

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 31 October 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.

Motions

STILLBIRTH

Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (11:02): I move:

That this house establish a select committee to investigate and report on stillbirth in South Australia and its prevention, specifically—

- (a) best practice stillbirth prevention education and awareness programs for expectant parents; including, but not exclusive to, the monitoring of babies in utero;
- (b) public education programs/initiatives to increase community awareness of stillbirth and where people can access support in the community;
- (c) models of care in pregnancy that may contribute to a reduction in stillbirth (including for priority populations);
- (d) models for follow-on care (including mental health support or care in subsequent pregnancies) for parents after stillbirth (and infant loss more generally);
- (e) support and training for healthcare professionals relating to stillbirth prevention and bereavement care;
- (f) best practice regarding stillbirth investigations (including access, information for parents and case review), pathologist training and service provision;
- (g) processes of data collection, reporting and monitoring;
- (h) allocation of research effort; and
- (i) any other related matters.

I will speak very briefly today about the introduction of this committee to the house. As many would know, because I have spoken many times in this place about this matter before, it is of course a matter that is incredibly close to my own heart having lost my own little brother to stillbirth when I was four.

I think that today is a particularly important day to be introducing this committee, on the final day of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month—31 October. It is a really important month for families not only to spread awareness and education about pregnancy and infant loss but also, of course, to break the stigma around having conversations about pregnancy and infant loss. In my own personal experience, whether it be here in this place or just out and about in the community, I have made it a personal goal of mine to do what I can to break that stigma and to have those open and honest conversations that for many generations have not been had, generally because it has been seen as women's business or issues relating to women's health—which, we all know, are not often spoken about or have not been spoken about historically.

Despite the numbers—and there are six babies born still in Australia every day, a number higher than the national road toll—there is still stigma around talking about stillbirth, and I think that is incredibly unfortunate. When I think about that figure, I think back on the fact that it was only a generation or two generations ago when parents and grandparents and family members were not given the opportunity to officially name their babies. They were not given the opportunity to give their

babies a final resting place, a place where families can go and grieve and remember those babies lost and loved. I think that is incredibly sad and it has actually added, for many generations, to the complex grief that parents and family members experience as a result of pregnancy and infant loss.

Of course, we have come a very long way, and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the tireless efforts of former Senator and former Premier of New South Wales Kristina Keneally, who has been an advocate for stillbirth awareness and education for many years after the loss of her daughter, Caroline. I went to a function on Friday night, the Still Aware Gala. Still Aware is Australia's first stillbirth charity based here in SA, set up by the Foord and Heath families after the stillbirth of little Alfie some years ago. Kristina was the guest speaker that evening, and she talked about the fact that as someone who was highly educated and not from a low SES area, she did not actually know that something like that could happen to her.

Unfortunately, I think it is often the case that individuals do not realise that they could be facing or experiencing a pregnancy loss or a stillbirth until it happens to them. I think that is a real problem. We need to be talking about education and awareness, particularly in utero. The Still Aware foundation have done a really incredible job of increasing that awareness, including doing some tailored programs for educating mums in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, which has been really important. We know that, unfortunately, the rates in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of stillbirth and pregnancy loss more generally are much higher than those of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

I want to commend the work of Jane Warland, who has been running the WINDS project with Still Aware to create those educational pieces not just for those communities but alongside those communities; I believe they refer to it as 'for mob, with mob'. The way that that has been designed has been so important in terms of increasing awareness in places where those conversations have not been had in the past.

This morning, I had the really wonderful opportunity of going to the women's and kids' with Minister Picton and meeting with some individuals who have been involved in the Wattle Clinic. The Wattle Clinic has been set up this year at the women's and kids' to support families who are experiencing another pregnancy after the devastating loss of a child. So far, since January, the Wattle Clinic has seen 29 families through their pregnancies with that really important continuity of care and follow-up care after what was obviously an incredibly traumatic experience for those families. There are another 10 pregnant families who are going through the Wattle Clinic at the moment as well.

We were really blessed to have a family there with us: Demian, Hayley and baby Bodhi, who is three months old. They shared with us their experiences of going through the Wattle Clinic to bring Bodhi safely into the world after their firstborn baby, Zen, was stillborn. It was such an incredible story to hear from them but also a pretty emotional moment for me returning to the women's and kids'. I have not spent a lot of time at the women's and kids' as an adult, I will tell you, but when I was little we were there all the time.

After the stillbirth of my baby brother Ben at the women's and kids', my mum spent almost the entirety of the following two pregnancies living at the women's and kids' to make sure that she was supported through those subsequent pregnancies, my little brothers Zach and Elijah. There was a craft room that mum spent many a day in. She would knit, she would make moneyboxes, she would make photo frames—we still have them all around the house—and we would go and visit after school and on weekends. Mum spent the really important months of those pregnancies supported by the women's and kids', and they do such incredible work there.

It was not a tailored program, of course, like the Wattle Clinic is, to support those pregnancies after loss and I do see personally just so much value in that. I also see a lot of value in the way that they are going about it with students. We met a student today, Francesca, who is a midwifery student at UniSA and talked about what it means for our next generation of midwives to not just be learning about the happy moments, the science behind a pregnancy, but, of course, to experience firsthand what it is like to be alongside a family when they do have a significant bereavement, that loss that is so difficult for families, and what it means for our midwives to actually understand that before they go out into practice themselves.

I was really warmed to be there this morning to share a bit of my personal family's story and, of course, to do so in the memory of my little brother and in memory of all the babies who have been born still, and the families, of course, who mourn those babies and have mourned those babies for a very long time. I talk a lot about how it never really leaves you and I know that for our family the impacts have been significant.

But even talking about those pregnancies with my two younger brothers and those experiences—me as a little kid running through the hospital and my mum going through a pregnancy in a hospital setting where everybody else was bringing home a baby—is something that we need to talk about, something we need to acknowledge, and how those experiences can be for bereaved families.

Since talking about it and speaking in this place and at other functions about pregnancy and infant loss awareness, I have been so privileged, so humbled to have so many parents contact me sharing their stories. I do want to particularly acknowledge one family who came to speak to me just last week and gifted me a photo of their little boy who was born still as a token of appreciation for speaking up about this topic. Again, what that means to be brought into those people's lives, to be given the great privilege of knowing the story of their baby who they miss and they love so dearly, really meant a lot to me and I know that this sort of work is going to mean a lot to families.

Because, of course, although I had the great privilege of growing up knowing that I had a little brother and I was brought up in a family where we talked about those things—we had his footprints in the house, we had a portrait of him in the house—I know that not everyone has been and that not everyone necessarily has been given the tools or the skills to have those conversations out loud. So it means a lot to me and it means a lot to families like mine to have those conversations, to be a voice for those who do not feel that they can share their experiences.

In acknowledgement of that, I do want to outline and acknowledge that I know in the process of bringing in this committee there will be a lot of people who find it really hard to talk and there will be a lot of people who talk for the very first time, and I think that that is again so important. It should be a fundamental business of governments to listen to individuals, particularly individuals who are going through difficult times like this one. I want to thank all of those individuals in advance who are going to share their stories with us in what can be an incredibly difficult thing to talk about. I know a number of people who have lost babies and still struggle to have those conversations.

I do think, of course, it is important that the states do so. I mentioned Kristina Keneally and her work before. She has been instrumental in stillbirth awareness in this country and was pivotal in the federal inquiry into stillbirth. But she has acknowledged—and does acknowledge quite openly—and has said to me as well, that where there was a gap in what they did was what they can do in a public hospital setting.

Of course, that is the purview of state governments and what she encouraged us to really focus on were those bereavement supports in a hospital setting in the minutes, hours, days, months and years following a pregnancy loss, because that hospital is often the touchpoint. It is obviously not just where the baby is born and the baby is lost, but it is also the place where parents will continue their fertility journeys, returning to the hospital with all of those anxieties, the questions about whether it be the genetics of what has occurred, or even just the mental health element, which is so important if you are deciding to continue the growth of your family.

So it is really important that the states do take on some of that work and I do want to acknowledge a few people who have been really instrumental in getting this to be what it is today. I have spent the last few years meeting with a number of bereaved parents, families and advocates. I want to thank Still Aware who have been such brilliant advocates in this space for 10 years now, not just here in South Australia but around the country. I want to thank some individuals from the Women's and Children's Hospital. Our terms have been supported by Christopher Barnett and Rebecca Smith, both experts in the hospital setting, who have really advised and provided some information on this.

Of course, I want to thank all my colleagues who really supported this mission of mine. It is one that I take very seriously and one I care about very much. I also want to thank all the parents who have spoken and who want to see change in this area. It has always been important for us as a

family to say this: I see those parents with lost babies, I value their lost babies and our family continues to grieve with those who have lost their babies as well.

I am very proud to be moving this today on behalf of my baby brother, on behalf of my mum and, of course, all others who have babies lost and loved.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (11:15): I rise to support the motion and speak briefly on the select committee process. I have had quite a bit of experience on select committees in my 18½ years in this place and there is nothing more satisfying than when a select committee is timely and when a select committee delivers a bipartisan move for change.

There is no doubt that the member for Frome and I, on this side of the chamber, were very pleased with the work that we did with the committee chaired by the member for Badcoe on the dispensing of treatment for UTIs via pharmacists. I think that report was an example of where there was a strong indication to the minister of the bipartisan support of what was a controversial move. It was a move that was about enabling people to go directly to a pharmacist to be diagnosed and to be —'prescribed' is not the right word because the pharmacists are not prescribing the antibiotic—dispensed the antibiotic after establishing that there was a very good chance the ailment the patient was suffering from was a UTI, and in most instances that gave immediate relief.

What was important from that committee was that there was an understanding that pharmacists knew that there would be a provision that the patient also see their doctor after they had that initial medicine. This was an important move for women, in particular—it is not available to men because even if a man has a UTI it is normally a much more complex issue than if a woman has a UTI—because it meant that immediate relief could be sought while perhaps a longer term treatment could be offered by the GP.

The problem that women were having was that for something that needed instant relief sometimes there was a one or two-week period to wait to get into a GP, in which case the situation would get worse or it would heal over a five or six-day period and that person was in pain they did not need to be in.

One of the things that was successful about that select committee was that not only did we hear about women's experiences of access to antibiotics and the difficulty they were having in getting those appointments and the cost, the gap charges of course, with seeing GPs, we also heard an enormous amount of evidence delivered by practitioners in Queensland, for example, who were already offering a trial and a lot of evidence from science about why it was safe for pharmacists to move down this track because, of course, there was an opposing view from the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and from the medical practitioners on this issue.

Because the committee spent an enormous amount of time getting to understand the science and the reasons why this process with pharmacies would not compromise health, we were in a very strong position to put forward, in a bipartisan manner, a very strong recommendation for the health minister to consider. Of course, we know now that this service is available in South Australia. It is one of the quickest responses to a select committee or any committee that I have ever experienced in this place.

The member for Finnis and I will certainly be very keen to participate in this process. We are very keen to learn about best practices in stillbirth prevention, awareness and programs for expectant parents. I think what you learn about being a parent yourself is that sometimes it is even a bit late once you are already pregnant to be looking at how you can reduce the risk of something happening to the foetus. Families are not always planned but, when they are, there are things you can do prior to pregnancy that could possibly minimise the risk of a stillbirth.

I would be very interested in hearing about what is happening in that space and what research has been done and what has been planned. How much research is being done? I think the process of data collection, reporting and monitoring is very important because you cannot manage what you do not measure. I think through this committee we will get an understanding from those in the medical profession who deal with women who have experienced stillbirth or who know that they are going to have a stillbirth—understanding how that data is collected, how it is analysed and how that may help with the science in reduction or prevention of stillbirth in the future.

Models of care in pregnancy may contribute to a reduction in stillbirths, including different groups in the community. Certainly in health it is not a one-size-fits-all, and in women's health it is even broader when it comes to the known unknowns and the unknown unknowns in some health issues that women have that men never really have to be concerned about for themselves but obviously are concerned about for their partners and their children.

In supporting this motion I wish the Chair all the best in delivering an outcome to this parliament and to the minister that will see an action by the government that will make a lasting difference to those women and those families who have or will experience stillbirth in their lifetime.

Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (11:23): I want to thank the member for Unley for his comments. I am really glad that we are going to have the member for Unley and the member for Finniss on our committee. I spoke at the hospital again this morning about how I think that this issue has not been discussed for many years because it was considered to be simply a women's issue, so I think it is really important to have the perspective of men on our committee. I think that is actually incredibly important because for many, many years those discussions have not been had and it is, of course, something that affects mothers, fathers, siblings and family members, and that is a really important perspective. I am really pleased to have them both joining our committee and pleased to be having the rest of our membership as well. In a moment, I will move that they join us.

Motion carried.

Ms SAVVAS: I move:

That a committee be appointed consisting of Mr Basham, Ms Hood, the Hon. D.G. Pisoni, Ms Wortley and myself.

Motion carried.

Ms SAVVAS: I move:

That the committee have power to send for persons, papers and records and to adjourn from place to place and that it report on 28 November 2024.

I do note that is a very close date, but we will be returning to the house to adjust that date once we have a sitting calendar for 2025.

Motion carried.

AUKUS

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. D.J. Speirs:

1. That in the opinion of this house, a joint committee be established to inquire into and report on matters relating to South Australia's contribution to the AUKUS agreement, and particularly to consider—
 - (a) how to ensure that all submarines are delivered on schedule;
 - (b) education and training initiatives to build the future workforce;
 - (c) the role of the South Australian industry;
 - (d) opportunities from emerging technologies;
 - (e) the progress of task forces and working groups;
 - (f) interstate and international partnerships; and
 - (g) any other relevant matters.
2. That in the event of a joint committee being appointed, the House of Assembly shall be represented thereon by three members, of whom two shall form a quorum of assembly members necessary to be present at all sittings of the committee.
3. That a message be sent to the Legislative Council transmitting the foregoing resolution and requesting its concurrence thereto.

(Continued from 15 June 2023.)

Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (11:26): I move:

That this order of the day be postponed.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes22
 Noes.....13
 Majority9

AYES

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

NOES

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

PAIRS

Brown, M.E.	Tarzia, V.A.	Picton, C.J.
Hurn, A.M.	Malinauskas, P.B.	Patterson, S.J.R.
Boyer, B.I.	Cowdrey, M.J.	

Motion thus carried; order of the day postponed.

Bills

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SAFETY AND SUPPORT) BILL

Committee Stage

In committee.

(Continued from 30 October 2024.)

Clause 19.

Mr TEAGUE: At clause 19, I welcomed an indication of the importance of a whole-of-government approach to child protection. It is described as an interagency approach in clause 19. I think the minister had given some indication of how that might work in practice. There is the direction to the chief executives to meet and to discuss. Does the minister concede that it only goes so far, in that there is no capacity for the minister to direct the spending of money in other portfolios, and there is no capacity for the minister to exercise executive function as it were interagency? Has the government given consideration to that really being about the limit of the extension of ministerial powers without conducting the broader reform around the scope of agency functions?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: The answer is: we are comfortable with it because, as I said last night, it is important that we read this clause in conjunction with the clause about the establishment of a state strategy, because that state strategy absolutely goes to various departments needing to discuss and develop their part of that strategy, and contribute across agency to the development of that strategy.

So the answer is, yes, when you read this clause about directing chief executives to meet, to discuss particular issues that may arise for children and young people, and to ensure that the system is acting in a seamless way for those children and young people. When you couple that direction in a broader context of the public health approach that is now embedded, and the development of the state strategy across government, yes.

Mr TEAGUE: Perhaps then to round out the consideration of questions of whole-of-government interagency extended powers of the minister, and it is rather a reference back to the debate last night in respect of clause 9 and then the retention of the paramount principle in clause 10, given now the express reference to the UN convention in clause 9(8), insofar as other agencies are concerned—that is, not the minister and chief executive with responsibilities to administer the act as it is framed in terms of the paramount principle at clause 10—is there, given that express reference in clause 9(8) to the UN convention, now an imperative on those other agencies, and indeed the rest of the parliament, to give a new paramountcy to the best interests of the child and those other range of considerations subject to the UN convention, for example?

A way of saying, notwithstanding the retention of the paramountcy of safety and protection for the purpose of this act, is there now a whole-of-government paramountcy in relation to the best interests of the child that is possibly gaining a pre-eminence that was not there previously?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I guess I would reflect on my answer from last night. We are very clear that safety remains the paramount principle for the reasons that I spoke about. Best interests has been elevated as a guiding principle and, of course, this legislation, like all legislation in relation to the particular subject matter to which it refers, is legislation that across government it would be an expectation that the principles of any legislation would be adhered to in the way that that particular piece of legislation describes.

Clause passed.

Clauses 20 to 23 passed.

Clause 24.

Mr TEAGUE: I ask this in the general sense. We are here dealing for the first time expressly with the functions of the chief executive, in terms of then what will be more expressly dealt with in terms of delegations later in the bill. Is there anything about the consideration of the functions of the chief executive that has been the subject of particular consideration by the government in moving from the 2017 environment to the 2024 environment? I give the minister the opportunity to perhaps address any of those at this clause.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I think if I am hearing the question correctly, the main difference is the addition of functions for the chief executive to have power in relation to. Those additional functions include developing all the policies and procedures and strategies that give effect to the state strategy that we have spoken about; the promotion of partnerships across government but, indeed, with the community and the sector as well to address harm to children; promoting partnerships with approved carers; encouraging cooperation between state authorities to ensure that children and young people at risk of harm receive the appropriate support as much as possible; and working in partnership with recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entities to build capacity to facilitate delegated decision-making and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision-making, which we will no doubt talk about in part 4. Also, most of the current functions remain.

Mr TEAGUE: Perhaps for the record, then, is it convenient for the minister to indicate those that do not?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes. As I said, most of the current functions remain, excluding current section 145(b)(ii) and section 145(b)(iv).

Clause passed.

Clause 25.

Mr TEAGUE: We see at clause 25 the powers of delegation of the chief executive. There is the power to delegate a single function as it is framed in subclause (1): 'delegate a function under this or any other act to a specified person or body'. The exclusion to that is a prescribed function. Again, I am interested from the point of view of the structure of the act how those prescribed functions are caught and defined. I compare the expression in clause 50, when we get further down the line, also a reference to a prescribed function.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: If I am hearing correctly with that last reference to clause 50, it is probably important to note that a discrete statutory power of delegation to Aboriginal entities is contained later in the bill. You have just alluded to clause 50 as part of the new provisions for Aboriginal children and young people. That is there to make very explicit the parliament's intention to enable that delegation to recognised Aboriginal entities and to be explicit about the scope of that power of delegation and how it accords with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

Mr TEAGUE: That has the same carve-out; that is what I am saying.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: It is the same as the existing clause. However, the carve-out in terms of 'other than a prescribed function' is that maybe at a particular point, for particular reasons, we carve out a particular issue that we do not want the CE to have that function to delegate.

Mr TEAGUE: I understand that. As I framed it, it was a statutory interpretation and structure question. I think we came across this in another bill recently. It turned out there was no such prescribed function, no definition—did not work. The whole thing was not able to be interpreted from start to finish. The carve-outs are not expressed other than any function that may be prescribed by regulation, for example. We just refer to small-p, small-f 'prescribed function', and I do not even see it defined.

For the purposes of both this clause and clause 50, is it the case that there is not any at the moment? If there was to be one, how would that be recorded? It would not be gazetted by regulation; it does not say so. It would presumably not be done by an amendment to the act. Is this not the occasion to provide for how that might be done?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: You are right; there are none at the moment. That is something that we would develop obviously in consultation with the various bodies that we would usually consult with, whether that is Wakwakurna Kanyini, others in the non-government sector, SAACCON, etc., but there are none at the moment.

Mr TEAGUE: How would you go about prescribing such a function, given the way—

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: In regulations, through consultation.

Mr TEAGUE: If so, why not say so? For example, in clause 13(7) we see a 'prescribed decision', and we see them spelled out. The answer is there are no prescribed functions at the moment. I am not suggesting that there necessarily needs to be. It might be convenient to do it, and it is good to have on the record that there would be a process. If it is the subject of advice that it is not necessary to frame it in terms of 'as may be described in regulation', that is the government's view.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes, it is our view. I am happy, though, to look at that in between the houses, as to whether we need to be more specific that the method would be via regulation and the necessary consultation.

Clause passed.

Clause 26 passed.

Clause 27.

Mr TEAGUE: At clause 27 we see the commencement of division 3 and the Quality of Care Report Guidelines. As I read it, this is the closest approximation to a reform of the complaints handling process. As has been canvassed in the course of the second reading debate, there has been a move away from a start to finish, independent complaints process, something of that nature, but we have an obligation here on the chief executive to publish guidelines that I might roughly describe as being

a road map or framework of how the department will go about investigating itself in circumstances of concerns about quality of care and so on.

Before I get to any possible interaction with other agencies, as has been flagged in the second reading, is there anything that the minister might take the opportunity to put on the record in relation to how that quality of care guidelines approach has been reached and what is anticipated by the government to flow?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I have spoken in the second reading speech and many times in here about being really committed to listening to carers and to making sure there is a timely, transparent and effective care concern process in place for carers, without of course compromising the safety of children and young people and the need to balance any necessary inquiries in relation to particular issues.

Dr Fiona Arney's report included a proposal to embed the care concern process in the legislation. This recommendation follows similar and significant advocacy from carers and the peak body, so this clause has been included to specifically respond to carers and advocates alike by creating an obligation on the chief executive to publish these Quality of Care Report Guidelines, which will govern the processes by which reports are to be assessed and responded to, including—which was very strongly advocated for by the peak—how procedural fairness will be afforded and how decisions can be reviewed.

The approach we have in the bill responds to that desire to have this embedded in legislation. It also ensures the guidelines can remain flexible, responsive, contemporary and also be underpinned by legislative requirements to ensure that the process is fair and transparent. Further opportunities to strengthen this process will also come through the care concern reform project that carers are right now inputting into. Carers are involved in that process very actively, so as well as this embedding in legislation that project will also continue. It is due to conclude around the middle of next year, from memory—I will certainly double-check that for you—but those two things operating together will be really important.

Mr TEAGUE: The minister mentions the only report. I do not recall the specific date, but a review was commenced middle of the year or thereabouts into the matter broadly. I noticed there was media reporting yesterday. I stand to be corrected, but I do not understand the review itself to have been published in full. What is the status of the review and will the government publish it and to what extent is it informing, coming as it does relatively late in the piece, the overview the minister has just given?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: We are talking about two slightly different things. The Arney review also recommended that there be a review of the internal complaints process and that was conducted, there was media about that and I have just looked over at the CE and I understand we will publish that in due course on the website. As a spokesperson from the department said in the media yesterday, of course we will consider those recommendations.

We had a conversation in our briefing also that we are absolutely committed to improving both the internal complaints process, through exploring how we can strengthen pathways from that process to other bodies, namely, the Ombudsman, but also we have committed (and I have spoken about this in here and I spoke with the honourable member in the briefing and I think it is also in the media article) to better training and resourcing staff to, as effectively as possible, deal with internal complaints as well. I think that has answered everything you have asked in that question.

Mr TEAGUE: I think I heard the answer to that being that the government will publish the review in due course. I get it, loud and clear, that what the government has preferred over a legislated independent complaints process has been two prongs: one is taking some active effort to promote the existing capacity of the Ombudsman to provide, effectively, an independent complaints process. Secondly, it is having what has been described as regional oversight, within the department, of individual staff members who might, with the benefit of some oversight, be likely to improve in terms of practice—that there be some opportunity to review by that means.

In relation to what the government has indicated it regards as the existing power of the Ombudsman to do all that might be desirable in this space, what actions, if any, is the government

taking or planning to take in respect of facilitating such complaints to be directed to the Ombudsman, in terms of the resourcing capacity of third parties, staff and then also the Ombudsman, to make that work better?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: First of all, in the original draft of the bill we did canvass an independent complaints mechanism. It was not well received, and we heard that. What we have publicly committed to—and I am not going to go through the words of my second reading speech—is to explore how we can provide additional resources so that carers can get to that independent provision of investigation that the Ombudsman creates through what they do by the very nature of their position. So we are going to provide additional resources in that regard.

I know there was some commentary from the shadow minister, I think in a Budget and Finance meeting maybe last year, about that particular proposal and the role of the Ombudsman. From memory, that was something you supported in terms of that function of the Ombudsman. We, though, want to make sure that carers have information and the best possible pathways there, and that is where we will focus resources to make sure they can access that independent complaints mechanism, because, as I know the shadow minister agrees, the Ombudsman is absolutely independent, of course, by the very nature of their function and their powers, etc. So we will be resourcing that.

Also, we will be resourcing additional training and exploration of pathways to make sure that those internal complaints at that first step are handled much better—and you did speak about that regional oversight as well. Additionally, and we have spoken about this publicly also, we have been very open about the fact that we are creating a director of carer services role in the department because, on coming into government, it was very clear that there are different responses to carers within the department. We think that carers need to have a person, a function, in the department that they can go to directly to seek the support that they need. So we are also resourcing the establishment of that new position.

As you know, and as I have spoken about here, we have established our Carer Council so that I can hear directly through the Carer Council. Also, as I have been very open about and as I have demonstrated by pretty much nonstop forums and meetings, I am very happy to keep listening to carers about what else we can do to make those improvements. They should be listened to, and I am very happy to do that, and I am very open to doing that, and, in doing that, we can keep improving that system, including around complaints, together.

Mr TEAGUE: The minister referred to resourcing that in terms of the engagement with the Ombudsman. Is there anything more specific about that? Is there a proposed cost to child protection? Is there a cost to the Ombudsman in terms of that sort of interagency direction? What sort of form does that take, or is it as general as that at this stage?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: The CE, if I have just read what she has said, is having those discussions with the Ombudsman about how that can work, but also, as I spoke about recently at an event to re-sign our refreshed Statement of Commitment to carers, we will also be involving carers in that consultation about what that needs to look like because, as with everything we do in relation to carers, their voices need to be part of what that looks like. So I very much look forward to it, and that is absolutely a commitment that we engage with carers around that.

The CE will keep talking with the Ombudsman, and also, through that new director of care services position, we will be making sure that there is a further opportunity for carers to have that person, that department within the department, if you like, where they can actually find out about particular matters, speak, give ideas about what carers want to be further consulted about, etc. So I think amongst all of those avenues, we have the best opportunity in partnership with carers to get this right.

I see two of our wonderful carers here. I look forward to working with them and other carers to progress that change in a way that works for carers. Right throughout this bill, we have been very clear—and I will be speaking about it in relation to a range of clauses—we will have a period of time for implementation of this bill so that we can absolutely get things right in partnership with carers.

Clause passed.

Clauses 28 to 38 passed.

Clause 39.

Mr TEAGUE: We come to the new part 4, which I have identified as being the wholly novel part of the bill. Treating it in a kind of clause 1 type of way and given that it is a brand-new approach, it might be fair to say that there would be a range of participants in the sector—stakeholders and so on—who are new to it as well.

Perhaps from a framework point of view to start with, can the minister indicate to the committee that the government has had relevant advice, including as to the constitutionality of it, for want of a better word, in that it is clearly carving out a whole range of provisions that are going to apply only to a particular group, and then to the genesis of the work that has contributed to this part 4, the rationale for it and how this approach is expected by the government to pan out in a new way? It is a pretty open question.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes, it is. Thank you. I think it is a good way to start the conversation on this chapter, because this chapter does make significant change, and the significant change comes literally from years and decades of advice from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations about the way forward. Embedded in that advice are three really clear proposals that have been consistently put forward to governments of every persuasion. Those principles relate to delegation, self-determination and the embedding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle.

In terms of how we have arrived at that, as I said this has been decades—longer—of Aboriginal community members and organisations putting those principles forward. It is a shame that governments of all persuasions have not always heard those words from Aboriginal people—Aboriginal people who have been so strong and resilient in putting forward those three principles in articulating their desire about what needs to change.

So I am very grateful to those Aboriginal community members and organisations who have very generously engaged with this process that is in front of us now—and when I say this process that is in front of us I include the long-term discussions that have happened in the national environment where SNAICC has engaged, again, with ministers over time of every political persuasion at a national level. SNAICC has provided very strong advice about what is in front of you today, and in fact Safe and Supported and the first action plan absolutely have been committed to, again by governments of all persuasions over the years, to bring to life those principles.

In terms of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, that concept I think has been around for about 40 years, and it was finally embedded in the national plan, called Safe and Supported, and in the first action plan. All Australian jurisdictions, obviously including ours, have agreed that more needs to be done to fully embed that principle in legislation as part of our efforts to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in contact with the child protection and family support system.

As I said, that shared commitment from all jurisdictions was developed in collaboration with Aboriginal partners. As well as being in Safe and Supported: the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031, it is also embedded in target 12 of the recently refreshed Closing the Gap agreement. The Closing the Gap agreement and that national plan, signed up to some years ago, which committed all of those Australian jurisdictions to this approach, have absolutely informed where we are today.

Also this approach has been informed by the extensive review process where I think 167 Aboriginal people—or around 167; I will check the number for you—engaged in that review. Through our review the overwhelming majority of stakeholders indicated an exceptionally high level of support for embedding the principle, including all five elements, in relation to the standard of active efforts within our legislation.

I am sure I will have an opportunity to speak about some of these steps forward as we go through this significant part, but again this is guided by those three tenets of delegation, self-determination and embedding the principle. Those commitments around each of those areas are

embedded in the national plan, Safe and Supported 2021-31, and the first action plan and also in target 12 of the Closing the Gap agreement.

Mr TEAGUE: My question is on the record in terms of the government satisfying itself as to the benefit of advice in relation to any problems, as in discrimination and so on. The minister might wish to address that directly or not in response to this question.

This second question goes to the providence of the part and the extent to which stakeholders have engaged in the process of the establishment of part 4. Is it a good characterisation of part 4 to say that it is informed by a whole lot of elements, the work of government over a long period of time in some ways, but that the particular formulation in part 4 is being presented by government, the subject of the draft bill, and it is now for all of us to consider as a new proposal, but it will be in the working out that stakeholders will have more to say? If there has been any particular input by stakeholders in advance then the minister might care to highlight that as well.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Absolutely this has been informed, as I said, by discussions over many, many years and representations by SNAICC through the development of the national plan and then the first action plan that resulted in all jurisdictions signing up to this. That work is not new; it absolutely, though, does inform the bill.

To go to your question about is it that we have heard all of that and then we have come up with something else, actually what we have heard over all those years, what we signed up to in the national plan, is absolutely embedded in this chapter. It is a chapter I am really proud of, because it does demonstrate that commitment that governments all around the country have made to Aboriginal people. It is a demonstration of that.

The other thing I would say is that I know there are particular views, right throughout this bill, of some wanting us to go even further at this point in time. What I will say to that is that we have landed in a place where we have embedded those three principles I have mentioned—one of those being the Child Placement Principle—but also, as I just spoke about, over the next couple of years there will be an opportunity to deeply engage with, for instance, the newly funded Wakwakurna Kanyini, with SAACCON, with SNAICC, with various Aboriginal organisations to make sure that we bring these provisions to life in the best, most appropriate and respectful way.

So yes, this is where we have landed, but we will be working very closely with our Aboriginal partners to make sure we get the rollout of these provisions right.

Clause passed.

Clauses 40 and 41 passed.

Clause 42.

Mr TEAGUE: We come back to the point about definition, clauses 42 and 43. My questions are directed to the practical mechanical questions, partly in circumstances where we have a differential family group conferencing mandate that is applying, that has a consequence once you have ascertained a child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Clause 43, which we will get to in a moment, contains presumptions that ameliorate what I have described as the 'native title' definition in clause 3.

Just staying with clause 42, the stipulation in clause 42 rises to 'active efforts to ascertain'. That, if I am right, is an effort that takes place prior to what would become a mandatory family group conference. I flag that we see references in clause 43 about presumption in a way that looks more fit for purpose than the definition in clause 3, but which might be matters that are coming to light at a family group conference.

The question might be: is it enough and is it appropriate to conduct the active efforts ahead of the family group conference, which might actually not otherwise occur at all because it is not mandated if those active efforts do not ascertain the child as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child, and so the rest of the provisions do not apply, including the family group conference? Is the minister satisfied that we are not going to see children missed, as it were, under that active efforts stipulation?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I am confident about that. Again, I speak to that period of implementation and involvement of the Aboriginal community in how we bring this to life in a way that is absolutely respectful of Aboriginal community members and organisations.

Mr TEAGUE: Is it right, therefore, to regard the government's attitude to this as being one in which the nature and extent of those efforts is not actually core to the risk of missing a child—that through the other mechanisms the government is confident that ascertaining a child is not going to be a major risk in this regime? The 'active efforts' is there to stipulate something, but the risk is not great, as it were?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: The short answer is yes. Again, the implementation will be important. The standard of active efforts themselves also speaks to a timeliness, a thoroughness, a practicability and a purpose, so I think in terms of how we apply those active efforts that will be very helpful—and also how we adhere to that definition in clause 3 that goes to the tripartite test and, again, how Aboriginal people inform us in that regard.

Clause passed.

Clause 43.

Mr TEAGUE: We see in clause 43 what is described as provision for 'presumption as to acceptance by the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community'. I suggest that the heading does not quite give the clause justice, in that it is doing more than that to ameliorate what might otherwise be rather harsh consequences of the clause 3 definition, in that it is both ameliorating the question of acceptance and, importantly, it is also extending the test as to 'regards oneself', obviously in the context of a child.

As I addressed at clause 3, clause 3 for whatever reason, I am not sure, retains or applies again what I have described as the native title definition. The minister has described it as the tripartite test—the well-established test—which is all very well for purposes including native title, establishment of entitlement to do other things, and there is a whole of range of ways in which that is applied. For these purposes we are talking about, by definition, children, and in terms of the eligibility for therapeutic, beneficial receipt of government services.

We see here the amelioration of the definition to the extent that the definition in clause 3 perhaps does not have a great deal of practical work to do. Might it be read for practical purposes—the relevant definition is 'Aboriginal person' in clause 3, but for practical purposes the definition is best sourced at clause 43; is that right?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I think the definition you are talking about is wider than a 'child', so having regard to what you have just raised, a rebuttable presumption as to acceptance by community has been inserted. That is considered important in this statutory context where under later provisions in the bill the court will be required to, for instance, consider if active efforts have been made before making certain final decisions, whether a respected person is involved, etc.

Mr TEAGUE: Yes, and I might address that briefly when we get to clause 57. I appreciate that it is not only children who are relevantly Aboriginal persons for the purpose of the act. Might I posit, then, that for the purposes of identifying Aboriginal children for the purpose of the act, clause 43 is really the go-to in that it is addressing both the question of how one might regard oneself and a child not necessarily regarding themselves as anything in particular other than a child.

But in paragraph (b) it is extending the definition in clause 3 to a member of their family, which seems sensible, and that is why I say the heading does not seem to do the clause justice fully. Then in terms of acceptance, maybe for practical purposes, paragraph (b) does the work of acceptance already in the first place, so that regarding of the child as Aboriginal on top of the fact that they are Aboriginal is the relevant work. Is that a fair characterisation of the clause?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes.

The CHAIR: That is your answer to the question?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes.

Mr TEAGUE: The third question is: in what circumstances outside of clause 57 is it anticipated that there will be a contradictor or someone else withstanding who might be leading such evidence as is referred to there? The clause talks about 'the absence of evidence to the contrary'. Who is interrogating that and who is leading that evidence?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: There is not anything contemplated. I guess it is there should anybody raise a particular issue. It is not ruling out that that could happen.

Clause passed.

Clause 44.

Mr TEAGUE: I note that in clause 44 we see the restatement of the principle. I do not know that there is anything new or that the minister would like to add about that. Clause 44 is restating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. It is there; it is now contained within part 4. Is there anything the minister would like to say about the context of that?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: No, other than I think the key thing is to look to clause 45 about how we are embedding it to the standard of active efforts and the test about whether or not active efforts have been adhered to.

Clause passed.

Clause 45.

Mr TEAGUE: We have referred to the ALRM's problem with the word 'timely' and whether or not there is necessary foundation for caution about that. The standard of active efforts is tied to the application of the principle. I might perhaps invite the minister to describe anything more broadly about how this standard of active efforts is applied, but also to perhaps confirm if it is true that it is also relevantly informing active efforts for the purposes of clause 42.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes. First of all, I note your comment about ALRM. Again, I appreciate all the feedback that we have received and had to weigh up in terms of a slight, and sometimes larger, diversity of views. Active efforts are described by SNAICC themselves as thorough, timely and purposeful efforts that aim to ensure an Aboriginal child's connection to family, culture, community and country are maintained at every stage of engagement with the child protection and family support system. We have taken SNAICC's definition because that is also the definition and the standard that we as a government—and, indeed, as I said, every jurisdiction around the country—have signed up to in the national plan and the first action plan.

Clause passed.

Clause 46 passed.

Clause 47.

Mr TEAGUE: We are now dealing, in clause 47, with the principle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision-making. Perhaps I will invite a wider ranging response than just this, but in the context of mandated family group conferencing for children the subject of this part, is there anything in particular that the minister would seek to highlight in terms of the principle stated in clause 47?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Probably to draw the member's attention to the review. We received absolutely consistent, positive feedback about embedding Aboriginal family-led decision-making in the legislation and requiring active efforts to apply this model for all significant decisions, right across the system relating to Aboriginal children and young people. The feedback on this part was very, very clear. It is a new part and it is in there because it is really well established that Aboriginal families and communities are best placed to make decisions relating to the care and wellbeing of Aboriginal children and young people and that when Aboriginal families' voices are privileged in decision-making this does lead to better outcomes.

So through this bill we are fulfilling that commitment to embed this principle of Aboriginal family-led decision-making. We want to absolutely elevate the existing departmental policy framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision-making through embedding it

in the legislation and, as you mentioned, this clause will be particularly enlivened through the clause relating to family group conferencing being offered to Aboriginal families.

Clause passed.

Clause 48 passed.

Clause 49.

Mr TEAGUE: Clause 49, still within part 4 and the beginning of division 4, which provides for the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entities, empowers the minister to recognise certain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entities for the purposes of the act.

This is a new concept within a new part and I think I have described it in various ways as a sort of courageous step of government, because it is really putting both trust and funds in what might be anticipated to be an entity or entities outside of government and I guess there is a risk that it might be characterised as an abrogation of responsibility, or an abdication of sorts of the responsibility to do that important work within government.

In terms of just stepping through it, there seem to be two means by which an entity can be so recognised. The first is on an application by an entity that might be so eligible, or on the minister's own motion. Is there any eligible entity that the government is aware of that is aware of this and is expected to apply and, in the same breath, is there any such entity that the minister has presently in mind to proceed to recognise for the purposes of clause 49?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: The first thing I would say, just by way of background, is that again in the comprehensive review the vast majority of stakeholders and people who attended community consultations absolutely agreed that the legislation should explicitly provide for the progressive delegation of legislative functions to recognised Aboriginal entities and, again, all jurisdictions around the country and Aboriginal partners have agreed that the only way to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people is to transition to and strengthen Aboriginal-led organisations and their role in the system.

In terms of the question about whether this is—I cannot remember the exact words—abrogating responsibility, absolutely not. This is taking responsibility to do absolutely the right thing that Aboriginal people have told us for some time needs to occur.

The first action plan—again, all jurisdictions have signed up to that—and South Australia's Closing the Gap implementation plans specifically include the commitment to legislative change, inclusive of the commitment to recognise self-determination, one of those three principles I spoke about, and family-led decision-making to implement the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle to the standard of active efforts and the ability to delegate legislative functions to Aboriginal entities.

These provisions are intended to enable the broader goal of transition over time to the Aboriginal-controlled sector and structural transformation that will much better support better outcomes for Aboriginal children and families. It is the right thing to do. Implementation will, of course, be supported by the government's broader commitment to continuing to strengthen the Aboriginal community-controlled sector and our work through the national framework and those commitments that I mentioned under both the state and the national level Closing the Gap agreement.

Again, I think it is really important to note the implementation period in relation to this clause and to recognise that delegation provisions will only be implemented at the discretion of the CE and with the agreement of a specified recognised Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity or a specified member of a recognised Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander entity and for those particular powers and functions as agreed.

Mr TEAGUE: Perhaps the minister chose deliberately not to answer the question. The core of the question in those two limbs was: is there any such eligible entity that it is anticipated is going to take advantage of the application process? The second part is: is there any such entity that the minister has in mind, any expectation of recognition for the purposes? That is really question one all over again.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: What is fair to say is this provision has elicited a lot of anticipation and excitement because finally we are taking a step forward on what Aboriginal people and communities have told us for a very long time needs to change for that over-representation to be addressed.

Of course, there are existing Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, but it is my hope that further entities evolve and strengthen over time. As I said, that is certainly part of the commitment through Closing the Gap and through the national Safe and Supported plan and the first action plan. It is the right thing to do that we keep strengthening the sector. Again, that implementation period will be really important in this regard.

Mr TEAGUE: On the face of it, it is a new process. I take that answer to be a way of saying no but also of indicating that there is a process that is subject to this and that whoever comes out of the woodwork will come out of the woodwork and whoever the minister might give consideration to will be a matter for the future and is not preloaded.

I notice then as well that subclause (2) among the balance of the provision sets out a process by which there will be a manner and form of application determined by the minister and information that may be required by the minister, and so on. In terms of those manner and form provisions that are subject to the balance of clause 49, is that also as far as we have got, or has the government prepared and has ready to go such manner and form as will meet the criteria particularly for those eligible entities that might be wishing to apply?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: We do need to consult about that but insofar as that question about being ready to go, there are Aboriginal community-controlled organisations right now that are in this space and doing particular work very much aligned to what is in the legislation. But we will do deep consultation and this will be a really important part of our implementation process. The newly formed peak body Wakwakurna Kanyini and, of course, SAACCON will be really instrumental in that consultation and implementation process.

Mr TEAGUE: Just to be clear that, yes, clearly, there is going to be a bunch of existing eligible entities, entities that are in existence that will meet the definition of eligible entity. The question was a manner and form question: that is, should, for example, any of those that the minister has just mentioned be interested to apply, that the work to constitute a form of application has not yet been done and, so far as the manner and form aspects, any of those eligible entities will need to—that is work to be done in the future. There is nothing the minister has got to show and tell about that right now.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes.

Clause passed.

Clause 50.

Mr TEAGUE: Clause 50 is really where the consequence of that recognition occurs because that is where the chief executive is now empowered to do a delegation, the minister having recognised the entity. Clause 50 got a mention earlier on because it also has this reference to carving out prescribed functions, none of which exist at the moment but might. Okay; right, we understand. So it is a broadranging power for the chief executive to delegate once there is a recognised entity or entities to whom to delegate functions.

Is it presently anticipated by government that that scope and range of delegation powers of the chief executive is, for present purposes, unlimited and that it might be anticipated that the result of this is that really quite substantial core functions and otherwise obligations of the chief executive will be delegated both as to responsibility and funding to one or more such recognised entities?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I think the important thing to point out is that any function can be delegated; however, before that can occur there are very clear provisions at (5)(a), (b), (c) and (d), which set out in short, to summarise those, what has to happen prior to that delegation of a particular function.

Mr TEAGUE: And then to understand, we have two forms of delegation. Firstly, the specified function, and then secondly functions of a specified class. Is it more than hypothetical? Is a good

example of such a delegation being to an entity to take responsibility for family group conferences the subject of part 4, for example, so functions of a specified class desirable that a single entity might take responsibility for family group conferencing across the board, for the purposes of the part?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: That is possible, yes.

The CHAIR: Is there anything further on clause 50? One more question?

Mr TEAGUE: One more, thanks, Chair. I turn to subclause (7); it is over the page. In the context of this, on one view there is endless scrutiny that this is amenable to, so I am just looking to identify some key points. Subclause (7), as part of that delegation, empowers—although it does not oblige—the chief executive to provide such information and documents to a delegated decision-maker in respect of a child as the chief executive considers reasonably necessary to allow the delegated decision-maker to perform delegated functions.

Bearing in mind that those delegated functions might be pretty serious, broad-ranging, comprehensive in terms of the care and response to the child, is there not a tension there between, on the one hand, the consideration that the chief executive has to make about retention of documents and the sensitivity of them and all the rest of it, and then the capacity of the delegated entity actually not to be doing work with half an arm tied behind their back?

Might it not be expected that the chief executive, under a provision like this, would tend to err on the side of saying, 'Well, you are going to need everything, actually. You've got the delegated function. Here are all the documents and information that we've got about the child.' Is that not going to require some form of monitoring and oversight, return of document process so far as the department is concerned to satisfy itself that there are not these discrete risks, both in terms of a partly informed delegation on the one hand and a risk of things getting outside the department's control on the other, just to raise a couple of examples about how that might work?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I think it is a tension, and that is one that we will have to work through. This is a brand-new provision. It is a provision, as we have spoken about at length, that is about doing that right thing to delegate this authority, and as part of that the chief executive will have to balance how we provide those documents that are reasonably necessary for a delegated authority to undertake work for a child or young person. It is a tension and it is something we will have to work through.

Clause passed.

Clause 51.

Mr TEAGUE: Clause 51 deals with the costs of the entity in performing the delegated functions. Again, this is new territory. This is now delegating power and saying the department will be good for the costs of doing so. It is a pretty brief clause that is couched in general terms. I recognise that clause 50 deals with matters of memoranda of understanding and so on. Is the need for the clause in the first place to somehow recognise that this is a serious form of delegation and that the department is actually obliged in a general sense to pay costs?

But is it otherwise analogous to the costs of third-party providers of services and that there will be the usual process of invoicing for services and oversight of that kind? Or is it anticipated that there might be some overarching budget in the broad for the provision of functions so delegated?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes and yes to your first two questions. Yes, this is about being very clear that this is a very serious delegation. In answer to your question about will it operate in the same way where we strike agreements with particular non-government organisations now to provide particular services, we are provided with an invoice that is paid for the provision of that particular service.

Clause passed.

Clause 52.

Mr TEAGUE: I indicate that my consideration of a question on clause 52 might be wrapped up with clauses 53 and 54. They are the three clauses that deal with the special provisions for family group conferencing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. Apart from

highlighting the mandatory aspect of it, for the purpose of part 4, I am really just giving the minister the opportunity to address any matters that the government regards as of particular significance in terms of the provision of family group conferencing for the purpose of this part and all three clauses.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Again, this clause responds to significant feedback from the community about the need to require that a family group conference is offered to Aboriginal children and young people. We know that family group conferencing has a greater than 90 per cent success rate and that, when we can convene a family group conference that brings together extended family to make decisions about their child or young person in a way that is constructive and facilitated and aims to bring people together around the interests of that child, those family group conferences can make a profound difference.

We have listened to community and that is why we have embedded this provision about requiring that a family group conference be offered. Again, the review showed really strong support, and various reports all over the country and indeed all over the world have expressed support for the use of family group conferencing. In a 2022 report, the Trust in Culture report, Kate Alexander reiterated those calls for more resourcing for family group conferencing.

Of course, we have already invested an additional \$13 million into family group conferencing and we want to see family group conferencing increasing, because we know that the results absolutely help to keep families safely together and connected to culture, country, community and kin.

Mr TEAGUE: I appreciate the minister's response. It might be then a more particular question in relation to clause 54. I guess in light of that characterisation of family group conferences more generally, is there any reason—outside of resourcing or setting some sorts of limits on the mandate—why this mandatory regime isn't applied to the whole act?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Certainly, it is potentially available to a range of other families, and provision is made for that in part 8 of the bill. Those family group conferences can be convened by different parties from what we set out in this provision, so it is certainly available and, again, it is showing very good results, and it is being taken up by other families as well. We have focused, in seeking to embed to the standard of active efforts, on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and, in response to that very strong feedback, we have included this particular provision.

Clause passed.

Clause 53 passed.

Clause 54.

Mr TEAGUE: Clause 54 provides specifically that the coordinator of family group conferences is to be an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person, and that is then a superadded provision in comparison with what will be the section 94 and 110 regime. Is there anything that is particularly informing that, in the context of a mandatory process? Is the government satisfied that that is always going to be readily possible and will be able to occur?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: It is certainly the case that we do think there are—I cannot remember your exact words—enough Aboriginal people to perform that function. There will be particular circumstances, of course, where Aboriginal families may not want a particular Aboriginal person and may choose another facilitator.

Mr TEAGUE: I appreciate the answer in a way in that there is clearly an emphasis on the importance of family, kinship. The stipulation in clause 54 is talking about a requirement that the coordinator be an Aboriginal person. That Aboriginal person might be perfectly Aboriginal but also perfectly unrelated to anyone involved in the particular family group conference. Does the government anticipate such a circumstance, and is there in any event a virtue therefore in that generalisation, because it is not as if it were requiring that the coordinator have any special connection to the child, family or kin, but just that broader stipulation?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes.

Clause passed.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

Sitting suspended from 12:59 to 14:00.

Parliamentary Procedure

ANSWERS TABLED

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

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Annual Reports 2023-24—

Auditor-General's Department

Cross Border Commissioner

Infrastructure SA

Motor Sport Board, South Australian

Premier and Cabinet, Department of the

Premier's Delivery Unit

Productivity Commission, Office of the South Australian

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

Annual Reports 2023-24—

Director of Public Prosecutions, Office of the

Freedom of Information Act 1991, Administration of the

Legal Services Commission

National Agreement on Closing the Gap

Return to Work Corporation of South Australia

State Records Act 1997, Administration of the

Surveillance Devices Act 2016—

Independent Commission Against Corruption

SA Police

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

Annual Reports 2023-24—

Infrastructure and Transport, Department for

National Heavy Vehicle Regulator

National Rail Safety Regulator, Office of the

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

Annual Reports 2023-24—

Principal Community Visitor

Health Advisory Council—South Australian Medical Education and Training

Health and Wellbeing, Department for

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

Annual Reports 2023-24—

Child Protection Systems Royal Commission and the Royal Commission into

Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse—South Australian

Government Response to Recommendations

Child Protection, Department for

Guardian for Children and Young People—Training Centre Visitor, Child and Young Person's Visitor, Youth Treatment Orders Visitor

By the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing (Hon. K.A. Hildyard)—
Recreation, Sport and Racing, Office for—Annual Report 2023-24

By the Special Minister of State (Hon. D.R. Cregan)—
Electoral Commission of South Australia—Annual Report 2023-24

By the Minister for Planning (Hon. N.D. Champion)—
Annual Reports 2023-24—
Adelaide Cemeteries Authority
State Planning Commission
West Beach Trust

By the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services (Hon. D.R. Cregan)—
Annual Reports 2023-24—
Official Visitor—Timothy Fitzgerald
State Bushfire Coordination Committee

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LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE: WESTERN HOSPITAL AT HENLEY BEACH PETITION

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning) (14:03): I seek the leave of the house to explain my response with respect to the report of the Legislative Review Committee on the Legislative Council Petition No. 50 of the First Session of the Fifty-Fifth Parliament: Western Hospital at Henley Beach.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: I can inform the house that I have recently responded to the Legislative Council on this petition. Specifically, as requested by the committee, I have responded as Minister for Planning to the recommendations of the report. The petition was tabled by the member for Colton in the house on 7 March 2024, and was signed by 11,134 residents of South Australia.

The petitioners requested that the house urge the state government to ensure the future of the Western Hospital at Henley Beach and, in particular, ensure that the land on which the hospital sits remains zoned for healthcare services into the future. There is no current zone in our planning system that would limit the land use solely to a hospital, as the member for Colton is requesting.

The Malinauskas Labor government shares the desires of the petitioners for the Western Hospital to remain a viable and functioning private hospital for the community. However, using the state's planning system to achieve this outcome would likely prove ineffective and have unintended consequences. For this reason, the request to ensure the land on which the Western Hospital sits remains zoned for healthcare services in the future is misguided, and no action will be taken by me as Minister for Planning.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (14:05): I bring up the report of the committee on the House of Assembly petition No. 84 of 2021, SA Ambulance Service Resourcing.

Report received.

*Question Time***NORTHERN WATER PROJECT**

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): My question is to the Premier. What is the estimated cost and timeline for delivery of the Northern Water project? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: It was recently reported in *The Advertiser* on 28 October that a number of sources have raised concerns over the project, with the Auditor-General noting that the project does not have a fixed estimate of cost or timeline.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:06): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question because it is an important subject and an important project for the state generally. The state government, as the Leader of the Opposition probably is aware, is engaged in a comprehensive prefeasibility study in conjunction with a number of partners, including BHP, with BHP and the state government being the principal partners. That prefeasibility piece of work is a \$200 million-plus exercise, which is an astronomical sum of funds for an analysis of this nature, but it is what it costs.

We have been rather diligent in making sure that this is an appropriate use of taxpayers' funds. We take confidence from the fact that all parties to the project believe it is necessary by virtue of the fact that they, too, have put their hands in their pocket, none more so than BHP. I can say this publicly because it is on the record, that they are contributing \$77 million of that cost from their own funds, which BHP don't do for fun; they do it because they are serious and they appreciate the size of the opportunity that exists in the northern part of our state in and around furthering copper production—not just mining but also beneficiation. That work is in train.

One of the key functions of that exercise is to develop a consolidated cost because as part of that exercise we are also simultaneously going through the work associated with procurement of the work, of the project itself, and that will deliver us a comprehensive and accurate cost of what it actually takes to build. I have said publicly that this will be a very expensive project. It is a large desal plant. It is a pipeline of approximately over 600 kilometres long. It will be billions of dollars. I have said publicly that it will be well north of \$5 billion, but we will have a better idea about how much that is on the back of the conclusion of that work.

The timeline for that, since the Leader of the Opposition also asked about timing, we have asked for that work to be completed by the beginning of 2026. That is the publicly stated timeline that we are working on. We want that work completed by the first half of 2026. In the event that that prefeasibility work demonstrates the project is of value to all of the parties concerned, including the government, i.e. in the interests of the people of South Australia, in the event that it is commercial, that it stacks up, it meets a whole range of criteria, then we would like to see work commence pretty quickly after that on the construction of the project in accordance with the timeline that will be established through the prefeasibility exercise.

OFFICE OF NORTHERN WATER DELIVERY

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:09): My question again is to the Premier. How many staff have left the Office of Northern Water Delivery in the last two months? With your leave sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: It was reported in *The Advertiser* on 28 October that acting chief executive Matt Hardy resigned last week, telling staff 'it no longer makes much sense for me to continue being involved'.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:09): When this project came to me, I immediately instructed my infrastructure agency to conduct a review. They have done an exceptional job in procurement advice for the South Australian government. They were instrumental in uncovering the

blunders of the previous government on the north-south corridor, and I wanted to ensure that the project was in a good and stable position. Of course, the review has vindicated that, and the project is on a good and sound path.

But I also think it is important that the state's premier infrastructure agency be the one to conduct procurement of this project. It is what they do day to day. They are experts at it, and it is important that they do that, so we did a restructure of the office of Northern Water. That body of work, which was an attached office to the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to begin with, then is being reallocated.

Mr Hardy has now accepted another role within government. He is an exceptionally talented young man who has a very bright future in the South Australian public sector, and he has taken another role. I am extremely confident with the way that this project is being handled and has been handled.

I think it is important that this project not be confused with other infrastructure programs that the government is involved in. This project is being built and should be paid for by people who use that water. This is not about a government subsidy for a private sector proponent. This is about finding out what are the gaps to unlocking our massive copper reserves and iron ore reserves and hydrogen potential in the Upper Spencer Gulf.

I said to the house yesterday that the foresight of the Tonkin government and especially that of Roger Goldsworthy, when there was an insistence in the indenture that the then government—and to our great shame the opposition then was a Labor opposition—was that BHP, or Western Mining as it was at the time, would have to smelt copper in the state and go up the value chain. That was a very good decision.

What we want to see at Olympic Dam and what the previous government wanted to achieve at Olympic Dam is to make sure of the second-stage smelter, which would unlock the vast amount of resources after BHP have just spent \$10 billion purchasing OZ Minerals, to try to create what we think is a copper province here in South Australia, to allow that ore, rather than to be exported to smelters in Indonesia, Brazil, Europe and China, that we use our technologies here to smelt that ore into copper and make copper in South Australia. The gap is water.

Mr Telfer: The question was: how many staff members have left?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am getting to the point. The reorganisation is about the success of the project and making sure that the appropriate people, the premier agency within government that does procurement, does it and does it well. The Office of Northern Water Delivery runs an important role. In terms of people who have left, what we have done is transfer that team into DIT. If the member for Flinders has different advice, he can stand up and he can ask me a question.

Mr Telfer: We asked the question: how many have left? We are just looking for an answer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I have to say I do enjoy your sudden curiosity in this project that you have all claimed was your own.

NORTHERN WATER PROJECT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): My question again is to the Premier. Did MBB Group undertake the review of the Northern Water project? If so, was it subject to a tender process?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:14): The review was conducted by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, and they had consultants. Of those consultants, MBB are one of them. MBB were appointed by—wait for it—the previous government. To do what? Give procurement advice. They were appointed by Mr Braxton-Smith. I can't say whether they were appointed after a competitive tender or not by Mr Braxton-Smith.

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

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Sorry?

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner: In relation to this?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: They are our procurement advisers. The department is able to use procurement advisers that we already have on contract. I believe it was appropriate, because MBB are world class. They are some of the best procurement advisers anywhere in Australia, if not the world.

If the opposition have evidence to the contrary that MBB are somehow not qualified to provide this advice, then I would like to see it. If the opposition is saying that for every single procurement in government—that every single contractor who is already prequalified or already sitting with DIT with an existing contract must re-tender for every piece of advice we seek, well, that is, of course, silly.

MBB are exceptional financial advisers. I value their advice. It was one of the good decisions the previous government made, to secure them as advisers on procurement. They do an exceptional job. Can I also say: they have done an exceptional job for us on the north-south corridor and were one of the first to raise red flags about what members opposite were saying about their pretend \$9.9 billion cost for the north-south corridor.

Mr Whetstone: It's a tunnel up at someone's electorate.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, that's right, it's a tunnel. Congratulations. Catch up. You might have seen the pictures in the paper. MBB are exceptional, world-class procurement experts. No-one doubts that. They are world class. I value their advice and the government will continue to use them.

NORTHERN WATER PROJECT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:16): My question is to the Premier. What is the government's preferred location for the Northern Water project?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:16): That is the role of the prefeasibility study into either Cape Hardy or Mullaquana, which is near Whyalla. The study is now investigating the environmental impacts on both sites and the traditional owner and native title arrangements at both sites. Obviously, one site is a lot closer to Roxby Downs than another. One site has no infrastructure; another site is very close to an existing industrial town. One site has no power or any other infrastructure in place; the other has lots of power, lots of infrastructure and a ready workforce nearby. We will let the work be done on the two sites and come back with the most cost-effective and best site chosen to build the Northern Water project.

DRIVING INSTRUCTOR ACCREDITATION

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:17): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Will the government increase the number of driver instructor accreditations that are available in the South-East? With your leave, Mr Speaker, and leave of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: There is currently a moratorium on appointing authorised driving examiners for class C car licences. In the city there are around 295 driving instructors while in the South-East—MacKillop and Mount Gambier—there are only 10. Some people are having to book six months in advance to get a driving lesson.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:18): It is a good question. The member for MacKillop is absolutely right: the current system is not working. The reason the current system is not working is because the accreditation model was outsourced to the private sector, which means the people who are doing the training also do the accreditation and the assessment. What the government is doing will be insourcing that accreditation, which means that you won't be reliant on the private supply of private providers in your community.

About 50,000 people a year in South Australia get their driver's licence. The department believes that a cohort of about 50 FTE equivalents throughout South Australia would more than easily

manage that demand throughout the year, which would mean that we will be able to schedule more driver testing in the South-East than what is currently occurring. If the legislation passes the upper house, I think what you will see is a better outcome. The outcome that I think will improve for the member for MacKillop is that the government can assign the testing regime on the basis of need and demand.

If you imagine a driver tester working for the department—because we don't have any doing it now, it is all done privately—if we have them doing, say, five to six examinations a day, it would easily more than clear backlogs throughout regional South Australia. Obviously, we can travel to regional communities where a backlog has built up over the past couple of years because of the current operations, but, most importantly, what we are attempting to do, and what the previous government rightly attempted to do, is to fulfil the outcome of the ICAC investigation into the driver training industry.

Let me preface it by saying this: the overwhelming majority of driver trainers and assessors are good and decent people and they are hardworking, and they want to train our children to make sure that they have the very best chance of having the very best skills to drive on our roads. However, there is a minority within this cohort that, unfortunately, in a cost-of-living crisis, are pushing the cost of getting a driver's licence higher and higher.

I have had people come to my office and tell me that they have spent up to \$4,000 training their children to get a driver's licence. I have heard firsthand accounts of parents who have told me, as a result of the review that we did, that they were being told to turn up to car parks while their children were being assessed with a bag full of money, in cash, to pay for the assessment, and then seeing their children failed and being told they need a few more lessons to get their drivers licence. That type of behaviour is exactly what the premier associations of the driver training industry want to stamp out, and that is why they are supporting our legislative changes. That is why the RAA is supporting our legislative changes. That is why, as of last night, the shadow minister told me he is supporting our changes. That is why the crossbench is supporting our changes.

What we need to do is make sure we can service those people in regional communities because it has not worked to date. I think regional communities are the ones that are doing it a bit tougher here, because there is less choice of driver trainers and those driver trainers are the same people who do the assessments. There are fewer people doing the driver training, which means, I think, that there is an opportunity there for us to try to decouple the training and the assessment, to get that bit more rigour into the system and, of course, to make sure that the modules that are being used are fit for purpose. I hope that answers the member's question.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA-CHINA TRADE RELATIONS

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (14:22): My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Can the minister update the house on recent developments in the trade and economic relationship between South Australia and China?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:22): I thank the member for her question. I particularly note the support she provides to local exporters in her community and also, more broadly, the support she provides and the close work she does with Chinese-born residents of her wonderful electorate.

The South Australian export sector is the backbone of our state's economy; we are a trading state. As this chamber is well aware, this is a government that supports businesses to create jobs and prosperity for the people of our state. So we have been delighted to see the state's export figures go from strength to strength, with ABS data showing that our state's export goods have grown to the value of \$17.6 billion in the last 12 months. This has been driven largely by outstanding double-digit growth in major trading partners like China and the US, but also Vietnam, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

Refined copper and wine continue to grow. Iron ore and barley, sheep meat and beef meat are all growing: sheep meat up 6.2 per cent and beef up 125 per cent. While this—

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: We will get to the low bar you guys set; just give me a minute. While this global success story is significant, I think it is important that we highlight the current state of trade between South Australia and China. I can inform the house that South Australia's exports to China have hit a new record. Latest ABS data shows the value of South Australia's exports to China rose 46 per cent over the last 12 months to a record \$4.27 billion.

Our state has exceptionally high-quality produce and this is in high demand from increasingly affluent and aspirational Chinese consumers. This includes our fantastic wine, our outstanding sustainable seafood and, of course, the fruits of the hard labour of agribusiness and primary producers. Unfortunately, for an extended period of time it simply was not possible for exporters to get access to this market. Under the stewardship of the former Morrison Liberal government we saw communication with China completely breakdown. Trade restrictions were imposed and our products were off the plates of the Chinese.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Members on my left will come to order. The member for Chaffey, you are being a little loud. I know you are trying to get out a little bit earlier today, but I might make you hang around a bit longer. The minister.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: As I was saying, it is fantastic to see the adults back in charge in Canberra. I pay credit to two very proud South Australians, the federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Penny—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Minister.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Thank you, sir. It is almost as though the member for Chaffey has got some preselection challenges in his electorate. It is almost directly proportionate to the number of challenges he has got—is it two or three?

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

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order that the member for Morialta is about to make. Will the minister please stick to the subject matter.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Sorry, I will.

The SPEAKER: It makes it hard for me to control those on my left when you are antagonising those people. If you do not come back to the point of the question, you will be chucked out.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I would be more than happy to continue to discuss the fantastic primary producers in the member for Chaffey's electorate, rather than his own preselection challenges. As I said, the adults are back in charge in Canberra and the stabilisation of the China relationship has seen an ability for South Australia to be back at the table. There has been a full resumption of all trade restrictions. Tuna is continuing to perform well, but what we have seen is a resumption of barley, a resumption of meat and a resumption of lobster. But most importantly, what our government has done is not to sit back and watch. We have announced the China re-engagement wine package. We announced a re-engagement package for seafood because, unlike those opposite, who look to the commonwealth and do not say a word, we act quickly and we are prepared to act, when the adults are back in charge.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The minister's time has expired. Maybe save it for the next one. The leader.

NORTHERN WATER PROJECT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): My question again is to the Premier. Was Cape Hardy previously identified by the government as the best-performing site option to focus any further studies regarding the Northern Water project and, if so, when?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:27): The Northern Water project is obviously, for the lack of a better term, huge. It is a massive investment that we are looking at on behalf of the state government. But it is more than that, just being huge, it is also complex. We have only seen one really substantial industrial scale desal plant built in South Australia in recent memory, down in the southern suburbs of Adelaide. That project, in terms of delivery, had challenges and we should anticipate that there will be challenges on this journey as well, hence the necessity, and the value, in doing as much work as we can in terms of that pre-feasibility exercise and, as part of that, site location is a critical consideration.

The work that has been done thus far is looking closely at two sites—as the Leader of the Opposition would well be aware—Cape Hardy and also Mullaquana. Both Mullaquana and Cape Hardy have their respective virtues and disadvantages. That is why we are undertaking a comprehensive exercise. With respect to Cape Hardy, there are a number of elements that bring with it a degree of attractiveness. Most of those things go to some of the science that sits around it, in terms of its location on Eyre Peninsula, but one of the consequences of Cape Hardy is that its proximity to the principal place the water is being transported to is that little bit further, which means, of course, more pipeline, which means more expense. Mullaquana, if it works out to be appropriate in a geological context, in a context environmentally, particularly in terms around the discharge of the saline water—if you can overcome those hurdles Mullaquana has the advantage of being relatively closer to Olympic Dam. That's why the work needs to be done thoroughly and comprehensively.

The original work that has been undertaken on Northern Water thus far, of course, originated in Infrastructure South Australia. It was never the intention to have Infrastructure South Australia do the delivery of the project. They are not an infrastructure delivery agency. Our principal infrastructure delivery agency in government is the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. I say we are doing a lot of work around the business case and in the lead-up to it. So it was always going to be transferred out of Infrastructure South Australia. That has now largely been done, as the minister alluded to in his remarks earlier, but we will continue to go through this.

Let me just say something for the benefit of the opposition, for the public record and for the news media: history tells us that whenever we embark on an infrastructure project as complex as this one, as large as this one, we can expect there to be challenges along the journey. There will be problems we have to overcome. There will be drags on time, there will be drags on cost and there will be issues that we have to encounter with communities along the way. That's all to be anticipated. I think it's reckless and foolhardy to suggest that any project of this size won't encounter those challenges. This will not be an exception.

It is the determination of the government to ensure that this project is thoroughly examined before we reach any FID with any commercial offtakers, such as BHP. Our determination is to make sure we do as much of that work as we reasonably can to ensure that the project is a success in the event that it is in the best interests of the state.

GFG ALLIANCE

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:31): My question is to the Treasurer. Is GFG Alliance the government's preferred operator of the Whyalla Steelworks? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr TELFER: It was reported in *The Australian Financial Review* today that the group's plant in the Czech Republic is facing insolvency proceedings, its plant in Hungary is the target of a creditor-initiated liquidation suit, and its plant in Romania has been idle for months. Its Australian steel business, InfraBuild, slumped to an \$18.6 million loss.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:31): It is not a matter of whether they're preferred or not preferred, they're the operator of the steelworks and until something very significant changes, that is the status quo. We want the steelworks to succeed in South Australia. We want the steelworks to remain operational and producing steel products, which are not produced anywhere else in Australia. This is good not

just for Whyalla and the state's economy, this is good for the nation's sovereignty and the nation's sovereign economic capability.

Yes, we appreciate that these current times are challenging for GFG. We are trying to be as accommodating as is reasonable because we want the plant to remain in production, the workers to remain employed and for these products to continue being produced for the benefit of our nation. That is why we have taken the approach of trying to work closely with GFG in order to get them back on track with their obligations to the community, to their suppliers and to the government and those efforts continue.

GFG ALLIANCE

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:33): My question is to the Treasurer. Has GFG Alliance sought any further financial assistance from the state government and, if so, what was the request and what was the government's response?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:33): As I have previously advised the house, there is a financial assistance package that has been on the table for seven years now for GFG: \$50 million, which is a state government contribution towards the significant upgrade and improvement of the plant in order to make it more efficient, more productive and more sustainable, both from an operational perspective and also from an environmental perspective. There is not just the state government money on the table but also the federal government money on the table, a bit over \$60 million for that same purpose.

Those funds have not been drawn down because GFG, despite making several iterations of promises over recent years, has not been able to make good on its commitments to transform the operations of GFG. That is one of the topics that we remain in conversation with GFG about: when they are able to make good on these transformation plans and hence when they are able to get access to that money that's on the table from the state and federal governments.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart) (14:34): My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer advise my electorate if the government will consider providing any transport subsidies for livestock feed as a result of the current drought conditions across certain parts of the state? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain further.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I have been contacted by many farmers in my region in the electorate of Stuart, and also other areas of the state, providing me with information about the current drought conditions. They have asked me if the government will provide any form of support, such as transport subsidies, to assist in the provision of fodder feed for their livestock.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:35): Can I thank the member for Stuart for raising this matter in this place, because I know that he has been contacted by many of his constituents, as well as other primary producers around the state, knowing his record as a minister for primary industries and regions and his long track record of supporting South Australia's regions. They are therefore contacting the member for Stuart about what capacity there is to assist farmers through the conditions which have been plaguing them in recent months, as we previously canvassed in this place. I thank him for the question and, in particular, raising the issue of transport subsidies for providing feed for primary producers.

Mr Speaker, you will probably be aware that at different times in the past, in different places around the country, similar schemes have been introduced where transport subsidies have been provided by government agencies to encourage and to facilitate donations of feed and produce from primary producers in one region to primary producers in another region.

Of course, Mr Speaker, you would be familiar with this because it was part of the response package after the bushfires on Kangaroo Island in the 2019-20 year that you were instrumental in playing a role in organising it. It is in that vein that the member for Stuart raises whether there is the potential to do that.

I can advise the house that I am aware that the Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon. Clare Scriven in the other place, has been working with the primary industries department, as well as representatives of the industry, as to how a scheme might work. It is not quite so simple, Mr Speaker, as I am sure you are aware, as just providing a transport subsidy for anyone who is transporting feed from one region to another because what we are trying to encourage is the donation of feed by primary producers who are in circumstances to be able to provide that donation to primary producers in other regions.

We want any support, financial support, to genuinely assist those charitable activities rather than just provide blanket financial support for commercial operators. They are working through that. There is a strong relationship that has been developed, I think, between the primary industries department and the organisations that were previously involved in establishing this scheme. My advice is that we are still working through that, and I hope to be in a position to advise the member and his constituents, and also the house, in the not too distant future.

ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

Mr HUGHES (Giles) (14:38): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the Minister update the house on the government's investment in the Royal Flying Doctor Service?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:38): I thank the member for Giles for asking this important question. The Royal Flying Doctor Service is one of the state's great institutions. I think we are all proud of the work that they provide, across our very vast landmass of South Australia, in making sure that no matter where people live they are able to receive high-quality healthcare services. There has been a very long-term cooperation between them and SA Health, the SA Ambulance Service and MedSTAR in providing both emergency retrieval services and also inter-hospital transfer services across the state.

I was very delighted in the past couple of weeks to announce a new contract. A new long-term contract has been signed between SA Health and the Royal Flying Doctor Service that is worth some \$509 million over the course of the next decade. This enables our partnership to extend to 40 years of collaboration and service between the government and the Royal Flying Doctor Service in providing these services.

This contract covers those emergency retrieval services where MedSTAR staff—this is something I know the Minister for Human Services knows particularly well in her former life as a retrieval nurse—are able to go and provide those emergency services where fixed-wing aircraft are required on our vast distances across South Australia. The doctors and nurses and ambulance officers who work with MedSTAR and SA Ambulance will work with the nurses, pilots and ground crew with the Royal Flying Doctor Service to provide that.

Equally important is the inter-hospital transfer work that happens, both bringing people to Adelaide who require that high-level specialty treatment in our metropolitan hospitals and also, after they have completed their treatment or they are now stabilised, getting those people back home to their regional communities, closer to home. It is important for them to be closer to their families, but it is also important to help free up city hospitals.

We coordinate some 15 to 20 RFDS inter-hospital transfers each day. Together, MedSTAR and RFDS do an incredible job delivering this vital care and some 7,400 inter-hospital transfers and retrievals each year. This investment that we now make will significantly boost the capability of the RFDS to provide those important services, increasing the operations to four aircraft during the day and three overnight.

These aircraft and health services are, of course, funded through the government and taxpayers in a partnership reflecting that there will be SA Health branding on these aircraft. There will be an increase in terms of the RFDS staff. Some 23 additional FTEs are going in, including nurses, pilots, engineers, clinical support, and operations and communication staff.

Importantly, it also includes two dedicated nurses who will be stationed 24/7 at the RFDS base at Adelaide Airport to help the patients who are being transferred in or out of that service, to make sure that they get continuity in terms of their nursing care there and also make sure that the

nursing staff who are involved in the flights can get back out onto the tarmac as quickly as possible to the next people who need them.

It also involves new KPIs, new faster responses, getting into the air within 20 minutes of being tasked, more than halving the previous target. I thank the RFDS for their work. We look forward to this important partnership continuing into the future.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS, JOB LOSSES

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:42): My question is to the Treasurer. Has the Treasurer sought a guarantee that there will be no further job losses at the Whyalla Steelworks?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:43): I thank the member for Flinders for his question. It is an issue that we are acutely aware of. As I have advised the house previously, the government is in constant, ongoing contact with GFG and its senior management through the Steel Task Force, and through all of those discussions, of course, a focus has been on what is going on with the workforce, to try to understand how the operational environment at the steelworks is impacting the employment arrangements for workers at the steel plant, because we have seen in recent months a number of announcements about reductions in workforce and we do not want to see that continue. So, yes, it is a constant thing that is discussed between the government and GFG.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:44): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Will the government scrap the GP payroll tax? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: As part of the Queensland state election campaign, former Labor Premier Steven Miles committed to scrapping the GP payroll tax if re-elected. The LNP, who formed government in Queensland over the weekend, committed the same. GPs in Queensland will no longer be subject to the tax.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:44): I thank the member for her question. The good news is we have provided a substantial tax cut for GPs in the most recent budget. We have provided a payroll tax cut for every GP in South Australia who bulk-bills.

The latest data, I am advised, shows that 76 per cent of all GP consultations are bulk-billed—76 per cent. More than three-quarters of all GP consultations are bulk-billed. That means no out-of-pocket expense for patients.

For many years, including the four years that those opposite were on the Treasury benches, payroll tax was liable for all GP wages, subject to the taxable wage limits. We have changed that policy to cut payroll tax. I am pleased to say, in navigating this issue—

Mr Cowdrey: Who has been taking it from them for the first time?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I am sorry, the former shadow treasurer, now shadow minister for environment, has something to say about this. Did you fail to prosecute the issue in your former role? Is that the issue?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Yes, okay. Didn't even get the question.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: Don't, he might quit preselection.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Yes, we wouldn't want to see that. Was that 11 o'clock before the 12 o'clock cut-off that you nominated? Were you really weighing it up that long? Did you leave it that late to weigh up whether to nominate again at the next election? Did you honestly wait until the last 60 minutes?

Mr Cowdrey: No, I didn't.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: That is extraordinary. To think that people on your side ring us up and tell us. It's amazing. That is amazing. Maybe somebody else is hanging around the parliament threatening your preselection as well.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: He's threatening himself.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: That's right. It's habitual. It happens every four years. The political Halley's Comet of tantrum throwing. It comes around every four years.

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta, I again uphold your point of order without you needing to state what it is. The Treasurer will come back to the substance of the question.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Apologies for the digression. So we have cut payroll tax for GPs and are proud to continue our record of cutting taxes for South Australians. In bringing GPs into compliance with the longstanding provisions of payroll tax, we have ensured that South Australia is providing a more generous, more lenient regime than New South Wales, than Victoria, than the ACT, and that is an important distinction, that our arrangements here in South Australia are better than those in our immediately surrounding states.

I have been very pleased to do that, and I note the reports that I have received from people who have contacted me that they have gone and received a GP consultation that for the first time has been bulk-billed for them. If that is the case, that we are now seeing our tax cuts have a beneficial impact on patients who are now getting access to bulk-billed services, I think that is a really good thing for South Australians.

FREDERICKS, MS T.

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:48): My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier conduct an investigation into the death of a 26-year-old woman from Port Augusta? With your leave, sir, and that of the house I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr COWDREY: It was reported that Tegan Fredericks, who suffered from significant physical and intellectual disabilities, died on Monday. Police investigations have identified significant indicators of criminal neglect. She required ongoing care but was not an NDIS client and may well have been eligible for the scheme. The opposition has this morning called for an investigation but are yet to hear a response from the government.

The Hon. N.F. COOK (Hurtle Vale—Minister for Human Services, Minister for Seniors and Ageing Well) (14:49): I thank the member for the question. Any unexpected death is absolutely tragic, and of course all of our thoughts are with the people who loved Tegan, first responders, the community in general and anyone involved in the case.

Obviously we can't make comment on specifics, noting the ongoing major crime investigation by SAPOL, but what I can say is that immediately multiple officers and departments have been reviewing contact and service records since the incident. Early advice indicates the deceased, Ms Fredricks, was not receiving ongoing or formal services from state or federal agencies, and there had been no recent contacts raising welfare concerns.

With regard to my own agency, I am advised that Ms Fredricks was not a client of the Department of Human Services, and to the best of our knowledge was not a client of any organisation funded by the Department of Human Services. I can confirm that a report was made to the Adult Safeguarding Unit after Ms Fredricks was admitted to the Port Augusta Hospital in the past week, and my office was notified by the department on the day that that report happened.

There is a clear expectation that agencies will continue to review their records for any relevant contacts or interactions while cooperating fully with police, coronial or other investigations. As noted by police, it does not appear that the person was receiving NDIS supports, although the

investigation may seek to identify others who were, or were possibly supposed to be, providing care and support.

Without making any reference to the case, all people who experience significant impacts from disability should approach the NDIS to consider their support options. The NDIS transition commenced in 2013, which began with young children in South Australia, and older age groups progressively moved into the scheme up until 2018. Since that time, the funding and delivery of disability services for those with high-level needs has been funded and regulated by the commonwealth.

This case is another reminder for everyone that if you see something, then say something. If you yourself need help, then reach out. We have a range of support services and safeguarding bodies that can provide direct help and, where necessary, intervene to ensure safety. Since 2022, our state budgets have provided more than \$12 million to the Adult Safeguarding Unit, and that works closely with police and other agencies, including federal agencies that oversee quality and safeguarding in disability and aged care to respond to reports of any abuse or neglect.

Following the 2022 election, we also have invested in increasing funding to the Community Visitor Scheme. The commonwealth recently announced another \$4.4 million to invest in funding to work towards a nationally consistent model for that. In regard to the current investigation, Detective Superintendent Des Bray, who is the officer in charge, yesterday said the investigation was in its early stages, and the examination of the house was expected to take several days. Detective Superintendent Bray said, and I quote:

There are significant indicators of criminal neglect, but it is not clear yet if that caused the woman's death.

Because of this there is a simultaneous criminal and coronial investigation underway that involves a significant commitment of resources.

The criminal investigation will examine the role of everyone who was involved in the provision of care to the victim and to determine if anyone is criminally responsible for the death. I expect it will take some time.

SYP COMMUNITY HUB

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Can the SYP Community Hub be empowered to conduct more Service SA functions? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr ELLIS: A constituent of mine, Roger Murdoch, reports having to drive all the way to Kadina from his farm, which is some 130 ks, to change farm harvest machinery from seasonal to farm-to-farm registration. I met on his behalf with department reps in March, but Mr Murdoch has reported having to drive to Kadina again this harvest.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:53): I am always here to help the Murdochs, sir—whatever I can do to help the Murdochs, I am in.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes. It is a big problem for us in regional South Australia with Service SA and those facilities, and I would like to see us have a lot more of a presence but, again, there's a cost issue and this is the paradox that government faces. For safety and security and integrity of the licensing we do, we require people to attend Service SA centres. A lot of those people who have to do that regulatory licensing are in regional and remote areas and they can't get to a Service SA centre, and it is very, very difficult.

The cost of us having these centres rolled out with the logistics and the equipment that are needed to maintain the integrity of a lot of that licensing, which if it gets into the wrong hands, as we have seen previously, with the licence number issue by some banks using key identifiers on their databases, which has then been leaked, it is very, very dangerous. I am up for suggestions of how we can get more infrastructure into regional areas to try and, one, eliminate a great deal of cost for us.

One of our biggest expenses in Service SA, excluding wages, is postage, which is a big expense for the government and, of course, that is a cost that can be changed on us at a moment's notice by Australia Post, and it is probably the only way we can get a lot of information to people. I am up for a better look at this. One of the things we have been canvassing internally is whether or not we cooperate with councils, whether we allow more work to be done online. But, again, the online aspect is difficult because there are some things you need to do in person.

So, I don't have a good answer for the member for Narungga. I wish I did, but this is a complex problem. I would say to the member for Narungga that if there was an easy solution we would have done it by now because we want our citizens to have access to this. This place puts a lot of regulations on Service SA to deliver to people and it gets very, very expensive and difficult. We have tried to open it up and make things available on weekends, but there are regional centres that are not being covered, with people driving long distances to get to essential services, and it's very frustrating for me, as it is for you, as it is for your constituent.

So we are looking at it. Do I have a solution today? No, I don't. There are scarce resources that we try to allocate towards health and education and those key government services, and where we can do it more effectively and efficiently, we will. If we can open up more services we will. If it is cost-effective to get more services out to regional areas, we will do it. But there's not an endless pit of money where we can just open up centres throughout South Australia to service as many communities as we possibly can.

We try and deal with it and try to manage it and we triage it as best we can. So, I don't have an answer to the satisfaction of the member, but I do undertake, if he likes, to speak to Mr Murdoch personally about this issue because I know you are a fierce advocate for your local community and I want to help you as much as I possibly can. If you can get me those details after question time, I will do what I can, but I can't make promises I can't keep.

CHERRY GARDENS ROAD SAFETY

Ms THOMPSON (Davenport) (14:57): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Can the minister update the house on works to improve safety in Cherry Gardens?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:57): Another member of the government who does not leave me alone. I have to say—

The Hon. S.C. Mullighan: Leave me alone! Leave Tom alone!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Leave Tom alone, yes! I've got to say, the member for Davenport's advocacy on Main Road, Cherry Gardens, has been pretty fierce. It's something I think that a lot of people have come to recognise, her tenacity in this area, because this road has a very poor crash history and longstanding safety issues. I've got to say, these safety issues weren't addressed by the previous administration, but those are now being addressed because this government has listened to its members and listened to the member for Davenport and the community, who are rightly concerned about road safety along the 5.5-kilometre section of Main Road at Cherry Gardens, and I can report to the house we have delivered on our promise.

Between 2019 and 2023, there were 39 crashes along this stretch of road, with two of those crashes resulting in serious injuries. Sadly, a young man lost his life along this stretch of road in 2018. It was clear to the member for Davenport and this Labor government that something had to be done and needed to be addressed, and the member for Davenport's advocacy has made change. The upgrades that she has forced the government to deliver through her advocacy are wider lanes; curve widening at nine priority locations; new road surface, improving skid resistance; new safety barriers, with motorcycle projection rails; new and improved road signage; new line markings, including markings at all new medians; and drainage installations and enhancements.

These works were delivered as part of a larger Adelaide Hills productivity package, which was jointly funded by the Australian and South Australian governments over five years to support economic growth, improve road safety and increase fire resilience in the Adelaide Hills.

This project has delivered a safer road for local residents and those who use it. The member for Davenport fought long and hard for it and, as a consequence of her advocacy, there were 40 full-time equivalent jobs over the construction period created in that local community. I want to pass on my thanks to the residents for their patience while these works were undertaken. Roadworks can be quite intrusive on communities, especially when we are upgrading them, and it does create a lot of anxiety and issues, but the wait is worth it; the reward is there at the end.

The member for Davenport is a local MP who listens to her community and who takes actions on their concerns. She does so to get things done, and she gets them done. South Australia is building because we are afraid of the member for Davenport.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I call the deputy leader, I would like to welcome to parliament today Mr Steven Alderson. He is my guest, a local constituent, but he is also Australia's latest sporting star. Steven took out the Golf for the Disabled Tour championship in Spain just a couple of weeks ago and captured the hearts of many Australians with how he described growing up with autism and how the relentless bullying forced him from five schools and took him out to the Willunga Golf Course, where he just hit balls day after day after day.

Steven, thank you for what you have done not only on the golf course but for people with autism around the world. I know the outpouring of emotion has been huge from many people around Australia. I want to thank you for all your advocacy that you are doing on behalf of people with autism and wish you all the very best for your next tournament in Dubai coming up the week after next.

Question Time

WORLDSKILLS AUSTRALIA

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:01): My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. Will the minister commit to seeking to bring the WorldSkills Australia national finals to Adelaide at the first possible opportunity?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (15:02): I thank the member for Morialta for his question. I am very pleased to have an opportunity to update this place on the trip that the member for Morialta and I took just a couple of months ago to the United Kingdom and France.

Mr Whetstone: What did we miss?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: You are just jealous of what we have got—you can say it; it's okay. I am pleased to have the opportunity to talk about the significance of the WorldSkills event, which I think I speak on behalf of both the member for Morialta and myself, and the South Australian Skills Commissioner, when I say the magnitude of the event took us all by surprise.

For those who are unfamiliar with it, it is an international competition for vocational education and training, for people who are in a VET profession to compete against other people like that from all around the world. There are countries represented from everywhere on the globe—China, Japan, Germany, the United States, all with very large contingents of primarily young people under 24 years of age who have won regional and then national finals in their home countries and then get a chance to go to wherever the international final is. This year was in Lyon.

The member for Morialta and I had the opportunity to attend the convention centre there, which, just to put it in a bit of perspective, has floor space about seven times the size of the Adelaide Convention Centre, and every square inch of that was being used for competitions in a really broad range of areas. I would like to list a few just to give people an idea of how immense this event is. There was electrotech, plumbing, patisserie, carpentry, floor tiling, hospitality, welding, fabrication, mechatronics, robotics, joinery, painting, decorating, landscape gardening, hospitality, renewable energy, bricklaying, cloud computing and fashion technology. That would be about half, perhaps a third, of the events that were on display there.

It was amazing for us to get the opportunity to spend a few days wandering around watching the competition. To give an example, in landscape gardening, parts of the convention centre were physically set up like enormous garden beds, and it was a live competition that was being judged by international judges, as people set out sand and rocks and all sorts of things. It was the same with patisserie, where we had a judge from Adelaide there as well in the patisserie section.

I think what really spoke to us most powerfully about the importance of the event, and I think why the member for Morialta has asked about whether or not we will do some work to try to attract the event here, is the day on which local schools were able to come and watch the events. The Lyon Convention Centre was absolutely packed with thousands and thousands of local school kids who had an opportunity to see people not much older than them have an chance to actually represent their country in a trade.

Sixteen thousand people were at the opening of the event. Macron himself opened the event, and all those competitors from every country got to come out dressed in their national colours and were welcomed, as they should be. Although in this place we often talk about not needing to go to university to have a great career, the truth is there is only so much we can say to convince a 15-year-old boy or girl around what they should do with their career. The opportunity to have a world skills event here where those young people can watch someone represent their country and potentially win a gold medal by performing to a world class and excellent standard in a trade is, I think, an incredibly powerful thing and something that I am certainly willing to consider.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to acknowledge the presence in the house, too, of Michael Pratt, the former federal member for Adelaide and the second-best politician in his family. We very much like the member for Frome, your daughter.

Grievance Debate

MALINAUSKAS LABOR GOVERNMENT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (15:06): As we know, it is Halloween. It is scary, it is spooky: it is life under Labor. Do you know what is scarier than Halloween? I will tell you what is scarier than Halloween. Firstly, it is scary that under Labor stamp duty is \$8,250 more. It is chilling that under Labor fees and charges are up by 30 per cent. It is shocking that under Labor power prices are the highest in the nation. It is horrifying that under Labor water bills are up by \$90 per year per household. Can you believe it?

In the spirit of Halloween we might have to ask ourselves if the Minister for Energy and Mining has been playing pranks on us recently. First we learned that he will be using diesel-fuelled B-double trucks to truck gas into his experimental green hydrogen plant for four hours a day—four hours a day.

Then we learned that the acting chief executive of the Northern Water project has quit and a number of others are rumoured to have followed him, all due to this government's mishandling of what is going to be a multibillion dollar project that is meant to actually play a critical role in the production of green steel and hydrogen in the Upper Spencer Gulf and also provide a new source of water for Eastern Eyre Peninsula.

Is there something a bit spooky about the minister's handling of this project? The Auditor-General certainly thought so when he raised the alarm bells around this project and its lack of a fixed estimated cost and timeline for completion.

This all sounds familiar to me. I can remember; it was not that long ago. What was that third-party independent government organisation that had a fair bit to say about some of these ministers and something called the Gillman land deal? Do you remember that? The Gillman land deal—who was involved in that bad deal? Could it be history repeating or just Labor subjecting South Australians to another horror movie sequel?

Mr Telfer: Zombie raised from the dead.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: Exactly. Whyalla is on its knees, unfortunately. The opposition have heard recently, even overnight, about job losses and creditors coming out of the woodwork. This is just days after Peter Malinauskas and his cabinet did a fly-in fly-out taxpayer-funded cameo appearance.

Do you know what is really scary this Halloween? Labor's failure to get tough on crime and the horror scenes we saw only a week ago in Elizabeth: youths wielding knives and a young man left fighting for his life. If the government will not get serious on crime then we will, which is why the member for Bragg this week introduced a bill to stop knives being sold to minors in South Australia. While the Premier spent the week talking about the Liberal Party, we stepped up to deliver what South Australians are calling for, which is safer streets, safer shopping centres and safer communities. In another blow to accountability, the Premier revealed he was not going to make public the report from the task force into South Australia Police recruitment and retention issues. What does he have to hide?

This week we read with anguish about women left living in emergency accommodation, some having fled domestic violence and single mums who are struggling day after day. Not only are they struggling, they have found that the Housing Trust did not fulfil the requirements that it should be fulfilling. *The Advertiser's* Be Their Champion campaign showed the devastating impact the housing crisis is having on vulnerable members of our community.

When we asked the Minister for Housing if he had taken up the invitation of single mum Cass Richardson, who has been living in emergency accommodation since July, we learned that he had not. It is absolutely appalling—no empathy whatsoever from this government. Over 1,700 Housing Trust homes remain vacant, is our mail, yet the minister will not release the review into maintenance contracts under the SA Housing Trust.

We also asked the Premier about housing targets and whether there are enough people to actually build these houses. When asked if the Premier has targets in place for how many homes South Australia needs, and the workforce to build them, he simply ghosted us. He absolutely ghosted us. A Housing Roadmap to nowhere is what we got from this government: lots of TED Talks, lots of shiny things but, alas, no actual road map going anywhere.

While families are out trick or treating tonight, they should be asking themselves: are they better off or are they worse off under this Labor government? The people of Black have an important decision to make in the coming weeks. I do not think they are going to reward incompetence. They are going to remember the failings of this government and they are going to hold them to account.

LIFELINE VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart) (15:11): Today, I would like to speak about the recent Volunteer Awards event held in Wallaroo by Lifeline Regional SA and Far West NSW, recognising the tremendous voluntary work that these people do for their communities. Lifeline is a very great organisation that does tremendous work for all people, particularly in regional South Australia. They are 100 per cent reliant on income from their op shops in different locations and also on community donations.

I would like to announce the award winners. First up, from the Port Pirie warehouse, there was Sharon Arbon, who received the Eucalypt Award for five years' service; Murray Coleman received the Golden Wattle Award for 10 years; Brian Reeves received the Golden Wattle Award for 10 years; Keith Smith received the Opal of Honour Award for 15 years' service; Jewell Pisani received the Lifetime Award for 20 years of service; and Heather Stringer received the Lifetime Award for 25 years' service. From the Port Pirie retail shop, Francine Warren received the Eucalypt Award for five years' service and Christine Promnitz received the Eucalypt Award for five years' service.

From Port Augusta, Robert White received the Eucalypt Award for five years' service and Nicolette Fitzgerald received the Golden Wattle Award for 10 years of service. From Wallaroo, Stephanie Blythman received the Golden Wattle Award for 10 years' service; Barbara Simpson received the Golden Wattle Award for 10 years' service; Pauline Hitchen received the Opal of Honour Award for 15 years' service; Tony Huybregts received the Opal of Honour Award for 15 years' service;

and Sharon Penny received the Opal of Honour Award for 15 years' service. From Gawler, Kym Noack received the Eucalypt Award for five years' service.

There is also a major award awarded to a volunteer in memory of Rex Jordan and Marg Garrett, who volunteered as counsellors and on the board of the previous named organisation, Lifeline Country to Coast, prior to the amalgamation that formed the current organisation. It was after the merger that this award was initiated. I was talking to this gentleman from Port Pirie before the awards. He is very unassuming and we were talking about things in general. He certainly does like to have a discussion about community in general. Not once did he indicate that he was a recipient or in the final list to be considered for this prestigious award. This recipient was Martyn Powell, who was extremely surprised when his name was read as a nominee and he was even more surprised and excited when he was named the winner. He was so excited about it he could not even speak during the ceremony there.

One of the things I want to say about Lifeline in general is that it is not only the opportunity shops and what they do for the less fortunate people there, it is also about the suicide prevention and the Lifeline counsellors they have across not only Clare but also Port Pirie. I know the member for Frome, the new member down there, goes into that one there. As the previous member for Frome I was very passionate about establishing a Lifeline Connect Centre in Port Pirie and had the opportunity to actually take a challenge from the community there to raise funds towards that organisation.

The challenge was either to shave my head or take my moustache off, and Lifeline and people were asking my two girls, Hayley and Marissa, what it was like to see their dad without a moustache. They have never seen me without a moustache. I did both and raised nearly \$21,000 towards the Lifeline Connect. What we have done now is be able to have that at Port Pirie. I know the member for Frome also attends the one at Clare.

With this opportunity, I want to reinforce what Lifeline do across all of regional South Australia. I encourage our members of parliament here to make the connection with Lifeline and promote it, because they are not only there for less fortunate people where there is an issue of affordability but also for people who have an anxiety or a mental health issue. Again, I congratulate these people for their great service. They are community volunteers and they do a great job for their communities, so I certainly congratulate them.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:16): It is Halloween today and it is a time to be scared. Of course, one of the things scaring many young people in my community is whether or not they are going to be able to have their own home in the years ahead.

One of the big challenges, of course, as we seek to increase the availability of housing in our community, is the workforce there to build it. This week we had a big scare from Build Skills Australia who have done a significant body of work, one of the findings of which is that next year alone we will be about 20,000 workers short of supply in the construction, property and water industries. Indeed, that is set to get worse, certainly set to get worse under the settings of the current state and federal Labor governments.

Their modelling prediction shows that by June 2035 there will be a shortfall of greater than 47,000 workers. They note in their 2024 National Workforce Plan that the capacity of the skilling system to scale, in line with an increased demand for skilled labour, is in question.

This fits in very much with what we have seen over the last two years since this government came to power in the training skills, training and apprenticeship sector, where commencements increased each year under the former Liberal government to the point where between March 2021 and March 2022 there were 17,870 commencements of traineeships and apprenticeships in South Australia. That dipped after a year of Labor from 17,870 to 13,000. Then in the most recent figures, released a couple of weeks ago, it is down to 9,200—nearly a 50 per cent drop of traineeship and apprenticeship commencements.

That has had a flowthrough to the number of people in training, from 29,090 at its peak in 2022 at the change of government, down to 28,585 in training in March 2023 and then 24,765 in the most recent figures. That is set to continue going down every year under Labor, whereas the number of those apprentices increased every year under the stewardship of David Pisoni, the former skills minister. As those apprentices complete their apprenticeship, indeed some of them will potentially withdraw as well. As those people cease to be in apprenticeships the numbers of apprentices are coming down. It is hitting a range of sectors, including the construction trades where those numbers have diminished from 1,565 commencements in 2022, down to 1,280 in 2024.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier, what was the government's target to address this skills shortage in the construction sector and what was the government going to do about these alarm bells, these scary Halloween-style alarm bells that have been raised in the Build Skills report?

The Premier responded saying that a target was unnecessary but the government had engaged in serious policy consideration and he had five responses. I want to briefly go through these and demonstrate why the government have, in fact, through their responses, made things worse and will continue to make things worse unless they have a radical about shift towards the Liberal Party's way of going about things, which was working very well before the change in government.

The first thing the Premier said was 'technical colleges'. There is nothing wrong with spending money on new school buildings, but to pretend that the five school buildings that the government is building around South Australia for \$300 million including ongoing operating costs are going to address our skills shortage is fanciful. Five schools with 20 per course across three courses each who will eventually, upon leaving school, get into an apprenticeship is so far short of the scale needed that it is remarkable. In the last year of the Liberal government, we had a program across all of our public schools that had, I think, about 10 times more young people leading to apprentices than this \$300 million program.

The second thing was fee-free TAFE, the government's marketing exercise. You know what is a great fee-free TAFE course or a great fee-free training course? An apprenticeship or a traineeship. Not only is it fee-free for the students, they actually get paid to do the work. Moving all those resources out of apprenticeships and traineeships into the fee-free TAFE marketing exercise has indeed reduced the number of people in traineeships and apprenticeships that we need.

For the third and fourth thing, we are talking about group training organisations, and we know that the government has reduced funding to the GTO Boost program, which we really need to look at. The last thing is the Deputy Premier and the Premier have claimed that they have successfully persuaded the federal government to block the cap reductions on our universities. What they missed is, of course, our training sector is dramatically suffering from caps on international students. This government has failed the construction workforce, traineeships and apprenticeships.

Time expired.

BE BUSHFIRE READY CAMPAIGN

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (15:21): This morning, I was very pleased to join the Minister for Emergency Services and the chief of the CFS, Brett Loughlin, the chief of the MFS, Jeff Swann, as well as some firefighters to talk about the Be Bushfire Ready bushfire season campaign starting tomorrow.

We also let people know that the fire season will be brought forward two weeks in Mount Lofty and the other districts that had not yet been announced. Now my community has about two weeks to be getting itself ready for bushfire season before the danger really starts to take hold. It has come back early because the vegetation is very dry and there is some concern that we need to make sure that communities are ready earlier.

The dry vegetation is a real problem. There is lots of high grass, and I encourage my community to get out with their whipper snipper and cut it because it is those fine fuels that really are going to create problems should a fire start.

It is important that we clean up around our houses. Make sure you clean out your gutters. The gutters are a really great spot for embers to fall should a fire start. One of the key reasons houses burn down is ember attack. Make sure gutters are clean, make sure it is clean around your house, cut the grass and get rid of flammable materials, such as garden furniture and different things like that that may be leaning against the house. All of that needs to be cleared away to give you the best option to survive a bushfire.

We need to make sure that we prepare our homes. Embers can also fall into cracks around windowsills or areas where decks are, so making sure holes are sealed up is a really great way to prevent embers from entering the home and starting a fire. Even if people feel as if their house is fully prepared, they need to make sure that it is. If their plan is to leave, that is excellent. We do not want people in the area on catastrophic fire days. If you are planning to stay, or even if you are not, if your home is not prepared, then you put other people's lives in danger because a home that is fully prepared has a much better chance of surviving a bushfire than one that is not.

Usually, we know that it is going to be a catastrophic day around 4 to 4.30pm the day before. I encourage residents to check the CFS website to find out what the rating will be. If a fire were to start on a catastrophic day, it would be incredibly difficult to control. That catastrophic rating means that it is going to be too hot and it is going to be almost impossible for firefighters to get to a fire on time to get it out before it really takes hold. That way, if people are not in the area, we are not having to worry about them and they are in a safe space.

I have done quite a bit of work not only talking to community about what their plans are for catastrophic days but also finding places for them to go on catastrophic days because some people do not have family or friends down on the flat. I have worked really hard and spoken with our friends at Wallis Cinemas at Mitcham, and they are offering our community, those who live in the seat of Waite in the Mitcham Hills, \$10 movie tickets. You can go down to Wallis, watch a movie, enjoy their lounge and stay in the cool on catastrophic days.

The aquatic centre at Marion is also offering \$20 family passes, for a whole family to go there and spend the day in the pool away from danger but close enough to know that if they wanted to they could go home. Also the Women's Memorial Playing Fields will be open for community members to go along to. There is TV there, there are places to charge phones, and you can take some pets there as well. There is also the Tonsley Innovation District. They have a really great undercover area where people can take kids with their bikes, and they can take their pets there to stay safe as well. I am continuing to work on more things for catastrophic days because if I can find different things for people to do then, hopefully, that will mean they do not want to stay at home.

When you are doing a bushfire plan it is so important that you consider lots of different aspects, not only what you will do but what your family should do, what you are going to do with your pets, what you are going to do should your kids be home alone, and what you are going to do if your car does not start. These are all things that need to be in a bushfire plan.

The other thing you can do is that if you live on a street where there is a vulnerable community member, whether they be elderly, whether they be disabled, whether they may not be able to hear or may not be up with technology, perhaps check on them as well and see what their plans are, and in that way if you can help them in some way you will be able to keep them safe.

Those bushfire plans also need to be shared with your family, not ones who live with you, because hopefully they have worked on it with you together, but those who live in other areas who might be wondering and worrying about what you are doing on a catastrophic day or if a fire should start. Share your bushfire plan and make sure you are ready, because bushfire season is coming and if we all plan together then we will build a resilient community together.

I look forward to helping our community as much as I can. Always feel free to give my office a ring if you need any resources or head to the CFS website.

WESTERN HOSPITAL

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (15:26): I rise today to provide an update to my community in regard to the Western Hospital. I think it has been done many times throughout the last six months

or so that I have been here providing an update to the community on what is ultimately a very concerning situation in terms of the delivery of healthcare services in the western suburbs.

There are so many in the local community who rely on the hospital and the services that are delivered there. Given the history, over the last little while, we have seen the hospital fall into administration and there has been a process that has been playing out since that time. To be caught in what was essentially a shocking announcement last week, where oncology services are potentially going to be ceased at the hospital, was really quite concerning to a number of people.

For those in particular in our local community who rely on the oncology services, going through cancer at the best of times is one of the most stressful times of life, and I can only imagine the additional stress that has fallen upon those in our community who rely on the oncology services at the Western Hospital, based on hearing the news.

Very soon after understanding that that was the case, I wrote to the administrators of the hospital seeking an answer from them as to whether this decision was going to be final or whether they would still be going out to try to source another buyer for those services. Ultimately, I am a little confused and was a little bit disappointed in terms of the communication of this announcement. Like many in the community, I am now confused as to what the government's role is.

As I understand it, they are a creditor to the hospital, they have been part of the process, there were Treasury officials working closely—as has been stated on previous occasions by the government—with the hospital administrators in this sale which is so important to the continuation of healthcare services in the western suburbs.

Yet, over the last couple of days, there have been public comments made more broadly that the government have not been quite as close to this as potentially they would have had us believe in the past. I think some clarity about what the government's role has been to this point would be very helpful as well, because this is not about politics. This is well above politics. The most important thing for my local community is to see the continuation of services at the Western Hospital.

That is why I was again disappointed today to see the Minister for Planning come in and just dismiss more than 23,000 people who have signed a petition calling on the government to ensure the future of the hospital and to look at all options available for keeping planning arrangements for that area in a way that will enable the site to be used as a hospital into perpetuity, rather than its current zoning, which would provide for residential construction.

Finally, I hope that we are reasonably close to a conclusion in this process. When the hospital—and I say hopefully; hopefully we get the answer that we have all been seeking over the last number of months—is transitioned to a new provider, I want to implore them to do one thing, and that is to continue to access and to use the most important part of that hospital, which is the Friends of Western group, who volunteer at the hospital, who have in the most recent iteration of the hospital participated in organising fundraising, bequests and donations to, essentially, purchase additional infrastructure for the hospital, in the hope that they can continue to upgrade the experience that patients have.

We have such a dedicated team of people who are there every day, volunteering their time to keep the community in what has been ultimately a private hospital for nearly two decades. If I can do anything through this process, I just want to ensure that whoever the new purchaser is of the hospital—and let's hope that is the case, that the hospital is purchased—we keep the community, we keep the Western as a community hospital with community involvement, with the Friends of Western front and centre in the operations moving forward.

As has been said many times, this hospital is too big to fail. It would leave far too big a hole in health services in the western suburbs. More than 23,000 people have sent a strong message to the government, the administrators and a potential buyer that we want this hospital to continue and we will continue to support it as best we possibly can.

PROSPECT SPRING FAIR

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (15:31): I rise today to say a big thank you and congratulations to everybody who was involved with the Prospect Spring Fair that has just been on Saturday at

Broadview Oval. It was an absolutely wonderful community celebration that brought so many different groups, locals and organisations together to celebrate our wonderful community.

I never thought I would say these words, but one of the highlights was the 'fastest sausage in the north'. What I am actually referring to is what is known as the 'dachshund dash', which is where lots of little sausage dogs come together to have various heats and races to be claimed the fastest sausage in the north. Well done to all those little dachshunds that participated in that event. It really is the highlight of the fair every year.

I myself, along with my amazing staff and the federal member for Adelaide, Steve Georganas, and the member for Enfield, Andrea Michaels, hosted a stall. I would like to think we were a bit of a triple threat on the day. We were not just offering free popcorn to all the locals, but the member for Enfield's staff held 'make your own badges' or badge-making, and my staff and I were able to provide 'make your own friendship bracelets'.

As a bit of a Swiftie, I was quite inspired, having attended one of Taylor Swift's concerts, by the magic of friendship bracelets, seeing people share them, the joy that it brought, the connection that it created. I thought if it is good enough for a Taylor Swift concert, it is good enough for our community. It was an absolute joy seeing all the kids coming along to our stall, making their friendship bracelets, whether it had their little name on it or a special message for the community.

It was wonderful to be able to be there on the day and not just provide those free activities for families but also be there to chat to locals and listen to them. For them, it was an opportunity to be able to raise various issues or just have a chat about how things are going in the community.

Speaking of dogs, I was able to also offer my Dogs of Prospect and Surrounds calendar. I also have the Dogs of Adelaide calendar. This is a fabulous 12-month calendar for 2025 featuring the many famous pooches in our community. I was so inundated with offers to provide their dog as a model mutt for my calendars that I had to do two. It was wonderful to be able to sell those calendars at the fair as well, with all proceeds going to the RSPCA. All profits from the sale of the calendar are going to our amazing RSPCA South Australia.

I want to also give a shout-out to some of the other stallholders. We had some amazing local businesses also at the fair: Cannoli Box Co., Blackfriars school, Powerhouse gym, Artisans of Prospect. We also had some amazing service clubs. Our Prospect and Blair Athol Lions Club was firing up the barbecue as always. It was amazing to see all the volunteers there, including former member for Adelaide Rachel Sanderson, who is always willing to roll up her sleeves and assist with the barbecues at various events. Thank you to all those wonderful volunteers for what you do to give back to the community.

Big thanks to our Mayor Matt Larwood and all the staff and volunteers at the City of Prospect. This really is a team effort. It is a beautiful community event where you see everybody coming together to really lift the spirits of the community, and we had gorgeous weather for it as well.

Thank you also to Uncle Tamaru, who was able to provide the welcome to country, with some assistance from my daughter, Audrey. A quick thank you to my kids Audrey and Ned. They were there right behind the stall helping, as well as my amazing staff Chloe, Sophie and Nathaniel.

I have always said in this place that often working for an MP can be a bit of an extreme sport. You are called upon to do many different tasks, but they always do it with a smile. They always work so hard and they are so committed to our community, so I really want to thank them for that.

Finally, it is never a community event without the incredible Police Band. They came along and really showed us an amazing array of hits, as they always do. They bring so much joy to whatever event they come to, so a huge thank you to them.

I wish everyone a wonderful spring. I cannot believe we are on the run to Christmas but, once again, thank you and congratulations to everyone involved with the Prospect Spring Fair.

*Parliamentary Procedure***SITTINGS AND BUSINESS**

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD (Reynell—Minister for Child Protection, Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:36): I move:

That the house at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 11am.

Motion carried.

Sitting extended beyond 18:00 on motion of Hon. K.A. Hildyard.

*Bills***CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SAFETY AND SUPPORT) BILL***Committee Stage*

In committee (resumed on motion).

Clauses 55 and 56 passed.

Clause 57.

Mr TEAGUE: I have skipped over the first couple of clauses dealing with court proceedings specifically in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. I will get to the subject of clause 57, which stipulates that there are no orders to be made unless a family group conference has been offered. I think it might be a reversion to the question of how that is going to be dealt with from an evidential point of view.

It is sort of like the chicken and egg: has the child in question been the subject of the active efforts to identify their aboriginality? If so, the court will not make an order if the aboriginality of the child has been established unless the family group conference has been offered—so far so good. But if a court otherwise proceeds to make orders in circumstances where the child is not Aboriginal, what onus is there on the court from the beginning to turn its mind to the ascertainment of aboriginality for all children before making any orders? How much is this at the feet of the court?

It is straightforward enough to have an Aboriginal child come to the court and for the court to say, 'An Aboriginal child, therefore I won't make any orders until there is a family group conference.' But if that question has not been determined, the court is being asked to make orders in the ordinary course, and a question arises: 'Hang on, have you determined aboriginality?' To what extent is that at the feet of the court and who is going to satisfy the court as to the aboriginality or not of every child prior to the possible making of orders that might be prohibited under clause 57?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: There are three things: first of all there is the presumption that we speak about, then identification is obviously the precursor, but also in relation to any child particular evidence would be put before the court in relation to the circumstances of that particular child.

Mr TEAGUE: Yes, that is true, and that might be as much as can be said. The clause is proscriptive: there is the possibility that the court is in breach of the act in circumstances where it is making an ordinary order. The court says, 'Alright, this child is before the court. Has there been a family group conference?' 'No, and these are the circumstances in which that has not happened.' 'Alright, we will go ahead and make orders.' The court is not to know that the child's aboriginality has not been determined. The court is proceeding as if the child were not Aboriginal. Is it a matter, therefore, that the court is going to have to turn its mind to, in every case before making any order, where it is clear that a family group conference has not occurred?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: No.

Mr TEAGUE: I am just not sure that that is right in that given that clause 57 is a straightforward prohibition, where there is not positive evidence led as to the non-aboriginality of a child in the absence of a family group conference, I query the question as to whether the court is going to have to cover that ground, in which case the court is going to have to conduct an inquiry into

the aboriginality of a child or not in each case. It is not a matter of being pedantic; it is just it is the form of the clause.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I think the court will of course, in any particular case, make the inquiries of the department that it sees fit to do so in the particular circumstance. There would be circumstances where it is clear they do not need to, but in other circumstances I am sure they will make those inquiries as they see fit.

Clause passed.

Clauses 58 to 61 passed.

Clause 62.

Mr TEAGUE: Clause 62, at the commencement of part 5—State Strategy for the Safety and Support of Children and Young People: I simply draw attention to clause 62 in the broader context of part 5 and invite the minister to address any aspects of importance in relation to changes in the structure of the application of part 5 in the new bill, the new act, as it will be.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: This is a new section, and I think I have covered this at length in my second reading speech but also in an earlier answer in the course of this debate, so I do not have anything further to add.

Clause passed.

Clauses 63 to 71 passed.

Clause 72.

Mr TEAGUE: This is the second clause in part 7 and is introducing the new threshold of significant harm. I refer, in this frame, to the definition that has been addressed at clause 4 already. In terms of the establishment of the threshold, I think much has been covered at clause 4, in terms of what the threshold means and how that will play out.

In terms of the categories of person who are prescribed persons and the circumstances in which they form the relevant suspicion, what consideration has the government given in terms of the scope and the context in which the suspicion has relevantly formed? Is the government satisfied that that range of persons and the settings are where they ought to be?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I think this is what the member is drawing our attention to. There is obviously the inclusion of allied health professionals and there is a long list of new categories of persons. In answer to your question, we are satisfied with that list, bearing in mind that nothing stops any person from making a particular report when there is a suspicion of a risk of significant harm. Also, nothing would preclude at a later time adding particular new classes of people as required.

Mr TEAGUE: I note in relation to the discretion that applies also to a prescribed person at subclause (3) and so on, there is provision for that. As was drawn to my attention, I appreciate subclause (7) and the provision in relation to liability.

I refer specifically to a concern raised by SACOSS in this context, and I get back now to the threshold. It is a concern that is not unique to SACOSS, but I recognise that, having been raised by it, there is an experience where there is a history of multiple reports that are being made, each of them might be innocuous almost, certainly below the newly introduced threshold, but there are many of them, and they all provide an indicative picture, which would not be brought to attention without the accumulation of them. Is the government satisfied that accumulation of multiple small indicia is still able to be addressed, notwithstanding the threshold that is now to be applied in terms of mandatory reporting?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I think we spoke about that particular matter earlier when I spoke about the definition around 'cumulative harm' in relation to the provisions about 'at risk of significant harm'. Cumulative harm is an area that we are deeply interested in. We have sought advice about that from various bodies, and it is an area that we will continue to look at, and we will certainly be looking at how that is contemplated as we go through implementation and educate various new persons who are named in the legislation but also existing people as well.

Clause passed.

Clauses 73 to 78 passed.

Clause 79.

Mr TEAGUE: Clause 79 is concerned with random drug and alcohol testing. My understanding is that that is certainly drawn from the 2017 act but, in turn, it has had its genesis in an amendment that was in the context of the 2017 act, motivated I think by a member of the other place. That then carries on into clause 80.

I just query whether or not the government has satisfied itself as to the proved utility of that regime and if there is a frank answer that is possible, that it remains at the margins of utility but it has been retained out of an abundance of caution, or whether, in fact, on review it has work to do and, if so, what is that?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Two things: I am informed it is a clause that is frequently relied on in Youth Court proceedings. This clause, yes, was born from that 2017 or the existing act, but it also does ensure that the clause now supports all of the relevant types of testing that are currently available and which may be available in the future, bearing in mind that there are developments in terms of what can be tested and how, etc.

Clause passed.

Clauses 80 to 90 passed.

Clause 91.

Mr TEAGUE: Clause 91 is the first clause of part 8, which deals with the ordinary regime for family group conferences. At the outset I again note the proved-up efficacy of family group conferences. Clause 91 deals with the application of the part, which is wideranging. I ask just at the outset, and I will not repeat it in terms of the discretionary aspect that remains for a part 8 family group conference, is there any particular single reason why family group conferences the subject of part 8 are not mandatory in the same way as they are in part 4?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I think I have already outlined that, but we made a very clear decision in line with the consistent advice from SNAICC, from SAACCON and through the discussions at a national level to ensure that there was that taking into account of that advice that required offering to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

Of course, in this provision there are family group conferences available to other children and young people, and this clause makes it very clear that that applies whether or not they are in care.

Mr TEAGUE: Again, I do not know that this has been covered in exactly the same way; if it has, then fine. Is it in any way a matter of budgetary consideration or are there other factors that are in play that are entirely qualitative? Is there a budgetary factor? If so, fine, there is a cohort for which there is an extra effort, as it were, to provide a mandatory family group conference, but if there is a broader qualitative criterion and it is nothing to do with budgetary considerations, then I just ask if one or other, or both, plays into it.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: It is about that extra effort for that particular group of children and young people.

Mr TEAGUE: I might just indicate by way of anecdote—again, a nod to SACOSS and its feedback—I understand that by reference to the Woodville office there has been no case where a child has been returned following a family group conference. This is an unusually shining example, but proves up the great worth of the family group conference.

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Thank you.

Clause passed.

Clauses 92 and 93 passed.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

*Auditor-General's Report***AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

In committee.

(Continued from 30 October 2024.)

The CHAIR: I declare the examination of the Report of the Auditor-General 2023-24 open. I remind members that the committee is in normal session. Any questions have to be asked by members on their feet and all questions must be directly referenced to the Auditor-General's 2023-24 Report and Agency Statements for the year ending 2023-24, as published on the Auditor-General's website, and the Update to the Annual Report, as tabled in this house on 15 October. I welcome the Minister for Veterans Affairs and the member for Hammond.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to page 10, objectives and programs, program 3, Veterans SA. Has Veterans SA provided the minister with a response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am very happy to answer that question. I thank the member for that being the first government question. Yes, I received the final report; that, of course, came not directly from Veterans SA but directly from the secretariat of the royal commission. I can advise the member that subsequent to receiving the report, the commonwealth acted quickly, and we have held a subsequent face-to-face Veterans' Ministerial Council meeting.

It is, in broad summary, an incredibly detailed piece of work. I will use this opportunity to thank all the commissioners and, more importantly, recognise the bravery of families and survivors who participated in the royal commission. This is a story that must be told. It is also a part of our service history that we cannot forget, ignore or not act upon.

The commonwealth has advised states, and I believe the commonwealth is on the public record on this, that it will be formulating its response by the conclusion of this calendar year. There are, I think—and I am happy to perhaps take on notice the final number—seven or eight of the recommendations which have some interplay with state agencies. The majority of the relationships between those recommendations and the state are not with Veterans SA, they are with agencies like education, health and DSD, particularly with workforce and industry policy. We will be undertaking that body of work once the commonwealth has determined its final response to the recommendations.

There is, at a broad level, nothing in the recommendations that relates to the South Australian jurisdiction or state jurisdictions which should not see support from the state, but, of course, the formulation of our response will be in collaboration with the commonwealth, which is leading this important project.

Mr PEDERICK: In response to that question, will the state government collaborate with the federal government, and also your other state agencies, on delivering the 122 recommendations from the royal commission into defence and veteran suicide?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Yes, we will. It is critical. I will note that the conversations that I have had with the federal minister as well as the briefings that I have received from Veterans SA with respect to their engagement with their federal counterparts has been a commitment from the commonwealth to work with the states, and the commonwealth has South Australia's assurance that we will work with the commonwealth. The member's question regarding other states, of course, those other states—

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Yes, other state agencies, absolutely; we will be. As is already happening, Veterans SA—as it has been—is working with the Attorney-General's Royal Commission Response Unit, working across other government agencies. This is a whole-of-government effort and a whole-of-government response will be required.

Mr PEDERICK: How many applications were received for the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II grant?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am happy to take that question on notice. It may actually be for brevity that I will bring the number back before the conclusion of our examinations.

Mr PEDERICK: Given the significance of the occasion, will Veterans SA offer another round of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II grant?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: In respect of the 80th anniversary commemoration fund, I am advised that the design of the fund and the way that the round has opened has been to facilitate applications and grant funding agreements to take place leading into and for the 80th anniversary. So the fund itself, rather than doing it after the fact or post the event, it has been designed by Veterans SA to roll through ahead of time. As for the ongoing commemoration fund, that is the ANZAC Day Commemoration Fund which I can advise the member is baked in and ongoing.

Mr PEDERICK: I refer to page 15, the advisory board, council and employees. Regarding the Veterans' Advisory Council, what are the key issues the Veterans' Advisory Council has discussed and informed the minister about over the last six months?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can provide some advice to the member for Hammond. Again, I preface this by acknowledging that some of this advice was provided to the previous minister and some of it has been provided to me. Broadly across the financial year—matters specifically to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, definitions of ex-service organisations, veterans identify, particularly with respect to government services. One really important matter, which was important for the former minister—and again, I will take this opportunity to both acknowledge and congratulate the former minister's leadership—is Veterans' Families Day, which was inaugurated on 15 May, the first in the country, and one that I am quite dedicated to working on with the other states and my colleagues to see it roll out nationally.

There has also been specific work and engagement, which I do thank the VAC for in respect of their ongoing support and collaboration with events and engagements that Veterans SA run. As the member knows, the Veterans SA resource within the public sector is modest in terms of individuals. All of those individuals do an outstanding job. I again use this opportunity to thank them, including Ms Wheeler who is accompanying me today. It is the collaborative approach between the VAC, members of the VAC and Veterans SA that I am most impressed by, and I thank them for that collaborative approach.

Mr WHETSTONE: Moving on to the Department for Trade and Investment at Part C on page 436, can you explain the \$10 million increase in supplies and services compared with the 2023 year?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I could take some time in answering that or I could, more appropriately, refer the member to the next examination. These are matters within the housing side of the report. I understand Minister Champion is up next so those variances are in relation to the housing side and planning side.

Mr WHETSTONE: Can you answer why there were no other expenses this year, yet there was a \$17 million expense in 2023?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Perhaps the member can refer specifically to the item. If I can endeavour to get that information—

Mr WHETSTONE: Part C, page 436.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised that that is a planning matter. I will endeavour to take that on notice. I also will ask my DHUD adviser here, Mr Reynolds, if he can seek that information ahead of the next examination so as to be able to provide that information within the session today.

Mr WHETSTONE: Same reference point: the Department for Trade and Investment assets increased by \$29 million, with \$19 million attributed to the SAILIS titling database. How is the other \$10 million accounted for?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Likewise, as part of the total response to the member that I undertake to take on notice, I will provide that to him. He did refer to the \$17 million, including the

re-evaluation of SAILIS, that does go largely to my answer to his previous question, but I will provide a fulsome answer on the record.

Mr WHETSTONE: The SAILIS titling database: when was that database last evaluated and what was its value?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: SAILIS is a Lands Titles Office asset. Again, I will try to be as best and helpful as I can here. The Minister for Planning is up next. This is a planning matter and I would invite the member to ask that—we are lucky that we do have Mr Reynolds here who will be accompanying the Minister for Planning in the next session. So you have the question on notice half an hour ahead of time as well.

Mr WHETSTONE: Significant transactions, the Department for Trade and Investment financial statement, page 15: why were 28 per cent of grants paid to South Australian government entities? Can you break down the \$3.488 million worth of payments made to DIT and SA Water?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The first part of the member's question I will take on notice again. That seems to be, to the best advice that I have received, largely focused on the part of the agency which is not under my ministerial responsibility. As for the question in respect of DIT and water, I am advised that that is office accommodation.

Mr WHETSTONE: TradeStart, regarding the financial statement at page 17: the paragraph reads that \$163,000 was received in 2024 for TradeStart but the table lists \$287,000, so where is the other \$124,000 from?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I thank the member for his question. I am advised that the discrepancy is around invoice and timing. As noted in table 2.3, that is commonwealth contribution to the TradeStart program, where the commonwealth and government of South Australia have entered into a contract to fund fifty-fifty, so the table to which the member refers is the commonwealth contribution, and the variance or discrepancy, as I am advised, is in relation to the invoicing—sorry, not invoicing, the timing of payments.

Mr WHETSTONE: Can you give me a better understanding as to why Austrade funding to the department decreased by over 70 per cent compared to the previous year: 2023, \$582,000; 2024, \$163,000?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can, by both referring to the answer that I just gave the member in respect to the variance being around the payments as opposed to any change in the contract. The contract is fifty-fifty, but to be very explicit for the member, there is no decrease in commonwealth contribution.

Mr WHETSTONE: Will the state government seek commonwealth support to continue delivering the TradeStart services beyond 2024?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can do much better than that, I can actually inform the member that we have signed a new contract. We have locked it in and it is ongoing. One of the first things I did upon becoming minister was to ensure that we sought some longevity to what has been a program that has been well received, and that exporters and primary producers I have met with have spoken in resounding support for it, so we will not need to advocate for it anymore. We have locked it in by way of a new contract.

Again, the conversations that I understand have occurred within the last financial year, from a departmental perspective but also on an ongoing basis between my department and Austrade, have been incredibly fruitful and incredibly successful.

Just today I met with the director of trade for Austrade and he raised with me the appreciation that he has for the support that the program receives from the Department of State Development.

Mr WHETSTONE: Regarding contracts with SA and non-SA businesses, financial statement, page 26, how many contracts does the department have with non-SA businesses, and who are they?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Within the contracts awarded as the member has asked, of the 4 per cent which are with non-South Australian entities, I do not have the number outside the 4 per cent. I will of course endeavour to get that figure for you.

Mr WHETSTONE: Grants and subsidies, financial statement, page 26: why have the government's investment subsidies decreased by \$3.8 million?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised, and can advise the member, that there has been no material decrease in the program delivery or funding for those. The variance is in large part due to, again, the payment of invoices. These are quite large individual programs. I am also advised that the 2023 figure that the member refers to was impacted by previous year carryovers as well, which has inflated the number.

Mr WHETSTONE: In the financial statement on page 34 it is stated that there was an error made in the 2022-23 revaluation of the data service concession. That resulted in an adjustment of \$8.678 million. What were the impacts of that mistake?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Outside of the fact that I can advise the member this is another matter related to the SAILIS system, I again invite the member to direct that planning question to the planning minister.

Mr WHETSTONE: Moving on to the financial statement on page 1, why was there a \$302,000 decrease in commonwealth-sourced grants and funding for the department compared with the 2023 year?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can advise that the member has already asked me the question, and I hope I gave him a fulsome answer. That is the TradeStart funding and the TradeStart payments to the commonwealth. Table 2.3 on page 17, about which the member asked me a question a couple of moments ago, is the same data.

Mr WHETSTONE: With cash assets, the financial statement on page 2, can you explain the \$16 million increase in cash and cash-equivalent assets?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I am advised that the variance the member asks for is largely as a result of levels of appropriation, incomings and timings of commonwealth payments and, most materially, transactions through Land Services SA and the Lands Titles Office.

Mr WHETSTONE: If I can go back a step, on page 437 of Part C, why have payments into the Consolidated Account increased by \$42 million over the last year?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can advise the member, with the limited information that I have, that it is Lands Titles Office transactions. So it is payments in and then out into Consolidated, but it is transactions that relate to Land Services SA and LTO.

Mr WHETSTONE: The overlay certainly does not make it all that fluent, but it is what it is. On page 14, the Department for Trade and Investment spent five and a half million dollars less than budgeted on grants and subsidies. Have any of the grants been cut?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The positive news for the member is no, no programs or grants have been cut. Again, due to the nature of a number of these grant funding programs there is always a timing and a sequencing of payments in support of either grants or other programs. In fact, contrary to programs being cut, there has been a considerable increase in this year's state budget in respect of key programs that the government runs. Of course, those key programs are around attracting investment as well as building export capability and capacity for local businesses, many of which reside in the wonderful electorate of Chaffey.

Mr WHETSTONE: For clarification, there was five and a half million dollars less spent than was budgeted. Can you give me a better understanding of why there was five and a half million dollars less spent?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The member has put the question as being an underspend against budget. There has been no reduction in overall payments contained or attached to a contract or attached to a grant program or attached to individual support. The chief executive advises me that

a large body of these payments are paid upon the completion or attainment of a milestone, be it a construction milestone or a performance milestone.

This is across multiple programs within Trade and Investment as well as within the now D-hub. These are always paid upon milestones. The department budgets at the start of the year seeking to do the best they can to see the project proponents meet those milestones, but of course if they do not then the department will not facilitate the payment until such time as they do.

Mr WHETSTONE: I think the department is a lesser. No disrespect to the current CE, but the former CE of the department I think has done an outstanding job and I just want to put that on the record.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I can also say the same and not just because he is sitting in front of you and next to me, but I thank Mr Reynolds for his stewardship and service and guidance. Of course, he has a body of work before him now with his new minister of whom I know the member for Chaffey enjoys calling 'the super minister'. He is a super minister and a super gentleman. I thank him and also acknowledge the really important policy-driven MoG that has been undertaken through the Department of State Development. The new chief executive, Adam Reid, is doing an outstanding job.

Mr TELFER: I will cast the minister's attention to the Electoral Commission of South Australia report. The separate article from the Auditor-General on page 10 speaks about council elections. Has the minister received a report from the Electoral Commissioner on the November 2022 council elections?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: Whilst the containment of those Auditor-General's statements, those full reports, are of course for the relevant minister, I can confirm to the member that I have not received the report. The Electoral Commissioner has been somewhat busy. Of course, with the recent resignation of the member for Black, or the former member for Black under most—

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The CHAIR: Member for Flinders, you have asked a question.

Mr Telfer: It was about council elections. He is talking about Black.

The CHAIR: Member for Flinders, you don't wish to depart, do you?

Mr Telfer: Not at all, sir. I am hoping he answers the question.

The CHAIR: Right, okay.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I could sit down or I could try to continue without interjections.

The CHAIR: You can continue without interjections.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The Electoral Commissioner has not provided me or furnished me with the report. Again, there is not any great outrage or confected outrage here. The member opposite is seeking to impugn the work and the independence of the Electoral Commissioner. I am simply seeking to proffer—

Mr Telfer: Sir—

The CHAIR: Member for Flinders, resume your seat.

Mr Telfer: Sir, can I just—

The CHAIR: No, resume your seat. You have interjected. You will listen to the minister without interruption from this point onwards or I will ask you to leave the chamber.

Mr Telfer: Can I have a point of order, sir?

The CHAIR: No, I don't want to hear it.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I think the member's question was in relation to a body of work that is being undertaken by the independent Electoral Commissioner. I am simply seeking to put on the record some of those reasons why the Electoral Commissioner may have been busy—in fact,

has been busy. With the upcoming Black by-election—I am not sure if it was on the radar of those opposite; it certainly was not on our radar that it was coming around any time soon—the Electoral Commissioner has been busy.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIR: Members on my left!

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: The good news is that pretty soon the by-election will have come and gone, and the electorate and people and voters of Black will finally get a member who is representing their interests and we can move on.

Mr Telfer: Sir, can I raise a point of order, please?

The CHAIR: You can raise a point of order, yes.

Mr TELFER: Can I ask that the minister withdraw and apologise for his false accusations that I am somehow trying to impugn the reputation of the Electoral Commissioner? It is an outrageous statement from the minister and one which I was trying to bring to your attention at the time.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: It is always a matter for relativity, and the test for the member feeling offence is of course one for him, so I am happy to withdraw and apologise.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIR: I do not need the advice of people on my left, thanks very much. I also remind members that the Electoral Commissioner is also involved in the redistribution at the moment, so he has other things on his plate as well.

We have a new minister. I just remind members that the committee is in normal session. Any questions have to be asked by members on their feet and all questions must be directly referenced to the Auditor-General's 2023-24 Report and Agency Statements for the year ending 2023-24, as published on the Auditor-General's website, and the Update to the Annual Report, as tabled in this house on 15 October. I welcome the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, the leader and the member for Frome. The floor is yours.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: Annual Report, Executive Summary, Agency Outcomes, SA Health, page 17. I note that the Auditor-General noted a \$956 million overspend by SA Health, an 11.5 per cent overspend for the second year in a row. My question to the minister is: how did the minister manage to underestimate demand so significantly once again this year?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: I thank the member for his question. Obviously, health is an area of expenditure which is highly impacted by the demand that we face, whereas there are other areas of government where costs are much more fixed. We are impacted in terms of both the number of patients that we will see but also the complexity of the patients that we see. That complexity significantly impacts us in terms of their length of stay, in terms of the surgical interventions that might need to take place, all of which leads to additional costs.

Health services across Australia are funded on the basis of activity-based funding, and that certainly has been in place in South Australia for some time. Estimates are made in terms of activity units. They are called NWAU, which is National Weighted Activity Units, each of which has an assigned price that is determined by the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority. That then flows through the state budget process, through both a relevant activity budget and also block-funded services that each of the health services deliver that cannot be estimated through that activity basis.

It is certainly one of the areas that we are seeking to reform through the current negotiations underway in terms of the National Health Reform Agreement in trying to address some of those areas that are not activity-based funding in that block to make sure that they can be activity-based funded in the future. One of those key examples is virtual care, where we are doing a lot more services clearly now as well.

All of those matters lead to that estimation of the budget that the Leader of the Opposition has asked about. Clearly, as the Auditor-General notes both in this report but also the subsequent

report that he tabled this week, this is not something new. Over the past decade, including in the four years that the member for Hartley sat in the Liberal government, there has clearly been overspending in terms of the health budget based on the activity that we are seeing in our health services and the cost of delivering those services.

We certainly have made very clear our government's intention to prioritise health expenditure, to make sure that we can deliver services that people need across the state. A very significant proportion of the money we spend on health goes directly to employee salaries—doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, paramedics and other staff in our health services providing those services. One of the factors in terms of the expenditure, as noted by the Auditor-General, is that increase in staff that we have employed.

To meet the budget, if that is what the leader wants to achieve, that would obviously involve a reduction in those frontline healthcare staff across the system. That is something that this government is certainly not advocating. It is not our policy, and we are determined to make sure that we can meet the healthcare needs of South Australians in our state.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: Minister, what were the unexpected issues that arose that resulted in that almost \$1 billion budget blowout?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: Thank you for the question, member for Hartley. Of the money that the Auditor-General notes, the vast majority of that was approved budget expenditure, particularly through the Mid-Year Budget Review or other cabinet decisions that were made. Of the \$956 million, it is primarily attributable to approved budget adjustments, so these are approved matters that went through the appropriate processes, of \$627 million. The vast majority of that was for \$492 million, which was for addressing the pressures experienced for activity and costs, such as workforce, patient requirements, supplies and services. I will list some of the other areas of additional budget expenditure that were approved:

- timing of expenditure associated with upgrading residential aged-care facilities, \$18.5 million;
- realignment of depreciation expenditure to align the fixed asset register at Northern Adelaide Local Health Network and Women's and Children's Health Network, \$16.5 million;
- increased interest expenses associated with the Royal Adelaide Hospital, \$13.5 million;
- increased expenditure associated with the provision of Aged Care Assessment Program, \$13.4 million;
- increased expenditure associated with the essential vaccines national partnership agreement, \$11.3 million;
- increased expenditure and associated commonwealth revenue for provision of patient care and services related to veterans' affairs, \$10.6 million; and
- increased expenditure and associated commonwealth expenditure revenue for the extension of South Australia's participation in the national partnership on public dental services for adults, \$9.4 million.

In addition to that, there are a whole range of other items that were approved of smaller amounts, which I can go into if there is interest in doing so.

In addition, DHW consolidated position was adversely impacted by the following accounting adjustments associated with provision movements, including:

- insurance revaluation provision movement, \$69 million;
- employee-related leave revaluation provision movement, primarily long service leave, \$58 million; and
- workers compensation revaluation provision movement, \$25 million.

Breaking down that \$956 million, it breaks down to salaries and wages—so our staff, particularly frontline staff—of \$365 million, and supplies and services of \$516 million. The expenditure in salaries and wages reflects higher than originally budgeted FTE employed across the health system in 2023-24 of 2,186 full-time equivalent staff, primarily located in our local health networks. Clearly, such a significant area of our expenditure is in terms of that additional 2,000 staff above what was budgeted for.

The higher than expected services and supplies expenditure primarily relates to increases in volumes due to increased activity but also increases in CPI that we have had to meet in terms of the supplies and services that we have across the system.

Ms PRATT: In relation to report 9, page 139, what factors have led to a \$15 million increase in accommodation and lease incentives related to the Bragg Centre?

The Hon. C.J. Picton: What was the page reference?

Ms PRATT: Page 139, under liabilities—the question is: what factors have led to the \$15 million increase in that lease accommodation arrangement for the Bragg Centre, and how are these lease incentives defined?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: I thank the member for Frome for her question. My understanding is that about four or five years ago there was a contract entered into by previous Treasurer Rob Lucas. Part of that contract arrangement was that the health department—the South Australian government, but it was delegated to the health department—would take, we think, four floors in the Bragg Centre for accommodation.

That was part of an arrangement that the previous government had entered into to make sure that that building could go ahead and that the commercial proprietor of that building—which I cannot remember if at that stage was Commercial & General or if that had changed to Dexus by then—was able to have the financial surety that they required for that to happen.

That is not a contract that this government has entered into, but we are fulfilling the contract requirements. We have therefore received those four floors that we are now leasing in the Bragg Centre. We have moved a significant number of particularly Department for Health and Wellbeing staff into those four floors—including Ms Formston next to me, the deputy chief executive, and many of her teams—to utilise that area we are contractually obliged to use in the Bragg Centre and have therefore also tried to consolidate a number of our other leases that we previously had across the Adelaide CBD.

Ms PRATT: Just following on from that, I will ask for clarification because having stood in the lobby it does look like there are five floors leased.

The Hon. C.J. Picton interjecting:

Ms PRATT: Just following on from that, of course in the basement is the proton bunker. Can the minister give a current status update on the government's ongoing negotiations around delivering the proton therapy unit?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: It may well be that it is five floors; we certainly can check that. In terms of the arrangements for proton therapy, as the member may be aware this is an arrangement that SAHMRI entered into, many years ago now. They established a corporation under them called the Australian Bragg Centre for Proton Therapy Research, otherwise known as the ABCPTR, that entered into contractual arrangements with ProTom International for the delivery of that device.

Regarding the government's connection and involvement, while there is a national partnership agreement that was originally signed by my predecessor, Stephen Wade—and I have recently signed an updated version of that, noting delayed timeframes. The management of that originally sat with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet when these arrangements were first entered into, but then under the previous government it sat with the Department of Treasury and Finance under Rob Lucas. That has continued under this government.

The health department, of course having a very strong interest in terms of delivery of healthcare services and also medical and health research in the state, are very clearly involved in

this matter and we are working very closely with our colleagues in the Department of Treasury and Finance in relation to trying to reach a solution to this matter.

Clearly there have been issues in terms of ABCPTR's and SAHMRI's contractual arrangements that they have had with ProTom International for the delivery of this device. We have been open about the fact that we are, through the Department of Treasury and Finance, trying to work constructively with both the commonwealth government who are funding this program and also with SAHMRI and ABCPTR to try to find a solution that can deliver the intended outcome.

Obviously, this is an outcome that is of national importance. The proportion of South Australians who would be using such a service would be roughly in line with our population share, so in the order of 5 per cent to 7 per cent. Expectedly, this is a national service, so obviously the commonwealth government are the significant funder of this service and we are having to work closely with them.

I do not have any particular update in terms of what is already on the public record and what the Treasurer has said, other than that we are continuing to work very closely with the Department of Treasury and Finance, the Treasurer, SAHMRI and ABCPTR to try to find a solution.

Mr McBRIDE: My question relates to page 15 of the financial statements, point 9, supplies and services. The fee-for-service expenditure for the Limestone Coast Local Health Network last financial year was \$28,164,000, an increase of \$4 million from 2023. Can the minister explain exactly what fee-for-service relates to, and whether that is the amount spent on employing locum doctors?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: What is the page reference?

Mr McBRIDE: I refer to the electronic version of the audit, page 15. If it is of any help, the question relates to page 15 of the financial statements, point 9, supplies and services. There is a figure in there that says we are paying \$28,164,000 in 2024, which is up \$4 million from the year before. I am wanting to know what that fee-for-service expenditure is going towards; is it being spent on locum doctors in the Limestone Coast?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: I cannot find that reference in the electronic version. My adviser Judith is very quickly looking to see if we can find it. I suspect the member is exactly right that a large proportion of the fee-for-service expenditure in the Limestone Coast network would be in relation to locum doctors.

We are in a situation, not just in South Australia but across the country, where a real change has happened over the past decade where we have seen an increasing localisation of the medical workforce in regional areas. That has certainly, I think, not been a positive development. I think that has clearly led to increased costs right across the country, and I do not think that there is any argument that it has led to benefits in terms of patients. That is why we are working so hard to try to turn the tide on that, and that is why I have been determined that we implement what is known as the single employer model to enable us to train more doctors in regional areas who will become SA Health employees working between general practice in primary care and our acute care settings in our country hospitals.

I have also been very clear and have put a lot of pressure on our local health networks to have better connections with their GPs in their local area, and certainly that is true in the Limestone Coast and also elsewhere. I note the member for Narungga is here as well. A couple of years ago when we came to office—and the member would be aware of this—in the Mid North area relations between GPs and the local health network had completely broken down. I am really pleased that there has been a significant turnaround in that from the Yorke and Northern Local Health Network and there is a much stronger connection. That is not to say that everything is perfect, but we have much stronger engagement with our GPs in that area and that is certainly what we would like to see across the state.

Mr ELLIS: I have the Agency Audit Reports in front of me, minister—I should start by saying good afternoon. At page 122, health sector overview, I am specifically looking at the graph for country LHNs, which reports a 22 per cent increase in the number of patients presenting at country LHN emergency departments since 2021. It says:

This is consistent with a 6% decrease in the percentage of patients seen, treated, discharged or admitted within four hours...

Is that data available broken down by LHN or by hospital? I would be intrigued as to whether there has been an increase in the number of people presenting to the Wallaroo Hospital, for example, and Yorketown, and what that quantum is.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: Certainly, we would be able to provide that information; if the member wants to ask it on notice or write to me, etc., we would be happy to chase up that information. The graph is correct that we have seen an increase in presentations at our country emergency departments.

Anecdotally, and at least from some data I see, I can inform the house relatively confidently that I think when you break that down a significant proportion of that would be based in what we would call our peri-urban emergency departments. Particularly the south coast, based at Victor Harbor, the Mount Barker District Soldiers' Memorial Hospital and also the Gawler emergency department have seen pretty significant increases.

That is I think a combination of factors, including the increase of population in those areas and the ageing of the population. But it is also hard to get past the fact that—for instance, take Mount Barker and Gawler, that were previously staffed exclusively by GPs that would then charge through Medicare arrangements a gap for non-admitted patients. Now we have SA Health staff providing those services free of charge. That clearly has led to greater demand in terms of a number of those sites as well.

But I do not doubt at all that we have a growing and ageing population in Wallaroo as well, and there may well have been an increase in the numbers there. Certainly, we are happy to chase that up for the member.

Ms PRATT: In reference to report 11, page 40: the Auditor-General makes these reflections on the new Women's and Children's Hospital in regard to construction risk, if you like.

The Hon. C.J. Picton interjecting:

Ms PRATT: Alright. I don't think it will test you. But just to read in to this committee, the Auditor-General reports:

The SA Government has limited experience in managing and delivering projects of the scale and complexity of the...new Women's and Children's Hospital.

It states:

...risks are already evident in the...new Women's and Children's Hospital, with significant cost and timing revisions made to...[this project] in the 2022-23 [Mid-Year Budget Review].

So what confidence can the public have, minister, in the delivery of this project of the new Women's and Children's being on time and on budget, given the Auditor-General's observations, and how does the minister respond to the Auditor-General's lack of confidence?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: I wouldn't necessarily characterise what the Auditor-General said in the quote you read out as that. I would certainly agree that this is a very complex project. This is a very substantial project for this state, and that is why it is being taken extremely seriously.

When we came to office one of the first things that we did was get a review of the status of this project, including consideration of whether there should be alternative sites for the delivery of it based on the difficulties that had been had really over the course of the Weatherill and Marshall governments in terms of being able to deliver anything on that very small site. That has led us to the point where we had to make a very big decision in terms of moving that site to the barracks, and things are certainly progressing on that site apace now.

There is still, of course, a lot of work that needs to happen to make sure that we deliver a hospital that is going to meet the needs of women and children in this state for decades and decades to come. That is why we certainly have prioritised this as a government in terms of oversight of it. We have established an executive steering committee that includes really our most senior public servants in this state, including the chief executives of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet,

the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department for Health and Wellbeing. Also involved, of course, is the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. All of those chief executives are playing a key role in terms of making sure that we can deliver this very important project as well, of course, as working with the Women's and Children's Health Network.

I think when we announced the start of the work of the construction of the car park a couple of months ago the Premier was asked a question along similar lines and said very clearly at the press conference that there are always going to be hiccups when it comes to an infrastructure project of that size and scope, and I think he said something similar in question time today about the Northern Water project. That does not mean that you don't do those things and it does not mean you don't take on those challenges. You just have to make sure that you take every possible measure to try to get them right.

Mr McBRIDE: I refer to the Auditor-General's Report, Annual report, Part C, pages 175 to 181, with specific reference to the Limestone Coast Health Network, Independent Auditor's Report and part of its financial statements published under section 36(4) of the Public and Finance Audit Act 1987. The question relates to page 14 of the financial statement, part 8.3 Staff Remuneration. There are five extra staff employed in 2024 than in 2023. Two staff members are being paid between \$686,000 and \$726,000, and four staff are being paid between \$446,000 and \$486,000. Can the minister explain what these roles are that are paying that amount and where are they based?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: We have incredibly hardworking and talented medical professionals in this state and they certainly get paid sums more than anybody in this house in many regards, particularly our senior consultants. I refer you to page 115 of the report which breaks down those executives, medical numbers, non-medical numbers, nursing for employees based on their salary range. You can see very clearly those people paid above \$166,000 in the system, 3,144 of whom are doctors and, as the scale goes up, the higher is the percentage of doctors.

We, of course, have an enterprise bargaining arrangement in place with SASMOA and with our doctors in this state, the Salaried Medical Officers Enterprise Agreement, that sets the salaries and conditions available for our doctors in this state. For our very senior doctors there are some significant remunerations available. This, of course, does make it an attractive place for us to be able to recruit staff, particularly when you compare the salaries that we pay for doctors to, for instance, those in the United Kingdom. We pay significantly more, both in terms of base salary but also a wide array of different allowances compared to what the UK will pay. I have done media in the UK highlighting that fact, that actually we pay significantly more than what the UK does and that is why Australia, but particularly South Australia, has been able to attract a number of those doctors to work here.

I will check the detail and I am happy to provide a response on notice to the member, but I suspect that what has happened on the Limestone Coast is that we have employed more senior doctors, and those more senior doctors come at a significant salary rate compared to other staff in the system. Going back to our previous discussion of locums, in many cases the alternative is having to employ locums. It is much better in many regards for us to employ those people as salaried doctors in the system.

That may well be full credit to the Limestone Coast Health Network that has been able to employ and recruit more of those senior clinicians to work directly for the health system, rather than relying upon locum arrangements. We will check the exact details of those additional staff on the Limestone Coast. But certainly, when you are talking about those pay brackets, and you compare them to that table for the system as a whole, I am willing to be reasonably confident in assuring the member that they would be doctors working on the Limestone Coast.

Ms PRATT: Minister, page 139—it might be liabilities, but it is going to be in relation to legal fees. The Auditor-General's Report notes a \$21 million increase in legal fees related to the Royal Adelaide Hospital dispute. I am wondering what the total was, given that is the increase?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: As members may be aware, there has been a very long-running arbitration involving the builders that was launched by the builders of the hospital. They launched proceedings against the consortium, and also the government, many years ago now, and that

arbitration process is continuing. There are obviously legal fees associated with that, and those are significant.

As a government, we are defending our state's position through those arbitration hearings, and we are still obviously awaiting the outcome of those arbitration hearings. Certainly, if we are successful in those arbitration hearings, then following proper consideration of advice we are likely to try to seek costs from the other parties if we can in terms of meeting those costs of the legal fees, because I think the state has been clear, under successive governments, in terms of these proceedings that we believe the state has a very strong case, and we do not believe that the claim that has been made has merit.

The CHAIR: That ends the examination of that portion of the Auditor-General's Report. I call on the Minister for Child Protection and the member for Heysen. I just remind members that the committee is in normal session. Any questions have to be asked by members on their feet and all questions must be directly referenced to the Auditor-General's Report 2023-24 and the Agency Statements for the year ending 2023-24, as published on the Auditor-General's website, and the Update to the Annual Report, as tabled in this house on 15 October. Member for Heysen, the floor is yours.

Mr TEAGUE: I will go directly to Part C, page 39, where the Auditor-General makes the observation at the fourth dash point on page 39, addressing significant events and transactions, and I quote:

The number of children and young people in residential non-family-based care continues to grow proportionality faster than those in family-based care.

Can the minister explain why that is, and how the department is going to address it?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: It is a pretty broad question in terms of why particular types of care are growing, and why others are not, and I am very happy to provide a broad answer about the levers and the programs that lead to particular growth or otherwise. What I would say from the outset is that I am really, really pleased that the number of children in care, in terms of the growth of children and young people in care, has significantly slowed, and it currently sits at around 0.2 to 0.4 per cent, and I say that not having checked the figures over the last 24 hours. That is really pleasing, given that what we were facing in 2019-2020 was a growth of 9 per cent of children and young people in care. So I am so pleased that that growth of children and young people overall in care has significantly slowed. I am pleased that the growth of children and young people entering residential care or staying in residential care is also slowing.

Mr Teague: Do you have that figure as well?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: I can come back to that. In terms of the growth of family-based care, actually what we are now seeing is that family-based care is finally beginning to grow, particularly in relation to kinship care but also in relation to foster care. What I would like to say about the levers in relation to, first of all, that broader proposition about the slowing of growth of the numbers of children coming into care is that a number of our strategies are beginning to work.

I would never stand here and say that there is not much, much more work to do, because there is. We know that the fact continues that one in three children in South Australia is subject to a notification to the child protection and family support system at some point during the course of their childhood, and that is because families are grappling with deeply complex, deeply interconnected issues, often intergenerational issues, issues pertaining to poverty, mental ill health, substance misuse and domestic, family and sexual violence, with 80 per cent of child protection and family support cases having a domestic violence element.

There is this complexity of challenges that families are facing, and that is why I would say we have much, much more work to do to continue to tackle that. I have spoken in this place before about the system reform process that we are going through. I will not go into the details of a bill that is currently before the house. Part of our strategy is to build a foundation and a framework for change that reflects a public health approach to child protection and family support. A public health approach is widely and internationally accepted as the way forward on child protection and family support and the complex issues inherent within it.

The legislation is one part of our strategy in terms of reducing that contact with the child protection and family support system, as the member's question goes to, reducing the numbers of children and young people who are in either family-based care or residential care. Also, alongside that legislative change, is change that includes bringing together through the state strategy, but in many other ways, cross-government effort. We have a \$450 million investment into the child protection and family support system.

A portion of that is, of course, to ensure that we have the facilities and the resources to support children and young people who are already in residential care. That is something we must continue to invest in. That is a really incredibly important part of our investment. Also, to ensure that we are reducing the growth overall and also growing the number of children and young people who do, as the member spoke about, live with either foster or kinship carers when they cannot safely live at home is another really important part of our strategy and part of where that \$450 million investment goes.

To go to your question about the numbers in either family-based care or residential care, which also goes to that question about numbers overall, I will take you through some of those strategies as you asked me to that are beginning to make change. I know I have spoken about this at length, and rightly so.

One of those strategies is our \$13.4 million additional investment into family group conferencing. Family group conferencing is recognised around the world as an incredibly important and successful tool to give children and young people the best chance possible to grow up safe in extended family and with extended family wrapped around a particular child or young person, making decisions that assist them to stay safely in that family environment.

In terms of that question about family-based care, that is a really key strategy that we are employing. I know I mentioned it in the house earlier today, and I gave you the figure that generally it sits between a 90 and 92 per cent success rate. I am very proud that that investment is enabling us to grow family-based care and particularly kinship care. As I spoke about before, kinship care is certainly growing.

I think the member is aware of this. I know the member for Frome is certainly aware of how family group conferencing works. I had the benefit just a couple of weeks ago of sitting with one of our family group conferencing community organisation providers. They took me into the space where they facilitate family group conferencing and spoke with me about their approach.

What is really clear in their approach, and in the approach of our other provider as well, is that during the discussions that happen throughout a family group conference the facilitator sets that family group conference up in a way that absolutely puts the best interests of the child or young person at the centre of those discussions that occur through the family group conference. What is really clear, what is absolutely lovely from everybody I have spoken with who has ever participated or facilitated a conference, and what is always unifying in family group conferencing is that deep love and care for the child who is the subject of that family group conferencing.

In terms of your question about the rates of family-based care, that is one of our strategies that is absolutely working. There are all sorts of creative solutions that families come up with to keep that child at the centre of their efforts, safe, well, loved and cared for in family and community. There are all sorts of examples where various extended family members step up to provide a particular part of that care journey at a particular time for a child or young person.

In terms of your question about strategies, I am very proud of the success of family group conferencing. As is indicated in the legislation that we have been debating, we will rightly continue to rely on family group conferencing and think about how we can continue to explore the growth of family group conferencing, given its success, and why wouldn't we?

In terms of your question about other strategies and that balance between family-based care and residential care, we are also focusing (including through new investment) on reunification. Again, I think the member for Frome would probably be aware of the Newpin program that is a highly successful program. I have visited Newpin and sat with families who have participated in the process of reunification. I have so much admiration for these families because they have gone through the

most difficult and heartbreaking of times when their child has been removed. But to come to that and go through the Newpin program and work so incredibly hard to address the issues that existed in their life that led to the removal of their child, and to keep working on those issues until it is deemed that it is safe for that child to return to their care, is extraordinary.

I absolutely take my hat off to those families who go through that process. I cannot imagine what it would be like to have a child removed. We know that there are very, very good reasons that that happens in terms of keeping that child safe, but to actually come from what I imagine would be just the hardest point possible and to address those issues and to front up and to seek support in doing so, and to go on that new pathway, is absolutely extraordinary.

We have also, through that investment, looked at how we can better support existing carers. One of the mechanisms, as was recommended by Dr Fiona Arney in her report into foster and kinship care—her inquiry and the report of that inquiry into foster and kinship care—was that she recommended the establishment of a Carer Council, and that Carer Council has now been established. They are doing extraordinary work to provide very frank and robust advice directly to me as minister about what else we need to do to make change that improves that experience for carers so that we can retain them, so that we can keep growing family-based care and retain carers.

Again, we have a lot of work to do in this space, so much work to do, but I am really proud to have the Carer Council in place, led by Lorraine Joy, and all of the people around that table who are providing advice about what we can do better. They are providing advice on our carer attraction and retention strategy. They have provided advice on various campaigns that we are running, which I will come to in a moment. They have provided advice on the refreshed Statement of Commitment to carers that has recently been re-signed in a really lovely ceremony. They are providing advice on a range of matters.

One of the other things we did, which again goes to a question about what are the strategies around family-based care and residential care, is a strategy around remuneration. Again, we know that there is more work to do in this space but I am very proud that in the budget before last we provided a 4.8 per cent increase to carer payments, to those carers caring for a child 16 and under, and also provided a \$50 per payment increase, and then, in the last budget, also provided a further 2.5 per cent increase.

We know that some carers are still struggling and we need to continue to look at how we provide them with particular support, but that is a really important step forward, as is the step that we took to embed a flexible respite payment to carers. Again, when listening to carers all over the state, one of the things that they told us very, very clearly was that it is difficult to access respite sometimes, depending on where they live, their networks, on the particular experience of their child or young person, and that sometimes it is really hard to access respite care in the way that I think many of us think about respite care, in a way where we might see a particular respite carer coming and providing care one weekend per month, or every second Wednesday, or whatever it might be.

That is a really important form of care and that works really well for particular carer families. But for others, for all sorts of reasons, that is really difficult. So the thing that we instituted at the beginning of this year is what carers said to us would help them in terms of being able to stay the course and have the sorts of breaks or support that they need but also provide them with a little bit of financial relief to enable them to access support in the way that they wanted.

What we are finding with that flexible respite payment of \$800 a year that we announced and instituted from the beginning of this calendar year—so for half the period this audit report pertains to—is that those carers are using that flexible respite payment for all sorts of support that is helping them to feel that sense of respite and relief. Some carers are using it for cleaning or gardening support, others are using it to engage in particular outings or weekends away, but they are absolutely using it to access respite in the way that works for them.

Again, that has come about because we have directly listened to carers and we will continue to do so. We have continued, since I became minister and certainly over the period of this audit report, to hold forums and discussions and meetings with carers all over our state. Just last week we had a forum with carers again, having listened to carers about particular experiences that they were having and particular needs they had. We co-hosted with the Assistant Minister for Autism, the

Hon. Emily Bourke from the other place, Dr Goodall, the Office for Autism and the Department for Child Protection a really successful forum where carers could speak about that experience of caring for a child or young person who is an autistic child or young person.

We will continue to listen to carers about the sorts of information and supports they need to help them stay a carer, which the honourable member asked about. He wanted some advice about the various strategies we are engaging in as a government around family-based care. There are all these different planks to those strategies, but that listening piece is so incredibly important.

One of the other things we did recently was around retention of both foster and kinship carers. Recently we instituted a campaign called Foster the Feeling, a campaign that saw a 200 per cent increase in direct submissions from individuals interested in embarking on their carer journey. In terms of attracting more foster carers or family-based carers, as the honourable member spoke about, Foster the Feeling is particularly targeted to foster carers and has been really successful in terms of the number of inquiries and people taking that next step in their consideration of a carer journey.

One of the other things, to switch to kinship carers as a particular cohort—the cohort that is growing in a more significant way—is that we have invested to increase the resources available in the Kinship Care Assessment Unit, because we want to make sure that, when a child or young person has been identified as being at risk and alongside that we identify that there are potentially family members to provide that family-based care that he spoke about, we have the resources to deeply, thoroughly and efficiently assess whether or not those kinship carers who have brought themselves forward are suitable and safe for a child or young person to be placed with them. That is another really important part of our strategy.

What I would say in summing up on this particular point about family-based care is that we are incredibly grateful. We continue to be incredibly grateful, and I know the shadow minister shares my view on this. We are incredibly grateful to those foster and kinship carers who make that very personal decision—sometimes a very hard decision, particularly in the context of kinship carers. Whenever a kinship carer steps forward it generally means that something has happened in their family.

I meet often with aunts and uncles and grandparents who, sadly, have a son or a daughter or a niece or a nephew who cannot safely care for their child, for all sorts of reasons. They make that very personal decision to take on their great-niece or granddaughter or grandson, whoever that child might be. They do that in an environment where often the relationship with the parent of that child has become very, very difficult. I absolutely take my hat off to kinship carers. I absolutely applaud those foster carers who take children and young people into their hearts and provide such love and care to children whom they generally have no familial connection with. They are absolutely extraordinary, and I am incredibly grateful to them.

As I said, just in finishing on this particular question about the strategies for family-based care and residential care and our investments in them, I was really proud—I cannot remember if it was last week or the week before—when we launched or signed our refreshed Statement of Commitment. Our refreshed Statement of Commitment has been worked on by the Carer Council, by the carer community through a consultation process, by the peak body and also by CAFFSA.

I was really moved to sit down and sign that refreshed Statement of Commitment with them, because it does reflect a very firm promise to foster and kinship carers, a promise about the respect that we all have for them and the relationship that we want to cultivate. I am very pleased, very grateful actually, that they put that work into developing that refreshed Statement of Commitment and that we were able to come together to sign it. I take that promise very seriously.

Finally, again, I do not ever shy away from the fact that we have a lot more work to do in this space of continuing on that trajectory of slowing the growth of children and young people in contact with the system, of looking at that balance between family-based care and residential care. I do not shy away from the fact that we still have work to do, work that represents reform of a system that was developed decades ago, that no longer responds to the current complexity of issues that children and young people and their families face.

I will continue to apply myself to this work. I am proud of the investments we have made. I am proud of the progress that we are making, but there is much, much more to do. I look forward to working alongside the shadow minister and everybody in this place, and indeed right across government and right across the sector and with our community, because we know that keeping children safe, loved, cared for and connected is a task for everybody—not one person, not one minister, not one department but something we have to all apply ourselves to.

I hope that that has provided some fulsome information about those strategies. There are more. I suspect there might be other questions, but I am happy to elaborate further on some of those strategies if required.

Mr TEAGUE: Against the background of the minister's answer, I turn to page 40 and the table that is set out in the bottom third of page 40, which tells a story of the data. Against the background of the minister's answer just now, we see that the number of children in care increased overall but by a relatively small amount. At the same time, the number of children in residential care increased by a large multiple of that amount. So residential care has increased, proportionately, many times more than the number of children in care.

At the same time, further against the background of the minister's answer, the number of children in foster care actually reduced; it is approximately a 3 per cent decrease. Can the minister account for the decrease, from year to year, in children in foster care at the same time as the proportionately large increase in residential care? Did any of the children in foster care transition to the residential care system within the last 12 months? If so, how many?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: What I can provide you with that I think will be really helpful are some of the most up-to-date figures. They are also on the website; I am not sure if you have had a chance to look at them. But what I can say—

Mr Teague interjecting:

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD: Yes, but to give you context, I guess. What I can say is that, since 30 June—so since this report, and hence my comments—we have actually seen a further decrease of 25 children and young people in care, so we are now back at 4,866 as at 30 September. So again we are seeing that trend of reduction in the growth of children and young people in care, which is really good news. I know that some people may feel like that is a small amount, but when you look at the trajectory we have been on and that now I can safely say that it is a consistent overall reduction, I am so pleased.

The other thing I can tell you is that kinship care I think has also gone up again, with another seven. For your reference, the way that it is displayed on the website is that placement and support packages are counted, in a way, within residential care. So when you look at residential care it is actually a decline if you just take pure residential care, but actually placement and support packages—which may mean that a child is living in a particular transition-to-independent-living space—are also included. However, residential care has actually also gone down by 24 as at 30 September. I am happy to explain that other figure about the placement and support packages at any time, but residential care, as at 30 September, has gone down by 24, including PASP.

The CHAIR: The examination of this portion of the Auditor-General's report has concluded. I invite the next minister to take his seat, and the next MP. I remind members that the committee is in normal session. Any questions have to be asked by members on their feet, and all questions must be directly referenced to the Auditor-General's 2023-24 report and Agency Statements for the year ending 2023-24, as published on the Auditor-General's website, and the Update to the Annual Report, as tabled in this house on 15 October. I welcome the Minister for Planning, and Housing and Urban Development, and I welcome the member for Colton. Member for Colton, you have 30 minutes.

Mr COWDREY: Hopefully, we all do. I take you to Part C of the report, page 457, in regard to contract management plans not being prepared for two complex contracts. I will let you find the reference, if that is helpful, page 457. Why has the URA repeatedly failed to prepare contract management plans for complex contracts, despite that being a requirement under its own policy framework?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: As I understand it, with the complex contracts, they had a plan but it was not documented. That has led the management of URA to now have both plans and a technical system through a computer program to manage that. So, essentially, it is a documentation issue.

Mr COWDREY: What two projects did those contract management plans relate to?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: Lot Fourteen and civil works at Playford Alive.

Mr COWDREY: In terms of the minister's view at the moment, have those two contract management plans now been documented? You have effectively closed off the loop and that issue is no longer relevant?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: The contracts are completed and the work is finished. The management of the URA have obviously reviewed the situation and corrected it. Going forward, they have put in place a system that avoids these sorts of documentation issues in the future.

Mr COWDREY: Given that the Auditor-General only examined a selection, were there any other projects that did not have a CMP in place?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: No, it was just those two.

Mr COWDREY: I take you to Part C, again page 466 through 469, in regard to the major projects and the status of those projects. With regard to Lot Fourteen, given the URA's anticipated project completion is 2026-27, what specific challenges does the URA have, if any, of meeting the current timeline and what measures are in place to ensure completion remains on schedule and within budget?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: I think the first point to make is that Lot Fourteen, as it was in the previous government, is managed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and so those questions would have been better put in that series of questions. That is the way it was in the previous government and we have inherited that architecture.

Renewal is, if you like, an agency of delivery for DPC. While the member talks about the timelines regarding the capital component of it, which are obviously revised every year—they were revised previously, the same sort of policy architecture that was done by the previous government—the sales for that continued on much further, so that would be the answer I give.

Mr COWDREY: Perhaps the minister will be more willing to share in regard to Playford Alive. The project he just mentioned failed to have a CMP in place during the time of the project. Can the minister provide any insights into the long-term plans for Playford Alive and any adjustments to project scope or budget that are being considered to accelerate the completion?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: If you go just north of my electorate to the Chair's electorate, you can see the latest land release in the Playford Alive project. That involves an extension of Newton Boulevard. It is an excellent piece of work, if I do say so myself. There are 282 allotments. I think the last 40 we announced just last week; the last 40 are going on the market. We have had very good sales results there, and we are going to build 25 affordable rentals. They will either be managed through the Housing Trust or through community housing providers. It is a very good project, which has been undertaken for a long period of time.

There will be future extensions. They will be informed by the URA's northern land sales strategy, which we are yet to release. They will also be informed by the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan and by the ability to have water and sewer pipes. Obviously, all of those things need to connect in order to get land to market. No doubt we will discuss water and sewerage at some point, but they are the basic architecture of the releases.

Mr COWDREY: With regard to the Prospect project, as I understand it, the latest announcement has been around 188 new dwellings with a focus on affordable housing. What steps have the URA taken to ensure that affordability targets are met? How do you plan to address potential market or construction challenges?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: I am just operating a bit off memory here. It is 108 townhouses. We are using the shared equity through HomeStart in addition to the provision of stock to help

affordability, particularly for young working people. Anybody in their 20s now, even if they have a very good professional job, often needs to access shared equity for townhouses. The sales have been very strong on the townhouses. If you go down Churchill Road, you can see them being constructed as we speak.

There are also two unit blocks in there. We have actually managed to push the numbers there to just under 100 or so affordable rental apartments, which will be managed through CHPs. We see the importance of the affordable rental category, which I think is a category that has been under-done in the affordability space, because we need to be able to give people an affordable rental product that they can hopefully save a deposit for and then move on and release that affordable rental product for someone else, but that is at 75 per cent of market rate.

Generally speaking, for Prospect I think it is a little bit over \$100 a week less than what you would pay for a like-for-like two-bedroom or one-bedroom apartment. They were the figures when we last did them, but they will bounce around a bit depending on what market rents are doing. Twenty-five per cent off your rent is a significant benefit, and that does two things: it obviously benefits the individual but it also plugs permanent affordable rental into a system.

We are trying to carefully manage all of our projects, whether it be Playford Alive or Prospect, to ensure that we have affordable rental, affordable sale and market sale. The market sale helps us make these whole projects viable, the affordable rental puts locked-in affordability, and the affordable sale obviously benefits individuals.

Mr COWDREY: In regard to the Forestville development, it was noted in the report that it will include a component of a consortium partnership to include residential food-oriented retail and a range of other service providers, for lack of a better word. How progressed are the negotiations in terms of the consortium and when do you see construction starting on the Forestville project?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: Forestville is a very well-placed piece of land, and obviously particularly well-placed now that we know the Keswick barracks will ultimately be utilised for housing once the Army moves off there. It is obviously close to town and is very well placed.

The deal is done. The group have already launched their brand and it is up on the billboards. In November, as I understand it, they will have sales going to the market—I do not want to announce them here for them, but that is our understanding of things—and then mid next year they will begin construction on the front portion of it.

It is an exciting project. It involves Peet and Chapleys. Chapleys are very good retailers and I think they will bring a sense of vibrancy to that area, and access to those retail offerings will be of benefit more broadly. I suspect that sales will go very well, given its location to public transport and town. It is an attractive part of Adelaide.

Mr COWDREY: What is the target in terms of affordable housing in that development?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: We will have to take on notice the exact percentage, but it is over the minimum. I might just flag to the member that one of the things in the Housing Roadmap was the affordable housing overlay. We think it is an important overlay, but we think it is also going to be very important to look at different methods of developers being able to meet their obligations to affordable housing, because the nature of land values around the city now is making it difficult for some projects. On this one they will meet it and exceed it and we will get the number for you, but I just flag that for the member's interest.

Mr COWDREY: When you talk about frontage, I assume the first part is on Anzac Highway?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: It is broadly in two components. There is obviously a retail offering which will be built at the front. They are beginning at the back, at the railway line end, with townhouses and the like and then moving down.

Mr COWDREY: In regard to the issue of height in that particular neck of the woods, obviously that has been something that has been controversial in the past in relation to development on Anzac Highway and height limits. In terms of the planning settings around all of this, what is the height overlay in regard to that particular development?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: We will take that on notice. It has been through the planning process. It has cleared the State Planning Commission. You are right; sometimes height can be an issue. I do not recall it being particularly controversial on this site. There were interests in open space and there were interests, certainly, in the nature of the retail offering. I do not recall it attracting a great deal of attention through the planning system; it has not seemed to be controversial. There are some apartment blocks. It is a mixture of apartment blocks and townhouses.

Mr COWDREY: In regard to the neighbouring townhouse developments, though, the height limit previously—I am just trying to jog my memory in terms of the height overlay in the area. Are we in train with the rest of the development along Anzac Highway? Are we slightly higher or slightly lower? Is there an overlay that is specific to the Forestville development, or is it the same as the rest of the corridor?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: It certainly has not been the subject of a code amendment that I have done. We have Sally Smith from Planning and Land Use Services; she will be able to give us a number, I am happy to report. If you want to move on to other questions, we will get the exact height limit for you.

Mr COWDREY: I will frame the question another way: if there was an issue with height on that particular development, is there the mechanism to be able to, effectively, put in a height overlay over that section of land, should it have been necessary through the planning code?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: We are just checking, but it went through the State Commission Assessment Panel. It went through that whole process. There was not a lot of controversy about it, so I assume it fit in with the height corridor which would be, from memory, somewhere between four and six.

Mr COWDREY: I will phrase it another way. The question is less specific to the particular development now and is more in terms of the planning process. Is there the ability for the planning minister of the day, or for somebody moving a code amendment, to have put a particular height overlay on that particular area at Forestville, should they have wished to? It could have been reduced to three storeys, for instance, should the minister of the day have chosen to reduce it to three storeys; that is the purview of the planning system, to allow that to happen.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: It is up to eight storeys. That is consistent with the zoning that was already in place. On this project, effectively, from Renewal's point of view and for the proponent, it just went within the existing planning framework.

Mr COWDREY: I understand that. The question is more generic now: should the developer or whoever, the minister of the day, wish to have kept the height limit on that particular area at, say, six storeys rather than eight within the existing envelope, would there have been an option through the planning system to have done that?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: It is not often that areas are downzoned, and that is because we are in a housing crisis.

Mr COWDREY: I am not saying they are, but there is the purview, there is the option, through the planning system to have kept that at six storeys, should the minister of the day have wished.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: As I said before, this project fit into the zoning that was present before I became minister. You are right: in theory, a private proponent or the minister of the day could move a government-led code amendment and that would have to go through a process, and everybody is aware of those processes. They are laborious, they involve a whole lot of study. But areas, once they are zoned up, generally speaking do not get zoned down. That is because we are in a housing crisis. We need supply. This is important supply. It is a good mix, I think.

Mr COWDREY: It is not a criticism of the development by any stretch of the imagination, but hypothetically that could have happened. There could have been a height limit put in place on the particular parcel of land.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: We do not really do hypotheticals. I think we have been through this before. Code amendments—

Mr COWDREY: Specifically to Forestville, then, you could have put a height limit on that particular parcel of land, should you have wished, that was lower than the eight in place.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: I guess the issue here is you do your planning system—and you understand it, and I understand it—and then there are amendments to the code. They could be done anywhere and everywhere by either the government, councils or private proponents.

Mr COWDREY: Yes, which can include height limits, should they wish.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: They all include height limits of some form, don't they? That is just a self-evident fact.

Mr COWDREY: Thank you.

Mr ELLIS: Can we move onto SA Water, minister?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: Yes, sure.

Mr ELLIS: I have the Agency Audit Reports here, and I am flicking to page 378. There is a subheading, 'Community service obligations', with relation to SA Water. I wondered whether you might be able to provide some insight into how the money that is collected for community service obligations is expended? It says here that revenue increased by \$8.4 million to \$144.7 million in 2024. How is that money expended? How is it apportioned? How do we go about getting some of that to be used at Port Hughes to ensure the Metacap development can proceed?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: I understand the local member is very concerned about water provision and sewerage provision throughout the state. Obviously, there has been quite a bit of commentary and examination of our water and sewerage systems as it relates to developments. In terms of the CSOs, community service obligations are paid to SA Water for the implementation of statewide pricing, and that ensures already that regional customers pay the same water charges as metropolitan customers. That has been a standard approach—which is of great benefit, I might add, to the regions—for settling of sewerage services.

There are other CSOs that relate to costs incurred by SA Water which are funded by the government, and they include the operation and maintenance of water and sewerage systems servicing remote communities; providing exemptions and concessions to certain customers, places of worship, charitable organisations, local government and sporting clubs; water rate concessions for emergency services entities; reimbursements of operations, particularly operational and emergency communications costs within SA Water; the administration and distribution of concessions for pensioners who are SA Water customers; and the provision of water and wastewater services to Leigh Creek following the closure of Alinta Energy's mine activities.

There are a range of members in regional communities who have made advocacy like yours in relation to developments in terms of housing projects in regional areas. That is not necessarily a community service obligation issue so much as a prioritisation of the money we have for infrastructure. That is a delicate balance. This government has embarked on a huge spend in terms of water and sewerage infrastructure for housing.

Of course, we remain open to talking to developers in regional areas—SA Water does it all the time—but it is a finite resource, and often regional country towns and regional cities are like the northern suburbs and parts of the southern suburbs: at the absolute end of the capacity in the system. So we are happy to talk to the member and hear his representations. CSOs are a somewhat different category, but I totally understand your advocacy.

Mr COWDREY: Given the time I might just quickly switch to the Housing Trust and a question relating to page 356, in particular around the SA Housing Trust properties that are underutilised. There was a 0.4 per cent reduction in underutilised properties this year, which is obviously not significant in terms of a shift in that regard in a housing crisis where we are trying to ensure that as many bedrooms are being used across the state. What steps are the government taking to ensure that they are addressing the underutilisation issue?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: We have over 30,000 properties, many of them are ageing and many of those properties were built in the Playford era and in the eighties and sometimes before

that. The great challenge that we have is the same challenge that the broader community has, which is that we have an ageing cohort within South Australian Housing. Often there are single people in three-bedroom houses, but they have been there for a long period of time and we obviously do not want to disturb those arrangements because that can often be distressing.

The challenge for the Housing Trust I think is to build new stock that is suitable and matches the needs of both the ageing tenancy cohorts, so we give people places to downsize to effectively within the public housing system and we also build stock that is better suited to the new cohorts coming in. Obviously as a result of changes made in the Howard government, believe it or not, we have seen an increase effectively—I think it is over 90 per cent now—of category 1, as opposed to a mix of people who were in the system before that.

So the utilisation of houses is one issue, but it has to be closely matched to tenancy as well. If you put in regeneration of stock, like we are doing at Seaton or Kilburn or a range of other places, as some houses get to a point where they have reached the useful end of their life and have to be demolished and then there are some that become vacant and then we have to fix them up and we have to do pretty serious maintenance to them, the question is: can you organise that better to lower the vacancy rate? I totally agree with the member that that is a virtuous cause.

Mr COWDREY: I do not disagree, minister, hence why I raised the question, but I was asking what concrete strategies are being put in place. You mentioned that there are elder, more mature people, shall we say, in our society who are in three-bedroom houses at the moment.

Is there a policy within the SA Housing Trust to deal with those particular lodgings, the three-bedroom lodgings in particular, when they do become empty? Is there a particular framework or strategy that you have? Is every second one of those houses going to be repurposed, sold or redeveloped? What is the concrete policy that you have in place to rejuvenate that three-bedroom stock, given that, as we have both articulated, it is not necessarily appropriate for today's Housing Trust?

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: One of the things I have done just recently is appoint Chelsea Lucas to the board of the Housing Trust and she is a planner. It is important to have regeneration projects within the Housing Trust framework, and you can see the government's priority is in Seaton. The government's priorities in Seaton in public housing are one-for-one replacement, so we are not diminishing the amount of public housing there. We are building about 1,700 houses overall, with all the project builds, so significantly more.

Where we now have 400 or so public houses we will have 1,700 houses, but what we are going to get out of that is one-for-one replacement of public housing, but the stock will be different. Some will be apartments. If you look at Tucker Street in the city, we are putting in place housing for women over the age of 55 who are at risk of homelessness, so it is about having new stock, which gives tenants a place to relocate to, and then you can look at those three-bedroom homes and the like.

We have brought the Housing Trust name back. We have embarked on a serious urban regeneration project at Seaton. That gives you an indication of our priorities: one-for-one replacement. That was not the case in previous regeneration projects like Playford Alive, so we want to see more public housing in the system, and a more sophisticated, if you like, use of that public housing, not just to house new tenants, but to allow us to more flexibly use our existing stock.

The CHAIR: Time has expired for the examination of this part of the Auditor-General's Report.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

Bills

CRIMINAL LAW (HIGH RISK OFFENDERS) (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS (WASTE AVOIDANCE) REPEAL BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

MOTOR VEHICLES (PREVIOUS OFFENCES) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

RETURN TO WORK (PRESUMPTIVE FIREFIGHTER INJURIES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

RETURN TO WORK (EMPLOYMENT AND PROGRESSIVE INJURIES) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the amendments made by the House of Assembly without any amendment.

At 18:13 the house adjourned until Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 11:00.

*Answers to Questions***RIVER MURRAY SALINITY LEVELS**

In reply to **Mr COWDREY (Colton)** (12 September 2024).

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Housing Infrastructure, Minister for Planning): I have been advised by the responsible minister on this topic, the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water:

In accordance with Schedule B of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement (Schedule 1 of the Water Act 2007), Murray-Darling Basin governments and the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) must prepare comprehensive progress reports on implementation of the Basin Salinity Management 2030 (BSM2030) strategy and undergo an independent audit of their performance biennially.

On 15 April 2024, the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water noted the 2023 basin salinity management reporting package that was provided to the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council. The package included the Report of the Independent Audit Group for Salinity 2021–23 (mdba.gov.au).

The MDBA's 2022-23 comprehensive report is available at Basin Salinity Management 2030 (mdba.gov.au) and South Australia's 2023 comprehensive report is available at 2022-23-Basin-Salinity-Management-2030-Biennial-Report.pdf (environment.sa.gov.au).

The operation of the Pike and Loxton salt interception schemes in 2022-23 was influenced by flooding, which inundated infrastructure and raised groundwater levels on the floodplain.

The reduced operation of salt interception schemes across the Murray-Darling Basin since the 2022-23 flood has not created any risks to water quality for irrigation or human consumption as salinity has remained well below 800 EC at Morgan and is currently around 450 EC.

The MDBA is continuing to work closely with the state constructing authorities under the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement on flood remediation works and the operation of salt interception schemes to manage any ongoing salinity risk whilst minimising operating costs during periods when river flows provide adequate dilution for in-river salinity.