

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 27 August 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.

*Members*

### MEMBER FOR NARUNGA, SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

**The SPEAKER (11:01):** I have been advised by the Director of Public Prosecutions that, on 1 July 2024, Mr Fraser Ellis was found guilty by a magistrate of four counts of deception, committed contrary to section 139 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935. Mr Ellis is yet to be sentenced for this offending.

Each of the four counts of which Mr Ellis was found guilty were minor indictable offences within the meaning of section 5 of the Criminal Procedure Act 1921. Under section 42 of the Magistrates Court Act 1991, Mr Ellis has the right to appeal against his convictions. The Joint Criminal Rules 2022 provide that any appeal be instituted within 21 days of judgement.

Since receipt of correspondence from the Director of Public Prosecutions, I understand that both the director and Mr Ellis have lodged appeals. Section 31 of the Constitution Act 1934 provides for the vacation of a seat in the House of Assembly in the event that the member is convicted of an indictable offence.

I have also communicated with Mr Ellis, inviting him to provide me with any information that he wishes the house to consider in determining the question of the vacancy of his seat. I now table correspondence I received from Mr Ellis via his lawyers, dated 1 July 2024 and 23 August 2024; a copy of correspondence I received from the Director of Public Prosecutions, dated 3 July 2024, which included a copy of the judgement delivered on 1 July 2024 by His Honour Magistrate Smart; and a copy of the letter I sent to Mr Ellis, dated 20 August 2023.

I now invite the house to consider the question of the vacancy of Mr Ellis, as arising by operation of section 31 of the Constitution Act 1934.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (11:03):** I rise on behalf of the government to make some brief remarks in response to your statement. Given the current circumstances of this matter, the government does not intend to move a motion at this time.

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (11:03):** We note your statement to the house today and the documents that you have tabled. We also thank you for having those documents circulated to members, about 30 minutes ago. I note the leader of the house's approach to this issue, and the opposition concurs.

*Bills*

### APPROPRIATION BILL 2024

*Estimates Committees*

Adjourned debate on motion:

That the proposed expenditures referred to Estimates Committees A and B be agreed to.

(Continued from 27 June 2024.)

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (11:04):** I seek leave to continue my remarks from before the break. I do not have much to add, apart from acknowledging the acting chairs in Estimates Committee B. There were a couple of sessions that, due to circumstances beyond my control, I could not attend, so I would like to acknowledge the people who did step up. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the opposition. It was a very well-ordered series of sessions. I guess one of the perennials that often comes up when we talk about estimates is, ultimately, the need for some form of reform. The Chair of Estimates Committee A, the member for Light, also touched upon the need to have a look at estimates and the sorts of reforms that could be introduced to improve the process.

Having said that, I would like to also acknowledge that the underlying principle that guides the estimates committees is an incredibly important principle. Obviously we have been in opposition, as is the current opposition. It is incredibly useful in the name of openness, transparency and accountability that there is an opportunity to go through the budget, to examine budget lines, because that is an important underlying principle.

It is one of those approaches, along with many others, that, in some ways, is under threat globally. We might sometimes complain about estimates, but it is incredibly important, when you look at what is going on around the world at the moment and the attacks on open democratic societies, that we do have institutional processes that are able to put the spotlight on government. At the end of the day, in open, democratic societies it is important that we have that respect for dissent and then, based on that dissent, for dialogue, deliberation and, ultimately, decision-making on the part of government and also on the part of others, but especially on the part of government. It is important that we have processes that, as I said, are able to cast a light on the things that government do, and obviously one of the incredibly important things is the handing down of a budget.

Once again, I think it is a positive that when it comes to government members sitting in estimates, I have noticed that over the years there has been a big reduction in the number of questions asked by government members. Let's be upfront: those questions are often just set up questions and we know what the answer is going to be. I think it is important that those government questions have diminished over time, which does provide that additional opportunity then for the opposition to ask questions.

As I said, in Estimates Committee B it was all a very civilised affair. Most of the ministers appearing before Estimates Committee B were just willing to get into it. They did not make opening statements, so, once again, it gave the opposition that opportunity to make full use of the time available to them when it came to estimates. With those few words, I would like to acknowledge and accept the receipt and adoption of the report from Estimates Committee B.

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (11:08):** I rise to speak on this bill. We reflect back on the estimates process. It is a vigorous process that gives the opposition the opportunity to really delve into the nuances of some of the numbers in the budget and also to cut through some of the smoke and mirrors that are inherently baked into a state budget.

Certainly from my perspective and from the opposition's, there was an opportunity to be able to get a bit of cut-through because the substance of this budget is never delivered with the budget speeches or the budget summaries that come from the government; that is just the spin that they want the community to see.

The reality of what is in this budget that was found through the estimates process is worrying, honestly. We have seen a budget that is based on significant growth of revenue—an additional \$3 billion of revenue from taxation, more taxes coming into the coffers—but we have only seen a relatively small surplus delivered by this government. Not just that, we have seen record debt levels baked into this budget and the forward estimates, which is really setting up our state for the greatest challenge of all: facing these increasing debt levels at a time when we now see the economy starting to show signs of cooling down and those revenue increases which this government has been riding the wave of starting to dissipate.

This budget has really failed to appropriately address many of the major challenges that are facing our state, especially some of the opportunities and concerns confronted by regional South Australia. We have seen these significant revenue increases. The budget predicts surpluses

over the forward estimates, sure, over those years to come, but they are significantly lower than the original forecasts in the initial budget in 2022-23.

Worryingly, the significant debt levels which are going to be taken on by this government, by us as the people of South Australia, have increased to \$44 billion in the forward estimates—\$44 billion. This is a massive number that the average person on the street has no ability to appropriately comprehend. Even for us in this place, it is really challenging to comprehend \$44 billion in debt. The interest repayments alone on that debt are going to be in the billions—money that we, the people of South Australia, are going to have to fork out to pay the interest, which could have been instead invested in some of the core infrastructure that is necessary.

As I said, this burden that has been placed onto the people of South Australia by this Labor government is truly concerning and comes at the same time that we see government spending out of control and government departments out of control. We have seen these significant budget blowouts across most portfolio areas. There is no respect from this government and their departments to the taxpayers of South Australia. It is this, 'Spend, spend, spend; someone else will foot the bill in the years to come.' Well, that someone else is us as South Australians. That attitude towards departmental overspend and government inefficiencies is only costing us as South Australians. Not just that, government expenditure is putting additional upward pressure onto inflation during a cost-of-living crisis. During a cost-of-living crisis, the government has no care or concern for South Australian families doing it tough.

When it comes to the health budget, we see a significant blowout—\$627 million—yet what do we see on the ground? We see ambulance ramping numbers ballooning out of control, now once again at nearly inconceivable levels. How can the average person get their head around what the impact is going to be: more than double the ambulance ramping hours there were when this government took control? They came in with the promise that they would fix the ramping crisis. They make promises to get power but then do not deliver. They cannot use that power effectively to fix the problems, to drive the necessary change that is needed and that is expected by the people of South Australia, because that is what they promised. That is what they promised: that they would fix the ramping crisis, but those numbers are now more than double.

Also within the health budget we see there is not the money for a boost to the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme, a scheme that really sustains regional communities who put so much into the state's budget and the state's economy. There are more than 16,000 claimants to the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme who rely on that scheme to be able to help pay just a small amount of the cost that it takes to travel from Port Lincoln, from Ceduna, from the Riverland, from Mount Gambier or from Kangaroo Island to Adelaide for the necessary medical care. There is no additional money. There is no additional vision from this government to try to appropriately help support those regional communities.

We have also seen the burdening of GPs with a significant payroll tax obligation. This is something which has significant flow-on effects to South Australians. The government's spin is that they are listening to GPs. Well, if they were truly listening to GPs, then they would have been hearing the same thing that we have been hearing for the last 12 months; that is, the decision from this Labor government is going to mean that people are paying more to visit their GPs. It is going to make health care less affordable for everyday South Australians and, because of this, there will be more pressure on the emergency departments of hospitals all around our state, more pressure on those already outrageously ballooning ambulance ramping numbers, more pressure on the bottom line for our families, our communities in South Australia that are already doing it tough.

During a cost-of-living crisis, this government has no care, no concern for South Australian families doing it tough. The opposition have been long calling for Peter Malinauskas and this government to introduce incentives to attract and retain healthcare workers, like what is on offer interstate. There is no denying that we are in a competitive jobs market at the moment. At the moment, we are being outcompeted by our friends across the borders.

There are no incentives to attract and retain healthcare workers compared to other states, so it does not matter how much cash the Labor government throws at the health system. It will not have an impact if there is not the workforce to staff it. There is not a vision for what our healthcare

workers need from this Labor government. There is not a mind to effectively reflect what are the needs of our South Australian communities from this Labor state government during a cost-of-living crisis. This government has no care or concern for South Australian families doing it tough.

When it comes to housing, there is once again a lot of smoke and mirrors, a lot of spin from this Labor government. We have seen \$65.9 million for public housing build commitments. The spin was \$135.8 million for maintenance and building of 442 social housing units. That is federal money. The state government are using themselves as the funnel for the federal money coming in without giving us any sort of information about that social housing endpoint.

The budget papers and indeed the answers which we did get—or did not get—in response to the questions from the opposition mean that the information that we receive is very vague and really is just high-level spin. It is high-level spin because we in the opposition hear from communities on the ground right across South Australia about the vacancies, about the maintenance backlogs around our state, around the lack of a vision for where it will be going.

There were questions in estimates to the Treasurer about the lack of investment within their budget papers into water infrastructure to support not just future housing development but even the existing water needs of South Australia. A few days after the estimates process, we discovered why. We discovered why there was a gap within the information that was provided. It was because they were planning, using the shadow of the ESCOSA process and the SA Water pricing mechanism, to significantly raise the water bills of South Australians right across our state, because of their mismanagement and their lack of planning for our current and future needs.

This was not done within the budget papers, where we could have the opportunity to vigorously unpack it during this estimates process we are reflecting on. No, it came a few days later with the information that the average South Australian water bill will increase by \$80 per year—straight to the hip pocket; classic Labor government, clawing money out of our communities because of their lack of planning. During a cost-of-living crisis, this government has no care or concern for South Australian families doing it tough. The government says the increase is needed to help pay for the \$1.5 billion worth of new mains water and sewerage connections to rapidly growing Adelaide suburbs. That is code for: the government has had their head in the sand when it comes to planning for future infrastructure needs.

We have seen billions of dollars—billions of dollars—taken out of SA Water throughout the years, propping up general revenue and giving the government the opportunity to try to fund their niche election promises. SA Water is being used as a cash cow rather than investing in the water needs of South Australians, and now our communities are doing it the hardest. They are paying the cost for it with an \$80 average increase for South Australian household water bills at a time when they are facing a cost-of-living crisis. This government has no care or concern for South Australian families doing it tough.

Then we look at the road and infrastructure network. Reflecting on some of the questions that were asked throughout the estimates process, there is only \$6 million for regional road safety infrastructure across the entire state of South Australia. I did not say billion, I said million: only \$6 million for regional road safety. Let that sink in. Let that sink in, in reflection on and in the shadow of last year's horrendous and heartbreaking road toll numbers. Last year was a terrible year on our roads. What does this Labor government do to reflect that? Only \$6 million for the whole state for regional road safety infrastructure. It is just not good enough.

As far as other investment into regional roads goes, we see \$200 million for the South Eastern Freeway and \$150 million for the Mount Barker-Verdun arrangement, which is going to help commuters, absolutely. It is going to help people travelling to and from our peri-urban centres. But there is no significant investment into our regional road network which is responsible for transporting goods around the highly productive areas of our state.

I often speak in this place about the need for appropriate investment into these productive areas in regional South Australia, the areas that pump so much into our state's economy. There needs to be appropriate investment reflected back into these areas, or else we are doing a disservice to our whole state. We are undermining the economic future of our whole state.

This also comes at a time when we are seeing that regional roads have been taken off the priority of ministerial portfolios. There is now no minister responsible for being the advocate for regional roads. There is not a voice in cabinet pushing for regional road investment. I seriously worry about what the future holds for our regional road network right around the state under this Labor government.

As we delved into a number of different aspects through the estimates process of this budget, we started to see so many hypocrisies, so many inconsistencies, so much lack of vision and so much lack of planning. Take the primary industries portfolio area, which was vigorously dissected as part of the estimates process. There was a cut of \$29 million to agricultural services, equal to a 40 per cent cut, and a \$5 million cut to regional development funding.

The true colours are coming out. Labor government budgets seep through with these sorts of cuts to the productive part of South Australia. Agricultural services and regional development funding: these are all investing back into the parts of our state which add new money into state coffers and new money into our state's economy—\$30 billion of contribution from regional South Australia, and what is the response from this Labor government? Cut, stop, ignore. At a time when the Premier is arrogantly dismissing concerns about, say, in my electorate, the future of the aquaculture industry due to the Billy Lights Point proposal for desalination, what do we see? We see cuts, we see programs stopped and we see this Labor government ignoring regional South Australia.

And this all comes in the shadow of significant revenue increase. Like I said at the top, there have been significant rivers of gold that have been flowing into this state Labor budget. The land tax take has increased by 48 per cent since Labor came to power. The emergency services levy, which we all pay, has risen by 17 per cent since Labor came to power—17 per cent during a cost-of-living crisis. This government has no care or concern for South Australian families doing it tough.

What are they doing? They are going about their expenditure, their reckless spending, their department overspend, their lack of accountability to their departmental budgets, and what is the response from the Treasurer in estimates? To try to say, 'Well, what areas would you cut?' The responsibility of each and every minister for their departments and for their budgets should be something that the Treasurer always goes back to.

Ministers, you are responsible for your departmental budgets, you are responsible for making sure your departments are fully aware of their financial obligations, and not just additional expenditure and not just spend more and then come back and expect that the next year's budget is going to reflect that additional need. Be responsible. Be efficient. Be effective.

There is a responsibility that has been put on the shoulders of you as ministers to hold your departments to account. We have not seen that at all from these Labor ministers. Nearly every single department has gone over budget, and gone over budget significantly, and I am sure that my colleagues will reflect, during this debate, on some of the nuances of that overspend.

Within one of the most important aspects of our state departments, SAPOL, which is responsible for keeping our community safe, some of the activity indicators that I saw within the budget papers were truly concerning. We have seen offences and crime up, yet future projections are down. How do they justify that? Once again, smoke and mirrors, fiddling the numbers to try to make it so that what the reality is is not reflected by the expenditure that is going to be needed.

Within our police force we see an attrition rate over 5 per cent, barely covering the existing losses with recruitment. What are the measures to retain officers? Nothing. We have heard nothing from this government. We have seen the ballooning cost of the move of the police force out of the Thebarton barracks, including the ongoing escalation of the costs for the, at this point, \$100 million facility construction for moving the police horses and the dogs. There is no accountability. They talk about it as, 'It's just ever-rising costs.' Well, our South Australian communities have ever-rising costs.

We are in a cost-of-living crisis at the moment. It is no use to just wash your hands and say, 'Well, that's just the way it is.' These government ministers need to be doing what they can to hold their departments to account during a cost-of-living crisis. During a cost-of-living crisis this government has no care or concern for South Australians doing it tough.

**Ms O'HANLON (Dunstan) (11:28):** I rise to speak on this bill because I want to call into question in this place the behaviour of the member for Chaffey, which I and I believe others were shocked to observe on Tuesday 25 June in Estimates Committee B. It also might be interesting to those in his electorate to know exactly how the member speaks to women ministers and whether he thinks this is an acceptable way to speak to women. It certainly would not be acceptable in the private sector.

For some reason the member for Chaffey appeared to believe, when questioning the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, it was perfectly acceptable to make the comment, when thanking the departmental staff for their hard work, that they had to work 'to make the minister look good'. That is eye rolling enough, but further along the member for Chaffey makes the comment to the minister—and I again quote—'If only you knew how bad you were.'

Does the member for Chaffey truly think it is acceptable to say that to a minister at all, let alone in front of her staff? What could the member hope to achieve other than to undermine her standing, the result of which, even if it were achievable given the minister's clear competence, would only serve to diminish outcomes for those he claims to champion, namely, farmers and the regions?

On top of this, the member for Chaffey appeared to believe it completely fine to continually interject and interrupt with snide comments, such as, 'You have obviously read the wrong brief,' and 'I think you are confused.' Interestingly, when I asked a question of the Minister for Primary Industries, the member for Chaffey appeared to believe he was being very clever when he made the comment of me, 'You've only been here for five minutes and you're already an expert.'

Well, the member for Chaffey was a little bit right: I have only been in this place for a short time, but before that I was in the private sector. I worked with small and medium-sized businesses, and one area I worked with them on was company culture. I can assure the member for Chaffey that that kind of immature, undermining and, frankly, misogynistic commentary would not be accepted there. But the member for Chaffey may have forgotten that I was also previously a broadacre crop and cattle farmer, so actually, yes, I am an expert with lived experience, and once a farmer always a farmer: you never stop caring about the regions, you never forget what it takes to get grain to the silos and you also never forget the effects of droughts and floods.

Funnily enough, when the member was asking questions of the Minister for Trade and Investment on Wednesday, he was all cordiality and jokes. He was all, 'Thank you, minister,' and 'I was concerned for you, minister.' Is that because the member's confidence does not extend to belittling men? In fact, the member even said, as though looking for praise (or was he acknowledging his poor behaviour from the day before?), 'I have been well behaved today.'

The member for Chaffey might like to reflect, when he goes home tonight and looks in the mirror and complains about how unfair it is that Minister Scriven is the Minister for Primary Industries and not him, on how competent he would be, indeed, as a minister. The Minister for Primary Industries may not be competent in the eyes of the member for Chaffey, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, but he can be assured that, when she is putting in her accommodation claims, she knows which continent she is on.

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (11:32):** I rise to contribute to the debate on the Appropriation Bill. In making my contribution, following on from the shadow treasurer and the member for Flinders just now, I will take the opportunity to step through what are now three budgets of this government. We are now seeing that their stripes are well and truly on display, and no more so than when it comes to what has occurred in terms of the budget management in the Department for Child Protection. Some of this is not news, and we have had the opportunity to traverse the immediate response to the budget provision in the course of debates, and we have taken the time to analyse that in some detail in the course of budget estimates.

By way of framing, there is cause to draw a comparison when presented with the same subject matter in the response of the Treasurer on the one hand in the course of budget estimates, the Premier on another in terms of dealing with public comment in the media and the responsible minister, thirdly. I commend the Treasurer first of all for providing the most straightforward and I think best answer to what has occurred in terms of the budget for child protection in this last year. I just remind members that the Treasurer, in the course of that estimates session, was asked the question

by the shadow treasurer, 'What is the cause for the budget overrun?'—or, to use the vernacular, 'the blowout in the child protection budget'.

The Treasurer gave an answer—and I will stand corrected if I am summarising this in any way inaccurately—basically indicating that the cost of external service provision, short-term contracts and the like in terms of responding to needs, was a key source of additional cost that would need to be addressed if costs were to be kept to budget. It was an explanation for the budget blowout in the last year.

So far so edifying, and one can point to a range of different service providers and the principal debate that might occur around the balance between those who are employed by the department and then the external services that the department might need to obtain from time to time. That is version No. 1 that the Treasurer provided. He had the opportunity to do that early doors in the budget estimates process, and that was appreciated. I will come to it in a minute, but the minister was certainly on notice of that answer by the time the budget estimates session for the Department for Child Protection came round.

In the meantime, in remarks in the media when the same question had been put to the Premier about 'What is the cause of the cost blowout in child protection?', the Premier resorted to what I would describe as a form of virtue signalling, which, in the Premier's view, might have served some sort of alternative purpose. There is perhaps a certain kind of virtue that might be pointed to in terms of the number of FTEs in the department, but it was a different answer. The Premier chose to highlight, in responding to that question, 'Well, we might have spent a lot more in child protection than the budget provided, but aren't we good because we've employed a whole lot more people.'

That, too, presents, at least on the face of the budget documents, that there has indeed been an increase in the number of FTEs in the department from year to year. I would point out to the Premier that that was part and parcel of the budget papers and should not actually provide an answer as to why the costs have blown out. But the Premier chose to highlight that particular point, and good luck to him.

So far we have a coherent answer from the Treasurer, we have a kind of virtue signal from the Premier to the media, but then we get into the Department for Child Protection session in which the minister has an opportunity to wrap it all up and to make sense of where the government is at and why we have experienced this blowout—and I will say a blowout for not the first or second but third time in three budgets for the Department for Child Protection.

What I got from the minister in the course of that session—disappointingly, I might say, for the benefit of members—was not, 'I agree with the Treasurer. The Treasurer had it right on Friday.' Again, I stress: there was no ambush, there was no sense of, 'What do you reckon? And by the way, gotcha. It might be contrary or not to your Premier or Treasurer.'

But, no, the minister made very clear that the minister had the benefit of the Treasurer's response, and disappointingly—and this has become now a matter of practice, though it is not for me to give advice to the minister about how the minister chooses to conduct the estimates process, answers to questions and so on—what I received was yet further admonishment from the minister that I even dare go there to talk about dollars spent in child protection and an emphasis on just how much everybody cares and therefore that it is sort of off limits, really, to be asking questions about dollars in budget estimates when we are talking about how the process of government is organised in the area of child protection.

I indicate to the house that I found it a sufficiently inadequate response, incoherent response, incompetent response, that my urging immediately on the conclusion of that session was to the Premier to sack the minister and to appoint a new Minister for Child Protection, one who is competent at managing the budget and competent in respect of managing the challenges of the care of our state's most vulnerable children.

There is a whole range of evidence of that incompetence that, as it happens, was to come to light in the period immediately following and I maintain that call. It is a test of leadership of the Premier to ensure that there are competent ministers undertaking their duties. The Minister for Child Protection is a particularly key one and I continue to make that case.

Having heard three versions from the government about what is a fairly startling blowout on the face of the Agency Statements at Volume 1, and it is neatly encapsulated at page 83 of Volume 1, what we have seen from the 2023-24 budget to the 2023-24 estimated result is a blowout of around \$70 million from budget to estimated result.

I will come back in a minute to this point about estimated result. Do not quite hang your hat on that because the previous year tells a story about a blowout that became a more serious blowout. We have had a track record now over three years; I am slow to call it. Certainly, not in the first year. The second year sets a trend. Now there are three years in which we have had increasing budget after increasing budget and quite substantially. That has been matched by blowout after blowout after blowout and it points to nothing short of incompetence.

When that injury has the insult added to it of a minister who, even in the light of the Treasurer having given an out-of-portfolio assessment of the basic causes and the Premier having pointed to some virtue that might be attached, does not, when the estimates opportunity comes around, take the opportunity to give all South Australians some overview of where we are headed in child protection and why all this scarce resource is, contrary to what appears on the page, being spent in the best interests of vulnerable children, it is just a completely unacceptable state of affairs.

It is no surprise that my calls for the sacking of the minister were joined. I spoke with one voice, together with every single non-government member of this parliament, in calls that were made at that time for the removal of the minister and the appointment of a competent minister.

Here we are, therefore, analysing what has happened in terms of the appropriation. Let's bear in mind very clearly at the outset that, if we go back to 2022-23, the first of these three disastrous budgets, and I say disastrous across the board but particularly in terms of the budget management for the Department for Child Protection, what we saw in the first budget, we will recall, is a more or less across-the-board application of operating efficiencies. Operating efficiencies, of course, is a sort of neater, cleaner way of just talking about cuts; nothing turns on that. We see operating efficiencies across the board in 2022-23 in the budget.

Now, leave aside the fact that the operating efficiencies just weren't met, more or less comprehensively from stated objective to outcome, what we saw relevantly, in terms of child protection, was an exception to the operating efficiencies. So child protection stood out in the first of the Malinauskas Labor budgets in 2022-23, and we saw there, going back to 2022-23 in the Budget Statement, page 23, at the top of the page:

Child Protection—projected to increase by \$80 million due to the estimated growth in the number of children and young people in care and the costs associated with providing care services. The government continues to focus on increasing the number of family based care placements and providing resources for early intervention programs to reduce the number of children and young people requiring care.

Well hear, hear to that, and if that is achieved, and there are outcomes that can be pointed to, then we would all like to describe that, see it happen, and praise those outcomes. So there is an explanation as to why the Department for Child Protection's budget was set to increase in 2022-23 as an exception to those across-the-board operating efficiencies. What did we see occur? Well, you turn to the Agency Statement for 2022-23, Volume 1, page 89, and you see that the budget for 2022-23 was \$714,576,000. There is the exception.

Then we go to the Agency Statement for 2023-24, Volume 1, page 89, and we see expressed there the budget for 2022-23, the \$714.5 million for the care and protection program. What was the estimated result for 2022-23? That was \$763,832,000. So there is a \$50 million blowout. That is 2022-23 to 2023-24, a \$50 million blowout, but you kind of get it all, the bringing home the bacon, to use the Keating vernacular, but completely in the opposite. You get all this on one page in the Agency Statements for this year's budget, 2024-25, Volume 1, page 83, because not only do you see the indication of what happened in 2022-23, but you see that the actual result for 2022-23 was not just a blowout of \$50 million.

The actual result was a blowout of a further \$35 million—\$35 million more than what was estimated as the result of the previous year—so one is left thinking, 'Yeah, well, hang on, were they saving the best for last?' They are sort of dribbling out the fact that the picture is looking worse to budget. By the time you get the next year's papers we reveal actually it is significantly worse. So we



go from the 2022-23 budget, just to be really clear, of \$714 million, and we see that the 2022-23 actual was just a few hundred thousand shy of \$800 million. So we go to an \$85 million blowout by the time we see the actual 2022-23 figures.

Alright, what does that lead to? Well, it leads to, on the face of it, a nearly \$15 million budget cut for 2023-24. That is met with an estimated result in 2023-24 of \$855,742,000 in expenditure, so a \$70 million blowout to that. And that is where we leave ourselves in a situation where we have gone from child protection being an exception to operating efficiencies back in the first of this Malinauskas Labor government's budgets, to now the Department for Child Protection having to deal with, on the face of it, a \$62 million cut in the present budget, in the 2024-25 budget. Folks, it is an understatement to say I will believe that when I see it. We have not seen the department constrain its cost of services to anything close to that proposed cut, even going back to 2022-23. We are at or above \$800 million and we are heading rapidly towards \$1 billion in the Department for Child Protection.

I have focused in these remarks, as we do in terms of analysing the budget, the appropriation, on the hard numbers, the reality of the hard numbers that are provided to us on the face of the budget papers. Again, I say this because I anticipate the nature of what is put against me in this regard: 'Oh, well, how dare you come and talk about dollars in an area of care and protection.' I want to make this very clear: the people of South Australia expect that their scarce resources are applied towards improved outcomes for our most vulnerable children. The test is: if the budget is set as an exception to operating efficiencies, if it is set with increases from one year to the next, let's have the government spell out the case for that and let's have the outcomes to show for it.

Again, I urge people who are focused on this area to have a look at the key agency outputs that are expressed on the face of each of those pages in the budget papers for each of those years, because with minor adjustments from one year to the next, the key agency outputs for each year are described in more or less precisely the same sorts of terms. I can hear the journalists from *Media Watch* approach when they go through detecting plagiarism and you hear two voices reading the same content, overlapping at the same time, minor departures from those dot point agency outputs.

Tellingly, this year, there is one dot point that has been added to the list. We have one novel dot point. What do you know? At the bottom, a novel dot point which is supporting foster and kinship carers. I am glad they got a mention for a first time. I suspect that the business of supporting foster and kinship carers has and remains at the core of what expenditure is necessary in the Department for Child Protection. It is hardly something new. I call on the government to ensure that these scarce resources are applied in a competent way by a competent minister.

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (11:52):** I rise to make a contribution to the Appropriation Bill in response to the estimates of 2024. I say at the start of this contribution that I am a little taken aback by the contribution of the very new member for Dunstan in this place and her turns of phrase, some of which I find quite offensive.

I want to put it on the record that I do not delineate between a female minister and a male minister—not at all. For her to come into this place and use the misogynistic turn of phrase about the way in which I ask questions not only of the Minister for Agriculture but the Minister for Trade and Investment, that new MP has a lot to learn in this place. I must say that I found it quite outrageous that she made no contribution to the budget or the reference to estimates, only attacking me. For what it is worth, to the member for Dunstan, the electorate is Chaffey not 'Chaffy'.

I must say that my questioning, particularly of the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Clare Scriven, was just that. I have many, many industry people who come to me with complaints and concerns about the lack of interest by that minister. She has her pet areas of portfolio. Okay, so be it. I questioned the capacity and the capability of the minister through the budget estimates process. That is what the budget estimates process is about. It is about questioning the capability of not only the minister but the department, its budget lines and exactly what its priorities are.

I guess, now that I have got that out, I think the member for Dunstan has a lot to learn. For her to reference me and my constituency you might say are fighting words. Sure, maybe it is, but I

think she has a long way to go to learn. She might not be there much longer either, with an election coming up in 2026, and if she keeps playing her cards the way she is her constituency will see right through her, let me assure you.

She referred to cordial conversations with the trade minister—a very new trade minister; it is not his background—and I gave him some level of cordial conversation, which was out of courtesy. For what it is worth, the trade portfolio needs to be more bipartisan, it needs to have that continuity. That was very much demonstrated with my most recent trade delegation visit with the former trade minister over to India. It really did open his eyes to the benefit of showing a level of bipartisanship. It showed the confidence the government has in presenting a level of continuity, whether it is opposition, whether it is government.

Having the opposition spokesperson role for trade for four years prior to coming into government, I saw it as being very beneficial, as did the former trade minister, the Hon. Tom Kenyon. He took away the opposition trades spokesperson, who then became a defector and went to be a Labor minister, but it did demonstrate to our trade constituency, our global trading partners, the value of showing that level of bipartisanship.

I reached out with the olive branch to both the now Premier and the former trade minister, and I think both have seen the benefit to that initiative. I note that the new trade minister does not see the benefit of acting in a bipartisan way, nor showing that continuity to our trading partners, but that is his and his officers' decision.

The member for Dunstan, you got to ask your Dorothy Dixier; you even got to ask a question that was out of order, talking about major events to the trade minister. If you are going to criticise someone on the opposite side of the chamber, make sure you have your facts right. You can play the card of 'I came off a farm, isn't that wonderful? I know exactly what a farmer is all about', and all the rest of it, but let me assure you that you do not live on the farm today, not like many who are primary producers, living in regional settings, understanding what the heartbeat of today is and not what the heartbeat of 20 years ago was.

Let me assure the member for Dunstan that she has a lot to learn and, should she be there after 2026, I hope she can present herself with the right intent, rather than going out and attacking. Whether it is on behalf of the agriculture minister, I do not know, but for her to come in here and use the misogynistic line speaks volumes about exactly what sort of person she is, without a personal attack on her.

I want to take the opportunity to speak on trade-related matters, particularly here in South Australia. As a former trader myself and a primary producer, I now represent what I would consider the engine room to a number of commodities traded out of the state. We have seen a number of initiatives, both federal and state—and I will focus the majority of my contribution on the state trade pathway—and we are going down a very dangerous path. We are here looking in the face of what we experienced 10 years ago, and that was a pathway into China, a very important trading partner—yes, it is. But with one fell swoop we saw many businesses either put to the wall or are now still suffering financially.

I think it has to be said that we can and must learn from our previous experiences—we are trading into a major trading partner—and understand exactly how vulnerable you become when you put all your eggs into one trade basket; for example, China. I did this with the former trade minister, and I got severely hounded down by him for my questioning around putting too much reliance on one trading partner and where it got us. My view is that we have seen both federal and state governments putting a significant amount of money and investment into trying to reinvigorate the China-South Australia relationship. I think that is an initiative that has merit, but it also shows us that there is a capacity for a government to again have a singular focus of trying to trade our way out of trouble.

We have seen a significant amount of economic hardship come to South Australia's economy. It was passed on to small business, family business and big business, which have had significant hardship bestowed upon them through trading sanctions with China. We know that the majority of those sanctions have been lifted. It was very sad to see that the current trade minister, while he was in that role, never got an invite to meet with Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

There was no mention of rock lobster and no mention of the hardship that industry has been through, and there has been no mention of it since. I would like to know exactly what the government's recommendations are in supporting an industry that has been severely impacted by the live rock lobster trade with China. They are doing it very tough, and many of those family-owned businesses are still trying to find their way into new markets, trying to find their way back into China. The silence has been absolutely deathly with the lack of, I guess, commentary.

Is the government speaking to China about re-engaging the rock lobster industry and taking away the sanctions that were imposed with regard to allegations of heavy metal content in those lobster? I think the government has a duty of care to not only give some level of commentary but to actually level with the industry as to where those trade negotiations are for what is a very important industry, particularly for southern rock lobster. We do have a western zone, and they too are impacted.

We have been promised by federal trade ministers, over time, that, 'We are dealing with it, and those sanctions will be lifted very shortly,' but still there is nothing to hear. So I want to better understand exactly what the government's priority is. Is it popular politics? Probably. Are we putting all our eggs back into the China basket? Probably. Why are we not showing more initiative in regard to some of our other traditional markets?

I noticed that the trade minister put out two press releases in one day, before he jetsetted off to China, to say how wonderful it is that we have seen that export numbers have risen significantly. The comparison is: yes, it was through a COVID pandemic, and now we have seen that the majority of the impacts of COVID have slowly dissipated. It is coming off a low base when the government states a 175.4 per cent increase in food and wine agribusiness exports. I look back to 18 months ago when wine exports to China were \$2 million, and now both state and federal governments are standing up and saying, 'Look at us; aren't we fantastic? We are almost approaching \$400 million of wine back into China.' But I can assure you, that is filling up the pipeline and currently the goose's neck is full.

In speaking to traders in China and in speaking to wine businesses, merchants, makers and wine businesses here in South Australia, they are just filling up the supply line. What is it going to mean? In six months' time we will know. We will know much more as to how thirsty the Chinese consumer is.

We should be looking at more of a focus on how thirsty the rest of the world are for South Australia's wine, for their agribusiness products, for their food, for their value-added products that have been severely impacted, not only by the pandemic, by trade sanctions, but by, now, a government having very much a singular focus on China. Some of these emerging markets and traditional markets that we took our eye off the ball on between 2014 and the pandemic have been the US, the UK, the Nordics, Japan, New Zealand. Those countries were filthy that we had taken our focus off those trading relationships and put all of our focus into the China basket.

Yes, we were seduced. We were given premium prices. We were given assurance that they would take everything that we had to offer, but then, when sanctions came in, that was just cut off at the knees, and so we went back to our traditional markets. We went back to some of our emerging markets: the Nordics, South-East Asia. We looked right across the globe as to where opportunity was and they looked at us and laughed and said, 'You dumped us for China and now look where you are.' It might be a little bit of 'coming back to bite you'.

My call is on the federal government to put a focus on a more diversified trading strategy, to put your money on all of our trading partners, whether they be traditional or whether they be new entrants into wanting to have our services, wanting to have our food and wine, wanting to have some of our raw products.

Obviously, we have seen impacts on timber, we have seen impacts on barley, we have seen impacts on seafood, red meat, wine, livestock feed. We have seen impacts on petroleum, we have seen impacts on a majority of some of those horticulture products that now we have an opportunity to make sure that we are a powerhouse in our export space, and that we are looking at the way that other countries have further diversified. I will use New Zealand as an example.

Coming into government in 2018, the Marshall Liberal government then, as policy papers were written, released and then enacted, we saw the re-enactment of trade offices globally. We saw a hub-and-spoke approach where we would have significant presence in major trading hubs with then a spoke approach out to some of those new entrants or smaller trading partners that saw a great opportunity and a great level of confidence, not only by exporters here in South Australia but by exporters here nationally, and we saw trade numbers grow significantly. We saw services grow significantly. We saw international education was a boon until, sadly, the pandemic stopped everything in its tracks.

What I must say is that, while we are still very heavily focused on China, we must diversify. Vietnam is a great opportunity, along with Hong Kong and all of South-East Asia and north Asia. If we look at Japan as one of our great trading friends, they are still damaged goods after South Australia and Australia's behaviour in dealing with China, giving much higher preference than to any of these traditional trading partners.

My message to the government and to all of South Australian small-to-medium business, even large business and those family businesses, is that, as an alternative government, we will make sure that we have diversity in our trading relations. We will make sure that we do not do what we succumbed to from 2012 onwards by putting all of our eggs into one basket, making ourselves more vulnerable and siloed into a country that has shown us what their power and trading experience has done. We have to remember that China have been trading for 2,000 years. Here in Australia we have been trading for somewhere in the vicinity of 150 years, and it certainly shone out.

The cost of living is also playing a big part. Whether it is running a small business, whether it is growing a business, or whether it is a new entrant into the export sector, we have a lot of work to do. We have current governments that have put in workplace relations rules that are now making it harder and more expensive than ever in the history of this state to grow food, process food, manufacture that food, transport food and put it onto the shelves of our global trading partners. It is becoming much, much harder.

The inputs have really become a major factor. Not only are we dealing with the vagaries of weather, the commodity prices, the exchange rate and the high cost of inputs but we are now dealing with labour costs. We are now even dealing with being able to access labour because of a lot of these new workplace relation rules. This state, and in particular the electorate of Chaffey, have seen the peace agreement that has been installed for over 100 years and has worked exceptionally well now come back to minimum hours per week, making the cost of running a business significantly more expensive. There is the burden of attaining a workforce, the burden of being able to afford a workforce, and the burden of being able to justify an increase in the price of food. As I said, the cost of growing, packing, producing, putting it into a container and getting it offshore has never been more of a challenge.

It is highlighted on the front page of *The Advertiser* today that some of my constituents—a great South Australian business, the Knispel family—are fed up to their back teeth with the cost of power, as are many of my farmers who are lifting water and putting it into their farms, and putting power into packing sheds and refrigeration, making sure that produce is kept in pristine condition so that it is ready for a global market. We are dealing with the rest of the world, putting the best piece of food in a box, putting it into a market and onto a shelf so that we are given the accolades for what we do so well.

The costs have never been harder: the cost of running a business, the cost of producing food. We all know what happens when the cost of inputs goes up: the cost of food goes up and it makes it much, much more difficult for the cost of living to be able to be brought to a balance. This is my contribution to the Appropriation Bill. You will hear a lot more about trading relations, primary production, and what a great state we have here to do it in.

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (12:12):** I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill and the reports of the estimates committees. It is an opportunity for me to put on the record my thanks to all those involved in the estimates process. It is a very useful exercise for this parliament, and particularly the opposition, to scrutinise how we are spending taxpayer money and to hold the government to account. This is an opportunity for me to again talk about some of the issues I have been advocating

for locally in my own electorate during this budget process, some of which we explored during the estimates committee process because some of it, happily, we have achieved, including in particular an announcement about road safety.

I was very delighted to see in this state budget funding of \$80 million for road safety initiatives. I am particularly interested in this topic, not only as the new shadow minister for road safety but also in my capacity as a local member. We had this issue brought to the forefront in my electorate very soon after I became the local member, when there was a shocking accident out the front of a school in my electorate, Marryatville High School, when two children who were looking to do no more than get to school that day were struck when a truck failed to stop at a red light.

So I have been advocating in this place for improvements to road safety infrastructure right around this state, particularly at school crossings. I am pleased that these calls have been heeded by the minister for road safety, in particular the announcement of a package for road safety funding near schools, as well as the consideration of something that I have been advocating for for a couple of years now, which is the consideration of 40 km/h speed limits at schools on main roads.

Of course, we all know that there are 25 km/h school zones in most side streets, but it is an unusual thing indeed, if we are hurtling down Kensington Road in my electorate or if we are hurtling down Portrush Road in my electorate past a whole number of schools, whether it be Seymour College, Loreto College or Linden Park Primary—and the school crossing there was found last year to be the most dangerous in the entire state—that there is really no warning that you are approaching a school zone or a school crossing, and there is certainly no change in speed limits.

So I am pleased to see in this budget the announcement that there will be a school crossings package, and that will include the rollout of 40 km/h school zones on main roads near some priority schools. That is the big question I now have for the minister: where are these priority locations for the rollout of 40 km/h school zones and improved school crossing packages? I have a long list in the eastern suburbs that I urge him to turn his mind to. That is something I am going to continue to pursue not only as the local member for Bragg and representing schools like Marryatville, Glenunga, Seymour, St Peter's Girls' and Loreto, and primary schools like Linden Park, Burnside and Rose Park, but also now in my new capacity as the shadow minister for road safety. It is something that I look forward to working with the government on.

The other aspect in the budget that I look forward to working with the government on from a local perspective is around the apparent crackdown on illegal vaping and tobacco stores. Again, it is something that I have been bringing to the attention of this house for certainly over a year now. I see now again that those calls have been heeded, and I am pleased that we could secure \$16 million of funding to counter the illegal trade of tobacco and vaping. This is a phenomenon we unfortunately see growing right across the state and, concerningly, perhaps see growing in my own electorate.

I think it is particularly concerning when we see a lot of these stores opening up near schools and targeting schoolchildren with particular flavours of vapes or whatever it might be. So I am pleased to see the \$16 million of funding to Consumer and Business Services to fund the enforcement of our laws, because I do not really like vape and tobacco stores being anywhere near schools, but I certainly do not like illegal vape and tobacco stores being near our schools.

I have written to the minister again just recently about stores that we have seen opened in Stonyfell near St Peter's Girls' School and also in Marryatville near Marryatville High School and Marryatville Primary School. There is also a store on Glynburn Road that I have identified for the minister. If Consumer and Business Services are looking for ways to spend their \$16 million enforcement fund, come and have a look in the eastern suburbs, because we do need to crack down on illegal vaping and tobacco stores in our local community. It is an area of huge concern to my constituents.

There are three other local issues I want to touch on that we explored in the estimates process through various committees, and unfortunately it is not such happy news. It is happy news on the road safety front, happy news on the tobacco and vaping front, but there are three things that I thought were missing for the people of the eastern suburbs in this budget. The first is something that I have spoken about many times in this place before. It is the need to get trucks and heavy

vehicles off our local roads, including in particular Portrush Road in my electorate but also Glen Osmond in my electorate.

We know that there are thousands of trucks coming down the South Eastern Freeway every single year. They spew out onto our local roads, whether it be Portrush Road running through my electorate and the member for Dunstan's electorate, Glen Osmond Road running through my electorate and the member for Unley's electorate, or Cross Road running through a whole range of electorates, mainly on the other side of the house. I am surprised I do not see the same advocacy from that side of the house for a solution to this problem because it is not only a traffic congestion issue but, again, it is a road safety issue.

I think it is devastating that we only ever seem to talk about this issue when there is some spectacular or tragic accident, often at the bottom of the freeway. We have seen it time and time again. We saw it very soon after I became the local member when there was a huge crash involving buses and trucks and about half a dozen cars, I think. I understand it was about the fifth major accident at that intersection within the last decade. What are we waiting for? Do we need to see another tragic accident before we turn our minds to this issue again? Let's not wait for the next accident before taking action on this issue.

There is a solution in the form of a Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass. This is something we have talked about for a very long time in this parliament and others have spoken about it in previous parliaments. But for the first time, in the previous government, there was actually some money on the table to start this project with the Truro freight route, which I saw as not only a really important project in and of itself but also a really important first step in a wider greater Adelaide freight network that would get trucks off of our local roads.

That funding has been cruelly ripped away by Labor governments at both state and federal levels. As long as there is no Truro freight route, we are not going to see a Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass and we are not going to see trucks being taken off of our local roads. It is something I will continue to advocate for constantly in this place until we do get trucks off of our local roads.

The second disappointment from a local perspective for me in this budget was the lack of investment in schooling capacity in the eastern suburbs. We have a problem in the eastern suburbs. It is a good problem to have in the sense that our schools are really good; in fact, they are the best, but they are so good that they are bursting at the seams. We have Glenunga International High School as well as Marryatville High School. Both are subject, I think, to capacity management plans and both are over capacity at the moment.

The picture is no better for our local primary schools, being Rose Park Primary, Burnside Primary and Linden Park Primary as well. Nearly all of them are subject to capacity management plans. I am helping, I think, about a dozen constituents at the moment who are trying to get into Glenunga International High School who live in the suburb of Glenunga. One of them lives basically opposite the school and is being sent to a different school much further away because our local schools are full. We need investment in schooling capacity in the eastern suburbs because local kids deserve to be able to go to local schools.

I think it is really concerning that we see this pressure on our local schools now, before we have even had a big influx of urban infill that is being proposed by the Labor government. The third thing that we considered, particularly with the planning minister, through this estimates process was his plan to increase urban infill in the eastern suburbs and his plan to build, or at least initiate a proposal to build, 20-storey towers in my electorate. I have spoken about that proposal before. At the moment, the proposal that is on the table is to change a medium-density development in Glenside, at the corner of Fullarton and Greenhill roads, into a very high-density development and a very high-rise development, changing eight-storey towers into 20-storey towers.

There has been a lot of concern in my local community about that proposal. The concerns fall into two main themes. One is that this is really bad planning, and it is bad planning because it is not the plan. The plan was a series of eight-storey towers. That was going to add 1,000 new dwellings to that local area in Glenside, a huge contribution to housing supply. Many people have bought in good faith on the basis of that plan.

Once those thousand dwellings have been sold, what is now trying to occur is to fundamentally change the plan on these people. They bought into a development where there were going to be eight-storey towers and now the very same developer is changing it on them to 20-storey towers. Some of these people only bought in as recently as the start of this year on the basis of a really different plan. There are a lot of constituents who feel like they have been the victim of a bit of a bait and switch here. They have been led to believe one thing and they are going to end up with another.

The broader concern is that this whole proposal is happening without any reference to investment in public infrastructure in the eastern suburbs. I have already spoken about road infrastructure in the course of this contribution. I have already spoken about schooling capacity in the course of this contribution. There is also concern about open space, about sewerage and about car parking. All of it is happening divorced from discussion about public infrastructure to support high-density, high-rise and unrestrained urban infill, which seems to be the policy of this Labor government, and it is a really concerning thing for my constituents.

That is going to go through a code amendment process now. The minister did not seem too interested in talking about it during the estimates process, which is surprising given the whole thing was announced with a great big front-page story of him smiling in front of what are going to be his new 20-storey towers. I respect his decision because he says, 'I am the sole decision-maker, so I need to make my decision in due course.'

What I say is that we all know he is the sole decision-maker. We are all going to remember the decision that he has made, and it is now up to him to determine whether it is Labor Party policy to build 20-storey towers in the eastern suburbs. The first of them is proposed in Glenside. Perhaps the second will be in Kent Town, in Norwood or along The Parade. Is this Labor Party policy to build 20-storey towers in our eastern suburbs?

With the time I have left, I want to touch on a couple of portfolio areas from the committee process that I took a particular interest in. The first was the environmental portfolio. It was an honour to serve very briefly as the acting shadow minister for the environment, and it was an honour during that time to be able to celebrate not only what I see as one of South Australia's greatest assets, being our natural environment and our built heritage, but also the very strong record of particularly the previous Liberal government in this space: our record investment in national parks, our record expansion of national parks, a huge increase in park rangers.

They were very significant reforms. There was single-use plastics reform, the latest stage of which we see rolling out just this week. These are really important practical and sensible environmental initiatives that were spearheaded by the previous Liberal government. I am pleased, and I am going to continue, to take a very active interest in this area throughout my time in this parliament.

Over the past couple of years it has been a pleasure to continue that tradition of the Liberal Party taking sensible and practical action to protect the natural environment, to try to get away from simple virtue signalling, which I think is the easy way out for those on the other side of the house, and take actual practical action to protect the environment. We saw that perhaps most recently in work that the Liberal opposition led around our Adelaide Parklands, protecting and preserving our Adelaide Parklands as the great asset that they are, as well as our work around tree canopy that we have been advocating for on this side of the house and also our work around our heritage laws.

One of the first things I did when I was the shadow assistant minister for heritage was come up with a plan about saving our suburbs, protecting our heritage homes, preserving our heritage buildings and, indeed, growing our important tree canopy as well. I am going to continue to take a very active interest in that portfolio to celebrate our natural environment to protect and preserve what makes our state so great.

I have also had the opportunity now, as the new shadow minister for police, corrections and community safety, to reflect on the estimates process that has taken place before the time of my appointment. What became really quite apparent through reading that is that crime is skyrocketing under Malinauskas Labor. Indeed, since the election there have been really disturbing increases in crime in this state right across the board. There are some really startling figures, with shop theft being

up 51 per cent since the election of this government, assault on police up 48 per cent, robbery up 26 per cent, homicide up 25 per cent, and sexual assault up 12 per cent since the election of this Labor government.

My starting position as a very new shadow minister is that South Australians deserve to feel safe. They deserve to feel safe in their homes, they deserve to feel safe in our suburbs and on our streets. Indeed, I think it is the core business of government to keep South Australians safe. That is never going to happen unless this government acts to appropriately resource, recruit and retain our police officers, because one very disturbing fact that emerged from the estimates committees is just how under-resourced South Australia Police is. Indeed, we have a shortfall of nearly 200 officers currently in South Australia Police, and what the estimates process revealed was that current recruitment strategies are only yielding, net, about 16 officers a year.

So the recruitment strategy is not really working and, importantly, the retention strategy is not really working. It seems just as we have a new recruit enter the door through the front we have a really experienced officer exiting the back door, for a gain of 16 net per year. At that rate, it is going to take about a decade, on this government's current plan, just to get up to that base level that is required for police officers.

So I say we need more cops on the beat to deter crime. The crime wave is really concerning and it is going to keep happening unless we retain, recruit and resource South Australia Police. That is something I am going to be really focused on as the new shadow minister for community safety, because South Australians deserve to feel safe in their own homes, safe in our suburbs and safe on our streets.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12:32):** It is a privilege to have the opportunity once again to reflect on the estimates process as part of the debate on the Appropriation Bill. I thank those ministers whom I had the opportunity to question for their courtesy and diligence in answering questions, when they did so, and obviously condemn them for those occasions when they chose not to. I think the ratio was not too bad this year, if I am being fair. I do not really have time in the 20 minutes allocated to go through each of the portfolios that I was interested in, but I will identify some particularly interesting aspects.

The Premier indicated that the government has yet not worked out what it is doing in relation to the Tarrkarri project, for example—a \$200 million project that was underway when this government was elected. It was put on pause, reviewed and has now been kicked down the road for two years while they work out whether they can afford to do what they might want to do instead of what they were going to do when they came into government. We await that information, as do many South Australians.

I found very interesting the estimates process for the Minister for Arts five days before the end of the last financial year, and at that point being uncertain as to whether the Adelaide Festival had a deficit in its budget, whether it had met its targets or not, and we still await that information a couple of months into the new financial year. I look forward to the Minister for Arts at some stage coming back with a response on that matter.

We had discussions on higher education with the Deputy Premier about a range of things, including and in particular the impact of the federal government's decision to place caps and restrict international students, and the impact that that will have on our new university. I remind members that the business case for the new university, which was a core element of the government's plan for South Australia's economic future, is based very fundamentally on a massive increase—by 5,000 to 7,000—in international students over and above the current combined international student numbers at the Adelaide University and the University of South Australia.

There are also, of course, economic impacts of the increased research that is designed to take place, but the economic underpinnings of the business case to enable that extra research to take place also rely on 5,000 to 7,000 extra international students. As the Deputy Premier has admitted and as I think the Premier has admitted too, there are real concerns about the federal government's proposed new direction in reducing the number of international students in Australia. Until and unless we have certainty that the international student numbers that Adelaide University,



as it is to be called, are able to take are indeed reflective of that proposed 5,000 to 7,000 net increase then the entire business case is under threat.

This is a real and present concern for South Australia as a whole. This project is too big to fail. Despite our misgivings and concerns and reservations, once it was clear that the legislation would pass we did commit our support to it with our vote, because this is a combined effort of South Australians that has to succeed. The potential catastrophic consequences, if it were to fail, would be generational in the way that the State Bank disaster was generational. So we want to work together to help make it succeed.

I hope that the Deputy Premier will take on board our offer of bipartisan support in approaching the commonwealth. At the moment, any failure of the commonwealth in delivering this is the failure of the Labor Party alone. The government has not seen fit to take that up. We hope the commonwealth will see reason and allow our South Australian universities—not just the new university but also Flinders University, which is on track to become one of Australia's top 10 universities by measure of rankings—increases in international students, which they need for us to deliver that outcome.

We had a good discussion about that in estimates, and I thank the Deputy Premier for her thoughtful engagement on the issue. I hope she will take us up on our offer of bipartisan support in tackling the federal Labor Party on their dreadful failures.

I also, of course, had the opportunity to engage with the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Tourism on behalf of our shadow minister, the Hon. Jing Lee. A highlight from that process was a clarification on the definition of what engagement one needs to have with the music of Taylor Swift to be called a Swifty as opposed to Swifty adjacent. I am sure that the Minister for Tourism and Minister for Multicultural Affairs estimates process will be something that many people will not forget any day soon.

The majority of my last Wednesday of the estimates, and indeed the entirety of the sitting that day, was with the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, so in the remaining time I will reflect on some of the work we did in that time, particularly reflecting on school education and, if I have time, early childhood. There will be other opportunities to talk about training and skills.

Many members would be in receipt of some documents from Catholic Education. I want to start on this issue. The federal government has taken \$15 million from South Australia's students and young people. I am sure that the Treasurer and the Minister for Education will be acutely aware of this but, for the benefit of the house, I will explain.

The federal Labor Party in late 2022 indicated that it will cease what had been its operation for many years, certainly since the institution of the federal Education Act, of funding every student in our schools to 80 per cent of the student resource standard for non-government schools, less parents' capacity to pay, and indeed 20 per cent per of the student resource standard for public schools. That included students in South Australian schools who had entered reception midyear under midyear reception entry, a longstanding practice in many South Australian schools which has been reintroduced for public schools by this government after the former Labor government withdrew that opportunity about a decade ago.

These students, who are in the midyear reception entry, are students who turned five after 1 May in the year that their cohort, born before 1 May, would be entering reception. In South Australian non-government schools particularly and now public schools as well, those students get an extra six months of reception and that has been proceeding in catholic schools and a range of independent schools for an extended period of time and now in our public school system as well. They have been counted, as their compatriots in reception to year 12, as students and the Gonski model applied accordingly.

Those students deserve to be supported in their education. Those schools provide that opportunity. It is beneficial to the students. Indeed, it is particularly beneficial to those students. Records show that, whether it is year 1 phonics check data or whether it is year 3 NAPLAN results, students who have had the benefit of that extra six months of reception schooling are outperforming

their compatriots. This was an election policy the Labor Party took to the last state election to extend that to public schools, and it has been popular.

I note that in the estimates process we identified that the cost for state government schools was \$29 million a year, which is approximately \$22 million a year more than Labor said it would cost, but, nevertheless, I am not going to focus my criticism on state Labor for having a budget blowout. It is clearly a benefit to those students and the Liberal Party will support it continuing in the years ahead. It was a close-run thing. We were certainly considering implementing it ourselves. We ultimately did not do it and the Labor government did. That is fine. That is good. Those students will benefit as students in non-government schools did too.

But \$15 million from the federal government is what Treasury and the education department was counting on to support students in government schools and students in non-government schools in South Australia and the federal government has now chosen not to proceed. They gave one year's grace. In late 2022, they said, 'Okay, there are a couple of months to go, so we will fund them in 2023,' but this year, 2024, these students are not funded.

The state government can make up the shortfall in public schools, that shortfall being in the order of \$7 million extra that the state government is having to come up with because the federal government is not paying for their share. For non-government schools, in estimates we explored it and we do not have the exact number but, from what I can tell, there is \$2 million that the state government continues to provide to non-government schools for these students. The federal government's share would therefore be in the order of about \$8 million a year that is not being paid by the federal government to our non-government schools.

Most of this money is not going to wealthy schools or schools that might be considered elite. Most of this money is, indeed, going to lower-SES non-government schools with midyear reception programs. Schools in the catholic education system, small, parish, country, catholic schools with a midyear reception program, are now getting no federal government funding to support those parents, who are either going to have to pay for that through increased fees in those schools or, alternatively, if the federal government maintains their position of refusing to pay for these students' entitlements, through the rest of the school students receiving less so that some support can be given to these midyear reception entry students or, potentially, worst of all, some schools may have to make the decision to withdraw this program, so those small, catholic, parish schools will suffer.

The other group of students who will really suffer are those students in low-SES non-government schools, independent schools, who do not even have the backing of a broader system, such as catholic ed does, to back them up. Those schools may be low fee, \$1,000 or \$2,000-fee schools, and the majority of their funding actually comes through the federal government's subsidy for those low-SES non-government schools.

We are not talking about schools that have the capacity to bring in extra parental funding, schools such as the one where the Deputy Speaker was formerly the business manager, serving communities with very low fees, and indeed the Gonski model recognises that. But the way the federal government is applying the Gonski model it will not recognise that. These schools will be left high and dry and, worst of all, these students will be left high and dry.

The minister says that they are still in negotiations with the commonwealth, and he said in estimates that the outcomes of those negotiations are yet to be finalised, but I think the state government needs to do more. I think that the state government needs to unambiguously come out again and urge the federal government to change their tune.

To be clear, it is not even as if there is a good reason why they are not doing this. The Catholic Education document on midyear reception South Australian funding says, 'The withdrawal of Commonwealth funding makes no sense.' I will quote from the Catholic Education document. It bears reading:

The withdrawal of funding will put financial pressure on schools committed to educating this student cohort, and it makes no sense as to why children in a school setting are now not being funded.

The only rationale being offered for the funding backflip is to save the Commonwealth government money. Yet children not in schools are likely to be in childcare.

They go on to say:

Any saving the Commonwealth makes from abolishing midyear intake funding will be far outweighed by the much larger cost of providing child care subsidies.

They are right. This is a uniquely South Australian issue because, for whatever accident of circumstance in history, schools in other jurisdictions have not traditionally offered a midyear intake. But maybe they should consider it, and maybe the commonwealth parliament should consider encouraging them to do so. The statistics speak for themselves. The commonwealth government has now actually got on board with policy that was controversial when we promised it in 2017 of having a year 1 phonics check around the place, around every school in Australia in the years ahead.

Year 1 phonics check results show that students who have done the extra six months benefit from that, as do year 3 NAPLAN results, so it is in their educational interest. But it would also save the commonwealth government an enormous amount of money in their social services and childcare budget if they are no longer having to provide childcare subsidies for that six months before students are entering school or indeed preschool, and if that goes into the education budget instead there are better outcomes for everybody.

This is \$15 million that the federal Labor government has taken from South Australian students, and South Australian students deserve better. We need more work from the Labor Party here in South Australia to get their federal colleagues to reverse this terrible decision.

I will just highlight one other issue that relates to this. The state Labor government is spending \$29 million a year to deliver the midyear entry program for public school students. As identified just then, the commonwealth is not recognising these students in terms of the Education Act and the Gonski allocation.

I asked a question of the Minister for Education as to whether these students, and indeed the \$29 million we are spending on these students, are counted towards our Gonski allocation, towards what is required by the state government to be spent on public schooling to meet our obligations under the Education Act.

The minister took it on notice. I look forward to his response in due course but, of course, if it is not counted, if it is not entitled to be counted towards our Gonski allocation and we have been using it in identifying, as part of our Gonski allocation, to the board that assesses whether we are meeting our responsibilities, then it may indicate that we do need to spend some extra money in our public schooling system as well. I look forward to more information on that in due course.

There are a couple of other matters—and we are going to have to take some time in other speeches to go through all of the workforce issues that the government has in education—but there is one particularly interesting contract payment that I am looking forward to receiving more information on in due course. The state government spent \$200,000 in the last year report in the education department's annual report; \$200,717 to PricewaterhouseCoopers, a payment for what was described as professional services for machinery of government transition support.

The Minister for Education advised that this was to assist in moving skills into the education department under machinery of government. I asked some questions about whether there were other transition costs and other contracts provided towards that machinery of government change, and the minister is going to get back to us in due course, I expect. I asked what services were provided for that \$200,000. It is not a small sum of money. There is a range of schools and preschools around South Australia, a range of communities and councils around South Australia, that would love to have \$200,000 to spend on a useful project.

Given the fact that the government has about 30,000 staff across education and skills, it will be fascinating to me to discover what this external body, what PricewaterhouseCoopers were able to do for \$200,000 that was not within the wherewithal of those government officers to do without support from PricewaterhouseCoopers. I am hoping that the minister comes back. He took the question on notice, which is not unreasonable—assuming that they were not shifting desks, assuming that they were not designing a new letterhead or logo for people—fascinating, I am sure, to find out exactly what they have done with that money. I look forward to that detail, and I hope that that response has a great deal of detail.

While in the area of contractors and consultants, there was also \$342,000 to Deloitte Financial Advisory for a business case to support the case for change to guide life cycle infrastructure investment. This was explained to us by Mr Ben Temperly, deputy chief executive of the department. He said:

That work formed a component of the 20-year infrastructure plan. Specifically, what we were looking for in that work is the optimum way to prioritise and allocate funding for the sustainment of existing assets in the system. The 20-year infrastructure plan identifies investments for new facilities, where there are demographic changes and capacity increases required. One of the other components is the notion of sustaining investment in infrastructure, and that is the money we invest in schools to renew and replace existing buildings and infrastructure in schools. This work was to assist us with that.

We asked whether either the Deloitte document or, indeed, other documents in the 20-year infrastructure plan were available for public consumption. We received the press release from the minister, and there was a press conference saying that the government had a 20-year infrastructure plan for our schools, and we were advised that it was a cabinet document. I asked if cabinet would release the document, and the minister's response was a simple no.

It would not be the first time that has happened. I urge the government to release these documents because when I was with the Hon. Ben Hood last week, travelling through schools in Mount Gambier and the Limestone Coast, when we went to Millicent, Naracoorte, Mount Gambier, Mulga Street, and at Glenburnie and other schools, too, like Kalangadoo, the extraordinarily consistent feedback we had from all but one of the schools in question was that their infrastructure and maintenance was not remotely up to scratch.

It is my view that having long-term planning in terms of infrastructure is a good thing, but from the public's point of view and the parliament's point of view, we need some transparency about this, some understanding of whether the school in Mount Gambier that has the leaking roof into the art room, or whether the school in Naracoorte that has rooms that are unable to be used because of black mould, because of leaks, because of inconsistent footings, are on the list to be improved or are they not? It is all in a black box held in the Cabinet Office at the moment, and so we urge transparency here.

I also think that we need to make sure those country schools are considered. They might not meet the criteria of demographic change and they might not meet the end of life—although they might be near—but they need to have their issues taken into consideration too. I look forward to reporting to the house on more of what we learnt in estimates in other formats in the coming days.

**Ms PRATT (Frome) (12:52):** I grab the opportunity afforded me to rise and speak to the Appropriation Bill, reflecting on the budget that was handed down and the estimates committee that many of us participated in. I want to echo the member for Morialta's sentiments in thanking the ministers who participated and who most often graciously took our questions, and the public servants who always work hard in the background to make sure that their ministers are prepared before the onslaught, if you like, of the questions that follow.

I want to start my remarks by reflecting on the role that the Frome Economic Forum plays in my local community, a group, a coalition that I established with the CEOs and the mayors of the seven councils contained within the electorate of Frome, as well as representation from the two Regional Development Australia boards, encompassing Barossa, Light, Gawler, Yorke and Northern.

I am really grateful for their participation, I am grateful for their interest and I am grateful for the conversations we generate. Our MOU, if you like, is to meet twice a year—once pre-budget, in the approach to the budget, in the hope that as a coalition we can collate and summarise the priorities that we have in common in our region, and make sure that if there is something that we are fighting for that we are acting en bloc and writing en masse to the government to lobby and advocate for that critical investment. Sadly, for the last two budgets, when we come together post-budget to reflect on what investment the electorate of Frome might have enjoyed, the answer has been 'not very much'.

Again, I put to my friends in council and the RDA a fairly direct question, which was what had they uncovered in the budget that was going to be good for councils, and the room was silent. That, I think, reflects the budget that our state has been presented with. If I look at it through the prism of my constituents, then there are not a lot of positives to find.

I reflect on the member for Bragg's comments about the \$16 million allocated to vaping. I know that my community are going to enjoy seeing me communicate with the minister to make sure that country areas, including towns in my electorate, are on the radar for this enforcement strategy. We really do need to see a crackdown across our state on the illegal trade and sale of the toxic e-cigarettes and vaping products that are now commonly found. I know that the community across the Clare and Balaklava region are concerned about the availability and supply of these products, particularly when we see young people able to access them. I note that at a state and federal level we are seeing a lot of reform around the legislation.

I acknowledge the government's investment in that. I hope the \$16 million extends out to regional South Australia. I will be making sure that Frome is on the radar of the minister and that we see a crackdown with those enforcement officers from Consumer and Business Services knocking on those shop doors to make sure that legal products are being sold and that young people are not being exposed to the toxicity of vapes.

Going back to the post-budget meeting that I held with my councils, we identified a number of priorities that we have in common across the region from Two Wells to Terowie. Most often we talk about housing, water infrastructure, tourism, workforce, and government services or government investing in services in country towns. This bill did not excite us, the budget did not excite us in any way.

I touch on housing briefly. Certainly in regional South Australia, and Frome is no different, we are seeing no vacancies available and that really is a handbrake on every local economy. A number of businesses for a few years now in hospitality, primary industry, tourism and retail are looking to recruit. They want to recruit outside our townships either because of a skill they are seeking or solid employment ratios but there is no housing. You cannot move into South Australia to take a new job because there are no houses available.

Facebook is flooded with requests looking for recommendations for accommodation with people saying, 'I have taken this job; I am keen to move; I am coming to the area.' It is at the point of desperation, where it is who has a room, who has a shed, or who has a caravan. We are desperately looking for the government and the minister, with his super portfolios, to really shift the dial on the factors that are an impediment to housing supply.

Affordability is an issue because of those supply and demand pressures. It saddens me to be a constant contact for people who are looking for more affordable housing. These issues are not new, but we are looking to the government to take the lead there. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

*Sitting suspended from 12:59 to 14:00.*

**CRIMINAL ASSETS CONFISCATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Assent*

His Excellency the Administrator assented to the bill.

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

*Assent*

His Excellency the Administrator assented to the bill.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO) BILL**

*Assent*

His Excellency the Administrator assented to the bill.

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

*Assent*

His Excellency the Administrator assented to the bill.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (PARLIAMENT—EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND CLERKS) BILL**

*Message from Governor*

His Excellency the Administrator, by message, recommended to the house the appropriation of such amounts of money as may be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

**PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL**

*Message from Governor*

His Excellency the Administrator, by message, recommended to the house the appropriation of such amounts of money as may be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

**BIOSECURITY BILL**

*Message from Governor*

His Excellency the Administrator, by message, recommended to the house the appropriation of such amounts of money as may be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

*Parliament House Matters*

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY STAFF**

**The SPEAKER (14:03):** Welcome back, everyone. It is really good to see everyone's smiling faces, and I hope people had the opportunity to take a little bit of a break during the recess. I know plenty of people worked all the way through, but it is important that everyone, wherever they work, gets a little bit of a break—you come back with fresh ideas.

During the break, we had a little function to recognise some of the staff members who have served the House of Assembly so well for so many years. I would like to place on the record the thanks of everyone in the house, I am sure:

- To David Pegram, who has notched up 25 years in the House of Assembly. I think he may have done seven years in the Legislative Council before he came here, so that is 32 years.
- To Shannon Riggs, who has racked up 20 years of great service: congratulations and thank you to Shannon.
- To Tonia Coulter, who has served the House of Assembly for 10 years.

We thank everyone for their very valuable service to the House of Assembly. We appreciate all that you do.

*Petitions*

**HAMMILL HOUSE**

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart):** Presented a petition signed by 2,057 residents of Port Pirie and Greater South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to take immediate action to confirm Hammill House remains as a facility for aged care services today and into the future.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

**ANSWERS TABLED**

**The SPEAKER:** I direct that the written answers to questions as detailed in the schedule I now table be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

**PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

Auditor-General—Report 8 of 2024—Managing homelessness services  
[Report ordered to be published]

## Independent Commission Against Corruption—

The Gatekeepers: Corruption risks with ministerial advisors—Report—July 2024

The Inside Advantage: Managing corruption risks in recruitment processes involving internal candidates—Report—July 2024

A Dependent Commission Against Corruption: The problems with being unable to brief the Director of Public Prosecutions—Report—August 2024

Grants Administration Final—Report—August 2024

When duty calls, who is responding? The importance of police affidavits—Report—August 2024

Parliament of South Australia—Joint Parliamentary Service, Administration of—Annual Report 2023-24

## By the Premier (Hon. P.B. Malinauskas)—

## Remuneration Tribunal—

Determination No. 1 of 2024—Minimum and Maximum Chief Executive Officer Remuneration

Report No. 1 of 2024—Minimum and Maximum Remuneration for Local Government Chief Executive Officers, 2024 Interim Review of

Determination No. 2 of 2024—Remuneration for Official Visitors of Correctional Institutions, 2024 Review of

Report No. 2 of 2024—Remuneration for Official Visitors of Correctional Institutions, 2024 Review of

Determination No. 3 of 2024—Overseas Accommodation and Daily Allowance—International Bar Association Annual Conference—Justice Livesey

Report No. 3 of 2024—Overseas Accommodation and Daily Allowance—International Bar Association Annual Conference—Justice Livesey

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

## Annual Reports 2022-23—

Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission Chair, Board of the Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005—Annual Report 2022-23

## Summary Offences Act 1953—Report for Period 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024—

Dangerous Area Declarations return pursuant to section 83B

Road Block Authorisations return pursuant to section 74B

## Regulations made under the following Acts—

Aboriginal Lands Trust—Davenport Community Dry Zone

Criminal Law Consolidation—Prescribed Place—CT 5046/144

Cross-border Justice—General

Daylight Saving—General

Fair Work—

General

Representation

Land Valuers—General

Legislative Instruments—Postponement of Expiry—2024

Oaths—Prescribed Requirements

Work Health and Safety—

Crystalline Silica Substances

Engineered Stone—2024

## Rules made under the following Acts—

South Australian Employment Tribunal

Supreme Court Act 1935, District Court Act 1991, Environment, Resources and Development Court Act 1993, Youth Court Act 1993, Magistrates Court—

Joint Criminal—No. 4

Supreme Court Act 1935, District Court Act 1991, Magistrates Court Act 1991, Youth Court Act 1993, Environment, Resources and Development Court Act 1993, Mining Act 1971, Local Government (Elections) Act

1999, First Nations Voice—Uniform Civil—No. 11  
Supreme Court Act 1935, District Court Act 1991, Youth Court Act 1993,  
Magistrates Court—Uniform Special Statutory—No. 3

By the Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science (Hon S.E. Close)—

Annual Reports 2023—  
Flinders University  
Torrens University  
University of South Australia

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

Annual Reports—  
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee—2021-22  
Co-Management Board—  
Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park—2021-22  
Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park—2022-23  
Regulations made under the following Acts—  
Irrigation—General  
Renmark Irrigation Trust—General  
Water Industry—Extension of Third Party Access Regime

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

Regulations made under the following Acts—  
Harbors and Navigation—  
Alcohol and Drug Testing  
Harbors and Ports  
Motor Vehicles—Motor Bike Driver Licensing  
Rail Safety National Law (South Australia)—Fees  
Road Traffic—Road Rules—Ancillary and Miscellaneous Provisions—  
Compliance Vehicles and Exemptions

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

Regulations made under the following Acts—  
Hydrogen and Renewable Energy—  
Fees Notice—2024  
General  
Mining—Exempt Land

By the Treasurer (Hon. S.C. Mullighan)—

Emergency Services Funding Act 1998—  
Declaration for Vehicles and Vessels Notice  
Declaration of Levy and Area and Land Use Factors Notice  
Forestry SA (South Australian Forestry Corporation)—Charter 2023  
Primary Industries and Regions, Department of—Draft Management Plan for the Lake Eyre  
Basin Fishery 2023—Summary Report  
Regulations made under the following Acts—  
Emergency Services Funding—Remissions-Land—Miscellaneous—2024  
Fisheries Management—  
Demerit Points—Lakes and Coorong Fishery  
Lakes and Coorong Fishery

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



Regulations made under the following Acts—

Controlled Substances—

Controlled Drugs, Precursors and Plants—Controlled Drugs

Pesticides

Poisons—Miscellaneous—2024

Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia)—

Amendment of Law—2024

Health Services Charitable Gifts—General

By the Minister for Child Protection (Hon. K.A. Hildyard)—

Regulation made under the following Act—

Family and Community Services—General

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

Regulation made under the following Act—

Supported Residential Facilities—General

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

Regulation made under the following Act—

Residential Tenancies—Fees Notice—2024

By the Minister for Local Government (Hon J.K. Szakacs)—

Local Council By-Laws—

City of West Torrens—

No. 1—Permits and Penalties

No. 2—Local Government Land

No. 3—Roads

No. 4—Moveable Signs

No. 5—Dogs

District Council of Mt Barker—

No. 1—Permits and Penalties

No. 2—Moveable Signs

No. 3—Roads

No. 4—Local Government Land

No. 5—Dogs

No. 6—Cats

No. 7—Animal Management

Kangaroo Island Council—

No. 1—Permits and Penalties

No. 2—Moveable Signs

No. 3—Local Government Land

No. 4—Roads

No. 5—Dogs

No. 6—Cats

No. 7—Keeping of Livestock, Fowl and Bees

Naracoorte Lucindale Council—

No. 1—Permits and Penalties

No. 2—Local Government Land

No. 3—Roads

No. 4—Moveable Signs

No. 5—Dogs

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

SA Water Corporation—Ministerial Directions—  
Cape Jaffa Anchorage Essential Services  
Augmentation Charges  
Water and Sewerage Retail Services

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

Adelaide Cemeteries Authority—Charter 2024  
Regulations made under the following Acts—  
Real Property—General  
Survey—Requirements for Lodgement of Plans

By the Special Minister of State (Hon. D.R. Cregan)—

Regulation made under the following Act—  
Electoral—General

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

Correctional Services, Department for—Official Visitor Annual Reports 2022-23—  
Report on actions taken

*Ministerial Statement*

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CAPS**

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (14:08):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** International education delivers significant benefits to South Australia. In 2023, international education was South Australia's largest export sector, valued at \$3.15 billion. This economic contribution, while significant to the state, does not capture other equally important aspects of international education, such as attracting highly talented students to our classrooms, strengthening global linkages at the academic and personal levels, creating a graduate workforce for businesses in Australia, and a network of alumni with a shared understanding of Australia's values and perspective.

The Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) legislative framework has contributed to South Australia's reputation as a compelling destination for students to undertake high-quality study, where students' rights are protected. Ensuring the ESOS Act is fit for purpose in the ever-evolving international environment safeguards the quality and integrity of the international education sector in Australia and its sustainability into the future.

The Malinauskas government has supported the proposed amendments to the ESOS Act that strengthen the integrity and quality of the international education sector, but has been highly concerned with the proposal to limit the enrolments of overseas students by provider, course or location. South Australia has not experienced the same level of growth in international enrolments as in other capital cities, particularly Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, and has capacity in student accommodation to allow for growth.

The Premier and I have strongly advocated to the commonwealth government on the need to treat South Australia differently to the Eastern States when considering the number of international students that can be enrolled by international education providers in South Australia, and particularly our universities.

This morning the commonwealth government announced, subject to the passage of the proposed amendments to the ESOS Act currently before parliament, a new national planning level for international commencements of 270,000 for the calendar year 2025, consisting of approximately

145,000 new international student commencements for publicly funded universities, 30,000 for other universities and non-university higher education providers, and 95,000 for new VET international student commencements. Individual limits have been outlined in an international student profile (ISP) for each publicly funded university.

I am very pleased to report today that, based on the strong advocacy of the Malinauskas government, the commonwealth government has listened to our concerns and recognised that there is capacity for sustained growth of international students in South Australia. The three public universities in SA will see a moderate increase of international student commencements on 2023 figures, which was a bumper year for international students. This is reflected in the indicative ISPs provided this morning to South Australian universities.

While the government remains vigilant about the impacts of policy changes in Home Affairs and the commonwealth Department of Education on the international student market, we welcome the response to our collective advocacy that South Australia be regarded as a place that welcomes international students and provides high-quality education and research opportunities.

The new Adelaide University has signalled the growth of international students as a significant factor underpinning its domestic and international ambition. The Malinauskas government strongly supports this ambition for growth in international students at Adelaide University as well as at Flinders University.

#### *Parliamentary Committees*

#### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**

**Mr BROWN (Florey) (14:16):** I bring up the 90<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Greater Seaton Renewal Project.

Report received and ordered to be published.

**Mr BROWN:** I bring up the 91<sup>st</sup> report of the committee, entitled Noarlunga Downs/Port Noarlunga Project.

Report received and ordered to be published.

**Mr BROWN:** I bring up the 92<sup>nd</sup> report of the committee, entitled Outback Highway Flood Recovery Works.

Report received and ordered to be published.

**Mr BROWN:** I bring up the 93<sup>rd</sup> report of the committee, entitled Barossa Trunk Main—Bentley Road Project.

Report received and ordered to be published.

**Mr BROWN:** I bring up the 94<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Ceduna Supply System and Tanks Rationalisation Project.

Report received and ordered to be published.

**Mr BROWN:** I bring up the 96<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Affordable Housing—Direct Delivery Apartments (Lot 51 Bowden, Lot 18 and 59 Prospect).

Report received and ordered to be published.

**Mr BROWN:** I bring up the 97<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Rebuilt Campbelltown Ambulance Station.

Report received and ordered to be published.

#### *Parliamentary Procedure*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I would like to welcome to parliament today school groups from St Peter's College, who are guests of the member for Dunstan. We welcome you here today and hope that you enjoy the learning experience you are receiving from your school and that everyone here is very well

behaved. I would also like to welcome students from Concordia College, who are guests of the member for Unley. Welcome to Parliament House. Before the break, everyone in this place was very well behaved. It was nice and calm and quiet, but it has not always been like that, so we are hoping that we can kick off the new school term a little how we left the last one. We welcome you here and we hope you have an enjoyable day.

#### *Question Time*

**The SPEAKER:** Before we move to questions without notice, I would like to congratulate the new Leader of the Opposition and wish him well in his new position. With that, I kick off question time by calling the Leader of the Opposition.

#### **COST OF LIVING**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:19):** My question is to the Premier. Are South Australians better or worse off since the Premier took office? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** A typical South Australian household is nearly \$25,000 a year worse off since this government was elected. The cost of food has skyrocketed, electricity prices have risen by nearly 30 per cent, water bills will increase 3.5 per cent above inflation every year for the next four years, and now South Australians are paying more to see their GP because of this government's GP payroll tax grab.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:20):** I will answer the Leader of the Opposition, but I would like to start by also putting on the public record my congratulations to him in achieving the office of Leader of the Opposition. I had the opportunity to speak to the Leader of the Opposition I think on the day of his elevation or maybe the day after on the phone. I wish him all the best in what is an important function within our parliamentary democracy.

Critically for the people of South Australia, they take a lot of comfort in the most important source of their standard of living, which of course is their job. What this government has been committed to from the outset of its election is making sure that more South Australians are in more jobs that are secure and well paid. On that score, the South Australian economy has never ever been in a better position than what it is now. Tens of thousands of jobs have been created since the last state election, and that means a lot. It means a lot to the people who are in those jobs but, more than that, it means a lot to the families around them.

It is true that we have seen globally—and Australia has not been immune—a high inflationary environment. That is why this government has put a considerable amount of effort and resources into cost-of-living support across a range of areas within our control. We think of the Cost of Living Concession that just this week approximately 200,000 South Australians will be recipients of. That's \$255 going into their bank account to provide them with support when they need it most.

We think of the support that we are providing to mums and dads sending their children to public schools throughout the state in terms of school services charges relief but also, on top of that, the extension, acceleration and increase to the school Sports Vouchers program, including for the first time making them available to music lessons. This is on top of a range of other concessions and supports we have provided since being elected, including on energy concessions and the like.

It is important to understand why the state government has the capacity to be able to provide this support. Of course, it exists in the fact that the state's economy is growing at a faster clip and a faster rate than what we have experienced in the past. We believe in growing our state's economy, not just for the sake of it but for the sake of people throughout the community, and we have an unapologetic focus on providing support to those families who need it most.

The recognition of the strength of the South Australian economy doesn't exist from the remarks of any of us on the front bench, it exists in independent report after independent report being publicly released making it clear that South Australia has the best performing economy in the country. Never before, prior to this government's election, have we seen the Commonwealth Bank State of

the States report awarding South Australia the number one performing economy in the nation, yet we have now experienced that, and we have experienced it three quarters in a row.

On top of that, we have seen the Stateometer report from the ANZ and we have received accolades from the Business Council of Australia making it clear that the South Australian economy is performing exceedingly well relative to other jurisdictions in the country, notwithstanding global economic headwinds. We take pride in that but not comfort in it, because we know the work must continue if we want to realise all the opportunities that are available to this great state.

### POWER PRICES

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:23):** My question again is to the Premier. Is the Premier taking any action to reduce the price of power for South Australian businesses, including regional businesses? If so, what action and when? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** *The Advertiser* reported today that leading regional South Australian businesses have been hit with surging power bills as the country's highest electricity costs cripple the agriculture industry and send staple produce prices soaring.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:24):** I saw that report in *The Advertiser* today and it was very disturbing. I called Ben from Nippy's and I had a conversation with him today, and I spoke to him about what was occurring. It's a story of a lot of businesses across the country. This is not a problem isolated to South Australia; this is a problem across the entire country. One of those problems is, of course, the increasing cost of gas.

What's occurring is that companies like Nippy's, companies across the country, have been on fixed-price contracts with their retailers and some of them are attempting to go onto the spot market. I understand that with Nippy's, without going into too much detail, they have three price contracts at some of their sites. They have two fixed contracts and one is on the spot market. Of course, on the spot market you are open to some of the fluctuations in the wholesale market, which can see a lot of discrepancy between prices. So I have spoken to Ben and we have exchanged numbers.

The government is committed to making sure that family businesses like that across South Australia of course are top of mind of the commonwealth government who brought in capped price controls in the gas market. What a lot of people do realise is that the gas market is what is driving up those firming costs of renewable energy. Renewable energy plummets prices of power. When, of course, the renewable energy is not available, gas seeks to make a return on that rent and they do charge a lot. You can see it in the reports recently, from AGL right through to Origin, of massive profits for those companies—huge bonuses for their executives and, of course, big shareholder returns, which is showing that the gas market is making big profits for energy companies.

What we need is a consolidated bipartisan approach to make sure that renewable energy can smash that monopoly market that gas has here in South Australia. The first thing you can do is make sure that gas is more available. There are shortages of gas across the country, and I find it a bit tough to be lectured by members opposite—who have banned fracture stimulation in the second largest basin in South Australia for gas extraction—and to then complain about gas prices.

Quite frankly, I would have thought one of the things that people like Tony Pasin and the shadow minister would be keen on would be to see more gas out of the ground, to see a more liquid supply of that commodity in the Australian market and to see those prices fall. Instead, what they do is put restrictions on it and then complain about the consequences. Quite frankly, I think what we need here is more renewable energy and not less. The idea that you would blame renewable energy for the cost of increased power prices is quite frankly untrue.

### ECONOMIC RECOVERY FUND

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:27):** Will Nippy's power bills go down as a result of the government's Economic Recovery Fund announcement today?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:27):** I thank the leader for his question and congratulate him on taking up his new role. Today, I had the pleasure of attending a proud South Australian manufacturer—Electrolux—in Dudley Park, a long-term manufacturer of whitegoods in South Australia and a very energy-intensive business who have themselves significantly invested in their own operations to bring down their power costs, transferring from a gas-fired furnace that they had as part of their manufacturing operations to a new more advanced and energy-efficient electric furnace.

The Minister for Small and Family Business and I attended there with the general manager of Electrolux to talk about the second round of the Economic Recovery Fund grants which are specifically tailored to small businesses. As you would be aware, of the roughly 150,000 or 160,000 businesses operating in South Australia at any one time, the vast majority of those, approximately 95 per cent of those, are small businesses, and the definition used by the federal government, for example, when it comes to energy consumption for small business, is less than 160 megawatt hours of consumption per year.

Our Economic Recovery Fund that we announced today was \$20 million in grants for those small businesses: the dominant cohort of the business community in South Australia, the cohort that employs the majority of South Australians across all different types of industries. From this week, they will be able to apply for grants between \$2,500 and \$50,000 to fund improvements in their business operations or their business premises to bring down their energy consumption.

What we did last year I think was welcomed by many recipients, where we partnered with the federal government to provide energy bill reductions for the course of the last financial year. That assistance, of course, is welcomed by those who receive it over the period of time that it's received. But that only lasted a year and so this year what we are doing is we are helping those South Australian small businesses invest in their businesses to lock in lower energy consumption and lock in lower bills from now on, not just for this year but for the years to come, and doing that in a way that encourages South Australian businesses to adopt more energy-efficient processes, operations or investments. It could be anything from solar panels to batteries. It could be more efficient refrigeration or cooking appliances. It could be improvements in business premises and in plant and equipment. They will be able to do that.

Nippy's, of course, is a very large business and a very large consumer of energy. What we saw in today's paper is what happens when large businesses, who are able to negotiate specific longer term contracts with retailers at a particular price, come off those contracts and they go on to the open market where they are subject, for example, to the prevailing spot price for energy. We are working to co-invest with the vast majority of South Australian businesses, or the sector that represents the vast majority of South Australian businesses. For larger consumers, the importance of those longer term contracts with more beneficial pricing can't be underestimated.

#### **POWER PRICES**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:31):** Given that answer, a question to the Minister for Energy: does the government expect the prices of iced coffee and juice to increase in South Australia? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** There are obviously those reports today that Nippy's monthly power bill has more than doubled in an electricity cost crisis that is gripping the agriculture industry.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:31):** We know that the default market offer has dropped and we are going to see a bit of relief, but ultimately the idea of politicians being able to guarantee the public what the cost of an iced coffee is is childish—it's childish. I think my young friend has just jumped the shark a bit early, I would have thought. We are going to do everything we possibly can to make sure that we can put downward pressure on household power prices.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I just point out to members opposite that it's all very well to complain about an issue, it is completely different to offer an alternative. The alternative is where we have the debate. I look forward to having the debate. Yelling across the chamber is not a substitute for policy work. Treachery is not a substitute for policy work.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morialta!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** What policy work is is hard work behind the scenes to come up with an alternative policy.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morphett!

*Mr Patterson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morphett!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Yelling out, 'It's not my fault, no-one mentioned your name in the leadership speculation. It's not my fault you went down and voted.'

*Mr Patterson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morphett, I have called you to order twice. Please, stop yelling out, it's disorderly and the minister will be heard in silence.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Our plan is to make sure that we can do what we can to firm renewable energy at appropriate prices rather than try to extract massive rent like gas-fired generators are now. I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to have a look at AGL's returns. I would ask him to look at Origin's returns. I would ask him to look at every gas-fired generator's returns last financial year and see the extraordinary profits that they have made on the back of very, very high gas prices to firm renewable energy and then tell us what the alternative policy is.

#### CFMEU

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:34):** My question is to the Premier. Is the CFMEU driving up the cost of construction in South Australia? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** On 1 August it was reported that the militant CFMEU union is applying a 10 per cent to 15 per cent premium to Adelaide construction projects, adding millions of dollars to costs. Industry figures claim the CFMEU is inflating project costs by threatening to shut down sites unless costly demands are met.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:34):** I heard that this question was going to get asked of me today by the Leader of the Opposition—not a good sign, Vincent, but never mind. I have not seen—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Flinders!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I've got it highlighted: 'Tales of Tarzia 13'.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Calm down. I have not seen the accusations that the member opposite is saying. What I do see is pressure on the labour market, that the economy in South Australia is doing so exceptionally well that there is a competition for labour, and that competition for labour is driving up wages. The idea that it is down to one or two people within the CFMEU is simply not true. What is occurring is that we are seeing South Australia's unemployment

rate at a record low. That record low is seeing a lot of companies that are attempting to build large-scale projects competing and struggling to get labour.

That labour shortage is pushing up wages. It is a pretty simple economic equation that I would have thought members opposite would know. Perhaps if they had not sacked their shadow treasurer so quickly, maybe they would have someone over there who could explain to them why there is competition for labour going on. I feel very sorry for my friend the member for Colton with the humiliation he has been put through over the last couple of weeks. Through no fault of his own, he was sacked, moved to another portfolio and has seen someone else promoted who, quite frankly, we all know is going to be interesting. I have to say—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Morialta, the member for Chaffey! The minister will be heard in silence.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I do not think it is the CFMEU that is pushing up wages: what we see pushing up wages is massive competition for labour. This government fully supports the commonwealth government's move to put the CFMEU into administration. We do not support any form of organised crime or bikies in the CFMEU. I would point out that the CFMEU did not just start in March 2022: they were around under the Morrison government, they were around under the Abbott government, and they were operating freely. It took a Labor government to put them into administration.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for MacKillop is next in the line. I know the member for MacKillop umpired Glencoe versus Mt Burr on the weekend, and it was not his fault the mighty Murphies went down by 50 points.

#### REGIONAL ROAD MAINTENANCE

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:37):** You never know what you might hear there. My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Is the minister going to cancel the contract held by Fulton Hogan to maintain the regional road network in the South-East? With the leave of the house, I will explain, Mr Speaker.

Leave granted.

**Mr McBRIDE:** On 5 June in parliament, I asked the minister about this contract. The minister said he would have more to say in coming days. I subsequently wrote to the minister seeking an update, and two months later, my office has not received a response. On radio last week, the minister said he was close to cancelling the contract.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:38):** That is true. I thank the member for his question and his constant advocacy on behalf of his constituents. All members of this place would be aware that the former government outsourced road maintenance in South Australia, and it had devastating results, particularly for our regional communities.

The Regional South, zone 2, road maintenance contract was awarded to Fulton Hogan by the previous government. It covers 5,800 kilometres of the state's 22,900 kilometres of road network. Zone 2 incorporates some of the oldest pavements and oldest bitumen seals in some of the most challenging environments for road maintenance, particularly with the amount of rain received in that area. This area was previously managed by the department with departmental maintenance gangs, and it was considered a high-risk area. That is why it was an insourced program where we conducted this work ourselves.

Members opposite, since the commencement of that contract, Fulton Hogan, despite their assurances, have experienced significant challenges in meeting the contract level for service for the delivery of routine maintenance services. The member would know that, as would the member for Mount Gambier and anyone driving down in the South-East would see it in the pavement, that the contract is not working. Despite increased levels of investment by this government into that contract, the condition and performance of the network on the Limestone Coast has not improved.



Early in May 2024 the department advised Fulton Hogan of its concerns regarding its performance on the zone 2 maintenance contract. The department confirmed that the interim operating model cannot continue and it was considering all options. Since that time, the department has been working with Fulton Hogan on strategies to achieve an uplift in productivity and efficiency in the delivery of services.

It is fair to say that these road maintenance contracts across all zones, put in place by the former Liberal government, have not worked and are not delivering on expectations of the community, particularly on the Limestone Coast. The department has determined that the contract model is not appropriate for the services required and continues to undertake a comprehensive review of the contract and delivery model, including the performance framework, designed to incentivise positive network outcomes and behaviours.

I expect Fulton Hogan to continue to maintain the network in cooperation with the department while we develop this new framework. It is expected to be around for the next six months, after which consideration will then be needed around the possibility of re-tendering the contract or terminating it.

#### CFMEU

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:41):** My question is to the Premier. Has the Department for Infrastructure and Transport conducted a review into the CFMEU and, if so, what was the outcome of that review? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** *The Advertiser* reported on 1 August that the Department for Infrastructure and Transport are currently reviewing all contracts that include enterprise bargaining agreements signed by the CFMEU and will report back with any findings of concern.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:41):** Yes, we have conducted a review. We all saw the media. We all saw the accusations made about the CFMEU and I've got to say that the government, to a person, was alarmed and we immediately instigated a review. That review is looking into links to organised crime, any contracts that were signed or any enterprise agreements with current contractors that may give preferential treatment to other subcontractors that may have links to the aspects of the CFMEU that were mentioned in the media that could have nefarious links.

To date, the department has not found any links to organised crime in any of our contracts and we have not found any concerns. We are cooperating with South Australia Police to make sure, but it is fair to say that the Albanese government's swift action to put the CFMEU into administration is a good day. It is a good day for South Australia, it is a good day for workers because it is important in the construction industry. These workers work in a dangerous field and they need to have a union that is focused on their safety, their health, their wages, their conditions, not about commercialising their influence for their own pockets or their own organised criminal activity.

We are pleased that it has taken a Labor government to put the CFMEU into administration while apparently under previous governments there was no action taken on the CFMEU and all this illegality only started happening when Labor happened to come into office.

#### CFMEU

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:43):** Supplementary: will that review be made publicly available?

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:43):** Given that the review is also—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my left, there will be several of you departing if we don't hear some silence. I think there have been some good questions today, some good answers today, and the fact that we have been able to hear both sides I think is a good thing. I'm sure people in the gallery agree. Let's just keep the noise level down. The interjections are not parliamentary.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Criminal intelligence in South Australia Police is not generally made public—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I will explain this again, slowly, for my friends opposite. This review is being conducted with South Australia Police. South Australia Police will cooperate with the department and the department will cooperate with them. Once the report is completed, I will take a report to cabinet and we will make a decision then.

It's fair to say that thus far we have found no evidence of the accusations members opposite are making. If they have evidence of organised crime involved in any government contract, I would ask members to stand up in the parliament, under parliamentary privilege, give any documents that they have to the government—make them public if you like—and put up or shut up.

#### CFMEU

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:45):** My question is to the Premier. Did the Premier request the Commissioner of Police to conduct an investigation into any links between the CFMEU and bikie gangs? If so, what was the outcome of that review? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** On 14 July, *The Advertiser* reported that the Premier had asked police commissioner Grant Stevens to investigate whether there are any links between the rogue CFMEU and bikie gangs in South Australia.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:45):** Yes, I did, and I haven't received any advice from SAPOL that suggests they have established any link. I assume that SAPOL will continue with their work and make a public statement at an appropriate time, if appropriate. I contacted the police commissioner directly, while I was on leave, at the first emergence of reports regarding the conduct of the CFMEU in Victoria and in New South Wales. Anybody who is familiar with my view and my industrial philosophy throughout my time in the labour movement will know that I have been a strong supporter of taking the harshest possible action against the CFMEU, and that has resulted, of course, in their administration. That's a move that I welcome and support.

#### CFMEU

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:46):** My question is to the Premier. Will any South Australian government projects be delayed as a result of today's CFMEU rally? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** It has been reported today that work has stopped today on the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:46):** The work that most recently occurred at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital was of course the opening of a brand-new emergency department, and it is now well and truly up and running. I had the great pleasure of opening that facility along with the health minister and a suite of western suburbs MPs a number of weeks ago. There is another piece of work following that at The QEH: in the location where there is the old emergency department, we are now using that for a facility that, to explain it, is a western suburbs equivalent of the facility at Sefton Park.

That is a piece of work that is ongoing, and my office and I have received no advice from the builder there to suggest that that work is anything but on track. It's another example of the comprehensive strategy that this government has in putting more capacity into our health system. We are not making the mistakes of the past of opening one facility over here, only to close the facility behind it. What we are doing is actually establishing the capacity of the system that other governments before had failed to do.

**BEACHPORT BOAT YARD**

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:47):** My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Can the minister advise when the Beachport boat yard will be getting its new travel lift? With your leave, and the leave of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr McBRIDE:** The Beachport travel lift is a vital piece of machinery that is used to move fishing boats in and out of the boat yard. It has been out of service for at least two years, and a crane has been used instead. However, fishermen are frustrated at the constant delays from the department in getting this new piece of machinery.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:48):** Thanks for the question, member for MacKillop. I thank him for his constant advocacy on behalf of the Limestone Coast. The boat yard is a critical marine facility that serves the rock lobster commercial fishing industry, and it operates out of Beachport in the south. I am advised that the boat yard serves approximately 40 boats and provides for their launching, retrieval and storage. The boat yard operates a vessel straddle carrier and a mechanical ship lifter originally designed to lift and move up to 60-tonne boats. The straddle carrier was taken out of service in April 2022 due to its poor condition, and since that time boats have been craned in and out of the water.

In August 2024, the department completed an open market procurement for the supply of a brand-new 60-tonne straddle carrier. I expect that contract fabrication delivery of a new straddle carrier be executed by the end of September of this year and I expect to have it fully operational by May 2025. I know it's taken time but, again, we had to wait until April 2022. If work had started earlier on that, we wouldn't be in this position we are now.

The Beachport Professional Fishermen's Association has been involved in developing the specifications for the unit on which procurement was based. Once the contract has been executed, the department will advise all the stakeholders, including the local member of parliament, and provide further details and particulars of that unit. Thanks for the question.

**CFMEU**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:50):** My question, again, is to the Premier. Did the Premier or any member of the government attend the CFMEU rally on the steps of parliament today and, if not, why not?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:50):** I am not too sure if the Leader of the Opposition has been paying attention, but this government—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We always welcome the thoughtful contributions from the member for Unley. The state government has made very clear that we believe only the strongest of action should be taken by those people who are in a position of regulatory authority regarding the conduct of the CFMEU. That is why, while I was on leave, I wasn't just calling the police commissioner, I also contacted the Prime Minister's office, I also proactively contacted Tony Burke's office, and made it very clear that this state government would support very strong action being taken against the CFMEU.

I know that the CFMEU—I am not familiar with the remarks in the protests but I have seen media reports this morning that the CFMEU is now in some areas calling for the destruction of the Labor Party, which just I think very much demonstrates the absurdity of the opposition's positioning on this issue. They can't work out if the CFMEU—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Unley, you are warned for the second time. Next time you're out.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** As I said earlier, we always welcome the contributions from the member for Unley. The member for Unley, let the *Hansard* show, interjected suggesting the South Australian branch of the Labor Party was accepting the affiliation of the CFMEU and their affiliation fees, but that action has stopped, at my initiation. But I thank the member for Unley for drawing that to people's attention anyway.

#### CFMEU

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (14:52):** My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier endorse the member for King attending CFMEU events? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TEAGUE:** *The Advertiser* newspaper reported on 2 August that, and I quote:

Just before Premier Peter Malinauskas asked for a police investigation into the rogue construction union, Labor MPs were praised at a CFMEU [event].

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:52):** I thank the—what's your job now? The shadow—I can't remember. It's hard to—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** In general, that's right. I thank the member for Heysen for his question. The member for King, along with every member of the parliamentary Labor Party, firmly believes that working people in all their forms deserve professional, thoughtful representation. That's why we have an unapologetic position of supporting industrial organisations that are committed to professional representation and the workers who seek to benefit from that. The member for King, from memory, attended an event that was supporting women in the construction industry, and that's very important because we want to see more women participating in construction trades.

The member for Heysen would be well aware that there is a big infrastructure program happening around our state driven by state government investment. There is also a big private sector explosion in construction activity, which is one of the reasons why we are the number one performing economy in the country according to the Commonwealth Bank.

The trouble and the challenge that we have in the construction industry in South Australia is that we don't have enough labour to be able to meet all the demand. It is entirely rational that we seek to engage more female participation within the construction sector, because it is a good job and it is a well-paid job, and they may help contribute to the realisation of all that growth in construction activity around the state, whether it be in residential, commercial or civil construction that the government is investing in. That is the context and the reason for the member for King's attendance at that event. I welcome her advocacy in that regard; long may it continue.

#### CFMEU

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (14:54):** Supplementary: in light of that answer, my question is to the Premier. Has the Premier banned members of the government, including the member for King, from attending CFMEU events?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:55):** What we have done is probably been a lead jurisdiction around the country in advocating for strong action being taken against the CFMEU—I'm talking specifically around the construction division, of course. What we have been is a lead advocate, as far as a state government is concerned, in advocating the case against the unwelcome elements of the construction division within the CFMEU.

We have been on the record on this from the start. We were one of the first jurisdictions out of the blocks on the reporting of the activity that occurred through the *60 Minutes* report and the lead-up to it, so we have a very strong position on that. That's what we have been doing. What we won't stop doing is providing support to working people in this state having professional representation, regardless of what industry they work in, to advance their cause.

We have always held the view that we see industry advocates in terms of business—whether it be the chamber of commerce or Business SA, whether it be the MBA, whether it be the property

council, or whether it be the HIA or any other industrial organisation representing business—as a valuable resource for advice on government policy, on advocacy around investment and driving that investment. We have been very grateful for the partnership we have had with business since we have been elected.

But equally, we acknowledge the right of other industrial organisations representing working people having a seat at the table as well. Working people deserve to have advocacy to ensure their wages are going in the right direction, to ensure they have safe workplaces, to ensure that parliaments are passing laws that advance the cause of working families. We have always believed in that balance. That is, of course, the stark contrast between the Liberal Party and the Labor Party.

The Liberal Party don't support the union movement, they advocate against the union movement's very existence at every opportunity they get, and they don't sit at the table, whereas on this side of the house we engage with both. That is something I expect any party of government to be able to do, to make sure we get the balance right between the interests of working people and the interests of commerce and the growth of economic activity writ large across the state.

### LIMESTONE COAST RADIATION TREATMENT

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:57):** My question is to the Minister for Health. Could the minister inform the house about the Mount Gambier radiation therapy service feasibility study and the final report and its findings? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr McBRIDE:** This report is coming on the back of a lot of community concern and perhaps a 20,000-signature petition in support of such services. The report has actually found that it is not worthy for the service to be rolled out in Mount Gambier, for a number of reasons. I am hoping the minister can inform the house of these.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:58):** Thanks to the member for MacKillop for his question and his passionate advocacy in relation to Limestone Coast health services. As the member has articulated, we did undertake a feasibility study in relation to advocacy for radiation oncology in the South-East and the Limestone Coast. This followed advocacy from the local community, but it also followed an initial rejection of that proposal under the previous Liberal state government and under the previous Liberal federal government. Both of those governments looked at this at the time, didn't discuss it with the community, didn't undertake a feasibility study and decided to reject that proposal. We took a different approach of saying to the community that we would bring in a team of experts to undertake a feasibility study, put all the facts on the table and release that report in full. We undertook to do that, we had community representation in terms of the appointment of those people to undertake that work, and we now have released that report and provided that in full.

I met with the working group when I was in Mount Gambier recently alongside the member for MacKillop while we were starting construction of the upgrade of Mount Gambier hospital and also releasing the full plans in terms of our upgrades of Naracoorte hospital as well. I met with the team who are part of the working group. Obviously, they are disappointed in terms of the results of that feasibility study, but I think there are some positive elements. There are a series of recommendations about improving cancer care in the Limestone Coast that we can take up and which can lead to some meaningful improvements for people in the Limestone Coast who suffer from cancer.

This is a report that was done completely at arm's length from government. They had access to all the information. It has been provided. There are some useful recommendations that will improve care. Very importantly, it will lead to a better result in terms of the upgrades that we can now do for cancer care services. There were some criticisms of the previous proposals. I think that now, based on this feasibility study and this report, there will be a much better outcome in terms of those upgrades proceeding.

### POLITICAL DONATION REFORM

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (15:00):** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise whether the government has banned donations from the CFMEU to political parties?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (15:01):** I thank the member for Heysen for his question. We returned the donation from the CFMEU, as I think we did back in 2022, that was made in the lead-up to the state election. I note that the Liberal Party have failed to return donations from various sources that have had a whole range of questions being raised publicly over time.

Nonetheless, the member for Heysen will be well aware that the state government is committed to not just banning donations from any particular organisations, we are committed to banning donations full stop. The Special Minister of State is in the active process of crafting the version of that legislation that will be introduced into parliament in the not too distant future on the back of a substantial amount of public consultation that has occurred recently. I understand there has been an initial briefing to the opposition on the crafting of that legislation, as there has been for other members of the parliament.

The government will be introducing that legislation into the parliament, all being well, this year—hopefully in the not too distant future, because we do believe quite firmly in, and I can say I firmly have been an advocate of, getting donations out of politics full stop. I think that the electorate wants to see politics and politicians not focused on fundraising and those efforts, but rather focusing on thoughtful policy development and advocacy to the community. We are working on a donation ban across the board.

#### CFMEU

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (15:02):** My question is again to the Premier. Is the CFMEU restricting competition on government worksites by forcing the use of companies linked to the CFMEU? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TEAGUE:** On 18 July this year, the ABC reported that, and I quote:

A lack of competition—particularly in specialised fields like cranes—makes the industry reliant on companies that are linked to the CFMEU...that boosts costs for construction.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:03):** I have not seen evidence of that. If the member has evidence of what he has raised in parliament, I would like to see that very quickly.

#### SA WATER

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:03):** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise if performance payment bonuses were paid to public servants in connection with the River Murray flood crisis and, if so, from which agencies? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TELFER:** It has been revealed by FOI that \$902,346 was paid out on top of ordinary salary packages to 926 SA Water staff in 2023-24.

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning) (15:04):** The opposition is, I think, well aware that SA Water paid out bonuses to their staff. The important thing to remember about all of this is that these bonuses were not paid to executives, board members or some imaginary fat cat; 92 per cent of employees who received the performance allowance earned less than \$100,000 a year. They were people like lock attendants, construction and maintenance workers, field technicians—people who do that sort of very important work all throughout the state. The River Murray was obviously a particular point of focus for SA Water. There were many things that they did that improved the outcome for that flood recovery effort.

*Mr Whetstone interjecting:*

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** I can hear the member opposite interjecting and he's got an interest in these matters. Of course this is part of the normal work of SA Water, but it is important that we properly remunerate employees. These employees only received, for their last pay rise in

their enterprise bargaining agreement, 1 per cent, which in the current inflationary environment is pretty small, and these bonuses go some way to recognise the sort of work they do.

I have extended to the opposition spokespeople in the upper house who put out a press release recently, and I would extend to any member of the opposition, the opportunity to come out and see the SA Water crews doing their work, dealing with sewage spills and dealing with water leaks.

**Mr Whetstone:** At the locks?

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** The locks. Well, you can go down to the lock and tell the lock attendant he shouldn't get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, and that's all we're really doing here. We're providing proper remuneration to staff who do a really good job for the state.

#### SA WATER

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:06):** Supplementary. Will any further performance bonus payments be paid and, if so, to whom?

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning) (15:06):** I just had a meeting with SA Water today. I was speaking to the chairman and we were talking about these bonus systems. These bonus systems were present, as I understand it, every year under previous governments, of both persuasions, and these bonuses are paid at the discretion of management and the board of SA Water. I think we should leave the board and the executive to properly remunerate their employees.

SA Water staff work incredibly hard at providing safe drinking water and at providing a good sewerage system, and most of us just turn on the tap or flush the toilet and we don't need to think any more about it. But what we have got is a very sophisticated system of 27,000 kilometres or so of potable water pipes and 9,000 kilometres or so of sewerage pipes. It's an incredibly sophisticated system which serves the state well.

As we know from various places—and I know many members are interested in this—where you don't have potable water pipes and where you don't have sewerage provision you get blockages in the housing supply and blockages in your local economy. So this is a really important entity for the state government and very important for the provision of drinking water, sewerage access and the like. It's very important to the life and economy of the state and we should properly remunerate SA Water staff who do so much of that good work.

#### BORDERTOWN WATER SUPPLY

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (15:08):** My question is again to the Minister for Housing. Could the Minister for Housing please inform the house about its investment into water at Bordertown and its future needs, and what investments are further needed to shore up that town's expansion into the future?

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning) (15:08):** I thank the member for MacKillop for his interest both in housing and in water. He is a persistent local member, one who is very dedicated to practical solutions. In Bordertown, we know there's a big housing challenge there and we know that there's consequentially also a big challenge with drinking water. The aquifer there has a freshwater lens over a saltwater aquifer. We have come to the natural limits of growth in Bordertown, so SA Water is undertaking investigations to basically put in place water security for the future and to enable the growth of Bordertown.

I have gone out with the local member to the industrial estate, to the new housing estate with, I think, 60 blocks. The Office for Regional Housing is investing in that housing estate to get it going. There is no good in releasing land if it were not serviceable, and the investigations which are going to underpin the sorts of investments that we will be doing at Bordertown will underpin that housing growth in time.

**STATE TAXES**

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:10):** My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier stand by his election promise that there will be no new taxes, no new tax increases? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TELFER:** From 1 July, water bills for South Australians rose 3.5 per cent above inflation and will do so for every year for the next four years, meaning South Australian households will be on average \$85 a year worse off and small business will be charged on average an extra \$348 a year.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (15:10):** I thank the member for his question and I also congratulate him on his new role in the shadow cabinet. I think it's a bit disingenuous to contrive the two issues that are raised by the member in his question. We made a clear commitment about no new taxes or tax increases, and we have honoured that commitment. Of course, it is entirely disingenuous to try to say that the annual water bill increases which have occurred by and large each and every year, with a couple of notable exceptions, under both previous Labor governments and under the previous Liberal government, constitutes the same thing.

**An honourable member:** They came down.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** That's right, they came down—

**The Hon. D.G. Pisoni:** They came down alright. We discovered the fraud you had, your faux costings.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** They came down in 2013 and they came down again under the term of the previous government for one year—for one year—out of the four-year regulatory period, and then they went up again. So let's just put to bed the contention of those opposite—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —that they cut water bills.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Unley will leave the chamber until the end of question time, not only because he was on two warnings but because he has been yelling out the word 'fraud', which is entirely unparliamentary.

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

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. So I don't accept the member's conflation. We have not only honoured our election commitment—we have actually done better. We have cut taxes because we have abolished stamp duty for first-home buyers who are building a new house.

For those members opposite—and I heard the former shadow minister for finance, now shadow minister for cost of living—reiterate the demands of those opposite, that they want more spending, they want less taxes and they want lower debt. That is the approach of the Liberal Party of South Australia to state finance.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Yes, if you are Norman Lindsay it can happen. You can have a magic pudding, that's right, but if you are not Norman Lindsay, and if you don't read historical Australian children's fiction, then it can't exist. That is not the recipe for financial management in the contemporary context. We have met our election commitment, we are proud to have met our election commitment, we are proud to have delivered the cost-of-living relief that South Australians most in need deserve from their state government. We meet our election commitments and we honour them, and I am glad we have done it in this area. What we haven't done is gone to an election and said 'lower taxes' and then jack up land tax, and alienate your traditional support base and drive them into the arms of your political opponents. That's what you do.



**EMPLOYMENT FIGURES**

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:13):** My question is to the Treasurer. Is the Treasurer aware of the August employment forecast for South Australia from Deloitte Access Economics and, if so, what actions is he undertaking to address concerns raised in this report? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TELFER:** Deloitte's August employment forecast shows a decline equivalent to 13,300 workers this financial year.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (15:14):** Yes, I am aware of those economic forecasts not only from Deloitte Access Economics but from other leading national economic commentators, which are aligned with the projections in the federal budget papers that the national unemployment rate is due to increase because that is what happens when the Reserve Bank is increasing the cash rate as fast as we can all remember in recent memory in an effort to get inflation under control. The Reserve Bank is increasing the cash rate to influence mortgage rates and to slow down the level of consumption both by households and the business sector to get inflation under control.

Of course, when you are running a restrictive monetary policy setting like the Reserve Bank is at the moment, that usually has a corresponding impact on the unemployment rate here in Australia. That is likely to be the case by and large across the states and territories as well.

What I am pleased to say is I think the advice that I have been given recently is for nearly half of the months in calendar 2022 and in calendar 2023 South Australia's unemployment rate had a three in front of it—a record low. We have shrugged off that stigma which was placed around the shoulders of South Australians by the previous government of having persistently the highest unemployment rate in the nation. I am pleased in that context that we sit with the pack.

The member for Morphett says, 'We had a three in front of it' when in fact the unemployment rate was 4.9 per cent at the time of the last election. I am not quite sure which digits he uses when he counts, if they are hands or feet, but 4.9 is somewhat higher than something with a three in front of it—somewhat higher. We have not only had the unemployment rate lower in this state than what we have ever seen before in the state's history but for the majority of the time that we have been in government it has been substantially lower than historic records with a corresponding increase in employment.

We are proud of that economic record. As the Premier said before question time, it is a real achievement for the first time in the 14 years since records have been kept that our state has been ranked number one in the nation by the CommSec State of the States report, and not just once, not a one-off, three times in a row—three times in a row.

I understand the interjections from the deputy leader. We all refer to the new Leader of the Opposition as the new Leader of the Opposition. The deputy refers to him as the current one because he likes to swing between opposition leaders.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Yes, the loyal deputy.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** To hang on to them. The ever-loyal deputy, maintaining his position.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** With friends like John.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** That's right, with friends like John. We are proud of the state's economic record since we have been in government. We are proud that we have maintained our election commitments. We are proud that we haven't increased taxes and we are proud, in fact, that we have cut them.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (15:18):** My question is to the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. Is there a morale problem at SAPOL and, if so, what action is the minister taking to address it? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr BATTY:** One officer recently told parliament that morale is at a very low point. The general theme is that management is out of touch with frontline officers and the members don't feel valued and supported.

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN (Kavel—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Special Minister of State) (15:18):** I thank the shadow minister for what is a very important question. The challenges in policing are real, and every day that every police officer heads out to protect our community they continue to face those challenges. This is a government that is particularly proud of those efforts. Every single officer of police is proud of those efforts too.

May I say this: I'm familiar and have become increasingly familiar through my course of service in this role with the immense commitment of every single member of South Australia Police, whether sworn or unsworn, and their families to serving our state. They are proud to do that work, they are very proud to do that work, but the challenges, as I indicated at the outset, are real and will continue to face South Australia Police. We look forward to the recommendations of a committee to which you have referred.

#### *Ministerial Statement*

### REPORTS FROM THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (15:19):** I table a ministerial statement made by the Hon. Kyam Maher in the other place.

#### *Grievance Debate*

### MALINAUSKAS LABOR GOVERNMENT

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (15:19):** After two years, sir, you have a government that has completely lost control. You have a union boss Premier who has lost control of the union movement, you have a health minister who has lost control of the healthcare system, and you also have a Premier who has lost control of his backbench. We saw that last week when they started leaking to *The Advertiser* in relation to the Crown and Anchor as well.

What can we say? Let's talk about ramping. With only 81 weeks until the next state election, can I tell you we will continue to remind the people of South Australia about the biggest lie that was told to them by the Labor Party before the last state election. We will continue to remind them that the Labor Party lied to the people of South Australia about fixing ramping because, as we know, it is the worst that it has ever been: 5,539 hours lost to ramping, over 100,000 since the state election, and that is compared with nearly 75,000 for our entire four years in government.

Not only that but we also see that there are 22,000 people or thereabouts waiting for elective surgery, and out of that, 4,000 are actually overdue. They are in all of our electorates, more or less. If Labor wants bipartisanship on health, the first step of that per the convention is for the health minister to back down and resign. Admit the Labor lie. The minister should do what is right by convention and resign.

Coming to the Crown and Anchor, we know that the Premier has lost control of his backbench. We saw that last week. *The Advertiser* reported on the Crown and Anchor and how the Premier did not even have the courtesy to talk to his backbench. You would think that this arrogance would take a little bit of time to creep in—like it did with Rann, like it did with Weatherill—but, alas, it has been two years and it is already happening. This is not us putting these stories out: this is coming from the backbench of the Labor Party.

I should just refer to some of these quotes. The Premier is facing 'widespread internal fury over claims a lack of respect was shown to Labor MPs who were left in the dark about his intervention'. What can I say? It is the Labor Party boys' club. It is the three or four of them who are making all the decisions. They think they are that good that they do not even have to consult the backbench. *The Advertiser* report went on. It said: 'Multiple MPs have voiced private fury at poor communication by the Premier.'

Apparently, some of them did not even know where the protest was. You would think they would have had the decency to at least find out. Another source said: 'The distance between the top (Mali) and the people who put him there is so great, he doesn't even bother speaking to some anymore.' He does not even bother speaking to them: we speak to each other. We might not always agree, but we speak to each other. They do not even talk to the backbench. Two years in, it is an absolute disgrace.

Then, of course, there is the cost of living. We know that South Australians are doing it tough at the moment. We know that many families are struggling to make ends meet. We know that the average South Australian family is on average around \$25,000 worse off per year under this Labor government, whether it is water bills—and we have heard a pathetic defence about why the Labor Party needs to put up water bills the way they are—whether it is mortgage repayments, or whether it is energy bills. How much more can these businesses put up with? We saw it today from Nippy's. We are seeing stories of this every single day, and the government still want to defend their pathetic record when it comes to energy. It is simply not good enough.

Then, of course, there is the gift that keeps on giving: the CFMEU. You would have thought that today of all days the government might even come down a bit harder on the CFMEU. They cannot even keep their story straight. Is it a review that is being conducted by the police? Is it a review that is being conducted by DIT? If it is criminal in nature, why is it criminal in nature if they are saying that there are no criminals involved? Which one is it? They cannot even have their stories consistent. We know that there are fears out there, all across our state at the moment, that the CFMEU are and will continue to hold South Australian construction projects to ransom, whether it is the new hospital down the road, whether it is the north-south corridor.

Look at the comments of the minister and what he said two years ago and now and you see a very different picture. That is because protests are happening across the state and country today—get ready for disruption, get ready for cost blowouts, get ready for delays, because the CFMEU are here and they are going to make an example of the Labor Party. They are going to make an example and, unfortunately, it is the taxpayers of South Australia who are going to pay.

We are going to make sure that we do everything we can to continue to shine a light on this. The threats that are being made by the CFMEU are not good enough. Look at what they did recently in relation to the AFL and that poor umpire. These things are going to continue under this Labor government and the only way to change this is to change the government.

#### LEE ELECTORATE

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (15:25):** Over the winter recess I had the great pleasure of attending the official opening of the Seaton Ramblers Football Club's new clubrooms. This was an election commitment of the Labor opposition, which we made, to contribute \$1¼ million towards the Seaton Ramblers Football Club redevelopment, which is of course a very proud club in my electorate in the western suburbs. They have long supported young South Australian footballers in the western suburbs and remain an important club to this day.

Pleasingly for me, that redevelopment not only completed and opened but it is now located in the middle of what is a broader redevelopment area of Seaton of Housing Trust homes, a broader housing development to increase supply and rebuild homes.

I want to thank the people who worked so hard to deliver it, not only the City of Charles Sturt and its mayor, Angela Evans, and chief executive Paul Sutton, of course, but the leaders of the club: long-term club legend Attilio Cavuoto, or big Al as he is known, as the president, and also returning to the club, Steve Karpluk. They have put so much time and effort into that.

Of course, it is not the only election commitment I have had the pleasure of opening. I also had the pleasure earlier this year of opening the Coast Park Trail, something that has eluded the part of the western suburbs I represent for 30 years, getting the Coast Park developed in the face of a small group of strident, self-interested residents who do not want the park built outside their homes so that the rest of South Australians can access this important part of the coast for recreation.

We are looking forward to getting on with stage 2 of the Coast Park, which will link up Tennyson to Grange. That will see the Coast Park complete through the north-western coastal suburbs, from North Haven all the way down towards the southern suburbs, and I see southern suburbs MPs have had the benefit of seeing some new infrastructure there, with a stunning looking bridge.

It just goes to show anyone who takes an interest how political parties and members make election commitments. It reinforces the fact that candidates aspiring to parliament, members of parliament seeking re-election, and governments and oppositions are not only of course entitled to make election commitments to demonstrate to the community how they would represent their area but also it is important for governments to deliver on those election commitments. As a member of parliament and as a member of the western suburbs, and even now as a cabinet minister, I am really proud to have made decisions to deliver on the election commitments that we have as a Labor government.

I was also pleased on Saturday night to attend the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Henley Sharks Football and Netball Club. It is not quite located inside my electorate but just next door to it. Of course, many people living in my electorate play football or netball for the Henley Sharks—a very proud, successful club in the western suburbs. I attended there, along with the member for Colton, and heard of a club that has gone through an extraordinary history over that period, as so many clubs have done in greater metropolitan Adelaide and, indeed, across regional South Australia. Clubs have come together to merge, with two clubs becoming one. That has also been the case with the Henley Sharks.

In fact, as a proud Port Adelaide Football Club supporter, it was really pleasing to see a couple of Port Adelaide footy players interviewed on stage—Matthew Broadbent, of course, a wingman with a penetrating kick for the Power. Also, in the current AFL Women's team, Ella Boag was interviewed, as well as a former Crows player, James Rowe. They were talking about their reflections of their time at the Henley Sharks. All of them tell these really lovely stories about how impactful key people at the club, in particular coaches, were when they were coming through the juniors as young kids—not only learning about football but learning about life and playing in a team, and mateship as well.

In particular, Matthew Broadbent's father, Michael, gave a great history of the club over that period of time. It was a great night and great to see so many clubs in the western suburbs doing so well, strongly supported by this state Labor government.

#### **OXENHAM, MS H.**

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (15:30):** I rise to pay tribute to Helen Oxenham OAM, and I do so with humility, following her passing on 23 July. I say 'with humility' because I did not know Helen Oxenham, unlike others in the house and others in the community, particularly in the southern suburbs of Adelaide, whose lives she influenced over the course of her last 50 years, particularly.

It is true to say, and there ought to be more said over the course of the time ahead, that Helen Oxenham's service to South Australian women, in particular over those last 50 years, is indeed a legacy of towering achievement. That was recognised by hundreds who attended her memorial on 2 August this year. In Irish style, it was a memorial occasion that was both profound and filled with humour and goodwill and joy at a long life well lived.

Helen passed away in her 90s, having been born and raised in Ireland, in Cork, as is well known. She was one of six children. Growing up, her childhood was impacted by domestic violence. Helen observed that she was witness to her mother, and her siblings as well, being abused at the hands of her father. She has described that, expressed in her own words, as being like living with a volcano.

She married a gentler gentleman, and, having married, she migrated to Australia in her late 20s. She raised her family in the southern suburbs. It was in the mid-1970s that Helen had the opportunity to go to Flinders University to study women's studies. I emphasise that in paying tribute in these remarks, because Helen was a woman already in her 40s, having grown up overseas, having moved to Australia with the zeal of a migrant, having found this place and then having found both the opportunity to chart a course and the occasion to provide groundbreaking, transformational support for women in need.

Off the back of having the opportunity to study women's studies, Helen famously founded the first women's shelter at Christies Beach. In fact, she established the very concept, in many ways, of response to need. She found that she was surrounded by women in the southern suburbs whose first need was not for education, although there was the benefit of that, but they wanted beds and they wanted safety. The stories are countless as to women of all ages who found refuge with Helen from those very early years.

I note, in particular, the Place of Courage that Helen sought and, I think it is fair to say, pestered those, including, in particular, her daughter Heather to whom she has passed on the legacy to keep talking up for the Place of Courage. I am proud that the Marshall Liberal government provided \$200,000 towards its establishment. We know that there is more needed and I look forward to that investment continuing that 50-year legacy. It was a long life well lived. Vale Helen Oxenham OAM.

#### **MACKILLOP ELECTORATE, ROADS**

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (15:35):** I am very honoured as I rise today to highlight and seek action on one of the most common complaints to my electoral office, and that is the poor conditions of roads in my vast electorate of MacKillop. As you know, MacKillop covers more than 34,000 square kilometres. As the local member, I drive up to 80,000 kilometres a year and I can honestly say I know the ups and downs, the broken edges and the potholes because I have travelled them, felt them and hit them. Specifically, I want to bring to light again the dire state of the Southern Ports Highway as well as the Frances Road and the Bordertown to Naracoorte road. These roads are vital arteries for our region and their current conditions are a matter of concern for everyone who travels them.

First, let's consider the Southern Ports Highway. In a recent survey from my office, nearly 20 per cent of respondents named the Southern Ports as the road that needed the most attention. This road is a crucial link connecting our community to economic opportunities and essential services and it has fallen into disrepair. Potholes and uneven surfaces have become commonplace, making travel hazardous and uncomfortable.

I know the department has spent around \$2 million on resurfacing around eight kilometres of this road between Beachport and Millicent. I know the quality of these works has not been up to standard. These issues are not just minor inconvenience: they pose serious risk to safety and contribute to wear and tear of vehicles, increasing maintenance costs for local families and businesses.

Moving on to Frances Road, where the situation is equally troubling, the road's deteriorating condition impacts local farmers and transporters who rely on it for moving goods and supplies. The compromised infrastructure not only hampers efficiency but also threatens the economic viability of those who depend on this road to sustain their livelihoods.

The Bordertown to Naracoorte Road, a key route for regional travel and commerce, is also in need of urgent attention. Potholes and crumbling surfaces are more than just blemishes on the landscape: they are obstacles to progress. The safety of our residents and the efficiency of our transport network are at stake here, and we must address these issues with urgency and commitment.

The problems with these roads are not just about inconvenience; they are about safety, economic stability and quality of life. Poor road conditions lead to higher accident rates, increased vehicle maintenance costs, and inefficiencies in transport and logistics. For business, this means higher operational costs and potential delays. For families, it means a greater risk every time they get behind the wheel.

To address these pressing concerns, we need more than just temporary fixes. We need a comprehensive and sustained approach to road maintenance and improvement. We, unfortunately, now need a huge spend. We know that the previous Liberal government privatised the road maintenance contracts, and we know this has been a disaster for the road network in the Limestone Coast. We cannot just blame the Liberals as there were many years of Labor governance prior to the Liberal team.

I asked the Minister for Transport about these contracts in this place back in June. Following that, I wrote to the minister but I am yet to hear back. I know the minister is also frustrated by this and only last week said on radio that he is looking at cancelling the contract, given its poor performance. I will continue to advocate for the necessary resources and attention our roads desperately need. I will continue to ask for more money in budget allocations and infrastructure priorities. I will continue to engage with the department to see how we can do the maintenance better, and I am sure there are other options, such as reinstalling local highways departments.

Investing in our roads is an investment in our community's future. It supports our local economy, enhances safety, and improves overall quality of life for everyone. We cannot afford to let these vital links in our transportation network continue to deteriorate. We need action.

I would like to finish with the little bit of time that I have left by saying that I heard a story about a couple of local identities Bernie Vince and Andrew Jarman from FIVEaa who made their way down to Frances for a local event. They tried to get some sleep in on the way from Adelaide and when they hit the Bordertown to Frances road they reckon they nearly had concussion from hitting their heads on the roof. That might have helped their speeches and might have helped their temperament, but they did not get the sleep they were looking for!

One of the key things I have not mentioned in my speech is that a lot of my roads are used by school buses. These roads are becoming very uneven, they are very wavy and they are throwing vehicles around. We know that trucks probably cannot even maintain their speed limits on some of these roads. The most valuable vehicles that are using our roads are the school buses with our children on them, and I hope that the safety remains at a level that does not increase the risk of a major accident with a school bus and heavy transport. I really am hoping that this government, with its advocacy for regions, and hopefully the way it looks after MacKillop, can address these issues.

### ST AUGUSTINE'S OF CANTERBURY

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (15:40):** Today I rise to speak about St Augustine's of Canterbury, an icon of Unley Road and part of Unley's significant heritage. In South Australia's founding years, Unley's Anglican community built the first of St Augustine's churches as a mission church of St John in Halifax Street, Adelaide. During the First World War, the Unley parish grew as the population of Unley grew to in excess of 30,000. They grew out of the small church and a larger church was required, so after years of fundraising the foundation stone was laid in 1922.

That original church today is our community hall and also houses the op shop that they call 'Aggies', which this year celebrated 30 years of providing collectables, curious and just handy things that have been donated by local people in Unley.

As construction of the church progressed, the size of it had caused those who passed it to call the new church 'the cathedral in the suburbs'. As the planning of the church followed the signing of the armistice, it was decided to incorporate a memorial belltower, as one in five men and women who served in the First World War from the parish lost their lives in doing so. Since then, the church has been seen as a beacon for the Unley community, with the bells ringing every Remembrance Day.

Our local communities have turned to St Augustine's in times of grief, such as the prayer service for the Sturt Football Club members after the Bali bombing in 2001. More than 700 people attended that service which was led by Reverend Brenton Daulby OAM, whom I had the pleasure of meeting as a young candidate nearly 20 years ago when I knocked on his door.

Just as the church was representative of its local community when it was founded, it remains representative of the ever-changing community that we have in Unley and has become the first Anglican church in Adelaide to host Mandarin-speaking congregations. As the centenary of the

church approached, a centenary committee was formed. The chair of the committee was the Hon. Kevin Scarce, and members included Reverend Mee Ping Lau, Reverend Paul Monash, Andrew Marshall, Ian and Alison Haddy, Jeffrey Tan, Anne Ford and Josephine Marshall.

The launch of the centenary year's celebrations and commencement of the Morris windows and organ restoration fund was a concert opened by the Governor, Her Excellency the Hon. Frances Adamson, on Sunday 25 August, just last Sunday. It was a pleasure to attend the centenary service of the new church—the 100-year-old church—to a packed congregation. We heard reading and psalms from the Reverend Canon Mee Ping Lau, Reverend Paul Monash, Alison Haddy, Elaine Tang—in Mandarin—and Dr Daryl Teague. The sermon from the Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith was translated by Miranda Lyu representing the Mandarin community.

The choir was beautifully led by Reverend Joan Claring-Bould. After an introduction by the Hon. Kevin Scarce, the Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith gave thanksgiving for the restored Morris stained windows and the pipe organ, which was purchased from St Augustine's Cathedral after it had upgraded to a larger organ for around about a quarter of a million dollars in today's dollars. It was a very precious piece and remains so today. It was played beautifully by Dr Josh van Konkelenberg, followed by the official launch of the book by the Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith, supported by the Hon. Kevin Scarce and Anne Ford.

The book was authored by Anne Ford with the support of the Hon. Kevin Scarce, Ian and Alison Haddy, Emeritus Archdeacon Bob George, Reverend Paul Monash and Josephine Marshall. It was a terrific service and a time to reflect on how Unley grew and evolved, and how involved the Anglican community were in Unley at that time to build such a spectacular and glorious building that is very much appreciated and valued today.

#### **GIBSON ELECTORATE**

**S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (15:45):** I would like to congratulate the Marion Rams Football Club women's team for winning the grand final. It was a magnificent display on the Saturday before last. They absolutely nailed the opposition and actually only lost their clean sheet in the final quarter. For the record, the Marion Rams women's team won 7.4-46 against Houghton 1.0-6.

It has been an incredible journey for the women's team at Marion Rams. They were formed six years ago. There were players in the playing group on grand final day who have been there for the whole six years and have been on an incredible journey with the club. Importantly, too, it is worth noting that the team was undefeated this season and pulled through with a grand final win, so a big congratulations. I think it is also worth noting those who were deemed to be the best players on grand final day: a shout-out to Emily Pelling, Darcie Coad, Zoe Smith, Hannah Gordon and Isabelle Dawson. Congratulations and I hope you have recovered from Silly Saturday last weekend.

Also recently in our community the Marion RSL had their AGM last Sunday. I was there for knock-offs on Friday, as I regularly am. It is a lovely place to end the week and catch up with members of our community. I had the opportunity to present the club with a state flag on Friday night, as they were in grave need of a new one to display. At the AGM there was an election for president, of course, and I was pleased to see that it was contested by two women. I would like to congratulate Chere Maynard for winning the election for president and I look forward to working with her. I would also like to acknowledge all of the efforts of the previous president for the last term, Bret Sando. He contributed a massive amount of time and energy to the Marion RSL and I would like to thank him for his service.

Last Saturday night I had the pleasure, along with my colleagues Nadia Clancy and Louise Miller-Frost, of attending the South Adelaide Basketball Club end-of-season dinner. It was fabulous to celebrate a club that works really hard to provide a positive culture for its members. It was a good night, too, to acknowledge not only the players and the coaching staff but all of the administrators, volunteers and parents who enable a club like South Adelaide to flourish. They are a growing club and I look forward to the day that they finally get new courts to play on.

Recently, too, in my community we have been holding a study with regard to traffic in the suburb of Sturt. It was a year ago now when I was doorknocking Sturt and it became very clear very quickly the frustration that residents had exiting their suburb. That is something that all of us have to

do every single day and to have that experience every day causes frustration but also, of course, becomes a safety issue. They have trouble getting onto Sturt Road and they have trouble getting onto Marion Road.

Following that doorknocking, I then held a street-corner meeting to give more people an opportunity to share with me their thoughts. I also invited staff from the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to hear first hand the concerns of residents. They have worked really hard, done a traffic study and put all the data together. Just recently, we held forums in the Sturt community to show all that work that the department has done.

They had all the maps out and they had all the data so members of the community in Sturt could come once again to consult, see what the data looks like, see how that lines up with their own experiences and provide feedback and their good ideas about how this suburb can function better so that it is safe for everybody. I would like to thank everyone for their participation in that, because we all want safer communities that function well.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (15:50):** I rise to talk about the Australia India Youth Dialogue, which is the premier youth dialogue bringing together young leaders from India and Australia every year at an annual conference. There are 15 Australian delegates and 15 Indian delegates. I had the great honour of being one of the Australian delegates to this year's Australia India Youth Dialogue, which took place last week in Australia across Canberra and Sydney.

I found it an enormously valuable experience to discuss the Australia-India bilateral relationship, to delve a little bit deeper beyond perhaps the superficial—cricket and curry and the commonwealth—and to discuss what the future of the relationship looks like and also to better understand the contribution that Indian Australians have made to all our communities, including the community I represent, which has a large and very fast-growing Indian population.

It was a pleasure to be able to attend the dialogue and learn more about the bilateral relationship. I would like to thank the entire steering committee that put the dialogue together, including in particular this year's co-chairs Bindu Subramaniam and Bodean Hedwards.

**The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:52):** The Town of Gawler mourns the loss of George Rau, our esteemed local rail historian. If there was anything George did not know about trains it probably was not worth knowing. George's passion for trains was unmatched, and he was more than happy to share that information with anybody who was prepared to listen. George was particularly knowledgeable about the history of Gawler's rail system and the locomotives manufactured at the James Martin Foundry in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Born and raised in Gawler, George spent 45 years working for the South Australian Railways where he dedicated himself to repairing and maintaining rail carriages. Gawler was once a leading manufacturing town, producing many locomotives and farm machinery. George lamented the day that the commonwealth closed down its sites in South Australia and disposed of historical documents charting the state's rail history. Fortunately, he preserved plans and records of many of these locomotives built in Gawler, leaving our community with a priceless collection of drawings, photos and information.

We will seek to honour George's legacy by making these historical pieces publicly available, celebrating our region's history and George's love for rail. George, an avid Port Power supporter, lived a full 96 years and our hearts go out to his family and friends. Thank you for the opportunity to honour George.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:53):** Members of my community in the Morialta area have been coming to my office in increasing numbers in recent times, and it reflects the main complaint that I also receive from people when I am knocking on their doors, and that is that they are suffering under a cost-of-living crisis right now that is unlike any that they can recall.



There is an extraordinary deficit in responsibility being taken by the government for the impact that their decisions are having on the cost of living, whether it is the impact of the way that the government is operating in the market or whether it is the red carpet that the government has rolled out to union leaders like John Setka, whose CFMEU is now actively seeking to push up prices in the construction sector, whether people are buying a house, whether small businesses are facing increasing electricity bills that are completely out of control or whether it is the bracket creep of state government taxes and charges, such as payroll tax, which hoteliers have reported are seeing dramatic increases in their costs and an unreasonable amount in the cost of doing business in South Australia, and the cost of living in South Australia is increasingly out of control.

The opposition raises these issues in a respectful way in this house. The opposition asks questions of the government about these issues in the house. It is critical that this becomes the top priority for government, something it has clearly not been up to now because, while they are very happy to pat themselves on the back about the way that the state is going in this area or that area, South Australia leading the country in inflation is nothing to be proud of and it is having a dramatically bad effect on South Australian households.

**Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (15:55):** I grew up knowing how wonderful Probus clubs were because my grandfather, Lavington Fisher, was part of the Naracoorte Probus, and he spoke fondly of the club and I knew how important it was to him. So it was with great pleasure and privilege that I was invited to attend my local Prospect Probus club last Wednesday to celebrate the club's 500<sup>th</sup> meeting. Over those 500 meetings, there have only been six secretaries: Stirling Casson was secretary for 18 years and John Lumsden for 16 years.

The club was originally formed back in October 1982 with the aim of fellowship, friendship and fun. It was the eighth Probus club in South Australia. The first meeting was held at Prospect Town Hall and was convened by the Rotary club, with the assistance of Mayor Ern Sconce. They started with 25 members and by the end of the year they had a total of 52 members.

Currently, the club is now a mixed club with 19 members, and also non-members taking part in its activities. While the club no longer does interstate trips or overnights, it now has travel insurance, a members' benefit scheme and the Active Retirees magazine. Congratulations to the Prospect Probus on its 500<sup>th</sup> meeting, and thank you so much for having me along as guest speaker. I wish them another successful 500 meetings in the future.

#### *Bills*

### **APPROPRIATION BILL 2024**

#### *Estimates Committees*

Adjourned debate on motion:

That the proposed expenditures referred to Estimates Committees A and B be agreed to.

**Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:57):** I do the courtesy of letting the house know that the member for Frome, who I know had sought leave to continue her remarks, unfortunately is unable to do so, so I will commence mine. I know the member for Frome is a strong advocate for her regional community and before in her remarks she talked through what she expected to see in the budget and what was lacking for her community. I wish to continue and echo those remarks on her behalf as I talk through.

If I talk through my own experience, as we went through the estimates process it gave shadow ministers the opportunity to go through in detail the budget and spending that has occurred in their departments, so I had the opportunity through the estimates process to go through Defence SA, to talk through energy and mining and the Office of Hydrogen Power and their expenditure and also industry, innovation and science and go through the spending in that portfolio. At the same time, I also got to sit in on the examination into the budget for the Department for Trade and Investment. They are really important portfolios for the South Australian economy as a whole, and for South Australians.

Before I go into them in much greater detail, if I look at some of the general themes—to pick up on the member for Frome and others who have spoken previously—one of the key areas of

concern for the opposition was the blowouts in the operating expenditures in the budgets for so many of these departments.

There was significant overspending in the budget compared with what was budgeted only a year before. The operating expenses by agency for the 2023-24 budget showed over \$824 million of overspending by these departments. Chief amongst them was the Department for Health and Wellbeing, which had significant overspending, but also other departments, such as the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and similarly the Department for Environment and Water overspent by nearly \$50 million in terms of their operating expenses.

As I have said previously, you have the Premier and the Deputy Premier, the two leaders of this government, not being able to control spending within their department and so it is quite obvious that many other departments were following suit. They were not under any sort of instruction, any inferred pressure from their leaders, that they too should hold their departments to account and in fact saw overspending as well. In terms of my department, certainly the Department for Energy and Mining had overexpenditure of over \$40 million, which I will go into later.

When you look at what is going on with the economy as a whole nationally you have the Reserve Bank wanting to reduce spending because that spending is driving inflation. Their only lever to do that is interest rates. That is a blunt instrument, which has a huge toll on households and small businesses as interest rates go up. The Reserve Bank needs governments to work in tandem with them.

Certainly, interest rate rises have caused consumer spending to drop, which is what the Reserve Bank is seeking to do; however, as I have shown here, spending by the state government and equally by the federal government has not dropped so you have the government not working in tandem with the Reserve Bank and as a result inflation is continuing on. The national average is 3.8 per cent inflation, yet here in South Australia the inflation rate for the 12 months to June was 4.5 per cent. We are well above the national average.

The Reserve Bank has said that what is driving inflation now primarily is federal and state government spending. Households are having to tighten their belts and small businesses are struggling. The government is not doing the heavy lifting to help them and so they feel the pain more. At the same time, because inflation is up and groceries, fuel and lots of household costs are increasing and many of these have GST applied to them, there has been a massive surge in GST collected across the country and that has flowed back into state government revenue.

We have seen over \$2.1 billion of GST revenue increase between the 2023 budget estimate and what we are estimating for 2024-25—massive increases there. What has been the pain for households and businesses has been the gain for this government. That is a really concerning outcome and an issue that has been picked up by so many members on this side of the house and investigated as part of the estimates process.

In terms of some of the portfolios, as I discussed before, one of those was Defence SA. I have to say that on the whole while they did overspend in terms of their operating expenses, it was by no means as significant as so many others. At the same time I welcomed the new Minister for Defence and Space Industries and wished him all the best in his new role. He had been in the role only quite recently, but it was certainly an important change. For the previous defence and space industries minister, who was of course the Deputy Premier, there was so much uncertainty in both those important sectors, in the space sector and the defence industry sector, that the minister was not able to provide any certainty for them.

If I talk through some of the issues occurring in space, we had the federal government slashing and axing many very worthwhile programs. The Deputy Premier, the former minister, was not able to stand up and fight on behalf of SA and stop the federal government from axing those programs, which would in turn have benefited the space industry in South Australia. They were programs such as the \$30 million Moon to Mars program, which would directly affect South Australian companies that were looking to put their satellites into space and develop space heritage.

There was \$32.5 million cut in the development of Australian spaceports. Of course, we have Southern Launch here, who have a test range in Koonibba and are also looking to set up a launch

facility in Whalers Way. A really important part of the space industry is launch, and to have that taken away is really disappointing. Of course, there was \$1.2 billion of cuts to the National Space Mission for Earth Observation program to try to give sovereign capability for the nation.

We have just seen the launch of Kanyini, which is the first state-owned satellite from South Australia to go up into space. The benefits of getting that space heritage, the benefits of having that sovereign capability in space, are so important. Additionally, and I think really close to home here, there was the \$20 million cut by the federal government to the Australian Space Park, which was a terrific opportunity looking to bring a consortia of space companies here. That was cut as well. Under the Deputy Premier when she was in the role, there was real uncertainty for the space industry.

When we talk about the defence industry, it was subjected to the Defence Strategic Review, leading then into more uncertainty with the Surface Fleet Review. What really culminated in a show of where the priorities lay for the Deputy Premier, of course, was the disastrous Auditor-General examination late last year, when she showed quite strongly that her priority was the environment by not even bringing the Chief Executive of Defence SA to that examination. She then had to do a mad call and have a mad dash from the CE to try to come in here in that time.

As the CE was in transit, we asked questions important to that portfolio. It really showed the minister was not across the portfolio and her focus was not on defence, which is just so important when we know we have AUKUS and the focus for that. While the first submarine is not scheduled to be delivered until the 2040s, the rubber needs to hit the road immediately because, of course, from the South Australian defence industry's perspective, we need those companies to get into the supply chain.

The Labor Party have tied themselves up in knots around what their positioning is, what they feel about the future of conventionally powered and nuclear-powered submarines to be built in South Australia. Just last year, we saw Labor branch members in Boothby, which is situated in my electorate of Morphett—Boothby is represented by Louise Miller-Frost, the Labor MP there—pass an anti-AUKUS motion, one of the few such motions across Australia that were passed by Labor sub-branches.

This would indicate that the Labor MP there, Louise Miller-Frost, is not fully supportive of the thousands of jobs that the AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines being constructed in South Australia will create. We need to have a defence industry minister who is totally focused on the success of that massive undertaking for the nation's security.

Questions were asked along those lines during estimates, and they were answered. Being new in the role, we hope that what appears to be very strong support for that from this current minister continues, because we know how important it is to the South Australian economy.

I move on to another department that I was able to interrogate the costings of, and that is the Department for Energy and Mining, responsible, in no uncertain terms, for delivering affordable energy here in South Australia for households and businesses. Of course, the budget preceded that. The Australian Energy Regulator brought out its default market offer after two years of increases, where they skyrocketed by significant amounts: for households, 34 per cent, up to \$710, and for businesses it was staggeringly more, increases of over 40 per cent, upwards of \$1,750. They came down by a very slight amount, by as little as 1.5 per cent for households and for businesses a little bit more.

If you look at the three default market offers in the term of this government, power bills for both households and businesses have increased over 30 per cent and, at the same time, the average household here in South Australia is paying more for their electricity bill than households in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. This is a really serious environment for households and businesses.

We saw even more the impact this is actually having on businesses in the papers as recently as this week. We have had a local business, Ballaboosta, explain how their quarterly electricity bill year-on-year has gone up by 35 per cent in the quarter, up from \$5,800 to \$9,200. That is a massive amount and it is hard for the business to pass on those costs, which results in fewer opportunities for employment, the business owner working harder and the business owner struggling to survive.

Today we have really seen what the effect has been on big businesses that use significant amounts of energy. We have had Nippy's, a much loved South Australian icon, come out and explain that their monthly electricity bill has more than doubled in a year, despite Nippy's using fewer power hours. Their bill has gone up from \$51,600 last June to \$109,580. That is a significant amount. About a third of that was because of network charges. These are massive costs.

At the same time, the Dairyfarmers' Association have flagged the massive electricity costs that that sector is facing. They have experienced an up to 38 per cent increase on average. Almond farmers as well have explained the massive surge that they have seen, saying they have experienced increases in the last three years while Labor has been in government of 60 per cent. There are real struggles going on for businesses and, at the same time, there does not seem to be much good news on the horizon, because AEMO just last month released their quarterly updates around wholesale energy prices and they showed that in the second quarter this year prices had increased by \$80 per megawatt hour, so up from \$55 to \$135 per megawatt hour. They are massive increases. So on the back of big increases they are staring down the barrel of more.

So in estimates, of course, the first question asked of the minister was what was he doing, because if you look in the budget measures for this budget there were no new measures in the Department for Energy and Mining to help bring down power prices for household electricity. There was money put aside for a green iron and steel strategy, money put aside for the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Act, money put aside for the Whyalla steelworks transformation and money put aside for Whyalla accommodation for the hydrogen plan workforce.

So there was money being poured into hydrogen, and at the same time money was being spent on the power plant: \$126 million according to the budget for 2023-24, with another \$380 million projected to be spent in this financial year, on a project that the government have said is not targeted at lowering household electricity bills. Of course, the minister's fallback, when explaining what they are doing, was to blame anyone but the government and to blame it on an east coast energy crisis.

But when the point is made, as I made previously, that we are seeing prices paid by South Australians for their power bills that are more than for the average household in Brisbane, in Sydney and in Melbourne and that that does not stack up, then it is explained that the plan is going to be more of the same. It is the same approach that was taken when the current minister was the energy minister in the former Labor Weatherill government, when we saw electricity prices skyrocket. Those were brought down when the Liberal Party was in government for four years, and now, when we are back in the opposition seat, we see prices skyrocketing once again. So the plan is for more of the same to go with, as I said, what is coming down the line in terms of wholesale prices. These are really concerning responses.

In terms of the actual spending, I talked briefly about the overspending going on in the Department for Energy and Mining. One of those areas, of course, is in the Office of Hydrogen Power SA. The very first budget, the 2022-23 budget, said that that office would be spending \$2 million per annum and would employ 8 FTE. Last year's budget said that it increased: it went up to \$7.8 million and 23 FTEs in the estimated result. What we find in the budget now is that the actual for 2022-23 was \$13.6 million. So, even in the space of a short two months, between the budget and 30 June, costs blew out even further.

In fact, what we see is this continuing at an alarming, escalating rate. We see another blowout occurring in the 2023-24 year, where the estimated spend in the Office of Hydrogen Power was \$35 million, and this year it is budgeted to be \$25 million. So, all up, it is nearly \$75 million, and then we have to take with a grain of salt that that \$35 million will be \$35 million. All up, for that \$75 million over three years we are on track and on trajectory to be spending \$100 million in the Office of Hydrogen Power over and above what is meant to be spent in terms of the power station itself.

In terms of that, questions were asked about what the \$126 million had been spent on. Of course, when I asked how much had been spent on storage, the minister could not explain and was not able to tell because it was under procurement. When I asked what was to be spent on the electrolyzers, he said, 'I can't say; it's under procurement.' When I asked what was being spent on the turbines, we at least got out of them that \$25 million had been spent. So that is another

\$100 million where we do not know where it has been spent, and we have no confidence about what the other \$380 million coming up in this financial year is going to be spent on.

Time expired.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:18):** I rise to make a contribution to the Appropriation Bill. Budget estimates are always an interesting time. Sometimes you get some reasonable answers and sometimes you do not, but it is a process that we go through in the parliament. I commend all the public servants who do the research in the background to make sure that the ministers can at least be informed.

I want to talk about development. In the first instance, we are all well aware of the housing crisis, not just in this state but throughout this country and around the world. It is something that needs to be addressed, and I am proud that my electorate is doing its bit to address it on a local basis. Part of that process is the Gifford Hill development that is coming online over the next 40 years. When I say it is coming online, there is action already underway on the housing part of it, a project that is only going ahead because of the vision of the Murray Bridge Racing Club, the horse racing club, to move their facilities from in the town out to Gifford Hill, about three or four kilometres outside Murray Bridge, procuring some land.

This conversation started back in 2003, three years before I got elected. Certainly, I applaud the Murray Bridge Racing Club for their forward thinking, on going out there and working with Burke Urban at the time, not just getting a racing club built but a project that is part of a bigger plan of revolutionising Murray Bridge and surrounding districts. As we move forward and as the discussion has been through estimates and beyond the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan and the growth that is forecast to happen from Murray Bridge up through to Callington, I was very pleased to see the other day the announcement of these 17,100 homes that Grange will build.

One thing that was very interesting was that there were no government members or ministers near the announcement, which was disappointing. You have to wonder, when it is such a major announcement in this state. This will really be a game changer. There are plenty of negative Nellies online and wherever else saying it will not happen, but people need to remember that this project started 21 years ago and it is a long-term project. Within a couple of years, the first 1,400 homes will be on the way.

Obviously, you have to dodge through that minefield of planning regulation, not just through the state processes but local government processes. Obviously, there will be multiple schools, there will be healthcare facilities over time and it will essentially triple the size of Murray Bridge. The developer, Grange, certainly has interest in land not just at the original Gifford Hill site. There is land adjacent. Some of that land is fine. It is not in the Environment and Food Production Areas, but some of it is. So there are going to have to be some changes around the Environment and Food Production Areas to see the full realisation of this project, not just in the area near and around Gifford Hill but further out as it moves forward over the decades.

Minister Champion and the government need to be aware of that. If I had my way, the EFPA (Environment and Food Production Areas) block on development in this state would be completely got rid of because there are so many planning rules and people have to jump through so many hoops anyway, and this is just a hoop that blocks realistic development into the future. I applaud everyone involved in that major development locally.

Also, during estimates, we had a discussion around regional roads. It was very disappointing to see that, through the budget process, the capital program funding for regional roads and transport projects has decreased by \$172 million compared with last year. There was \$310.6 million in new money allocated for regional road and transport improvements, but \$250 million of that is for upgrading the South Eastern Freeway between Mount Barker and Adelaide. This leaves a measly \$60 million in new money for the 24,000 kilometres of truly regional roads across the state.

It is a bit like the \$98 million that we saw allocated to road safety funding but then we see \$40 million or \$42 million of that going to upgrade a roundabout in Mount Barker, which does not have to be upgraded. I challenged the local member when he was the Speaker one day in here and said that money should be transferred to the intersection on the freeway outside Mount Barker, which

is essentially a dog's breakfast and needs a new roundabout and a new way, as part of the Hahndorf project, to get people onto the freeway or off of the freeway appropriately. Anyone I talk to in Mount Barker is just stunned at this other roundabout, where there will have to be compulsory acquisitions and it will take out the local fish and chip and chicken shop and other houses, etc. Anybody locally can see that it just is not the issue that it is made out to be.

I was questioning the Minister for Transport about alternative freight routes between Murray Bridge and Mannum to get freight out of Murray Bridge, which is part of the discussion of the Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass. As we have seen, and I have mentioned multiple times in this house, there has been an expansion in the size of freight options moving forward, noting that nothing bigger than a B-double truck can come down the freeway. All of those bigger combinations—right up to AB-doubles, which is essentially a B-double with another semitrailer hooked to it—have to go around.

I applaud the work that is being done on the Halfway House corner on the Sturt Highway and am questioning the minister about that. That is being built for triple trailer road train capacity. I applaud that forward thinking going into the future, because you do not always see it. But sadly, there is the Hahndorf project, where we saw \$250 million sucked out of a project by the Labor Party both federally and state. There is \$200 million that has been sucked out of the Truro freight bypass project, which is disgraceful when we are trying to do our best to get as much freight as possible around Adelaide and around the Hills and off the freeway.

Carriers are already doing that. It does have its issues, because it does add extra time for truck drivers, and time is valuable. They can only be on the road for 12 hours a time, so it is not just a simple process of adding another hour or an hour-and-a-half to a journey, because obviously they have to manage their logbooks for safety reasons. It is something we need to be mindful of.

I note that the government are looking at another bypass route instead of taking heavy freight through the current Morris Road-Hindmarsh Road route through to Mannum Road and then up towards the state highway. They are looking at coming in around Monarto, which some trucks already do, but making it the formal route. A new \$4½ million roundabout will have to be built at Monarto on the Old Princes Highway corner and the route will be put around there.

The business case is still underway for the Swanport Bridge duplication: the first five kilometres of the south-east duplication of the Dukes Highway—or Princes Highway; it is pretty close to each one, but heading out towards the Motorsport Park—out of Tailern Bend to get that duplication program that is so desperately needed. I know there have been different investigations and business case studies underway, and we learned during estimates that they are ongoing, but the Swanport Bridge definitely needs duplicating.

We definitely need a major investment back into our regional road systems. In the time since we were in government, I am appalled to see the progress of mainly projects that we instigated when we were in government. I look at the duplication works to Lochiel on the Augusta Highway project and it is appalling. This project should be finished by now. We started it in government and there used to be a lot of vehicles, people and machines working on that project; I think I saw one truck movement the other day when I was going through. It is just starved of workers. It is like the government are deliberately starving the budget for that.

Another project that I am passionate about is the Strzelecki Track upgrade project, which still is only 40 per cent completed and I believe is collapsing under poor management decisions and just not getting the money that was allocated in the budget to get that project completed.

Talking about emergency services, I am still intrigued about the CFS facilities audit and the \$817,000—and we asked questions about this in the estimates process—that has been allocated to the CFS to investigate their facilities, which includes CFS trucks, sheds, bases, etc. This is an organisation where hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested over many years. I salute the 13,000 volunteers in the organisation; I am one of them. It is just bizarre that an organisation that big cannot go to a database of what their facilities are like and what they have and just dial it up. I am stunned at that.

I know that during the process there has been an amount of \$1.65 million allocated to the Metropolitan Fire Service for PFAS remediation and testing. It is good to know that that testing is underway and some contaminated sites have already been identified.

Another thing that shocked me: the other day I went to my local brigade, Coomandook, for the annual general meeting and I saw a big checker plate alloy bin. I said, 'What's that?' and they said, 'That's the laundry bin.' I said, 'Are you serious?' Right across the state, these laundry bins are being deployed—with a big lock on them, obviously—and put outside the sheds so that people can put their uniforms in there if they need to be sent away to get washed. They will go in tubs and be pulled out and there will be a contractor who will drive right around the state picking up uniforms. I just cannot believe it.

For the money to build these storage bins, you could have put an industrial washing machine at every facility. I just cannot understand the money going into this project. I get the theory of it because of structure fires and problems with asbestos. We had a structure fire that our brigade fought last year, I think it was. I get that it is about protecting people and getting the clothes looked after without taking them home to wash, but I think there is a far more economical way to do it.

In veterans' affairs, it is great to see that in South Australia more than 47,000 people have served in the Australian Defence Force. Mental health and wellbeing continue to be the main matters of importance for veterans. There are still some issues with the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs. It is an ongoing challenge for veterans in South Australia.

I must say as a proud Port Adelaide supporter—I am very happy to see them at number two on the ladder, and they will get two home finals—it was great to hear about the great work they are doing with veterans via the Power Community Limited ADF Veterans Program assisting veterans with the transition to civilian life. It has also been good to see the Veterans SA Career and Business Mentoring Program ongoing. This was an initiative of the former Marshall Liberal government and I hope it will continue well into the future.

I want to talk about energy quickly. I know gas was raised today during question time. With all the talk about green energy and how good it is, I think we are really going to see what goes wrong with the massive solar farm and the amount of wind turbines that are going to be built to run the so-called hydrogen plant at Whyalla. I think it is going to have to generate a massive amount of energy because 80 per cent of that energy will be lost in the transition through to hydrogen.

I think the only way it is going to work, in my mind, is a great big gas pipe in the back of the plant. The issue is that we are running out of gas, and one of the reasons for that is we have protestors—whoever they are and whoever they want to be—protesting against gas developments right around the country, whether it is the Scarborough project off WA or the Barossa project off the Tiwi Islands run by Santos, and the billions of dollars they will put into the country. There is also the stalled Narrabri project in New South Wales.

There was a bit of a conversation by Minister Koutsantonis about factors affecting gas shortages across the country, and he mentioned where our party voted to ban gas extraction in some parts of the state. One comment he made was:

I exclude the member for Hammond from that criticism [of that decision] who was a supporter of the gas industry and was prepared to cross the floor to vote with the opposition to stop that. He is a man of principle.

That is very interesting coming from a mining minister who, when the Bird in Hand project was fully authorised by the department and had the full environmental approvals after over a decade of assessment, stepped in as the final arbiter and stopped the Bird in Hand goldmine in Woodside with his decision, overriding all the environmental statements and investigations that had been done. It is just outrageous.

There is similarity to where Tanya Plibersek federally has just blocked a billion-dollar goldmine near Orange. I note that the New South Wales Labor Party is having a fight with the federal Labor Party over getting that investment into New South Wales because they acknowledge the need for the money to be extracted, literally the gold and those critical minerals, for the state and the country.

As my time is starting to roll out, there were questions about net zero and agriculture. There is great concern about the baseline of where those investigations start, because farmers have been utilising single-pass, no-till and zero-till farming practices for over 30 years, which has been putting in great amounts of carbon sequestration over that time. Farmers come to me and say, 'Where do we stand in this process? Where do we stand going forward?'

The minister, the Hon. Clare Scriven, asked me if I was referring to carbon credits. I said that it is not just carbon credits but farming in general and what they are doing to build up the soil profile. The minister made the following comment:

I think, on what might be a fairly rare occasion, I am going to agree with the member for Hammond on a topic, which is that the farmers have been doing a lot of great work.

Yes, they have, but they need to know where they stand going into the future. It is one thing to say, 'We'll have this net zero program,' but if the line in the sand is going to be in 2024 and not back in the 1980s or 1990s when a lot of these farming practices were changed from multiple passes over paddocks and people were taking great advantage of managing their soils, managing their water retention and managing the whole process, where do they stand? There needs to be a major investigation into that going forward, and I hope the minister takes on board the discussions that we had during estimates.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (16:38):** I thank all honourable members for their contributions. I recognise that in the contributions members have taken the opportunity to reflect on the committee stage of the Appropriation Bill or, as we refer to it in the standing orders, the estimates process. I also recognise that members have taken the opportunity to make a number of reflections on matters that pertain to their own electorates. As members would be aware, there is not always the ideal opportunity for members in contributions on legislation to speak more about their electorates, but the Appropriation Bill, along with the Supply Bill, is one of those rare opportunities.

I thank all the members for their contributions. I also thank them for their participation in the process of considering the bill, including in the estimates committees. I thank members on both sides for their participation in that. I also thank the staff of the house for assisting the members in going through that process and the two Chairs for their conduct of the committee stages of the bill, one in each chamber. With that, I conclude my remarks.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (16:40):** I move:

That the remainder of the bill be agreed to.

Motion carried.

#### *Third Reading*

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (16:40):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

### **LATE PAYMENT OF GOVERNMENT DEBTS (INTEREST) (REVIEW) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 6 June 2024.)

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (16:41):** I rise to make a short contribution to the Late Payment of Government Debts (Interest) (Review) Amendment Bill, and to take the opportunity also to perhaps reflect on the impact of not just government terms and conditions when it comes to payments but also the impacts that all government decisions have on small business in particular. In



South Australia, we are an economy that is really built on the foundation of small business all around our state. There are around 150,000 small businesses in South Australia, and the number of people that these businesses employ, the amount they contribute to our state's economy and the amount that we rely upon as a state on that foundation should never be underestimated.

This bill provides just a little bit more detail when it comes to the interaction of payments from the government with businesses that take on government work. Obviously, a lot of that interaction—as I have reflected on, there are 150,000 small businesses—is between government and small businesses. The contribution that the minister added to the debate and tabled without reading on the floor did provide a lot of additional context when we are looking at some of the arrangements.

I note with interest the time frame for the resolution of interest on late payments. The change may seem innocuous, from 48 hours to two business days, but it is interesting how, on reflecting on that, I recognise that small businesses work all week long. Every day is a business day for small businesses. Government may, indeed, break for weekends and not be participating in economic activity around our state, but small business does.

This may seem an innocuous change from 48 hours to two business days, but it probably just reflects that differentiation between private business operations and the Public Service. Basically, it just means that there are going to be additional delays on the requirements for payments to be going to businesses. It reduces incentives for departments to streamline operations without references to the challenges and cash flows small businesses may face. Not all businesses are big enterprises, and departments do not offer reciprocal options for non tech savvy businesses.

To provide a bit of context on the impact and contribution that small businesses make on our state's economy I think is really important. According to the government figures that 85.5 per cent of invoices are currently paid within 15 days, with approximately 2 per cent of invoices being paid after 30 days, we really need to reflect as decision-makers and especially those who are responsible for the processes within their departments on the impact that their decisions have on small businesses every single day. These are often single-people operations, businesses that employ a small number of people, all the way up to businesses that have significant turnover and have a significant amount of people under their employ.

It was interesting to read only in May this year *The Advertiser* report around hospitality business closures we have already seen in 2024, and this is a few months ago, and to reflect on the 36 hospitality businesses, small businesses that provide the foundation for our economy, closing in 2024. We saw some examples within that story of some of the businesses that had closed. Hospitality and entertainment businesses in particular, during a cost-of-living crisis have those additional pressures from members of the community not being able to spend as much money on hospitality and entertainment. Some of the small businesses to close included Hog's Breath Cafe Glenelg; Cardone's on Jetty Road, Glenelg; Little Banksia Tree in Bowden; Gouger Street's Super Bueno; cult Hill's pizza restaurant Lost in a Forest; Folklore Cafe in Port Adelaide; Morris Bakery in Naracoorte; Cameo Cinema in Murray Bridge; and many more.

There have also been impacts from the challenges that small businesses are facing in the non-hospitality closures. Some of the ones that were noted included Tucker Tennis in Brighton; Vadoulis Garden Centre in Gawler, one which was a real favourite in South Australia; Mega Fast Karts and Laser Skirmish Richmond, which was obviously forced to close because of the Torrens to Darlington project; and homeware store Moose on the Jetty in Brighton.

I bring up these small businesses in this place because, indeed, decisions that government make have impact on individuals and small businesses all around our state. As decision-makers we need to be acutely aware of those impacts. Like I said, decision-makers from the Premier down on the ministerial benches should absolutely be mindful of the impacts their decisions have on small business. It flows on as well.

The discussion is often had here about the impact that the incredible rise in energy prices has had on small business in particular in South Australia. We have the highest energy prices in the nation at over 40¢ per kilowatt hour for single-use rate plans. It is often the topic of questions in question time because it is so important that we get the policy settings right to support businesses, especially small businesses, in South Australia.

That price of over 40¢ per kilowatt hour is 49 per cent higher than the average of the rest of the national energy market. These impacts cannot be overestimated. This is on top of rising costs and high inflation; everything is costing more and it is costing small business in particular. These small businesses cannot absorb cost increases. It is hurting their bottom line. They are trying to pass it on to consumers, so that hurts consumers all around our state.

I note the quote at the time from David Penberthy in *The Advertiser* who was highlighting the importance of small business, and the fact that government should not lose sight of the impact that their decisions have on small business, and I quote:

Then there are those businesses that aren't too big to fail, but small enough to fail without anyone in power doing anything to help them.

They are coffee shops. They are sandwich bars. They are restaurants. They are retail outlets. They are garden centres.

They employ three people, or 10 people, or 20 people. In an individual sense, their demise causes the merest of blips in employment statistics and has negligible impact on the state's economy.

When these businesses close...they don't get a special cabinet meeting.

[They just get] platitudes saying it's a terrible shame and that things are clearly tough out there. Sometimes they don't get mentioned at all.

The individual demise of these businesses might be a blip on the radar but the collective impact is enormous.

As we move through this bill, which looks at the interactions between state government and those businesses that are involved in government business, we need to make sure that we get the arrangements right with those interactions but we also have a big picture perspective, because our state's economy is built on a foundation of small business. This government needs to have a strong focus on supporting these small businesses in the decisions that they make.

During this cost-of-living crisis, this government needs to have care and concern for South Australian families and small businesses doing it tough because it is real out there at the moment. It might get waved off by answers in question time that the economy is doing fine and everyone is happy, that it is all happy days all around the state, but there are small businesses out there that are really struggling with the burdens of multiple different aspects, and too many of them are driven by government decisions.

**Ms THOMPSON (Davenport) (16:51):** I am pleased to stand today to talk about an important step that we are taking to support South Australian businesses, the late payment of government debts amendment bill. This bill is part of the Malinauskas Labor government's commitment to making the public dollar work for South Australians.

One of the biggest challenges that businesses face is cash flow. This bill addresses that challenge head-on for businesses doing business with SA government by halving the standard payment timeline from 30 days to 15 days, meaning businesses will get paid sooner for their hard work. This will have a positive impact on many small businesses that work with state government departments. Contractors, cleaners, printers, sign makers and suppliers will all benefit from being paid sooner.

We are also extending these reduced payment timelines to not-for-profit entities, ensuring they receive the same level of protection and support. Furthermore, the bill moves the method for calculating interest on late payments from the act to the regulations, giving us more flexibility to adapt to various payment systems. Additionally, it amends the time frame for resolving interest on late payments from 48 hours to two business days, accommodating weekends and public holidays.

These changes build on the successes that we have already achieved. In 2022-23, more than \$12.2 billion in economic benefits flowed to South Australian companies and workers through state government contracts, a 59 per cent increase from the previous year. This bill continues our efforts to use government procurement to support local businesses and jobs, aiming to inject an extra \$425 million into our state's economy. Our government has already implemented several initiatives to support South Australian businesses, such as mandating that 90 per cent of labour hours on major infrastructure projects are delivered by SA workers and requiring the use of locally manufactured products in public housing projects.

On government projects, we are committed to only using local project managers, architects, designers, engineers, surveyors, planners and other professional service providers. We will also ensure that public projects costing more than \$500 million will be broken into smaller stages or components, allowing multiple South Australian companies the chance to participate. We have also introduced training for procurement staff on industry participation policies and established an independent complaints process for tenderers.

Local businesses are already seeing the benefits. For example, Aboriginal Urban Design, an Aboriginal-owned business based in my electorate of Davenport in Bedford Park, have been instrumental in delivering infrastructure upgrades across Adelaide, including work on the significant Torrens to Darlington project. With this bill, they will be paid sooner for their work.

Similarly, the recently completed Flagstaff Road upgrade was in part delivered by South Australian company Bardavcol, who are now working on another very exciting project in my electorate, which is the safety upgrade of Main Road, Cherry Gardens. This project is particularly exciting for my community. Main Road, Cherry Gardens was listed by the RAA as one of the most risky roads in our state. I know that the community is particularly excited to see those works have started, are well underway and close to completion. Expected completion is by the end of this year.

We have had crews up and down this road for the last few months and I have really gotten to know the Bardavcol team, who have worked really hard, continuing to engage with the community on this important project. I commend them for their communications and their commitment. I am, of course, pleased that they will benefit from future payments being expedited.

We are not stopping there. We are working on additional commitments such as ensuring the Auditor-General's procurement spending audits and setting aside 1 per cent of government funding into a subcontractor support fund. This bill is a testament to the ongoing dedication to supporting local businesses and jobs, helping to build a stronger economy for South Australia, and that is why I commend the bill to the house.

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (16:55):** I rise today also to support the Late Payment of Government Debts (Interest) (Review) Amendment Bill 2024. This bill marks a significant milestone in delivering an important election commitment of the Malinauskas government: to make sure that the public dollar works for the benefit of all South Australians, in particular our small businesses.

It is widely acknowledged that timely payment is critical for the survival and growth of businesses, particularly those that supply goods and services to the South Australian government. When governments do delay payments it puts unnecessary cashflow pressure on businesses. This is not just of theoretical concern to me. Mr Acting Speaker, as you are aware, before I took on this role I owned a small business myself so I know firsthand the stress and uncertainty that comes with waiting for a payment and how crucial cash flow is in keeping the doors open and staff wages paid.

Timely payments are not just a matter of efficiency: they are the lifeline of businesses. This bill aims to address the challenge by halving the standard payment timeline from 30 days to 15 days, ultimately ensuring that businesses are paid for their work sooner. Furthermore, the bill extends the reduced payment timeline for not-for-profit entities that engage in business with the South Australian government, promoting the same level of protections across all sectors. This inclusivity underscores our commitment to equitable support for all businesses in South Australia.

The bill endeavours to encourage the prompt payment of invoices and foster greater flexibility and adaptability across government payment systems. It will do this by shifting the method of calculating interest from the act into the regulations. Another important change is improving the timeframe for resolution of interest on overdue payments from 48 hours to two business days to take account of weekends and public holidays, ensuring government departments without automated systems can effectively meet their obligations under the act.

These reforms build on the positive impact the Malinauskas government is already having on our small businesses in South Australia. The substantial economic benefits delivered through our state government contracts to local companies and workers demonstrate our ongoing commitment

to boosting our local economy. By continuing to increase the percentage of state government spending with South Australian businesses by 5 per cent, we are aiming to inject an additional \$425 million into our local businesses in our state economy, going directly to South Australian workers and business owners. That is an incredible initiative.

Every day, around 155,000 South Australian small businesses deliver products and services not only around our state but around our country and around the world. Mr Acting Speaker, as you know, small businesses represent about 97 per cent of the state's total number of businesses. They employ about 300,000 staff, representing almost 40 per cent of the total South Australian workforce. They generate about \$49 billion to our economy. They are the lifeblood of our communities. These small businesses create jobs and support workers, suppliers and families right across the state. Our government recognises the importance of small businesses and we are making real changes and implementing tangible policy to support them to build their capabilities and succeed.

Through my Office for Small and Family Business we are implementing the \$14 million Small Business Strategy. This strategy is built around six key themes, identified through extensive consultation with small businesses across the state. These themes are around strengthening business capability, building skills and workforce, navigating the digital environment, boosting business sustainability, embracing diversity and, importantly, in line with these measures, improving access to government services.

Aligned with these themes is a suite of programs that we are rolling out under the strategy to support small businesses to build their capability, stay competitive and succeed. We have the Small Business Fundamentals Program, which provides grants to 12 delivery partners to directly assist businesses to build their fundamental knowledge and skills. These partner organisations are delivering a range of services to small business, such as mentoring and business coaching, financial management, human resources, marketing and more. Impressively, over 2,300 participants from a diverse range of industries have already accessed this program.

Of course, we also have our \$4 million Women in Business program, which has a number of arms to it. It caters to the diverse needs of women entrepreneurs and is comprised of three key elements. First is our Women in Business Foundations Program, aimed at nurturing the skills of women in the early stages of their business journey. The Women in Business Advisory Program provides invaluable support in governance, strategic planning and mentorship to more high-end businesses. Finally, the Connecting Women in Business Program, fostering networking opportunities through events, forums and workshops, is also very popular.

Together, these initiatives empower women who want to run their own businesses to make sure they succeed and grow those businesses. I am proud to say that over 2,000 women have accessed the Women in Business program since its inception, and it is only continuing to grow.

Recognising the increased threat of cyber attacks on small businesses, we are committed to bolstering the resilience of our local businesses. The Small Business Digital Capability Program helps businesses improve their digital readiness and protect their assets. This includes the Cyber Uplift Step Program, which equips businesses with the skills to safeguard against cyber attacks and respond effectively if they occur.

We also have a Mental Health and Wellbeing Program, which offers tailored support to small businesses to improve access to mental health services. It helps business owners and their employees build resilience and capability in dealing with mental health challenges.

The Small Business Sustainability Support program assists small businesses in assessing their climate impact and in becoming more energy efficient, leading to cost savings and reduced environmental footprints.

I am particularly pleased to say that, as of today, announced this morning with the Treasurer, small businesses can now apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to help reduce their energy bills under round 2 of the Economic Recovery Fund. These grants range from \$2,500 to a maximum of \$50,000, subject to a matching contribution, which will help up to 8,000 small businesses reduce their energy costs. These grants can be used for investments, such as installing power supply and generation

equipment, energy-efficient appliances, automation technologies, and building improvements to ensure more efficient heating and cooling.

A total of \$20 million has been allocated to this second round of the ERF, with grants available on a first-come, first-served basis until those funds are exhausted. All these programs and initiatives are not just about offering support; they are about building resilience, fostering innovation and ensuring our small businesses are well equipped to handle future challenges.

This bill is another step forward to make it easier for businesses to engage with the South Australian government. By streamlining processes and offering supports, we are helping businesses to increase their participation in state-funded projects. We have great initiatives like the Office of the Industry Advocate's Meet the Buyer event and the Supply to Government Panel, which provide invaluable information and advice direct to businesses on how to secure government contracts. They offer insights into government procurement processes, available opportunities and guidance in preparing for and participating in government contracts.

The Office of the Industry Advocate also provides a Ready to Tender online module, accessible via their website. It is a self-paced tool that covers four key areas of writing a tender, offering invaluable assistance to businesses preparing to compete for government contracts.

The Malinauskas government is committed to attracting the best local businesses to work on our most significant state-funded projects. By implementing efficient and fast payment procedures through all departments, local businesses can maximise the economic benefits from participating in these projects in a timely manner.

Our government has already implemented a number of commitments to support local South Australian businesses in procurement, and these include principles for government procurement that prioritise value for money, creating SA jobs, increasing the number of apprentices and trainees in South Australia, stimulating innovation and new businesses and achieving environmentally sensitive, low carbon and socially just outcomes. We have mandated that South Australian workers deliver a minimum of 90 per cent of labour hours on major infrastructure projects, with penalties for contractors who fail to meet these requirements.

Importantly, we are also requiring the use of South Australian manufactured products in public housing construction and maintenance programs where possible. We are ensuring that procurement staff receive training on industry participation policies and educate local industry participants and providers. Chief executives are now required to sign off on procurements where the successful tenderer is not from South Australia—so if not, why not?

The government has also undertaken a broad market assessment to identify South Australian businesses that can deliver projects, goods or services to the government. We have established an independent complaints process for tenderers that feel they have unreasonably missed out on government work. We are also ensuring apprentices, trainees, Aboriginal workers and long-term unemployed individuals deliver 20 per cent of all labour hours on our major projects. We are committed to only using local project managers, architects, designers and other professional service providers on government projects.

We aim to publicise government procurement opportunities three months in advance to ensure enough time for businesses to apply. To increase participation from our local businesses, we will break down public projects worth more than \$500 million into smaller components, allowing multiple South Australian companies to be involved. We also plan to release tenders for major projects within 30 days of funding being available for the project.

Additionally, we are working to ensure that the Auditor-General audits spending procurement and annually reports on how much is spent on SA and non-SA goods and services. We have set aside 1 per cent of government funding into a subcontractor support fund, which will enable the state to directly pay subcontractors on government projects if lead contractors delay payments or are unable to pay.

These measures and supports are just a snapshot of the many initiatives the Malinauskas government has taken since being elected, demonstrating our strong commitment to supporting local businesses and industry in South Australia. In fact, more than \$12.2 billion worth of economic benefit

was delivered through state government contracts to South Australian companies and workers in 2022-23; that is a huge 59 per cent increase on the previous year.

The changes in this bill reflect the government's ongoing commitment to strengthening the prospects of our local businesses. As the small and family business minister, I am encouraged that this bill adds to the Malinauskas government's commitment to enhancing government efficiency and strengthening the economic landscape for South Australia to create job opportunities and support our very hardworking local small businesses.

By streamlining payment processes and fostering a more supportive environment for businesses, we are laying the groundwork to continue to make South Australia a great place to do business—in fact, with recent data coming out, the best place in Australia to do business. I encourage all members to support this bill and I commend the bill to the house.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (17:07):** I thank members for their contributions on this bill. This is, as members have commented, a brief bill but an important one because, as the Minister for Small and Family Business just articulated to the house, it demonstrates this government's commitment to South Australian small businesses. This is just another way that we are trying to support South Australian small businesses. I thank members, and if there are any questions in the committee stage, I look forward to taking those. If not, I look forward to taking the bill through, hopefully, to its conclusion.

Bill read a second time.

*Third Reading*

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (17:08):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (BUDGET MEASURES) BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 6 June 2024.)

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown):** The member for Morialta has leave. Does the member for Flinders wish to draw my attention to the state of the house?

**Mr TELFER:** No.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown):** The member for Flinders is making a contribution?

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (17:09):** Yes, sir. I rise to add a few short comments on the Statutes Amendment (Budget Measures) Bill 2024. There are several different aspects of this bill which amend six different acts. Obviously, they are all different parts, and the impacts that they are having on the budget are different.

I especially want to start with looking at the changes to the First Home and Housing Construction Grants Act. It is an interesting one. Obviously there has been not just political pressure but community pressure on the government when looking at the impact that the current housing market is having on first-home owners' ability to afford properties in particular.

Since Labor came to power, the median house price in Adelaide has risen by more than 20 per cent—more than 20 per cent in less than 2½ years—from \$650,000 to \$785,000 according to the Valuer-General, so it is interesting to look at. According to the Real Estate Institute of South Australia, some suburbs such as Royal Park, Tea Tree Gully, etc., have risen by more than 40 per cent on the year. When we look at Adelaide as opposed to other capital cities around Australia, only Perth is experiencing more rapid housing price growth than Adelaide. This is the context in which we are looking at this Statutes Amendment (Budget Measures) Bill in particular.

Regional median house prices have risen as well, from \$325,000 to \$420,500, an increase of almost 30 per cent. This is in regional South Australia. In that same time, there have been challenges around wage growth in South Australia, where we have seen wage growth come in at around 7½ per cent.

There are a number of different pressure points. Several housing finance firms in particular have voiced concerns that abolishing the \$650,000 cap for first-home buyer grants will see first-home buyers seek to build expensive homes rather than entry-level dwellings. There is a potential snowball effect that that could have on forcing house prices up, with larger dwellings on the market causing prices to remain high.

This is why it is really important that government needs to be making decisions when it comes to the housing market not just on the demand side—we see a lot of the headline stories that get the little media grab for a day—but getting the supply levers right within our state. This cannot be overestimated, and not just supply out in the never-never. Some of these announcements have seen pieces of land, greenfield sites, that have been opened up and make a good headline number for new houses, but the reality of when these allotments can actually come into the supply stream puts them out a long way. The housing challenges we are facing at the moment are in the short term especially, and this is why we need to get these measures right.

As I said, the different aspects of this budget measures bill are very separate issues bundled together within the same bill. I note the changes to the Mining Act in particular. I was reflecting on the comments that the Treasurer had included in his speech in *Hansard*—which he did not speak but had put in—and the importance of context when it comes to these changes. There are certain details within this that—and I will take guidance from the shadow mining minister—may need clarification within the committee stage.

Overall, the opposition do not oppose this bill, but there are often ramifications for aspects that are put in bills such as this that we need to unpack a little bit. The motivations for what we are trying to achieve with some of these changes are really important. This is why, as I said, with the Mining Act changes in particular I will lean on my shadow cabinet colleague to consider whether there are additional questions that need to be answered.

These are detailed changes to a number of different measures, some of which are innocuous but some of which certainly have the attention of us in opposition, as well as the flow-on effects they have on our state's economy. We are looking forward to perhaps a bit more detail as we go through the process.

**Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (17:15):** I am in support of this bill and I am very excited about the budget going forward and what it is going to deliver for our state. Close to home, it was very exciting to hear that one of my primary schools is going to get an urgent upgrade that it needs. Bellevue Heights Primary School has some classrooms that they have not been able to use for quite a number of years due to them leaking and not being safe places for the kids to be. Recently, I visited there with the education minister and we walked through to see exactly what needed to be done. In the budget, as part of the \$38.1 million to help some of our primary schools in most urgent need, was \$7.6 million for new classrooms.

When talking to the kids and the teachers, they were incredibly excited about what this will deliver and allow them to be able to achieve, including looking at the number of students who go there and the subjects they can provide. I offer a quick congratulations and thank you to the Bellevue Heights team for having us there. They had the most incredible Book Week presentation in their library. It is amazing what our teachers do for our kids every day to make sure they have an incredible experience at school. These classrooms that will be built will go a long way towards helping them do that.

Also in terms of learning, part of the budget is for additional training places at TAFE. TAFE is such an important institution. We really need to do all we can to encourage people to upskill themselves all the time, whether they are coming from senior school and not wanting to go to university, or choosing a career in the trades like my son who is now a fourth-year apprentice—albeit at home with a broken foot at the moment—and has been working very hard in his TAFE course.

To be able to offer TAFE courses for free for people to upskill can only put them in a really good position going forward. It is a way to earn more money and set themselves up for the future. Someone I know who is a cleaner told me they were going to be studying nursing through some of our programs. There is also child care and all of the other different ones we are supporting to be able to become better and more set up for the future.

Supporting TAFE and supporting the opportunities for our students is something that we cannot go past. We know that for the skills of the future, we need to be filling those roles and we need to be making sure we have people who are able to work in defence, health, building and construction and early childhood education: areas where we desperately need more employees and more workers. These TAFE investments are going to support that.

Locally, again—almost, but not quite in my electorate, but it will have a huge impact on the people in my area—is the Marion Ambulance Station, part of a \$24 million investment over three years. Marion has an ambulance station; we will also have the ambulance station at the Repat and we also have our Mitcham Ambulance Station. This means that my community is serviced by quite a number, and hopefully that means that when they need an ambulance they will be able to call one and it will come. I know firsthand from the last couple of years when my dad was unwell that we called the ambulance probably four or five times and they were there within five minutes, and my mum lives up the hill. We are very fortunate to have yet another investment in our ambulances nearby.

In terms of youth mental health, it has been really interesting going around to our schools and talking with young people. I have my youth advisory council, and every time we talk they always express their concern and their support for each other in terms of their mental health. As someone who obviously went to school like everybody else, it was not something that ever came up. We never really talked about it a lot when I was at school, but it is lovely to find that our kids are talking about it and are acknowledging that there are challenges.

Our investment of \$5 million to support youth mental health and the expansion of the Child and Adolescent Virtual Urgent Care Service and mental health workshops is going to go a long way towards supporting our kids. It is so important that we take that time because if we can support them when they are young, we are going to set them up to be the adults of the future, and we need to make sure that we are doing that as much as possible.

Our \$80.1 million road safety package, especially around our schools, is a huge investment. Obviously at peak hour our schools have cars and kids and everything going everywhere, and the more we can do to slow down the traffic and make people more aware that they are passing through schools is important. I know in my community we have a number of schools that are on main roads, and they specifically need to make sure that they are constantly looking at ways to make it safer for our kids.

We recently visited Coromandel Valley Primary School, which is on a main road. They are currently getting new signage to help warn people coming along that there is traffic and that kids are going to be crossing there. Belair Primary School also is on a main road, so I have a couple of schools that would benefit from this opportunity.

The MarionLIFE community hub is just down the road from my electorate. I remember meeting with them a year or so ago and talking about how much they wanted to expand their services and have the opportunity to support more people. Within my community, I learned that quite a few people were going down and accessing those services, so I was really excited to hear that after a lot of advocacy the MarionLIFE community hub was going to get an upgrade of \$1.8 million to support the acquisition of a parcel of land in Mitchell Park to help them grow their community hub. We know cost of living is really biting and we know that people are doing it tough, so to have this extra support for them is a huge improvement.

In terms of our police, we know they do all they can to keep us safe, and we need to be investing in them and getting police back into frontline duties and finding ways for them to be not behind the desk but out on the beat. So we are investing in a digital police station with \$19 million over four years, which will allow people to do those things that they go to police stations for that are not necessarily crime related or they do not need to speak to someone in person. People are going



to be able to do some of that stuff online, which will free up some of our police officers to be out on the beat. We know that from time to time there are peaks and in my community we have times, especially in certain suburbs, where we have crime gangs coming through, and to be able to have more police on the beat is so incredibly important.

I know the CFS quick response vehicles are coming. The money is coming from the federal government, from our federal member Louise Miller-Frost, for the Sturt group. We have been waiting patiently for our quick response vehicles. They are the best thing to get out of the station quickly, whether it is a grass fire or a car accident. They do not need a truck driver. A couple of volunteers can hop in the quick response vehicle and get out to an incident as fast as possible. We need to make sure that we see those and support those.

As someone who is a CFS member in a fire station—it is a shed, and a lot of our fire stations are sheds, and I heard someone talk about it earlier—to make sure that we are focusing the money in the right locations, we need to know exactly what each station is doing. It may be the case that this information has been fed back previously up the line and there is a list or whatever. We need to have a close look at every single station and see exactly what they need to be able to support their volunteers and to make sure that we have the best possible equipment and the best possible stations available.

In fact, just the other week I visited the Belair CFS station where they have raised quite a bit of money themselves to do up their kitchen and their radio room, and they are continuing to fundraise. The CFS volunteers do a really amazing job at fundraising, and our community especially loves supporting them because we know how important they are. Actually, when I was at the Belair station the other day we also welcomed a new brigade, the ops brigade at Belair, who are the radio team and the ops team who stay back at the station and support the on-ground volunteers in their work. They are going to be taking radios home, they are going to be on shift and they continue to support our volunteers.

The ops support is so incredibly important. Radio is one thing, making sure that the brigades have what they need on the ground and making sure that they can get extra resources there when needed, but there are also the other volunteers who organise the food, the ration packs and the fundraising. They do so many things. Our operations brigades and our operations teams that we have in all our brigades—we all have an ops team or you might call them an auxiliary team—do an incredible job. I want to thank them all just as much as we thank our frontline firefighters.

So there are lots of things in the budget that I see are good for my local community, as well as in terms of the environment. We are looking after the Murray River. We are looking after sustaining our national parks, which is so important, with Belair being the oldest national park in the state and in my community, and I also have Sturt Gorge and Shepherds Hill Reserve.

Just on the weekend, the Friends of Belair National Park hosted all the Friends of Parks, and we know that we are supporting them through grants schemes as well. They do such a wonderful job, and I do not know how we could ever put a figure on what they give our communities in terms of help, but without them I do not think we would be anywhere near as lucky to have the beautiful parks that we have.

I am pretty excited about what the budget brings. I am pretty excited about how we can go forward and continue to roll out these initiatives, especially in terms of health but also in terms of our housing. It is so important. We have so many people looking for housing who are low-income earners, and we really need to be able to provide a lot more housing for them to be able to get into, to be able to start their families and to be able to secure a home. So we are supporting our first-home buyers of course, but also our seniors. The state budget has been a great opportunity to be able to support my local community but also the state as a whole, and I look forward to seeing these measures roll out.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (17:26):** I will take a few moments to speak about a measure in the budget that covers the grants that were promised by the previous Labor opposition in key marginal seats and Labor seats designed obviously to buy votes in the lead-up to the election. The one in particular that has caused quite a bit of angst in my electorate is the Forestville Hockey Club. It was a process that started quite some time ago back in 2016 when the first grant was offered. It

was given to the Forestville Hockey Club as a support to relocate, and a site was found at the women's war memorial gardens at Darlington. That was eventually rejected by the hockey club because it did not have a strictly north-south orientation, as I understand it, so other options were considered.

That was a process that was continued by the previous government and of course the previous government was very particular and focused about making sure that things were done properly, that grants were allocated properly, and that all the work was done prior to money being promised and money being granted. Consequently, we went to the election without any commitment other than to see what other sites were available for the Forestville Hockey Club.

Labor saw an opportunity to lock in some votes within the Forestville Hockey Club to help Jayne Stinson in the seat of Badcoe whose residents around Goodwood Oval would be very pleased to see the hockey club relocate somewhere else. We saw a promise, a commitment, made of \$4 million that was supposed to fund top-of-the-range artificial turf, a fence, lighting, toilets, change room and clubrooms for the Forestville Hockey Club on the soccer pitch at the oval at Unley High School. That process went ahead after the election.

Secretly in cabinet, we know that this government has reversed the policy of allowing the Auditor-General to have access to cabinet documents so he could do his job and make sure that public money is being allocated responsibly and through proper processes, and he makes reference to that. We see the ICAC today making reference to the concerns it has about the \$133 million that was promised and processed within cabinet behind hidden doors and key public servants whose job it is to ensure that the government of the day, regardless of the colour, regardless of who they are, regardless of the personalities of the government, follow proper process and that taxpayers' money is used in the proper manner.

What I have since learned specifically in regard to that \$4 million grant is that the money has been spent and the job is not finished. Why is that? Because the costings were worked out on the back of an envelope and that was turned into a promise. The federal member for Boothby is also responsible for taxpayers' money being promised from the ALP for this project, but now we have a situation where temporary toilets are going to be considered to be brought in and temporary change rooms are being brought in because the club simply does not have the money.

The use of those facilities by school students is now no longer available because they are not there. The change rooms and the toilets are simply not there. It is now a site that is locked up. It was a site that was used on weekends and outside of school hours, school holidays, by the local community. We know that there is a lack of open space in inner suburbs and in my seat of Unley in particular. It is geographically the smallest at about 12.4 square kilometres and that is because of the higher density of housing and because of the smaller amount of open space. Open space is precious.

Before I was elected to the parliament, when I was the Chair of the Unley Primary School, I can remember being involved in negotiations with the department at that time, what is now the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, that manages school infrastructure. A deal was done with many of the schools in Unley that, if the council was prepared to contribute to the upkeep of the grounds, the 'no trespass' signs would be removed and the greenery space, the basketball courts and the other sporting infrastructure that was there for students' use would be available for those kids, their parents and their families after hours. Kids could kick the footy on the green grass that grew in the various school grounds within Unley.

We saw that at Unley High School as well, where residents would use those grounds, as encouraged by the department all those many years ago, for recreation. What we have now is an area that is probably close to 20 per cent of the entire open space of Unley High School locked away behind fences. Residents have sent me photographs of the testing when the lights were on. If anyone has seen that *Seinfeld* episode that involves the Kenny chicken shop and the problems those bright lights caused Kramer in his room when it was lit up like stalag 13, you would get some feeling as to what the people who live directly around that new development experience.

There are still unanswered questions about the completion of the Forestville Hockey Club. There are unanswered questions about when it will be complete, when the promise that the

government made would be delivered. The government says, 'We promised \$4 million. We didn't promise to deliver a completed project. That's up to the hockey club to do that.' We have a situation of a calculated process of pushing certain buttons in certain seats and locking in certain votes with the promise of money.

We saw the allocation of these grants and even the dollar amounts of these grants determined by a wing and a prayer. What we are seeing in the Forestville Hockey Club I am sure is not the only example of where these grants are leading to projects that have been cut back, projects that are incomplete and projects that have been delayed. We saw the cost adjustments this new government made for virtually every infrastructure project that was in the pipeline when it came to office—a 50 per cent increase in the north-south corridor, a 50 per cent increase from \$10 billion to \$15 billion.

We know there has been an escalation in building costs attributed to a number of things, but one of those contributing factors is the red carpet this government gave to the CFMEU when they were elected. They were partners in the election campaign; we all saw the posters the CFMEU were putting up around particularly marginal seats in Adelaide. I witnessed during that campaign people complaining about the bad taste of those posters that were being put up by the CFMEU and the Labor candidate telling them anything they wanted to hear to try to get their vote: 'Oh, I don't support that, I don't support that,' yet Labor was happy for that to continue.

I did not hear the Leader of the Opposition at that time, Peter Malinauskas, asking the CFMEU to stop. I did not hear any cries from any Labor MP that the Labor Party should not be accepting money from the CFMEU after John Setka pleaded guilty to domestic violence offences against his wife back in 2019. They still kept taking the money. Last year, after giving back the money that they took—the \$130,000—they accepted affiliation fees from the CFMEU. They may not have accepted them this year, but last year they accepted them. Last year, if you read the AEC website, you will see an affiliation fee of around \$1,500, which gives the CFMEU the same right as every other union to participate in the selection of ALP members of parliament and to participate in policy.

Do not forget that policy of ALP members and the unions that develop that policy is binding on the Labor Party members of parliament. We have this very powerful position that the CFMEU is in as an affiliated member of the ALP. We have seen the cost impost of the methods and the enterprise bargaining agreements, from what we have heard from media reports, that people pay for with cash in brown paper bags so that they get favourable treatment in the allocation of subcontractors who are managed by the CFMEU. How on earth does that happen in a civilised country like Australia, where it is not the customer who is involved in the choice of the subcontractor, it is not the main contractor, but it is the union?

How does the union have that power? Because they have bikies working for them. We know how they operate: standover tactics, assault charges, threats and drug dealing—we know what the bikies' business model is. We also know now that their business model includes a partnership with a major ALP union, the CFMEU. When we are talking about money and about the budget, when we are talking about promises governments make, everybody is held to account. We have mechanisms in this place, mechanisms in this state, that have kept us in the standards of comfort, the standard of living, the standards of safety, that we all enjoy and we want our children to enjoy and their children to enjoy. We have mechanisms in place, like the Ombudsman, like the Auditor-General.

This is an adversarial place for doing business. That keeps the government honest when the opposition knows what is going on. But when the government breaches convention, changes the rules, deliberately keeps secrets—we even saw media reports just a couple of weeks ago about how the Premier is now keeping secrets from his own backbench. If he is keeping secrets from his own backbench, the very people who put him in that chair over there as the Premier of South Australia, what other secrets is the Premier keeping from the people of South Australia? It is a sure sign of arrogance, of a government that has become cocky. All South Australians will continually be concerned about the secrecy of this government.

An open and free press and access to information: the FOI process under this government has been slowed down dramatically. We see they did not continue the sessional orders that were put in place by the Marshall government requiring questions on notice to be answered within 30 days.

Why did they do that? It is because they are not answering those questions. They do not want to answer those questions. They do not want to be held accountable. Those sessional orders are still operational in the upper house, so many of the questions that should be asked down here are asked in the upper house because standing orders say that those questions must be answered within the 30-day period.

So we have a government that do not hand over cabinet documents—the very documents decisions are based on—to the Auditor-General, whose job is to look after taxpayers' money. They removed or did not continue the practice that was introduced by the previous Marshall government requiring questions on notice to be answered within 30 days, and now we learn that the Premier is not even sharing details with backbench members of parliament about what the government are planning to do, even when it affects those members of parliament. It really is showing very strong signs of arrogance. I shall leave the chamber with those thoughts and those comments.

**S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (17:42):** I rise to indicate my support for the Statutes Amendment (Budget Measures) Bill 2024, as this bill delivers for all South Australians. So many of us in this place grew up in a time when it was expected that by the time you reach adulthood you would be well on your way to achieving and buying your first home, but unfortunately that is no longer the case. But this Labor government has a plan, and we have already undertaken record land releases to make home ownership a possibility. Additionally, we are delivering the first positive investment in public housing in decades.

It shows what a united Labor government can achieve, more in 2½ years than so many governments in four. We are investing in a broad range of areas that affect the lives of South Australians and delivering legislative reform that makes our community safer, reduces costs and red tape and strengthens the rights of our citizens in a number of areas.

In last year's state budget, the government scrapped stamp duty for first-home buyers for new homes up to \$650,000 and land up to \$400,000. However, as announced in the 2024-25 state budget, this bill abolishes the property value thresholds completely. It reads 'if the contract for the conveyance or transfer was entered into on or after 6 June 2024—no duty will be payable'.

This bill also increases the property value cap previously placed on the First Home Owner Grant to \$650,000, with this applicable for contracts entered into on or after 6 June 2024. First-home buyers will save \$30 million over four years, which is \$30 million they will now have the opportunity to spend at our local South Australian businesses. It means a first-home buyer who buys a newly constructed home broadly in line with Adelaide's median house price of \$750,000 will receive \$50,000 in relief, including the First Home Owner Grant of \$15,000.

The stamp duty exemption will be available to all eligible first-home buyers who buy a new home, including a house, flat, unit, townhouse or apartment, an off-the-plan apartment, a house and land package, or vacant land to build a new home.

I am proud to be part of a state government that is making home ownership a reality for many South Australians, and for those who, due to circumstances so often beyond their control, cannot enter the market there is a fairer private rental system and more public housing for those in their greatest need.

I also have the Oaklands Green project powering along in my electorate, delivering more than 680 new homes as part of South Australia's largest social housing regeneration project in decades. It is good to see new quality homes for a mix of new owners, including first-home buyers, being built at Oaklands Green, and in many other smaller projects across Gibson.

In exciting news, these residents, just off Morphet Road, will now be able to drive down and go under the new tram underpass being built at the Morphet Road and Anzac Highway intersection. This has been a troublesome bottleneck for decades, and so many residents in Gibson are going to benefit from this infrastructure project, including those heading into the city for work and particularly when you are coming home along Anzac Highway. This is another project the Liberals failed to deliver but that they now want to take credit for. Only the Malinauskas Labor government is improving South Australian roads and public transport and building the future.

I was also pleased that the 2024-25 state budget announced the refurbishment of the Drew Court Housing Trust complex in my electorate. It is the most significant investment at this site since it was first developed in the postwar period. This has followed advocacy by myself as the local member on behalf of the tenants and also the surrounding residents. Everybody believes that people should have a decent house to live in and not one that is crumbling. It is a great location, next to the Oaklands railway station, nice parks and the Marion shops just a short drive away. I so look forward to seeing the new Drew Court when it is complete.

This bill also amends the Payroll Tax Act 2009, which sees the Malinauskas government deliver permanent tax cuts to GP practices which offer bulk billed GP services. The state government will exempt the wages earned by GPs for bulk billed services provided to patients. This provides protection for current bulk billed patients and an additional incentive for GP practices to bulk bill. I commend this bill to the house.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (17:47):** I thank members for their contributions on the budget measures bill. In particular I was pleased to hear members' reflections on some of the changes in particular to the First Home and Housing Construction Grants Act. As the member just articulated, we have taken some further positive steps to improve housing affordability, including in this budget, as well as dealing with the vexed issue of providing some important relief to general practitioners who have long been liable for payroll tax and exempting a vast majority of the consultations that they undertake in South Australia by exempting payroll tax on the wages earned during bulk billing.

I will not continue in my comments, but I understand the shadow minister may have some questions at the committee stage, so I am happy to proceed to that.

Bill read a second time.

*Committee Stage*

In committee.

Clause 1.

**The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Brown):** Do you have any general questions?

**Mr PATTERSON:** No questions, just the statement that, as has been said previously, this is all part of the Appropriation Bill process and so I am happy for it to proceed.

Clause passed.

Clauses 2 to 4 passed.

Clause 5.

**Mr PATTERSON:** We have here changes to the way royalties are calculated. It is effectively inserting this amendment over what was previously the case. Maybe if the Treasurer is able to provide some information around what issues this amendment is seeking to resolve and how they have been resolved through this amendment in clause 5.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** While I have officials with me, they are unfortunately not from the Department for Energy and Mining. If I could make a suggestion: if the member is amenable, what we could do is listen to his questions and I will endeavour to take them on notice and bring back appropriate answers between the houses. In the event that we get our official in, then we can put them to the official.

**The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Brown):** Member for Morphett, is that okay with you?

**Mr PATTERSON:** Yes, that is certainly fine. I have obviously had off-and-on discussions with the Treasurer, and I appreciate that. As I said, these are just questions around trying to get a broader understanding of that. I do note also that the Treasurer provided a briefing to the Hon. Heidi Girolamo from the other house, and I want to pass on her appreciation of that. This is just an opportunity to get some information that can then be furnished between the houses, and we can potentially then use the process in the other house to maybe look at other questions further. That being the case, it was quite a broad, expansive question for this clause here and I do not intend to

ask other questions around that. Once I have got that question, maybe you could follow up with a briefing.

**The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Brown):** Member for Morphett, given the nature of the minister's offer and your acceptance of it, I think, if you have other questions on this particular clause it might be best just to put them on the record now.

**Mr PATTERSON:** No, I do not have any.

Clause passed.

Clause 6 passed.

Clause 7.

**Mr PATTERSON:** In terms of this clause, it is seeking to change rentals that are payable regarding mineral tenement and to the land owner. Maybe as a first question, I understand from the briefing provided, as I said before, to the Hon. Heidi Girolamo, that this amendment is to try to bring our Mining Act in line with what other states are doing, and it will be beneficial if the Treasurer is able to provide further information around what is being sought. What are other states doing that isn't the case, and therefore that this amendment is seeking to resolve? What stakeholders were consulted in regards this, and what the feedback from them was into this amendment?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I am happy to bring back an answer for the member's benefit in the passage of the bill between the two houses.

**Mr PATTERSON:** Specifically, we have changes to subsection (9b), where it talks about where there is a transfer and it's not with a familial relationship:

...on or after 1 July 2026, the net amount available for distribution under that subsection in respect of that parcel of land will be taken to be 50% of the amount remaining...

The question is: what happens with the other 50 per cent of that distribution? Is there just a general reduction or is it that that 50 per cent goes to another body, potentially the minister? If you could expand on that. Also, if in the case there is a familial relationship that exists, is it the case then that the net amount available for distribution after 1 July 2026 will remain as is, and there will be no reduction of 50 per cent?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I am happy to bring back a detailed answer for the shadow minister between the houses.

**The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Brown):** Further contributions on this clause?

**Mr PATTERSON:** That being the case, no further questions in regard to that.

Clause passed.

Clause 8 passed.

Clause 9.

**Mr PATTERSON:** This clause is seeking to set up either a scheme or a fund in relation to electricity capacity, in particular long duration dispatchable electricity capacity, and in subsection (2)(b) it talks about imposing duties and obligations on market participants, including to provide or procure capacity. Is the Treasurer able to provide more detailed information around what is envisaged in terms of duties that are going to be imposed, or obligations on those market participants and, additionally, what stakeholder feedback has been around this subsection?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I am advised that the Department for Energy and Mining is currently going through the detailed design of the scheme, and once the design of the scheme is settled, it will then go out for broad stakeholder consultation before the scheme parameters are finalised, so there will be the opportunity for the community and industry stakeholders to have their input before the government finalises the specifics of the scheme design.

**Mr PATTERSON:** Further questions to the same section here, 15B, but in particular subsection (2)(h) where it talks about imposing fees and charges, and providing for the making of

financial contributions by market participants in respect to the scheme, including for the purpose of recovering the costs of the scheme. In terms of this, if you can, again, provide information around the quantum and amount of fees and charges that are proposed to be raised by this and, potentially, what stakeholder feedback there will be around that.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** As part of the detailed design of the scheme, what is also being considered as a part of that is the fee structure and how it will apply to participants within the scheme and industry participants as well. The idea is that that would form part of the consultation when the details of the scheme are put out for industry feedback and for public feedback as well.

*Sitting suspended from 18:00 to 19:30*

**Mr PATTERSON:** Obviously, because of the break for dinner, we did not want to have the public servants having to stick around for what really was only one more brief question and so we have worked with the Treasurer so that they could go home, but I do have one question here and I am happy for it to be taken on notice knowing that. It is, again, the same clause, clause 9, section 15B(2)(i) where it talks about requiring market participants, within the meaning of the National Electricity Rules, to make contributions to the fund in accordance with the scheme.

The question is: what is the expectation around the scale of the contributions that participants are going to be making? Also, is this targeted in terms of a class of market participants—for example, a thermal generator, or we might have renewable generators such as wind farms and solar farms? Are they required to make a contribution to the fund to then, in turn, go into the scheme or fund and then pay into a thermal generator?

I suppose it is trying to work out whether the scheme is around having all market participants equally contributing, or will there be a different scale or amount of contributions and some participants not having to pay and, in fact, receiving moneys in lieu to try to have participants that have no ability to have dispatchable energy pay into a fund to potentially pay to thermal generation?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** As I indicated with the earlier questions, I am more than happy to take the question on notice and make sure that we provide an answer for the member for Morphett between the houses so that there is time to consider that answer before the other place considers the bill.

The only other thing I can add is that at the beginning of that clause you will see that it sets out that the government is aiming to come up with a scheme that is aimed at trying to keep base load generators in the market and providing base load generation capacity. Of course, we have been canvassing throughout the day the benefits of that in bringing down energy costs and energy bills.

My understanding is that the specific charges, and how they will be levied and to whom they will be levied, is part of the scheme design, which is currently underway within the department, and that that will all be included in the detail that will be put out to consultation both amongst the industry but particularly publicly for feedback before the commencement of any regime. But whatever further particulars I can provide I will make sure that we get to the shadow minister as the bill is being transmitted between the houses.

Clause passed.

Clause 10.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** Treasurer, are you able to advise if there is an average payroll size for GPs in South Australia and what that is? Do any GPs practice under the payroll threshold, and how many are there? Has any modelling been done on what effect changes to increase the threshold would have on payroll tax on GPs?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** In short, it is difficult for me to provide information to the house and it is difficult for RevenueSA and the Department of Treasury and Finance to provide information to me, because what we are dealing with here is a cohort of employers who have to date largely not been registered for payroll tax. I say 'largely' because we do have some GP practices and clinics that have been registered for payroll tax but we now understand they are in the small minority. So I cannot provide a conclusive or comprehensive answer or an accurate answer to the member.

It is complicated further by what we would all understand in the context of this issue to be a reasonably significant change to the composition and operation of GP clinics, perhaps over the last 20 years. We might have all been familiar in years gone by with going to our local suburban or regional GP clinic where there may be one or two or three or a very small number of practitioners looking after their local community. That has in many instances now been subsumed by much larger, corporatised medical practices that are often developed and built by commercial property developers or investors, and agreements are entered into with general practitioners for them to provide services within those newer types of facilities.

What has become clear both here in South Australia and also in other places around the country is that as these businesses and these relatively newer business practices have been entered into, many GPs were given the impression—if not directly given advice—that the way in which they could structure their employment arrangements or the provision of their services as general practitioners within that practice could be done in a way to try to minimise some of their obligations, one of which was payroll tax.

Of course, as we all understand, it has now been demonstrated in case law in New South Wales and also separately in Victoria that despite those efforts to contrive an arrangement where the GP is not 'employed' but they have separate otherwise contractual arrangements with the centre or its owner, the payroll tax obligation still arises.

On becoming aware of that, we have sought to try to come up with a regime that recognises that the difficulties of that industry—if you can call it that—or that part of medical service provision have been contrived in recent years, and embark on a campaign not only to bring them into an understanding of what their longstanding obligations have been but also try to make a number of concessions so that they could meet those obligations in the future, with some period of time to give them adequate runway into understanding those.

I am pleased to say, of the states and territories that have been tackling this in a similar way, South Australia still has the most generous arrangement for general practitioners—more generous than Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT. Queensland has tried to contrive a different model, and the advice that has been given to me by RevenueSA is that not even the Queensland Revenue Office quite understands how that model is going to effectively work for GP clinics up there. Of course, that might change, given that there is a Queensland election in the coming weeks as well.

The further thing I would ask is: what is the impact likely to be? The impact is now likely to be vastly lower than it would have been had the existing law remained in place unamended, because what this budget does is provide a new significant concession for GPs as a class of employee by saying that the wages they earn in the provision of bulk billed services will be exempt from the calculation of payroll tax.

To put it in context, the quarterly data from the federal government that we referred to when we were making that decision outlined that—I do not have the figure in front of me, but off the top of my head, approximately 74 per cent of consultations by GPs in South Australia in the November quarter last year were bulk billed, so three-quarters of all consultations. You could say that three-quarters, potentially, of wages earned by GPs across the state would not be liable for payroll tax.

On top of that, you can say that even if you consider those consultations that are not bulk billed, as a proportion of wages within that practice—and I know this does not apply cleanly across all GP practices—if we are only really talking of 25 per cent or 26 per cent of wages that are now being attributed to non-bulk billed services, you could easily imagine that in many practices that would reduce the total taxable wages bill below the payroll tax tax-free threshold. So those practices would not be liable for payroll tax, and even if they did go above the payroll tax tax-free threshold, their payroll tax bill would be vastly lower than what they were worried about being taxed in the first place when this issue first arose.

To put that issue in context—what was the fear of GPs and what were some of the figures that were being bandied around by the Australian Medical Association and, to a lesser extent, by the royal college—I was in receipt of representations around these extraordinary increases in fees that would need to be levied in order to enable a clinic to meet its payroll tax obligation which, on hearing



the explanation that I have just provided to the chamber, do not stand up to scrutiny because of the way in which payroll tax is calculated and now because of the concession that we have given for bulk billed services.

I respect Dr John Williams as the President of the AMA. He is a very well regarded and, I am sure in his local community, much loved general practitioner who can speak authoritatively about many issues when it comes to providing GP services. But I respectfully disagree with his assessment about the need to increase costs for consultations.

Of course, this issue has become a convenient scapegoat for many GP practices which, on 1 July each year at the start of a new financial year, will increase their gap fees anyway in order to reflect the increased costs of doing business from one year to the next. I understand that, and I do not complain about it, but I think it further shows that any changes in behaviour or charging practices cannot, I think, be accurately ascribed to the issue that we have been discussing today.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** What information would RevenueSA require to determine whether a medical practice qualifies for the exemption of wages? What evidence do they need to present? For example, is a statement from a tax agent enough, or does RevenueSA need to get their own evidence as to whether or not they are eligible to have those wages exempted?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** I thank the member for Unley. It is a good question, because if you run or operate one of these medical practices you would well be having similar questions. There are two parts to this. One is what do you need to do to register for payroll tax, which is part of the requirement in order to qualify, firstly, for the exemption and also, secondly, for the amnesty that we provided from the regular five years of back taxes that would otherwise be charged by RevenueSA for a compliance issue.

One is that you just have to register a name, contact details, business number, that sort of thing; and it does not have to be absolutely accurate, but to register for payroll tax you also need just an estimate of taxable wages for a particular year. That is different to the return, which has to be accurate, which is filed later. For the purposes of calculating this exemption, what we would require is an estimate of taxable wages, then a number of consultations and then the disaggregation of that number of consultations between bulk billed and non-bulk billed.

I know that a GP practice would not only have 100 consultations in a year but, for argument's sake, let's say that. You might say, 'This practice has had 100 consultations and 75 per cent of those have been bulk billed and 25 per cent of those haven't.' That taxable wages amount would be effectively divided by four to represent the 25 per cent of wages that should be used or assessed to calculate payroll tax, and the payroll tax liability would be calculated thus.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** It sounds like John Hewson's birthday cake. Can I take you to new clause 17C(1), which provides, 'The regulations may declare wages, or a percentage of wages determined in a prescribed manner'. Has that prescribed manner been finalised and are you able to describe the prescribed manner to the house?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** It is a good question. I do not have the detail of that in front of me, but perhaps I can provide the same assistance to the member for Unley that I provided to the member for Morphett in making sure that I provide that answer before the bill is transmitted for consideration to the other place.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (11 and 12) and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

*Third Reading*

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (19:48):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING FUND (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL***Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 16 May 2024.)

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (19:49):** As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted about 2½ months ago—in fact, I might even go back to the start of where my remarks would have been. I will not retrace my steps through all my previous remarks but let's take it afresh as if this is a new contribution.

The Construction Industry Training Fund (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill that we are dealing with today is a bill to amend the Construction Industry Training Fund Act, an act where the former Liberal government under the stewardship of former Minister for Innovation and Skills, the Hon. David Pisoni, did some important work in improving the operations of this bill some years ago and, indeed, ensuring that the Construction Industry Training Fund and the board were operating to an improved regime.

On coming to government, the new government undertook an independent review of the act. PEG Consulting, led by Tahnya Donaghy and Ingrid Haythorpe, are well known to the parliament. They did this review and they released their report, the issues paper, in December 2022. There were 45 submissions from stakeholders indicating that the opposition has considered and taken the opportunity to consult with stakeholders in the several months since we were last here talking about it. We did also have a look at some of the submissions from stakeholders. Minister Boyer has indicated that 30 of the review's 31 recommendations will be implemented if this bill is implemented in full.

The minister also advised the remaining recommendation to investigate an alternative, more robust collection mechanism for the levy will be delayed for three years pending evaluation of other reforms that this bill introduces. As I said, the former Liberal government was successful in implementing significant reforms to bring this act into line with equivalent legislation in other states and territories and also legislation governing the appointment of boards in the state's education and training sector.

The Construction Industry Training Fund (Board) Amendment Bill 2018 supported training growth across industry and modernised the process for appointments to the Construction Industry Training Board. Indeed, this bill is seeking to reverse some of those reforms to lock in the appointment of a higher number of union representatives than is currently the state of affairs.

For members who are not aware, the board is responsible for managing and expending funds raised through the Construction Industry Training Fund levy to improve the quality of training in the industry and to coordinate industry-based training. In my last speech, I did particularly identify some of the members of the board and thanked them for their service, and I reiterate that thanks. The work that the board has done over a number of years has been tremendously important in serving both the sector and also the young people considering a future employment pathway and a career in the sector. It is tremendously important work.

In the CITB's annual training plan, the projected revenue collection across industry sectors (housing, commercial and civil) for the financial year 2023 is \$29.8 million. Indeed, it is not a bad read. I encourage members to have a look. It is fairly well summarised. So I thank the minister's office for the briefing and also the office of the Hon. David Pisoni, which includes some strong expertise in this area from our time in government, and particular thanks to Kim Meier for advice along the way.

I also want to express thanks to some of the industry stakeholders who have had input into the opposition's point of view on this, particularly Matt Lowe, Group Training Australia and the Apprentice Employment Network. I thank Greg Bassani and ATEC. I thank Amanda Grocock from the Master Landscapers Association, Daniel Palumbo from the Urban Development Institute, Will Frogley from Master Builders and Stephen Knight from the Housing Industry Association. All of those stakeholders have either provided new submissions or identified that their points of view

contained in their public submissions were still accurate and, indeed, assisted the opposition. I thank also all of those who have taken the time to have a chat with me about this matter.

The objectives of the bill we are dealing with include, as I mentioned, changing the composition of the board, mandating the appointment of four employee representatives and four employer representatives, following consultation with key organisations. Just to put that into context, the current act at section 5, from memory, talks about appointments:

...by the Governor on the nomination of the Minister:

- (a) 1 person to be the presiding member of the Board;
  - (b) at least 4 (but not more than 8) persons who have knowledge of, and experience or expertise in, the building and construction industry;
  - (c) 2 persons who are, in the opinion of the Minister, independent of the building...industry.
- (1a) The Minister must, in nominating [people]...seek to ensure that—
- (a) at least 1 person is nominated to represent the interests of employers in the building and construction industry; and
  - (b) at least 1 person is nominated to represent the interests of employees in the building and construction industry.

Then there is a range of other factors, but basically that is the composition of the board. There is a flexibility to enable a skills base to be developed that serves the industry, serves the needs of employees well without having it devolve into a series of appointments for unions, and indeed employer organisations for that matter, just to have their professional board attenders being part of the arrangement.

I foreshadow that the opposition will be moving amendments to this aspect. We have two amendments that we will be moving during the committee stage of debate. The first is to oppose the clause. We do believe that the clause that changes the composition of the board does not add value to the bill, does not assist in ensuring that there is good governance for the Construction Industry Training Fund and does not enable South Australia's construction sector to be best supported in this manner going forward. I think if we are seeking to get outcomes, we want to provide more flexibility to the minister to get great representation rather than just finding an opportunity to bulk up by 400 per cent the union membership on the board.

If that amendment is not going to get the government's support, we also have a second amendment that we will be seeking to move highlighting the particularly damaging impact that the CFMEU has had on this sector. We discussed in parliament today the damaging impact that the CFMEU has on relations between Labor and capital in this state. We heard today from the Premier his case that he does not support in any sense the way that John Setka and those sorts of operatives in the CFMEU go about their business.

We heard from the Minister for Energy and Mining in his response in question time today the horror that he identifies upon seeing revelations of connections between CFMEU figures and bkie gangs, and the idea that organised crime and people involved in it for their own purposes are able to take union members' funds and use the power that comes with their position for their own personal benefit is appalling.

I think it is only reasonable for the government to back up their rhetoric with support for that amendment. Even if they wish to still have the four union representatives on the board, I trust that the government will take seriously the rhetoric that their Premier said in the house today and will support this opposition amendment to remove any possibility of an appointment of a CFMEU representative on the board. I think this is a very simple ask frankly and I look forward to the government's support when we get to that committee stage. And, of course, they also have the option of retaining the existing board structure as well.

That said, we also heard feedback from a range of those people I have spoken about that they indeed liked a number of the pieces of reform in the bill. Certainly, my comments on a number of the other reforms are in the positive. I think there are some reforms here that are the natural

successors to the work done by the member for Unley in 2018, and we are very supportive of those other reforms.

We will move our amendments when we get to the board composition, but I highlight that some of the other changes appear to be things that have been sought by industry, by businesses, by representatives of staff and, indeed, of industry groups. Some of those include increasing the project value threshold at which the levy is payable from \$40,000 to \$100,000 through regulations, allowing the minister to present the board with an annual statement of the government's priorities and establishing a cross-sector planning committee to advise the board on issues that impact the industry as a whole.

The bill also enables members on this new committee to make claims and seek financial reimbursements, so potentially there are some increased payments there, but hopefully these people do good work. The bill reduces the minister's oversight and approval of payments to board members and committee members, but one hopes the administrative efficiencies will outweigh any risk there. It enables the allocation of moneys from the fund for the purposes of workforce attraction and retention activities.

The bill changes the board's financial and operating reporting from a financial to a calendar year, streamlines the reimbursement of expenses incurred by board members and formalises the ability of the board to engage staff or services of the Public Service under an arrangement agreed with the relevant minister. There is a mandate for a review of the operation of the act following its fifth anniversary. The bill does not change the current 0.25 per cent levy rate, consistent with the review's recommendations. We heard from stakeholders who view the application of the GST to the calculation of a project's value as a tax on tax. Accordingly, the bill removes GST from the calculation of a project's cost, resulting in a reduction in the amount of levy payable for all project owners.

Under the current act, the levy is not payable on certain projects. Exemptions and exclusions are contained in the act, including on main or core turbines or generators to be installed at power stations involved in the generation of electricity for the state's power systems and works associated with any operation under the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Act, the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act, the Mining Act and the Opal Mining Act.

The review considered the exemptions in the act and whether they remain relevant and appropriate. It is suggested that exemptions for power generation and works performed by self-employed people in industries outside of building and construction do not meet the test of relevance or appropriateness and should be removed. It is my understanding that the government has accepted this approach and will proceed with these reforms. The review also recommended the exemption for mining and petroleum works be reviewed, and we understand the government has decided not to proceed with that course of action at this stage.

We have discussed the board composition already, so I will not repeat myself there, however I do remind people in relation to the legislation that was approved in 2019 that that also included the presiding member being entitled to vote, including always having a casting vote in board proceedings; the board comprising up to eight industry representatives who are nominated by the minister following a public expression of interest process, as well as two independent members; and a removal of the veto voting provisions to enable decisions of the board to reflect a majority position, not the majority position of prescribed sectional interests.

The point I would make is that, while most of the measures in the bill were broadly supported by stakeholders who responded, some of them did take objection to the measures relating to the composition of the board. The Liberal Party has listened to those stakeholders. The Liberal Party has also identified that the particular sectional interests being sought to be expanded under the changes in the board composition are not in the interests of the South Australian people.

Noting the particular changes made in the federal parliament recently related to the CFMEU, noting the strong rhetoric from the Labor government in relation to the damage caused to public confidence in the union movement by the CFMEU and their behaviour, and noting the strong language used by the Premier and the Minister for Energy in relation to their disapproval of the actions of operatives of the CFMEU, we look forward to the government's support for that amendment at least. I commend the bill to the house otherwise.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (20:03):** I will make a contribution on this bill as well. There is a bit of *deja vu*. What is interesting is that when I brought changes into this place to modernise the Construction Industry Training Board, every single element was rejected by the Labor Party and the Greens. I will take this opportunity to thank SA-Best and, at that time, Family First for supporting what the industry wanted, and that was a board that was less prescriptive, a board that was appointed with the skill set that was needed for the industry.

I remember the debate at the time and it was very obvious that even the Labor Party's reluctance to remove the union veto—in other words, a minority group sitting on the board would veto the majority decision that the CITB had made if it suited their interest or if they wanted to do a deal. We saw those sort of deals just prior to me taking on the portfolio as minister. The union element of the board had arranged to spend \$100,000 celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CITB. I remember they chose a venue where there were not even tables and chairs, so they had to hire them separately at a cost of \$10,000, was the figure that comes to mind. It was spending money like drunken sailors.

There is some concern that there is less ministerial oversight of the spending of the CITB. When I was the minister the key focus was on the department and my office working with the CITB, so doubling up was not happening and the precious money that was being raised through the levy on construction, which has an impact on housing costs of course, was spent for the betterment of the industry.

I was pleased to see a stronger focus on funding of apprentice and trainee training as opposed to training of those who were already in the industry. The board at that time felt that there was an opportunity for those who had been in the industry to consider their own training, whereas the main focus was to make those entry points as easy and as attractive as possible. We saw a massive increase in commencements in the construction industry.

It is disappointing that the government has rejected expanding industries that use the same trades or that actually poach tradespeople from the industry for their industry: for example, those building wind turbines and other energy producers and the mining industry. There were many times I had the building industry complain to me that they were sick of the mining industry or the energy industry poaching their staff that they had trained, in which they had invested in training. They do not take on apprentices themselves but wait until people come through the MBA or HIA training programs, for example, paid for by employers through the apprenticeship system, and then they are lured with the very large offerings available in those industries, because they simply do not have those training costs. They simply do not have them—they just poach them from elsewhere.

It is disappointing that there is no contribution from those industries that use the same trades that the construction industry uses. It has put a bigger burden on mum and dad homeowners who are paying this tax when they buy a home or an apartment or renovate. They are paying this tax to train people with the expectation that they will have quality work done in their home and will not have to wait for months for an electrician or a painter to turn up, because there is a supply of tradespeople.

There are no surprises here in what the government is achieving. We know that the Labor Party is the political arm of the union movement. It is not enough for the minister, when in government, to be in a position to appoint union mates to the board; they want to actually change the act to make it compulsory for any minister to be forced to appoint union people to the board, regardless of their qualifications or skills in the area.

I hope that we see a growing attraction to school leavers—those at school, wanting to get out of school into the workforce and into the building industry—doing a paid apprenticeship. The apprenticeship system, where you are paid to learn, really is by far the most efficient and most attractive way for people to learn skills. There is no HECS debt that they are paying. Yes, they get a discount on their salary, but that is their contribution, if you like, for getting that on-the-job training from the employer, getting that mentorship and being paid to attend trade school or, if you like, their vocational education college that is associated with that trade, rather than doing that in their own time. It is a much better model to support employers in employing apprentices and expanding those apprenticeship processes.

We brought in new apprenticeships in the civil industry—apprenticeships and traineeships in civil engineering and civil construction. These became accredited apprenticeships and traineeships under the previous government. There is the ability to do a five-year apprenticeship to be an electrician and a refrigeration mechanic together. It is, if you like, a vocational education version of a double degree. That happened with the changes that were made with the skill sets that we achieved with changes to the Skills Commission.

What we were able to demonstrate was, when you have the right skills, you get the right outcome. People are there for the right reasons. I am shocked, I have to say—because I understand—how philanthropic people become who are successful. For people who have their own businesses, people who are working in a professional field, as they get older, after they have established themselves, a monetary value for giving that time is secondary to giving that time.

It does cause me concern that the government thinks that the trigger for getting people onto this board is the monetary value. It does change the motivation for wanting to be involved. I have seen it time and time again, when a person's motivation for being in a board position is for the board fees rather than the outcomes they can help to achieve by working with those other board members. That is what we need to focus on. That is why it is so important that it is industry connected, that the board has the skills it needs to function, to be fiscally responsible, to focus on its key core areas and not drift into other areas that are thought to be sweet and cuddly at the time, focusing and staying focused on the job that is required, and that is supporting training for the building and the construction industry.

With the housing shortage that we have, it is very important that we actually increase construction. We have seen levels of home starts in Australia back to 2007 levels. The last time federal Labor was in office, I think it was 2013 or 2014 before we started to see a lift in those figures. We have a long way to go because we have also had significant population growth with people returning to Australia during the COVID period and staying, a big influx from the Albanese government of migrants coming to Australia and not necessarily targeted skill sets either, so we still have skills shortages. It is quite extraordinary when you have so many migrants coming into Australia and South Australia on what you would expect would be skilled migration pathways, and you still have massive skills shortages.

I was having a think about this just earlier in the year as the commentary started to increase about the migration pushing up the cost of housing and the need for expanding the production of homes and of course increasing those with the skill sets you need to build those homes. I look back at my father's experience arriving here in 1952, along with so many of his countrymen from Italy and others from Greece and other parts of Europe—the ten-pound Poms. The vast majority of those migrants who came to Australia and South Australia particularly at that time were tradespeople.

Many of them worked in the building industry. As a matter of fact, you would never be able to go to an Italian or Greek event without bumping into someone in the building industry—someone who had a concrete business or a bricklaying business or a carpentry business. That was the nature of it. So we were actually importing or, if you like, people were migrating to Australia who had the skills to build the houses they needed to live in, and we had these new suburbs being built right around South Australia.

I can remember Barnett Street, Salisbury, where my parents bought their home. They were about the third house in the street, and it took another 10 years or so before the council got around to laying asphalt on that street. My parents-in-law, when they lived at Marino—theirs was the first house in the street in the 1960s. Over a very short period of time that suburb of Marino became very, very popular, and Salisbury, which was a country town prior to the Playford push for industrialisation here in South Australia, became a suburb of Adelaide, with many quarter acre blocks.

They were just about quarter acre blocks. I can remember how big the block of land was in the house I grew up in in Salisbury. I do not think the house was very big, but the block of land certainly had plenty of room for fruit trees and grapevines and a lawn to play on and my mother's flowers.

I cannot emphasise any more how important it is that we have a focus on skills. This state had a terrible reputation until there was a turnaround in the attitude to vocational education. For

16 years the previous Labor government would either put brand new ministers or ministers that had been demoted into the skills portfolio rather than seeing it as a focus for a competent person to make some real change. I can remember as the shadow minister for seven years in that space that at every single event I went to there was never a government member—a government minister, even a backbencher representing the government—at those vocational education events.

I am glad that has changed. I am glad that this government is showing an interest and continuing the work that the Marshall government did in lifting the status of the apprenticeship and the traineeship, but I am disappointed that we have seen the disappearance of the support for employers for taking on apprentices. Regarding the subsidy—the Skilling South Australia subsidy—I am led to believe that there have only been about nine of those packages signed in the last 2½ years of this government, which means we are not seeing the apprenticeship numbers. We are not seeing the support for employers.

In relation to the vocational education system it is interesting how the apprenticeship system in particular is focused on the wealth-generating industries that we have in the country—construction and manufacturing—and it is the employer who is expected to pay for the training of the skills that that business needs. Yet, if you walk into a doctor's surgery, if you walk into a school, if you walk into an accounting firm or if you walk into an architects' firm, all those skill sets were paid for by the very people who are sitting there, providing their labour or their skill sets. It was not paid for by the business; the business is benefiting from those skill sets.

But in the manufacturing and construction industry—two things that hit consumers every day, basically—there is an additional cost. Until the Marshall Liberal government, it was unsupported by government, outside of off-the-job training. Unfortunately, we saw that finish with the change of government and a focus back on off-the-job training for subsidies. We have seen, in the first 12 months of that change in policy, a massive decline in commencements of apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia.

No employer is telling me they are having trouble getting a kid to do an apprenticeship. What they are telling me is that it is harder now to train an apprentice or a trainee, and that is what is putting them off participating in the process. It is a partnership. It is a partnership between the apprentice, the employer and the government, and whether that partnership extends to a third-party provider, whether that partnership extends to a big employer or a small employer, that three-way partnership is what gets the best outcomes.

I will take this opportunity to praise group training. We know how important group training has been. South Australia was a pioneer of group training. I think the MTA was the first group training organisation in the country, here in South Australia, and other industries of course followed on. The beauty of doing group training is that it completely removes the risk, for the apprentice and for the employer, of a personality clash or of a change in circumstances. If all of a sudden the business can no longer support that apprentice, the apprentice does not lose their apprenticeship; they simply transfer to another host employer, and so it is a continuous line of employment.

In many instances, if an apprentice can do their apprenticeship over two, three or four employers in different fields of the same trade, they end up being very well skilled, very employable and very valuable members of anybody's staff because of their broad training. It is much better than being employed for the entire time of your apprenticeship—which often used to happen in the furniture industry, where you might spend four years working at feeding three different machines, if you were doing a wood-machining apprenticeship, rather than getting a broad understanding of the full scope of the work that a wood machinist or a cabinet-maker would do in that area.

That is why it is so important that this board focuses on delivering more apprentices and more trainees, not just for opportunities for young people but also for economic health, the quality of living and the quality of life here in South Australia.

**Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (20:23):** I just want to make a few comments on the Construction Industry Training Fund (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill and put on the record where I will be voting and where I sit on this issue.

Before I begin, there has been a lot of talk, certainly today, about the CFMEU, and I want to highlight (to probably the one person who is listening to this) that the forestry sector is a section within the CFMEU. I have only had very positive interactions with our forestry union. Whilst we do not always agree, it is the largest employer in my region. I have only ever seen them fight for, as a representative body, the workers in terms of safety, in terms of pay and in terms of conditions. I just want to be very clear that, again, whilst we do not always see eye to eye—in fact, very rarely do we see eye to eye—I do recognise the efforts that they make on behalf of the largest employment group in our region and the largest number of employers in our region.

In terms of the construction industry and in particular the CITB, I have been privileged over my journey to see the very good that can come out of a Construction Industry Training Board. I firmly believe that pathways start at a school level. The CITB was a very active part of a constructions pathways program that a very good friend of mine Paul Jupe put together in Mount Gambier at Grant High School where they would actually build a transportable house on site with all the trades that go with that and then sell that transportable and the money would be reinvested back into the training program.

The Doorways2Construction program, which is what it was, brought students from all around our region to Grant High School, and different schools one day a week, under Paul Jupe's tutelage and then Mike's tutelage after that, would work on constructing this project. That would not have been possible with education department funding alone. The CITB played a crucial role in providing top-up funding and extra resources to come on board and support that program.

In fact, from that pathways program, many of our employers who started as a student at many schools but did their construction work at Grant High School have gone on to own their own business and now employ apprentices of their own. That is the power of having a pathways program being supported by an industry like the CITB industry. Of course, they get their funding from a charge on the construction activities around the state.

Of course, I also want to talk about Greg Megaw and our local group training, which is GTE (Group Training Employment). Again, I have seen the power of young kids coming through a school system, getting their apprenticeship, and if they do not quite gel with one employer—an employer may go through financial difficulties or have a marriage bust-up or some other external factor that nobody knows about at the time—having that safety net of GTE there, which is the actual employer, being able to move that young person to another employer has been very powerful in keeping that young person in their apprenticeship and providing a suitable outcome.

Those reasons are many and varied, but to have the safety net of GTE, with Greg Megaw—who came after Brenton Lewis, who was a long-time CEO of that organisation—again proves the power of a community working together in the interests of young people. At the end of the day, that is what I think it is all about. We do have a housing shortage. We need more young people coming through the training sector, getting apprenticeships, and I genuinely believe the Construction Industry Training Board plays a major part within that.

Again, my politics may be a little bit different but I just want to see the best outcome for young people. I understand what the opposition is trying to do, and I just want to put on record that I will be supporting the amendments of the opposition because I firmly believe that that is in the best interests of young people coming through a system that should not be politicised with appointments. I think it really should be about how we get more young people into a training pathway and, again, that starts at the school level.

I think the CITB has done a wonderful job over many years in promoting that and doing exactly what I am talking about. Going forward, I obviously want to encourage more young people to look at apprenticeships and trades because there is a serious pipeline there and opportunities where young people can make very good futures for themselves, for their families and the community that they are involved in. With those brief comments, I conclude my remarks.

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (20:30):** I thank the members for Morialta, Unley and Mount Gambier for their contributions and take this opportunity again to put on the record my thanks to the team at PEG Consulting, particularly for the hard work that they did on the review of the act, which of course was a requirement of the act that



this occur. It was a very large piece of work, as has been alluded to by the other people who have spoken on this bill this evening.

There were 45 submissions from stakeholders, and a lot of those stakeholders are absolutely vital cogs in the skills and training machine of our state. I want to thank them for taking the time to put in such considered submissions to make sure that the review that was ultimately presented to me as the minister by PEG Consulting was a very thorough one with, I think, some very sensible recommendations.

I might just quickly touch on one thing that the member for Mount Gambier said, and then I will conclude my remarks. The Doorways2Construction is a fantastic example of a very fine program that has been around for a long time, and it continues to thrive. I have had the joy, as minister, on at least two or perhaps three occasions to go out and see students—I think on those occasions from Salisbury High School—present to the community the work they had done on restoring properties.

On one occasion, I think it might have been the first occasion for me as minister, it was an old Housing SA property that had fallen into disrepair and needed some work done so that it could be used again by some members of the community who needed public housing. These young students at Salisbury High School had done an immense amount of work on restoring it to look incredible. If you are looking for a really heartwarming story around using and teaching young people skills that will lead to a fantastic job in an area where there is a lot of really high demand in the state and, at the same time, making sure that there is an incredible outcome for people who are struggling with housing, I cannot think of a better example than that.

I know that everyone in this chamber supports Doorways2Construction, but I will just thank all those who did all the hard work to bring us to this point here today where we can make some very sensible changes to the Construction Industry Training Fund Act and modernise it in areas that are, I think, welcome and overdue. I will conclude my remarks there.

Bill read a second time.

*Committee Stage*

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 5 passed.

Clause 6.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I move:

Amendment No 1 [Gardner-2]—

Page 4, after line 42—After inserted subsection (1) insert:

(1aaa) However, a person who is an employee or officer of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union must not be appointed as a member or deputy of a member of the Board.

This is an amendment that will ensure that a person who is an employee or an officer of the CFMEU must not be appointed as a member or a deputy of a member of the board. The Construction Industry Training Board is an important government board. It makes important decisions about the expenditure of nearly \$30 million—soon to be more than \$30 million—of industry funds.

These funds need to be applied for best purpose for the industry, for our construction sector, for employment and for young people seeking to get access to important pathways into work, whether they be VET in schools programs, Doorways2Construction, whether they be the support of apprenticeships or traineeships, or whether they be the other functions of the board that enable our construction sector to be best supported by the CITB.

I have no confidence in a member of the CFMEU in its current composition: their employees, their officers and certainly the people who are associated with that organisation. It has been highlighted in question time today; the Premier and the minister expressed their concerns. Let the government now show that those concerns are backed up with the force of their votes on this amendment. I commend this amendment to the house. This amendment will improve the bill and improve the governance of this board.

**The CHAIR:** We have just been notified of an amendment by the minister, so we are waiting to see what that is and whether it is actually going to impact on what we do here.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** That strikes me as a different amendment. I would like to deal with ours first, seeing as I tabled it first, and then after that I am happy to deal with the minister's amendment. Can I offer assistance by way of a point of order?

**The CHAIR:** Just resume your seat; just wait a second. Sorry, are you offering a solution?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** My suggestion, just for the record, is that we resolve the amendment that the opposition has moved already, which has been tabled and circulated in the usual fashion. Should that fail, then the minister's amendment may well be relevant for the house and we can proceed after that.

**The CHAIR:** Do you wish to add anything to your amendment? We are going to proceed with yours.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I have introduced my amendment and spoken to my amendment. I am urging the house to support my amendment. Obviously, I foreshadow if the house does not support my amendment then we will consider other amendments as well.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, do you wish to speak at all?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** Thank you, Chair. The government will not be supporting the amendment from the opposition. We have an amendment of our own, which I will speak to after this has been considered. I think our own amendment is very strong and deals with the issues that were raised in the second reading contributions by the members for Unley and Morialta. There has been a lot said, as was alluded to by both of those members today and previously, around some of the behaviour that we have seen from the CFMEU and the fact that the organisation has been placed into administration.

As the members for Morialta, Unley and Mount Gambier all said, the Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Transport both spoke very strongly about not accepting or tolerating that kind of behaviour. We have our own amendment that will deal with that, and I think it is a more appropriate amendment for the house to consider than the one that has been placed here by the member for Morialta.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** After seeing the government's foreshadowed amendment, it is a compromise and it is obviously a political compromise. The opposition's amendment is very clear. We do not know where the CFMEU is going to end up in administration. It may be disbanded. It might not even exist, which makes the proposed amendment from the minister superfluous.

What I learned by attending the rally today is that one of the speakers told the group that members of the CFMEU who have been sacked by the administrator have been banned from participating in any activities for life. Does this amendment of the government stop somebody like that from being appointed to this body? If it does not, then it is inadequate. It is very clear that while the CFMEU is in action and while it is operating as a union and a team of gangsters, it is not appropriate for such an organisation to have a representative on what is effectively a government board.

The committee divided on the amendment:

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

#### AYES

Basham, D.K.B.  
Ellis, F.J.  
Pederick, A.S.  
Teague, J.B.

Batty, J.A.  
Gardner, J.A.W. (teller)  
Pisoni, D.G.  
Telfer, S.J.

Bell, T.S.  
Patterson, S.J.R.  
Pratt, P.K.  
Whetstone, T.J.

## NOES

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

## PAIRS

Hurn, A.M.	Cook, N.F.	Cowdrey, M.J.
Odenwalder, L.K.	Tarzia, V.A.	Picton, C.J.
Speirs, D.J.	Stinson, J.M.	McBride, P.N.
Cregan, D.R.		

Amendment thus negated.

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** I move:

After inserted subsection (1) insert:

- (1aaa) Any employee or officer of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU) must not be appointed as a Member or Deputy Member to the board whilst that Union is in administration under the terms of the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 of the Commonwealth.

I do not feel the need to explain it too much because we have covered this territory already. The opposition proposed their amendment and that has been defeated. Our amendment is in some ways similar but it is not the same. We are proposing that the term stand for the length that the union that we are naming in this amendment is in administration, as per the terms of the federal act under which they have been placed in administration. I commend the amendment to the house.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Morialta, do you wish to speak to it?

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** Yes, and I indicate my appreciation for the opportunity to do so. This amendment, in my view, is inferior to the one offered earlier because, while we were offering a solution to improve the bill for the duration of the bill, this amendment improves the bill only for a shorter period of time potentially unless, of course, the CFMEU was to be in administration in perpetuity. We are confident that ours would have done a better job. The minister has offered a compromise. It improves the bill from what it was. It does not improve the bill as much as we would have liked but, nevertheless, as it does give some improvement to the bill we will support it.

**Mr BELL:** I also indicate that I will be supporting the amendment to the bill.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Unley, your wisdom please.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** I have a question for the minister. Does this amendment prohibit the CITB from employing a former employee or a current employee or officer of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** This bill, and indeed the act that it is seeking to amend, does not deal and never has, on my understanding, with arrangements around employees of the actual Construction Industry Training Board.

Amendment carried.

The committee divided on the clause as amended:

Ayes .....	24
Noes.....	10
Majority .....	14

## AYES

Andrews, S.E.	Bell, T.S.	Bettison, Z.L.
Bignell, L.W.K.	Boyer, B.I.	Brown, M.E.
Champion, N.D.	Clancy, N.P.	Close, S.E.
Ellis, F.J.	Fulbrook, J.P.	Hildyard, K.A.
Hood, L.P. (teller)	Hughes, E.J.	Hutchesson, C.L.
Koutsantonis, A.	Michaels, A.	Mullighan, S.C.
O'Hanlon, C.C.	Pearce, R.K.	Savvas, O.M.
Szakacs, J.K.	Thompson, E.L.	Wortley, D.J.

## NOES

Basham, D.K.B.	Batty, J.A.	Gardner, J.A.W. (teller)
Patterson, S.J.R.	Pederick, A.S.	Pisoni, D.G.
Pratt, P.K.	Teague, J.B.	Telfer, S.J.
Whetstone, T.J.		

## PAIRS

Stinson, J.M.	Hurn, A.M.	Picton, C.J.
Tarzia, V.A.	Cook, N.F.	Speirs, D.J.
Odenwalder, L.K.	Cowdrey, M.J.	Cregan, D.R.
McBride, P.N.		

Clause as amended thus passed.

Remaining clauses (7 to 29), schedule and title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

*Third Reading*

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (20:56):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

I have a few final comments. Again, I thank all those who were part of all the work that occurred over a very long period of time to bring us to this point with amendments to what is a really important piece of legislation, particularly given where we are as a state at the moment in terms of both the enormous opportunity that lies before us and also the challenges that are there as well, which almost in every case come back to workforce. I think it is important that we are all pulling in the same direction as a sector and also that we have a modernised piece of legislation, as is the case here with the amendments that we have made, that gives us the best opportunity of growing the workforce particularly in the areas where the economy needs it.

I want to single out again for thanks PEG Consulting who I thought did a really thorough piece of work. The feedback that we had from stakeholders was that they felt heard, which is the most important thing. What is hopefully soon to be passed here today I think is very true to the report that was handed to us by PEG Consulting. We have accepted the vast majority of the recommendations that were made.

I look forward to, I hope, being in this role long enough to see some of the benefits that flow from amending this act and I hope it serves the state and the skills and training demands of our state well now and into the future.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (20:58):** I speak on the third reading of the Construction Industry Training Fund (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill noting that there has been a change to the bill as a result of an amendment passed by this

chamber a few minutes ago. It is worth noting that since the change in government, the new government had indeed appointed a delegate, a representative of the CFMEU, to the Construction Industry Training Board. Today, the government has been forced, albeit in an amendment that was a compromise from the government, into a position where that would not be able to happen as a result of that change. That is a good change.

The government has been forced to block the CFMEU from participation on this board for at least the period of time while they are under administration. I reflect on and appreciate that improvement to the bill. We would have liked to see the bill improved further; nevertheless, I am pleased with that improvement. I also reflect that the vast majority of the measures in the bill, other than the change in the composition of the board, which the opposition expressed its view on, are by and large improvements to the act, so the opposition will support the bill.

Bill read a third time and passed.

### **STATUTES AMENDMENT (SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL) BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (21:01):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is now nearly a decade since the passage of the South Australian Employment Tribunal Act 2014 established the South Australian Employment Tribunal as a one-stop shop for employment and industrial relations disputes in this state. This is an appropriate milestone to reflect on whether SAET's governing legislation is meeting its statutory obligations, particularly having regard to the practical experience of workers, employers, representatives and members of the tribunal itself since SAET was created.

At the 2022 state election, our government committed to a review of SAET. Following the election, the Attorney-General's Department invited feedback from stakeholders to inform any necessary changes to the practice and jurisdiction of the tribunal. I take this opportunity to thank the many legal practitioners and organisations on both sides of the industrial fence who took the time to provide thoughtful ideas on areas for potential improvement. Having consulted with the tribunal and considered feedback from stakeholders, overall the government is satisfied that SAET is effectively carrying out its function as a one-stop shop for industrial disputes.

SAET provides high-quality dispute resolution in a timely and efficient manner, with over 6,000 applications filed in the last financial year. SAET deals with a large and complex case load while maintaining resolution time frames significantly faster than many other jurisdictions. Many stakeholders identified SAET as a best practice model for an industrial tribunal and a preferred forum for the conduct of proceedings, having regard for its specialised knowledge and practical focus on dispute resolution.

SAET's high-quality conciliation processes and the work of its commissioners were particularly commended; however, in the course of this consultation, stakeholders did identify a range of issues arising from SAET's governing legislation, largely of a technical or procedural nature, which could be addressed to improve the efficiency of the tribunal and the experience of litigants. Consultation also raised some issues about the rules, forms and practice directions of the SAET and, while those are matters for SAET itself to determine, the President has advised the Attorney-General he intends to undertake stakeholder consultation on those issues with a view to potential improvements.

The purpose of this statutes amendment bill is to address those technical and procedural issues that arise from SAET's governing legislation and other acts conferring jurisdiction on the SAET. I commend this bill to the house and seek leave to have the remainder of my second reading speech and the explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

I take this opportunity to outline some of the key features of the Bill.

Part 2 of the Bill amends the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.

This amendment provides that employment-related discrimination and victimisation complaints will be heard in SAET rather than SACAT. That is appropriate given SAET's expertise in employment-related matters, and is supported by the Equal Opportunity Commissioner.

Part 3 of the Bill amends the *Fair Work Act 1994*.

In 2017 amendments were made to this Act to consolidate the functions of the former Industrial Relations Court of South Australia and Industrial Relations Commission of South Australia into the new South Australian Employment Tribunal.

An unintended consequence of those changes is that uncertainty has emerged over which powers under the Act are now exercised by SAET constituted as the South Australian Employment Court, and which are exercised by SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission.

The Bill clarifies this by inserting amendments to specifically state which powers are exercised by which part of SAET.

These amendments are consistent with the orthodox principle that courts exercise judicial power to ascertain, declare and enforce existing legal rights and responsibilities; while industrial commissions exercise arbitral power to ascertain and declare what ought to be the respective future rights and liabilities of the parties.

The Bill also clarifies which proceedings are required to be dealt with at a Full Bench level, rather than by a single member. This generally applies to significant matters with implications across the state industrial relations system, such as the State Wage Case and applications to vary minimum standards for leave entitlements.

The Bill amends section 4 of the Act to make matters in an industrial instrument relating to wage parity an 'industrial matter' for the purpose of the Act. The Bill also inserts a new section 4A to provide the declared employer for public employees is an instrumentality of the Crown and capable of binding the Crown in relation to an industrial matter.

These amendments will give certainty that when the declared employer of public employees negotiates an industrial instrument on behalf of the Government, such as an enterprise agreement, workers and their representatives can have confidence that the Government as a whole can be held to that agreement.

The Bill repeals existing section 11 of the Act. This section is redundant because the same power to make declaratory judgments is also conferred by section 26A of the *South Australian Employment Tribunal Act 2014*. The deletion of this section is not intended to reflect any diminution in the SAET's power to grant declaratory relief.

In its place the Bill inserts a new section 11, which confers jurisdiction to settle and resolve industrial disputes. This section is inserted for the avoidance of doubt as a more express statement of the industrial dispute jurisdiction already exercised by SAET, consistent with other provisions in Chapter 2, Part 1 conferring jurisdiction on SAET. This is not intended to reflect any alteration to SAET's existing industrial dispute jurisdiction.

The Bill inserts a new section 13A to confirm that the prohibition on mandatory injunctions against the Crown under section 7(2) of the *Crown Proceedings Act 1992* does not apply in respect of proceedings before SAET under this Act. This amendment applies both to SAET sitting as a court and as an industrial relations commission.

The practical effect of the amendment is to restore the longstanding position in *Dunk v South Australian Health Commission* that orders may be made against the Crown to remedy or restrain contraventions of industrial laws. This is necessary after the recent decision of *Chief Executive, Attorney-General's Department v Montrose* suggested some such orders may be prohibited by the *Crown Proceedings Act*.

This amendment ensures that when it comes to industrial laws and entitlements, the Crown is subject to the same principles and remedies as any other employer in the state industrial relations system.

The Bill repeals section 24 of the Act, which deals with circumstances in which legal costs may be awarded. This section is unnecessary because section 52 of the *South Australian Employment Tribunal Act* already provides a default position that parties bear their own costs in proceedings before SAET, subject to the provisions of a relevant Act.

The Bill amends section 34 of the Act to align the rules for the calculation of interest on monetary claims with those applied under the Commonwealth *Fair Work Act 2009*. The practical effect is that interest should be calculated from the date an unpaid amount falls due, rather than from the date a monetary claim is commenced in SAET.

The Bill inserts a new section 100A to provide a streamlined process for the conduct of the annual State Wage Case.

Since the referral of industrial relations powers to the Commonwealth, the State Wage Case has almost invariably resulted in a 'flow-on' to the state industrial relations system of the minimum wage decision made by the Commonwealth Fair Work Commission. Nonetheless, every year parties are required to produce evidence and make submissions to SAET prior to a determination being made.

The new section 100A will permit SAET to simply adopt the outcomes of the Fair Work Commission determination without the need to conduct a hearing or receive evidence, provided there is no objection from an interested party. If there is such an objection then SAET will be required to conduct a hearing on the issue consistent with existing processes.

Part 4 and Part 6 of the Bill amend the Magistrates Court 1991 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2012.

These amendments increase the monetary threshold under which a criminal offence can be dealt with by a Deputy President Magistrate in SAET to \$1.5 million. This particularly affects prosecutions under the *Work Health and Safety Act*.

In practice, Deputy President Magistrates deal with most work health and safety offences and have an expertise in these matters. However, the existing monetary threshold of \$300,000 means many work health and safety prosecutions may need to be referred to Deputy President Judges for hearing or sentencing instead.

This amendment will assist SAET in efficiently allocating its caseload between different judicial members, by ensuring Deputy President Magistrates can fully deal with a work health and safety prosecution up to a Category 2 level. Matters above this penalty range may continue to be referred for consideration by a Deputy President Judge.

Part 5 of the Bill amends the South Australian Employment Tribunal Act 2014.

The Bill amends section 6 of the Act to clarify the assignment of matters between SAET sitting as a court or as an industrial relations commission. These amendments are consistent with and facilitate the amendments to the *Fair Work Act 1994* discussed above. These amendments will ensure matters assigned to the Court can continue to be subject to compulsory conciliation conferences conducted by commissioners.

The Bill amends section 19 of the Act to provide additional flexibility to the President in the composition of the Full Bench, by allowing Commissioners to sit as members of the Full Bench when SAET is acting as an industrial relations commission.

This recognises that Commissioners are appointed to SAET having regard to their significant on-the-ground industrial relations experience and expertise, which is essential in achieving the practical resolution of disputes. This amendment ensures that experience and expertise can be deployed as part of the Full Bench in appropriate arbitral matters.

The assignment of members in any particular case will remain at the discretion of the President, and at least 1 member of a Full Bench must always be a Presidential member. The amendment also provides that the President must be satisfied that a person has appropriate knowledge, expertise or experience relating to the class of matter before SAET before assigning a commissioner to constitute the SAET or sit as a member of the Full Bench.

The Bill amends section 43 of the Act to increase the maximum timeframe for compulsory conciliation conferences in workers compensation disputes from 6 weeks to 10 weeks.

A number of SAET decisions have now identified that, in practice, the current 6-week timeframe specified in the Act is often unworkable due to unavoidable delays in obtaining specialist medical evidence and reports.

As a consequence, it has become routine for SAET to exercise its power to extend the period for compulsory conciliation well beyond the 6-week timeframe in the Act. Indeed, SAET itself has advised that in reality the timeframe for conciliation is often closer to 12 weeks than 6.

It is essential that workers compensation matters are dealt with expeditiously. If an injured worker's claim has been wrongly determined, that needs to be resolved as quickly as possible to provide the best opportunity for the worker to access necessary compensation and support and to make a successful return to work.

However, timeframes in the Act also need to reflect the realities of litigation. There is no point setting a timeframe which is practically impossible to meet; indeed, doing so risks trivialising the goal of completing the conciliation process as quickly as possible.

The increase to a maximum compulsory conciliation timeframe of 10 weeks acknowledges the existing timeframe is often unrealistic, and sets a more appropriate target which can actually be achieved in practice.

Importantly, the increase to a 10-week conciliation period operates in conjunction with an amendment to tighten the threshold for SAET to extend conciliation beyond this timeframe, recognising that an extension of time should be the exception rather than the norm.

This Bill replaces the current broad 'good reasons' test for extending the conciliation process with a requirement that SAET must be satisfied there is a 'substantial likelihood the proceedings will resolve by settlement' if an extension occurs. That is appropriate as the settlement of disputes should be the fundamental focus of the conciliation process.

The Bill amends section 44 of the Act to provide that the procedure for referral of matters for hearing and determination is subject to the provisions of another relevant Act. This recognises that some legislation conferring jurisdiction on SAET may provide for alternative procedures.

The Bill amends section 51 of the Act to provide for the confidentiality of communications between non-legally qualified representatives and members in proceedings before SAET.

It has been common throughout Australian history for non-legally qualified officers and employees of industrial associations—both business associations and trade unions – to represent their members in industrial courts and tribunals.

That is also the case in SAET, with several Acts expressly providing for such a right of representation. This includes in workers compensation and industrial proceedings.

While it may be thought communications between a representative and a member would be confidential, the decision of *Davies v Woolworths Group Limited* has identified such communications may be disclosed to opposing parties if a representative is not a legally qualified.

Disclosing confidential communications between a representative and a party to proceedings would substantially undermine the important representative function of industrial associations which has been recognised in South Australia for decades.

The amendments in this Bill ensure that where a party is represented by a non-legally qualified person authorised by legislation to appear before SAET as a representative, documents and communications will be subject to similar confidentiality rules as apply between legal practitioners and their clients.

The Bill amends section 65 of the Act to allow SAET, on application, to expand the scope of issues in dispute in workers compensation disputes where the Tribunal is satisfied it is in the interests of justice that a question should be determined as part of the proceedings.

Workers' compensation disputes are a unique jurisdiction. Proceedings are conducted using informal documents and without detailed applications or pleadings. It is common for the issues in dispute to ebb and flow as new medical and factual developments arise while a dispute is on foot, and as the parties' cases are sharpened closer to hearing.

The jurisdiction is also unique in that the relationship between an injured worker and a compensating authority like ReturnToWorkSA often persists over a period of years and is rarely confined to a single issue. A workplace injury may result in a cluster of related claims which arise over time; some for weekly payments, some for medical expenses or surgery, some for return to work services, and some for lump-sum compensation.

While the Act currently allows the issues in dispute in proceedings to be enlarged with the consent of the parties, concerns have been raised that one party's unreasonable refusal of consent can result in unnecessary duplication through the filing of separate applications about related issues and, ultimately, increased cost and delay.

The aim should be for all relevant issues in dispute between a worker and a compensating authority to be heard and determined in the same proceedings insofar as just and appropriate; taking into account matters such as the objects of the Tribunal, the need for procedural fairness, and case management principles.

That approach provides the best opportunity to achieve finality in litigation and allow the worker to move on with confidence in their affairs and the ability to focus on their recovery; rather than the dispiriting prospect of completing one proceeding before SAET only to then face further proceedings arising from ancillary disputes which could have been resolved simultaneously.

The amendment in this Bill will ensure that if the parties cannot agree on which issues should be dealt with in proceedings, SAET has the ability to supervise the litigation and ensure related issues are dealt with together insofar as just and appropriate.

This means, for example, that SAET can determine it is appropriate to deal with both the question of whether the worker's injury arises from their employment, and whether the worker is entitled to a particular surgery or medical expense related to injury, in the same proceedings.

The Bill amends section 86 of the Act to significantly streamline the process for the enforcement of monetary orders made by SAET.

Currently, in order to enforce an order made by SAET, a party must go through a labyrinthine legal process. Having already won their case in SAET, if a debtor refuses to comply with an order the party must first seek to prove the order as a debt through a civil claim in the Magistrates Court or District Court.

The purpose of this process is to effectively convert the order of SAET into an order of the relevant court. This provides a forum where a debtor can seek to relitigate the substantive issues raised before SAET. Only once the debt has been proven in a civil claim can a party proceed to commence an application to enforce the judgment under the *Enforcement of Judgments Act 1991*.

The amendments in the Bill will remove these unnecessary barriers to the enforcement of SAET decisions, and hopefully improve compliance with orders made by SAET generally. A worker who has been underpaid and pursued that underpayment to receive an order from the court is entitled to expect the order will be complied with.



Under these amendments, where a monetary order is made by SAET sitting as a court, it will no longer be necessary to prove the order as a debt. Instead, the order will be immediately enforceable as if it were a judgment of the Magistrates Court or District Court.

The amendments also promote access to justice by providing that where a non-legal practitioner representative, such as an officer or employee of an industrial association, is entitled to represent a party before SAET then they may also represent the party in proceedings under the *Enforcement of Judgments Act*.

The Bill amends section 92 of the Act to permit SAET to make rules providing for the suspension of inactive proceedings.

It is common for workers compensation proceedings, in particular, to involve periods of inactive litigation, such as where the parties are awaiting receipt of a specialist medical report or confirmation of a worker's prognosis following surgery.

This amendment will support SAET in the efficient management of its workload by allowing specific rules to be made dealing with these circumstances, such as placing proceedings in a suspended matters list pending the resumption of active litigation.

In conclusion, it is essential all parties in our industrial relations system – workers, employers, and compensating authorities like ReturnToWorkSA – can have confidence in the high quality, independent dispute resolution process SAET provides.

Continuous improvement is always welcome, and the Government will monitor the practical effect of the amendments in this Bill and consider any feedback from stakeholders on issues that may arise, to ensure SAET can continue to deliver the best service for the entire community.

#### Explanation of Clauses

##### Part 1—Preliminary

###### 1—Short title

###### 2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

##### Part 2—Amendment of *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*

###### 3—Amendment of section 95B—Referral of complaints to Tribunal

This clause amends section 95B to provide for referral of matters to SAET (rather than the Tribunal) in certain circumstances.

##### Part 3—Amendment of *Fair Work Act 1994*

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

This clause—

- makes an amendment consequential to clause 5
- amends the definition of *industrial matter* to specifically include matters in an industrial instrument relating to wage parity.

###### 5—Insertion of section 4A

This clause inserts a new section 4A as follows:

###### 4A—Meaning of employer for public employees

This provides that the employer for public employees is the body or person (not being a Minister) declared by regulation to be the employer of the employees (and the employer is an instrumentality of the Crown and is capable of binding the Crown).

###### 6—Amendment of section 8—Jurisdiction to interpret awards and enterprise agreements

This clause provides that jurisdiction conferred under section 8 of the Act vests in SAET constituted as the South Australian Employment Court.

###### 7—Substitution of section 11

The current section 11 is deleted because it is unnecessary. This clause substitutes a new section 11 as follows:

###### 11—Jurisdiction to settle and resolve industrial disputes

Jurisdiction to settle and resolve industrial disputes is conferred on SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission.

8—Amendment of section 12—Orders to remedy or restrain contraventions

This clause provides that jurisdiction conferred under section 12 of the Act vests in SAET constituted as the South Australian Employment Court.

9—Amendment of section 13—Advisory jurisdiction

This clause provides that jurisdiction conferred under section 13 of the Act vests in SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission.

10—Insertion of section 13A

This clause inserts a new section 13A as follows:

13A—Mandatory injunctions

Section 7(2) of the *Crown Proceedings Act 1992* does not apply in respect of proceedings under the Act (other than proceedings under section 10).

11—Insertion of heading

12—Insertion of heading

These sections divide Chapter 2 Part 2 into Divisions.

13—Repeal of section 24

Section 24 is repealed.

14—Amendment of section 34—Award to include interest

An award of interest, or lump sum instead of interest, must take into account the period between the day the relevant cause of action arose and the day the judgement is delivered.

15—Insertion of Chapter 3 Part A1

This clause inserts an interpretative provision as follows:

Part A1—Interpretation

65—References to SAET

A reference to *SAET* in Chapter 3 is a reference to SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission.

16—Amendment of section 69—Remuneration

This clause removes the requirement for SAET to establish a minimum standard for remuneration at least once in every year (which is consequential to clause 26) and provides that the minimum standard for remuneration is established by a Full Bench of SAET.

17—Amendment of section 70—Sick leave/carer's leave

18—Amendment of section 70A—Bereavement leave

19—Amendment of section 70B—Family and domestic violence leave

20—Amendment of section 71—Annual leave

21—Amendment of section 72—Parental leave

22—Amendment of section 72A—Minimum standards—additional matters

23—Amendment of section 72B—Special provision relating to severance payments

These clauses provide for various minimum standards to be established or reviewed by a Full Bench of SAET.

24—Amendment of section 79—Approval of enterprise agreement

This clause provides that an enterprise agreement may be referred to a Full Bench of SAET for approval in certain circumstances.

25—Amendment of section 90—Power to regulate industrial matters by award

This clause allows SAET to vary an award about remuneration and other industrial matters and removes an obsolete note..

## 26—Insertion of section 100A

This clause inserts a new provision as follows:

## 100A—State Wage Case

A Full Bench of SAET must, within 3 months of the conclusion of the Annual Wage Review conducted by the Fair Work Commission, conduct an annual review of the minimum standard of remuneration under section 69, minimum wage rates in awards and minimum work-related allowances and loadings in awards.

## 27—Amendment of section 108—Question to be determined at the hearing

This clause updates a cross reference.

## 28—Amendment of section 120—Application for registration

This clause provides that applications for registration under Chapter 4 Part 2 are to be made to SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission.

## 29—Amendment of section 125—Alteration of rules of registered association

This clause provides that SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission can register an alteration of rules.

## 30—Amendment of section 127—Orders to secure compliance with rules etc

This clause provides that certain applications under section 127 are to be made to SAET constituted as the South Australian Employment Court.

## 31—Amendment of section 130—De-registration of associations

This clause provides that SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission can de-register an association.

## 32—Amendment of section 132—Application for registration

This clause provides that applications for registration under Chapter 4 Part 3 are to be made to SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission.

## 33—Amendment of section 134—Registration

This clause is consequential to clause 32.

## 34—Amendment of section 135—De-registration

This clause provides that SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission can de-register an organisation or branch.

## 35—Amendment of section 138—Limitations of actions in tort

This clause provides that applications under section 138 are to be made to a Full Bench of SAET constituted as an industrial relations commission.

## 36—Amendment of section 140—Powers of officials of employee associations

This clause provides that in exercising powers under section 140(4) SAET must be constituted as an industrial relations commission.

## 37—Amendment of section 219D—Compliance notices

This clause provides for the making of applications to SAET constituted as the South Australian Employment Court for a review of a notice issued under the section.

## 38—Repeal of section 230

This section repeals section 230.

## 39—Transitional provisions

This clause provides transitional provisions related to the Part.

Part 4—Amendment of *Magistrates Court Act 1991*

## 40—Amendment of section 9—Criminal jurisdiction

This clause increases the jurisdictional limit applicable in the case of an offence under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* being heard by an industrial magistrate to a fine of \$1,500,000.

## 41—Transitional provision

The new limit proposed under clause 40 will apply in relation to proceedings commenced in the Magistrates Court after the commencement of that clause.

Part 5—Amendment of *South Australian Employment Tribunal Act 2014*

42—Amendment of section 6—Jurisdiction of Tribunal

This clause removes the current section 6(2)(b)(ii) and provides that if a matter is assigned to the South Australian Employment Court, the Court may direct, or an Act or the rules may provide, that the matter be the subject of a compulsory conference in an industrial relations commission.

43—Amendment of section 6A—Conferral of jurisdiction—criminal matters

This clause increases the jurisdictional limit applicable in the case of a minor indictable offence heard by a magistrate of the South Australian Employment Court to a fine of \$1,500,000.

44—Amendment of section 13—Appointment of Deputy Presidents

This clause requires consultation with the President before an appointment is made under the section.

45—Amendment of section 19—Constitution of Tribunal

Under this amendment a Full Bench of the Tribunal may, when acting as an industrial relations commission, consist of 3 members of which at least 1 must be a Presidential member. In addition it is provided that if a non-Presidential member is to constitute the Tribunal, or is to be a member of a Full Bench of the Tribunal, for the purpose of dealing with a matter, the President must be satisfied that the member has appropriate knowledge, expertise, or experience relating to that class of matter.

46—Amendment of section 43—Compulsory conciliation conferences

A conciliation conference must be attended by persons with sufficient decision-making authority to fully participate in settlement discussions. The amendments also make provision in relation to the maximum period over which a conference may occur and extension of such a period in certain cases. The amendments also make it clear that the conference may enlarge the scope of proceedings in accordance with section 65.

47—Amendment of section 44—Referral of matters for hearing and determination

This clause makes a minor clarifying amendment to section 44.

48—Amendment of section 51—Representation

This clause allows protection equivalent to legal professional privilege where a person is entitled to be represented in the Tribunal by a person who is not a legal practitioner.

49—Substitution of section 65

This clause substitutes a new section 65 as follows:

65—Power to enlarge scope

Under the proposed new provision the Tribunal may enlarge the scope of proceedings either with the consent of all parties or, in the case of proceedings are under the *Return to Work Act 2014*, where (on application and after giving all parties an opportunity to be heard), the Tribunal is satisfied it is in the interests of justice that a question should be determined as part of the proceedings.

50—Amendment of section 67—Appeals

This clause amends section 67 to provide that an order for costs may only be made on an appeal to a Full Bench of SAET if the SAET Act, or a relevant Act, specifically provides for the making of such an order.

51—Amendment of section 72—Functions of registrars

This clause provides for a review of an exercise of administrative power by a registrar.

52—Amendment of section 86—Enforcement of decisions and orders of Tribunal

This clause makes provisions in relation to recovery of monetary orders made by the Tribunal.

53—Amendment of section 91—Disrupting proceedings of Tribunal

This clause amends section 91 so that the section will also apply where a person contravenes or fails to comply with an order for payment of money.

54—Amendment of section 92—Rules

Rules may provide for the suspension of inactive proceedings.

55—Transitional provisions

This clause provides transitional provisions.

Part 6—Amendment of *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*

56—Amendment of section 230—Prosecutions

This clause increases the limit on sentencing for an indictable offence against the Act charged on complaint in the South Australian Employment Court to a fine of \$1,500,000.

57—Transitional provision

The new limit proposed under clause 56 will apply in relation to proceedings commenced in the South Australian Employment Court after the commencement of that clause.

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (21:05):** I indicate that I will be the lead speaker for the opposition and indicate opposition support for the bill. The minister is right to highlight that the bill arrives here now a decade on from the establishment of the tribunal. It is well to reflect at this time on the remarks of the then deputy premier in June 2014, in the course of the debate that accompanied the introduction and subsequent passage of the bill to establish the SAET in 2014. I reflect on those opening remarks of the Hon. John Rau in his capacity at that time as attorney-general.

He observed that the jurisdiction of what was to be the new tribunal would be to review certain decisions arising from the Return to Work scheme that was then planned to commence the following year. He observed that the South Australian Employment Tribunal would have similar functions, powers and operating approach as the then newly established Civil and Administrative Tribunal—and more about that in a moment. He observed that it would provide efficient and cost-effective processes for all parties involved, act with as little formality and technicality as possible and be flexible in the way that it conducted its business.

The tribunal was established further with the objective to be transparent and accountable, headed by a President who would hold concurrent office as a judge of the Industrial Relations Court. The Attorney, as he then was, went on to advise the house that at that time the workers compensation tribunal dealt with disputes about claims for workers compensation under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act of 1996, and the establishment of the new Return to Work scheme was a driver for requiring a fresh approach to the resolution of disputes arising under the new scheme.

The new scheme therefore was designed with less moving parts, as the Attorney described, which he anticipated would provide injured workers and their employers with greater certainty regarding their entitlements and obligations under the legislation. It was foreshadowed by the Attorney at that time that the government anticipated that the rate of disputation should decrease significantly, and those disputes that did arise that could not be resolved through reconsideration by the corporation would be dealt with by the newly to be established Employment Tribunal.

The observation is made that the bill was introduced concurrently with the Return to Work Bill 2014. The balance of that contribution in June 2014 is there for relevant reference as we come to now this decade down the track and the consideration of this amendment and reform bill, which covers a whole range of matters, largely to improve in terms of the dispatch of those objects in light of the experience of now many years down the track.

For completeness in terms of making some observations about the debate back at the instigation, back at the commencement of the tribunal, I refer to the Leader of the Opposition, as he then was, Steven Marshall, in leading the debate for the opposition, indicating the opposition's committed support for the establishment of the tribunal and for the associated reforms.

It was the opposition's view at that time, and it remains the opposition's view, that these tribunal processes, permitting, as they were expected to do, to assist businesses in South Australia to deal with disputation in a much more efficient way, were something that was supported at the beginning and, of course, a decade down the track. Sensible reform in relation to the jurisdictional functions of the tribunal is supported by the opposition. Those are remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, in particular in September 2014, and further contributions to the debate on 24 September 2014. I commend those contributions as well as others who contributed to the debate now almost exactly a decade ago.

In indicating that I will take the same sort of approach as the then Leader of the Opposition did in 2014 in not staying all that very long in the debate. I will just take a moment to acknowledge

the very thoughtful and thorough work of the Law Society in its consideration of the sensible reforms that can be made in light of some of the challenges that the tribunal has faced over that time. On many occasions with legislation such as this, I have had occasion to thank and recognise the work of the Law Society and those members who participate in specialist committees that are dedicated to providing a thorough, thoughtful response to legislation. This is particularly true on this occasion where an amendment bill is coming along really as an across-the-board review of what can be done to improve the functioning of the tribunal.

I note that, perhaps mercifully, the minister, in providing us the benefit of the government's second reading explanation, obtained leave to incorporate the balance of what was a rather lengthy contribution from the Attorney in the other place when the bill was debated there. I certainly commend that to members when it becomes available overnight, because it sets out really comprehensively the scope and subject matter of the legislation. I will not stay to rehearse all of that. Suffice to say that the bill has been before the parliament in its present form since early this year, when it was introduced in the other place back in February—and so here we are in August.

I mentioned the contribution of the Law Society. That is expressed primarily by the letter of the then President of the Law Society, Justin Stewart-Rattray, to the Special Counsel to the Chief Executive of the Attorney-General's Department. That letter to Ms Steph Halliday is dated 25 November 2022 and it gives a clue as to the work the government did over that first year.

Without reading the entirety of the contents of the Law Society's contribution at that time, I indicate that it is a thoughtful and thoroughgoing treatment of both the successes and the challenges, if I might describe it that way, up to that time, and I know the contribution of the Law Society has informed the bill as it stands.

It is a letter that runs to 49 paragraphs. It is an eight-page letter and covers a wide range of subject matter. It also makes particular reference to the South Australian Employment Tribunal's own key publication in 2019, entitled 'Proposed approach to managing Return to Work Act 2014 cases at hearing and determination'. It encloses, further, four letters, each of them from the Law Society and addressed in the main to the relevant judicial officers over the course of the decade or so, including in the years prior to the establishment of SAET. Those are all of particular usefulness as well.

I might make more particular reference to the 30 October 2019 letter to the Hon. President Justice Dolphin, which is a 20-page letter from the then President of the Law Society, Amy Nikolovski, addressing the Law Society's considered views broadly in relation to the proposed approach to managing the Return to Work Act 2014 cases at hearing and determination.

Just in terms of those references—that is, the 25 November 2022 letter and each of those enclosures that I have mentioned, particularly that 30 October 2019 letter—it is apparent that the Law Society has been keenly engaged in the process of considering the circumstances of the establishment of the tribunal, its operation on a year-to-year basis in terms of engagement with the responsible judicial officers and, in turn, its engagement with the government.

Turning just briefly then to the topics that are the subject of the Law Society's concern in November 2022, I note the Law Society's observation that, in its view, the tribunal is efficiently disposing of the litigation before it, in the main. But there is really quite a pointed reference to its history of that having not always been the case. The Law Society points to significant resourcing issues as having been a challenge, the lack of resourcing that has led to delays, various particular matters of evidence and process in relation to affidavits, and issues in relation to the enforcement of SAET orders.

The Law Society also refers to remote attendances, and in that respect I will draw particular reference to the Law Society's observation that, at that time, it was generally offering:

...in-principle support for the use of video conferencing and like technology to facilitate remote attendances in various forums.

I am quoting from the letter here:

However, the Society considers it would be desirable to have some level of consistency with how remote attendances and such technology is utilised in the Tribunal.

So it has turned its mind to how those matters of facilitating remote attendances and consistency might be accommodated. There is reference to the obligation on the positive duty on employers to provide suitable work for injured workers in the operation of section 18 of the Return to Work Act 2014, and the society makes particular reference to its related submission earlier in the year in that regard. Then there are a number of other matters that are raised in the balance of what is a, as I have said, thoughtful and thoroughgoing feedback in relation to the review.

So we are now dealing with a decade-on reform bill. The bill, in providing for the appropriate jurisdiction and functionality of the tribunal, makes amendment to several acts, some of which have been referred to and I think, in the balance of the minister's contribution, we will see a treatment of how those amendments are provided for in the bill. Suffice to say that we have part 2 amending the Equal Opportunity Act; part 3 amending the Fair Work Act; and part 4 amending the Magistrates Court Act, and that is specifically in relation to the civil jurisdiction of the relevant magistrate—extending that quite significantly. Part 5 amends the South Australian Employment Tribunal Act 2014 itself, and part 6, finally, amends the Work Health and Safety Act 2012.

As I have indicated, without then trawling through those changes in their entirety, I think I am in a position to commend to members of the house the contribution of the minister and the balance of that contribution that will find its way onto the *Hansard*. With those brief remarks, emphasising, as I do, the valuable contribution of the Law Society in this matter in particular, I commend the bill to the house.

**Mrs PEARCE (King) (21:27):** I rise to speak in support of the Statutes Amendment (South Australian Employment Tribunal) Bill, which marks the delivery of yet another election commitment, that being a commitment to review the practice and jurisdiction of the South Australian Employment Tribunal. The South Australian Employment Tribunal is responsible for resolving workplace-related disputes and issues. It is a statutory independent tribunal that is responsible for resolving return-to-work disputes, resolving SA employment and industrial disputes, regulating South Australia's industrial awards agreements and registers, hearing SA work-related prosecutions, and also resolving South Australian dust disease matters.

In each of the cases before it, SAET aims to reach a fair and just outcome as quickly as possible, either through agreement at a conference conciliation or mediation, or through a decision at a hearing. Our review was to ensure it is effective and efficient and to empower it to enforce its decisions without going through other courts.

The consultation undertaken as part of this process was undertaken by the Attorney-General's Department, which engaged with trade unions, the business community and also legal organisations throughout. Now we have the bill before us, which is relatively simply designed, but it is designed in such a way that will help improve the efficiency and to make the process smoother for the litigants before it.

Throughout the consultation I understand that the opinions of stakeholders across sectors was that SAET was identified as a best practice model for an industrial tribunal. I also understand that it handles a caseload that sits around 6,000 applications per year. Having such a high-quality tribunal with processes and commissioners who hold a great level of respect with all who engage with them is a promising start. All that is needed is a bit of fine-tuning to help keep them operating at a level that is acceptable to ensure that fair and just outcomes are reached as quickly as possible.

In improving the efficiency of the state's Employment Tribunal, this bill also covers important reforms. Among these are the removal of loopholes that had been relied upon by the likes of the previous government to avoid complying with enterprise agreements that had been negotiated with public sector unions. Amendments to the South Australian Employment Tribunal Act will also now see that internal documents prepared by union representatives when representing members before the SAET are treated in the same way as that of a lawyer. Additionally, the bill will also move amendments to allow commissioners of the SAET to sit as members of the Full Bench in industrial-related matters.

This amendment bill is packed full of reforms that will make life easier for all who interact with SAET, but what I am most excited for within this bill are our amendments to the Fair Work Act that make it clear that this same job, same pay terms can be included in agreements under the state

system, to say that where we have two people doing the same job it is only fair that they are getting paid the same amount to do it. For workers who are covered under the national Fair Work system, the same job, same pay reforms have been proving themselves very effective in ensuring that workers hired under labour hire companies are paid the same way as those employed directly under an enterprise agreement with their host employer.

This is so important because it is only right that every employee has a right to secure and stable employment, and part of this is ensuring that if they are turning up to work and are working alongside others doing the same job, they are not being undercut and paid less for doing the same amount of work. This has also helped to defend against businesses forcing their workers into dodgy labour hire contracts designed with one intent in mind: to exploit workers out of their hard won and well-deserved pay and conditions.

Ultimately, the impact of this bill will be that it will make improvements to the process for those who are involved in our state's industrial relations and workers compensation system. As a member of parliament who strongly believes in doing what we can to build a better, fairer and more equitable future for all, I commend this bill to the house.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Veterans Affairs, Minister for Local Government) (21:32):** I thank the members for their contributions and particularly note the support for the passage of this bill by the lead speaker for the opposition, the member for Heysen, and also note the contribution of the member for King. In doing so, I commend the bill to the house. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

### **CASINO (PENALTIES) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 1 May 2024.)

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (21:34):** I rise to indicate that I am the lead speaker for the opposition, and I indicate also that the opposition supports the bill. I had the occasion just earlier this evening to have a word with the minister about the progress in the debate on the bill. It came to my attention, therefore, only quite late in the day today that there was the prospect that the bill might be coming on for debate, and I welcome that.

I say that in circumstances where this is a bill that was, for a time some months ago, regarded as a bill and the measures that it contains which is largely about quite dramatically increasing penalties, and in appropriate ways that the government has articulated really quite sensibly. There was a particular urgency to the passage of the bill some months ago, and I just indicate that at that time there was a willingness on my part and the part of the opposition to facilitate that passage.

In the mystery of the variety of government priorities that come along from time to time, and without reflecting on any particular matters the subject of debate in the course of this Fifty-Fifth Parliament, it is somewhat passing curious to me that this bill has not been given greater priority over recent months. The record speaks for itself in terms of what the government has chosen to prioritise in the intervening period, but here we are in the course of the first sitting day back for now many weeks—and relatively well into the evening of the first day, if I might put it that way—and we have made our way to the bill. I welcome that; I just flag my interest in what has actually transpired.

I hope no matters of consequence have been, as it were, lost in the passage of time since that initial flush of urgency came along, with the circulation of the bill and the reasons for it and so on. I trust that the passage of the bill now, the advancing of debate, will permit the consequences in terms of the significantly increased penalties, primarily, to have effect in the intended way.

There is such a large number of penalties that are the subject of the bill that, for the benefit of my colleagues in the opposition, I had cause to circulate a form of annexure with a table. There is really a wideranging number of penalties the subject of the bill and they are to be found in



amendments to the Casino Act 1997, where some of the really enormous increases are to be found, and also very dramatic increases the subject of the Gambling Administration Act 2019.

I draw particular attention to section 39(2)(b)(ii) of the Gambling Administration Act 2019 which will transform an existing penalty of \$100,000 to a proposed penalty of \$75 million. To characterise the nature of these penalty changes, they are far from incremental; they are really transformative. I think it has been put by others along the way that the endeavour here is to move penalties associated with these relevant offences well and truly away from being able to be characterised as some sort of cost of doing business; rather, they are existential in terms of necessary compliance.

Seeing as it has been some time since the introduction, I pause to walk through those changes with some level of particularity. We see that clauses 4 to 7 and 9 to 20 of the bill and clauses 1 to 3, 5 and 9 of schedule 1 have the effect of substantially increasing the penalties that can be imposed for offences relating to the operation, supervision and integrity of the casino. The changes that are the subject of those provisions will be the first substantial increase in penalties since the Casino Act was passed, and the penalties will be applicable to the casino licensee, to close associates of the licensee and designated persons of the licensee.

Clause 4 of the schedule would amend section 36(1) of the Gambling Administration Act to provide two additional causes for disciplinary action against the casino licensee. The new clauses would allow the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner to take disciplinary action against the licensee if the licensee or a close associate of the licensee or a designated person engaged in serious misconduct or had a penalty imposed against them by a court or tribunal in the commonwealth, and there is a context for that.

Clause 8 of the schedule is consequential, expanding the commissioner's existing scope to take disciplinary action under section 42 of the Gambling Administration Act whether or not criminal or civil proceedings have been or are to be taken in relation to the matters the subject of the disciplinary action. Clause 7(1) of the schedule would increase the maximum fine the commissioner can impose on the licensee, as I have indicated earlier, in a really quite transformative way: from \$100,000 presently to \$75 million. That is, on any measure, a significant increase in the penalty, and we are told that that aligns with changes recently made in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia which now permit penalties up to \$100 million, so we are broadly in the same territory.

The government, in providing its briefing to me and the opposition, advises that the \$75 million maximum penalty is determined having regard to the size and scale of casino operations in comparison with other jurisdictions. There it is, and of a comparative scale to that very substantial regime that applies now in the remainder of the mainland states.

Clause 6 of the schedule would increase the maximum penalty payable for a default notice given by the commissioner from \$10,000 to a million dollars. Section 38 of the Gambling Administration Act also allows the commission to give a notice to a gambling provider specifying grounds for disciplinary action, and that action may be avoided by the paying of a specified sum. As I have indicated, there is a very large wideranging number of monetary penalties that are significantly increased, and they are all there on the face of the bill.

There is of course a context to all of this that is I think relatively well known, and I go back to my remarks at the outset about, if not urgency, a desire to see the passage of the bill without delay in the context of AUSTRAC proceedings against SkyCity Adelaide in terms of civil penalty proceedings commenced back in December 2022 and an investigation under part 3 of the Casino Act that is the subject of a report of the then Liquor and Gambling Commissioner, Dini Soulio, dated 27 June 2022.

Those two processes and their conclusion are relevantly providing context to the importance of progressing this legislation. So I say, given that here we are in now late August 2024, the contents of the bill now being well familiar, the purpose and context and all the rest of it being well familiar as well, my curiosity as it stands is as to the practical application of the amendments and any assurance that the government is able to give that the passage of time has not affected in a negative way the opportunity to apply these changes to the present circumstances.

As I have perhaps said on previous occasions, I indicate my appreciation for Consumer and Business Services' provision of what are helpful notes in terms of outlining the purposes of the bill. This is no exception here. I indicate my appreciation for that, for the provision of briefing by the government, and I thank the minister for facilitating all those processes.

Again, I just indicate that if there is some assurance that might be given as to what the passage now of the bill will permit, in terms of its application and any general update about those broader circumstances, then I just flag that might otherwise be my point of curiosity in any committee process that might follow. With those words, I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (21:50):** I rise in support of this bill, which seeks to ensure integrity and ethical conduct within casino governance. This bill seeks to modernise the Casino Act 1997 and Gambling Administration Act 2019 in the face of unparalleled scrutiny into the contemporary casino governance and integrity.

This bill introduced new and increased penalties for noncompliance with these acts for casino operations, which will be imposed either as penalties for criminal offences, as expiation fees or as fines imposed from disciplinary action. New clauses will also be established for the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner to take disciplinary action if:

- circumstances come to light that show the casino licensee, a close associate of the licensee or a designated person is found to have engaged in conduct that constitutes serious misconduct; or
- if a court or tribunal in this state, the commonwealth, or a state or territory of the commonwealth has imposed a penalty (whether civil or criminal) on the casino licensee, a close associate or a designated person.

Furthermore, the transitional provisions within the bill clarify that the change being made to the maximum fine for disciplinary action, as well as any new clauses for taking disciplinary action, will retrospectively apply to the past conduct. This will ensure that conduct which has occurred prior to commencement of the provision, as well as to disciplinary action which has commenced but the penalty has not yet been determined, will be held to the new standard.

Over the last three years, we have witnessed a series of independent inquiries across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia. These inquiries exposed widespread and serious integrity, compliance, governance and risk management issues at casinos operated by subsidiaries of Australia's two largest casino operators, Crown Resorts Limited and The Star Entertainment Group Limited, leading to calls from the community for the casino sector to be subjected to stronger regulatory scrutiny.

I would like to commend the Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Andrea Michaels, for her efforts in tabling these vital reforms before the house, and I commend this bill to the house.

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (21:52):** I would like to thank the member for Heysen and the member for Adelaide for their remarks on this bill. As the member for Heysen indicated, there are some questions that I understand he will have through committee and I am happy to address them at that point in time. I am very pleased to see the progress of this bill through this house and in the other place as promptly as possible, and I look forward to the committee stage.

Bill read a second time.

*Committee Stage*

In committee.

Clause 1.

**Mr TEAGUE:** It might be convenient to deal with clause 1 and perhaps by reference to the member for Adelaide's contribution. We understand that the effect of all this is to have retrospective effect in terms of the penalties for those not yet concluded. I think I referred in the course of my contribution to civil penalty proceedings that had commenced now some considerable period of time ago. With respect to covering the field, if it is possible to do it in one go, is there an indication that

this continues to have the capacity to slot in and to then have full application in terms of the circumstances that have informed this and is there anything that the minister can then add in terms of concluding the round of reviews, including that that has been referred to and identified in terms of the terms of reference of Dini Soulio some time ago?

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS:** What is on public record, of course, are the AUSTRAC proceedings that the member refers to. They were finalised in June, when AUSTRAC announced that SkyCity had been ordered to pay \$67 million by penalty via the Federal Court and also \$3 million of AUSTRAC's costs. Those proceedings have now been finalised since the introduction of this bill.

What has also happened is the investigation by the Hon. Brian Martin was paused while those AUSTRAC proceedings were on foot. The commissioner has advised that has now been recommenced so that investigation is now ongoing with the commissioner expecting a report by the end of December this year from the Hon. Brian Martin.

In terms of the member's comments about the passage of this bill, of course we did have a budget, estimates and winter break and we had about a week and a half of sitting before budget between my introduction of this bill. So in terms of progressing this, the member may have questions about the retrospectivity in later clauses, but until the Hon. Brian Martin's review is complete and that report has been completed and received by the commissioner and decisions made on those issues of suitability, there has been no consequence of any delay or otherwise on the passage of this bill that might concern the member.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I thank the minister for that answer. Perhaps for the record if I can put it in this way for my benefit: the capacity for the civil penalty to be imposed in the order of \$67 million earlier in the year, as it relates to the circumstances of the passage of this bill, can the minister just indicate how that has been possible to achieve and where this bill now comes along subsequently so that we have that on the record? Otherwise, I understand, we look forward to the results in due course of the Martin review.

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS:** Provisions of this bill that are relevant include the changes around causes for disciplinary action where conduct that was undertaken by the casino that were relevant for the AUSTRAC proceedings, that same conduct might be considered by the commissioner under those new amended causes for disciplinary action. The penalties may apply to previous conduct, including the conduct that was considered by the Federal Court in the AUSTRAC proceedings. That same conduct may, after the passage of this bill, be considered by the commissioner in determining if or what penalties might be imposed on that same conduct.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I might have just missed it somewhere along the way then. The source of the legislative power to impose the \$67 million penalty earlier in the year, it is obviously not this. Where do we see that and how does that then correlate to circumstances post the passage of this bill?

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS:** Those penalties were imposed by the Federal Court under anti-money laundering and counterterrorism finance federal legislation. That same conduct might be considered under state legislation, but they are two different proceedings. One was federal legislation and proceedings brought by AUSTRAC in the Federal Court, and we are here looking at the Casino Act and the Gambling Administration Act and any penalties that may or may not be imposed for that same conduct.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Perhaps then, for completeness: there is no screaming rush to legislate here in that the Federal Court has been able to get on with disposing of that matter. So long as this is dealt with so as to provide a possibility to answer any outcomes of the Martin review, then the landscape is in complete shape, as it were. Is that a fair way to describe the relevant timing for the imperative to pass this?

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS:** That is right. As things have panned out with the Federal Court proceedings—when I introduced the bill in May, those proceedings had not been finalised. We did not really know what the result would be. As things have panned out, those Federal Court proceedings are finalised. The Hon. Brian Martin has recommenced his consideration of those matters, and there is no prejudice to whatever might or might not come from that review.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (2 to 20), schedule and titled passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

*Third Reading*

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (22:01):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**RETURN TO WORK (EMPLOYMENT AND PROGRESSIVE INJURIES) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS) BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

At 22:03 the house adjourned until Wednesday 28 August 2024 at 10:30.

*Answers to Questions***PENNESHAW WHARF**

In reply to **the Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition)** (30 April 2024).

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining):** The Department for Infrastructure and Transport (the department) is currently upgrading berthing structures at Cape Jervis and Penneshaw ports, with these upgrade works forecast for completion in early 2025.

During these upgrade works, ferries at both ports, and cruise ships at Penneshaw will be accommodated.

Cruise ships for the next cruise season will be accommodated at Penneshaw. No decision has been made to use Christmas Cove as an alternative at this time.

The project team is working closely with key stakeholders, including the South Australian Tourism Commission and Kangaroo Island Council to inform a suitable solution.

**HOCKEY SA**

In reply to **the Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition)** (19 June 2024).

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs):** I have been advised of the following:

I met with Hockey Australia and Hockey SA on 4 April 2024. My Chief of Staff met with Hockey Australia on 20 June 2024. Opportunities surrounding hockey events held in South Australia were discussed.

**EYRE PENINSULA DESALINATION PLANT**

In reply to **Mr TELFER (Flinders)** (27 June 2024).

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning):** I have been advised:

SA Water has sought, and continues to seek, engagement with Barngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (BDAC) on cultural heritage matters related to the proposed Eyre Peninsula desalination plant, to be located at Billy Lights Point, Port Lincoln.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, MAGILL CAMPUS**

In reply to **the Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** (27 June 2024).

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning):** On Thursday 28 March 2024, I joined the Minister for Education, Training and Skills, the Hon. Blair Boyer MP for a site visit at the Magill Community Children's Centre as we toured the site with its director and governing council chair to hear and discuss their plans for both the present and for the future of their site.

*Estimates Replies***EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS**

In reply to **Mr BATTY (Bragg)** (21 June 2024). (Estimates Committee A)

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

Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Since 1 July 2023, four new executive appointments were made, with a further three appointments to vacant positions already in the existing structure.

Individual executive total remuneration package values, as detailed in schedule 2 of an executive employee's contract, will not be disclosed as it is deemed to be an unreasonable disclosure of personal affairs.

Department for Energy and Mining and Office of Hydrogen Power South Australia

Since 1 July 2023, seven executive appointments were made.

Individual executive total remuneration package values, as detailed in schedule 2 of an executive employee's contract, will not be disclosed as it is deemed to be an unreasonable disclosure of personal affairs.

**EXECUTIVE POSITIONS**

In reply to **Mr BATTY (Bragg)** (21 June 2024). (Estimates Committee A)

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

Department for Infrastructure and Transport

Since 1 July 2023, there were three executive positions abolished.

Individual executive total remuneration package values, as detailed in schedule 2 of an executive employee's contract, will not be disclosed as it is deemed to be an unreasonable disclosure of personal affairs.

Department for Energy and Mining and Office of Hydrogen Power South Australia

Since 1 July 2023, there was one executive position abolished.

Individual executive total remuneration package values, as detailed in schedule 2 of an executive employee's contract, will not be disclosed as it is deemed to be an unreasonable disclosure of personal affairs.

**CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS**

In reply to **Mr BATTY (Bragg)** (21 June 2024). (Estimates Committee A)

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining):** I have been advised that for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and the Department for Energy and Mining:

As required by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet Circular PC013—Annual Reporting Requirements for 2023-24 information relating to expenditure on consultants and contractors including the vendor, total cost and nature of work undertaken, will be detailed in annual reports published by agencies.

**CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS**

In reply to **Mr BATTY (Bragg)** (21 June 2024). (Estimates Committee A)

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining):** I have been advised that for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and the Department for Energy and Mining:

As required by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet Circular PC013—Annual Reporting Requirements for 2024-25 information relating to estimated costs on consultants and contractors including the vendor, total cost and nature of work undertaken, will be detailed in the relevant annual reports published by the agency.

**GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING**

In reply to **Mr BATTY (Bragg)** (21 June 2024). (Estimates Committee A)

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining):** I have been advised that for the Department for Infrastructure and Transport and the Department for Energy and Mining:

As an open and transparent government, marketing communications activity reports and annual media expenditure details are proactively disclosed. The reports list all marketing campaigns over the cost of \$50,000 and budgeted expenditure for approved campaigns and are disclosed on the DPC website:

<https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/about-the-department/accountability/government-marketing-advertising-expenditure>.