate, those across Adelaide's north more broadly, and the entire South Australian community.

In January this year we marked a noteworthy event. I refer to South Australia's economy being rated for the first time ever as the best performing in the nation, according to the CommSec State of the States State and Territory Economic Performance Report. South Australia topped the nation in four of the eight key indicators used to measure and rank economic performance among states and territories. We ranked number one in the nation for economic growth, employment, construction work, and the number of dwellings starting to be built.

And then the following quarter, that is April 2024, we did it again. That is two consecutive State of the States reports in which South Australia topped the nation for the first and second times respectively. It should not be lost on members that this distinction was achieved not once, but twice consecutively, during the term of a Labor government.

It is also worth mentioning, though, before I proceed with extolling some of the virtues of the program of public spending that we are undertaking, that these results were just a couple of selections among our broad range of nation-leading economic results that South Australia has recently achieved. For example, our exports have reached record levels, and we achieved an export growth of 2.6 per cent in the year to April, against the backdrop of a nationwide decline of more than 10 per cent. South Australia's unemployment rate has also hit a record low of 3.3 per cent.

Driving strong economic results is, of course, crucially important, and recognising the broader and more nuanced economic context in terms of what individuals, households and businesses are experiencing day to day is also critically important. That is why the budget meaningfully recognises the extent to which many South Australians are struggling amid cost-of-living pressures that are challenging people across our state and across our nation.

As we have done before, this budget sees the government again acting to support those most in need in our community. The budget provides \$266.2 million in cost-of-living relief to South Australian families, as well as to persons who are on low and fixed incomes, along with support for South Australian small businesses. The budget provides \$51.5 million in 2023-24 for an additional once-off Cost of Living Concession payment of \$243.90 to those who received the concession payment during this financial year. This extra support will go to more than 210,000 households. We are also doubling the Cost of Living Concession payment for all eligible tenants and commonwealth seniors Health Care Card holders. I know that each of these measures will benefit many people within the community of my electorate and across Adelaide's northern suburbs.

Another measure that will be warmly welcomed by families across my electorate, indeed the entire state, is the \$54.6 million over four years that is provided for the doubling of the school Sports Vouchers to two \$100 vouchers per school-aged child. Expanding the program to include music lessons means greater flexibility for families in choosing how they might utilise these vouchers. Accompanying this relief measure is our doubling of the materials and services subsidy for public school students to \$200 per child for this school year, for which the budget provides \$24 million in 2024-25.

Other measures focus on those across our community in the greatest need. For example, \$10.6 million over four years is provided to extend public transport concessions to all Health Care Card holders. Our social housing and energy upgrade initiative, delivered in partnership with the commonwealth, aims to bring significant energy bill savings for tenants in public and community sector homes, by providing insulation improvements and replacing inefficient appliances. Our government's contribution is \$35.8 million over three years, and this will see approximately 3,500 homes upgraded.

We are also supporting small business through providing \$20 million for round 2 of the Economic Recovery Fund, which will help up to 8,000 eligible small businesses and not-for-profit

organisations invest in energy efficient equipment or other improvements that will assist to reduce and manage their energy usage and costs. Applications for these grants, ranging from a minimum of \$2,500 to a maximum of \$50,000, and to be accompanied by a matching contribution from the applicant business, will open in August this year. This is just a selection among a range of our initiatives to support South Australians amid challenging circumstances as our community contends with the impacts of inflation and interest rates.

Very importantly, our investments in health continue. For my community and the broader north of Adelaide, people will be gratified to see \$16.5 million in 2024-25 to provide 20 additional general inpatient beds at the Lyell McEwin Hospital. These extra 20 beds are on top of the 48 new beds currently under construction that are due to open later this year, and 23 extra emergency department treatment spaces. The beds will be built in what has been an administration area of the hospital. Construction is due to start later this year, and the beds are expected to come online next year. This will deliver additional bed capacity for the northern suburbs and for our hospital system generally and will be welcomed by my community and those across the north.

Overall, an additional \$2.5 billion is provided for health over five years to assist in meeting demand and towards ensuring that our health system is appropriately resourced. This includes, among a number of other things, \$17.1 million over four years for an extra 21 renal haemodialysis chairs in northern Adelaide, supporting an additional 84 patients. New investments are happening right across our health system and our community, but I am gratified to see investments continue in Adelaide's north, which the local community will greatly welcome.

Another important area of focus for the investments that are outlined in the budget is education. The government recognises that education is among the most potent of social and economic equalisers, and that ensuring the opportunity to access quality education from early childhood through to tertiary and vocational education is extended to all South Australians is crucial, both to social justice and to our state's productivity and future prosperity.

Members will be very well aware that the final report of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care was released last year. That report outlined what it puts forward as the optimal way for the state government to deliver on Labor's important election commitment to extend access to preschool to three year olds across South Australia, with \$715 million provided over the forward estimates to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care.

Part of that investment will include \$339.7 million over five years to deliver three-year-old preschool across government and non-government settings. This will deliver the funding to support us to build both the workforce and the infrastructure that will be required to successfully and suitably accommodate a new cohort of students across each setting. There will also be \$127.3 million provided to ensure that children most at risk of being developmentally vulnerable have 30 hours of a three and four-year-old preschool in local settings, as well as integrated hubs. Twenty new such hubs will be co-designed with local communities, including two to be built in 2025, one in the Elizabeth area and in Port Pirie.

Others have pointed out that this represents the biggest reform to education in this state in decades, and I echo that sentiment. This initiative aims to reduce the rate of South Australian children who enter their primary school years developmentally vulnerable, from where the figure now sits at 23.8 per cent, to 15 per cent over 20 years. The funding we are delivering will support our preschools to have quality teaching and learning programs, to identify children's needs early and to identify pathways for family supports where it may be beneficial to outcomes and to their future development. The staged rollout will continue until all three year olds across the state can access the minimum entitlement of 15 hours of preschool by 2032.

Of course, it is not only very young children and their families who will benefit from our latest initiatives in education. I am pleased that \$155.3 million has been allocated for a new high school in the northern suburbs, which has been identified as a key urban growth area. The new school will provide capacity for 1,300 additional student places and is expected to commence operations in 2028. I anticipate that this will relieve pressure in our school system in the north, adding student places in an area where they are much needed.

The government's keen ambition is for every young South Australian, regardless of where they live, to have a local public school and preschool that offers a quality education with the facilities and the necessary resourcing to support students in both academic learning and the important childhood business of play. South Australia sits poised to take advantage of an enormous opportunity that lies ahead, and indeed this government is doing much to realise the opportunity for our state and our people that we can see. We are working to seize it, but to be in a position to make the most of it, to be in a position to capitalise on the opportunities and realise the fullness of their benefits for our economy and our community, we must invest in our young people and in the infrastructure of early childhood and primary education.

Along with our recognition of what is needed to realise opportunity for our state and our economy, our strong commitment to social and economic justice drives policy decision-making in education. We know that investment in education is a crucial driver of individual opportunity and of fairness for our community. We have prioritised education from our commitments leading into the last state election to the present moment, with the substance of the budget. From the early years through to primary and secondary school, training and university, we know that quality institutions and quality facilities will support young South Australians to reach their potential and therefore will support our whole community to thrive.

On the subject of training, the budget provides a 43 per cent increase in skills funding of \$692.6 million over five years. This includes \$275.6 million to increase the number of training places in our state to over 160,000 training places. Our economy needs skills, and South Australians deserve support to get themselves on the path to skilled jobs and secure careers. We know this funding will help more people in our community to get the skills they need for the jobs that are being created across our economy, both now and into the future, in key areas such as defence, health, building and construction, early childhood education, clean energy transition and ICT.

Housing is an area in which we know South Australians are feeling acute pressure. We are seeing house prices and rents continue to increase, and we know that supply is not keeping pace with demand. That is why the budget allocates a further \$843.6 million to boost housing supply and to address housing affordability. Last year, we abolished stamp duty for first-home buyers, buying land to build a new home, or buying a newly built home, up to a value cap \$400,000 for land and \$650,000 for a newly built home.

But house prices have continued to rise and this is why we have now removed the value caps on new home and vacant land contracts for stamp duty relief to see stamp duty abolished for all new homes. We have also removed the value cap for the First Home Owner Grant as it applies to new homes—that is \$15,000 for all first-home buyers building or buying a newly constructed home, regardless of the property's value.

These measures apply to new homes for the very good reason that it will help to drive up supply. Targeting our relief to new homes will serve to incentivise the building of more new homes, which is a very important element towards ensuring that more South Australians can be suitably accommodated in both owned and rented homes.

We also continue to progress investment in public, social and affordable housing. Over the next 12 years, \$576 million will help to redevelop land at Seaton—which will deliver 1,315 homes, including rebuilding 388 public housing homes and delivering an additional 197 affordable homes—and also to redevelop land at Noarlunga Downs, which will deliver around another 626 homes including 80 social and 90 affordable homes.

The budget provides a further \$135.8 million over five years to build around 442 additional social housing homes by the end of the 2027-28 financial year, funded through the commonwealth Social Housing Accelerator Payment. Another \$30 million provided over three years will support the Office for Regional Housing in Renewal SA to develop more regional housing in partnership with regional communities and local governments.

All these measures will help more South Australians buy their first home and see more homes built for South Australians who need them. There is a great deal more to be said in relation to the worthy spending that the government is undertaking, about investments in key infrastructure

in our justice system and in our police, investment in roads, in tourism, in our primary industries and so much more.

In the interest of giving other members an opportunity to contribute, I wish to conclude now by saying that responsible and competent economic management has led to this government's ability to deliver a surplus of \$306 million, with further surpluses forecast across the forward estimates. Anyone who would seek to criticise the Treasurer's economic management should be mindful of the fact that there are only two states that are currently expecting to deliver a surplus this year and one of those has had its budget position underwritten by the favourable GST arrangements it was provided in 2018. The other one is right here in South Australia. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (12:11): To take up where the member left off, we have been told about a surplus, and the word 'surplus' in a state budget is going to go rapidly out of fashion, the extent to which the surplus is just so diminutive by comparison to what we have seen rightly published in *The Advertiser* newspaper the day after the budget as a \$44 billion debt bomb that this government has landed on the people of South Australia—and it is shameful.

We heard from the leader early today. We are told it is \$44 billion this year, and we are told that we have to somehow praise the Treasurer for that performance, and that is with major capital commitments to north-south and to Women's and Children's not even included in those extraordinary capital debt predictions that are set out on the face of the budget.

So what have we got from the budget this year? We have got a debt bomb. We have got that exacerbated by the fact that we have this extraordinary revenue windfall in the order of \$3 billion that is rising to over several more billion dollars, and that alongside what we have now seen is the pattern of this government year after year of basic day-to-day mismanagement that has led to routine blowouts in costs from agency to agency.

So never mind what you see in the budget papers from one year to the next. Do you remember a couple of years ago when we saw operating efficiencies from wall to wall that were set out in the budget? The only exception to that was the Department for Child Protection, and I will come to that in a moment. The first question to that department was: 'Is evermore money in child protection a sign of success or failure?' That question remains the pertinent question for the department.

Meanwhile, though, we do not see operating efficiencies achieved with a view to day-to-day management, we do not see operating efficiencies achieved with a view to achieving meaningful budget management that leads to a meaningful surplus, and we certainly do not see anything approaching debt reduction. We have a debt bomb against a revenue windfall and day-to-day management incompetence—so talk about a surplus. Let's look at the real circumstances that are facing South Australians.

Let's be really clear, this is a budget that has failed South Australians and has done so yet again, and that in the context of a time of crisis: crisis in crime, crisis in health—the circumstances that are facing health for South Australians in this state are going from crisis to disaster via dysfunction, and it is shameful—and crisis in housing. This is in circumstances also where South Australians are suffering the nation's highest unemployment and inflation rates, exacerbated and exemplified no better than by the highest power prices in the world.

The question for all South Australians today, and in the face of what we have seen from this government and this Treasurer, is: are you better off now than you were in 2022? I ask all South Australians: are you better off now than you were in 2022? Is the dream that you have had as a South Australian—looking to prosper in this place, looking to raise a family, looking to live a life, living to thrive and be active and productive—closer to your grasp or is it fading from your eyes? I know that there are many in my community and right across this state who will say that the Australian dream is dying right in front of their eyes and state and federal Labor governments are to blame. Responsibility for these circumstances lies squarely at the feet of state and federal Labor governments.

In contrast, the Liberal Party is committed to values that have at their core the provision of a place to call home. South Australians know that what is so much at the core of what it is to be South

Australian is that place to call home in South Australia. Our values are there loud and clear. We believe in all of those elements of the provision of a place to call home.

I mentioned the circumstances of the Department for Child Protection earlier. I will come back to some of the ways in which that place to call home can be made so much more meaningful by family supports that ensure that our vulnerable children have a family and a place to call home and they are not evermore to be found among the numbers in the worst of data associated with children requiring out-of-home and state care anywhere in the nation.

We know how important the home is. We will support South Australians in every respect in ensuring that South Australia is indeed a place that they can call home and that they wish to call home. That is why we are doing everything that we can to make housing more accessible to people. The South Australian Liberal Party has already announced that it will reform stamp duty to extend those stamp duty concessions when it is elected in 2026. We will make sure that those measures are actually meaningful and accessible to young Australians who are wanting to find their home and make their home in South Australia.

This comes in circumstances where, despite having said they will not collect any more taxes, the government is finding itself in the embarrassing circumstance of collecting more revenue than has ever been collected before—an extraordinary circumstance of collecting billions of extra revenue—and yet, as I said at the outset, we are to somehow praise the government for this tiny surplus that has been described, in the small hundreds of millions, against enormous billions of revenue that has been collected in taxes by the South Australian government.

It is continuing. We see total revenue for 2024-25 forecast to be \$28.5 billion, which is \$3 billion more than forecast in the 2022-23 budget, and revenue is forecast to reach nearly \$32 billion by 2027-28, which is \$9 billion more than when Labor was first elected. So if the Malinauskas Labor government wants to come and talk about achieving a surplus, then it better start talking in terms of billions and it better start talking in terms of debt reduction before South Australians are really going to pay attention. A notional cash surplus in the small hundreds of millions against those data is truly extraordinary, and it is galling for the government in the extreme to claim some sort of credit for a so-called surplus in those circumstances.

The revenue, of course, has been propped up by much higher than expected GST takes. But, not only that, we see stamp duty and payroll tax, land tax and fees and charges all playing their part. Against that background, more particularly, we have the government resisting the opportunity to extend payroll tax relief to small businesses in South Australia and saying nothing about it. Among the more startling, generally surprising absences from the budget we see zero in terms of the extension of payroll tax. I think it speaks to the values of this government in clear contrast to those of us in the Liberal opposition. We have already made clear we will extend payroll tax relief as it should be and is, of course, to be expected in response to these extraordinary revenue increases.

Despite the increases in taxation in South Australia, and on South Australian businesses, this budget is startling for the absence of any relief for small business. As much as we might hear and see members of the government—the Premier, chief among them—portraying this idea that they are a government for business and that they are business friendly, the walking of the walk speaks a lot louder than the talking of the talk. When we see the payroll tax relief in a Labor budget, we will start to see a bit of walking of the walk. There is none of that. When we start to see support for businesses to thrive, we will pay attention, but the absence of support for business is being felt across the state and businesses throughout Heysen are no exception to that.

We have committed, effective business associations throughout the Hills. They extend through Hahndorf. Echunga has a marvellous community association associated with promoting Main Street. I single out in particular the Stirling Business Association for the work that it does to highlight opportunities for working together to achieve good outcomes and to support businesses that are struggling in the circumstances that have been placed upon them by state and federal Labor governments. The Stirling Business Association is telling me that businesses through the town are struggling. They will innovate and they will continue to push against, they will find opportunities and they will do all they can, but they are getting no assistance from the government in this budget. It is extraordinarily disappointing.

Looking somewhat further afield, Neutrog is a business that is known to many. It is just outside the Heysen electorate and employs around 70 South Australians, many of whom live in Heysen. It is doing extraordinary innovative research, development and growth work, finding markets both here in South Australia and Australia and also overseas, but where is the support from government for that business? It is absent. You have a situation like so many of a small business that is looking over its shoulder, strangled by red tape, looking to justify its existence rather than feeling that the government is behind it with a wet sail. The contrast is extraordinary.

We on this side of the house believe in opportunity. The government is responsible for creating the circumstances of opportunity and supporting small and family business to create the jobs that they do when they innovate, and we need to do all we can. The payroll tax reforms that we announced in the first moments of the Marshall Liberal government and put into place are appropriately continued by the commitment that we have made to ensuring that small business does not pay payroll tax and that apprentices and trainees are given the green light as the result.

Those changes would make South Australia the most competitive business environment with payroll tax in the country and it is the sort of thing that we can and should be doing. We have made it clear that that is a priority and the government—and it is not too late—can put some of that extraordinary revenue windfall into practice in the interests of business by reducing the tax burden. Meanwhile, we know that South Australians are telling us that they are worse off than ever before. That \$20,000 per year worse off is an extraordinary circumstance for individuals and families to face.

I said at the outset that this government has now a track record when it comes to budgets and the day-to-day management of telling us one thing and then doing something completely different. When we focus on the budget, the dollars, the figures, speak for themselves, because the government says, 'We're going to manage the day to day'; so much about what needs to be done by a state government is about competent day-to-day management.

But nearly every government agency has again overspent its budget, getting on now towards nearly \$1 billion of overspend. Let's be clear: whatever are the figures you were told last year, forget it. You have nearly \$1 billion of overspend and without the revenue windfall you have then a budget in massive deficit, so keep a close eye on that capacity to meet government agency indications from one budget to the next. They just have not done it and it has happened again: \$824 million of blowout that has been recorded across the whole of government.

Major blowouts have been seen unsurprisingly in Health at \$627 million, Education is out by \$139 million, Human Services by \$135 million, Transport and Infrastructure by \$91 million, Premier and Cabinet by \$57 million and Tourism by \$54 million. We see the Department for Child Protection not only having budgeted increases in expenditure that continue to grow but having an off-the-books top-up heading to \$70 million because you just could not manage what was provided for on the face of the budget papers.

We on this side—and I will be the loudest advocate for it—will praise measures that are done, particularly in child protection, to achieve better outcomes. As recently as today the Chief Executive of Uniting Communities, Simon Schrapel AM, has highlighted the challenge that is faced by the Department for Child Protection and by all of us in the community working for improved outcomes for families. We must do it differently. We must have a focus on strengthening families, on supporting families and on ensuring that the long-term improvements that can occur so that when children are living within a family and a family substitute environment, they are then in a position to thrive.

We highlight that measures, small as they are in the previous budget—the provision of \$7.7 million for intensive family support, the provision of \$1.6 million for family group conferencing—are the sorts of measures that ought to be productive of such improvement. I will get around to the praise for measures that are auguring towards improvement in that way. There are a couple.

But we must ensure that when we are employing the resources we are doing so not with a view to flagging what further dollar inputs we have provided for things but what outcomes they are driving—what improved outcomes are we seeing? In the Department for Child Protection, unfortunately, we are still seeing circumstances in which there is ongoing growth in the number of children in state care and an eroding of the strength of family engagement and family support.

The Department for Child Protection is no exception. The courts precinct, for example, yet again has zero support in terms of capital funding. Coupled with that, we see the police horses now jammed in next to the court building as part of this Gepps Cross combo debacle that the government has foisted on police and the community as a result of the mismanagement of last year's destruction of the Thebarton barracks. So we keep a close eye on provision for the courts and the courts precinct.

Of course, the government's dismantling of effective structures for Aboriginal engagement over the last year has been truly extraordinary. We have seen the ending of the South Australian Aboriginal Advisory Committee, we have seen the scrapping of the dedicated committee of this parliament with a focus on Aboriginal affairs and, sadly, this government has gone about then destroying confidence in the Aboriginal community in terms of engagement. That is a state of affairs that must be repaired, it must be rectified, and that must be the first order of business for government.

I welcome the commitments to the South Eastern Freeway. What a debacle that has been. More capital funding must be applied in order to make a difference. I will be ensuring—and I know the community will be, too—that the government will not be let off the hook for that necessary further capital commitment. There is much more analysis to be done over the course of the estimates ahead.

Mrs PEARCE (King) (12:31): It is an absolute pleasure to provide my support for this year's Appropriation Bill in light of the recently handed down state budget. This year's budget once again demonstrates our government's commitment to delivering immediate support to those who need it while also investing in key priorities, including health, housing and jobs. We are allocating even more resources to help build a bigger, better health system. We are setting up our state to deliver truly transformative projects, all while setting up our state for long-term prosperity. Importantly, this budget is providing a strong foundation for our state for generations to come to help us go from strength to strength with no-one left behind.

First and foremost, I do acknowledge that times are tough. There are so many who are feeling the pinch at the moment. We have a clear agenda to help tackle this to help more people and businesses stay afloat. It is why our cost-of-living relief is helping those on low and fixed incomes, renters, families with schoolchildren and those trying to buy their first home. This is exactly what government should be doing when times get tough.

We announced the state budget just a little over a week ago and already we are seeing relief reach households in our state, with the additional Cost of Living Concession payment of \$243.90 hitting the bank accounts of more than 210,000 South Australian households. This is relief targeted at those South Australians who need it most at a time when they need it most.

Importantly, we are also providing significant additional ongoing support for those recipients who happen to be renters and Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders. From July, they will receive double what they previously received; that is, \$127.80 to \$255.60 for tenants and holders of Commonwealth Seniors Health Cards, aligning it with that of home owners, which supports around 73,000 people. Eligible low-income families are also to receive a total of \$371.70 in additional cost-of-living concession payments over the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years.

We are also improving and expanding access to a range of concessions, assisting up to around 21,000 vulnerable South Australians and extending public transport concessions to around 15,000 Health Care Card holders. We know that so many have been calling for the concession system in South Australia to be fairer and more accessible. It is something we committed to doing at the 2022 election, and I am so pleased that we are seeing this through as part of this year's state budget.

We are supporting small businesses with more financial relief provided through the Economic Recovery Fund. I am really pleased to see that this round is helping businesses to be able to invest in more energy-efficient equipment because not only is it helping them with the current cost-of-living pressures but it is going to give them that continued support for years to come, while also supporting our state to reach the net zero global market.

We are also supporting those who wish to export their quality goods, like local businesses in my community Soul Diva and Litharian Wines, by committing to support Food SA. I know when the minister and I met with Melanie last week to discuss what we are doing to support her family—

someone who provides so much support in our local community through the schools and community groups and causes in the area—it was certainly something that was welcomed, and I know that she will do wonderful things with this support.

We are also determined to do what we can to ensure the next generation receives the absolute best opportunity to thrive and live their best lives. It is why we have a firm focus on doing what we can to support families in this budget. It starts with education, where we are providing further investment to assist with the school materials and services charges. We will be helping to reduce those fees by \$200 per eligible child, a saving that I know is warmly welcomed across my local community.

In addition to this, the budget also includes a measure to support South Australian families and young people in an area that I am particularly passionate about—this, of course, being participation in sports and the doubling of the Sports Vouchers program for eligible school-aged children across South Australia. Not only will this initiative help encourage more of our kids to get off their screens and be active in our local communities, it is going to help their development, physical health, mental health and wellbeing and also develop those really important life skills that will continue to serve our kids well into their adult years, regardless of whether or not they continue to play sport in those years.

I have received a phenomenal amount of support from so many across the state regarding this initiative. I have met with stakeholders, families, clubs, associations and even kids themselves to learn more about what this initiative means to them and the future of sport in our state. For many, it offers an opportunity that may not have otherwise been possible, and it is also helping lessen the pressure that is being felt by families at the moment.

For some perspective on the program's success this year alone, in my electorate of King, the Sports Vouchers program has delivered a total value of vouchers in the order of over \$150,000. That is \$150,000 towards helping kids become active and engaged in our local community, helping to keep them healthy and forming those all-important friendships, many of which I am confident will last them a lifetime.

Across South Australia as a whole, this program has delivered a value of over \$5.5 million, and with such a huge uptake of the program across the state, I am very excited to see what the doubling of this incredibly popular voucher will bring. It helps to reduce the cost of sports and it opens the possibility of kids exploring activities to find the one that does work best for them because we do know that all kids are different, which has been a really key focus of what we have been looking at over the past couple of years when it comes to this initiative.

We recognise that every kid is different and has different interests, and if we are really serious about helping to support more of our kids to get off their screens and get active in their communities, we need to have initiatives that reflect that we are investing in them in this way. It is why I am so pleased that we have once again expanded the program to now include music lessons, because music also presents benefits to the development of our kids in terms of their health and their wellbeing, and we are absolutely here for that.

We are also implementing this initiative in a way that provides families with greater flexibility. You can choose to spend your \$200 all in one go on one activity. You can choose to allocate the two \$100 vouchers across seasons. Something families have been reflecting to me is that whilst it has been very beneficial to have it in one go, kids often play sport across the years and, likewise, across different sports and interests as well, which is why you can also now allocate to use the two \$100 vouchers to different activities, depending on the interests of your child. The crux of this initiative is to be able to support our kids to live their absolute best lives and by rejigging this initiative we are providing the best possible way of supporting as many kids as we can but also helping to encourage more kids to get out there and engage in their local communities.

While these measures are helping to provide targeted relief, the budget is also focused on setting South Australia up for future success. We are helping to get homes built. We are equipping the workforce with skills that will support secure and well-paid work now but also long into the future. We are backing in and supporting education and, importantly, we are ensuring that the health system is going to be resourced to adequately support the growing needs of our state.

In health, we have committed an additional \$2.5 billion over five years, which includes \$17.1 million to expand the availability of renal haemodialysis chairs across northern metropolitan Adelaide, allowing the support of an additional 84 patients with an extra 21 chairs. We will deliver an additional 20 beds at the Lyell McEwin Hospital, on top of the 48 that we are currently building and are due to come online a little later this year.

Recently, I visited the Lyell McEwin Hospital with the member for Newland to see the progress of this build underway and I am really pleased to see that it has been designed and constructed in such a way that reflects the needs of our local community and takes into consideration the growing needs in particular areas as well to make sure that we are providing the absolute best service to my local community.

We are also focused on other initiatives that will help improve the state of our health system, initiatives that will improve the transition of patient data in real time to hospitals, helping to speed up admissions, which I know is something that communities feel very strongly about. We are also improving and expanding in telehealth services and importantly, something that is close to my heart, youth mental health, which does include greater support for families and carers of those with eating disorders.

Accessibility to housing is also vital, which is why I am pleased we are implementing initiatives that will help increase supply, as it is key to getting more South Australians into safe, secure and affordable homes. That is why we are completely abolishing stamp duty for first-home buyers who are building a new home, which has been welcome news for all in my community who have been trying to get their foot in the door into home ownership. There is much more to come in this space, so stay tuned.

As we deliver our third budget since coming to government, it is clear that we are set on delivering cost-of-living support to South Australians now, while building for the future. We are building the housing, the skills, the education and health system needed to support a growing economy as we launch into transformative projects that will set up our state for generations to come. Importantly, we are doing all of this while delivering a surplus and the way that we are managing our budget means that we are supporting households to manage theirs.

It has been a pleasure getting out there and sharing this budget with my community because it shows that we are listening to the current needs while also remaining focused on the future of our state. I can assure you that these have all been welcome conversations and it is clear that South Australians are tired of hearing about one-term tactics. They want the vision, the investment and security that comes with long-term vision and planning. We are a government that is getting this done and with that, I commend this bill to the house.

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (12:43): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill. The 2024 state budget really can be characterised, I think, as a typical Labor budget. We see record spending, we see record debt and we see record taxes. The question that South Australians really need to ask themselves is: are they better off today than they were two years ago?

If we put all the distraction aside, all the golf, the football, the car racing and the sport, if we put all that to one side, are South Australians better off today under Malinauskas Labor than they were two years ago? I think the answer is a resounding no. In fact, we know that South Australian families on average are about \$20,000 worse off today than they were two years ago. What they do not need at this time of incredible cost-of-living pressure is a budget that delivers record spending, record debt and record taxation, and that is exactly what this latest budget from Malinauskas Labor delivers.

Looking at each of those in turn, we see record spending, and we see it across nearly every government agency. There is nothing to show for it, just run-of-the-mill cost overblows. We see nearly every government agency overspending, with an \$824 million blowout recorded across whole of government; major blowouts in the health department of over \$600 million; education, over \$100 million; human services, over \$100 million; transport and infrastructure, \$90 million; and tourism about \$50 million. It is mismanagement, overspending, record spending and cost blowouts. It is irresponsible financial management.

We also see record debt in this budget. Over the forward estimates, we see state debt ballooning to over \$44 billion. That, by the way, is despite nearly half the costs of the north-south corridor project and the Women's and Children's Hospital not yet even being included in the forward estimates. They are off the books at the moment, so presumably debt is going to increase even more during the life of this government.

It is a very concerning amount of debt. A total of \$44 billion over the forward estimates is more debt than this state has ever been in in its history. Indeed, debt per person is going to rise by nearly 60 per cent by the end of the forward estimates, compared to Labor's first budget. We know that having huge debt—\$44 billion over the forward estimates—is enormously bad for two reasons. One, we have to pay interest on this debt. Anyone who has a mortgage or a credit card knows that it costs to service debt. In fact, the interest repayments alone on the debt being projected in this budget are over \$2 billion annually. It is about \$6 million a day.

To put that into perspective, it is nearly the entire budget of the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. It is, I think, about four or five times the budget of the Department for Environment and Water. We could be building three Adelaide Ovals every year just with the amount it is costing us to service the debt, the interest. It is money for nothing, because we have run up this giant credit card bill and it is going to have to be repaid.

That is what I fear as well. Everyone knows we are going to have to pay back debt. Anyone who has ever borrowed knows that. We see this budget with glossy pamphlets and posters at train stations saying, 'This is a budget for all South Australians.' What that really means is it is debt for all South Australians. It is debt for all South Australians, because it is we who are being burdened with this \$44 billion of debt. It is all South Australians, whether they are families or small businesses, who are going to have to pay it back.

I am enormously concerned about the level of debt forecast in this budget. The opposition is enormously concerned, and the Leader of the Opposition has challenged the Treasurer today to prepare a debt reduction plan in future budgets. Commentators are concerned as well. We see Paul Starick in *The Advertiser* describing the level of debt as 'eye-watering' and comparing it to the State Bank crisis that this state saw in recent history. I think at that time we were dealing with debts at around the \$3 billion mark. We are now dealing with \$44 billion.

Matthew Abraham in InDaily described it as a government 'drowning in cash yet whacking massive amounts on the credit card'. That is exactly what it is. I think it is going to have a disproportionate impact on young people today, because it is those of my generation and those who will follow who are going to be left with the bill, left with the bill from this Treasurer's irresponsible budget racking up \$44 billion worth of debt over the forward estimates, left with the bill to have to pay it back and perhaps, unfortunately, standing a little too close if and when this debt bomb explodes. I am very concerned about the level of debt in this budget.

Thirdly, we see record taxes in this budget. Despite promising no new taxes in this government, despite promising no tax increases in this government, what we have seen just last week when the budget was handed down is the highest taxing government in the history of South Australia. If it feels like you have never been paying more tax, it is because that is the case. You have never been paying more tax than under Malinauskas Labor. There have been tax increases right across the board in how much the Malinauskas Labor government is taking in.

We see it on GST intake, a 31 per cent increase over the last couple of years of the Malinauskas Labor government. We have seen it on car registration, a 16 per cent increase. We have seen it on payroll tax, a 33 per cent increase. Businesses are paying 33 per cent more payroll tax than they were two years ago under this Labor government. The emergency services levy (ESL) is up 17 per cent. Fines have increased dramatically, up 59 per cent. We are taking in 48 per cent more land tax than two years ago, and stamp duty is up 7 per cent. What we see, despite a government that promised us there would be no new taxes and there would be no increase in taxes, is the highest taxing government in history.

These sorts of moments are opportunities to compare and contrast. What you have seen from the Liberal opposition over the last few weeks is a very clear indication that we want to lower your taxes. The Liberals will lower your taxes. We have outlined already a series of policies that will

do just that. We want to lower stamp duty for all first-home buyers to allow young people to be able to keep the dream of home ownership alive. We want to lower payroll tax for all small businesses by lifting the threshold and also applying an exemption for apprentices and trainees. We want to scrap this GP tax that we have seen about to be introduced that is going to increase the cost of going to a GP anywhere between \$10 to \$20, and it will drive people into our hospitals as well.

You have seen all of this announced by the Liberal opposition in the past few days and weeks. On the one hand you have the highest taxing Labor government ever, and on the other hand you have a Liberal opposition that wants to lower the taxes for South Australians right across the state, with a plan to lower your stamp duty, lower your payroll tax and scrap this GP tax.

While we are on this exercise of compare and contrast, there is a third force emerging in economic thought and leadership in this state, and it is the South Australian Greens who have released some tax policy as well. We know that the Greens spend a lot of time running around South Australia with all sorts of policy proposals. We know they want to scrap South Australian submarine and frigate building. We know they want to cut funding for school choice. We know they want to cut private health insurance. We know they want to decriminalise hard drugs. But what we have seen recently from the Greens is a bit of tax policy as well from the economic hardheads at the South Australian Greens.

To their credit, they have told us how they are going to pay for some of these wild policy proposals. In an Instagram post on 3 June 2024 we see the co-leader of the South Australian Greens, the Hon. Robert Simms, outlining it. The title is, 'How we will pay for our plans.' He sets out some tax policy for the Greens, which involves—you guessed it—a whole heap of brand-new taxes or tax increases for South Australians. I think South Australians ought consider the Greens' tax policy at the next election. The Greens are not some sort of safe place to park a protest vote, they are not an easy way to virtue signal on certain issues; what they are is a dangerous, extremist left-wing party who want to tax you, tax you and tax you. We know that because they have told us.

If we look at their tax policy released only a couple of weeks ago, they want to impose a 75 per cent developer tax on land value gains from rezoning. Presumably, that is going to force up the cost of all new development in this state. The price of new housing might increase by 75 per cent, which is the last thing we need when we want to boost housing supply. They want to tax residential properties that are vacant for more than 12 months. Any of my constituents who might have a holiday home, for example, might be very interested in the Greens' holiday home tax that they have announced. The kick is that they want to 'increase land tax' and they also want to 'increase payroll tax for big businesses making super profits'.

So, what do we see in this exercise of compare and contrast? Under Labor, you have never been paying more tax ever. Under the Greens, you will be paying a lot more tax by their own admission. A Liberal Party, a Liberal government, wants to reduce your taxes and that is exactly what we will do if we are elected in 2026. Then there are my comments on the budget, a typical Labor budget, from a macro perspective, where we see record spending, record debt and record taxes.

In what time I have remaining, I want to make some remarks from a more local perspective on this state budget. There are two wins for our local community in the state budget, two things that I have been advocating for for most of the time I have been in the parliament. One is around road safety, particularly at school crossings in the eastern suburbs. We do see a new \$80 million allocation for road safety, including something that I have been calling for in this place on previous occasions, which is a 40 km/h speed zone near schools on main roads.

This is obviously an area of great interest to my local constituents. It was really brought to the forefront by the horrible accident that occurred at Marryatville High School last year. Following that accident, we have worked together as a community to achieve a lot of improvements at that intersection, but there is more that can be done and there is more that can be done right across the state and indeed the eastern suburbs. I am pleased that part of this funding is going to reducing speed limits on main roads and also installing new variable speed signage at school crossings.

I note that the government and the minister have not yet outlined what priority locations there will be. I would urge the minister to read my numerous correspondence to various ministers on this topic where I have some ready-made plans that the government can implement at schools in the

eastern suburbs, particularly those schools that are on or near main roads, whether it is Marryatville High School on Kensington Road or Seymour College or Loreto College on Portrush Road or Linden Park Primary School quite close to Portrush Road. I urge the minister to consider my local schools as part of this \$80 million funding for school crossing improvements.

Another thing I have been advocating for for some time now is more enforcement and crackdown on illegal vaping and tobacco shops and I see in the state budget a \$16 million allocation to counter the growing illegal trade of tobacco and vaping, with additional staff in CBS to investigate this. Again, this is something I have raised with the government a number of times. It is of great concern to my constituents, particularly regarding some new tobacco and vaping shops that have opened in Stonyfell near St Peter's Girls' School, as well as in Marryatville near Marryatville High School and also Marryatville Primary School. There is concern about their proximity to those schools. There is also concern about whether they are appropriately licensed to be selling vapes and tobacco. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12:59 to 14:00.

SUPPLY BILL 2024

Assent

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

SUPREME COURT (DISTRIBUTION OF BUSINESS) AMENDMENT BILL

Assent

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

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Assent

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

Petitions

COLONEL LIGHT GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms CLANCY (Elder): Presented a petition signed by 1,736 residents of the Colonel Light Gardens Primary School community and greater South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to take immediate action to provide funding to plan and construct an adequate gymnasium at Colonel Light Gardens (CLG) Primary School, compliant with Department for Education standards, to support and serve the CLG school and community.

Parliamentary Procedure

ANSWERS TABLED

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

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (Hon. A. Koutsantonis) on behalf of the Deputy Premier (Hon. S.E. Close)—

Regulations made under the following Acts—

Surveillance Devices—Prescribed Circumstances

Work Health and Safety—Prescription of Fee—2024

By the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (Hon. A. Koutsantonis) on behalf of the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water (Hon. S.E. Close)—

Regulations made under the following Act—
Environment Protection—Environment Management Fee

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

Regulations made under the following Acts—
Heavy Vehicle National Law (South Australia)—Amendment of Law
Road Traffic—
Miscellaneous—Use of Devices in Vehicles
Road Rules—Ancillary and Miscellaneous Provisions—
Use of Devices in Vehicles

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

Regulations made under the following Act—
Energy Resources—Fees Notice—Fees (2024)

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

Regulations made under the following Act—
Cost of Living Concessions—Miscellaneous—2024

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

Regulations made under the following Act—
Teachers Registration and Standards—Prescribed Qualifications

By the Minister for Education, Training and Skills (Hon. B.I. Boyer) on behalf of the Minister for Local Government (Hon. J.K. Szakacs)—

Local Council By-Laws—
The Rural City of Murray Bridge—
No. 1—Permits and Penalties
No. 2—Local Government Land
No. 3—Roads
No. 4—Moveable Signs
No. 5—Dogs

By the Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs (Hon. A. Michaels)—

Regulations made under the following Act—
Residential Parks—Electricity Information
Residential Tenancies—
Miscellaneous
Provision of Information

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

Regulations made under the following Act—
Planning, Development and Infrastructure—Fees Notice—Fees No. 4 (2024)

By the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services (Hon. D.R. Cregan)—

Correctional Services, Department for—Coronial inquest into the death in custody of
Giovanni Trotta—Report on actions taken—April 2024.

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome to parliament students from Woodcroft College, who are guests of the member for Reynell—wonderful to have you in parliament today—and students from St Dominic's Priory College, who are guests of the member for Adelaide. It is also great to have you here in parliament today. It is always nice to remind the people down here that you are watching and that we expect the same good behaviour from them as we know we will get from you.

Parliamentary Committees

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr BROWN (Florey) (14:06): I bring up the 85th report of the committee, entitled Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin Program—Lake Hawdon North Regulator On Ground Works Project.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Mr BROWN: I bring up the 86th report of the committee, entitled Rebuilt Gawler Ambulance Station.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Mr BROWN: I bring up the 87th report of the committee, entitled South Australia Police Barracks Relocation Project—Police Operations Centre.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Mr BROWN: I bring up the 89th report of the committee, entitled Bridge Road and Wynn Vale Drive Junction Upgrade.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Question Time

STATE DEBT

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:08): My question is to the Treasurer. Will state debt peak at \$44 billion, as in the budget papers, or will it further accelerate in future years?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:08): We have outlined the state budget and the budget position over the next four years which, as the member for Colton has alluded to in his question, does show that state debt increases to \$44 billion. That, of course, will incorporate a significant amount, but not the total amount, of new spending that will come into the forward estimates to deliver a \$25.6 billion infrastructure works program across a whole range of projects over the next four years, in particular led by the significant commitment that this government has made to finishing what Labor started many years ago with the upgrade of the north-south corridor, as well as delivering a new Women's and Children's Hospital.

Of course, in our first two state budgets we have also committed to a range of upgrades to hospitals and healthcare facilities, which will see more beds delivered across our health system. We have also announced upgrades to our prison capacity. There have been very significant commitments made to increasing housing as well, in particular public, social and affordable housing.

Beyond the end of the 2027-28 financial year, we will still have more work to do to finish the Torrens to Darlington tunnels project, and the new Women's and Children's Hospital project, and the extent to which debt increases will not only depend on how much expenditure we have to go on those two projects beyond the forward estimates, of course, but whatever decisions the government may take into the future.

We have had the Leader of the Opposition say today in his budget reply that he strongly supports the Northern Water project and the government's involvement in it. Of course, if the state government was to take a position on that project, where we were going to make a form of financial commitment to delivering that desalination plant and pipeline project from the Upper Spencer Gulf

into the state's Mid North, then that would come at a further cost to the budget, which isn't currently allocated.

Overall, what the state's debt position will be will not just be as a result of those particular measures going forward, and what the costs of them will be into the future, but also any other decisions the government might take, which might add to the state's debt position or it might alleviate the state's debt position. The other thing which alleviates the state's debt position is what happens to the overall size of the budget. What we have seen in the first three budgets that we have been able to deliver, on the back of a very, very strong state economy and on the back of strong GST revenue growth, is state revenues continuing to increase, which gives the budget the capacity to take on additional debt.

In fact, in this current financial year—by 30 June this year—state debt is estimated to be \$3.6 billion lower than at the same time that the previous Liberal government had forecast it, and our net debt to revenue ratio is a full 28 percentage points lower, so the budget is in a much, much better state than what the previous government had left it to us—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: —a much, much stronger state, and even next year the net debt to revenue ratio will be better off than what they predicted.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Colton, I remind everyone that interjections aren't allowed, so we will listen to answers in silence. The member for Colton.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:12): My question is again to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer move to exempt all GP payments from payroll tax?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:12): I am pleased that the member for Colton has raised this important issue because it gives me the opportunity to talk about the significant tax cut that the state budget provides for GPs here in South Australia. As we know, for more than 15 years GPs have been required to pay payroll tax, including under the grouping and contracted provisions of the Payroll Tax Act 2008. That is a longstanding situation, so when you have the member for Colton or the Leader of the Opposition bogusly telling people that we are changing the payroll tax treatment for GPs to impose payroll tax, you know that they are wrong. They are wrong. In fact, what we've done—

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: There is a point of order from the member for Hartley.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: Under standing order 98, the question was very specific, and the Treasurer is deviating from the substance of the question.

The SPEAKER: We are not through the first minute of the answer, and I am sure that the Treasurer was going to address the substance of the question, so back to the Treasurer.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank you for your protection. As I was saying, we are moving to exempt a vast majority of GP wages and the wages they earn on the consultations they provide to patients in South Australia by exempting them from payroll tax. Importantly, we are doing it for bulk-billed consultations.

According to the latest national data, bulk-billed consultations account for nearly four in five of all consultations between GPs and their patients across South Australia. According to federal government data, nearly four out of five (nearly 80 per cent) of all consultations are bulk-billed, so you can imagine that even those GPs who operate on the basis of providing some consultations that are bulk-billed and some consultations where they choose to charge a gap fee will also benefit, because the wages they earn on their bulk-billed consultations will also not be subject to payroll tax as a result of this budget. That means that we anticipate that there are many GPs who would

otherwise continue to be liable for payroll tax no longer being liable for payroll tax, in that their wages are likely to fall under the payroll tax tax-free threshold.

We arrived at this position because we had engaged at length with the Royal College of GPs. I was really pleased to announce this policy, along with my colleague the Minister for Health, at College House, the home of the royal college in North Adelaide. We know from the discussions and the engagement that we have had with Dr Sian Goodson and her colleagues and the royal college that the measure that the state government is committing to law in this budget is going to ensure that South Australians have their access to bulk-billing protected. That is really important.

I don't dispute that there will always be a group of GPs and there will always be some GP practices that don't bulk-bill at all. They will continue on practising in that way, and that is their right and their choice. In fact, in the course of the discussions with the royal college, we have been made aware of some practices and some consultations where the gap fee has long been charged at \$80 or \$90-plus per regular consultation. That is the choice of that general practitioner; that is the right they have to operate their business as they see fit.

But what we have done, in addition to the very significant cost-of-living package that we have rolled out in our budget, is found a way to ensure that GPs can still provide bulk-billed services to their patients, so that we can maintain that really significant contribution that the federal government's data tells us that GP practices have. I think it is worthy to do and I think it is worthy of support from the opposition.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:17): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Is the minister taking any action to address the concerns raised by the South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association in its report to SafeWork SA about staff safety and wellbeing? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: On 15 June *The Advertiser* published an article called 'wild west' of hospital care, where, upon inspection of the Flinders Medical Centre, emergency department clinicians warned it is now inherently unsafe for patients and staff. Management staff reported that, and I quote, it would be 'pointless and would appear tokenistic if they checked in on the staff'.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:18): Yes, this government is taking action and we are building hundreds of extra hospital beds across the system. In addition to that, we are also hiring hundreds and hundreds of extra doctors and nurses into our system.

I am delighted to inform the parliament, if they hadn't noticed in the budget that was delivered last sitting week, that we are going even further than what we had previously committed to in now opening additional fast-tracked beds that will be open by the end of next year at The QEH and at Lyell McEwin Hospital to make sure we have more capacity in our system as well.

The issues that are identified in the member's question come about because we don't have the capacity for patients to get through the system. We have—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Frome!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: We have clearly committed from day one that we need to build additional beds—and that is exactly what we are doing—to make sure that patients who are stuck in the emergency department can get through to the inpatient beds that they need. That can free up the emergency department for the next patients who need it and for the ones coming in from the waiting room or the ambulance ramp as well. If we don't have those additional beds, which the Leader of the Opposition has said are probably wasted money, then that pressure is just going to build and build and build.

On a daily basis, we have well over 100 patients at the moment who are in emergency departments, who are being seen by the emergency department team, who are waiting for a ward

bed to go to, and we simply don't have those ward beds available. So that's why we are building these additional beds.

Through the course of this year, we will have opened 150 extra beds into the system. Now, with the additional funding announced in the budget last sitting week, we will have towards the end of next year 330 extra beds that we will have opened across the system, which is absolutely what's needed to make sure that we've got the capacity for patients to get the care that they need and also to free up our emergency departments that are obviously under pressure. In addition to that, of course, we need to make sure that people who don't need to be in hospital any longer can get out of hospital and can get other care in the community.

On a daily basis at the moment, we've got about 200 patients in our system who no longer need to be in hospital, who are medically ready for discharge but are stuck waiting for aged care or waiting for NDIS care. That's why we have made this a key priority in terms of our negotiations along with every other health minister, state and territory, across the country in raising it with the federal government. That's why we have also prioritised funding that we are receiving through national cabinet to go directly to this point to provide additional assistance for aged-care providers through geriatric flying squads, so doctors and nurses can provide outgoing support for those patients who are leaving hospital to get the care that they need in aged care so they don't get stuck in hospital and then cause that flow through the system to be blocked for the patients who need it coming through the front door as well.

Of course, at the other end of the system, we continue to advocate for needs in terms of primary care as well. While we do have additional options now in place, particularly around Medicare urgent care clinics, 24-hour pharmacies, as well as additional help that's available through Healthdirect, we do need more primary care and, particularly, we need to address the workforce challenges. That is why one of the big priorities that we are working on with all states and territories and the commonwealth is making sure that, particularly for countries like the UK where they have respected systems in place for doctors, we can fast-track those doctors through with appropriate checks, but without bureaucracy delay, to make sure that they can come and work in South Australia to be GPs, to be doctors in our hospitals, as we are expanding our healthcare system right across the state.

NURSE STAFFING LEVELS

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:22): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister further update the house on any workforce plan for more nurses to service the new hospital beds that have recently been announced? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: Last week on radio, SA Branch Secretary of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Ms Elizabeth Dabars, said:

...what we are still missing from this equation is a workforce plan. We need to look after the existing staff and we also need to employ many, many more people and nurture them up because the reality is it doesn't matter how many beds you build, they're not much good if you press the buzzer and no-one comes.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Karna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:22): Thank you very much—and my colleagues interject that this was a Dixier, because this is exactly what we are doing: we are hiring hundreds of extra nurses across the system. We have in the first two years of government added—above attrition, full-time equivalents—691 extra nurses into our system. Not only that but we are continuing to bring in more graduate nurses.

This year, the Central Adelaide Local Health Network brought in their record number of graduate nurses that they have ever brought in before. We are providing them with support to make sure that they can get the learning from senior nurses that they need to embed their skills as they come in to work for SA Health. We are also making sure that we can provide them with avenues in terms of advanced practice skills across the system as well—advanced practice skills to work in the ICU, to work in cardiac wards, to work in emergency departments and to work in mental health—

where we know that we've got those nursing needs in the future, to make sure that those nurses can get up to speed and can get those additional skills as fast as possible.

We continue to work with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation in terms of that. We clearly have got the runs on the board already in terms of additional nurses coming into the system. One other feature as well that's part of our policy that I think is worth highlighting is that we have ended the voluntary separation process for nurses. The previous government had in place voluntary separation for nurses; they were cutting nurses across the system. Hundreds of nurses took packages and left the system because of the programs that were put in place by the previous government.

Let's remember that for every one of those packages that was taken, the position was abolished. The position was not replaced with somebody else coming into it: the position was abolished. Many of these were frontline nursing positions across our system, the vast majority in the Central Adelaide Local Health Network, and we are now having to go and rebuild that nursing workforce that was decimated through those redundancy payments that were given under the previous government—during a COVID pandemic. All around the world people were adding more workforce and here we had a program to cut nursing numbers in our hospitals.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hartley on a point of order.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: I have given the minister a couple of minutes to roll his arm over, but the question was specifically about any workforce plan. He is now debating the substance of the question.

The SPEAKER: I will listen carefully but I think he is actually giving some context about the situation in the system.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: It is a key part of our plan to not make nurses redundant, to not make our frontline healthcare staff redundant. That is a clear policy difference between the parties and we are happy to state our position very clearly. We will continue to hire more nurses, we will continue to do what we have done over the past two years, we will continue to provide them with additional training and make sure that they've got the skills that they need as we open these additional beds that the Leader of the Opposition said are probably wasted money.

COUNTRY ARTS SA

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:26): My question is to the Minister for Arts. What is the government doing to assist the State Opera of SA to travel to regional areas? With your leave, Mr Speaker, and the leave of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: The State Opera would like to travel to the Limestone Coast to put on performances, including at the World Heritage listed Naracoorte Caves. In other states, dedicated touring funding is available to help and support the delivery of such programs; however, this isn't the case in South Australia.

The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (14:27): I want to thank the member for MacKillop not only for his question but he has been a strong advocate for getting our arts and cultural organisations into our regions, and he has advocated quite strongly on a number of occasions to me so I appreciate that.

What we did announce in the budget was \$19 million for a hub for Country Arts, the State Theatre and State Opera. One of the benefits that will come from that is actually having Country Arts work much more closely with the State Theatre and State Opera. Having those organisations work together really does support having those organisations tour into regional South Australia. They already do it quite well, but that additional funding will help with that.

I don't know if the member managed to see *The Frog Prince* last month that was performed on the Limestone Coast. That was a State Opera tour that went through the Limestone Coast, particularly to students there, and I want to thank the Minister for Education who helped with a grant

program to fund that. Not only did they get to enjoy *The Frog Prince* performance, but State Opera actually undertook some workshops with students to give them some career guidance on getting into performing arts, which I think they really enjoyed. That was a really important part of what Country Arts and State Opera do.

At the moment Country Arts, State Opera and Creative Australia are working on a program for a shared producer that will work into the regions. We are expecting that to be finalised and commence in 2025. That will also help Regional Arts as well. Of course, that all feeds into the 50-year anniversary for State Opera, which is in 2026, so again some positive steps in that regard. There has been significant touring of our incredible performances throughout regional South Australia. We have had *Symphonie of the Bicycle*, which was a State Theatre production that toured regional South Australia. We are about to have *Saltbush Country*, which is a Country Arts exhibition of First Nations female artists, incredible artists. It starts in Port Lincoln but is travelling around the state. It was part of Tarnanthi last year. We are getting a whole range of performances out through our regions.

Yesterday, I had one of my regular meetings with State Opera's Mark Taylor, who is the Chief Executive of State Opera. He is really keen to see an expanded audience for opera. At the moment, he is working on the Opera in the Pub program, which has started here in Adelaide. We actually did talk yesterday about the possibility of extending that into regional pubs as well to expand the audience base of opera. So there's a lot happening in that space. I again thank the member for his advocacy and I look forward to seeing him out in the regions for some of these incredible performances.

HYDROGEN INDUSTRY

Mr HUGHES (Giles) (14:30): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. Can the minister advise the house about any current interest in developing a hydrogen industry and how this might benefit Upper Spencer Gulf?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:30): I want to thank the member for Giles.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: He's not Scandinavian, no. I think he's Welsh. Close. Both have a problem with sunlight.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Too harsh? Too soon? I'm not Italian. Today, I was speaking at the Adelaide Convention Centre where the world conference on hydrogen was being held. It's fair to say that the amount of interest in hydrogen globally is evolving and changing. What we saw today, alongside each other, were two conferences. One was Copper to the World, which had, I think, over 500 people to hear the Premier's opening address. There was a much smaller crowd at the one I was at, obviously, the Hydrogen Conference alongside it. Both conferences were talking about the potentials of decarbonisation and the value it can give to South Australia.

What hydrogen can offer this state is the ability to decarbonise industrial processes and value-add here in the state. In the electorate of Giles, and in the electorate of—

Mr Pederick: Stuart?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Stuart—and Chaffey, we have some of the world's best magnetite resources anywhere in the world. Magnetite is a commodity of decarbonised green iron. What was clear today at the conference was the interest that international investors and governments have in what Australia, and indeed South Australia, is doing in the hydrogen story.

We have the best coincident wind and solar resources anywhere in the world. The government has collapsed six pieces of legislation into one for the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Act, which allows us to better allow and regulate the production of gigawatt scale off-grid renewable energy. Why would you need that level of off-grid renewable energy? It's for industrial purposes.

What are those industrial purposes? Ultimately, we have a smelter at Olympic Dam, we have a smelter at Whyalla and we have a smelter at Port Pirie. We have abundant copper, we have

abundant magnetite and we have workforces in those three cities in Upper Spencer Gulf and Eyre Peninsula prepared to get involved in this industry.

We can export decarbonised green iron. We can expand our copper mining in the Mid North. We could improve on our magnetite resources and process them at Port Pirie through the Braemar province into Port Pirie. There are magnificent opportunities for this state. What this conference today is uncovering is the global interest in what we are doing.

A number of other jurisdictions, indeed even the former government, pinned all their hopes on the export of hydrogen to different jurisdictions. That may happen one day; we are also supportive of exporting hydrogen. But what the world is coming to conclude is that you will use the hydrogen where you make it. That means we will value-add and go up the processing chain and add complexity to our economy in South Australia.

It's an opportunity for us to create more jobs in this state, it's an opportunity for us to decarbonise and it's an opportunity for our industrial towns, our industrial heartbeat, towns like Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie, to roar again and roar again in a way that is going to make the world listen because we have the commodities that the world needs to decarbonise and this government, through its prosperity plan, is doing all it can to encourage it.

NURSE STAFFING LEVELS

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:34): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Is the minister aware of comments made by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation of South Australia about the challenges of covering rosters and, if so, does he agree with them? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: On 13 June, in response to a SafeWork SA report, Ms Elizabeth Dabars said:

...it's still not meeting the roster requirements and we know that if they're putting another 300 beds, which they've committed to in the...fairly short term, we believe that's another 1,000 nurses and midwives head count that they need just to make sure that those beds are staffed.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:35): I reiterate that this government is committed to hiring more nurses to work in our healthcare system and to not making nurses redundant and we have shown already over the past two years that we have hired above attrition an extra 691 nurses into our system, that is full-time equivalent nurses across the system.

At the same time, we have put an end to making frontline nursing positions redundant across our system and we are committed to making sure that, as we open up additional hospital beds, they have the appropriate nursing that those beds need and those patients need to operate safely and effectively and that is why the government and the Treasurer have put significant funding into SA Health across three budgets now, an additional \$7.1 billion, compared to what was in the budget under the previous government.

ELECTIVE SURGERY

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:36): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. How many patients have now had their elective surgeries cancelled as a result of the system-wide Code Yellow?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:36): I am happy to take the exact number on notice, but I believe it was over 500 that have been rescheduled and we want to have them rescheduled as soon as we possibly can. As of Friday, we have lifted 90 per cent of the restrictions in terms of elective surgery no longer in place, so as of yesterday my understanding was that there were only five reported deferrals of elective surgery that took place because of the Code Yellow.

CODE YELLOW

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:36): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister advise what additional workforce protections, if any, are in place ahead of another Code Yellow? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: Last Friday, the CEO of SA Health, Dr Robyn Lawrence, said on talkback radio:

I can't categorically tell you that we won't call another Code Yellow in due course for whatever reason that might be.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:37): Obviously, I support the comments from Dr Lawrence, which I'm sure would be the case as well if the opposition was in government. You can never tell what's going to happen in terms of the future, but what you can very clearly know is that, when you have more capacity in the system, you have more ability to be able to care for patients and that's why we are building hundreds and hundreds of additional hospital beds—330—to come online by the end of next year to provide significant additional capacity for patients who we need to care for but at the moment we don't have the appropriate number of hospital beds to care for.

LIMESTONE COAST

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:38): My question is for the Minister for Tourism. Could the minister please explain what the minister observed last week in her tour through the Limestone Coast? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: I had the fortunate pleasure of meeting with the minister and seeing the minister go through the Limestone Coast and observe the Coorong, the Cape Jaffa Lighthouse, Robe and the Naracoorte Caves and then go on to the Coorong, the Coonawarra and further down south. Topics like the Great Ocean Road, the LIV Golf, Gather Round and capturing Victorian funds were many of the things that were mentioned. Could the minister please explain this?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:39): Thank you so much for giving my answer, member for MacKillop. Can I just say thank you so much for being able to join me for a key part of that three-day trip down to our beautiful Limestone Coast.

As you said, I started my journey at Kingston, which was the first time I had actually had the opportunity to go up to the lighthouse and hear the story, but most important was to hear the dedication of the volunteers, who are very committed to the National Trust, to invite people there. I understand it's particularly popular during school holidays with the co-located caravan park not far away. Can I just say the signage in Kingston is outstanding, inviting people to move around the town, particularly obviously to get up to the coast and to enjoy the history and the stories that we have there.

The opportunity went on to go to Robe to have a roundtable collaboration where we had stakeholders come on. What was really fantastic was that I had people from the tourism industry who were different to the groups I had met in previous years. They have some new product that is coming in to the area. As much as it's great to go and have a schnitzel at the Cali Inn afterwards, we are seeing some new investment there as well.

As you have raised, there are some key issues about the Limestone Coast; and Robe, being very popular, of course, during the summer peak months and how we stretch that out. For me, it's a really beautiful part of South Australia, which has a unique selling point in the fact that it's so close to the western area of Victoria. We know that people are coming along the Great Ocean Road, and Victoria has a nice little loop area for people to go back to Victoria. What we want to do is encourage them to come through.

It was shared with me how many people are often going to Kangaroo Island and making the trip through Melbourne, through the Limestone Coast and on to KI. Because they often stay for one

night, we want them to stay for two nights. So part of the opportunity that presents to us is to have more product, more tourism product, and particularly a lot of interest in adventure tourism. Often the conversation is, 'Could this be the Queenstown of New Zealand?' We could make the Limestone Coast with its caves and its sinkholes something really unique, but we also have an amazing amount of traffic coming through.

What they did love is when we did have great events here like LIV Golf and Gather Round, and they did benefit from people staying there before and after. I say Mount Gambier council went out of its way to have a Before the Bounce program. They had lots of activations, lots of visits from former players. They want to expand that even more to make sure people are staying throughout the Limestone Coast before and after that event.

We met on a very cold morning at Naracoorte at the caves; 97,000 people went to visit the caves last year. It's a really important key part of our education of our great heritage. We think we might work on a new master plan. I will talk with the Deputy Premier about that because we haven't had one for a while. It could be definitely a key catalyst—it is already a catalyst for people to come—to show the whole location of wine and the great produce around.

I got to visit Wynns Estate at Coonawarra and at Penola I got to meet George the Farmer; the concept store is there. What a story that is to tell—the books, the educational program, and of course the TV snippets on ABC. A lot of people are disconnected from primary production and horticulture, and George the Farmer tells the story of why it's important. I love the fact that his wife is Dr Ruby with her PhD in agronomy. We went on to Mount Gambier and had a round table with the Limestone Coast LGA. It was a wonderful trip, and I can't wait to follow up with action.

The SPEAKER: Just a reminder for people heading to the South-East that it's almost glow-in-the-dark mushroom time at Glencoe. Just as soon as we get the big rains down at Glencoe, the home of the mighty Murphys, those mushrooms will be glowing.

STATE BUDGET

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (14:43): My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the house on credit rating agency reactions to the 2024-25 budget?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:43): I thank the member for Torrens for her question because, as members would be aware, only less than two weeks ago we delivered the 2024-25 state budget. This state budget like last year's budget continues the Malinauskas Labor government's strengthening of the state's finances.

We have not only got the budget back into surplus after three consecutive deficits under the previous Liberal government, but we are forecasting net operating surpluses across the forward estimates. Of course, the budget also shows that in the current financial year the debt position of the state budget is \$3.6 billion lower than what the previous government had forecast in their last budget—\$3.6 billion lower than what had been forecast by the previous Liberal government.

In the same year, the current financial year, the state government's net debt to revenue ratio is 28 percentage points lower than the former government's projections. This is a demonstrably stronger balance sheet that the state government now enjoys compared to what the previous government had. As I indicated previously to the house when I delivered the budget, we have a record \$25.6 billion infrastructure investment program over the next five years, which will see debt increase across the forward estimates by \$16 billion.

After each state budget—not just in South Australia, of course, but in all states and territories—the international independent credit rating agencies S&P Global, Moody's, and Fitch release their credit opinion of government finances. This is done after these rating agencies have had the opportunity to have a look at a state budget and assess the figures and projections within it.

Despite the credit rating not being officially confirmed until August, S&P commentary, released immediately after the budget was tabled, was that:

South Australia's credit metrics can withstand another rise in infrastructure spending, thanks to a likely increase in tax revenue. A strong property sector and a historically tight labor market should drive the revenue increase and ensure sufficient headroom at the 'AA+' [credit rating] level to accommodate the higher spending.

They also note that South Australia's public debt burden is mid-range, compared to its domestic peers. That is important, as all states and territories are continuing to increase infrastructure programs to ensure that their respective jurisdictions have the capacity to continue growing their economies into the future.

This is also an opinion that was shared by the Westpac economist Jameson Coombs who spoke at the UDIA luncheon on Friday. The shadow treasurer and I had the benefit of hearing Jameson speak and provide his view to us both—and the rest of the room—about what his thoughts were on the state's debt position. He reaffirmed essentially what S&P said: we are mid-pack, and the debt remains affordable, particularly given that the budget is in surplus.

This comes at a time when, after last year's state budget, we had S&P take the state's credit rating off negative watch and return it to stable. That was an important demonstration of confidence in the Malinauskas government's—

Mr Cowdrey interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: The member for Colton says, 'That's inflation.' No, that's not inflation: that's the opinion of independent credit analysts on the strength of the state's finances. They say it is strong.

COUNTRY MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:47): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister confirm how many involuntary country mental health patients have remained in country hospitals for greater than 24 hours during the system-wide Code Yellow?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:48): I don't expect the member would expect I would have that detail on hand, but I am happy to take it on notice.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. Does the minister stand by the comments made by the Premier in December 2022 on energy costs? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr PATTERSON: In December 2022, the Premier is quoted as saying, about nuclear energy, that:

It would be madness to contemplate sources of energy that are more expensive than the ones that we already have.

In May this year the 2023-24 CSIRO GenCost report found that at every stage for the next 25 years both large-scale and small modular nuclear reactors are cheaper per megawatt hour than hydrogen electricity generation.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:48): First things first, I absolutely support what the Premier said. He is absolutely right. I would say to my friend opposite that the nuclear debate is—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, dull, that's one part. It's also a distraction, and it is an excuse for lazy policymaking. It's lazy policymaking.

If the member had been listening to my answer to the house previously when I talked about hydrogen, hydrogen is not just a form of storage. Hydrogen offers a lot more. The government has detailed its policies on hydrogen as a form of storage through its generator and Hydrogen Jobs Plan.

It has also talked about, through the state prosperity plan, its plan to decarbonise critical minerals in this state and export them.

What the member fails to do with his devotion and love for nuclear energy is articulate a policy platform for it to stand on. Members opposite would have us believe: do nothing for the next 20 years while we develop a nuclear industry in this state, and from scratch, we will build a regulatory framework to govern the whole thing—from scratch, despite only a few years ago all the members who were in this parliament accepting a royal commission finding saying that nuclear energy did not suit South Australia's position. Not only did they not accept the generation of nuclear energy but they also opposed the storage of its waste.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Members opposite—the ones chortling now like children, those ones—now want us to stop the reinvestment of renewable energy, which is cheaper than any form of nuclear industry. They want us to stop that and they want us to build a brand-new nuclear industry.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Interjecting won't change facts. Screaming won't change facts. It just won't. Members opposite have yet to announce an energy policy, yet they ask questions about nuclear energy. It is more expensive and would take too long to build. I can say that today at the Hydrogen Conference and at the Copper to the World conference there were plenty of investors wanting to invest in decarbonisation, plenty wanting to invest in copper and plenty wanting to invest in hydrogen, but do you know who weren't there? Nuclear investors—not one. But, apparently, members opposite have a whole line of people who want to build these things. What rubbish. It's a distraction. It's a hoax.

After their nuclear policy, it will be a monorail through the city of Adelaide. Then after the monorail—

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: Point of order, sir.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hartley.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: This is debate, a breach of standing order 98. The minister is clearly off the rails in his answer.

The SPEAKER: I think it's just the one rail; it's not 'off the rails'. Monorail by its very definition would be just the one rail. Has the minister finished? No, he has more.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Hence the term 'mono'. No-one serious about the energy transformation in this country is talking about nuclear energy—no-one. There are two people talking about it in this state: Peter Dutton and David Speirs. That's it. No-one else is taking it seriously.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Sorry, and the member for Hammond. Other than the member for Hammond, the federal Leader of the Opposition and the state Leader of the Opposition, no-one else is taking the idea of nuclear energy in this state, as a form of generation, seriously. Why? We don't have the conditions for it. We don't have the large-scale industrial demand. We don't have the large population centres. We don't—

Mr Patterson: We can have submarines.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Again, propulsion systems are not the same as generators, but we will talk about that later.

MOUNT GAMBIER MIGRANT COMMUNITY

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Tourism. Can the minister inform us about her visit to Mount Gambier and the Migrant Resource Centre, and all that it stands for in our region?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:53): Thank you very much to the member for MacKillop. This week is Refugee Week; it goes from 16 to 22 June and the theme is 'Finding Freedom: Family'. In fact tonight I am hosting, alongside the Migrant Resource Centre, 50 people who are coming here to recognise Refugee Week.

When I was down in the Limestone Coast, I had the opportunity to visit the Mount Gambier office of the Migrant Resource Centre. It's a particularly unique opportunity when people come to a specific region. The current community from Myanmar, Congolese and Yazidis have been settled in the Limestone Coast region. Now, of course, this is alongside of a very vibrant Afghan population in Naracoorte and at Bordertown as well. Can I thank the Migrant Resource Centre for the work that they do when people come here for settlement.

I also had the opportunity to speak with STTARS, which is an abuse counselling service for survivors of torture and trauma. We had a very deep conversation about the work that people do, particularly when they have come from persecution and fear about governments and even police, and how building that trust in authorities sometimes takes time. And, of course, people have been in survival mode for quite some time, so as they develop their life here in Australia, in South Australia, and particularly the Limestone Coast, they need to continue to interact with people and understand the issues that they have to live with. It was a really special moment to speak to both of those organisations.

When we think about Refugee Week, we remind ourselves that more than a hundred million people are displaced around the world. In fact, the numbers are higher than ever before, whether it's the invasion of Russia into Ukraine, whether it's the military in Myanmar and, of course, in other areas. Here, in South Australia, we have supported quite a few different groups over the past 18 months, including people from Gaza, Sudan, and many other regions. We continue to do that to support people here, which is why we had such a strong election commitment for our multicultural community. Twenty-five per cent of South Australians are born overseas.

Of course, not everyone comes as a humanitarian migrant. In fact, a lot of people come as skilled migrants or international students, or maybe on a partner visa to settle their life here. Refugee Week is a time for us to reflect on people who were forced to flee. It was not a choice of their own, and for some of them it happened very suddenly. They had to pack up and leave. They left behind loved ones. They left behind death and destruction, and they came here to rebuild their life again. So I want to thank very much the Australian Migrant Resource Centre in Mount Gambier and STTARS for their work; they do a great job.

Before I was talking about tourism, and it was remiss of me not to thank Kate Napper, the regional tourism manager. She was intrinsically involved in organising my trip down to the Limestone Coast. She is from the area. She grew up in Keith, spent some time away, and has come back because she wants to give back to her local community. It was wonderful to be there. I really enjoyed my trip seeing stakeholders from both sides of my portfolio. What we see is a lot of energy, we see a lot of commitment, and a lot of love and connection to the area, and people want to share it, whether it is new migrant communities who are looking for work and wanting to work there, or for tourists who come and want to spend time in the Limestone Coast.

GUARDIAN FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (14:57): My question is to the Minister for Child Protection. How is the government supporting the role of the Guardian for Children and Young People?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD (Reynell—Minister for Child Protection, Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:57): I wholeheartedly thank the member for her question, and also for her enduring interest in ensuring that the children and young people with direct experience of the child protection and family support system are supported, heard, and have their interests advocated for.

I am really proud to inform the house today of our government's investment into the functions and role of the Guardian for Children and Young People, including her roles as Child and Young Person's Visitor and Training Centre Visitor. The role the guardian plays in the child protection and family support system is incredibly important, and I thank Shona Reid for her outstanding work and

steadfast commitment to advocating for and empowering the children and young people whose voices most need to be amplified.

When we came to government, we funded the Child and Young Person's Visitor function of the guardian with the provision of \$1.87 million over four years. Sadly, and shamefully, this vital function, which enables children and young people living in out-of-home care to share their stories and raise their matters of concern, had no funding whatsoever committed to it by the former government after its trial concluded in September 2019—nothing.

In contrast, our government is deeply committed to doing all that we possibly can to help support and listen to children and young people in ways that help ensure their safety, wellbeing and the best opportunities to thrive into adulthood. Unlike those opposite when they were in government, our government wants to help ensure the voices of children in care are heard, listened to and acted upon, which is why in this 2024-25 state budget our government has committed a further \$4.6 million over four years to the Guardian for Children and Young People, Training Centre Visitor, and Child and Young Person's Visitor.

The funding will allow additional support for the functions of Training Centre Visitor for young people in custody and the Child and Young Person's Visitor, which support those in contact with the child protection and family support system. The guardian has significant powers of oversight, review and advocacy. To meet the growing demand of these functions and the increased complexity of needs experienced by children and young people and the need for effective advocacy for them, our government's recent investment will enable a further five ongoing roles to support the guardian.

The Guardian for Children and Young People and I meet regularly to discuss ongoing reform to the child protection and family support system. Central to our process of reform—and, indeed, to all that we do—must be considering how we can best ensure that children and young people in care are at the centre of decision-making and play a key role in decision-making about their care and all aspects of their lives.

I wholeheartedly thank the guardian for her ongoing contribution to positive change that makes a real difference in the lives of children and young people engaged with the child protection and family support system. I thank her for her understanding of the need for whole-of-community, whole-of-government and whole-of-sector effort to drive change that makes that difference, and I thank the guardian for the commitment to fairness and inclusion and the right for all children to be heard and respected with which she approaches her crucial role.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:01): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. Can the minister confirm when the \$600 million hydrogen plant will be operational? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr PATTERSON: The recent update to the Electricity Statement of Opportunities from AEMO has indicated that the generators at Labor's \$600 million hydrogen plant are not expected until the summer of 2026-27.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:02): The last time I checked, the advice I received from the agency was that the generators will be available by the summer of 2025-26, as we have estimated. I have not received anything else otherwise. If the member has something he can illuminate the house with, I would like to see it.

POWER PRICES

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:02): I will leave that aside. This is again a question to the Minister for Energy and Mining. Does the government have a plan to reduce power prices for South Australians? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr PATTERSON: The Premier has criticised next-generation nuclear energy generation because it is an evolving technology. However, his government is happy to forge ahead with a \$600 million taxpayer-funded hydrogen plant that Labor has acknowledged will not lower power bills for households or small businesses.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:03): First and foremost, the mischaracterisation of the allocation of money for the generator—my friend the shadow minister should know better.

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: That would be ungentlemanly.

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia: Why? We're here today.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It's not sport, come on, let's keep it civil. Follow my lead.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: They just jump on the hook. I don't even have to bait them. I just throw it out and they jump on.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: There he is, the thinker. The generators are one aspect of the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, and no-one is saying that the generators are going to cost \$600 million. When the shadow minister quotes the CSIRO report, he doesn't quote the entire context. I think it is important that we give the house the proper context for levelised costs. The CSIRO determined the levelised costs—

Mr PATTERSON: Point of order: 98, sir. I just asked the question here. He had plenty of opportunity previously, but didn't. I would ask that he respond to the question I have asked at hand.

The SPEAKER: I think we will give the minister—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I don't need the help of the backbench, thank you. The minister has the call.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: In his explanation, the shadow minister talked about the levelised costs of nuclear power in comparison to hydrogen and renewables, so I thought I would give the actual costs that the CSIRO had published. The GenCost 2023-24 final report by CSIRO determined the levelised cost for electricity generation technologies. It estimated that the levelised cost of electricity in 2030 from a nuclear small modular reactor would be up to \$382 a megawatt hour. This compares to integrated renewables, at \$89 a megawatt hour. So when we are comparing the technologies that the shadow minister is calling experimental, versus the really expensive mythological services that he wants to have here—

Mr Patterson interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: He talks about small modular reactors, and he talks about experimental. They are highly speculative, because there are no such reactors in commercial operation outside former communist states. One SMR of about 70 megawatts operates on a ship in Russia, and in China, and some small experimental reactors are operational; and an SMR is in construction of about 125 megawatts.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that there are more than 70 SMR designs at various stages of development, and so their costs per unit of energy generation are likely to be higher than the cost per unit of conventional large-scale nuclear reactors. So the SMRs are even more expensive than large-scale generators.

In Georgia, the most recent nuclear generator built, which commenced operation in July 2023, that plant is—wait for it—\$US17 billion over budget, at a total cost of \$US31 billion.

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The member for Chaffey interjects on energy yet doesn't have the courage to get up and ask a question, because he just interjects. He interjects, sits quietly, then interjects, then sits quietly, smiles and laughs, has nothing to contribute. At least his colleague has the courage to get up and ask a question. A few weeks after the budget and nothing—just interjections. My point is that hydrogen technology is not experimental. Members opposite derided the grid-scale battery at Hornsdale as nothing but a big tourist attraction. It is now the template around the world for grid-scale storage, as will be hydrogen.

DISABILITY FUNDING

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:07): My question is to the Minister for Human Services. Has the minister met with or advocated to her federal Labor counterparts to seek restoration of commonwealth funding towards the JFA Purple Orange, Enabled Youth Disability Network and Our Voice South Australia?

The Hon. N.F. COOK (Hurtle Vale—Minister for Human Services, Minister for Seniors and Ageing Well) (15:07): Thanks for the question, it is really important—and great work done by those organisations. I have had a conversation with those organisations and they have been part of issues that we have spoken with the federal minister about, yes.

Grievance Debate

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (15:08): I rise to acknowledge World Environment Day, which was on 5 June and has been celebrated right across South Australia with a range of events across the state. It has been a privilege to attend some of these events over the past couple of weeks, both in my own local community, but also beyond. One such event was only a couple of weeks ago, which was the night of nights for environmentalists in South Australia: the SA Environment Awards, which I had the privilege of attending along with the Deputy Premier.

This is an award that has been running since 1998, and it is an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate South Australians who have given their time, their expertise and their passion to protecting what I see as one of South Australia's greatest assets, our natural environment. It is presented in partnership with the Conservation Council, as well as Green Adelaide, the Department for Environment and Water, and the University of Adelaide's Environment Institute. I thank them for their work in putting the awards together.

I also congratulate the award winners across all six categories of the awards, including the winner of the Jill Hudson Award for Environmental Protection, Yuri Poetzi; the Conservation Science Prize Award, Dr Dominic McAfee; the Working Together Award winner, which went to Aussie Bread Tags for Wheelchairs; the Innovation Award, which went to SA Grassroots Ecosystem; the Leif Justham Young Achiever Award this year to Gemma Dawe; and also particularly congratulations to the Green Adelaide's Pelzer Prize winner, Dr Mark Ellis.

I particularly acknowledge Dr Mark Ellis because he is Burnside council's own. He is the coordinator for Conservation and Land Management at the City of Burnside. In that role he leads conservation work and management for over 130 hectares of reserves and manages the council's urban biodiversity sites. I am told he is also responsible for a very popular program at council, which is their native plant giveaway, and also the restoration of the Michael Perry Botanic Reserve. I particularly congratulate Dr Mark Ellis of Burnside council for taking out that award this year.

Speaking of local award winners in the environmental space, I also had the opportunity to attend Burnside council's Environment and Sustainability EXPO on the weekend, which was also attended by the Deputy Premier. It was an enormously successful event, featuring a sustainable fashion market, food trucks, information stalls, the launch of a new sustainable waste management system at the council chambers and also an opportunity to present a whole range of awards to local award winners.

I want to congratulate those winners, including the runners up, the Australian War Widows, who were doing a lot of work around preventing the blight of fast fashion and also about sustainable floral tributes and wreaths, which is a good reminder for many of us in this place who often have to

lay wreaths that we should do so in a way that does not use microplastics, and perhaps rely more on native plants.

We heard all about the Rose Park childcare centre's sustainability practices. I am going to visit their worm farm soon. They were a runner up in these awards as well for all their sustainable practices. There is the Botanica Enviros Club, which is a club operating at the new Glenside development, led by David Everett. They commenced developing a substantial understorey project beneath trees in Banksia Park in the new Glenside development. I helped them with some of their tree planting about a year ago and it has really come a long way since. I congratulate David Everett and the whole club as very worthy award winners.

The overall winner was the Rose Park Primary School, which won it for a range of reasons, including their Green Thumbs Garden, and also their major project at Gurney Reserve planting a lot of trees. I have helped them out with a bit of it as well. It is a genuine community atmosphere and a community exercise. They are a very deserved award winner.

CITY OF MARION

S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (15:13): I would like to take the opportunity this afternoon to recognise the many positive statements that the City of Marion have made over the last couple of years in regard to their commitment to trees and our environment. The City of Marion wants to preserve the large trees in our council. When asked about what are the priorities that council should focus on, the following theme emerged: increased tree canopy coverage and environmental protection. What did the community tell us? We asked the community: what is the one word that comes to mind when you visualise a great Marion council in 2040? Number 1, green. Number 2, sustainable. In their other strategic planning documents, they state:

We will continue to improve sporting and community facilities, encourage business, and bring life to our city with better looking streets and thousands of extra trees.

They also state:

Trees are a community asset that provide tangible benefits to the public and we therefore need to be consistent in our decision making.

I emphasise 'we therefore need to be consistent in our decision making'. There are many statements that Marion council has made in support of trees and our environment and their commitment to a sustainable future, yet two weeks ago the City of Marion made the decision to cut down two significant trees, trees that our community desperately care about, to make way for a private, for-profit, interstate organisation on council land, purely to give the council guaranteed income of 42 years of rent.

Not only are the community worried about the loss of two significant trees, trees which provide habitat, provide shade, cool our community and are of course a beautiful visual amenity, but they are also concerned about the increased traffic on Sturt Road that this private, for-profit ice rink will bring to our community. This section of Sturt Road is at the intersection of Marion and Sturt Roads, which has the highest number of accidents in our city. The highest number of car accidents in our city are at the closest intersection to where they want to build a private, for-profit ice rink in our community, which will only bring increased traffic.

In addition, the sports clubs at this precinct at 262 Sturt Road all want to grow. We have football clubs, cricket clubs, gridiron clubs, softball clubs and soccer clubs all using this space, all of which have waiting lists they want to be able to provide for our community. I would have thought that a council would prioritise supporting community sports clubs in preference to a private, interstate, for-profit organisation, namely an ice rink.

In addition to this, we have the Marion Tennis Club on this land. Marion Tennis Club, another community sporting organisation, has a membership that has doubled in the last few months and is a tennis club that plays all year round, yet Marion council determined earlier this year to bulldoze it. Marion council want to bulldoze one of their own sporting clubs in order to make way for another development.

That development, in this case, is worthy of its proposal because it is another community sports club, which has a large playing group and wants to expand and I absolutely support that, but that place where the ice rink is proposed to go could absolutely be a space that continues to be open space and continues to be accessible to our community and the Marion Tennis Club, or one of our other community sports clubs, could take up that land. I know the cricket club is looking for a place to put nets. They could use it and it would still be open and accessible land for our community.

I invite you all to come along on Saturday morning at 10.30 to 262 Sturt Road and join with me and the community and the sports clubs and the Conservation Council to stand together to sink the rink.

MORPHETT ROAD LEVEL CROSSING

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:18): I take the opportunity in parliament today to acknowledge and thank the 1,332 people so far who have signed my petition that calls on the state government to work with the federal government to fully fund and construct either an overpass or an underpass at the Morphett Road tram crossing while that line is closed to make sure that this major traffic bottleneck is fixed.

Whether it is during the morning peak hour when traffic is travelling along Morphett Road into the city, or in the afternoon starting from the school pickups and going right through to the end of the day as the last of the commuters make their way home from work, or whether it is just on the weekends, especially on race days, whichever it is, the red lights flashing, the bells ringing and the boom gates down signal one thing and that is delays. Now, these delays are caused more or less—and only getting worse—because of the urban infill going on in Glengowrie, Morphettville and Camden Park, as well as the other suburbs, which has increased substantially over the years.

The number of responses to the petition shows that there is massive community frustration at the congestion and delays that are caused at this major traffic bottleneck. I would like to highlight some of the responses to the petition, which really gives an insight into why people want to see a solution here. An emergency services worker said:

As a firefighter responding to emergency incidents we get stopped endlessly on the way to fire calls at the crossing and have to wait for the tram and traffic to clear, this has time issues for people needing an emergency response. Potentially causing greater injuries or death.

Another says:

I was a member of the SES and was constantly impeded from responding to urgent incidents when a tram was crossing due to the light cycle at Anzac Hwy and delays due to residual traffic. It's negligent to not fix this problem intersection whilst the tram is shut down and less travelled intersections are given priority.

A teacher has said:

I work at Immanuel Primary School in Novar Gardens. I avoid this route because of this crossing and would use this to go to and from work if it were fixed. I also see the significant bank up traffic that occurs from the end of the school day for around 3 hours. I have concerns about children's safety with accessing the tram and crossing the intersection with impatient drivers. The whole area needs to be fixed urgently.

A frustrated parent wrote:

I have kids at Immanuel and often drive through this intersection. I have seen so many near misses, it's a death waiting to happen. I've also been a parent volunteer with kids and had to walk school kids across Anzac Hwy to that tram stop. Both the Anzac highway crossing and navigating the traffic is dangerous.

I will finish off with a simple one, which we can all empathise with:

It's a nightmare, you can be stuck there for way too long.

The responses from the Morphett community reinforce to me why I have been advocating for a solution since before I was elected as a member of parliament in 2018. I will continue to fight for a solution for this bottleneck to reduce congestion and improve road safety at this intersection.

I understand that the intersection is a complicated one, with the tram crossing being so close to Anzac Highway but also near the Sturt Creek and the tram barn nearby. Of course, these complications require a detailed design, and that is why in March 2022 I worked with my federal Liberal colleagues to secure funding to undertake a design for this intersection. I am pleased that

design work has commenced in 2023. As we move towards 2025, the Glenelg tramline will be closed between Glenelg and the city to allow construction of an overpass at Marion Road and Cross Road, which is a perfect opportunity to also fix the Morphett Road tram crossing while that tramline is closed.

Recently we have had both the federal and state governments hand down their budgets and in a bitter blow neither the federal nor the state budget has allocated any funding to fix the Morphett Road tram crossing. While disappointing, it just makes me more determined to redouble my efforts until the government commits to a solution at this bottleneck. I again thank everyone who has signed my petition to fix the Morphett Road tram crossing. I will continue to get more signatures for the petition to hammer home to the government that there is overwhelming support to fix the Morphett Road tram crossing.

VAN DER PEET, MS C.

Ms O'HANLON (Dunstan) (15:23): I rise today to honour the life of Carol van der Peet. Sadly, Carol passed away recently after a short illness at the too-young age of 63. People pass away and, yes, too young, all too often, so why am I honouring the life of this woman? The answer is simple: Carol van der Peet was a person of the best kind. She was someone who dedicated so much of her life caring for others and, in particular, Carol cared for veterans and the extended veterans community.

I think most of us in society know of and value the important role veterans have played and continue to play in our community. They have shaped the country we live in today. Many of us express this sincerely on ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day; however, some people, people like Carol, ensure veterans feel cared for and appreciated every day. Carol van der Peet was such a person.

Carol loved and was loved by Jeff Barrett, who I welcome here to the gallery today, as well as Carol's brother-in-law, Ian. While I did not know Carol well, I knew I wanted to acknowledge her life and mourn her passing because I know how important the people who support our veterans are.

Jeff sent me some notes on his time with Carol and it is obvious to me that theirs was a beautiful love story. As Jeff says: destiny, a love that just happened. They had a life of finding joy in the simple things, mowing acres of lawn together with their ride-on mower, and Jeff and Carol created their own personal playground out at Mount Barker with a flying fox, climbing ropes, swings and a dam.

It is evident to me that what Jeff loved most about Carol was her incredibly kind and caring nature. Carol appreciated the service of veterans and she wanted them to feel loved and appreciated. She showed her care with her own commitment and service to the Vietnam Veterans' Association and all of the veterans advocacy organisations in Murray Bridge. Carol was a committee member of the Aldgate RSL and Jeff's secretary at the Mount Barker RSL.

I met Carol as the membership officer at the Royal Australian Regiment Association in Burnside, where my husband, James, and I attend from time to time—not as often as we would both like. Carol used her role there to chat for hours to members in the club and on the phone, eventually getting around to asking them to renew their membership for another year.

She also helped Jeff on the committee of the 3rd Battalion (3RAR) where they joined together with the Queensland corporation and 3RAR South Australia to become 3RAR Old Faithful. Carol loved being mother duck to the Army cadets. Carol and Jeff would have the cadets over for a sleepover and put on a movie night and BBQ and Carol would help out on cadet bivouacs where she would dress up as Rambo to make sure those young cadets kept in line. However, I have no doubt that it was the best fun because everyone knew how much Carol loved looking after them. It was also her way of making sure the female cadets knew that they had one tough cookie looking after them and everyone, even Jeff, knew there was no coming between Carol and the female cadets.

Carol also loved nature. When she and Jeff bought their little home in Mount Barker she set about planting it out with plants and flowers to attract insects, birds, possums, echidnas, lizards, the occasional snake and a koala. Jeff tells me that if we go to Amblemead we should enjoy the little lake that Carol was instrumental in creating after taking on the developers to ensure continued water flow.

Carol was also a fierce advocate for the community. She worked with Murray Bridge council and the Mount Barker District Council as a social worker and dementia care coordinator. Carol was also a member of the Mount Barker residents' association.

Another of Carol's loves was travel and she and Jeff enjoyed adventures that ensured she saw the best of what the South Australian and Australian outback had to offer, travelling from the beautiful Murray River to the Kimberley, Broome and Fitzroy Crossing. Carol's other love was her fur babies who Jeff loved too, from their lovely Jack Russell Bronson Chica Doro, their hens, and Ruby, who is sure Carol will come home for the quarter meat pie Jeff said she left under Carol's pillow.

Carol will be missed by all who knew her, from Colonel Doc Beard, Colonel Peter Scott and David White, who Jeff served with in Vietnam, to the many other veterans, Vietnam veterans and contemporary veterans Carol would check in on. I am certain I am only taking a small liberty in thanking Carol on behalf of all those whose lives were touched by her kindness.

Most of all, Carol will be missed by Jeff Barrett, her partner of 35 years, and her sister Sue and brother-in-law Ian and the rest of her loving family. Carol was bright, fun and so very caring. She did not complain. She put others' needs before her own. She will be missed.

PATERSON, MR N.D.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:28): I rise to talk about a dear friend of mine, Norman Donald Paterson OAM. I was very privileged on Saturday, not just as a friend and the member for Hammond but as the shadow emergency services minister, to present Norm with his medal for 60-years' service to the Country Fire Service. Norm is in poor health, but it was a real privilege to be able to present this medal to Norm Donald Paterson OAM. It was well deserved for all his community service over the years, but today I will speak more about his service to the Country Fire Service. Norm held all the positions, as you do at a station like Cooke Plains.

Norm is a patriarch of Paterson Bulk Transport, which people would see up and down the roads; a very successful business over decades. I was just talking to the current captain of Cooke Plains, Paul Simmons, the local mayor, the Mayor of Coorong District Council, and he recounted to me a couple of stories of Norm's experience with the Country Fire Service at Cooke Plains. As you just heard, it is over six decades, so some of these things were in the days when there was a little bit less regulation when you went out to fight fires.

They were at a tennis match at Cooke Plains one day, and obviously everyone was in their whites. All of a sudden down the road there was a samphire fire, and they roared out in the truck. It was fairly close to the town, and Paul said he has vivid memories of Norm jumping off, grabbing the rig and knapsack and saving the day, putting out some samphire that they could not quite get to with the truck. He also said they went back and finished their tennis game, but was not sure whether Cooke Plains won or not.

These are just a few stories, but another fire they fought was a fuel fire at the Taillem Bend fuel depot—obviously up the road a bit from Cooke Plains. They had an old petrol fire truck, and Paul said there were several of them in the back and Norm in the front, and he was doing well over 70 mph at the time to get to that one to assist Taillem Bend and other crews to extinguish that fire.

Norm's service to the Country Fire Service has been absolutely exemplary over 60 years, and in the true spirit of the fire service. As I said, he held multiple roles: lieutenant, captain, all the roles someone like that would hold being in a small, local brigade. I remember that I had a fire at home one day and Norm flew past in a ute. He said, 'Where are the hydrants?' I said, 'Right, there's a line out the front on the Dukes Highway and there's one up Parkin Hall Road up behind us.' Anyway, that secured the hydrants so that we could fast fuel the fire trucks. I certainly thank Norm for his service, the exemplary service he has delivered not just to the local community but also to South Australia.

In the little bit of time I have left I want to talk about why service with the Country Fire Service is so important, and why we need to look after our firefighters to make sure we can get those 60-year veterans like Norm, get that service that so many people want to do for their communities. It was terrible to see that we had to push for an inquiry in the upper house—it is now a house committee, a standing committee of the parliament—looking into the way volunteers and staff are treated at the

Country Fire Service. This was done after some wrangling on how to get the committee up; we could not get it through a select committee, but it is now a standing committee.

I urge volunteers and staff who have been disenfranchised by some of the disciplinary actions that have been taken to present to this committee. I was on a forum the other night with the deputy chief, and there were other CFS people on board, looking at the process as it has been. There are 10 steps in the disciplinary process, and that is ridiculous. It needs reform, and that is why we need people coming in to present to this committee immediately. To provide a submission people can email Shane Hilton, Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on Occupational Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation, at OccHealthCommittee@parliament.sa.gov.au or write to GPO Box 572, Adelaide SA 5001. The submission deadline is Friday 28 June 2024. People can ask to be heard in camera or confidentially, and can either just submit their submissions or ask to be present and present to the whole committee.

In closing, I would again like to congratulate Norm Paterson on his 60-year career with the Country Fire Service.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr HUGHES (Giles) (15:34): I rise today to talk about the ongoing situation in Whyalla with the blast furnace. It could be said, to use the words of Dickens, that it is both the best of times and the worst of times in Whyalla—the best of times, given the promise of what the future holds.

Members opposite would be interested to know that construction, or at least earthworks, will start on the hydrogen power plant towards the end of this year, so that is good news and positive news. There are also other potential projects in the broader region that will serve to benefit not just Whyalla but Port Augusta and Port Pirie and elsewhere on Eyre Peninsula. The Northern Water project has not been signed off on; it has some way to go.

I know there is strong bipartisan support for that project as it will be an enabler for BHP to expand copper production in the north of the state, and the potential to increase copper production threefold is something of a game changer. Of course, magnetite was also mentioned today by the Minister for Energy and Mining, and the abundance of magnetite in this state also gives us some hope for the future.

But at the moment the community of Whyalla is in a very difficult place. Contrary to the impression—partly driven by the media and partly driven by GFG—that the blast furnace is up and running, that is not the case. When is it going to be up and running? There is a question mark about how long that is going to take. What was achieved was fixing up the damage to the external shell of the blast furnace, but that got us back to where we were before that happened in the attempt to get the blast furnace back up and running.

Once again, I take my hat off to those workers who are involved in getting the blast furnace up and running, because what they are going through at the moment is really tough stuff. Of course, because the blast furnace is not operating, the permanent workforce who were working night shifts—not all of them, but a significant number—are on day shift now, which represents a 30 per cent cut in pay. That is not to mention the impact on labour hire people who are out of work and the impact on contractors and their employees. So it is a serious situation.

There is no hiding the fact that if we get the blast furnace up and running again, the fundamental issues at that ageing plant, an ageing plant in general, have not gone away. We do need a technology transition. When that is going to be achieved, how that is going to be achieved and even by whom that is going to be achieved are real questions that people ask: what is the nature of the transition? How smooth is it going to be? There is, at the moment, a degree of scepticism amongst significant parts of the workforce.

Unfortunately, given the challenges at the steelworks, to add to the challenges in Whyalla we see that there have been job layoffs at the mine sites. Initially, it was 38 to 50 people; another 40 have been added. I asked the question regarding the transition from the hematite resource, which is running out, to magnetite and how many additional jobs will be lost, but that is a question that cannot be answered at the moment. So that is more uncertainty for the Whyalla community.

Unfortunately, with GFG the community has seen a whole range of their promises in the past, none of which have been delivered. You could say that at least the plant is still there, but the promises—whether it is the Cultana solar project, the new mill, pumped hydro, the list goes on—have not been delivered. Now we face the prospect of the electric arc furnace and the direct reduction iron unit, which is central to any future, being subject to a bankable feasibility study which will not be completed until the end of this year or next year: yet a further kicking of the can down the road and more uncertainty for the community.

Private Members' Statements

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Ms PRATT (Frome) (15:39): On 29 November last year I tabled my first petition, but sadly it was about the closure of the Freeling Police Station, and the community calling for it to be reinstated. The comments I am making today are really about cause and effect. Many months on from the permanent closure of the much-needed Freeling Police Station, my community are now up in arms because we are seeing an increase in crime.

In the last 24 hours, I have been contacted by members of the Freeling community who are very distressed and upset about the fact that since we have seen the closure of the police station there has been a threefold increase in shoplifting at the local supermarket, the fabulous recreation centre has been broken into four times in the last month and, sadly, the people who volunteer at the recreation centre feel like their time and efforts are all for nought.

We are calling for a review of the Freeling Police Station by the minister, who I have written to and communicated with, but theft, looting, speeding, graffiti, break-ins and general disregard for a very proud community dedicated to volunteering and looking after itself is a great disappointment.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:41): On Friday night, I had the honour of attending the launch dinner for the third annual Hope Cup. The Hope Cup is an annual cricket match between the Gawler police and our local Riverside Salvation Army, which is filled with local residents and celebrities who donate money for a chance to be selected to play in the Riverside team. However, the Hope Cup is more than just a game of cricket; it is a symbol of hope for those grappling with the harsh realities of homelessness in Gawler and surrounding areas. And I talk about homelessness at the hard edge: those who sleep rough.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of church leader Darren Dwyer and officer in charge of Gawler police, Senior Sergeant Rob Mowday, for putting this initiative together. More than \$80,000 has been raised from the past two cricket matches, and this has gone into building lockers for the homeless, a secure place for the homeless to store their belongings during the day, leading to increased confidence and opportunities as they have less anxiety over their items being stolen. The program also offers a breakfast and shower service, and a street survival kit. This initiative has been transformative, with individuals finding homes and employment, and truly changing their lives and our community.

The launch night alone on Friday night saw almost \$7,000 raised through the 150 tickets sold to people to attend the event, and during the auction we saw the power of community and a spirit of giving to support a cause that makes a tangible difference in the lives of those who are most vulnerable in our community.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:42): I rise, too, to make a few comments. A few weeks back the South Australian government attempted to pat themselves on the back for establishing Invest SA. In reality, they had re-established a program whose work was already being done by the Department for Trade and Investment. So what has this actually done for South Australia? It has actually taken the investment out of trade and investment, created more red tape and is less streamlined, and it has shifted the goalposts—and this is the alarming part of what the government has done. Previously, DTI targets required facilitating a value of foreign investment into South Australia. The word 'foreign' has now been removed in last year's budget target, which means it's a broken promise.

Labor told us that re-establishing Invest SA would create 4,000 new jobs every year. In actual fact, they only managed to create 800 jobs in the last 12 months, less than a quarter of their goal. In

contrast, under the Liberals in 2021-22, DTI was directly responsible for half a billion dollars of foreign investment into South Australia, and the creation of 7,600 new jobs in 12 months. This was all while we were in the middle of a pandemic. Labor are riding on the coat-tails of a former Liberal government's strong trade policy and outlook, and their poor economic management means that having to shift the goalposts makes them a broken promise government.

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (15:44): I rise to congratulate the Brinkworth Primary and Early Childhood Centre on its 50-year anniversary. It was a pleasure to attend there last Tuesday 11 June, to celebrate with the community, and they came out in force to mark that milestone. It is a reasonably bittersweet day for the community, as 50 years ago the area school was resized and became a primary school only and the town lost some of the service that it had enjoyed for a little while. But nonetheless, they celebrated that anniversary and we had a wonderful time there.

One of the by-products of that downsizing was that we now have a primary school with these wonderful, expansive grounds, a swimming pool, multiple courts and those sorts of things, so the kids who are currently enrolled there enjoy those wonderful facilities. They have a wonderful staff, led by Caitlin McDaid, the principal, who does a tremendous job at that school. It was a real pleasure to be there.

Helen and Bruce Weckert gave a talk on behalf of the history group. Most notably, the story that I remember best was about a former bus driver who did a run. Once he had dropped the kids off and taken his bus back to his farm, he was able to take the seats out and use it to transport the pigs from his piggery to slaughter after that. So he was getting double use out of that bus way back when, and was able to put the seats back in in time to pick the kids up in the afternoon run. That was a funny story from Helen and Bruce. We thank them and the history group for their presentation and for the supplies that they had around the place.

I was able to see Fred Groom while I was there as well. Fred has welcomed me into his home previously and showed me his wonderful *Eremophila* public garden and talked me through the litany of things that he is involved in within the community. It was wonderful to see him recognised as the Wakefield Regional Council Citizen of the Year this year; congratulations to him on that. I thank him for all the service he does across a litany of groups, headlined by 50 years of service to the CFS.

Parliamentary Committees

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENDOMETRIOSIS

The Hon. N.F. COOK (Hurtle Vale—Minister for Human Services, Minister for Seniors and Ageing Well) (15:46): I move:

That Ms O'Hanlon be appointed to the committee in place of Mr Odenwalder (resigned).

Motion carried.

Bills

APPROPRIATION BILL 2024

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (15:46): Before the break, I was talking about this state budget as being a typical Labor budget where we have seen record spending, record debt and record taxation. I conducted a bit of a compare and contrast of various taxation policy and concluded that under Labor, South Australians have ever been paying more tax in the history of our state; under the Greens, we know that South Australians will pay even more tax with their new developer tax, their new holiday home tax, and their commitment to increase land tax and payroll tax; and, under the Liberals, we have committed to lower your taxes.

I spoke of three policies that we have been talking about over the past few days and weeks, including our commitment to reduce stamp duty for all first-home buyers, our commitment to reduce payroll tax for small business by lifting the threshold and exempting apprentices, and our commitment

to scrap the GP tax. The choice is clear: more tax than ever under Labor, even more tax under the Greens, or the Liberals who want to reduce your taxes.

I was moving on to talk a little bit about some local issues and celebrating two wins in this budget following significant advocacy by me and my community, including the \$80 million in funding for school road safety. I have urged the government now to roll that out in my electorate, particularly at schools that are on or close to Kensington Road and Portrush Road. There is also the \$16 million in the budget to crack down on illegal vaping and tobacco sales. Once again, I urge the government to roll out that package in my local area and to investigate new stores that have opened in Stonyfell and Marryatville to help alleviate and respond to very significant community concerns.

There were two main disappointments locally in the budget for me. Before this budget, I was calling for increased funding for schooling capacity in the eastern suburbs. Unfortunately, we do not see that in this state budget. We do see tens of millions of dollars being spent on new school sites, but mainly in the northern suburbs and also in Mount Barker.

We have a real problem in the eastern suburbs, which is that our schools are at capacity. We have three local primary schools in my electorate all of which, I think, other than Burnside Primary School, now are subject to capacity management plans. We have two high schools: Marryatville High School and Glenunga International High School. Glenunga is subject to a capacity management plan as well. Indeed, it is projected to be 153 students over capacity this year. Marryatville High School, which is also under extreme pressure, is projected to be 136 students over capacity this year. It is more than just numbers—it affects people in my community greatly. Local kids deserve to be able to go to local schools.

I go back and look at the correspondence I have received or the people I have met with only in the last six months or so. A family I met from Linden Park on 6 December is desperately seeking to get into Glenunga International High School. On 4 April: a different family from Burnside has been unable to get their children enrolled at any local high school. On 11 April: a different family living in Frewville—they had just moved into Frewville—are seeking to get their child into either Glenunga or Marryatville, but both were not possible. On 4 June: another constituent from St Georges who I have been dealing with for quite some time is still unable to get his daughter enrolled at Glenunga International High School. As recently as this week: another constituent who I have been dealing with for a little while now has had children on the waitlist for a spot at Glenunga since 2022. They are still unable to get into a local high school. It is not good enough.

We really need to increase schooling capacity in the eastern suburbs so local children can go to local schools, and I would urge the government to consider either a new school in the eastern suburbs or substantial investment to increase schooling capacity.

Ms CLANCY (Elder) (15:51): I rise today in support of this Appropriation Bill. I am really proud that we have for the third year running delivered a very clear Labor budget: a budget that is focused on housing, cost-of-living relief, jobs and skills and of course, importantly, health. The cost-of-living measures have been really widely welcomed in my community. Whether I have been at a train station, a school gate, out doorknocking yesterday or on the phones, people are really pleased to know that they have been heard by this government. We understand that these are difficult and challenging times at the moment, and I am glad that we are able to provide some relief.

We are providing \$51.5 million in the 2023-24 financial year, so right now, to provide a once-off additional Cost of Living Concession payment of \$243.90 to all recipients who have received the payment in this financial year. Those payments should have started to hit people's bank accounts this week, which is really important, particularly at a time when people are starting to get their energy bills as people have started to try to heat up their homes. We have also doubled the Cost of Living Concession for next financial year for tenants and Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders. That aligns it to that of home owners, which supports around 73,000 people.

At the school gates over the last couple of weeks, since we announced the budget, people have been really excited to hear about our expansion of the Sports Vouchers program. I know there is a bit of contention about it being called the sports program, because we keep expanding it. So it is not just sports but it is dance. As a proud Girl Guide, I am happy to know that Scouts and Girl Guides are also included in it, and we have also expanded this program to include music lessons.

So there really is something for every child in this program now, and people are able to use the full \$200 on one activity or they can use \$100 on one activity and the other \$100 on the other. It gives families flexibility, and it also provides an opportunity to some families who potentially have not been able to participate in extracurricular activities at all, so it makes it a lot easier for those who have already been doing it but have started to feel the pinch.

The materials and services charge subsidy is another thing people are really excited about. So for another year, we are providing a reduction to the materials and services charge, but we are actually making a \$200 reduction this year. That is very exciting and well received.

One thing that does come up a lot, and I think I have probably even shared it in this chamber before, is people living in social housing talk about the difficulty of keeping their home cool in summer and warm in winter. We know that that is a challenge for many people. It is something you think about a lot as you think about your energy bills.

I am really happy to see in this budget \$35.8 million over three years as part of a social housing energy upgrade initiative. That can help people to put in some new insulation, which I know for one family in Mitchell Park will be a real lifesaver if they are able to get it, and also replace some inefficient appliances. Those things are better for the environment, it is better for people's comfort and it is also better for their bottom line as well.

We are also extending the public transport concessions. I cannot tell you how many people in my community have shared with me how happy they are that we made it possible for people, Seniors Card holders, to travel on public transport free all the time, every day. It has made a real difference. People are using it. People are not panicking that their doctor's appointment is at 9.15 so they are going to have to pay for public transport as well. It has made it so much easier for so many people and I am really happy that we did that.

I was extra excited to see that we are also extending public transport concessions to all Health Care Card holders. That benefits around 15,000 people in our state, saving about \$2.25 per trip when people use their Metrocard.

We also have some relief for our businesses. While we are obviously very proud of how well our economy is going, we do also know that some small businesses are having some challenges. It is really good to see that we have the small business energy grants. That is a grant process that a number of small businesses can go through to either make their premises more energy efficient or purchase more energy efficient equipment. That will make a difference to small businesses as well, making things a bit more affordable.

Last year, straight after the budget, I stood up in St Marys with the beautiful Tim and Vanessa and their little boy, Fletcher—who is probably running around everywhere now but was very little at the time—as well as the Premier and the Treasurer and we were talking about our changes to stamp duty for first-home buyers. Tim and Vanessa and Fletcher are going to be moving into their new home in the next couple of weeks.

Around this time last year they were struggling to get into the market and very soon they are going to be moving into a new home, and I am really proud that we were able to support them to do that through this initiative. I am very sad that they are leaving the mighty electorate of Elder, but thankfully they are moving into the electorate of my good friend, the member for Gibson, and so I know they will be well taken care of there.

Today, in this budget, we are providing relief to first-home buyers buying a new home or building a new home regardless of the cost. We are removing that property value threshold, which will make that relief accessible to a lot more people.

Also in housing, we are spending \$135.8 million over five years to build and upgrade around 442 additional social housing dwellings by 30 June 2028. That is funded from the commonwealth government's Social Housing Accelerator Payment (SHAP) and it is being distributed across five SAHA and nine community housing projects in areas including Camden Park, Oaklands Park, Tonsley in my hood, Seaton and Eastwood.

I would like to now talk about our work in early childhood. I think all of us, regardless of whether we are parents, grandparents or wherever we might be in our journey in life, can recognise and appreciate the importance of early education. So much happens in those first few years. Our work as a government, through the royal commission and our significant investment, being \$1.9 billion over the period of 2032-33, is going to make a huge difference long term.

I know people might have gotten a bit sick during the last election campaign of us constantly saying 'for the future', but this really is for the future. Setting up the next generation with the skills they need early on and identifying challenges and difficulties really early so children can get the support they need is incredibly important.

One thing I am really proud of that we are doing in this space is making kindy, or preschool as some people call it, more accessible to more people. I know that for a lot of working families kindy hours are really challenging to make work. For us, it was our neighbours who did pick-up and drop-off one day, we did drop-off one day, my dad did pick-up the other and we could not make the half day work as it was just too challenging for us and that was even with a lot of support.

Our pilot for out-of-hours preschool care is really exciting. That starts next term and two kindies in my electorate, Clarence Gardens and Clarence Park, are both involved. I am really excited to see how that plays out because I would love to see it rolled out more broadly so every family is able to access kindy. I am really excited that three year olds are soon going to be able to as well.

Obviously, we are investing a significant amount of money in health, which is one of our greatest priorities along with housing. We are full of ideas, and we are full of action to implement them. We have significantly built our workforce. We are investing in beds. We are investing in new ambulance stations and rebuilds. In this budget, we have funding to rebuild five stations, including the Marion station, which is based in Mitchell Park. That was originally going to just be an upgrade, but if you talk to anyone at that station they will let you know that there is a fair bit of work to be done, including a giant crack that keeps getting wider and wider, so a rebuild really does make sense. That is in addition to the brand new additional station that we are building at the Repat.

We also announced \$5 million over four years in youth mental health support. That includes an expansion of the Child and Adolescent Virtual Urgent Care Service to include mental health. I know a number of people who have used that virtual care service, and they swear by it. I think this expansion will really make a big difference, along with workshops to support parents with children or teens with mental illness. It will be a great support to them to know how to navigate through the system and help them to help the children in their care. It also has funding for the organisation Eating Disorders Families Australia to support families and carers of young people with eating disorders.

This work adds to our government's significant commitments to improve the mental health of children and young people, including building 10 extra mental health beds in the new Women's and Children's Hospital, employing an additional 10 child psychologists and five psychiatrists working in CAMHS, employing 100 new mental health and learning support specialists to work in public schools, partnering with the Albanese Labor government to open the Head to Health Kids centre in Bedford Park—just over in the member for Davenport's electorate, but which will be very much used by my community as well nearby—and also employing an additional six specialist mental health nurses at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Before I conclude, I would also like to draw attention to some funding that we secured to help secure the future of an incredible organisation in my electorate called MarionLIFE in Mitchell Park, on the corner of Marion Road and Alawoona Avenue. The member for Gibson and I advocated really strongly for some support for this organisation to ensure they would be able to stay on the land they currently are on and to help enable them to really start working towards their plans to become a real southern hub in our community and in the future to develop some community housing on the site as well. It is really exciting to see what could happen there. I am really proud of the work done by the member for Gibson and myself and I am very grateful to the Minister for Human Services and the Treasurer for their support on this really important project. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (16:04): I rise today to provide a contribution to this year's Appropriation Bill. The leader delivered the opposition's response to this year's budget earlier today and outlined at a high level the areas in which the opposition stands side by side with the government

in terms of specific policy areas. He outlined a number of things that we would have liked to have seen done differently.

Really, in the time that is available to me, I want to spend that outlining as best I can the fiscal situation in the state and provide some commentary on some specific budget measures. At a high level, if we pull this budget apart, as has been articulated already, it really is defined by three records: record tax, record debt and record ramping.

I think it is stark to have seen some of the media commentary post the budget being handed down. You only needed to look on the front page of *The Advertiser* to see the AMEX card depicted and other media outlets around the state to see the reaction in earnest to what was probably a budget that is defined, as I said, by those three things but also missed opportunities. It is difficult to fathom just how much tax South Australians are paying now this financial year and have been over the last couple in comparison to what the expected take of the government was when they handed down their first budget—drastic.

We are talking about significant increases year on year to an extent that has not been seen before, I would have thought, in the state's history. Essentially, we have the total revenue position year on year having jumped by nearly \$3 billion through 2023-24, just over \$3 billion in 2024-25 and \$3.5 billion next year. We have a government and South Australians who are paying more tax than they ever have before.

The opportunities that were lost on the back of that are stark, in many ways because instead of having that additional revenue put towards projects that can further the state and provide additional revenue perhaps in some instances, whether that goes towards spending that makes sense, what we have seen is a systematic pattern over the last couple of years, particularly in operating expenses of government of significant overspend. You only need to look at last year when well over a billion dollars was overspent through department budgets.

While there may be some through health and child protection and others where you would think with increased activity there is a level of explanation, it is not just health and child protection. Again, this year the same story was evident where just about every government agency again overspent their budget to the order of \$824 million, with the expectation obviously not yet at the financial year.

This is a worry for a number of reasons. The lack of fiscal discipline, shown across government over the last 24 months in particular, is shocking. But it is shocking in the context of where the debt story for South Australia is. We know on coming to government the Treasurer and the Premier were faced with a difficult decision. They had promised \$3.1 billion worth of election commitments and, at the time of their first budget, they were looking at a set of figures that would not allow them to deliver that. They came up with a plan. There has been a delay in the north-south corridor project and the women's and kids' hospital project that happened to open up some headspace in government expenditure over the forward estimates that would allow them to deliver that spending.

But what does that mean for the people of South Australia? Well, debt. The cost of those two projects has increased by well more than \$7 billion. We have a debt level that is reaching \$44 billion at the end of forward estimates and is only going to escalate further, as indicated by the Treasurer in a roundabout way in an answer to a question today in question time.

More than that—and this is the question that is always interesting to pose—had the Treasurer been aware of the rivers of gold that were about to encompass the state when he did hand down his first budget, would those decisions have been made? Would we have delayed those projects had he known that the increased revenue was coming? Right now, South Australia and the South Australian budget is in a position where we have a \$44 billion debt bomb coming for us that is just the beginning of the debt we will need to take on to deliver those two projects.

It is so easy to use big numbers to make things sound scary, but when you break it down to what that means on a per day level, what that means on a per capital level, it gives a bit more context to what we are actually dealing with moving forward. It is not just the constraint of having the debt

there; we know there are also going to be some significant transfers of bonds that will go from low interest to significantly higher in the current marketplace.

Essentially, the year on year debt repayment amount has shifted from about \$800 million a year to all of a sudden \$2 billion a year. A significant portion of the state budget is taken up by debt servicing, and that is just the very beginning of the story: five and a half-ish million dollars a day to service the debt, per capita just over \$24,000 a head in South Australia.

These were levels that the Victorian government was looking at a financial year ago. Theirs have obviously increased since, but there are also some big fundamental differences in the two jurisdictions on a per capita basis. The first is a productive population: we have a much smaller percentage of our population who participate in the workforce, who are continually contributing to our state's economy. They will be carrying a much higher burden in comparison to Victorians, where there are significantly more people in the population breakdown who contribute in that way.

Of course, the question the Treasurer needs to answer is: at what point is this something that he is not comfortable with? It is okay to say that the budget has grown, that revenues have grown, but that is also having a significant impact on South Australian businesses and families. The one question we posed to South Australians in the immediate aftermath of this year's budget was a simple one: are you better off now than you were in 2022? The answer is a resounding no, with families sitting in a cost-of-living crisis, more than \$20,000 a year worse off than they were when Labor came to power, with small businesses struggling with rent increases, electricity price increases, and now wage increases—rightfully, on the back of the inflation data that has fed through.

What has that meant? Instead of finding ways to help small businesses, instead of finding ways to put them back, as best the state government can, onto the same footing as they were four years ago, in the face of small businesses closing their doors, struggling to stay in business, instead of taking steps to rectify that through payroll tax reform, through the lifting of the threshold, finding ways to exempt trainees or apprentices, the government has done nothing. They have left small businesses out in the cold.

There is very, very little, through all the pages of this budget, to assist with the cost of doing business crisis in South Australia for those in the hospitality industry, in particular, where payroll makes up such a big part of the cost base of their business. This is a simple approach that the government could have taken, to have some reform in this area, to answer the calls of the SA business chamber and others to deal with one of the significant cost burdens that business has that is in the control the state government—instead very, very little.

It is one thing to walk down the pavement and say that you have got the back of business; it is another thing to actually deliver for small and family business in South Australia. This government—the Malinauskas government—may whisper sweet nothings in the ears of small and family business in this state, but they certainly do not deliver much for them.

In terms of other missed opportunities, prior to the release of the state budget we outlined our view that the threshold at which stamp duty relief is provided for first-home buyers should have been lifted. That was done on a very simple basis: the government had put in place a model take-up, but the reality was that they were getting nowhere near what they expected.

It would not have been difficult for anybody to realise that house prices in South Australia had been going up very quickly, but instead of dealing with this in a sensible manner in the first place, we ended up with the release of stamp duty abolition mark-1, almost this time a year ago, that had numerous asterisks on every advertising campaign. They were somehow missing that it was the abolition of stamp duty for first-home buyers on new builds last year.

This year, the government announced essentially the exact same thing, but without the asterisks, because instead of there being close to 4,000 people a year taking that up in South Australia, there were just over 1,100 in March of this year. That is nearly 66 per cent lower take-up than was expected. That is a clear policy failure. If you are preparing a budget and you want to provide assistance to people, and you manage to put together a program that ends up with well under a third of expected take-up of the opportunity, that is a policy failure. So we had the Treasurer come

in and deliver his budget speech this year, making the exact same announcement without the asterisks.

What we see now is something that we actually welcome. We think it is a sensible idea. There are still some questions as to whether it would have been more sensible to have retained a cap. There are certainly some in the property industry who have concerns that having an uncapped stamp duty concession will have some perverse impacts on fixed-price contracts. I am keen to explore that issue through the estimates process to understand what advice was provided to the Treasurer in that regard, and the impact that could potentially have on fixed-price build contracts in South Australia.

But the missed opportunity was also in regard to existing homes. We know that not everybody is going to be in a position to buy a new-build property as their first property. Some people will be less inclined, because of the risk involved and because of the long time frames involved, to undertake the purchase of, or a contract for, a new-build property. While we certainly agree with the Treasurer that a key issue is supply, and we are committed to ensuring that our policies are in line with ensuring that supply is prioritised, we put forward a suggestion—something that we will take to the next election—of \$10,000 worth of relief for first-home purchasers of existing properties.

We are the only state in Australia that does not offer stamp duty relief for first-home buyers on existing properties. Importantly, in retaining that policy decision to prioritise new builds, we are not offering the same level of relief. A \$10,000 cap on existing properties: we think this is a sensible suggestion. We called on the government to take it up but, again, it was an opportunity that was missed, despite the significant increases in payroll tax being paid by South Australians for the last couple of years and well into the future.

There are a other couple of issues in regard to direct budget measures that I want to cover off. The Cost of Living Concessions: again, we do not have any issues with those, apart from asking the question of why the Treasurer went the route of shifting to direct payments rather than providing electricity subsidies or rebates.

We know that South Australia has the highest level of inflation in the nation. Inflation, in fact, is one of the key underwriting issues that we have that is providing for increases in GST returns to the state. That is driving up house prices. That is contributing to the revenue that is coming through to the state government.

When we are of the understanding on both sides of this house that there has been commentary from experts in this area who had the view that electricity rebates were one of the best ways to deliver cost-of-living relief for purposes that are effectively, at the very worst, neutral in terms of contribution to inflation, because they go to a direct cost incurred by a household, why would we shift away from that? When we have already the settings in place to be able to deliver those rebates, where it has been done last year already, why the shift? That is the question that we ask. Why take the risk of further fuelling inflation when we did not need to?

Then we move to payroll tax as it applies to GPs in South Australia. After much consternation, a period of time from that side of the chamber where the Treasurer simply refused to acknowledge that there was any sort of issue in regard to general practitioners and payroll tax, I am glad at the very least to have seen an acknowledgement in this budget that the Treasurer does think that there is an issue here that needs to be addressed, because on this side of the house we certainly do.

When the Premier's rhetoric to this point has continually been that he would grab every lever, take every opportunity available to him and flick every switch, why in the world would this government make decisions that end up making it more expensive to visit your GP? It does not make any sense. That is why we are committed, as the Liberal Party in South Australia, to ensure that general practitioners will not need to pay payroll tax on their revenue derived from their patients. It just makes sense.

I hope that the government sees the light over the next little while. I hope that this is not something that has to be taken to the next election because it should not need to be, but in the absence of the Premier and the Treasurer coming to that realisation, we are standing here committed to doing that. As some other Liberal parties around the nation have done, we will take a similar

position to eliminate that cost burden, to eliminate the introduction of a further cost to South Australians visiting their GP.

In closing, I just wanted to recognise the contribution in the budget to a local issue of mine around sand management in this state. We have nearly \$20 million committed towards a trial. It is something that I hope works. It is something that I hope is sustainable. I am yet to be convinced of that. There is nothing that I have seen by way of evidence that convinces me of that. It is interesting to note that that \$20 million spend for a one-year trial is approximately half of what the long-term solution was that was introduced by the previous government. That does not seem like sensible fiscal discipline by any stretch either, but the decisions have been made and, again, let's see. The proof will be in the pudding. But the people of West Beach, Henley Beach and those other beaches are owed some level of solution, given the three years it has taken to get to this point. It is a very Labor budget that has delivered record tax, record debt and record ramping.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (16:24): I rise to make my contribution to the Appropriation Bill. It is my 14th contribution in this place, and I must say that over time I have become quite aware of the different natures of government priorities and what it means to the state, and how the state deals with the government's priorities. Once again, we continue to see that the South Australian Labor government's priority, the majority of it, is in the city. It is a city-centric government because they obviously have a majority of city and peri-urban seats—of course, taking you into account, sir.

But I think what I would say is that I have given the budget a reasonably low grade. It is a lacklustre budget. A lot of hardworking South Australians, business owners and small business entrepreneurs are giving it everything they can, they are giving it a shot, and they are employing people, but they have never ever had it so tough as at the moment. Not only is it tough to do business in South Australia, it is tough to put food on the table.

I know that my office is now starting to receive a lot of correspondence with the cost-of-living impacts coming into winter. It is obviously very cold at the moment, particularly in the Riverland. People cannot afford to have heaters turned on. People cannot afford to have the luxuries of some of those warm meals that keep them warm and keep them sustained through a difficult period. It is not a difficult period because it is cold; it is a difficult period because they cannot afford to have those everyday necessities commensurate with what we believe we should have as a standard of living here in South Australia. What I must say is that the cost-of-living crisis is coming through further and further. Every day people have to deal with either an accumulation of debt or not being able to live a life that they should, rightfully, expect to live.

I must say this budget is big talk in the city and little action in the regions. The budget has seen a real neglect in the electorate of Chaffey. The Riverland and the Mallee have received little. But I am gratified and I have to show my appreciation for what we did receive: a small amount of what the government is calling 'cost-of-living relief'. It is little comfort to those who are having trouble putting food on the table.

What we are seeing at the moment is a \$44 billion debt bomb—\$44 billion. I have not done the calculation on what that is costing the taxpayers' credit card. I am not sure what that is costing every South Australian on a day-to-day basis. I am not sure what it is actually going to mean to our future generations. I know that the government are very quick to talk about surplus but are very, very sketchy when it comes to what the big picture means, and that is debt. Any business person who runs a business knows that when their debt exceeds their capacity they are in trouble. What I can see here is that our future generations in South Australia will be in trouble when they are going to have to pay off this debt.

Specifically, I will touch on regional roads. The \$310.6 million for regional roads and transport improvements: gee whiz, you turn the page, you read the fine print and what does that tell you? It tells you that 80 per cent of those upgrades are going to the Adelaide Hills and the peri-urban areas. Every regional area, every peri-urban and every metropolitan road is needing work, yes, granted. But when we are looking at road safety, we look at the Sturt Highway that runs from the border through the Riverland. It is the main thoroughfare down to Adelaide. We look at other arterial state government-responsible roads and federal government-responsible roads. We are seeing people continually die on our regional roads. A majority of accidents where people are losing life and being

severely injured are happening on our regional roads. I say that with the utmost of concern, because we are seeing now a reduction, particularly in the Riverland, of road funding.

We are now seeing that the \$20 million that was put into the regional road program—that is 6 per cent of the road funding program—is going to a four-year planning exercise. There are no major upgrades, there are no major black spot programs for fixing up dangerous areas such as intersections. We do not see programs there to remark the lines on our highways. We do not see programs to upgrade roadside posts, initiatives that help make our roads safer. I am not saying that we need to put down hundreds of kilometres of bitumen, hot mix, spray pave. I am just saying that the small amount of cost that should be in a road safety program is nowhere to be seen and that is critically disappointing.

I am dealing with blackspot sites on the Sturt Highway. In recent years we have seen 40 deaths in a section of the Sturt Highway just in the Riverland alone, and yet the former Liberal government and the National Liberal Party federally put an \$87.5 million road safety program in place which is just about completed. All of a sudden now that is completed the government have decided they are not going to put any more money into road safety. What we have seen on the Sturt Highway are overtaking lanes, we have seen better road signage, we have seen guardrails and we have seen parking bays, and that is going to make our highway safer. It is going to make it a better road to commute on.

By the same token we are seeing more heavy vehicles, larger heavy vehicles and due to those heavy road mass vehicles we will see fewer trucks on our road. I think that is a good thing. It does give some road users heartburn, because it is a big vehicle if you do need to pass it, or if you need to navigate around that heavy vehicle. Some people become very intimidated—and I think rightfully so. If you are intimidated or you do not feel you have the capacity to either overtake a truck or deal with navigating your way around that vehicle, that is when accidents happen. That is when situations arise when you are on a regional road. Many people who live in the city deal with a 40, 50 or 60 km/h speed zone on a daily basis, but that is something that we rarely deal with up in Chaffey because we spend the majority of our time on a federal highway or on a state highway.

I look at some of the roads that are in dire need of repair—not just rebuilds but repair. I look at the Wentworth Road. It is an unsealed road. It is a road that gets used every day, not by a lot of people, but it is a road that has now been smashed to pieces. The former SA Water project, the Chowilla regulator, has been there for a considerable amount of time but the road never recovered after it was built. It saw a large number of vehicles, particularly heavy vehicles, cranes—you name it—big trucks and big equipment that would go out there to install a piece of infrastructure that cost a significant amount of money, but the road never had enough road base put on top of it.

Then came along the interconnector. ElectraNet have run their equipment and all their vehicles along that road. There are many cranes all operating there at the one time. There is a huge amount of steel, a huge amount of concrete and a huge amount of workforce using that particular stretch of road. That road is bugged; it is absolutely bugged. I must say that the department officials have given me their time for me to state my case, but an extra large amount of material needs to be allocated to that road that currently is only allocated to be graded once a year, and I think that is just an absolute joke. That road now needs to be maintained and needs a program where we can put large amounts of road base there.

Other roads are desperate for upgrade. We have the Lyrup causeway that is now down to one lane—a flood-affected road with no sign of being remediated. We have the Old Sturt Highway that has had a lick of spray pave and it needs that program to be finished; it is currently a very dangerous road.

If we move on to other programs, the Truro freight route services about four and a half thousand people every day. Where did that funding go? Was that funding redirected to the Heysen Tunnels upgrade? I wonder. No-one has told me that it has not been, so I would suggest that it is a program that was funded, that has had that small amount of money taken away and redirected to a peri-urban road project. So, again, the regions are missing out, particularly up in Chaffey.

There are many roads that are desperate for attention and safety upgrades as a matter of priority. We must also understand that efficiency and productivity gains are through the big road user,

pay-as-you-go types of businesses. A lot of those large trucks pay exorbitant amounts of registration and costs to use those roads every day.

We do have some big trucking companies that particularly use the Sturt Highway. Sturt Highway is a thoroughfare, not only from Adelaide to the eastern seaboard, but it is seeing an increase in traffic. As primary production increases its tonnage, so do we increase the number of trucks. We are putting more pressure on the roads, and that is something that the government should put a level of care and consideration into.

Another area of concern is the Mobile Phone Black Spot Program. The former government put in a significant amount of effort and energy in conjunction with the telcos and the federal government and we saw some gains. We saw what people in the city currently expect, and that is mobile phone reception wherever you go. Well, get out into the country and have a look at what it means to be a second-rate citizen where you go over a hill and the phone drops out, you try to do business on the phone and the phone drops out, you try to run a business and you have no phone service. Many farmers, as did I, have to drive to the top of a hill, or you have to stand on the roof of your tractor so that you can actually get mobile phone service. It is an absolute crime that this state government has not shown any foresight, any futureproofing of South Australian mobile phone black spot issues, and that is something that is sadly not in the budget.

I also want to talk about our police stations. I noticed that the Treasurer was very happy to talk about having just tipped an \$18 million bucket of money into the South-East. Well, good luck to the South-East, but I have police stations that have not been manned now for a considerable amount of time. If we look at Morgan, Blanchetown, Swan Reach and Renmark, Renmark is the cracker. Renmark is a town of over 10,000 people, it has a police station and it is not manned. There are no police. It just needs to have some form of commitment to keep that town with an operational police station, but currently it is not manned; it is not operational.

I have spoken to police officers, I have spoken to those in the know of what is going on, and they have said, 'Our hands are tied. We are going to leave it up to you. Please, if you have any capacity, make a noise.' That is exactly why I am making the noise here today. It is absolutely unconscionable that a town of 10,000 people has had the capacity of a police station taken away.

If we look at Country Health—I know that the member for Frome has weaved her concerns, and very knowledgeable she is—yes, it is a tougher environment to live in regional South Australia, particularly dealing with health services. We are serviced by a very good regional hospital. We do have outreach hospitals in some of the Riverland towns, but yet we saw no money for regional mental health services. At the moment we are going through very uncertain times, particularly in the commodity sector, and that is proving to be creating a lot of mental health issues, particularly within the wine industry. Again, it is of particular concern, when we are dealing with regional health services and mental health, that there is no considered approach by this government.

We look at metropolitan Adelaide and they have been rewarded with \$2½ billion for their health. This government promised to fix ramping; they cannot fix ramping. They promised to do a lot of things within the health system and they cannot do them. I really do worry for where the health system in South Australia is headed.

I do not want to talk about the ramping issue because that is an embarrassment for the government. They promised to fix it, they cannot fix it. It has become worse. We have record ramping hours: 4,773 hours ramped up to last week. Since they have come into power ambulances have lost over 91,000 hours on the ramp. It is out of control. We moved a no-confidence motion in relation to the minister, and I think rightfully so. As an opposition, we are here to keep the government in a straight line. We are here to criticise the government where criticism is due, and the health system is very much a warranted criticism.

I guess the health system is one of my major concerns. Roads and health are the two big issues in the regions, as well as primary production and the care and considered need for making sure that we have every lever operating to make us more competitive. If we are going to generate an economy for every South Australian, we need primary production to be humming, we need the wine industry to get back on its feet, and we need all the commodity sectors within horticulture to be competitive. We need all those sectors to be able to go into an export market and return premiums

for their premium product so that we can actually generate an economy, pay our taxes and help the South Australian budget get out of what is a huge debt—and the list goes on.

I must acknowledge the \$30 million in new funding for biosecurity in South Australia. It is a welcome measure, but there are only a few. It does show that the government is potentially continuing to eradicate. The eradication program is something that I fought very hard for as a minister. It is very costly, but it is something that is worthy.

For those who are not aware, and as I have said in this place on a number of occasions, you will only understand what the biosecurity measures for fruit fly are when you go to someone's backyard or you go into a fruit shop and you bite into a peach and you get a mouthful of maggots. That is the reality check when you do not have good biosecurity measures in place. That is exactly what the Riverland is looking to do, to eradicate so that we can be more competitive on a global stage and we can be more competitive when we are looking to secure new markets.

I have much to contribute to this Appropriation Bill and I am going to use what time I have left to continue, but I will be using my 10-minute griever to finish this off. While we are talking about the South Australian wine industry and the grapegrowers, there was little support for an industry that has been a powerhouse, with about \$1.2 billion into China. We lost China, but both the state government and the federal government were on drugs, they were on China drugs. They are back there like nothing ever happened.

The South Australian economy has lost over \$100 billion in the last four years due to the tariff barriers by China. As soon as we get a whiff that China could give us those opportunities back again we are not for one minute looking at what are our alternative global trading partners. I will sit down but I will resume my contribution at the earliest convenience.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (16:44): I rise today to talk to the Appropriation Bill 2024 and what can I say? Record tax, record ramping, record debt and lost opportunity for South Australia. This government has the very privileged position of having the opportunity to help the lives of ordinary South Australians who are doing it tough at the moment, but they have failed on every single metric. What I will try to do today is to go through some of those metrics. I also want to take the opportunity to talk about the local electorate of Hartley and how a number of issues have also not been addressed by this budget.

With record tax and record ramping and, as I said, a whole range of failures by this government halfway through their term, I think if the people of South Australia were to reflect on whether they are better off or worse off they are far worse off. We know this as a fact. Our numbers show that the average South Australian is \$20,000 worse off under this current Labor government.

All one has to do is look at debt levels at the moment. When Labor governments run out of money, what do they do? They come after yours. We have seen this time and time again by Labor governments, both state and federal. We have seen record tax, record debt and record ramping. As I said, this government has a very privileged position to improve the lives of everyday South Australians, but they have absolutely failed.

If you look at the most recent state budget that was released, net debt, as has been explained, will proceed to \$44 billion by the year 2028. Let's break that down. It has been reported that when that net debt reaches \$44 billion the interest bill will be over \$5 million per day. That is almost \$2 billion a year. If you put that into even more perspective that would be the equivalent to paying for the construction of basically three ovals—maybe three Adelaide Ovals—a year. Wouldn't it be nice to invest that money back into the state, back into the pockets of South Australians, instead of just having to tread water to pay off loans? The interest on those loans is an absurd amount of money, if you ask me.

There is another alarming statistic. As of 2021, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that South Australia had a population of around 1.8 million people. I do not know about the maths of those opposite, but it equates to about \$24,400 of debt per South Australian. That fact is that it is not going to be this generation that is paying that debt off and it will not be the next generation paying that debt off. It might be the generation after that and the opportunity cost is enormous because, instead of being able to invest in things like productive infrastructure and productive gains, we are

literally going to be treading this debt water for years and years to come because when this Labor government runs out of money they come after yours. That is why we have seen record tax grabs by this government.

There is no fiscal discipline by this Labor government, a government that has provided a typical Labor budget. As I said, there is more debt, cost blowouts, no way to control inflationary measures, no way to reduce the cost of living and no way to get power prices significantly down and, as I have pointed out, you will not be seeing our children paying this debt off. If we are lucky, it might be our grandchildren who will get to pay off the debt.

We all know what the government promised to do in terms of ramping and, as we know, it has never been worse than under this government and that promise by the now Premier will come back to bite him. We have seen the warped priorities of this government, despite coming in to govern on an election promise to fix ramping. They even said, 'Vote Labor like your life depends on it.' Well, we all remember and what have we seen? We continue to see the worst ramping in South Australia's history. Only last month we saw 4,733 hours lost on our ramps. If you want to look at the worst months on record, you only have to look at what this government has delivered or failed to deliver in terms of ramping.

In comparison, the final month of the former Liberal government saw 1,522 hours lost on our ramps. Now, South Australians can work it out. They will be able to work out whether this now Premier has delivered on his election promise to fix the ramping crisis. You know what: numbers do not lie. In case after case, the examples, the families who are coming out, the doctors who are coming out: they do not lie either. In my own electorate we saw a gentleman pass away waiting for an ambulance. We have seen other constituents who cannot get reasonable care in a reasonable amount of time. These cases will continue to mount, unfortunately, under this government.

When it comes to cost of living, we know that the cost of living is absolutely biting at the moment. Everything is going up. The cost of living is going up: mortgage rates are going up, energy bills are going up, grocery bills are going up, the cost of taking kids to school and sport is going up. This government is in the privileged position of being able to alleviate some of those concerns, some of those burdens that families face, and it has absolutely failed to address those concerns in this budget. We know that energy prices in South Australia are not only the highest in the nation but also some of the highest in the world. Inflation continues to rise as well. Cost blowouts are adding to that inflation.

What about the CFMEU? What are we seeing by the CFMEU? We saw the tragic example last week of the belligerent tactics of the CFMEU, taking on an august national sporting organisation through the media, and we are seeing what is happening in Victoria at the moment. People do not want to see that thuggish, militant, belligerent-type behaviour here in South Australia. People are worried at the moment. People are worried, the construction industry is worried, and my fear is that the former union boss who is now leading this union-controlled government is going to have to answer to this and stand up to these bullyboy tactics by unions like the CFMEU. If he does not address those bullyboy tactics, then unfortunately what you are going to see is this belligerent, militant behaviour play out in worksites right across South Australia, and that is going to lead to more cost blowouts, more delays and more disgusting activity as you have seen recently interstate.

I would like to see every single minister on that side of the chamber make a stand and condemn the thuggish, militant, belligerent behaviour that we have seen in regard to projects, because we know that if that behaviour comes here to South Australia, that is going to have an effect on productivity and that is going to have an effect on the costs and the cost blowouts on some of these projects. By the way, I have no problem with reasonable union activity. But when it becomes standover tactics and when it becomes intimidation and when it becomes thuggish and when it becomes disgusting the way it has, it has no place in South Australia. People are sick and tired of that.

I have many in my own electorate—many builders, many concreters, many tradies—who remember the bad old days and they do not want those days to return here. They will not have a bar of it. This Premier and these ministers need to stand up to this belligerent, militant, disgraceful behaviour by unions like the CFMEU that we are seeing playing out.

Despite promising to get the cost-of-living crisis under control, what has this Labor government actually delivered? I know that ministers actually meet with their departmental heads, their agency. Some of them meet with them fortnightly, some of them meet with them weekly. There remains a number of unanswered questions as to why we are seeing these blowouts. In my experience, you have to hold these agencies to account, you have to ensure that budgets are met, you have to ensure that timelines are not blown out, and if they do blow out you have to ask them why and what they are doing about it.

In terms of payroll tax, we want to make it easier to see a GP if South Australians need to see a GP. We do not want to make it harder to see a GP, and that is why the Liberal Party has pledged to end the GP tax grab. Of course, today we have also launched a submission for a nuclear energy inquiry. If only governments—this government included—would take a long-term vision when it comes to affordable, reliable base load energy. We know it is going to take courage, but we know this is certainly something the government needs to embrace if we are to be serious about the nuclear situation.

For a long time now we have said we are willing to have an open-minded conversation about the potential for a civil nuclear industry in South Australia. We are paying some of the highest electricity prices in the world, and therefore every option to produce affordable, reliable power should be on the table. We are not interested in culture wars, we are not interested in any of that; that time has come and gone. We need to get on with doing what we can to act in the state's best long-term interest.

One only has to look at jurisdictions around the world. The best time to have looked at this type of thing was probably 20 or 30 years ago—but we are where we are. We are now drawing a line in the sand and saying that we need to have this open-minded conversation about the potential for a civil nuclear industry. With nuclear submarines set to be built in this state, it makes great sense to consider civil nuclear energy generation here, which is why a future Liberal government will establish a royal commission to at least investigate its viability—in a mature way, in a thorough way, with the most up-to-date, best economic information at our disposal.

When it comes to housing, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people, especially young people, to be able to afford the great Australian dream. Once upon a time it took people, on average, about six years to save for a deposit; unfortunately, it is now over 11 years for the average person to be able to save a deposit. Home ownership is becoming further and further out of the reach of many South Australians. My parents would have loved me to have stayed home until I was 40, being the good Italian parents that they are—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: I am still under 40, that is right, but I am not at home; I have not been at home. However, not everyone has that support network. We need to encourage home ownership, we need to encourage people to take the leap, to build some equity, to develop that freedom, to make sure they can provide for themselves and their family and provide independence as well.

There are so many advantages when it comes to homeownership in terms of economic development. Unfortunately, that is becoming more and more out of reach for more South Australians. As I said, it used to be an average of six years to save for a deposit, but it has now become over 11 years. The government has failed to address that core issue.

You can make some policy adjustment, sure, but I would have liked to see more ambition by this government in terms of helping to provide people, especially young people, with an opportunity to crack into the housing market. That opportunity has been lost by this government. The opposition has announced that, if elected, we will provide relief of up to \$10,000 in stamp duty for those first-home owners looking to buy an established home. Why would you also not provide that relief for established houses, not just ones that are yet to be built?

In terms of the regions, a number of regional towns and centres are lacking core infrastructure development by this government. I only have to look at my current shadow portfolio

areas, one of which is transport, for example. Here in South Australia we have some of the lowest per capita spend when it comes to, say, regional bus spend.

Unfortunately, that is to the detriment of many of these communities. Why should they not have the ability to get around in their local communities like we do here in the city? That means you have to have some courage and you have to make some policy adjustments and make sure that you invest more in those regional communities. I am talking about regional communities like the Riverland, the South-East, the Limestone Coast and Mount Gambier. All of these communities are not having the right amount of investment into regional transport.

On racing, we know that the racing industry has been given some good news in South Australia with the increase in share that the racing industry receives from the betting operations tax. We welcome that, but we would also like the government to continue that momentum and increase the return to the industry as well. I want to congratulate the team at Racing SA for the impeccable job that they have done this year in raising prize money.

I think we are seeing great momentum in the racing industry, and we are happy to work in a bipartisan way if it is in the industry's interests. It is great to see million-dollar races and it is great to see, for the first time in a long time, many more trainers and investors coming back to South Australia through some of the work that we started, investing in key infrastructure. We want to see that momentum continue.

For many regional communities, we know race day is actually one of the biggest days on the calendar. For example, at places like Port Lincoln, Penola—where I visited—and Kangaroo Island, their race days are some of the biggest events on their yearly calendar. Of course, the racing industry is also a provider of several thousand jobs right throughout the state, so we want to continue to see that industry do well. Alas, there is not really any more additional funding for that industry and no real significant adjustments in this budget, so we want to see that improve.

In terms of industry blowouts, we know that many infrastructure projects have blown out, whether it is the new Women's and Children's Hospital or the north-south corridor—a project, do not forget, which was \$9.9 billion before the election and is now \$15.4 billion. Wait until the CFMEU get involved in this project. What do you think is going to happen with this project with the CFMEU involved, despite the minister telling us on a number of occasions and belittling me about how I do not understand anything about union politics?

You can bet your bottom dollar, and you heard it right here again today, that the CFMEU are going to be involved in the north-south corridor. Do you know how I know that? Tradesmen who are likely to work on that project are already coming to my office and they are telling me, 'Vincent, we are really worried about this because we're already getting the calls and we're already getting the coercion, and we're already being told what will happen and what won't happen,' and they do not like it because—do you know what?—we are not in Victoria, we are in South Australia.

Watch this space, because people will continue to speak up, and if people do not listen, then they will come to us. This government and this Premier have an opportunity here to stamp out the militant behaviour that we are seeing in Victoria. We do not want to see that here in South Australia. If this goes on unchecked it will continue to lead to cost blowouts and cost delays, and when you couple all of that with design changes, do you know what happens? You pay more for projects and the people of South Australia pay more for projects. That means you forgo more opportunities and it means you cannot do things that other states and territories are doing.

We are talking to investors and companies all the time about other states and territories and the incentives that they are offering to lure the best and the brightest minds to their states. When you continue to be strangled by unacceptable levels of debt, you cannot afford these positive measures.

There is plenty more to talk about in terms of significant infrastructure projects and how they have been abandoned by this government. Take, for example, the Truro freight route. Infrastructure cuts by federal Labor and state Labor have caused this much-needed project not to be funded. The Labor government had an opportunity to fund this project to ensure that Truro gets that much-needed road upgrade; however, it is simply not going to happen. It is not going to happen because of a federal Labor government that does not listen and a state Labor government that also does not listen.

What about the South Eastern Freeway? The South Eastern Freeway is a classic example where you have bodies like the RAA and SARTA saying that we need a third arrester bed on that freeway, but this government and this minister think that they know better. Somehow, they know better than the RAA. Somehow, they know better than SARTA. They have continually said—

The Hon. D.G. Pisoni: Tom's got a good driving record.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: Yes, indeed. I would not trust them to take those lessons, that is for sure. What we have seen is that too many times heavy vehicles have been involved in accidents at the bottom of the freeway, and so we are renewing those calls for a third arrester bed on the South Eastern Freeway. I will continue my remarks at another time.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (17:04): I take this opportunity to make some responses to the budget, and just picking up on some of the points that the member for Hartley raised about the infiltration of the CFMEU here in South Australia, led by the most notorious person in the trade union movement, John Setka, who is also a perpetrator of domestic violence. This must be called out. The Labor Party must call this out. Labor men must call this out, and say it is simply not acceptable.

Why is the Labor Party doing business with a perpetrator of domestic violence, a man who threw his wife down the stairs, and injured her so severely that to this day she lives with metal rods in her back. This is John Setka, the perpetrator of domestic violence, the wife basher, and he has been welcomed into South Australia with open arms by the Malinauskas government. I bet you, despite the fact that there were accusations of some MBA cars being damaged by the CFMEU a couple of years ago, and the Premier was embarrassed into returning a \$130,000 donation back to CFMEU, the Labor Party has accepted the affiliation fees for 2022-23 and for 2023-24, and that it will accept the affiliation fees for 2025-26 as well from the CFMEU. There is no doubt that the Labor Party is in bed with the wife basher, John Setka, and the CFMEU, and they are able to—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Unley, resume your seat for a moment, please. Member for Unley, we are actually debating the Appropriation Bill. I have given you quite a bit of space to introduce the topic of the Appropriation Bill. There is an opportunity for you to do what you would like to do with unions and other people in the time you have available in your 10 minutes later tonight or tomorrow. Can I suggest you get back to the Appropriation Bill now if you wish to use your time to speak.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Thank you, sir. Another point that the member for Hartley raised that I would like to contribute to is the need for the third arrester bed. I know that the intersection of Cross Road, Glen Osmond Road, Portrush Road and the South Eastern Freeway is at capacity. We know that cars that are stopped at those lights are at enormous risk on the down track. Those vehicles turning left into Cross Road or those turning a slight left into Glen Osmond Road or those heading a slight right into Portrush Road are at risk of a truck with its brakes not working ramming into them. Yes, there has been a promise to move further west on Cross Road the line where vehicles stop so that no cars that are planning to enter the freeway from Cross Road would be affected by a runaway truck, but it does not protect those cars that are diligently obeying the law and stopping at a red light from being rammed from behind by a truck that is out of control. A third arrester bed is the last chance for a truck to be able to take action to prevent a catastrophe and death.

I was shocked to hear the Minister for Transport—who some 12-odd years ago was stripped of his ministry for road safety because of the discovery of a shocking traffic record: 60 infringement notices for speeding, for using a mobile phone while driving, going through red lights, the list went on and on and on—lecturing members of this chamber and those listening or reading *Hansard* on how to drive a truck. It was extraordinary that that was the evidence that was being brought forward to this place by the minister as to why a third arrester bed is not necessary.

My advice to the government is, do not listen to Speedy Gonzales, the Minister for Transport, on traffic advice. Get some real advice.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown): Member for Unley, you will refer to members by their name or their electorate.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Were you thinking I was talking about the Minister for Transport when I said Speedy Gonzales?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown): Member for Unley, do not be smart, just keep giving your speech.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Thank you very much, sir. Just for the record, I am referring to the Minister for Transport as Speedy Gonzales.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown): Member for Unley, you will refer to members by their name or their title or their electorate.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Certainly, sir. And of course, we know that the South Australian Road Transport Association (SARTA), the organisation that represents the transport industry, supports that third arrester bed. They see it as being part of a suite of reforms—of tweaks, if you like—at that intersection that will make it safer. I support that and would like to see that.

Another issue that has been raised with me by constituents at Mira Monte is the condition of the footpath. There are several hundred people living in Mira Monte. If you are driving down the South Eastern Freeway and you notice the width of the footpath and where the light poles are located, if you were using a frame, for example, when you were out walking or if you were using a buggy or a gopher to move to a destination, you would not get past that fence and the post. It was a design fault from the very beginning and needs to be rectified. We would also like to see access to the park as an alternative pathway through to Cross Road so that people can actually leave their cars in the garage and walk to their destination and feel safe in that area.

We saw a press release put out pre-budget by the government about the introduction of 40 km/h speed zones at selected school crossings in South Australia. That is welcomed, of course, but it is only an announcement and a job half done. It is not starting until the 2025-26 year, it is only for about 40 school intersections, and it will not be completed for another five years. In the meantime, there are intersections in my electorate where there are crossing points specifically there because there are schools in that same location.

Walford Anglican School for Girls on Unley Road has a button-activated crossing point, but it is still 60 km/h in the lead-up to that. I am grateful for the government reducing the speed of Unley Road to 50 km/h, but that is only from Greenhill Road to Park Street, so you are back up to 60 km/h as you head further south to that intersection in front of Walford.

I wrote to the minister on 9 November, asking for consideration of some ideas that came out of meetings I had with both Goodwood Primary School for their situation with their intersection and Walford Anglican School for Girls, which included a reduction in the speed at school time zones, as members would be aware. We are the only state, as I understand, that does not have specific times as to when reductions of speed for school zones apply. Drivers are expected to make a call as to when children are present and then reduce their speed to 25 km/h, but not on roads like Unley Road or Goodwood Road. There are no speed reductions there.

From what I can make from the budget announcements on those speed limits, there will be a series of consultation and work to be done, which is contrary really to the response I received from the minister to my 9 November letter that I received from the minister on 7 May this year, which was that the government had acted previously by putting up a couple of blue signs with white traffic lights on them with the word 'school' about 150 metres from the Goodwood crossing.

Anyone who is a frequent user of that part of Goodwood Road knows that it is absolutely littered with signs. There are shops everywhere, there are tram signs, there are 'no left turn' signs—there are signs everywhere on the road. It has a camera, and that was one of the requests that I asked the government to consider for the Unley Road crossing at Walford, but the process is failing because I understand that that camera is one of the most profitable in the state. In other words, people are going through red lights and are speeding through that 50 km/h zone in front of the school, and lot of that is to do with the fact that it is difficult to see that crossing until you are almost on top of it because there is car parking on the side, which is essential for the economic health of the precinct. People must be able to park their cars to shop at the shops that are there—so it is important

that people still shop—but there are other things that the government can do rather than just cameras and reducing the speed.

Reducing speed is important, and I encourage that. In designated school zones, anyone with a car younger than about 10 years, which has a GPS system in it, will get an automatic warning when they are in a school zone. That happens in Victoria whether you are on the Dukes Highway, whether you are going through a small country town on your way to Melbourne at 100 km/h. You will get a warning that there is a school there. You will see the signs that will tell you; in their instance, it is 40 km/h. At certain times of the day on school days is when you must slow down to that speed, but here in South Australia, if there is a school there on those main roads, it is just bad luck. There is no warning that comes through on your car to tell you that you have entered a school zone and there is no reduction in speed.

So why the government has chosen to only have a speed reduction in 40 of these crossings around schools is beyond me. It has been done everywhere else for every school, regardless of the road. One of the crazy things about this is if you are on Unley Road and you turn into Commercial Road, you will immediately get a warning that you are entering a school zone because it is another entry point and there is a pedestrian crossing across Commercial Road for Walford school. So on a 40 km/h restricted side road, you get a warning that there is a crossing and that you should be reducing your speed to 25 km/h when children are present, but if you continue to the next crossing that is on Unley Road, which is only a walking distance of about 70 or 80 metres from that intersection, there is no warning and no speed reduction.

I would like to see the government take a commonsense approach on this and actually roll this out as a 40 km/h speed zone, but add to it the declaration of school zones so that we get that warning through in our cars. Maybe even at intersections like at Goodwood Road, whether it be in relation to St Thomas School or whether it be in relation to Goodwood Primary School, there could be some road base alert, something that might send a rattle sound through your car, a small corrugated effect.

Even in the shopping district on Goodwood Road, I suspect even a slight raise a few metres before the intersection would make the driver aware that there has been a change in conditions and pay more attention as to where they are. We see that on other roads around Adelaide where there is a slight rise where you are expecting to see pedestrian traffic. I would like to see something along those sorts of lines.

This program itself should be expanded. It should allow the schools whose students use those button-operated intersections outside of their schools to be in a school zone so that there is more notice to drivers of the fact that the lights may change at any time and children will be crossing the road and might not be quite as aware of traffic and its behaviour as adults, so more care should be taken.

The other point I want to raise, as somebody who ran their own business for 22 years before entering this place, is the government's flat refusal to make any adjustments to payroll tax. When we came to office in 2018, it was a major priority of ours to lift the threshold to \$1.5 million. Back in 2018, for \$1.5 million the average small business would have been 15 or 16 staff and they would have been exempt from paying payroll tax. Now, a \$1.5 million payroll is probably 12 to 13 staff. Do not forget we have had a significant increase in inflation and pay increases, whether through market forces or alternatively through decisions of Fair Work Australia of increases much higher than what we saw in the low-inflation environment just a few years earlier.

Consequently, we have seen, through no fault of their own, businesses just trying to stay in business. Businesses that rightfully are paying legal wages and paying wages at a market rate to keep their staff are pushed into a tax category that they were exempt from previously. That is why the Liberal Party made a commitment to increase the payroll tax-free threshold to \$2.1 million and also to exempt apprentices and trainees from the calculation. This is important, of course, because what we learnt when we were in government was that there is a large cost for employers to take on apprentices and trainees, and this is just a mechanism of reducing that cost to encourage more employers to take on apprentices and trainees.

We have seen what happens when you remove the support that has been there for on-the-job training that was instigated by the Marshall government and that supported employers for on-the-job training. Around \$10,000 per training contract was available to support employers for their on-the-job training.

Consequently, we saw over 1,100 employers taking on apprentices for the very first time because they had that support for the very first time. That was removed during 2023 by this government. What we saw from June 2023 to June 2024 was a 60 per cent reduction in commencements of apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia—a 60 per cent reduction, which is an extraordinary turnaround in such a short time. Last time we saw a reduction in those numbers, it took over six years to achieve that, but they did that in just 12 months.

Ms PRATT (Frome) (17:24): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill for this new financial year and state my surprise that in anticipation of a budget that was projected to be targeting cost-of-living pressures, jobs growth and starting to address the housing crisis that we have seen the state struggling with for a couple of years now, the opposite is true and we saw another cash splash in health. This budget has delivered not just record revenue but also record debt and sadly continues to deliver record ramping.

When we start to unpack the real figures of this budget and look at how the state is groaning with record debt, it is still astounding to reflect that while we see record spending in health that continues for the third budget under this government, we are not the better off for it, we are not seeing better outcomes.

At what point does the public say enough is enough? Where is this money going to any real effect when the metric set by this government was to fix ramping, to take pressure off the EDs, to deliver hospital avoidance pathways, to support our primary care services by supporting and respecting our GPs, and to improve access to regional health much closer to home? There is a long shopping list of expectations that voters had and continue to have, but sadly are seeing the light with a government that just is not meeting any of those metrics.

Here is the third budget handed down by the Treasurer and yet from what we know—and I reference the front page of *The Advertiser*: a compelling image, no doubt—the people's bank of South Australia has been left with a record \$44 billion debt bomb on the public credit card. I think those calculations, when we look at them, come down to something like \$5.5 million a day that the South Australian public has been lumped with.

To focus on health for a moment, we know that the health department is certainly generously funded. It needs to be. There are lots of layers to the Department for Health and Wellbeing and SA Health and it has consistently been in receipt of an approximately \$7 billion to \$8 billion operating budget per annum. It is astounding that with that budget comes a lack of discipline by the department heads, the executives, the executive directors, and that we have not seen really across any agency much discipline in terms of fiscal responsibility, managing the books well enough, getting outcomes from the input and, yet again, Health sits at the top of the leaderboard with an agency blowout to the tune of \$627 million for the financial year.

The South Australian public was told in the lead-up to the last election to vote Labor like your life depended on it, but no-one really got to read the fine print and here we are looking at how this government is spending, budget after budget, three budgets in a row. What is clear is that the price tag for the promise by this government to fix ramping is \$7.1 billion and rising. What we have seen over the last three budgets is a top-up to the \$8 billion operating budget of another \$7 billion in the last three years and we are still as health consumers in receipt of the worst outcomes, and they are not worse by a little bit; they are worse in a record-breaking kind of way.

To reflect yet again, unfortunately, on the ramping hours lost just for the month of May, the previous month, we know that the hours lost in May for ramping were 4,773. When we line up the metrics, the measurables, the evidence of outcomes from this health system, we see record ramping, record hours lost on the ramp, and more and more money being poured into a system that is broken. It is leaking like a sieve. The price tag for the Labor Party's promise to fix ramping is \$7.1 billion at the moment. We will wait with anticipation to see what the Treasurer delivers to the state in next year's budget.

One way that the government is set to perhaps recoup its losses or its wasteful expenditure or its expenditure for poorer outcomes is to now go after GPs with the implementation from 1 July of payroll tax. We see that the cost of doing business in primary care has only increased for our general practitioners.

Sadly, with this new interpretation, this application of the payroll tax, to cover their costs of doing business, of running a clinic and of paying their overheads, GPs are declaring that in two weeks' time, by 1 July, as that payroll tax accrues for them, there will be some clinics that will need to apply a \$10 to \$20 consult fee on top of what they might normally be charging. There is no doubt that the government, in needing to meet its own promise to fix ramping, to reduce response times and to demonstrate an avoidance of presentations to the emergency department, has needed to recoup those losses by attacking a workforce that is already broken and overworked.

One of my great disappointments started pretty early when reading the front page of *The Advertiser*, waiting in anticipation to see a strong investment in mental health because why not? That is the direction our stakeholders and mental health consumers are pushing the government in. That is the direction that the federal government needs to go in response to the royal commission into the NDIS.

We know there are benchmarks expecting state and federal governments through bilateral agreements to fund mental health, yet the front page of *The Advertiser* declared a simple investment in a perfectly fabulous program—\$5 million being dedicated towards youth mental health. I congratulate the young teenager who, through her own lived experience with family members, has been able to work with the government to secure this funding. These are outcomes that are very important for the community.

Five million dollars for youth mental health is exceptionally important, but we know that the elephant in the room is the absence of any other funding and in particular \$125 million that has been consistently called for when we look at investing in psychosocial services and supports for people living with mental health distress who are unable to access the support they need.

This report sat on the minister's desk and was not released by the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist for the better part of five to six months after it had been finalised. Again, I suspect there was some method to that political madness of making sure that report was not captured in last year's budget. So we failed to see \$125 million in last year's budget, and the government has missed a second opportunity to fund that. They say they are waiting on part payment from the commonwealth, but half of that \$125 million—let's split hairs and call it \$62 million from the state—would go a long way to starting to invest in and support the service providers who already exist but need better resourcing to reach out to 19,000 people who are identified as living with these unmet needs. We can be sure that by budget day next year it will not be 19,000—it will be more—and sadly they are being left behind.

When I look at the amount of money required for the state government's split—it's share, it's investment in mental health services and unmet needs—I discovered that that very amount, \$62 million, has been allocated to ambulance services in three particular ways. My first declaration is that Two Wells, in my electorate of Frome, will be the beneficiary of an ambulance station, and we welcome that. We welcome investment in government services, particularly in country areas.

It is passing strange that the local Adelaide Plains Council did not even know on the day where the station will be located, and still we are in the dark, having asked a number of questions. There is a missing piece there where the government is dictating terms and patting itself on the back for investing in these services, but not working with the community that knows best at the local level.

So, that is three ambulance stations across the state, investment in what I am going to phrase clumsily as call centre services, as well as investment in the electronic patient care records system, totalling \$63 million in allocated services to SAAS. But, it is the exact same amount that this state needs to find and invest in mental health services per annum. To say I am disappointed is an understatement. My views matter less; it is the stakeholders, like the Mental Health Coalition and service providers across the state, who are waiting desperately to see investment in mental health.

I had the great joy of inviting the Mental Health Commissioner to visit my own electorate, to come to my home town of Clare and spend some time with mental health professionals and volunteers, and we really enjoyed our time together, in particular popping into the Lifeline Connect centre based in Clare, meeting up with my favourite human, Lorna Woodward, and understanding what benefit there is when we see investment in bricks and mortar—walk in, no fee, no referral—mental health services, psychosocial services, like the one that exists in Clare. There is another in Port Pirie. We are waiting with anticipation to see a third one come online in Moonta, and many more should pop up. These are the opportunities already in front of the minister to find those discretionary funds and support these services.

Regional health is something that I not only talk about a lot in this chamber but I live and breathe at the local level and have the great fortune to travel around the state interacting with and visiting my country colleagues in their own electorates but also then building relationships with the regional health workforce.

There is not enough time today to unpack all the missed opportunities, challenges and burdens that exist when it comes to the delivery of regional health services and access to treatment. We are certainly seeing a squeeze on country health patients, a squeeze on patients who are, more and more, discovering that the services or treatment they need do not exist closer to home—and they should. More often than not the hospital infrastructure can provide it, but we do not have the workforce, we do not have the diagnostics, we do not have the equipment. That puts them on the road to the city, and we do not have the roads—which I will come to shortly.

I am worried that we are seeing promises by the government of investment in hospital upgrades but what we are not seeing is the output, the deliverables, the commencement. A lot of these projects have been delayed, deferred or pushed out, and I implore the minister and the government to fast-track these projects.

I put Clare at the top of my list, the Clare Hospital upgrade of \$4.5 million. However, we know that the health professionals in Clare and the district know that that project is already expected to blow out beyond \$4.5 million to \$6 million. What worries me very much is where that top up is coming from, and whether there is a view to it being sourced locally as opposed to the government doing its job, finding the extra \$1.5 million and getting the job done.

As well as the Clare Hospital there is the Mount Gambier hospital, which was a sugar hit from the Premier a couple of days after the election, flying into town like a hero to promise millions of dollars in upgrades. The best information I have at the moment is that not only has the upgrade at that hospital not started, it has only just gone to tender. This is a community—or any community—that has been promised millions of dollars in investment in its hospital, that takes that in good faith and waits, in good faith, to see that delivered. It is scandalous to think that we are not a priority.

The opportunity for this government to fast-track the projects and upgrades in regional health infrastructure may possibly allow our country patients to stay closer to home, to travel less, and reduce not just the burden of over-presentations to our city system but also to be less reliant on PATS, the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme. Again, that had no profile in this budget.

It is beyond urgent. It is something the government needs to turn its mind to immediately, yesterday, last year, the importance of increasing the overnight accommodation from \$40. As a commercial rate that just does not come close enough to the costs accrued. We know, through the Code Yellow experience, that a lovely gentleman flying in from Port Lincoln for back surgery, for spinal surgery, had his surgery cancelled three times in the space a week. He was out of pocket to the tune of \$800 or so, and was treated poorly, treated with disrespect.

Our country patients having to come to the city are a burden on the city system, but there is nowhere else for them to go, so an investment in PATS, the reimbursement, is essential. If this government is going to retreat from country health and push us all to the city then it needs to create some equity of access there.

I also reflect, when looking at the budget, on the absence of workforce incentives. The minister knows I am quite interested in his workforce plan, not just for the city workforce but for the country workforce. The government is spruiking Spencer Gulf and the green hydrogen plant, looking

to invest in the Spencer Gulf region, which is welcome. I am sure that people who live around Whyalla are excited about the opportunities that seem to be coming their way, and the 700 jobs being created, particularly around a new school and bigger childcare centre.

But no-one is talking about the absence of babies being born at the Whyalla Hospital. We are truly 12 months on. This hospital historically has had 250 babies born per annum. Since December, nine emergency caesarean surgeries have been performed, so nine babies have been born because they were urgent. Let's call it what it is: a hospital that is not delivering babies, and a budget that has not delivered for regional South Australia.

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (17:45): I am speaking today on the Appropriation Bill, which is the budget that is funding the necessary items throughout the whole state. For me, when reflecting on what I have seen within the budget, it seems as though it has failed to address the opportunities and the concerns of regional South Australia in particular. For me and the electorate of Flinders, and for my region of the Eyre Peninsula, this budget has failed to really confront the major challenges, but also to make sure it is setting up the structure for the opportunities which we are facing, and the opportunities which we, as a state, have got knocking on our doorstep.

It has been spoken about already, and my colleagues—especially regional members—have done so in reflecting on the fact that when you see a health budget which has had billions of dollars of extra money spent on it and blowouts of \$600 million on top of the budgets that were allocated, we do not see increased health budget spending in regional centres. We do not see the necessary funds for the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme which is relied on by 16,000 claimants from regional South Australia every year. These 16,000 people, rather than having the services delivered to them that their city cousins get on their doorstep, have to travel to get to Adelaide to be able to have these services.

To have no more money actually allocated, and no change to the arrangements for the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme, is an absolute body blow for those of us in regional South Australia. When you are having to rely on a scheme that is reimbursing \$40—only \$40 per night—for someone to stay in accommodation in the city is laughable. There is nowhere within Adelaide where you can find a spot to be able to stay for \$40 a night. Our regional people are out of pocket in having incurred not only travel costs but also accommodation costs. As I said, to have a health budget which had so much expenditure put into it—billions of dollars—but to not see, on the other hand, money put into regional health and basic services to support regional patients, I think is absolutely shameful on the part of this government.

Shortly after the last state election the Premier proudly made the statement: 'Your prospects in life shouldn't be determined by your postcode.' They were the exact words that the Premier shared with the community of South Australia but, unfortunately, indeed it is. Those of us in regional South Australia have to go over and above what our city cousins have to do. When we reflect on the health expenditure, we have already heard that there is barely any more of that money being invested into mental health supports.

The opposition, for a long time, has been calling on Peter Malinauskas to introduce incentives to be able to attract and retain healthcare workers, such as what is on offer interstate. It is a competitive market that we are in at the moment and other states are doing the heavy lifting to make sure that their regional communities are well served by medical professionals, and have the appropriate healthcare workers within their regions. What are we seeing from this government? Nothing. It does not matter how much cash Labor throws at our health system, the investment will not make a difference, it will not have that impact if there is not the workforce to staff it.

For those of us in regional South Australia, we know how much of a challenge it is to fill positions all across the workforce and especially high-level professional positions. If the government is not being proactive in the attraction and retention of healthcare workers within regional South Australia, we are going to go backwards. So that grandiose statement from the Premier that your prospects in life should not be determined by your postcode, just like a lot of the statements that are made, has been shown to be only hot air.

For regional South Australia, the investment in our road infrastructure that connects the products we produce to an end point and an opportunity to be able to export, whether domestically

or globally, is so essential. Investment in infrastructure for upgrades and maintenance is crucial. Unfortunately, the numbers we see coming out of this year's budget do not properly reflect the amount that regional South Australia has been putting into the state's economy. I always say in this place at any opportunity I get: the amount of money which is invested into South Australia's coffers and the national coffers by those of us in regional South Australia should not be forgotten and should not be ignored and, in fact, equivalent investment should be going back into maximising economic opportunities.

We see in the budget papers statements around regional road safety infrastructure. Take away the regional road safety infrastructure, which is what I would call peri-urban and serving those who live in close proximity to the city, and there is only \$6 million—\$6 million—for the rest of regional South Australia's road safety infrastructure. Now, \$6 million does not go too far. It really is a slap in the face for those of us having to live in regional areas and drive on regional roads, with the messaging coming from the government around the fact that the vast majority of incidents and accidents that happen on our roads in country areas involve country people. Where is the investment back into regional road safety infrastructure? It is just not there in this year's budget.

This comes at a time when people in my community on Eyre Peninsula are having to deal with changes to traffic movement within Port Lincoln through Liverpool Street, the main drag through town, where changes have been made to intersections and roundabouts to take away the opportunity for people to be able to exit those roundabouts and get into the rest of the city. No-one in Port Lincoln thinks the changes that have been made are a good idea, and I worry that the changes are going to end up having a detrimental effect on traffic movement.

We also had word from the government that the proposed mooted overtaking lanes on the Tod Highway between Cummins and the Flinders Highway, which had money in the budget and subsequent budgets, got all too hard: 'Sorry, it got all too hard, this isn't going to be delivered.' This comes in the wake of the rail closure on Eyre Peninsula and the additional freight that needs to be taken on the roads of Lower Eyre Peninsula in particular, and the people who traverse the Tod Highway, down the middle of Eyre Peninsula, having to deal with interactions with heavy vehicles. After being told by the department and reassured by the department that yes, this project was going to continue, we now see that, sadly, no, it all got too hard. The budget has been expended somewhere else to fill gaps for mistakes made in other aspects and this overtaking lane is not going to be delivered.

On top of that, there was also a positive announcement that was made over 12 months ago now—I think it was 15 months ago—by the federal government around an upgrade of the Porter Street-Liverpool Street intersection in Port Lincoln: the announcement of \$3.6 million from the federal government. But we have seen no movement and we have heard no messaging. In the electorate of Flinders, we do not know what is actually going to be happening with that crucial intersection. There is a lot of noise, a lot of spin and a lot of announcement but, unfortunately, what we see is very little actually delivered on the ground.

Public housing, within regional South Australia in particular, is so crucial for those most vulnerable within our community. The investment that is necessary for the maintenance and ongoing longevity of our public housing network within South Australia's regions is so obvious to those of us who are having to deal with it every single day.

Within Port Lincoln alone, the main centre of my electorate, there are dozens of public houses that are sitting vacant at the moment because of a lack of maintenance, because of a lack of investment to make sure that they are still a part of the housing opportunity and housing scene in Port Lincoln. We are talking about those within my community who are most vulnerable: those who obviously struggle to break into the private rental market and those who are relying on the structures of the housing department to provide affordable housing for them. There are people who are seeing houses on their streets that are empty because there has not been that investment.

We see within the budget that there is money promised for maintenance and building of social housing units. It may look good at face value, but then we break it down a little bit more and realise that, indeed, it is federal money that is there and it is pretty vague as far as the social housing info goes.

Within regional South Australia, if we are not investing into the basics to set the foundation for what our future is going to look like, we are going to miss the economic opportunities, we are going to miss what could be a real positive for our state, and we are going to end up with an ever-increasing centralisation in South Australia and ever-increasing challenges in regional South Australia. This is why, prior to the budget and even now, I am calling on the government to make sure they are investing into those basics, into those essentials within our regions, none more so than the public housing network.

The SPEAKER: Member for Flinders, sorry. Would you mind taking a seat for a minute? I just want to address some people who we have in the gallery, and then we will come back to you straight after that.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of Thomas Hodges and Zachery Schubert. They are our Australian beach volleyball team who are heading off to Paris. In just a few weeks they will be competing under the Eiffel Tower for Australia at their very first Olympics. I want to wish you both all the very best. I am sure you will go with the entire parliament's best wishes to do the very best you can. You are in the top 16 in the world at the moment. We know that next year the Beach Volleyball World Championships—last year I was with you in Mexico; this year it is in Paris—will be right here in Adelaide at Memorial Drive.

I want to also acknowledge that Jenny Mann is with us tonight; she is the chief executive officer for Adelaide's hosting of the Beach Volleyball World Championships next November, right here in Adelaide. So, all the best to Zach and to Tom, and we hope you do really well over there under the Eiffel Tower. It is going to be very exciting for all Australian fans watching.

Bills

APPROPRIATION BILL 2024

Second Reading

Debate resumed.

The SPEAKER: Member for Flinders, I was very sorry to interrupt you; please continue.

Mr TELFER: Thank you, sir. As we look at the different aspects of the budget, there is a part that is especially an area of passion for me, and that is ongoing funding for our jetties network. Indeed, I welcomed the additional commitment from this government on ongoing funding for our jetties, but unfortunately the dollar figures that are involved are only a small drop in the ocean (no pun intended) for what the actual need is for jetties, within regional South Australia in particular. Although there was \$5 million that was budgeted in the year that has just gone, we have barely seen any of that get out to the infrastructure investment that is necessary for these vital pieces of our community infrastructure within our coastal communities, in particular, and within our regional communities.

Whenever I get the opportunity, I always highlight that there are 20 jetties within just my electorate of Flinders, and there are some 70 dotted around the coastline of South Australia. We as decision-makers need to make sure that we are prioritising investment into these sorts of vital, crucial pieces of our coastal infrastructure in communities that cannot afford to do that themselves. We are talking about small, regional communities that have significant tourism spend and visitor economy that are based around the lifestyle and the unique way which we, as South Australians in particular, can experience our lovely coastline.

There are more than 2,000 kilometres of coastline within my electorate and, as I said, 20 jetties, but we have small regional councils which cannot afford the significant work that needs to be done. These jetties are owned by the state government. Around half around the state are leased to councils for ongoing maintenance, but when there is a significant capital investment that needs to happen, I believe it is the owner of the infrastructure who needs to make sure they stump up and take responsibility for making sure that the longevity of these pieces of infrastructure are in place.

Sitting suspended from 18:00 to 19:30.

Mr TELFER: I will continue my remarks on the Appropriation Bill. When we are looking at the priorities for a government and where moneys are spent, making sure that our communities are kept safe and those people are properly equipped to the task of keeping our community safe, there is nothing more important than looking and dissecting the budget that gets allocated to SAPOL. It has been interesting at first glance to go through some of the numbers and have in context the numbers that we have seen as far as attrition, the number of police officers who are leaving the force at the moment. The attrition rate is still up above 5 per cent—that is 5 per cent of police officers are leaving the force every year.

There has been a lot of talk, a lot of spin, a lot of PR around the government's attempts to try to up the recruitment rates for police officers, yet we recently heard in this place that the gap between those who are leaving and those who are coming in is negligible—I think at last count it was 11. This is in the context of having currently a gap of over 200 officers. There is a shortfall of over 200 officers who should be on the beat, should be looking after our communities, but are not there because of the lack of direction from this government.

That 200-officer shortfall means that the district policing model that is in place cannot be fully equipped. It is also in the context of the additional officers who are out on the different forms of leave and it means that there is a significant shortfall for those people who, as I said, are tasked with looking after our communities. Within the budget statements, it has been interesting at first glance, looking at the activity indicators.

This is some of the nuts and bolts around the crime stats. Looking at Volume 3, page 185, for those who are wanting to read it at home, the offences and the crime numbers are up—up from last year, up from the year before. But then the government are looking ahead and they are saying, 'Well, no, we are going to project them down.' We see an ever-increasing number—and significantly so for this year—yet, optimistically, they say, 'Don't worry; next year's will be down.' Based on what?

Let me tell you, it is based on over 5 per cent of officers who are leaving the force, those senior officers, experienced officers who know what policing in South Australia is all about, and bringing in new recruits, who I strongly commend, but they are new recruits who are still learning what it means to be a police officer in South Australia. So why are the projections down? I think it is obviously to try to suit a narrative, but that narrative is in word only, not in action.

Where are the measures to retain our police officers within the budget? They are not there. There is nothing there to try to reinforce the fact that we as decision-makers should be making decisions around resourcing of our police officers to equip them, to look after them—to look after those who are looking after us. This is why they are leaving the force.

The big initiative that was announced by the government was the digital police station. I am going to be very interested in nutting out with the police minister a bit of the detail around the digital police station, but at first glance it seems like it is a new website or a new app for people to be able to report crime and go through some of those administrative aspects of policing, that interaction. Apparently, it is going to free up 47 employees—well, we can only hope. But once again, it is a significant cash splash for what I see as unproven as to whether it is going to actually be successful in freeing up the resources to appropriately equip police to be able to look after our communities.

There are a whole bunch of questions and a whole heap of unanswered questions within some of these budget papers which I know we will be starting to dissect through the estimates process. For me, the investment should be into not just police resourcing, as in equipping those individuals on the beat to be looking after us the best they can, but also the infrastructure that goes along with it and the equipment which is necessary to make sure that police are safe, well and properly looked after.

The Cummins Police Station is in my electorate. I thank the previous police minister for putting in place temporary measures for an office facility to be able to house the Cummins police officer as a short-term, temporary solution. The promise was made: 'Yes, we're doing work to progress a new build for the Cummins Police Station.' Well, I am going to be asking the new minister: does he stick by that commitment?

The people of Cummins and the people of Lower Eyre Peninsula deserve to have investment into these things which build the foundations for our community, none more so than equipping and building the capacity for our police force within regional areas to make sure that they are well-equipped to look after us in our communities. As decision-makers, we need to be looking after those who are tasked with looking after us.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (19:36): I rise to make a contribution about the Appropriation Bill, or the budget bill, for 2024. I note that the total budget when you add in the Supply Bill is around \$28.5 billion, which is a significant amount of money to resource the state—noting, I think, somewhere around \$9 billion of that goes into health.

What we have seen is with Labor's promise to fix the ramping—and it was a promise. They said that they would fix ramping at the last campaign coming into the election in 2022. They had Ash the ambo out; they had plenty of boxes of chalk out, chalking ambulances. It was essentially—well, not just essentially, the corflutes said, 'We will fix the ramping crisis.' That is what Peter Malinauskas and the Labor Party said coming into the 2022 election.

It is interesting that here we are, a couple of years and a bit more down the track, and we see that the ramping crisis has tripled—tripled. But I have not seen Ash the ambo and I have not seen any chalking, so it just goes to show where the unions sit.

We have talk of hundreds, and running over a thousand, extra health staff who are supposed to keep people off the ramps, get people through hospital and get them treated, but we have seen that over 500 people have had to let go their elective surgery. It is disgraceful. If you hear it from the minister, Minister Picton, you would think that everything is rosy. But, as members of parliament, we deal with people who are wondering why their hip operation has been put off, why a knee operation has been put off, whatever elective surgery it is. It is hurting the community. The next thing is we will see concrete trucks pulling into the emergency departments to build bigger ramps. That is what will be needed into the future, because they are not fixing the ramping crisis.

What I saw in this budget for Hammond was, essentially, close to nothing—close to nothing—which was disgraceful compared to when we were in government with the Marshall Liberal team for four years. We poured hundreds of millions of dollars into Hammond, and I was very proud to be part of the government that delivered that money.

As far as direct funding into Hammond, as far as infrastructure builds, there is a few million dollars for the levee banks. We have had to drag this government and the federal Labor government kicking and screaming to get that levee money to rebuild the lower Murray swamp levee banks, the 110 kilometres of those levee banks. We have had to drag them kicking and screaming to get some money.

Overall, it is \$31.4 million, and that is only the initial money to work on these banks. That is going to be expended in the next couple of years. It has taken so long. I have seen the frustration of farmers who have had to spend so much of their own money fixing their levee banks and desilting channels, and they are over it.

There was plenty of action when the floods were on, apart from one person—apart from one person. The Deputy Premier, Minister Close, was missing for the whole peak flood event, and she is the Minister for Water.

The Hon. B.I. Boyer interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: It's a fact, mate; it's a fact. She was missing for the whole month. They do not like it on the other side, but they were pretty happy to swing when Scott Morrison was in Hawaii. You have the minister responsible for the River Murray. There was a peak flood which came in at close to 200 gegalitres a day and no minister to be seen.

At least the emergency services minister was around, the Premier was around, the Minister for Housing was around, but they, too, ripped in, got some photos for social media and ripped out. But they were there. At least they were there, which is more than I can say for some. It was a major calamity for all residents on the River Murray, whether in my electorate or further upstream.

What really bothers me in this budget is that there has been a \$172 million cut to regional road funding in the capital works program. Where we have seen some funding put in, a lot of that money is going into between the tollgate and Crafers for the freeway works, for putting in the diversion works for if there is an accident down at the bottom of freeway.

I was listening to the member for Unley's contribution today about the third arrester bed. I think a third arrester bed would work. I know Minister Koutsantonis says it would not work at the bottom of the freeway, but I listen to the truck drivers. I saw one the other day. They literally stopped a bloke, made sure he stopped, because his brakes were smoking. He was past the other two arrester beds, and thankfully he pulled up. Then he had to deal with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and the tow truck. It would not have been worth his time of day.

I really think it could be done, somewhere near Mira Monte and The Monastery at the bottom. It would not take a lot of work, but everything seems to take a lot of money. I know there are thoughts of money going into planning, pulling back the Cross Road stop, where the traffic stops on Cross Road for that intersection at Glen Osmond Road, the freeway and Portrush Road. That would certainly assist.

What really troubles me is when we have had some really good projects that would help with freight productivity, the High Productivity Vehicle Network Project, where the planning just seems to get extended on and extended on. We need to get the Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass in place. I am seeing all the work at the Halfway House corner on the Sturt Highway and the proposal to build the Truro freight bypass that was put up by the former Liberal government federally.

We certainly backed it in with \$202 million to put in that freight bypass at Truro, but guess what, the federal Albanese Labor government pulled it, just like the Hahndorf bypass project, for which we put in state money of \$250 million. That is \$450 million of projects that would have alleviated the stress of heavy transport travelling through Truro and Hahndorf. Hahndorf has a million visitors a year, and they all have to travel through the main street, as I did the other day, coming from Charleston-Balhannah way to head back to the freeway towards Murray Bridge.

What do we end up with out of those projects? Labor have come back in and said, 'Hang on, we can do a little bit at Hahndorf. We can put up some money, and we will do the Verdun interchange, and we will do the Mount Barker interchange.' I can certainly say both are good things that need doing, but they miss the complete point of bypassing Hahndorf.

The member for West Torrens, the minister, says, 'We didn't want to compulsorily acquire some land.' He did not say that to the hundreds and hundreds of people whose land has been compulsorily acquired for the north-south connector, the Torrens to Darlington, with the tunnelling project. That is another thing: we have a project that, yes, does need to be done, but this was budgeted at just short of \$10 billion and now is running with a \$5 billion overload at \$15.4 billion. Yes, it has to be done, but it is sucking all the finance that could be assisting in our regional roads around the state.

I know some of my colleagues have talked about the regional road safety program. There was \$98 million. Projects were undertaken in near urban areas. There was certainly one at Mount Barker that does not even need doing—and I have raised it in this house before—up at the high school end on Adelaide Road, where I think \$40 million or \$42 million has been allocated to redo the roundabout. Yes, it is a relatively busy roundabout. I have gone around it multiple times. I have talked to many people from Mount Barker who just shake their head. Certainly, the fish and chip shop owner on the corner is really concerned because they will have to be acquired to change the roundabout. People just cannot get over it, and yet we see projects that need to be completed, like the Truro freight bypass and the proper Hahndorf bypass, being set aside.

Even when we have the community in Hahndorf work hard and put up a different proposal to repave a rubble road around Hahndorf, the government have come back and said—guess what—'It's too expensive. No, we can't do that. We will just stick to the dangerous River Road option, forgetting trucks around Hahndorf and be done with it.' The thinking is atrocious.

In the bigger picture, we have what was the South East Links project that is still in the planning stage with the other High Productivity Vehicle Network Project. They have all sort of been

rolled into one budget item, as I can see now. That is the duplication of the Swanport Bridge, which is essential. The first bridge was built in 1979, and the first five kilometres of duplication of the Dukes Highway out towards the Mallee Highway and heading south-east. That is absolutely necessary. There will be a railway bridge incorporated into that as well. So these projects need to happen.

As part of that freight project that extends from Western Australia through to Victoria, there is work to be done on Eyre Highway on the West Coast. As I said, it looks like the freight bypass, from the work going in at Halfway House corner—which down the track I know where this is heading; and that is fine, I am all about productivity—will have to have roads built to match it for triple road trains. So you will be able to take a triple road train from Melbourne around Murray Bridge, Mannum, Sedan, Cambrai, Halfway House, up through Truro, around to the north of Adelaide, come into Adelaide from the north, or head straight through to Port Augusta and straight through to Darwin. I assume that, more than anything, they are probably looking at triple road trains headed into Perth, though I am not entirely sure about that.

So the task is huge, but one thing that is part of that project for getting the freight around on the bypass is getting it out of Murray Bridge. I think that is going to be a challenge in itself. We have had the freight route going through Murray Bridge for quite a while, up around Hindmarsh Road, Maurice Road and Cypress Terrace. It then turns off onto Mannum Road. I know some trucks already sneak out around past Monarto and the Old Princes Highway, around about there, and head up that way. So I think that is a good proposal. It will need a roundabout to go in there that will cost at least \$4½ million on today's costings, but there is one factor that needs to be taken into account: that the same road through Monarto leads to the new entrance of the Monarto Safari Park, so there will have to be some pretty good planning done there.

Into the longer term—the close-on 600 kilometres—there is 167 kilometres post Lochiel from the work that we initiated, between Port Wakefield and Lochiel, to duplicate the Augusta Highway; there is about 200 kilometres of the Sturt Highway that needs duplication; and then 200 kilometres of the Dukes Highway, and they are big projects. Even with the exorbitant cost of these projects and the cost of compulsory acquisition, I still think they come in well under the tunnelling project on South Road, which is probably about \$10 billion, although that figure is probably getting out of date. Plenty of money needs to be spent on these upgrades.

I note in the budget there is \$1 million to support our veterans with programs, and we will explore some of that during estimates. We need to do all we can to support those brave men and women who put their hand up to defend our country. I salute anyone who is prepared to die for their country. We need to make sure that we assist them and look after them well into the future. So we will explore that a bit more during the estimates process.

I talked about the High Productivity Vehicle Network Project. The emergency services is another of my portfolio areas. We do see some funding for the extension of aerial firefighting, which is welcome, and there is \$10.1 million there. There is some PFAS remediation and testing through the MFS, \$1.65 million; for SAFECOM, there is \$435,000 over two years for the state's Volunteer Marine Rescue associations; and there is \$2.8 million to relocate the Prospect SES unit to a new facility. But there are many other things that we need to look at in regard to emergency services when we get through the estimates process.

One thing that does intrigue me is the push that we had last year with the Hon. Ben Hood in the other place to get a select committee on all things CFS, including facilities and trucks but also management of volunteers and paid personnel, those who felt aggrieved that they did not get a fair say. I am pleased that that inquiry, even though it did not get up as a select committee, has got up with a standing committee, the occupational safety and rehabilitation committee of the parliament. People can put in submissions, as I mentioned earlier today, until 28 June. I urge people to do so.

One reference got taken out, even though it can be included; people can still refer to facilities management under 'any other related matter' if they write a submission or wish to speak to the committee and probably do both in some cases. They can still talk about facilities, but the really strange thing—as people know, I am a proud CFS member—is that there is a fire station facilities audit for \$817,000 over two years. I just cannot understand why, for an organisation that costs

hundreds of millions of dollars to run and has people reporting all the time on what is at their facilities, what equipment and what trucks, and the state of their base camps, their sheds, essentially.

Yet, for whatever reason, the authorities do not know the state of the facilities. I think it is outrageous, to be frank. That should be something where you hit a button on a computer and up it comes: the state of the facilities right across the state that our 13,500 proud volunteers work with. I am just stunned. A lot of these things will be explored in estimates. It is a budget that does next to nothing for the regions. I am sure, right across the board from this side of the house, we will have a good look at it during the estimates process.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (19:57): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on the budget bill, the Appropriation Bill. In the course of today, the Leader of the Opposition gave an excellent speech responding to the government's 2024-25 budget. In that speech, he outlined some clear, optimistic, coherent, costed and well thought-through measures that will indeed assist South Australians in a range of areas. In particular, there were two new measures he talked about today, commitments that were given that a Liberal government, if forming in March 2026, will deliver for the people of South Australia.

One of those was in relation to our energy future. I am really pleased that the shadow minister for energy and mining is sitting next to me on the front benches. The way in which debate over energy in South Australia has developed over many decades is worth reflecting on. Today, I was at Jennifer Cashmore's funeral. In the 1980s and 1990s, and indeed in the 1970s, Jennifer Cashmore talked about the challenges to South Australia. She talked about solar, she talked about hydrogen, she talked about nuclear. She talked about a range of opportunities for what was ultimately going to need to be a transition away from oil and coal as our core supply of energy.

As we went forward, through the era when I became involved in politics more recently, the Rann government saw a significant proliferation of renewable energy in South Australia, and at the same time they hastened the decline of our base load power-generating capacity to the point where, during the Weatherill government, we had the statewide blackout. There were a range of factors contributing there, but the fact that in 2017 we saw such an extraordinary set of experiences across South Australia suggests that we potentially missed the mark on that transition to a cleaner and greener future.

Coming to government in 2018 the former Marshall Liberal government was very clear that we needed to have security, reliability and affordability when it came to the provision of energy. Indeed, the work is currently going on in building the interconnector with New South Wales—first promised by Mike Rann, as I am sure you remember, sir, four years before your own election, when he came into power in 2002 with a pledge card confirming that the interconnector would be built, subsequently disavowed by Labor—means that now, thanks to the work of Dan van Holst Pellekaan, Steven Marshall and the former government, the interconnector will be delivered. This will be of assistance.

There are opportunities in hydrogen. We do not believe that the production of power through an experimental \$600 million unproven hydrogen power plant is one of them. There will be a need for future provision of energy in South Australia over and above our current generating capacity. The Leader of the Opposition very clearly articulated that every opportunity to have clean, reliable, affordable energy should be explored, and that may possibly include nuclear as well, as part of the mix.

Indeed, the understanding of nuclear as a safe, reliable, green energy has much more proliferated in the South Australian community now, I would submit, sir, than when you or I started on our political journeys. I think that we should look to follow the science. The Leader of the Opposition has committed to that, and we look forward to that royal commission taking place, a reopening of the chapter of the Scarce royal commission where we can truly consider the opportunity for a civil nuclear industry.

Alongside that, of course, there are also new pieces of information such as the fact that in Adelaide we will be building our own military nuclear industry. Nuclear submarines being built in South Australia, powered by nuclear reactors, while at the same time accepting a federal law that prohibits presumably the attachment of an extension cord to those submarines to power a house

down the road is strange. There are a lot of things that need to go into consideration of whether a civil nuclear industry is relevant and appropriate for South Australia.

The government has talked about cost previously. The Premier has said that it would be foolish to get ahead of ourselves in supporting an industry that was going to cost more than existing ones. It is notable, as the shadow minister for energy has said today and at other times that, as I think it was, the CSIRO report has confirmed that the cost of the hydrogen proposal the government is pursuing is higher than nuclear. If nuclear is the more proven technology, a cheaper technology than hydrogen, then I think it is a foolish decision to block it off. That said, the reason for a royal commission is because we want to explore all of these matters and what South Australia would need to do to deliver on such an industry. That is a \$2 million commitment and I think one that is going to be beneficial to South Australia.

The other commitment that was made today that was a new commitment was the abolition of payroll tax for all GPs. GPs have not been paying payroll tax. It is not something that has interacted between patients and GPs over the years, until a ruling in New South Wales decided that GP clinics were to be treated as businesses for payroll tax purposes, notwithstanding the fact that the GPs by and large will have an arrangement where they are tenants in a room. They may be paying for some shared services with their fellows in the GP clinic, they all have their own ABNs, and they all have their own interactions with funding going through the Medicare system, and indeed gap payments from the patient.

This is not a small business where there is an employer who owns a practice and has employees who are the doctors, yet this ruling has found a case where they decided that a GP clinic in New South Wales is a small business and that is now being applied to GP clinics across South Australia. This government has given an amnesty until 1 July this year, when GP clinics will start paying payroll tax. The government has come out and said they are going to exclude bulk-billed transactions. That sounds on face value like a positive step forward, but the Liberal Party has gone further and listened to the GPs in our communities. We have listened to the GPs and indeed to the other stakeholder groups who have talked about the practical effect of what the government's position would be if taken no further. What we have heard is that the business model if one was to only see bulk-billed patients does not allow for a reasonable or a sensible business model to exist. As was suggested in one case, people seeing patients might have to limit their sessions to as little as six-minute medicine.

The practical impact of the imposition of the GP payroll tax, we understand, in many practices will be between \$10 and \$20 per client per session. That is an extraordinary impost in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, at a time when we are already struggling to retain the interest of young residents in pursuing GP practice, at a time when there is already a waiting list, in some cases in the weeks, for people to be able to see their local GP. I certainly get this from my constituents—I am sure you hear it from yours—people who would love to see their GP in a quicker time frame.

As has been pointed out by a number of the doctors who have stood up with the opposition today and last week, GP practice is often in many ways the cheapest and best form of medical care. It is literally stopping a patient from falling off the cliff of sickness where they need an ambulance at the bottom. Pretty much more than anything else in our healthcare system, if we can get primary care and the GP support right, if we can improve those services, we will be able to reduce the risk of somebody needing an ambulance and needing that longer ramp that has been described by so many in recent days.

I put it on the table: we do not have enough young people wanting to become general practitioners. Of the people studying medicine, there are all sorts of push factors going this way and that on what specialisation they might pursue. We would like, as a society, half of them to want to go into general practice and yet the numbers, from what I hear, are not anything like 50 per cent, but much closer to 10 per cent or 20 per cent.

This is a challenge for us as a community. The imposition of GP payroll tax is, we think, a real own goal. This is a government that came to power with big promises on health and ramping and they said they would not leave a lever untouched if they could shift the dial on ramping. They have put inputs in the billions of dollars extra to try to deal with the ramping crisis and yet what are

the outcomes? The 24 worst months of ramping on record: the last 12 months with 3,000 hours or more lost to the ramp and three of those months, including last month, with more than 4,000 hours lost to the ramp—more than 4,700 hours lost in May to the ramp.

The government has put in inputs in the billions of dollars and has had worse outcomes. As I have said before, it takes a special kind of incompetence to spend more money than ever before and get worse outcomes than ever before. We have just come out of a fortnight on Code Yellow. I was not able to hear the answer today, but I understand more than 500 elective surgery procedures have been deferred. Maybe necessary for the system in that circumstance but cruel for those patients. It was necessary during the pandemic on occasion for there to be pauses in elective surgery—during a global pandemic of once-in-a-century proportions. This government, not dealing with a once-in-a-century global pandemic, has given us these outcomes, is investing this money, and yet refuses to give GPs the same tax treatment going forward that they have had over the last number of years.

The Treasurer and the Premier seek to defend themselves in their inertia, in their lazy inaction, to support the GP clinics by saying that this is not their decision, there is no new tax here, this is just a legal ruling, as if they have absolutely no agency in the outcomes at all. This is the application of a state-based tax collected by state-based tax collectors going into support the revenue that is propping up this state Treasurer's budget.

The practical application of this tax to South Australian doctors for the first time leaves them really scratching their heads when the Treasurer says that this is not a new tax, this is not his decision, this is something he is being unwillingly forced into accepting. Yet, in the budget papers, the government cannot even bring themselves to say how much they think they are going to collect out of this revenue.

Budget Paper 5, page 5, Part 1: Revenue measures, talks about the bulk-billing exemption that the government has put in. That bulk-billing exemption has no budget figures attached to it. It says 'n.a.' and:

The nature of the measure is such that a reliable estimate cannot be provided.

On page 6 it goes on to say:

Reliable data is not available to estimate the cost of this measure. Estimates of revenue forgone will be incorporated in future tax expenditure statements.

Yet the Treasurer had the gall to go on the radio this afternoon after the Leader of the Opposition had spoken to the excellent Stacey Lee on FIVEaa outlining the new measures that he committed to in the budget, including the abolition of the payroll tax applied to GP clinics. The Treasurer of South Australia went on Stacey Lee's show on FIVEaa of his own choice and said in relation to the Leader of the Opposition:

He has outlined what would amount to hundreds of millions of dollars of additional costs to the state budget.

The Leader of the Opposition today outlined two new measures that would cost money to the state budget, one of which was the royal commission, which would cost \$2 million, and the other of which was the exemption for GP payroll tax to continue effectively going forward as it has for the last year under an amnesty from the government as it did beforehand. The Treasurer of South Australia presumably believes that exemption will cost us hundreds of millions of dollars because they were the two measures outlined.

Maybe the Treasurer was talking about other measures that the Leader of the Opposition talked about that had been previously ventilated, things like our commitment, which I am very proud of, to lift the payroll tax threshold for all small businesses from \$1.6 million to \$2.1 million, which would in fact bring it down in real terms to the level it was at in 2019 when we first abolished payroll tax on small businesses with a payroll of \$1.5 million. Perhaps, that is what he is talking about. The idea of giving back money to businesses that have done the incredibly dangerous thing from his point of view of employing South Australians is such an anathema to him that he does not want them to have that money. He thinks that is his money. He thinks that is a cost to the budget, as he describes it.

The other commitment we made several weeks ago that was repeated in the budget reply speech today was the exemption that we want to provide to apprentices and trainees because we as an opposition talk to businesses regularly. When we were in government, sir, you will recall I am sure with pride that many of the young apprentices were educated in your electorate at the excellent St Patrick's Technical College amongst other schools with good apprenticeship programs and other young people beyond school in apprenticeships. We had record growth in apprenticeships.

In talking to the businesses taking on those apprentices, it was very clear to us that one of the challenges usually for businesses thinking about taking on an apprentice is that in that first year or two there is often a time lag until that apprentice becomes productive. There is a time when the business and the RTO are providing support to that young person or older worker training in the area so they can become productive so they can pursue a career. Whether it is an apprentice or a trainee, they are more productive at the end than they are at the start and the business gets a greater benefit at the end than they do at the beginning. It is indeed a cost that many businesses see. It is a barrier to the employment of that apprentice in the first place.

There is a range of measures that the former state and federal governments took to increase incentives for businesses to take on those apprentices and thousands of young South Australians and older South Australian workers benefited from that opportunity. Thousands of businesses, indeed I think more than 3,000 businesses from memory, took on an apprentice for the first time during that period and benefitted from that experience. But we understand that it is a cost, especially in those early years, and so that is why we committed to removing the payroll tax application for apprentices and trainees. These are the things that have a cost factor.

There is also a relief of stamp duty of up to \$10,000 that we have committed to providing for young people, first homeowners, purchasing an existing house. This is noting that most first homeowners purchase an existing dwelling rather than a new build. We support the government's measure for a new build, but we do believe that having the particular needs of first-home buyers supported through relief of the first home build would benefit them very significantly.

These are the measures that the Treasurer finds so appalling that he would go on radio and be so critical of them. I am really excited about the policy agenda that the Liberal Party is putting forth. The budget deals with some of the issues that need to be dealt with and not others. I look forward to going through the education, training and skills budget in great detail with the minister next week.

I look forward to going through the higher education budget with the Deputy Premier next week, and I look forward to going through the arts budget with the arts minister, and possibly also the Premier, who has taken some of those responsibilities away from the minister. I am particularly thinking about the South Australian Museum.

It has been raised in this house before, but there is damage being done to morale at the South Australian Museum with every day that drags on without a clear understanding and sight of whether the research scientists, with their collective 400 years plus of experience of supporting scientific and other research at the Museum, have jobs going forward, and of those galleries presenting extraordinary opportunities for young South Australians to learn about the world from natural history to ancient society, to anthropology and a range of other things.

To be clear, those who love the Museum have come out in their thousands and demonstrated support for the Museum in recent months, that their stress that this institution that they love so much will indeed be supported going forward in a form that remains remotely recognisable to them can be alleviated. The Premier has an opportunity to set their minds at ease in the coming days, and I hope he will. It was really disappointing that that was not included in the budget. What we did see in the arts budget was—and I extend my apologies to the education minister, who has been attentively listening. I am not focusing on his issues tonight, we will have plenty of time next week, I assure him.

Just to finish off on the arts budget, the Museum was not mentioned. There was discussion about a number of projects, the Adelaide Festival Centre fire safety upgrade, I think, and some money for State Theatre, State Opera and Country Arts to have new offices. I am really interested in the minister's explanation about what is the thinking, the strategic decision, the application of purpose and, indeed, the application process for the granting of funds under the \$5 million arts investment

fund. I certainly am not going to complain about the application of money in a budget to the arts and culture sector. I think there are opportunities for it to be spent wisely, and I look forward to hearing what the minister is thinking about what they are. I am really looking forward to the minister and the Premier explaining what the government is going to do with the Museum.

In summary, I support the bill. The bill must be passed. Having appropriation is what pays for everyone's salaries and the government to keep going. Education, training, skills, arts, festivals and higher education are my roles to pursue in greater detail in estimates, and I look forward to that process.

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (20:17): I take this opportunity to speak on the Appropriation Bill, which deals with the 2024-25 state budget. Certainly, when South Australians are waiting for the budget to be handed down, and listening to, I suppose, the pre-budget announcements, and then afterwards what actually lands, the big question they want to ask, especially in light of where everyone is at the moment in a cost-of-living crisis, is: will they be better off in the next 12 months? Will their family be better off in the next 12 months? Will South Australians across the board be better off in the next 12 months?

If they are looking at what has happened in the previous two years and what has been going on, they would certainly be very cautious about answering that question in a positive manner—more likely in a negative manner—because if the past two years are anything to go by, that answer is a definite no.

We know that in the last budget, the 2023-24 budget that was handed down, South Australia had the highest inflation in the country at 7.9 per cent, and now in this budget the inflation figures that came out in March show that South Australia still has the highest inflation rates. It has reduced but it is still at 4.3 per cent, well outside what the Reserve Bank sees in its band of targeted inflation. It is a real issue and it is quite sticky, which is the real concern.

At the same time as inflation is high and costs are surging, what is important is that people have jobs. The unemployment rates are at low levels but South Australia, unfortunately, has the highest unemployment in the nation. That low level of unemployment started at the end of the time of the former Marshall Liberal government. It has continued, but the fact is that in South Australia the unemployment rate here is the highest in the nation and, concerningly, the participation rate is what we need to be concerned about in terms of the number of people actively contributing to the economy here in South Australia.

In terms of the average family, in thinking about how they are going: the average family—two kids and a mortgage—are more than \$20,000 worse off than they were at the state election in 2022. Their mortgage repayments, their interest payments, the basics and food costs have surged—inflation has seen them go up. Petrol, groceries—those costs that cannot be avoided—eat into the ability of families to have discretion and make do. Of course, electricity costs as well are massively eating into the family budget.

With South Australian households, as well as small businesses, we had the latest market offering handed down by the AER, which showed that South Australian households and families are paying more for the average electricity bill than are households in Melbourne, households in Sydney and households in Brisbane. So they are hurting. It is bearing out in some of the consumer spending reports. In recent months it has shown—I think, back in April—that consumer spending is down by 1 per cent. We are talking about inflation rates up around the 4.3 per cent, and consumer spending has basically gone down, because there is no discretionary spending for them—they are having to withhold money from the budget.

However, we know that increasing is the massive spending going on by governments, whether it is the federal government or, here in South Australia, the state government. We have the highest inflation rates in the country and we have record spending by the government. The RBA has one tool to handle inflation, and that is interest rates. It needs to work in conjunction with fiscal policy, but of course governments have absented this because they want all the blame sheeted home to the RBA.

The RBA tolled the bell on that today when it deliberated. Thankfully, to some extent, the interest rates did not go up—of course people want them to go down—but they warned that the recent big spending in federal and state budgets may have added fuel to the inflationary fire. Now the RBA has to sit and wait to see how the spending is going on before it can move on interest rates. At the very least, interest rates are having to stay on hold for longer, and certainly the threat now is that they may rise.

I spoke previously about the Supply Bill, which is to allow spending to continue while we get through the Appropriation Bill for vital, essential government services, and I was very intrigued that that bill had gone up by \$1.2 billion to \$7.7 billion from the previous year. I questioned it at the time: why would that be? Is that a portent of what is going to happen in the budget? The budget was handed down and we now see why. The budget revealed a massive spending problem—massive spending and expenditure going on in this budget.

In the last budget that increase in expenditure happened pretty much across the board; almost every single department had overspent to the tune of \$1 billion. What would you have thought would have happened? You would have the Premier in cabinet surely reading the riot act to the ministers, telling them to get their departments in check to make sure they are not overspending. But, no, what do we find in this budget? More overspending—I think another \$800 million of overspending going on there compared with budgets. We are finding that, compared with the original budget two years ago, we have \$3 billion of overspending this year.

When you look through the departments and where that is happening, health has massive overspending going on there—I think upwards of \$1.2 billion more than the budgeted amount in that first budget—but also, interestingly, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet overspent and the Deputy Premier's department overspent. So if the leaders are not setting an example, good luck trying to get the ministers to follow, because why should they follow when their leaders are not worrying about keeping their departments in check?

I talked about health. We have massive spending in health, but what is the result? Rather than correcting ramping, what we now have is record ramping in South Australia. In fact, this government and the Premier, despite their promise to fix ramping, are now responsible for the worst ramping ever recorded in the state's history.

We just had the ramping figures come out for May and they showed that 4,773 hours were lost for that month. Despite the Premier's number one election commitment that he was going to fix ramping, what we have is ramping at levels three times worse than the last full month of the former Liberal government. In fact, when you tally up all the ramping hours that have been lost, what you find is that more than 94,540 hours have now been lost to ramping since Labor was elected just over two years ago. Compare that to the former Liberal government which, in its four-year term, had 74,991 hours of ramping over the full four years. So there we go: we have had nearly 20,000 more hours of ramping in a little over half the time.

How those ramping figures play out is that the Premier, despite his promises, has now delivered the worst 24 months of ramping in the state's history. When you look at what that means for paramedics on the ramp and the amount of time they are spending on there, that equates to well over \$5 million of taxpayer-funded wages. We had the Premier telling us to vote like our lives depended on it and that he had the fix for ramping, but what we were not told was that he would make ramping three times worse and, as I said before, he would be spending record amounts.

How this has played out is that in the lead-up to the budget, we had five days in a row of Code White where all ED beds were full and hospitals were over capacity, leading to elective surgeries being cancelled for two weeks. We had people who have been waiting and waiting; I think over 500 surgeries were cancelled. Clinicians, nurses and doctors are burnt out. As the top union chief of SASMOA said, 'In my view it's the worst I have ever seen in our hospital system.'

So we have record spending and overspending from departments. In health, as I said, there is a massive amount of spending, yet at the same time we have had 24 months of the worst ramping in the state's history. If you were running a company and went to the board and said, 'I've spent a massive amount of money, more than budgeted, and the results are three times worse,' I think you

would be asked to resign on the spot—but not here, not in government. We have the Premier and the health minister going on with no issue from them continuing to do that.

When we look at how the budget, with its record expenditure, is still able to be balanced, that is driven off of inflation and the massive increases to taxation revenue that this government is getting. If you look at revenues, stamp duty and housing prices are going up and that has added another \$100 million to the state's coffers. The GST bill—the GST that people are paying on top of their already increasing food, petrol and groceries—has gone up \$2.1 billion. Payroll tax has also gone up 38 per cent to \$280 million.

So businesses, because wages are trying to keep up with inflation so that workers, rightly, can try to pay their bills, have an increased wage bill, and so payroll tax is surging into the state government's coffers. Overall, the tax take is up by 27 per cent in a cost-of-living crisis. This government is bringing in surges in taxation revenue. Despite their promise of no new taxes, no tax increases, what we actually have is South Australians paying more tax than ever before.

There is inflation, which home owners, people affected by interest rates, are getting crushed under by the RBA trying to bring inflation down. Householders' pain and small businesses' pain is this government's pain. At the same time there are record revenues. You would think, 'Okay, that could be used to pay down debt,' but what we actually found is that state government debt is projected to surge to \$44 billion over the forward estimates. That is a massive debt bomb waiting down the line in four years.

What does that mean? The estimates show that the interest rate bill annually is over \$2 billion to pay for that debt. That is more than \$5 million each day. Money that could be spent on other essential services is now paying down that debt. The other startling factor around that debt is the fact that more than half of the costs of the north-south corridor and the new Women's and Children's Hospital are not included. So there is more debt to come after the forward estimates—upwards of \$50 million is not inconceivable.

We have households hurting. They understand the issues around debt; the time of cheap money is behind them. Businesses are the same, but the government has not seen that. Businesses, as I talked about, are struggling. They are currently in a cost-of-doing-business crisis. We have the government, the Treasurer, in question time even today saying, 'You have never had it better. We've got such a positive, strong-running economy,' which, as I said, is driven by inflation.

So you have those positive macro indicators, but what we are finding, in business confidence surveys and even in CommSec surveys as well, is that these big headline factors fail to consider the micro issues that are being faced by business—the costs, profitability and labour availability—which are really hurting them. There was nothing in this budget for small business. The energy rebates that were there in the last budget have been cut, and there is no payroll tax relief as well. That is why, in the lead-up to the budget, it was welcomed on this side of the house that the Liberal Party, if elected, would increase the payroll tax threshold from \$1.6 million up to \$2.1 million.

I talked previously about electricity: the massive costs and the fact that households and businesses in South Australia are paying more for their electricity than in Melbourne, in Sydney and in Brisbane. Over the term of this government the first two years of default market offers saw electricity bills for the average household and business skyrocket and go up—for both businesses and households—by well over 30 per cent. I think for households it was an increase equating to about \$710, and for businesses it was well in excess of that at about \$1,700. So electricity prices went up.

Thankfully, in the most recent default market offer, put out only just a few weeks ago, you would say that prices have moderated. They came down by about 1 per cent. We have the energy minister rolling out, saying that this is proof positive that the energy price is coming down. What a plan: smash households with big 30 per cent rises and then have it come down by 1 per cent to say that prices are going in the right direction. Well, clearly that is not the case.

We looked at the budget to see what would be some measures in it to help struggling households and struggling businesses. We did not get any new measures that are going to help with bringing down prices for households. What we did see was more new measures into hydrogen. The

budget showed that \$126 million had been spent on the government's hydrogen power station in their estimate for 2024, with a further \$388 million to be spent in 2024-25. We had the Office of Hydrogen Power, which was meant to be on a budget of \$2 million per year in the government's first budget, but the actuals show that it was \$13 million for its first year of operation, not \$2 million.

It shows that the estimate for the 2023-24 year was \$35 million, and it shows for next year it is \$25 million. That is significant money going towards \$75 million spent on this office, over and above the \$600 million required for the hydrogen power station. We know that the government has admitted that that hydrogen power station is not going to reduce electricity bills for South Australians.

While we are on this transition, we got to understand that it is complex and it is at such a scale that we cannot just rely on a one-fix solution. The government has a renewables-only solution with the silver bullet of hydrogen being able to justify more and more renewable energy, which leads to inefficiencies throughout the whole electricity system, and an inefficient electricity system produces an inefficient economy.

That is why the leader today in his address in reply indicated that we need to have all options on the table, and that includes considering nuclear. That is why he has announced that, if elected, a Speirs Liberal government will hold a royal commission that investigates what would be required for South Australia to be ready to have civilian nuclear electricity generation as part of the energy mix, all aimed at trying to have affordable energy, affordable electricity for South Australian households and also business and industry, so that industry is not having to leave the state.

In conclusion, as I stated in my opening comments, after three budgets, South Australian households and businesses must ask themselves: are we better off under Labor? What this budget shows is a resounding no. We have record ramping. We have record high electricity bills here in South Australia, and the cost of living is crueling families and business.

Mr BASHAM (Finniss) (20:37): I rise to also speak on the Appropriation Bill and very much give a view from the lens of the people of Finniss, an area that certainly has a unique demographic. The population in Finniss is a much older population than generally in South Australia, let alone Australia. It is a lovely part of the world where many people choose to retire. I often look at the data and look at those people who are able to vote. Excluding the children of the electorate, the average age of the voting population in Finniss is actually 66, past the average retirement age. So it is a unique part of the population who reside in Finniss in that regard.

That then also puts interesting challenges in front of that community. Certainly, I acknowledge that there are some things being invested in in Finniss, but that many of them, if not nearly all of them, are things that the Marshall Liberal government had committed to prior to the last election. We see through the budget papers mentions of certainly things around health. We are seeing the commencement right now of the work that is going into the new emergency department at the South Coast District Hospital, in the Southern Fleurieu Health Service there, and the work that is being done is essential.

I certainly had firsthand experience of the current emergency department only earlier this year when, unfortunately, one of my children had an anaphylactic reaction to what was likely nuts and ended up having to be taken to the ED just to be treated to make sure that she was brought back under control, and to make sure that her body stopped fighting those nuts in her system. They did a wonderful job, but under enormous pressure and room constraints. Once my daughter was treated, it was very much, 'Can you move to another cubicle because we need this one.'

It was a really challenging time, and particularly very challenging being there as an elderly man came in for a regular check-up and, unfortunately, it was found that his body was in complete shutdown and he was only given hours to live. It was very hard to sit there—for me, let alone my daughter—listening to the conversation that his family was having to have, that he was only going to be with us for a few more hours. It was a real challenge, and thankfully this new ED is going to have some rooms where families can actually be separated and have those conversations in private so that they do not have to have the world listening to that very personal time that this family was having, talking to relatives around Australia and informing them of the sad news.

I am very much supportive of the investment that is going into the emergency department in Victor Harbor. It is important to make sure that that upgrade is delivered. Unfortunately, it is running late from when it was first forecast. Of all the ED upgrades, pretty well all of the others have been done on time. Unfortunately, this one is running 12 months late, at least, and we will see when it is actually completed how late it actually is.

Also in the health space, there is a new helipad to be built. This is an important part of making sure that the facilities are there for helicopters to land and, as we see larger helicopters come into operation, making sure that the helipad is fit for purpose. Again, this is something that was promised under the Marshall Liberal government. I am glad to see it is continuing and glad to see it is finally going to be delivered—and, interestingly, straight across from my front door.

I live literally straight across the road from where the helipad is and I get to see how often and how important it is for the people of Finniss to have that service there. There are times when it certainly is very regular and there are other times when we do not see it for a couple of weeks, maybe even a month or so. Sometimes it can come many times in a day, so it is an important thing in making sure the people of Finniss are receiving their healthcare needs.

In the investment in the region in health, also in the budget is the new ambulance station, on which work has also commenced. I am pleased to see this work commence. The old station has certainly been a challenge and it has been something that has needed to be upgraded. It is something I certainly spoke about with the previous minister, Stephen Wade. I was not able to get it lifted up to the priority of being in our cycle, but it certainly was acknowledged that it did need upgrading and it was a challenging time to find where to direct all the funds.

I guess the other important piece of infrastructure that is mentioned in the budget papers is the upgrade of Victor Harbor Road, particularly part of the money that was secured under the federal Morrison government to upgrade safety along Victor Harbor Road. It was meant to fund an overtaking lane, but that overtaking lane was axed by this government. We are still seeing some investment into one of the intersections, which was also planned to be done by the Marshall government, and that is at the Hindmarsh Tiers Road/Virgin Road/Victor Harbor Road corner.

This intersection is probably 1½ kilometres north of the roundabout, which many people call the Urimbirra roundabout, just next to the Urimbirra Wildlife Park. This intersection is quite busy and unfortunately is on a bit of a crest of a hill. People often do not realise the dangers that are there and do some fairly silly manoeuvres that have led to some quite serious accidents at times, and unfortunately there have been deaths at this intersection as well. It is a really important safety infrastructure upgrade, so I am really pleased that that is there.

There is also some money being spent on the bridges on the railway line where the SteamRanger train operates between Mount Barker and Victor Harbor. There are four bridges that are certainly showing their age. SteamRanger has been able to secure funding for those. We cannot actually find exactly where it is in the budget, but I am pretty confident it is still there.

That work is important to make sure that SteamRanger is able to continue. Interestingly, all of those four bridges are actually in the seat of Finniss, one being the crossing of the Finniss River itself, one crossing Currency Creek, and another one crossing the Urimbirra Creek. Most people would not know where that is, but that is between Port Elliot and Victor Harbor, and is also known as Watson's Gap. The fourth bridge is just as you come into Victor Harbor, going across the Hindmarsh River as you come into town.

There is an interesting little story about that bridge. I had a constituent come to see me. Her grandfather was given a job during, I believe, the First World War. There was concern that there may be an invasion and so they actually drilled holes in the bridge. These holes are still there today, where they were going to put the dynamite to blow the bridge up, in case there was an invasion. I would have thought that it was fairly unlikely that Granite Island was going to be the point where they were going to invade the Australian mainland, but they were prepared anyway. It was very much a request of this constituent to make sure SteamRanger were aware and that they did not fill these holes in. They have made that commitment. Unless they are structurally needed to be filled in, they will not be filling these holes in.

That certainly covers the bulk of infrastructure that I can find in the budget in relation to Finniss. There are certainly some other things that will help, but they are of very limited help in the population as I was describing. As I said, it is very much an aged population, so the number of children in the electorate is much lower, probably, than average across the state. The increase in sports vouchers is welcomed by those who are able to use them, but it is certainly limited.

Interestingly, I was just having a look at some of the stats over the years about where we are seeing that sort of investment, where people are using those sporting vouchers. It is quite fascinating to see that, over the last calendar year of 2023, a full year, 102 different organisations received funding via that sports voucher, 102 different sorts of sports clubs or Scouts, etc.

A total of 386 vouchers went to Australian Rules Football. Second was 191 to netball. We have a very strong soccer club at Port Elliot, and we had 150 playing soccer at Port Elliot. Interestingly, we had nearly exactly the same, 149, for dancing. It is certainly interesting to see that dancing is such an important part. A total of 138 went to gymnastics, another less known sport, but certainly well participated in there. Then there is a bit of a drop down to 79 for basketball.

That is where the community of Finniss is actually using these vouchers. There are some other interesting things that I think we need to look at, and that is what is in it for the older population. One of the things that gets raised with me a lot by the older population is the free transport available for seniors here in the city. The question is asked: why do we not get that in the regions? It is certainly something that is very city-centric in its approach.

Even though we do have public transport that goes from town to town, so travels between Goolwa and Victor Harbor, it still costs the community, users, a fare, whereas here in the city, if you want to go from Unley to Glenelg, that can be a free trip for those seniors. The older people of my community very much question why that is not available to them, particularly for those internal movements within our community.

I guess another thing that is of big concern to me is the infrastructure that the leader mentioned in his speech, in particular the infrastructure going forward needed for the developments that we are seeing across different parts of the electorate. In the move to see significant growth around Goolwa, what infrastructure money is there for the road network? What infrastructure money is there for the power networks? What infrastructure money is there for all those services that are needed? I guess one of the big challenges that we are really concerned about, because we are seeing some challenges even with the current developments, is what infrastructure money is there to support SA Water, making sure that they can deliver water and sewerage across the region?

It is becoming very challenging for those developers working forward. They are committed to this region and developing as fast as they can in some of those new developments across the region. We are wanting to see these houses built. They are doing all that they can, but they are absolutely running into some problems as we are moving forward.

With regard to the overall look of the budget from the perspective of those in Finniss, I certainly very much remember as a young adult watching the State Bank collapse and the debt that the state was in in relation to the \$3 billion loss the State Bank made. I just looked at \$3 billion from the time when the State Bank collapsed through to now: what does that look like in today's money? It looks like a bit over \$7 billion, from my calculations. In comparison, we are only looking at a \$44 billion debt for this government.

I guess my concerns are that it was mentioned today that the increased revenue has allowed increased borrowings. Certainly, as a small business owner and operator of a farm, that would be a very dangerous way for me to have operated—every time I got more income, to go out and borrow more money—because there are many things that come at you that you are not expecting. You need to make sure that you do not overextend yourself, particularly in borrowings where you are committed to paying those borrowings back to the bank, when those unforeseen circumstances occur.

In farming it was drought and low milk prices for me as a dairy farmer, so you could either be hit with increased costs, as you would be in a drought, or reduced revenues by a changing milk price. I think it is very concerning that we have gone out and continued to borrow with that increased amount of revenue that is there. I think that the debt bomb is certainly before us, and we have to be

very careful how we manage that going forward. Since I am about to lose my voice, I might actually leave it there.

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (20:53): It gives me great pleasure to speak to this Appropriation Bill. May I say that it was a budget of interest, and it was a budget in which those of us in the Limestone Coast and MacKillop were mentioned, and we were considered, and we are forever grateful.

I will have two parts to this conversation. My first part is obviously going to be about the fact that, for the sake of budgets and the history of MacKillop and me being the member since 2018, sometimes it has been very hard to find good news amongst budgets. This one is pleasant. It is not huge in proportion. I think it is a budget that resembled a little the federal budget, which really does not tell us a lot and does not make any sort of landmark claims to any clear direction. As we all know, we find ourselves in the middle of an election cycle, and it is probably going to be a lot more about the next budget rather than this one now.

Capturing a little bit of the intent of the budget, I know that the people of MacKillop and the Limestone Coast will benefit from the \$243 cost-of-living payment, and they tell me that this budget is trying to address the cost of living. We know that families going to government schools will also get a \$200 reduction in fees for schooling processes and service subsidies. I know that will be welcomed.

I know that the children of MacKillop and the Limestone Coast are very active in their sporting pursuits and I know the doubling of the \$100 sports voucher, where there are now two of them, will be well received; it will be appreciated. For those who may not be interested in sport, it has been extended to those who may wish to participate in music lessons.

There is another one that is really interesting, and I am pleased to see it, although I do not think it really captures the Limestone Coast but there might be potential for it certainly down in Mount Gambier, and that is that stamp duty will be abolished for first-time homebuyers. The biggest problem with MacKillop is that we really do lack developers, we really do lack home builds in any sort of great quantity. I do not think that saving first-home buyers the stamp duty is going to help much in MacKillop, but I can see the intent.

I know that first-home buyers obviously would be struggling with the cost of purchase of new homes, we know that interest rates are going up and we know that everything has become more expensive, so this is a help. Certainly, if there are those big extensive builds around Mount Gambier, I think those buyers are going to appreciate this initiative.

The biggest spend in MacKillop, which I have to say I am really excited about—it came out of the blue, and I will be speaking more about it later—is an \$18 million new police station for Naracoorte. I have to say a really big thankyou to the previous Minister for Police and Correctional Services and I now also thank the new Minister for Police and Correctional Services, member for Kavel, Dan Cregan, for this announcement, and for pursuing this new police station and advocating for Naracoorte.

The police station is an \$18 million build. It is a very tired and old police station. Ironically, we have had a number of fires. Most recently and sadly, we saw the loss of a local policeman at Lucindale. I know it is not Naracoorte, but I am sure Naracoorte would have been a police station he worked in as he was a policeman who used to travel around many stations, hence why he ended up in Bordertown on the last part of his duty. No doubt, he would have spent a lot of time in the Naracoorte Police Station.

It is really welcome that we are seeing this government initiative of \$18 million rolled out into Naracoorte, knowing that the police in a sense (SAPOL) are valuing Naracoorte as a facility. We are not going to be dependent upon Mount Gambier. We are not asking the police to come up from Mount Gambier to monitor Naracoorte. We are actually going to have substantial home office and facilities, and I know that the Naracoorte and surrounding communities are going to be very well served and feel a lot safer with this investment and commitment.

It is a little bit interesting when we see the CFS. They are going to receive \$800,000 for an audit and facilities. This is also another great initiative and it is just a matter of what does it mean,

what will they find and where will they land? We do know again in Naracoorte they have a CFS headquarters. Recently, it has been frequently used, but has found itself to be quite small with the number of fires.

There has been activity around the CFS headquarters, such as it is. I know they are looking for new facilities. There has not been any announcement yet but, fingers crossed, maybe in the budgets in the future we might see a nice surprise in this area, too, when they do this audit and go around looking at all the sheds knowing that some of our fire trucks in our regions still do not fit in the old sheds, knowing that some of our fire sheds still do not have bathrooms and amenities, flowing water, and it will be nice to address those as well.

It is also interesting that \$13.7 million is being rolled out at Lake Hawdon. I made a presentation to the Public Works Committee this week. I am very supportive of the fact that the intent here is for environment, birdlife and native fauna, but the devil is in the detail. Lake Hawdon represents part of our south-eastern water conservation and drainage network. It is an old network, over 100 years old now. It has a lack of maintenance, a lack of development. It has bridges that do not fit and meet the needs of the community. When they start weiring up, using regulators to hold water back in a system that has not been maintained, all I can say is let us watch this space and be careful, because there can be dire consequences upstream from there.

Even though they are only talking about 10 centimetres of extra water being held back, those are the sort of significant holdbacks on this flat landscape in wet seasons that can make a lot of difference. The devil will be in the detail about whether we are going to see any further drainage network cleaned or maintained beyond this regulator so that water can make its way with speed beyond the regulator towards Robe, because I can tell you it is full of reeds, it is full of trees and it probably has not been cleaned in 50 years.

There is \$250 million for school infrastructure, obviously noting \$155 million at Mount Barker. We can say that, yes, Mount Barker is not quite regional, but I guess it is a growing centre. We are seeing another \$62 million towards the northern suburbs and the like. I know that in MacKillop our education facilities do need upgrades. We see that there was \$6 million rolled out towards Mount Gambier High. I am looking forward to the day when we see some millions rolled out towards Naracoorte, Lucindale, Penola, Naracoorte South, Millicent and any other school that is obviously being left behind with old infrastructure that is no longer meeting its needs.

What was most interesting in the budget was to see this \$715 million over five years to implement universal three-year-old preschool, obviously picking up early childhood. I am not sure where the connections lie here. I do not know where the conductivity lies in regard to child care and early learning. Where is the money going to be rolled out in the way of infrastructure? I can tell you that most of my towns have a shortage of child care. They are full, they are flat out or they do not have any at all.

We are trying to address a seven-year issue in Kingston where there is barely any child care to speak of, with a kindergarten that is very old and away from the school, trying to pick up that child care and early learning alongside the area school. We are still running short and we are still battling there, so it will be interesting to see where that \$715 million rolls out. Can it pick up the needs of Bordertown, Naracoorte and other towns where we know there is a shortage of child care?

When you think about it, there are two really good positive aspects about child care and early learning. Firstly, child care allows both partners to be able to enter the workforce, and we know there is a real shortage of employees in regional South Australia. Secondly, we know that the benefits of early learning have the end-of-education outcomes that we are all looking for for greater education at year 12 levels. Greater academic achievements can be made through this early learning before four or five years old.

In roads, there is a massive road issue on the Limestone Coast, with roads beyond 20 years of age needing maintenance and upgrades. We saw \$80 million in road safety funding. It is lovely to have the safety funding, but I wonder whether we would need the \$80 million of safety funding if we had safer roads. Obviously, the billion dollars and more probably required to resurface some of the roads that are 20 years past their use-by date on the Limestone Coast is not there.

We are all waiting in our region to see what the iPAVe assessment came up with when the iPAVe truck was down there. It is going to take 12 months to divulge and work through that data before we get any sort of insight into what that really does mean with our road surface longevity and whether the roads are really safe.

In road safety, we saw \$3.8 million being rolled out for a heavy vehicle—but it would also be any sort of vehicle—parking bay and facilities for travellers just north of Salt Creek. Between Meningie and Kingston, there used to be a service station catering for the needs of travellers. It has all been packed up, closed up and left since COVID and has never reopened. It has certainly left motorists short of a stopping spot between Meningie and Kingston when they travel down through the Coorong, particularly tourists when they are not sure about distances, times and the tyranny of distance and they get caught short. Hopefully, this new parking bay facility for both heavy vehicles and also tourists will be welcome.

Summing up, there was not much to mention but we saw a little bit in health. There was a notice around mental health and some moneys going towards mental health; we are just not sure where it is going to roll out and who is going to receive it. I guess the devil will be in the detail.

As I said, it is a budget in small proportions. There are no big licks of big moneys and big changes. All I can say is that around the health area there is obviously a real need for investment, there is a real need for services, but sometimes you can even throw millions of dollars at the health budget—like the Marshall government did, taking I think around a \$6 billion spend to a \$7 billion spend—and nothing changes. It is not a really good way of spending the money if that is all you are going to get.

Coming back to some of the things that have rolled out recently in my electorate, and I am really appreciative of the ministers coming down and visiting. It is not maybe right in the budget, but it is certainly a state government rolling out spending in the Limestone Coast and backing up services and industries and shortfalls. It was really welcome to see the Hon. Clare Scriven come down and advocate \$800,000 to the Tatiara council for a 10-block development in the industrial area. Most of that will adjoin the Dukes Highway. It is looking like it is going to be oversubscribed and welcome and the developers will be raring to go once this development is completed.

On that same trip when the Hon. Clare Scriven came down she went down to Naracoorte and rolled out another \$500,000 to a private developer who bought the old TAFE site in Naracoorte, which was originally a school site, and that old TAFE site is going to be turned into an early learning centre. It is still a bit unknown as to what the whole centre is going to be. There is talk of picking up health rooms and activities by services or specialists alongside that childcare facility, or the childcare facility could be on one side of the building and the other side of the building could be a training centre in childcare facilities and trainers and the like.

It is one thing to have a childcare centre and say you can take 50 or 80 children, but then you need people to run it. In our area where we have a really low unemployment rate, and perhaps it is even lower in those skill levels we are looking for in the way of nurses and teachers and professionals, we do need to start looking towards that training and bringing our next set of school leavers and preparing them for the workforce and making sure that the local training is there for the local issues that we know that we can solve.

Recently, the Minister for Human Services, Ms Nat Cook, came down and she backed up the community centre at Tailem Bend. A lady by the name of Tammy Shepherd has been working with me really closely and she is trying to work with Minister Nat Cook as well in regard to—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr McBRIDE: We actually had a ball. We had a great time. The Tailem Bend community knows that the state government really does support their community hub. It provides everything from cooking to any sort of mental wellness or unwellness, cars and appointments, just a real service centre go-to place for anyone who would like to volunteer their time because they have got it, or they actually need help. We would really welcome seeing more of these community hubs in towns like Naracoorte and Millicent.

I had the really great fortune of running into the Millicent south primary school, Newbery Primary. I was talking to the principal there about supporting her students and her families. One of the things that is tough to see but is also good to see is the community around a school of a low socio-economic type area. There is a lot of social housing around Millicent south and a lot of issues to try to deal with. Talking to the principal, Leanne, she said, 'If I could work with a community hub in Millicent we could break down some real barriers and get the education to the children and get them into the workforce and get them educated, but not only help the children, help the parents help the children.' That is what seems to be lost a lot of the time with these low socio-economic type issues that are out there in society.

On the bigger issues, these are the ones where you can say, 'I am really appreciative for the budget. I am thankful to the Malinauskas government for considering MacKillop,' as they have with the budget and spends that we have received, but there are some really big issues here for the government that probably need to be highlighted. This is not punching anyone in the nose; this is not saying they are getting it wrong. What it should raise is alarm bells.

If you want to look at alarm bells, go and look at what Victoria is doing right now and where they have got themselves. They tell me that if you add the debt between Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania, you will end up with the Victorian debt. If you want, talk about a Premier who advocated for either the Commonwealth Games or the Olympic Games, then turned his back on it because he ran out of money. He was building tunnels, bridges, crossings and so forth and he ran out of money and had to stop.

The real question for the state governments of Australia is there is no doubt that no-one wants to get to this position. I do not know what the position is for South Australia—and these are real figures—because when Marshall came to government in 2018, the beyond forward estimates debts were \$24 billion. When Marshall left in 2022, it was out to \$34 billion. Now, two years and going three years into the Malinauskas Labor government, there are figures now of \$44 billion. Ironically, \$10 billion increments.

One of the things you do not want in politics or in finance is to say, 'It just rolls off the tongue like it's easy. It just doesn't matter because we will just keep on borrowing.' Let me tell you, we all know those who have lived through these cycles and it all comes back to bite you one day, particularly when interest rates go up like they have and we are not sure where they are heading. I have experience and I have seen the pain when you go to interest rates beyond 20 per cent and that is real and that happened in the late eighties and early nineties. I entered the workforce in 1986.

It is interesting when you look at these big builds that the government is proposing: the north-south corridor, \$14 billion, and the Women's and Children's Hospital, \$2 billion. They say, 'The longer we wait and the longer we talk about it, those figures will get left behind and soon it will be \$15 billion for the north-south corridor and maybe go to \$16 billion. The Women's and Children's, we need this and we need that,' and it will be one of the most expensive buildings in the Southern Hemisphere, if not the world, like the RAH was when it was finished.

I am hoping those who are out there thinking about these builds know this is real money, it has to come from somewhere and someone actually has to make the money. In this high-inflationary economy, this is Australia in general but the South Australian economy sits inside of that, we see interest rates rising and the perspective is: interest rates are rising, so who does it affect?

Apparently it only affects 25 per cent of the population. If it only affects 25 per cent of the population that we really do hurt and screw down, the other 75 per cent are enjoying it and the higher interest rates do not really have the effect they are meant to. Then with inflation, we are seeing it is around 3½ per cent or 3¾ per cent—it has been up around 5 per cent and beyond—we all want our pay rises, so you have to pay us more, so then everything costs more.

If efficiencies do not come into it, and there is not an efficiency because now we have a workforce that employs someone and you do not just employ people to work, you have to look after them, you have to look after their mental health and you have to allow them to work from home, and you have to allow them to have WorkCover and so forth. If the health system will not work for them, maybe they will use WorkCover instead. All these sorts of things fall back to employment and

ultimately it affects the cost of production, the cost of the system to make anything in this state or the country and it is all way out of control.

What I really wanted to say is we are getting ourselves into a two-tier economy. We have a government economy over here and we have a private economy and they are worlds apart, I can tell you. The private world is absolutely struggling. It cannot find the workers, it cannot find the workers it wants to produce what they need to efficiently on a world market, if they are an exporter. Then we have the government world, the government bureaucracy, and the government contracts. It is almost like it is fairyland Christmas time over here, without any problems. No, we just keep on borrowing money. We just spend a few more billion. It just gets more expensive so we add a couple more billion to it.

What does it matter? It will not be us paying it back, it will be my children paying it back or it will be my grandchildren paying it back. In the end it really does matter. With those reflections, thank you for the opportunity and I wrap it up

Bill read a second time.

Estimates Committees

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning) (21:14): I move:

That this bill be referred to estimates committees.

Motion carried.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: By leave, I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting that the Attorney-General, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector (Hon. K.J. Maher) and the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries (Hon. C.M. Scriven), members of the Legislative Council, be permitted to attend and give evidence before the estimates committees of the House of Assembly on the Appropriation Bill.

Motion carried.

Appropriation Grievances

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning) (21:15): I move:

That the house note grievances.

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (21:15): I would like to start my contribution to the grievance debate today by addressing a couple of the issues that I only briefly got to during the second reading, primarily in regard to the issue of beach and coastal management through the western suburbs, in particular those beaches, for those who are unfamiliar with the issue, where essentially we have a phenomenon called longshore drift, which shifts sand from south to north and has done for a very long time along the Adelaide metropolitan coastline.

If we look back over the last 20 or 30 years, there has obviously been a level of development that has occurred over that coastline as well. This resulted in a period of time 20 or so years ago in a realisation that there were significant erosion issues at Kingston Park to the southern end of a section of beaches and, post the more recent development, a significant issue at West Beach.

Over the last five or six years, those issues on the northern set of beaches have significantly worsened to the point where essentially the erosion issue at West Beach has got to the point of impacting infrastructure in terms of local roads. That erosion subsequently had also moved down further with the lack of action that was taken by the previous Labor government over a long period of time to start to impact the likes of Henley South and Henley itself in more recent years, where we have essentially seen rocks exposed and the clay bottom of the ocean bed exposed through many of the areas of what is one of South Australia's and Adelaide's most popular beachside destinations. To be completely frank, it has been an issue that has become so politicised that it is ridiculous.

If we look back over 15 years ago, the former Labor government at the time proposed a dual sand recycling pipeline solution, a pipeline that would run from Glenelg up to Kingston Park that operates through that southern set of beaches between and starting at the member for Morphett's electorate, through the member for Gibson's and then up to the member for Black's electorate where Kingston Park sits. That pipeline has been operating successfully for near on 10 or so years. It has seen a significant rebuild of the beach at Kingston Park to the point where it has essentially turned what was a rocky outcrop essentially near 10 years ago to what has been a remarkable success story that has seen that beach completely rejuvenated.

At the time, unfortunately, the then Weatherill government did not have enough money to complete the second pipeline. That was subsequently shelved and instead the poor people through my suburbs—through Henley, through West Beach and through Henley Beach South—have over time had to endure a range of different short-term solutions to this issue. Some of that involved significant movements of trucks, in the order of hundreds of trucks a day, that would shift sand from one spot to the other. On coming to government, we made a commitment to the local area that we would find a sustainable long-term solution for this and re-examine what the options were.

The work was undertaken by the department and the expert contractors who were brought in to undertake that work. Frighteningly, this has been one of the most significantly researched pieces of coastline in the world almost, with the number of reports and reviews and other research that has been done to determine the rate of drift, how significant it is, where it is occurring and what can be done to facilitate the fix.

This government came in and tore up the contract that was in place for the construction of the second pipeline that they themselves proposed in a former version of the Labor government. That has meant a significant delay in getting those beaches fixed. I am certainly putting the environment minister on watch and on notice, as it stands, because Henley Beach South is in dire straits at the moment. If we have a bad winter season and significant storm events coming through this year, there could be significant issues by way of infrastructure being impacted, rock walls being significantly impacted, and council infrastructure, in terms of beach access points, that will be impacted. That is on this government's watch. This is on this government's head. That is the simple reality of where we are.

On the back end of what has been nearly 2½ years since the election of this government, they finally got around to releasing a report, and essentially the outcome of that is a trial to look at whether near-shore dredging is a potential option. There had been a range of work supposedly done to determine the viability of this option but, to this point, it has been announced as a trial. We still do not know if this is feasible moving forward in a longer-term capacity. There has been no work, as I understand it, undertaken to determine the volume of sand that sits at this particular spot. We do not know and cannot ascertain, and still will not know, I do not believe, until the end of this trial, how frequently dredging can be undertaken at these particular points.

Number 2 is when the sand is being deposited at the other end, whether it is sensible works or otherwise, from a practical perspective, to be disposing of the sand or unleashing the sand into the tidal zone of the coast—not onto the beach itself, not onto the dune system itself, but into the tidal zone which, one would assume, would allow that sand to then shift further north anyway through the normal tidal patterns. There is much still to be examined, to be pulled apart, and questions to be asked in terms of what this actually means moving forward.

The most ironic outcome of the whole review process is that the government has quite literally said, in black and white, in the document, that, 'If the trial doesn't work we will have to go and do the pipeline because the pipeline was viable, it did have enough sand, and was capable of doing the job.' The government itself has admitted that the solution that was in place would have done the job, but their preference was to undertake a trial for this first. That is their prerogative and, again, I point out that the near \$20 million that is being spent just this financial year is essentially half of what the budgeted cost was for the sand recycling pipeline as well.

In addition to that, the one thing that my community was keen to see, and has been keen to see right from the very beginning—as I discussed with the history of this issue—is security and sustainability. Under previous Labor governments it had been a year-by-year process of approving

funding for sand carting, of deciding where and when and how much would be coming in that particular year. What we have now is we are back to that very same position where, if I look at the forward estimates, is there any money in 2025-26? No. Is there any money in 2026-27? No. Is there any money in 2027-28? No.

There has been nothing budgeted for sand for the coastal management of that stretch of beaches from next year onwards. I hope that is simply a function of the government hoping that this trial works, and I stress that I believe it is more of a hope than anything else. I certainly am in the same boat. I have always said I do not particularly care what technology is going to be used to return sand to that point, but it needs to be sustainable.

The community needs to be assured and convinced that there are appropriate levels of sand to be able to do this each and every year, so that we are not in a position in 10 years' time where we come back and have to have this same argument again as to how we deal with this issue, because it is not good enough that one section of beaches to the south has not had to deal with this for more than 10 years—it is not—when we know there is a solution that works. The member for Gibson sitting here today I do not think has suggested to anybody in her government that the pipeline that has been operating for nearly 10 years, servicing her section of beaches, should be turned off.

I do not believe there is a natural underlying issue with that technology on the Labor side. I think this was a cynical political decision to try to win votes—nothing more, nothing less—but it certainly cost taxpayers a lot of money in the process. We will see what sort of resistance or otherwise, how open some groups are, on the northern section of beaches, how amenable they are, to nearshore dredging. There is a lot of research that starts to underline how nearshore dredging can affect beaches as well.

There are pros and cons to every technology that can be deployed in this space, but there is certainly evidence that the likes of Greens, Labor, Liberal or otherwise, councils, state governments around the country, have implemented sand recycling pipelines: here on our southern section of beaches. In Noosa, on the Gold Coast, there has just been a second extension of a sand recycling pipeline completed up there. On the Sunshine Coast, in Maroochydore, there is also a pipeline running between Alexandra Headland and Mooloolaba. This is a technology that is proven and makes sense, and the Labor government's own report and review into this concludes to that end.

In regard to the budget, I thought I would go through in a little bit more detail, given that I did not get the opportunity in my earlier second reading contribution, to have a little more discussion and a deep dive into some of the numbers that underpin the budget position in South Australia. I described, as have many on this side of the house to this point, that this budget was defined by the three records: record tax, record ramping and record debt.

In terms of how we got there, it is very difficult to ascertain the fact that we are entertaining those three things together at the same time. In fact, it is quite difficult for some people to understand how the state budget works in terms of surpluses, when the Treasurer is out there saying that we are turning surpluses for the foreseeable future, yet we are increasing debt drastically to the point of \$44 billion over forward estimates. There are some that simply say, 'How does that make sense?'

It is reasonably simple to explain that net lending and capital expenditure does not count towards a surplus and deficit calculation, but what does that mean in practicality, the \$44.2 billion worth of debt, the debt bomb that is coming for us? The difficulty is from a per capita number, as we addressed earlier—some \$24,000-plus per person, which will only escalate, as the Treasurer admitted today in question time, and increase further over coming years. We have an interest repayment bill that has escalated from \$800,000 up to \$2.1 billion over forward estimates.

Comparisons have been made in terms of the total debt burden at the current time, or estimated over forward estimates, in relation to the State Bank collapse. A reputable media outlet made those comparisons on the day the budget was released. Net debt peaked post State Bank at roughly \$12 billion; we are talking about more than four times that. The debt directly associated with the State Bank collapse itself was almost two-thirds of what we are going to be paying year on year just to service the debt that we are going to be taking on inside of forward estimates. Those numbers should be shocking, and they are shocking for a range of reasons.

In terms of how a budget is received, the easiest measure of how a government views their own budget is how happy they are to walk away from it. I think we saw the Premier almost disappear the week after the budget. I think the Treasurer was at, give or take, maybe one or two press conferences the week after the budget.

Essentially, what we have seen from those opposite, even today, is that instead of every member coming into this house from the government and applauding the work that had been undertaken and the preparation of what is contained in the budget—I have been on my feet now for my contribution to the second reading debate and this first part of the grievance, and I think have spoken more on the budget than any members of the government to this point. That says a lot. It says a lot about this budget. It was a stinker for a range of reasons, and I am very certain that those opposite know that.

The other issue in regard to the state budget that I think is telling, having seen a few of the Treasurer's presentations on the budget to this point, is that he has almost gone to lengths to not discuss revenue when he presents the budget, because it tells a story and paints a picture of fiscal ill-discipline. More than that, it paints a picture of just how significant tax collections and the tax burden have been for South Australians over the last couple of years.

We have essentially seen the total revenue, or total tax take, for the state increase above and beyond original expectations from the government in their first budget of \$2.7-odd billion in 2023-24, \$3 billion in the coming year and \$3½ billion in 2025-26. Rightfully, I think, people would be asking the question: where is it coming from? The simple explanation is that we are paying more tax than ever before. The GST pool has drastically increased on the back of South Australians and Australians paying more for their everyday goods and services, and inflation has driven that number consistently for the last number of years.

But it is not just the GST pool that has increased again between the first budget and now by more than \$2 billion in itself. The story is the same across car registration, the ESL, fines and land tax. For payroll tax, there is \$483 million more in collections estimated in 2024-25 than was estimated in the 2022-23 budget—\$483 million in additional payroll tax. Stamp duty tells a similar story of significant increases.

The Treasurer, in terms of his narrative for the state's economy, paints a picture that our economy is strong because of the significant revenues that the state is taking in. I can tell the Treasurer that South Australian small and family businesses and households around our state do not see money going into state coffers as being a sign of a strong economy. In the context of having been out with a number of businesses and a number of families over the last few weeks, as we always do, and in particular in trying to tell some of their stories through the media in the lead-up to the budget and post budget, they are not buying what the Treasurer is selling.

When we have hospitality businesses—the likes of pubs that have been operating for years and restaurants that have been operating for years—having to close their doors or struggle to keep their doors open off the back of this inflation and off the back of increases to their electricity bills, their rents and their wages, do you think that they think that a strong economy is defined by revenue returned to the state government? I do not think so. I think it because that is exactly what they told us. Yet, when it comes to payroll tax reform, there is no interest from this government in finding any way to provide some relief to those South Australian small businesses and in putting them back in the position they were a couple of years ago in terms of the real growth of wages in comparison to the payroll tax threshold. These are real and telling stories.

What is more, it is not just those South Australian businesses and those South Australian families that are telling us that they do not think the economy is quite as rosy a picture as the Treasurer may paint: there are multiple surveys out there that are saying similar things. Only just over a week ago the latest NAB Monthly Business Survey showed that the South Australian business community is struggling, absolutely struggling. We have the lowest business confidence in the nation, at minus 13 points. We also have business conditions that lag behind every other state—again, the bottom of the table.

It is an absolute contrast to what we are being told is happening, an absolute contrast, and it continues to tell the story that the opposition has continued to spread to as many people as we can

to help people understand why the revenue lines and the tax have been so strong for this government. It is as simple as saying that the pain that South Australian small businesses and families have been feeling over the last couple of years has quite literally been the gain for the Malinauskas government, because on the back of inflation, on the back of property price growth and on the back of wages increasing, South Australians and South Australian small businesses are paying more tax than they ever have before.

We have what can only be described as a tax grab when we have GPs quite literally standing in front of cameras—a group of people who I do not think would ever themselves describe their demeanour as naturally political—saying that they despair the fact that they are going to have to pass on increases somewhere in the order of \$10 to \$20 per patient, based on the fact that the Malinauskas state government will not step up to the plate and deal with this issue surrounding payroll tax and GPs.

Again, I say what I said previously: if the government were truly committed to fixing ramping, for starters we would not have the 24 worst months of ramping in the state's history, we would not have ramping which is now nearly three times worse than it was when this government came to power, and we most certainly would not have decisions by this government that result in increasing the cost of everyday South Australians going to see their GP.

You try to explain to me the logic behind having a situation where South Australian GPs are going to have to pass on a cost increase to their patients. How does that make sense in the context of fixing ramping? How does that make sense in the context that we know that any price increase at the moment is going to shift and deter people away from their GPs and towards a hospital, towards the ramp? It just does not make any sense whatsoever.

If those opposite are not willing to, it is clear as of today, given the commitment that has been made by the Liberal Party today to ensure that no consultation, no fees paid to country GPs in servicing their communities through their hospitals—in the South Australian health system, mind you—should attract that tax to make it less desirable, less certain for South Australians to visit their GPs.

In the last week or so, I have also taken the opportunity to join with other shadow ministers to explore some of the other commitments that were made in previous budgets to ascertain where some of these are at, in particular the much vaunted and sold land releases that were to deliver a significant number of homes to South Australians. In terms of the Hackham development and every other one of those that were named in that land release, I can tell you there is not much there. There is not much going on. There is not much by way of houses. There is not much by way of frames. There is not much by way of slabs. There is not much by way of supporting infrastructure.

For what was described as essentially the silver bullet to the housing crisis in South Australia, there are more questions than answers when it comes to some of the announcements that came a year ago in terms of housing. It goes in the same vein that some of those projects were underway under the previous government. With some of those projects, including Prospect Corner I think is the name of the development close to the Bunnings there by the interstate freight train station on the bottom of Churchill Road, not much has progressed down on that section of work either.

Take the Seaton development that I drive past on a regular basis down Frederick Road every now and again when I make the trek down to West Lakes. I try my best on occasion to get down there when I can. That site has sat near empty with a fence around it for approximately the last year or so. If the government was serious about building these houses, then we would actually see action rather than just words, which is all we have seen to this point.

In terms of the other issues that have been traversed to this point, in particular I just want to draw attention to the fiscal ill-discipline. Again, this is a systemic issue that we have seen now a couple of years running across a vast number of agencies. It was identified last year in the context of what was a \$1.3 billion blowout in operating expenses. This year, thankfully, it is slightly more modest, in the order of \$800-odd million that departments and agencies had blown out their budgets.

Again, it is systemic. It is not just one or two, not just three or four; in fact, it is almost the opposite, where I think, from quick count, we have three departments and agencies that have met their budgets.

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner: Name them.

Mr COWDREY: I would like to recognise the legislature. The clerks here have ensured that the legislature has met its budget this year. The MFS thankfully has met its budget as well, and the Auditor-General, the always astute-to-fiscal-discipline Auditor-General, whose job it is to look very closely at the financial statements of each and every government department or agency, has done his job again this year, ensuring that he has met his budget this financial year.

In fact, the one department that has underspent is innovation. I am not sure which minister is responsible for innovation these days, but congratulations to them on being just about the only minister—

The Hon. A. Michaels interjecting:

Mr COWDREY: The Minister for Small Business says, 'Definitely not me,' so I will not applaud her for her fiscal discipline by any stretch of the imagination if she is not even happy to claim that she was the one and only minister to have ensured that her department or agency hit budget this year.

But there is much that was left, unfortunately, as missed opportunities. Imagine if some of that money could have been reinvested in ways that would have helped South Australians. Imagine if some of that money over the last couple of years could have gone towards payroll tax relief for those small and family businesses that are doing it tough right now. Instead, poor fiscal discipline has led to what can only be described as record tax, record ramping and record debt.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (21:45): The Hon. Jennifer Cashmore AM was a giant figure in South Australian politics, whose legacy is perhaps more well understood today in retrospect than it may have been by many people in her time. Today we said farewell at her funeral. In the coming days there will be a condolence motion in the parliament, and I will make a contribution. I look forward to that opportunity.

This evening I want to share with members and posterity the text of the inaugural David Tonkin Memorial Address given by Jennifer Cashmore to the South Australian Young Liberal Movement on 2 February 2000. At the time, I was the vice president and organising the event. Its reflections on historical liberalism and the challenges to come in the 21st century remain as sharp and prescient today as they were then. As I have about nine minutes, and it was a 15-minute speech, I will skip the biography of David Tonkin and the achievements of his government and focus on the philosophy. In the words of Jennifer Cashmore:

Thank you for the privilege, which I value greatly, of being your guest speaker tonight. And congratulations to the Young Liberal Movement for establishing an annual address in memory of David Tonkin, Liberal Premier of South Australia from 1979 to 1982.

It is an extraordinary fact...that death brings character, personality and achievement into sharp focus. Once the final chapter is written, somehow we have a clearer view of a person and of his or her achievements and significance in the context of their times.

So it is with David Tonkin, whose inaugural memorial address I have the honour to present tonight—*Liberalism—From Mill to Tonkin and Beyond.*

Some might question the claim of a direct link between a single term, late twentieth century premier of an Australian state of some 1.3 million people with John Stuart Mill, nineteenth century liberal economist and philosopher. David Tonkin was Premier for three years. Mill's influence on democratic practice throughout the English speaking world and beyond has been profound for one and a half centuries.

And yet, when you examine carefully the political philosophy, the policy approach and the administrative style of David Tonkin, you realise that he was a liberal thinker and practitioner in the true tradition of Mill. The link between the two demonstrates the immense importance to the world of philosophy as a discipline. It highlights the power of original thinkers to exert a continuing influence long past their own generations. It illustrates the positive role that has been and can be exerted by liberalism. And it should inspire those of us who belong to the Liberal Party to remain faithful to the ideals upon which our Party was founded in 1944 by that great Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies.

For the younger among us who may not yet be students of history, it is worth considering the origins of the word 'liberal'. The idea of freedom is probably as old as humanity itself. It was certainly spoken and written of by the ancient Greeks and Romans. But the word 'liberal', in the sense that we use it when we refer to thinkers like Mill, Locke, Rousseau, Voltaire, Burke, Bentham and Tocqueville, did not belong to the language of politics until after the French Revolution of 1789.

Mill's great essay *On Liberty*, published in 1859, bears regular re-reading and quoting. In the introductory chapter, Mill states: 'That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.'

Mill goes on to say that liberty comprises liberty of conscience, of thought and feeling and of absolute freedom of opinion. He maintains that the principle of liberty should enable us to pursue 'the plan of our life to suit our own character', so long as what we do does not harm others. From this liberty of the individual follows the liberty, within the same limits, for individuals to unite for common purposes.

At this point, I will skip the biographical detail of David Tonkin and continue:

To illustrate some of the qualities which illuminated David Tonkin's personal philosophy of liberalism, I would like to quote from an article entitled 'The Best Answer to Fanaticism—A Liberal Decalogue', written by Bertrand Russell, and published in *The New York Times* in 1951. Lord Russell's ten liberal commandments included the following:

- 'When you meet with opposition, even if it should be from your husband or your children, endeavour to overcome it by argument and not by authority, for a victory dependent upon authority is unreal and illusory.'
- 'Find more pleasure in intelligent dissent than in passive agreement for, if you value intelligence as you should, the former implies a deeper agreement than the latter.' And,
- 'Be scrupulously truthful, even if the truth is inconvenient, for it is more inconvenient when you try to conceal it.'

Those of us who knew David Tonkin will recognise this description of his resolute appeal to reason, his love of political discourse and his integrity.

As a parliamentarian, David Tonkin was in the mould of the classic South Australia liberal. This tradition was imprinted in the 1855-56 constitution, which provided for universal male suffrage, a revolutionary concept at the time in that it did not discriminate, for Lower House elections, between those who owned property and those who did not, nor between men on grounds of race.

South Australia's 1856 Electoral Act included the first provision in the world for the secret ballot, subsequently adopted by the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901, and eventually by all the world's democracies.

In 1894, South Australia became the first Australian colony, not only to grant women the right to vote, but also to give them the right to stand for parliament, another world first which was not emulated by either England or the United States until two decades later.

Other pioneering reforms, all rooted in the liberal tradition of enhancing the rights of the individual against the power of the State, or of monopolies or corporations, included:

- The 1858 Torrens land title system which simplified and secured ownership and transfer of property through a central government register, a system subsequently adopted by other states and many nations
- Pioneering laws to provide for conciliation and arbitration, thus providing orderly procedures for resolution of issues between employers and employees
- The world's first legislation, enacted in 1940 by the Playford Government, to give mothers equal rights with fathers in the guardianship of their children.

David Tonkin added two more firsts to this impressive but by no means comprehensive catalogue of legislative reform. They were his own Private Member's Sex Discrimination Bill, introduced in 1973, and his government's Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act of 1982.

The Sex Discrimination legislation was in the pure tradition of Mill, who had advocated full political rights for women as early as 1867. The Tonkin Bill, subsequently adopted as Labor Government legislation and passed in 1975, was the first such legislation in Australia and among the first in the world to outlaw discrimination based on gender. It provided for investigation and remedy, if necessary, of alleged discrimination in the fields of employment and training and the provision of services and the granting of loans. Remembering the atmosphere and attitudes of the almost entirely male-dominated parliament which I entered in 1977, I remain in awe of David Tonkin's courage and political skills in his efforts to secure equal rights for women.

Similarly, the granting of land rights to the Pitjantjatjara people was testimony to David Tonkin's recognition that transfer of one tenth of the area of South Australia was a question of simple justice for the original inhabitants whose leaders and culture he respected and whose advocate he became.

The liberal philosophy, which we inherit, originated in the seventeenth century. It was further developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in both Europe and the United States. Our western democratic ideas of freedom have their roots in three developments which, seen in the light of today's world, are still highly relevant to the continuum of liberal thinking. Those developments were the emergence of the modern state, the expansion of trade and industry and the proliferation of organised religions.

Liberal thinkers must now consider how individual freedoms are at once potentially threatened and enhanced by new developments. These include:

- The emergence of global corporations with powers greater than those of sovereign states
- The development of information technology that surpasses any single previous invention in its power to revolutionise economic, political and social ideas and practice
- The development of biotechnology which is already transforming human and animal reproduction and traditional notions of genetic relationships
- The influence of technology on the nature of work and, as Mill put it, on our capacity to 'frame the plan of our lives to suit our own characters'
- The changing nature of families, of global influences on children, and the implications of the first human generations with longevity of more than eighty years
- The relationship between humans and the earth itself which will determine our survival as a species, and
- The relationship between the earth and the universe.

Globalisation requires instruments for governance that have not yet been invented. Institutions such as the United Nations, born out of war, and the International Court of Justice, established in the mid twentieth century, were perhaps tentative steps towards recognition that a world view must prevail if peoples are to live in the peace and prosperity that best secure freedom. At the same time, our human nature is rooted in family and community, both of which are traditionally shaped by a sense of national identity.

The forgoing poses mighty questions for liberal thinkers. I hope that, in the tradition of Mill and Tonkin, Young Liberals will search out with open minds and without prejudice the knowledge which will determine policy responses to some of these issues. More importantly, I hope that you will study the world history of liberal philosophy and ideas, including the distinguished history of liberalism in Australia, in order to learn from the past and plan for our future.

I will have a great deal more to say about Jennifer Cashmore next week. In the meantime, I leave Jennifer Cashmore's words with all of us and encourage people to take those provocations as they were meant in 2000 (on 2 February) as still relevant for consideration today.

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (21:55): I am pleased to avail myself of the opportunity to spend a little bit more time this evening talking about the state budget that was handed down a couple of weeks ago and to talk in a little bit more detail about some of the new tax policy that the Liberal state opposition have announced over the past few days and weeks. This is in addition to my remarks this morning, where I characterised the budget that we saw handed down a couple of weeks ago as another typical Labor budget where we see record spending. Indeed, I think we have seen cost overruns and blowouts in nearly every government department.

We see record debt. I spoke a lot about my concern of the \$44 billion worth of debt over the forward estimates, which of course it is future generations, young people today, who are going to be left bearing the cost for, and record taxes. While Malinauskas Labor was a government that promised us they would not introduce any new taxes, a government that promised us they would not increase any taxes, the truth of the matter is this is the highest taxing government in South Australian history.

We see tax and revenue intake being increased right across the board in this state budget. Indeed, I think the headline figure is a 27 per cent increase in tax and revenue collection in this state budget compared to two years ago under the Malinauskas Labor government. It is in areas such as GST, where we see a 31 per cent increase; car registration, a 16 per cent increase; payroll tax, a 33 per cent increase; ESL, a 17 per cent increase; fines are up 59 per cent; land tax is up 48 per cent; and stamp duty is up 7 per cent.

If it feels like you are a South Australian who has never been paying more tax than ever before, it is because you are a South Australian who has never been paying more tax than ever before in the history of this state. That is the context in which the Liberal opposition has announced a whole range of policies that seek to actually reduce the taxes of hardworking South Australians

during a cost-of-living crisis. We want to put more money back into the pockets of families, back into the pockets of small business operators who are trying to run their business, because they are best placed to spend their own money. It contrasts starkly with a Labor government which simply wants to increase your taxes and is taxing you more than you have ever seen in the history of the state.

We have introduced a range of policies to lower taxes for South Australians. I mentioned some of them this morning, but I want to go into a little bit more detail on these policy announcements, because they are very important. It is important that South Australians know it is the Liberal Party which wants to lower their taxes. The first way we are going to do this is through reforms to payroll tax. I spoke about payroll tax in my own maiden speech. I spoke about all the state-based taxes, which I described as inefficient, inequitable, unfair, but payroll tax in particular I described at that time as a tax on jobs.

That is exactly what it is. It is a tax on jobs, which is wrong and counterproductive. It is why the Liberal Party over the past couple of weeks has announced a policy of increasing the current payroll tax threshold, which currently sits at \$1.5 million, to \$2.1 million. It is also why we have introduced a policy that would see an exemption in place on payroll tax, on wages paid to apprentices and trainees, so we can encourage those new entrants into the workforce.

As you would know, the payroll tax threshold was most recently adjusted by the former Liberal government in 2019, which was a very good move indeed. It basically removed payroll tax from all small businesses in South Australia. But what we have seen since then, of course, is record inflation. South Australian businesses have been subjected to record award wage increases, including the highest wage increase in history of 5.75 per cent in 2023. That means that there is a whole raft of small businesses in South Australia who are paying payroll tax for the very first time. They have moved above that \$1.5 million threshold through taking no action of their own, other than inflationary pressures and these wage increases on their salary books.

Payroll tax can influence a decision by a business to employ new staff. Of course, at this time more than ever, we want South Australian businesses to employ South Australians. The incentive structure is all wrong. We are facing a critical skills shortage, and what we actually want to do through our policies is further incentivise employers by abolishing payroll tax for apprentices and trainees. We want to not only cut tax but, of course, create jobs.

These are measures that a Liberal government would introduce if we are elected in 2026, these are measures that we have been calling on the Labor government to introduce in this state budget—and it is not just us calling for it, it is industry as well. Indeed, it is the peak business body in South Australia, the South Australian Business Chamber, calling for this sort of payroll tax reform, crying out for help at this time. I note that if we were to implement our policy—a raise in the current payroll tax threshold to \$2.1 million—we would make South Australia the most competitive threshold in all of Australia.

So if you really want to back small business, these are the sorts of policies you need to implement. Do not be under any misapprehension that this is some sort of business-friendly Labor government; that we have a pro-business Premier. While those opposite might quite happily go and sit around the boardroom table, and say the right things when they need to, what business in South Australia is going to do is judge this government by their actions.

Their actions are a budget last sitting week, where we see record tax for South Australians; their actions are small businesses struggling in a cost-of-doing-business crisis and red tape strangling their operations; and their actions are ignoring calls from not only the Liberal opposition, but peak bodies like the chamber, to seriously reform payroll tax in South Australia. If the Labor Party will not do it, the Liberal Party will back small business. We will cut payroll tax for small business if we are elected.

We announced two other tax policies over the past couple of weeks, including reform to stamp duty. In my maiden speech, I described stamp duty as a tax on the efficient transfer of property. Again, that is exactly what it is. We want to introduce a stamp duty exemption scheme for first-home buyers to include a \$10,000 discount on stamp duty for established homes up to a value of \$750,000.

It is because we want to back young people in South Australia to keep the dream of home ownership alive. Frankly, there are whole generations now of South Australians growing up who are under the apprehension that they will never be able to afford to buy their own home. That is a great shame on where we have got to. It is a great shame on policymakers in this place who have allowed it to get here. We need to reform stamp duty to enable the dream of home ownership to stay alive for young people in South Australia.

Thirdly and finally today, we also announced that we would be scrapping the GP tax grab that is going to be introduced in less than two weeks. That is going to see South Australians pay more to go to the doctor. That is not only going to cost South Australians more in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis but it is also going to cost our health system because more people will present at hospitals, adding to record ramping under this Labor government.

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (22:05): I am tempted to seek leave for some additional time because we have just started to touch on what is actually going on here in terms of this 2024-25 state budget. You might have said that the Malinauskas Labor government might have been given a bit of a pass the first time around. You remember we saw all those operating efficiencies, and we saw this sort of chimera of responsibility in the government in terms of the way it was describing its approach to the budget, then we saw that all completely blow out.

It was day-to-day management incompetence. It is pretty down-to-earth stuff running a state. If you are going to be described as a government that is worth staying put, then you just have to do the basics, and as Premier you have to get your ministers to manage their agency budgets with something approaching compliance with what you have said you are going to do.

We saw these operation efficiencies that were laid out in all departments except for Child Protection. I will come to Child Protection in a minute because that got additional money—alright, well and good, but get over the principle of whether or not more money in Child Protection ultimately looks like a sign of success or failure. You have to look at what outcomes are improved for the additional money.

What we have seen now, over budget after budget, is just such an extreme lack of any kind of day-to-day management capacity across just about every agency you can name. South Australians, who are used to hearing about macro-economic matters, government that is all a bit different because you have the management of public finance to be sorting through and it is all a bit complicated—folks, it is not so complicated.

You see year after year massive blowouts against stated budgets, agency upon agency, and then the government comes along and has the gall to say that it has achieved what is known in the public vernacular as a budget surplus. They indicated last year, 'We are headed for a surplus,' and 'We are headed for a big surplus—no, it has been chipped back a bit.' This time around, we have this minuscule little so-called surplus. The word 'surplus' has just gone right out of fashion because the big word on everyone's mind is 'debt bomb'. You can hyphenate it if you want to make it into the new single word on everyone's mind.

Unless we start seeing measures to address debt from this government, then their credibility is going to go out the window and it is going to stay there. We have a \$44 billion debt bomb. *The Advertiser* got it dead right the day after the budget. We see the smiling face, the expression writ on the face of the Treasurer, in terms of a recasting of the currency and a \$44 billion debt bomb coming down the line. Massive debt is baked into the budget.

Alongside day-to-day management incompetence, the sort of thing that we all need to do in our day-to-day-lives—and South Australians are right to expect of ministers in charge of agencies—there is then a debt bomb that is going to hold everybody to ransom for generations.

If that was not bad enough, it does not come against the background of 'Gee, we haven't got any revenue anymore. Revenue is just so down that we have to borrow more and that is all on the capital account and debt is going through the roof, but we are just going to get through because we've got no revenue.' No, we have massive revenue. You have never had more revenue.

You have \$3 billion in additional revenue and it is rising to \$9 billion, so you have never had more revenue, you have never had more debt, massive day-to-day incompetence in budget

management. Look at any minister and say 'Alright, how are you going? How is it going against budget?' Massive incompetence across the board, running to just about \$1 billion worth of incompetence in overruns—go from one agency to the next—and that combination is a triple threat risk to any kind of sustainable future for South Australians.

For the Premier to kind of swan around as the cool kid from one thing to the next, you know 'What can I announce? Where can I be seen next?' all that stuff, it is not washing anymore. The Premier is going to be asked by regular Australians, 'What are you doing saddling us with all these generations of debt coming down the line? How are we going to believe you that it's only going to be \$44 billion when north-south is off the end of the forward estimates?' Women's and Children's is right off the end of the forward estimates and we have to believe it is \$44 billion of debt down the line and absolutely no plan to reduce it.

This is an occasion very briefly in these short minutes to provide some grievance response and there will be time to unpack this in terms of the estimates in just a couple of days. I focused in the contribution earlier today on what I described as measures that ought to be praised in terms of what budgets can do to improve the resilience and supports around families and it ought to be central to what is going on in child protection.

Indeed, if you have a look at the objectives, the objective that is stated in the Agency Statements, Budget Paper 4, Volume 1 at page 82, every one of the four paragraphs that sums up the objectives of the Department for Child Protection talks repeatedly about supports for families. I referred earlier to the contribution of Simon Schrapel in praising measures not in this budget but little minor attempts in the previous budget to do things that will support families, and we can analyse that a great deal more. There is nothing in terms of significant outcome that can be set out in the budget in Child Protection that is going directly to that core priority.

Meanwhile what do we see? If we go one page further into the Department for Child Protection's budget, and let's remember here we are talking about dollars applied towards improved outcomes, about halfway down the page we see there writ large, yet again, the budget for 2023-24 for the Department for Child Protection, for care and protection, their core function, is just shy of \$788 million. It is a large amount of money. It has been rising year on year on year. That is the budget.

What is the estimated result for 2023-24? It is \$855 million going on \$856 million. So what has to happen as a result of that is that you have to turn to Budget Paper 5, to the Budget Measures Statement and on page 12 you see this kind of backdoor tail between the legs type scenario where you have a measure that says, 'Well, in there, Department for Child Protection, out-of-home care, additional resources, operating expenses' just shy of \$70 million.

So we are running, on my maths, \$67,846,000 over budget in Child Protection on what is a massive budget to start with. We are required then to go to a budget measure to have a one-off payment to get the books all balanced and then going forward, 2024-25, miraculously we have a budget again that is back to \$793 million. You just cannot believe a word of it—you cannot believe it.

I single out the dollars involved in Child Protection because it is the most important of human service delivery work that needs to be done. The work to improve family outcomes, the work to improve the circumstances of children supported in families and family substitutes where necessary could not be more important. But so too, there could not be any more important area in which to responsibly manage those scarce resources, those scarce public funds that are available to provide these critical services of government.

So there is a great deal more to be said about what is just basic day-to-day management incompetence of this government that is writ large yet again in these budget papers—a debt bomb against massive additional revenue and then a day-to-day display of incompetence that is just so startling that the time available for estimates just will not be enough to get through it all. I look forward very much to analysing all of that in just a couple of days' time.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

CRIMINAL ASSETS CONFISCATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

At 22:17 the house adjourned until Wednesday 19 June 2024 at 10:30.

*Answers to Questions***SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM**

In reply to **the Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** (1 May 2024).

The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts): I have been advised:

DPC provides corporate support services to the SA Museum, formalised under a service level agreement (SLA), which includes, among other things, the provision of strategic human resource/industrial advice in relation to structural reviews (i.e., restructures).