

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 6 February 2025

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 past and present.

The SPEAKER read prayers.

Parliamentary Procedure

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

The SPEAKER (11:01): I remind members that there is a joint sitting of the two houses in the Legislative Council chamber at 12.30pm today for the purpose of filling the vacancy in the Senate caused by the resignation of Senator Simon Birmingham.

Parliamentary Committees

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE: INQUIRY INTO ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) IN PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (11:02): I move:

That the sixth report of the committee for the Fifty-Fifth Parliament, entitled Inquiry into Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) in Primary Production, be noted.

There is an increasing expectation at the global, interstate and state levels for primary producers to exhibit accountability for their actions and sustainability in their practices. South Australian primary producers are aware of this and are committed to sustainable land management practices as signified by commodity-specific sustainability frameworks and initiatives. However, global sustainability initiatives, such as environmental, social and governance (ESG) frameworks, vary and have not adequately considered Australia's unique production context.

On 16 November 2023, the Natural Resources Committee resolved to inquire into ESG in primary production to examine how South Australian primary producers navigate domestic and international ESG landscapes, especially in communicating their initiatives and achievements in this arena and the pathways to ESG leadership. In particular, the Natural Resources Committee investigated:

1. what ESG is in the primary production context;
2. the process or processes employed or undergone by entities to craft ESG frameworks;
3. the current status of ESG initiatives in South Australia, interstate and internationally relative to:
 - (a) entities using the framework;
 - (b) reporting standards; and
 - (c) measuring impacts;
4. the pressures and opportunities for primary producers in South Australia regarding ESG;
5. what an ESG leader in primary production in South Australia looks like and the pathways to get there; and
6. any other relevant matter.

The committee received six submissions and conducted 10 public hearings from February to June 2024. The committee received evidence from representatives of South Australia's peak industry bodies, a state government department, experts from academia, and research and policy institutions.

Written submissions and oral evidence received by the committee described ESG as a holistic approach to sustainability that takes into account primary producers' performance as stewards of nature (E); relations with employees, customers, communities, and other actors in the supply chain (S); and the practices and processes in their leadership structure (G).

The committee heard evidence that the process of transitioning and complying with ESG principles necessitates (a) primary producers and relevant stakeholders working together; (b) having a standardised set of measures; (c) improving primary producers' ability to fulfil ESG requirements; and (d) balancing environmental stewardship with profit maximisation.

The evidence provided to the community, and as mentioned earlier, indicated that the current demand for ESG compliance among primary producers at the international, interstate and state levels is gaining momentum. This is indicated by the plethora of metrics and reporting systems that have surfaced, the implementation of ESG-related legislation, and the development of ESG-related products in the financial sector.

The committee heard evidence that primary producers are familiar with and committed to sustainability practices as indicated in each industry's specific frameworks and blueprints. This is an essential condition relative to ESG transition and compliance. However, the evidence received by the committee indicated that the uptake of ESG amongst primary producers in South Australia differs, and there are dissimilarities in primary producers' capacity and maturity towards ESG compliance.

The committee also heard evidence that South Australian primary producers are confronted with the pressure to present their ESG credentials despite no standardised ESG metrics and reporting schemes at the global, interstate and state levels that South Australian primary producers can use. As a result, farmers find themselves overloaded and uncertain about the requirements, and they delay or resist their transition to ESG.

Additionally, the evidence presented to the committee indicated that the lack of standardised measures and reporting requirements opens ESG measures and reporting to manipulation by entities themselves and performance auditors. Amidst this pressure, the committee heard evidence of an asset and opportunity that South Australian primary producers could use or maximise to facilitate ESG transition and compliance. The evidence provided to the committee noted that South Australian farmers' extensive and longstanding stewardship of the environment makes them well equipped already to demonstrate sustainability practices, placing farmers in an advantageous position relating to ESG compliance and reporting.

The committee also heard evidence of current ESG-related initiatives at the federal and state levels. One of these is the Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework (AASF), an outcome rather than a practice-based approach to ESG-aligned sustainability reporting. The AASF is a shared-values approach towards sustainability that, although not an ESG reporting system, uses an ESG lens that primary producers can use as a guiding tool to convey their ESG stories.

Another opportunity for primary producers in South Australia is the Australian Sustainable Finance Taxonomy currently being developed. The agricultural sector is one of the priority areas of this taxonomy, and it is hoped to guide primary producers' reporting on sustainability, including ESG, to financial institutions. Furthermore, the evidence provided to the committee noted that given Australian, including South Australian, farmers' management of natural resources, tools to account for or assess natural capital and product traceability innovations are opportunities for South Australian primary producers towards ESG compliance.

In regard to ESG leaders and pathways to leadership, the committee heard evidence that South Australia's dairy, grain and wine industries are advancing towards ESG compliance as exemplified in these industries' state action plans and initiatives.

The evidence received by the committee indicated that the enabling factors towards South Australian primary producers' trajectory towards ESG are (a) standardised ESG metrics, (b) data digitisation, (c) information and experience-sharing platforms, (d) federal and state level policies that

promote and support the primary production sector's sustainability credentials and performance, and (e) the communication of primary producers' sustainability narratives to the international, interstate and state markets. As such, the committee makes significant recommendations in relation to ESG and primary production in four areas: (a) ESG metrics and reporting schemes, (b) education and capacity building, (c) innovation and research, and (d) legislation.

I hope that members here will consider viewing this report. I would like to sincerely thank all witnesses who gave their time to assist the committee with this inquiry. I commend the committee members for their contributions throughout the inquiry: Sarah Andrews MP, Mr David Basham MP, the Hon. Tammy Franks MLC, the Hon. Ben Hood MLC, Ms Catherine Hutchesson MP, the Hon. Russell Wortley MLC and also, of course, the previous Presiding Member of the committee, you, Mr Speaker, the Hon. Leon Bignell MP. Finally, I acknowledge and thank committee staff for their assistance, in particular Mr Shane Hilton and Ms Jennefer Bagaporo.

Mr BASHAM (Finniss) (11:11): It is a privilege to rise to speak to this report, and certainly likewise I would like to thank very much Shane and Jennefer for their work that they did preparing the report on behalf of the committee. All our committee work, no matter which committee it is, very much relies on the staff of the parliament. They do a fantastic job of helping us through this process.

I just want to make a few comments in relation to the report, in particular being a former dairy farmer and very much involved in the sustainability framework that was established in the dairy industry back in 2012. At that time, the dairy industry was very much a leader in this space and trying to deliver what the market wanted in getting the message out there to actually report on what farmers and the industry as a whole does in relation to environmental, social and governance and, in particular, the sustainability of those industries.

The challenge, particularly on farms, is that farmers have been doing things in a very sustainable way for a very long time. They just have not been able to document and report, because there has not been a clear framework for them to actually do that and an understanding of how they can. There was not a lot of need for change of practice on farms as we headed down this path; it was actually more about making sure we were able to record what good work farmers were doing.

Farmers are great custodians of the land. Most of South Australia is under the care of farmers, pastoralists, people caring for the land. They are the ones who actually look after the land to make sure things are operating well. There are challenges, of course, and our seasonal conditions can be our biggest challenge at times. We feel very much for our farmers, certainly in the productive agricultural areas of South Australia at the moment, as over the past 12 months there have been large proportions that have been the driest on record, so it has been really challenging for those farmers operating in that environment.

There is a huge opportunity for us to actually help our farmers—not get in their way, but actually help them—to make sure that there is some commonality about reporting. One of the challenges, particularly from industry to industry, certainly that I found as a dairy farmer when I was trying to report, is actually understanding what happened on farmers' properties that I bought grain and hay from, understanding what the inputs were coming from there. It is very hard for farmers to actually have that understanding about how to report those transitions of responsibilities from one farmer to the other. So there are certainly many challenges there that we need to work through.

I think it is great to see this. I was looking this morning and discovered a select committee report from back in 2013 done here and chaired back then by the Deputy Speaker, the member for Light, looking at sustainable farming practices. That was in the very early days of moving down this path. Interestingly, I gave evidence at that inquiry. I had actually forgotten I ever did so. But certainly, it is interesting how much the industries have moved in that time, how much government—and all facets of government, whether it be state, federal or even local government—has been able to sit there and help farmers move through this path.

Industry is doing a fantastic job in this space. We need to be making sure we are there to assist industry. This is something that is very important to industry, so I very much commend the work that has been done here and thank my fellow members of the committee and past members of the committee for their work in this space. Again, I would like to thank Shane and Jennefer for the wonderful report they prepared.

The SPEAKER (11:15): I would also like just to quickly add my thanks to everyone involved in this report and in particular the member for Gibson, whose idea it was that we actually do the investigation. I want to thank all the current members of the committee for continuing that work and coming up with an excellent report, and I would like to thank Shane and Jennefer and Alison before Shane, for all the work they did as well and continue to do on the committee.

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (11:16): I would like to thank those who have made a contribution and thanks again to the committee and of course to you, Mr Speaker, for the work that you put in as Chair previously.

Motion carried.

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE BARRACKS RELOCATION
PROJECT GEPPS CROSS—BAND**

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (11:17): By leave, on behalf of the member for Florey, I move:

That the 107th report of the committee, entitled South Australia Police Barracks Relocation Project Gepps Cross—Band, be noted.

The submission from South Australia Police (SAPOL) proposes to construct a police band facility at the new Gepps Cross police complex. The new facility is part of the broader relocation of the Thebarton Police Barracks in order to make way for the construction of the new Women's and Children's Hospital at this Port Road location. The relocation project requires moving a range of specialist police functions that are not easily accommodated at existing SAPOL locations. It is critical that they are replaced with the new facilities at the earliest opportunity to ensure continuing service provision for the South Australian public.

Founded in 1884, the South Australia Police band is the oldest police band in Australia and is recognised as a state cultural heritage icon. It is an important part of SAPOL's operational services, with demand for its presence continuing to remain strong. Its main role is to support SAPOL's community programs and crime prevention initiatives. Currently consisting of 32 multi-instrumentalists that can form up to 17 different musical ensembles, it performs hundreds of shows annually, varying from ceremonial functions through to community and charity events.

This initiative will continue to build trust and confidence through positive community engagement and partnerships with other government and non-government agencies, schools, local businesses and the public, supporting the SAPOL Safer Communities strategy.

The project will enable the permanent relocation of the band to the Gepps Cross police complex where it will be co-located with the Mounted Operations Unit and Dog Operations Unit. The new facility will provide acoustically treated rehearsal spaces, functional work areas and a band hall appropriate for larger ensembles. The design includes accessible storage solutions that consider the work health and safety of staff when manually handling musical instruments and equipment, as well as a dedicated music library for storing sheet music and instrument consumables.

The project will also build vehicle parking that is configured to ensure equipment can be safely loaded and unloaded. The band has been temporarily relocated to an existing SAPOL facility during construction to expedite relocation from the Thebarton barracks, minimising interruption to the new Women's and Children's Hospital completion timeline.

Working in conjunction with Renewal SA and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, SAPOL investigated several sites for the new facility. The assessment considered the best match to accommodation requirements, the adaptability of layout for operational fit-outs and the quality of existing infrastructure. Key criteria for shortlisting included:

- the ability to achieve appropriate acoustic specifications for music rehearsals;
- site security due to the high value of musical instruments and sheet music;
- options to co-locate band staff with SAPOL employees; and
- parking for the band's vehicles, including two buses, an 11-tonne truck, two vans and two trailers.

The investigation concluded that the Gepps Cross police complex was best suited to meet these criteria, and SAPOL's internal Security Advice Section has cleared the option as an acceptable premise for police operations.

The Gepps Cross facility will be built at 10 Sports Park Drive, on government land that will be transferred to the ministers for police, emergency services and correctional services. SAPOL has undertaken geotechnical and environmental investigations at the site, and conditions are confirmed to be suitable for construction and free from contamination.

The SAPOL relocation project team has conducted a search of the central archives, which identified no record of Aboriginal items or sites at the Gepps Cross location. The team will engage Aboriginal groups as necessary regarding design progression and will manage Aboriginal heritage in accordance with its standard practices, should discoveries be made. Separate investigations with Heritage South Australia and the Department for Environment and Water advise that there are no local heritage places within the project site.

Project delivery will follow procurement and management processes as advocated by the state government and industry authorities, and construction tenders will be sought from contractors registered with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. Project management will follow a construction procurement policy, with the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport acting as principal.

Both a project control group and a steering committee have been established, including representatives from SAPOL, impacted units, the professional services team and government departments. Early works procurement has commenced, with practical completion of the entire project anticipated in July of this year. SAPOL has identified key project risks, including:

- the potential for the project to impair SAPOL's operational capability;
- the need for temporary accommodation of the band during construction;
- an accelerated delivery incurring cost overruns, for which a multi-agency governance framework is in place to ensure value for money, and
- that the program includes minimal contingency.

SAPOL ensuring the establishment of project governance structures will guarantee appropriate oversight and risk management throughout the planning and delivery phases of the project to identify risks early and to facilitate mitigation measures to prevent risks occurring.

SAPOL has noted that sustainability principles are considered throughout the facilities design and development processes, and the Department for Environment and Water's climate change unit has acquitted that the appropriate framework has been developed to ensure these principles are integrated into the project's planning, design and delivery. These initiatives include:

- incorporating passive design principles to reduce the facility's energy and water usage, including window orientation and shading, access points, natural lighting, natural ventilation, and low maintenance and emission-friendly materials selection;
- planting vegetation, surrounding the building, to create cooling;
- installing high levels of insulation;
- deploying solar power, efficient LED lighting and heat-recovery systems; and
- considering water-efficient fittings and installing a 350-kilolitre rainwater harvesting and re-use system.

There has been ongoing consultation with various stakeholder groups throughout the design and construction process regarding the relocation project, and SAPOL will manage internal communication regarding the planning and logistics phase of this project to ensure all end users are appropriately informed of the progress.

The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to the Thebarton barracks relocation project Gepps Cross—band. Witnesses who appeared before the committee included John De Candia, Chief Superintendent, South Australia Police; Scott Bayliss, Chief Services Officer,

Department of Treasury and Finance; and Aislinn Morris, Senior Project Manager, Department for Infrastructure and Transport. I thank the witnesses for their time.

Based upon the evidence considered, and pursuant to section 12C of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991, the Public Works Committee reports to parliament that it recommends the proposed public work.

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (11:24): I rise to just make a brief contribution on this report from the Public Works Committee into the South Australia Police Barracks Relocation Project Gepps Cross—Band. I congratulate the member for Adelaide on her ascension to Chair of this important committee and delivering this first report, which of course all stems from the destruction of a state heritage-listed building in her own electorate.

This is the latest in a string of reports from the Public Works Committee that comes from that decision to put the bulldozer through the Thebarton barracks a couple of years ago, despite promising before the state election that no state heritage buildings would be demolished under this government. It has been a debacle ever since.

I think this whole process has given a little bit of insight into how the new police minister might approach the portfolio, because a lot of this landed on his plate as Treasurer when it all got too hard for everyone else. I think everyone from the Premier to the health minister to the police minister to the planning minister to the environment minister had a go at trying to relocate various business units from the Thebarton barracks site. No-one could do it, so step in the Treasurer to save the day.

The approach throughout this whole process has been to put the police last, to think of them as an afterthought. As the Public Works Committee notes, there are various business units that were located at the Thebarton barracks. As the report notes:

These functions are specialist in nature and not replicated or accommodated at any other existing SAPOL locations.

It notes that:

It is critical that the new facilities are strategically relocated at the earliest opportunity to ensure continuing service provision for the South Australian public.

Well, that just has not happened. It has not happened because the police were an absolute afterthought in this whole relocation. We saw it from the very moment they tried to move the Mounted Operations Unit in particular—a lesson in incompetence to try to move some horses, where for many months we went through this bizarre 'announce, defend, capitulate' strategy from the government.

They had a plan A, which was to move the horses to Park 21 West in the Adelaide Parklands in the member for Adelaide's electorate. This was a Parklands pillage at its very worst that was proposed by this government despite, again, promising before the last election to protect the Adelaide Parklands and despite promising before the last election not to put the bulldozer through any heritage-listed buildings.

There was enormous community backlash to that announcement from the Malinauskas Labor government that they were going to pillage the Parklands in this way. The opposition stood side-by-side with the community at that time, pushed back on it and put a stop to the latest Parklands land grab that was being proposed by those opposite.

So we switched to a plan B—I cannot remember whether the Treasurer was involved with plan B or not; I think he might have been, at that point, coming in to try to sort things out—which was a proposal to move the Mounted Operations Unit to a parcel of land near the Airport. It turned out that the government did not even have access to that land, it did not own the land, and that there were a number of concerns around PFAS contamination at the land. Again: announced, defended for a little while, and then totally capitulated before landing on plan C, which is the subject of this Public Works Committee report from the member for Adelaide, which is to relocate not only the Mounted Operations Unit but some of the other business units, including the band, to Gepps Cross.

The original budget that the Treasurer had at that time for the relocation project was \$90 million, and I think by the time we were done that had ballooned out to about \$162 million to

move some horses and some musicians to Gepps Cross. India can land a rover on the moon for \$75 million. This Treasurer and part-time police minister cannot move some horses and musicians to Gepps Cross without spending nearly \$200 million.

The cost blowout alone, which would be about an extra \$70 million on top of the \$90 million previously budgeted, could have funded over a thousand new police cadets, which we know are desperately needed, because this Treasurer and part-time police minister has hopelessly under-resourced South Australia Police, with a shortfall of nearly 200 police on the beat, a dramatic decrease per capita in police over the last five years, over the term of the Malinauskas Labor government.

We have 10 per cent fewer police per capita—just over, I think, 10 per cent fewer police per capita—today than we did five years ago. This is data from the Report on Government Services released only a day or so ago, which shows police per 100,000 falling over recent times, which means, of course, that we have fewer police to respond to the needs of the community.

I think this whole string of reports from the Public Works Committee has set out this debacle right from the very beginning, which started when we saw from the Malinauskas Labor government the decision to put the bulldozer through the state heritage-listed Thebarton barracks, despite promising not to do so. This decision was followed by the fiasco touched by many, many ministers but ultimately at the end the Treasurer and now police minister, who has spent nearly \$200 million relocating some horses and some musicians to Gepps Cross.

There has also been a number of concerns raised about what the relocation is going to mean for operational purposes and for the workforce as well. We know there have been some concerns raised by officers about the move. We cannot afford to lose any more police under this government, so I hope it does not lead to that either.

The police band is an amazing benefit to our community. We see them at community events. We see them holding an important crime prevention function. It is the oldest police band in Australia. I am proud to support them. I think they deserved a whole lot better from the Malinauskas Labor government throughout this whole process.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: EMPOWERING SA COMMUNITY BATTERIES PROJECT

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (11:32): By leave, on behalf of the member for Florey, I move:

That the 108th report of the committee, entitled emPowering SA Community Batteries Project, be noted.

The submission from the Department for Energy and Mining, referred to as 'the department', proposes to construct a fleet of 16 community batteries across South Australia, with the goal of lowering electricity prices for low income households. The project will also provide key learnings and pave the way for future commercialisation and adoption of renewable energy technology.

South Australians who rent or are on low or fixed incomes have little opportunity to control their energy bills through investing in renewable energy. The community batteries project aims to provide an opportunity by harnessing excess power entering the grid to create a supply of stored power that will subsidise public housing.

The project will contract AGL to install a fleet of batteries in a front-of-meter configuration, which will be operated as part of a virtual power plant (VPP). The VPP will then generate revenue through wholesale energy market trading and be used to support electricity bills for 10½ thousand low income households. Potential households will be invited to accept a retail electricity plan that is priced 25 per cent below the default market offer, with the department stating that this will provide a typical household saving of approximately \$560 annually. As part of the VPP, the batteries will also increase resilience to the state's electricity distribution network.

Additionally, the project will support the state's transition to a renewable energy economy by providing subcontractors experience in the growing industry and by developing knowledge and experience in the deployment, operation and maintenance of community-style batteries for similar projects in the future.

The project involves the construction of 16 modular battery energy storage systems, each comprised of six separate storage modules that combine to create a 1,350 kilowatt per hour system. The storage modules are anticipated to be Sungrow battery systems, although equivalent models from an alternative supplier may be substituted, provided that their capacity, performance and value for money are comparable.

The design will also ensure that each site has the flexibility to allow for hardware replacement, as well as cater for an increased capacity. The batteries will be connected to the South Australian Power Network via pad-mounted transformers and will be operated by AGL as part of the VPP. AGL will have full dispatch rights and, once fully commissioned and energised, the proposed fleet of batteries will have an aggregate capacity of 21,600 kilowatts per hour.

Beyond providing the previously discussed savings for low income households, the batteries will also store excess energy during daytime periods when demand is high, helping limit voltage disturbances to the state's power network. Initial modelling also indicates that the project will reduce carbon dioxide equivalents from the grid by an average of five tonnes per day.

The project is funded through joint contributions from the South Australian government, AGL and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA). In June 2023, the department was awarded \$1 million as part of the Australian government's Community Batteries for Household Solar Initiative to install South Australia's first two community batteries, and was then, in May 2024, invited by ARENA to commence contract negotiations for a \$10.8 million grant towards an additional 16 batteries.

The South Australian government will match ARENA's capital expenditure, with an additional \$4 million from AGL, bringing the total capital expenditure to supply, install and connect the 16 battery assets to \$25.7 million. Once installed, AGL will be responsible for all operational and maintenance expenses over the 10-year life of each asset. In the event the project achieves a net positive return over the duration of the project, all parties have agreed to reinvest returns into emPowering SA, or a similar project in South Australia. It is expected that over that period the project will provide at least \$59 million of value across nominated low income households. Once finalisation of the battery locations are complete, there will be 16 sites identified across the state.

Project procurement followed a two-stage process involving an open market expression of interest and an invitation to supply. Following the competitive expression of interest, AGL was selected as the preferred implementation partner. To complete the second stage of the procurement process, AGL will then submit a final and binding quotation to the department. The department's project management framework aligns to best practice and defines management processes, planning approaches, key tasks and execution during the project life cycle, with monthly performance reviews held.

Given the major project status, emPowering SA will receive dedicated management support from the department's project management office. In partnership with the department, AGL, as one of Australia's largest energy providers, is well placed to identify, manage and mitigate project risks. The provider will implement its bespoke project management framework to accommodate the challenges and demands of large-scale batteries across multiple sites, and a representative delivery manager will oversee the team responsible for coordinating preparation and construction.

This framework focusses on front-end loading to avoid schedule delays and incorporates project management controls to identify and mitigate risk. The project aims to commission the first stage of batteries in November of this year, with full project completion anticipated in November 2027. The department has designed a sustainability audit checklist, which considers each obligation relevant to the project and considers strategies required to meet each identified need. Sustainability considerations include:

- minimising the impact of site locations on the environment;
- monitoring and minimising environmental impact during design, demolition and construction;
- considering stormwater management and controlling contaminated run-off;

- efficient, ethical and responsible selection of materials;
- consideration of waste management during construction and eventual operation;
- minimising energy usage and carbon emissions; and
- consideration of noise pollution.

The department will determine native title and Aboriginal heritage implications during the detailed site assessments and states that should a site be subject to or under consideration for native title they will seek an alternative site.

In the case of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement an alternative site may be selected, depending on timeframes. The department will engage local councils regarding Aboriginal heritage within their local government area and will seek guidance from the Attorney-General's Department if required. Further detailed site assessments will review local, state and commonwealth registers to determine whether there are local heritage concerns and should items or places be discovered advice will be sought from relative authorities.

The project team is in ongoing consultation with government departments, suppliers and relevant stakeholders. This includes working with local council to identify preferred battery locations; SA Housing Trust to identify the ten and a half thousand low income households; the Crown Solicitor's Office to create a retailer energy productivity scheme; the Department for Infrastructure and Transport for special project accreditation approval; the Country Fire Service and Metropolitan Fire Service to evaluate fire safety risk management; and ARENA concerning grant funding, contract negotiation and receipt of conditional funding approval.

The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to the emPowering SA community batteries project. Witnesses who appeared before the committee were Scott Oster, Director, Major Projects, Department for Energy and Mining, and Travis Murphy, Manager, Projects, Department for Energy and Mining. I thank the witnesses for their time. I would also like to thank the member for Stuart, the member for Kavel and the member for Mawson for their written statements regarding this project in their respective electorates.

Based upon the evidence considered and pursuant to section 12C of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991, the Public Works Committee reports to parliament that it recommends the proposed public work.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart) (11:41): I congratulate the committee on this great initiative. I am led to believe that Port Pirie is going to be a recipient of one of those batteries. What I would like to say is that this is well and truly overdue because the aim of this is to provide people in our communities in the lower economic situation the opportunity for cheaper power.

From a council point of view, I attended our council meeting couple of weeks ago; they have to decide on a location for this. I will say that there was nearly an hour of council discussion on a preferred location for this particular community battery. I think the final design or final location is just adjacent to a substation in Grey Terrace, which is fairly close.

One thing that is going to be very beneficial to our community is being able to access cheaper power. As the member indicated, it is up to about \$560 per annum cheaper and it is about 25 per cent below the market price. This is similar to a project of a previous member of the Port Pirie Regional Council, a James Holliman. He suggested some years ago that council go into partnership with a renewable energy company about providing batteries to people who have the panels on their roofs and they would be able to pay that off on a regular basis over a period of time through their pensions.

That was a great initiative from James Holliman at that particular point. Unfortunately, our council have not progressed that any further and have not continued doing that. But again, I congratulate the Public Works Committee on this one. The initiative is absolutely fantastic and I, as a local member and a resident of Port Pirie for many years, am looking forward to the installation of that battery and that the lower income pensioners will be able to get access to cheaper power. I commend the report to the parliament.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: MOANA GROWTH PROJECT

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (11:43): By leave, on behalf of the member for Florey, I move:

That the 109th report of the committee, entitled Moana Growth Project, be noted.

Between 2017 and 2024, SA Water (the agency) has recorded a 4.5 per cent annual increase in new customer connections in Moana. This has increased from a previous annual growth of 2.6 per cent. Put into perspective, since 2017 there has been a 37 per cent increase in water connections in the area. It is also a rapidly growing region, making the project a high priority for the agency to ensure the delivery of regulated standards of water to the people of Moana and surrounding areas.

During concept development, SA Water conducted investigations into several upgrade options to determine the most viable solution. These investigations consider technical and financial components, risk assessment and net present value, and included duplicating the existing water main, upsizing the existing water main or installing a booster pump station. The agency selected to duplicate the water main to augment supply as it offered the most cost-effective and sustainable solution with the lowest level of construction and operational risk.

The project outcome will support an expanded network to meet increasing demand in the area and sustain reliable baseline service to customers. The preferred option proposes duplication of the existing water main along Tatchilla Road, Maslin Beach Road and Commercial Road between California Road and Albany Way. The construction corridor is predominantly on road reserve owned by the Department for Infrastructure and Transport, with a small portion to be built on verge land belonging to the City of Onkaparinga council. Construction is anticipated to commence in the first quarter of this year and expected to be practically complete by September of this year.

The project will cost \$11.5 million, and the agency expects no ongoing operational expenses. Funds for the project are available within the capital budget previously submitted by the agency to the Essential Services Commission of South Australia for the 2024 regulatory determination. There will be no impact on SA Water's overall contributions to government or SA Water's customer bills. The agency notes that an economic benefit-cost ratio was not calculated as the benefits are a continuation of an existing service and cannot be quantified in financial or economic terms.

SA Water uses procurement frameworks that enable the sequential award of works to suppliers that are similar in nature. This model delivers significant efficiency benefits through collaboration, innovation, consistency, planning and programming whilst maintaining a level of service that benefits SA Water's customers. Last year, the agency extended three major framework partner agreements, which apply across the suite of the agency's programs, and the Moana Growth Project has been included in the agency's civil major framework program.

The procurement process has been conducted in accordance with SA Water policies and procedures, conforming to all applicable Treasury and government policies. SA Water engineering was responsible for the analysis and concept design, and a design-and-construct model has been selected to deliver the project.

The project is being managed by a project manager who is responsible for the development, including seeking approvals, management of the selected contractor, and overseeing works. The agency uses a risk management policy and framework to identify and manage project risks and states that this is an integral part of the project management process. Key risks include impacts to the environment, for which design has aligned the pipeline to minimise such impacts, and network isolation failures and loss of supply to customers, for which detailed planning and coordination aims to minimise impacts.

SA Water's corporate-wide policies reinforce a commitment to operating sustainably to support viability now and into the future, and the selected contractor will be encouraged to develop processes that consider short and long-term local and global environmental, social and economic considerations. Initiatives include:

- efficient use of resources and raw materials, such as sourcing materials locally where available;
- use of local expertise and contractors, where the expertise exists in the area;

- reducing carbon emissions;
- development of flexible processes and products; and
- recycling and re-use to reduce waste to minimise the use of local waste management companies.

An environmental control plan has been prepared to ensure the project is delivered in compliance with the relevant legislative frameworks, and the contractor has established a construction environmental management plan outlining general environmental controls and mitigation measures. The site environmental management plan will be developed to address site-specific environmental conditions. Regular work health and safety and environmental audits will be scheduled during the construction phase to ensure that construction management plans are implemented. The agency does not expect the project to impact native vegetation, and approvals have been sought for the removal of two trees.

The project site lies within the Kaurna people's native title claim, and the agency's legal team confirms that native title does not exist within the project area. Assessments have indicated a medium risk of encountering or impacting Aboriginal heritage, and the construction contractor will be required to comply with SA Water's Standard Operating Procedure for Discovery of Aboriginal Heritage. All site construction employees will also attend a site-specific Aboriginal cultural heritage induction. The agency has identified no impacts on non-Aboriginal heritage places or items.

Due to works being parallel to the existing pipeline, the agency is in ongoing consultation with relevant stakeholders. This includes the Onkaparinga council regarding the portions of council land through which the project passes, as well as to ensure sufficient traffic management is implemented during construction. Additionally, internal stakeholders and partner organisations will remain informed throughout the project's life span. The submission has been circulated amongst relevant government departments, which have indicated support for the project.

The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to the Moana Growth Project. Witnesses who appeared before the committee were Peter Seltsikas, Senior Manager, Capital Delivery, SA Water, and Jasmine Kabir, Project Manager, SA Water. I thank the witnesses for their time. Based upon the evidence considered and pursuant to section 12C of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991, the Public Works Committee reports to parliament that it recommends the proposed public work.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: ADELAIDE WOMEN'S PRISON REDEVELOPMENT

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (12:01): By leave, on behalf of the member for Florey, I move:

That the 110th report of the committee, entitled Adelaide Women's Prison New 40 Bed Secure Accommodation and Supporting Infrastructure, be noted.

In its strategic plan, the Department for Correctional Services (DCS) outlined a vision for a safer community through the reduction of criminal reoffending, with a mission to manage offenders in a safe, secure and humane environment that provides opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration.

The Adelaide Women's Prison provides a range of services and support structures designed and tailored specifically for its offenders, and DCS has put significant focus in recent years on women offenders, with improved accommodation and security infrastructure that aligns with the department's Women's Action Plan.

The proposed works will bolster wider department goals to reduce recidivism by 20 per cent, by investing in strategic initiatives and addressing factors underlying the women's correctional services interface and the risk of reoffending.

The Adelaide Women's Prison is located in Northfield and presently accommodates 232 low, medium and high-security female offenders. DCS notes that well-designed prison accommodation has the capacity to reduce stress, increase wellbeing and foster better relationships between staff and prisoners and between prisoners themselves—ultimately, all leading to fewer negative behaviours and critical incidents.

Following on from a redevelopment project completed in 2019 that allowed for future growth within the prison's secure zone, the proposed works will build two new residential accommodation buildings, a recreation yard and landscaping within the secure zone on the eastern perimeter of the site. The new accommodation is anticipated to house an additional 40 beds, and the final design aligns with the site master plan and meets industry best practice to create a more agile, flexible and sustainable correctional environment with improved accommodation and security infrastructure that supports rehabilitation into the community. The project also intends to finalise the infrastructure required for the transition of the electronic security systems from analogue to digital.

The department examined a number of options to deliver the project in a cost-effective, value-for-money approach, supported by the major capital works committee. The additional accommodation will build on the successful outcomes of previous builds and the contemporary design will be modelled off the current Rose Unit accommodation and refined based on the post-commission learnings from that facility and will include provisions for:

- air circulation;
- separate shower and toilet areas;
- a kitchen area;
- shared recreation space;
- cabling for future in-cell technology;
- cultural inclusion opportunities;
- upgrades of electric security; and
- sustainability opportunities.

The project will deliver a mixture of inside and outside communal spaces, providing a level of independence whilst increasing the model of supervision through clear lines of sight and open-plan communal spaces for the accommodation units. Cultural safe spaces and acknowledgement opportunities will also be considered to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal people incarcerated in South Australia through cultural understanding and engagement, further contributing to strategies within the department's strategic plan.

To actively contribute to improving outcomes for all people impacted by the criminal justice system, the Adelaide Women's Prison provides opportunities for prisoners to work and train in various areas, including the kitchen, laundry, textiles, horticulture, landscaping and community works.

The project anticipates that a prisoner construction pathways program will provide opportunities for participants to gain construction skills and develop industry relationships through participation in the project, supporting their rehabilitation into the community and aiding in preparation for life after release. This is similar to other successful initiatives at prison sites in South Australia.

The project is estimated to cost \$21 million and cabinet approved funding as part of the 2024-25 budget process with the department stating that ongoing operational funding will be requested in a future budget process. Construction is anticipated to begin in March this year, aiming to be completed in September of 2026 for prisoner occupation the following November.

Project procurement will follow the Department for Infrastructure and Transport's procedures, with the lead design consultant appointed under a lead professional services contract and a cost consultant appointed under a cost management services contract. Contract tenders for the various categories of building works will be offered by invitation, seeking responses with demonstrated prison project experience.

Capital works activities will be overseen by the department's major capital works steering committee, chaired by the Executive Director of People and Business Services. The project will be delivered in collaboration with the Department for Infrastructure and Transport following the best-practice principles for project management. The Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation division has

confirmed no record of Aboriginal heritage sites or items have been discovered at the proposed site; neither have any state or local heritage sites or items been identified at the location.

The department has compiled a report to ensure sustainability principles are considered in the design and construction of the project, including energy-efficient lighting and the use of photovoltaic systems, water management systems, energy-efficient air conditioning, procurement of ethical and environmentally friendly resources, the use of recycled materials, the use of durable materials, and the planting of native vegetation.

The project is in ongoing consultation with the City of Port Adelaide Enfield and will continue to work collaboratively with the council to promote local contractor participation. The management teams continue to work with the relevant government departments for project support as well as obtaining all necessary approvals.

The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to the Adelaide Women's Prison new 40-bed secure accommodation and supporting infrastructure project. Witnesses who appeared before the committee were David Brown, Chief Executive, Department for Correctional Services; and Sarah Taylor, Executive Director, People and Business Services, Department for Correctional Services. I thank the witnesses for their time.

Based upon the evidence considered and pursuant to section 12C of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991, the Public Works Committee reports to parliament that it recommends the proposed public work.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: YATALA LABOUR PRISON REDEVELOPMENT

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (11:57): By leave, on behalf of the member for Florey, I move:

That the 111th report of the committee, entitled Yatala Labour Prison New 312 Bed Redevelopment and Supporting Infrastructure, be noted.

The Department for Correctional Services (DCS) is committed to reducing the number of reoffending prisoners, with the mission to manage offenders in a safe, secure, and humane environment as well as provide opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration. While DCS has had success in reducing recidivism, the department is experiencing a persistent trend of increasing prisoner numbers. This has resulted in a new prisoner peak of 3,390 statewide as of July last year.

The additional beds proposed in this project will assist the department in meeting these demands, and the associated infrastructure upgrades will support rehabilitative services that reduce the likelihood of prisoners reoffending by investing in strategic initiatives that ensure fewer people return to custody.

Yatala Labour Prison is South Australia's high-security metropolitan prison and is responsible for managing complex, high-risk prisoners from across the state. This includes remand, sentenced, high and medium security, protected and high-notoriety prisoners and includes managing prisoners for short periods of time, often at the most volatile point in their journey through the correctional services system.

DCS offender development staff deliver a range of critical multidisciplinary services, including the assessment and treatment of prisoners at risk of mental health crisis, including suicide and self-harm, disability assessment, Aboriginal cultural support, case management, literacy and numeracy education, substance abuse counselling, and intensive behaviour-change programs.

Beyond the pressure applied by the statewide increase in prisoner numbers, the prison is also in need of infrastructure upgrades. This is evident in the decommissioning of the education centre after it was deemed unfit due to several health, safety and security risks, including prisoners having direct access to staff due to a lack of security barriers, the absence of CCTV cameras, prisoners having access to critical movement control points and officers' stations, the general state of the building allowing for the potential concealment of contraband, substandard air conditioning and fire hazards due to prisoner access to the gas furnace.

Debate adjourned.

*Bills***STATUTES AMENDMENT (CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS) BILL***Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 February 2025.)

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12:01): I rise, as I have indicated to the government, to speak briefly to indicate the opposition's support for the bill and to encourage the passage of it. The government's speech is now before us and this has been the matter of some consideration, including in terms of it having a consequential difference to the draft that was circulated before it was introduced, consequentially by the Law Society's input into its caution about the use of the audiovisual link for trials. I am the lead speaker and I will not be too terribly long.

There was a draft of the bill that was circulated initially that proposed heading off into new territory to contemplate the widening of capacity for trials to be conducted with the defendant on audiovisual link. I think it is fair to say, in response to the advocacy of the Law Society and in particular its Criminal Law Committee, as summarised by letter from the then President of the Law Society to the Attorney dated 24 April 2024, that has been now confined to the use of such technology at sentencing; that is welcome. I want to draw attention to the important role that is played by the profession, both the Bar Association and the Law Society, in relation to legislation of this kind.

The remainder of the bill, insofar as it relates to juries and judges' capacity to make directions, are sensible improvements and those are welcome. I want to highlight that point that the society has raised about caution in relation to the broad use of AVL. Just to make good that point and for the sake of future reference, the Law Society highlights in particular, and I quote from paragraph 7 of its letter, that:

Noting the complexity of criminal trials, the ability of legal practitioners to obtain timely, detailed and confidential instructions from their client being physically present at trial is essential. It is unsatisfactory for that to be done remotely (and indeed for some clients that might not even be possible at all). In this regard, the assurance as to communications between lawyers and clients...does not provide the requisite detail to reassure practitioners. There is no substitute for being able to speak privately face to face.

That, I think, captures the caution and why the society welcomes the narrowing in terms of the use of AVL to sentencing. No doubt that will be the subject of ongoing scrutiny. This will be now something that we will see in practice and, as is always the case, the disposition of criminal trials is at its core a very practical matter. It involves those crucial interactions between particularly accused and those representing them, as well as the capacity for the court to be able to dispose of the business that is before it efficiently in the interest of justice for the whole of the community.

With that, I indicate again the opposition's support for the bill and look forward to working constructively with the government and, in this case, particularly valuably, with the profession in relation to reform going further in the future.

Mr BROWN (Florey) (12:06): It is a pleasure to rise in support of the Statutes Amendment (Criminal Proceedings) Bill 2024. The bill seeks to strengthen the safe and efficient operation of South Australia's criminal justice system. Firstly, the bill proposes to amend the Juries Act 1927 to allow for a person summonsed for jury service to be excused by a judge from further attendance if their attendance would pose a risk to the safety or welfare of another person.

Secondly, the bill proposes to amend the Sentencing Act 2017 to broaden the class of defendants who may attend sentencing for indictable offences via audiovisual link to cover defendants who are in the community, as well as defendants who are in custody.

Under the current arrangements, there are various grounds on which a person may seek to be excused from attendance for the purpose of serving on a jury. These include recent jury service, ill health, conscientious objection, or a matter of special urgency or importance. However, under extant arrangements each of these requires an application from the prospective juror themselves. The bill before us proposes creating a limited ability for a person who is summonsed for jury service

to be excused in the absence of an application from the juror where it is necessary for the protection of health or safety.

These reforms came about in part as a result of experience gained during the COVID-19 pandemic, when various health and safety protocols were put in place in relation to persons attending for jury service. A potential risk was identified whereby, if a particular person refused to comply with the protocols, they could only be invited to apply to be excused from jury service. There was no power for them to be excused on the court's own initiative if they declined to make an application themselves to be excused. This government considers that such a gap in the legislation is well worth addressing.

In the event of future situations wherein a risk may be identified to health and safety, irrespective of whether that is a risk scenario arising on a whole-of-community level or whether the risk exists in relation to the specific circumstances surrounding one particular person, it is important that avenues are available to the court through which such risks can be addressed. This will support and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of fellow jurors and of other court users, and indeed under certain circumstances the broader South Australian community may also be better protected.

The bill provides that, if the attendance of a prospective juror poses or would pose a risk to the safety or welfare of another person, a judge may issue a notice in writing excusing that person from further attendance. This may occur on a judge's own initiative or on the application of a court Sheriff. The Sheriff is responsible for managing persons who are summonsed for jury service, which makes them well placed to determine whether a particular prospective juror poses a health or safety risk, and then to present this risk to a judge for consideration.

The bill also proposes to amend the Courts Administration Act 1993 to provide that the State Courts Administrator's annual report must set out the number of times a person was excused from jury service under this section as well as the number of times Sheriffs made an application for a person to be excused, irrespective of the outcome of that application. This aims to embed an additional layer of transparency and accountability in relation to the use of this power.

This bill further proposes to amend the Sentencing Act 2017 to broaden the circumstances in which a defendant may attend sentencing for an indictable offence via audiovisual link. The rule is under current provisions, and will continue to be under new provisions, that a defendant should be physically present in the courtroom during sentencing proceedings for an indictable offence. This is appropriate in the normal practice because the defendant's actual presence in the courtroom assists the judge to connect with them when delivering sentencing remarks, particularly in Youth Court proceedings.

However, the Sentencing Act already contains exceptions to this rule, allowing attendance via audiovisual link in certain circumstances. The broadest exception, which is found in section 21(2)(b) of the Sentencing Act, provides that, if a defendant is in custody prior to sentencing, the court may deal with the proceedings by way of audiovisual link without requiring the in-person attendance of the defendant if the court is of the opinion that it is appropriate in the circumstances.

However, there is no equivalent exception available to defendants in the community. This bill seeks to expand the existing provisions for exceptions such that any defendant may attend sentencing proceedings via audiovisual link if the court considers it appropriate in the circumstances. It should be noted that defendants in the community must also consent to attending via audiovisual link. This aims to allow greater flexibility to defendants in the community to attend their sentencing proceedings remotely. This may be appropriate due to mobility concerns, illness or caring responsibilities, for example. The intention is that this reform will increase the accessibility of our justice system.

Section 14(5) of the Sentencing Act 2017 must ensure that the defendant is present when the statement is read out if the victim so wishes. The prosecution can make known to the court the victim's wishes as to the defendant's presence at sentencing, and this will form part of the court's consideration as to whether their application is appropriate.

The changes proposed in this bill are sensible reforms that seek to make processes of the court more efficient and more responsive to circumstances, to improve safety for those who use our

courts, as well as to expand the accessibility of our justice system for those who engage with it. I commend the bill to the house.

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (12:12): I thank all the people who have contributed to this bill in the other place, here and also, of course, the public servants who prepared it, and those who contributed during the consultation process to its improvement. I commend the bill to the house.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (12:13): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Sitting suspended from 12:14 to 14:00.

PASSENGER TRANSPORT (POINT TO POINT TRANSPORT SERVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor

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

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT - INTEGRITY MEASURES) AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor

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

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Statutes Amendment (Criminal Proceedings) Bill 2024—Explanation of Clauses

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

Plastic Bags (Waste Avoidance) Repeal Bill 2024—Explanation of Clauses

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

Regulations made under the following Acts—

Education and Care Services National Law—Transitional (2024)

Question Time

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:03): My question is to the Premier. Will the government deliver its hydrogen power plant at Whyalla as promised? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The South Australian Labor Hydrogen Jobs Plan election policy document states, 'A Malinauskas government will build one of the world's largest hydrogen power stations.'

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:03): It was a great opportunity last week for me to be on the ground in Whyalla, and I took the opportunity, along with the member for Giles, to be out talking to members of the community. We met with people who work at the steelworks, we met with contractors who supply the steelworks, we met with local government representatives and we meet with various community organisations. I also had the opportunity to bear witness to the work that is already happening in Whyalla regarding the power plant to which the Leader of the Opposition refers.

One of the key components of the policy that we took to the last election was an investment in generation facilities to generate electricity. I am very pleased to report, as I think I have on more than one occasion in this place, that the generators that deliver the electricity production itself are currently under construction by General Electric. They are generators that have the capacity to be fuelled by two gases: both natural gas and also hydrogen. That was the policy. It always has been.

They are under construction in Ohio. We expect them to be delivered to the government of South Australia in the not too distant future and the location of that work, there are already civil works in place adjacent to Whyalla at the site, and that part of the program that the Leader of the Opposition asks about is well and truly in train. We see this as being important for a few reasons, including to add additional generation capacity to the state. Critically, that facility is going to be owned by the people of South Australia, generating electricity, supplying electricity into the energy market in the interests of South Australia.

Of course, in our view this is a very good example of a point of policy distinction—I don't say that as a criticism; points of difference in politics are natural and not necessarily unhealthy—and everybody in South Australia should know that this is a government investing in state-owned generation of electricity in South Australia. Our only hope, of course—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Members on my left will come to order.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Our only hope is that that policy is able to be sustained because we know that every time there is a change of government in South Australia, the first thing that a Liberal government does is sell off electricity assets. In the last two iterations—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morphet is on his final warning.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I don't know why there is consternation from those opposite. These aren't contested facts. The last two iterations of Liberal governments in the state of South Australia, both of them have sold off state-owned electricity assets. In both instances, it is the view of those of us on this side of the house that the selling off of state-owned electricity assets has diminished the capacity for the government of the day to have a positive influence in the electricity market. So, yet again, this Labor government is investing in state-owned electricity assets. We have a contract with GE to acquire turbines. That is in place and we look forward to the delivery in the not too distant future.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:07): My question again is to the Premier. Will all elements of the government's flagship hydrogen power plant project at Whyalla be delivered by the end of the year as promised? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The SA Labor Hydrogen Jobs Plan election policy document stated that Labor will ensure all projects will be operational by the end of 2025.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:07): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question again. As I have been saying in both this forum and also others in recent weeks, the one thing that is absolutely clear and not in dispute is this government's commitment to the people of Whyalla and the surrounds of it in Upper Spencer Gulf.

Currently, within the budget that was handed down by the Treasurer in June last year, there is at least \$593 million allocated to a substantial economic infrastructure investment in Whyalla.

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The leader will come to order. You have asked a question. Listen to the Premier as he provides the answer.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I have spoken to one of the key elements of that program, being the electricity generators, which are currently under construction and which we very much look forward to the receipt of in the future. In regard to the other elements of the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, what we have made clear in recent days is that the number one concern of the government, which is consistent with the number one concern of the people of Whyalla—and if those opposite had spent some time on the ground in Whyalla they would know this—is the operation and the ownership and the functioning of the steelworks, which, of course, is so much of what the Hydrogen Jobs Plan is predicated upon. When we developed this policy—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: It's in the policy document—the member for Giles, to his great credit, was a powerful advocate for this facility to be built in Whyalla for the very reason of the opportunity around the decarbonisation of iron production and steel production in the state of South Australia, an opportunity that is no less real today than what was the case four years ago or prior. Hence, it remains true, and there is no change to the fact, that this government is fully committed to the realisation of that opportunity, but it's got to be done in concert with the owner and the operator of the steelworks. Now, what do we know about that?

This government has been at pains to work with Mr Gupta and GFG in the realisation of the transformation of the steelworks. We want to see that transpire and we will do everything we can to ensure that it does, whether it be under the ownership of the steelworks' current owner or any other. We wish Mr Gupta and GFG nothing but success, because we realise the ambitions that he has for that steelworks, which were endorsed by those opposite during the course of their time in government—we all saw the photos and the smiles at the big reveal in 2018. That plan is the right plan for the steelworks, but of course there is a live question that remains to be answered about whether or not GFG has a capacity to do so.

But that should not in any way, in our view, impede the government realising our ambitions and determination to see the transformation of the steelworks and the opportunity that exists out of the decarbonisation of iron production, which is exactly why the one thing that I and everyone on the Treasury benches and everyone on this side of the house wants to see occur more than anything else is to get that money out that door. We want that \$593 million allocated and expended on the ground in Whyalla so that we can provide the stimulus and the support that our Whyalla community desperately deserves that is consistently opposed by those opposite.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Flinders will leave the chamber for the rest of question time. You spent the entire four minutes interjecting, and this is such an important matter that I didn't want to interrupt the Premier. The member for Chaffey, the member for Unley and the member for Bragg are all on your final warnings as well.

The honourable member for Flinders having withdrawn from the chamber:

POWER PRICES

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:11): My question is to the Premier. Will the government's flagship hydrogen power plant at Whyalla lower electricity costs

for all businesses in South Australia, as promised. With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The SA Labor Hydrogen Jobs Plan election policy document states that Labor will:

Lower electricity prices for all businesses in South Australia.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:12): It's an interesting question that the member asks, and I thank him for it because his shadow minister has been saying that this will not lower residential household power prices despite the Leader of the Opposition just quoting the policy document talking specifically about wholesale prices which impact businesses. So they know, they have now admitted that they know that they have been out there talking about two different things. So, yes, what we said we would do is our generator will bid into the market to attempt to lower wholesale prices at peak times.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The interjections after asking a question are unbecoming a person who wants to be the Premier of this state.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: He just asked a question. I've been up 30 seconds and you're interjecting. Just give me a moment and I will answer your question. What we are attempting to do with our generator is, what we are seeing in the market is gas setting the prices during the peaks. Because a lot of businesses are in the wholesale market, they see their prices peak around those times when residential households start using a lot more electricity at night and when renewable energy comes offline because of either the sun going down or the intermittency of the wind and gas setting the price.

What is happening is, amazingly in unison, every single gas-fired generator bids in at almost exactly the same amount, which spikes prices. The advice we have from Danny Price from Frontier Economics, who has also done work for both sides of parliament, is that when we have a government generator that is bidding in at its marginal run costs of producing electricity plus a small profit margin we will see us bidding in at a lower level than those other generators who are bidding at a higher level, which will bring down wholesale power prices.

What else brings down wholesale power prices? Renewable energy. The more renewable energy you have in the system, and you have a government generator acting in the interests of the people of South Australia and its constituents rather than their shareholders, you will get lower prices in the system.

But it's good to see you finally admit that what your shadow minister has been saying and what you have been saying have been misleading. The shadow minister has been out there saying, just as recently as one o'clock today on the Stacey Lee show, the hydrogen project won't lower household power prices, while the Leader of the Opposition gets up and actually quotes the document when we're talking about lowering business costs. The former shadow treasurer, who was booted out by his own people—not by us—shouldn't be commenting at all.

HYDROGEN JOBS PLAN

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:15): My question again is to the Premier. Will the government's flagship hydrogen power plant at Whyalla deliver thousands of new jobs for South Australians as promised? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The South Australian Labor Hydrogen Jobs Plan election policy document states that Labor will:

Deliver thousands of new jobs for South Australians.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:15): There is plenty of evidence that hydrogen will create hundreds and hundreds of jobs. I want to read to the house some quotes about people's optimism about hydrogen. There is one quote that says:

...and hydrogen, which has emerged as an area of future growth.

That is one person quoting what their views are on hydrogen. Another person says:

...hydrogen really has a fantastic ability. It is going to provide clean energy going forward, and it will support the transition to low-emissions energy across not only electricity but also potentially going forward heating transport and industry as well.

Another quote says:

Certainly hydrogen has great opportunities, and so it is fantastic that this government has put in place steps towards seeing this project, which will be a trial, and then going forward hopefully it will be expanded. As the energy minister said, people will look back in 10 to 20 years and say, 'Well, this was the first step but a vital step going forward for not only South Australia but also nationally.'

There are more quotes:

So not only can they export hydrogen nationally but there is also great potential in terms of using hydrogen as a transport fuel to allow that to be exported internationally as well...The strategic value of the South Australian portfolio is significant in our jurisdiction which is undergoing one of the most rapid energy transitions in the world.

This is certainly optimistic talk about the benefits of hydrogen.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Who are they? The Leader of the Opposition and the shadow energy minister. Turn that frown upside down! Oh no, oh no! Germany is decarbonising its steel industry. It needs to import—here we go, you might get that KC one day.

The SPEAKER: The deputy leader?

Mr TEAGUE: There is a point of order under standing order 98(a). It is all very well what others have said, the question goes to whether Labor's plan will deliver thousands of jobs. The question needs to be answered. He's debating it 1997 101 style.

The SPEAKER: I think the minister is getting to the answer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I would have thought if you did debating at Bond University you would know that what you don't do is attack your leader. He's the one saying it's going to be fantastic and so is your shadow minister. Why would you criticise them so publicly? What we heard two former ministers say was the potential of hydrogen to create jobs. If they believe it, why don't you?

The SPEAKER: The minister has concluded his answer.

PRESCHOOL FUNDING

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN (Kavel) (14:18): My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. Can the minister please update the house on the government's plans to construct a new preschool and primary school in Mount Barker?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (14:18): I really appreciate this question from the member for Kavel and it also, of course, provides me with a welcome opportunity to acknowledge his service to this place after his recent announcement and to the cabinet as well in his role as a minister there. I have greatly enjoyed the opportunity as the Minister for Education in this state in getting to know the Mount Barker area a lot better and visiting schools with the member for Kavel. I think everyone in this place knows what a very fierce and unrelenting advocate the member for Kavel is for his area. He knocks the door down when it comes to championing causes in his electorate and fighting for new services.

The issues around school capacity, enrolment and the quality of the school infrastructure in his electorate were issues that the member for Kavel raised with me in the very first days of me becoming the Minister for Education in this state. We went away and did the piece of work that you would expect us to do as a government when we heard those stories around not only the status of the existing schools and how well they can cater for the students and children who are currently in them but also the capacity of the public education system in Mount Barker to cater for what is a fast-growing population.

I took the time to make a number of visits with the member for Kavel to visit the existing schools that we have there and talk to staff and families and get an idea for things that we can do better but also meet with the council around their shared desire around building new infrastructure there. We referred the matter to Infrastructure SA as well as doing a business case of our own, just to make sure that we had at our fingertips all the data we needed around that projected growth and what the capacity of the existing schools, both primary and secondary, would be to cater for that growing population.

Of course, we were very pleased in the 2024-25 state budget to be able to announce \$61.1 million towards the establishment and construction of a new preschool and co-located primary school for the Mount Barker area, which I know was welcome news, of course, to the member for Kavel and really well received news for the whole broader Mount Barker community. It will create 100 preschool places, which is a pretty significant increase to the available preschool places in the Mount Barker area, and 350 primary places as well.

This is not just making sure that we can cater for existing enrolments in the area but making sure that what we build gives us the capacity to cater for the growth that we know is coming in Mount Barker. This is not out on the never-never. This \$61.1 million that we announced for the new preschool and primary school will see the establishment of those services by 2028, which is now less than three school years away. I know this will come as an excitement to the member for Kavel and all those families in the Mount Barker area, and possibly even those who are considering a move to that beautiful part of our state, to know there will be really high-quality public education options available to them into the future as well.

It wasn't the only commitment that we made in terms of schools and public education infrastructure in the Mount Barker area. Of course, we also announced \$9 million—\$4 million last year and \$5 million this year—towards an upgrade at Mount Barker High School. I think it is a great school—I have made a number of visits—but it is dealing with infrastructure in some cases that is a bit past its use-by date and needs some extra investment. We also announced \$15.9 million for Oakbank School to make sure that it can grow its enrolments and do its share of the heavy lifting in the area.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (14:22): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the house on action the government has taken to keep our community safe?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:23): I thank the member for Newland for her question. The member for Newland knows as well as anybody that community safety is an important subject. Those of us who feel safe in our own homes can't take that for granted, nor should we not acknowledge the fact that for those people who do suffer a crime it does have a significant impact on them.

What we have been determined to do as a government over a sustained period now is to make the investments that are necessary to ensure that police can do their work, but on top of that we continue to invest effort and energy in law reform to ensure that the courts do theirs. I am very pleased that what we have seen over a sustained period now is a suite of activities that demonstrate this government's commitment to that endeavour. We have invested in our police quite heavily, both in capital but also in people, and we have seen some of that play out throughout the course of this week.

When it comes to other forms of crime that may lead to other challenges within the community, we have of course cracked down on illicit tobacco and vape dealers in a nation-leading

way, and we have seen yet more results yielded as a result of that investment of \$16 million to weed out criminal elements of vape and tobacco delivery into the community. We have passed numerous laws designed to increase community safety, particularly when we think of child sex predators and other forms of antisocial behaviour occurring in big, busy, public precincts. We have passed laws to protect retail workers, with more to come.

One of the most insidious forms of violence or crime that we see in our community that continues to present a challenge, of course, is in the area of domestic violence, and that is why this government has commissioned a royal commission, a royal commission that we anticipate will hand down its report in the second half of this year. So we have a comprehensive strategy and response to the scourge of domestic violence that we see within the community.

This week, the work has continued with the introduction and the development of the toughest knife laws in the commonwealth—the toughest knife laws in the country—that are comprehensive in nature, not singularly focused but having a more broad approach to reassume the state's position of leadership when it comes to knife laws in the country.

Only on Tuesday the parliament passed laws making it easier to prosecute stalking and other harassing behaviours within the community. I couldn't think of anything worse than an innocent person, an innocent woman, particularly a young woman, having to endure a stalker, and now we have made it easier to go after those criminals and have them successfully prosecuted.

The police minister has just announced a piece of work that the government has been working on for a while, and that is to tackle the challenge of criminals operating within the scrap metal sector. This can't go on anymore. It is causing grave disruption for a lot of people within our building industries. We are doing something about that. Yesterday, the police commissioner, in conjunction with the Minister for Police, announced the consequence of their effort to get more police on the frontline, with now 70 additional police returning to frontline services, which in turn is allowing for the establishment of a new Youth and Street Gangs Task Force.

The work is relentless on this side of the house. It is not just talking about and admiring a problem but rather doing something about it. Is it yielding results? Is it making a difference? Well, we look at the November crime stats. What do we see? Recorded robbery-related offences are down by 26 per cent. Theft from motor vehicles is down by 17 per cent. Fraud and deception-related offences are down by 16 per cent. Theft and illegal use of motor vehicles: 7 per cent. This is year on year. Sexual assault is down. This government is making the law changes that are required, delivering the investments, and now South Australians are safer as a result, and we are going to keep on with it because we know the work never stops.

HYDROGEN INDUSTRY

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): My question is to the Premier. How many new jobs in the hydrogen industry have been created at Whyalla since the election of the Malinauskas Labor government?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:27): The Leader of the Opposition is attempting to phrase a question in order to try to demonise—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: No, he's not trying to get an answer. What he is trying to do is attack an industry that he used to support when they were in office. What he is attempting to do, without having the intellectual honesty to actually say that he is opposed to hydrogen—because he can't say that, because when he was in government, they were supportive of it. This is the difference between being in government and being in opposition. Being in government means that you have to lead. Opposing is easy.

Mr BATTY: Point of order, 98: this is debate. It was a very simple question. The minister should answer.

The SPEAKER: I'm actually having a real problem hearing the answer because of your leader constantly yelling out, so if everyone can be quiet and we can actually listen to the answer, that would be handy.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Hydrogen is a new industry. These were the types of questions we were getting when we were building the big battery at Hornsdale. It's exactly the same. We were getting questions like: how long will it last? How many jobs has it created?

Mrs Hurn: How dare we ask questions.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: You weren't asking questions to find information. You were asking questions at the time and denigrating the project because you are not being honest about what your intentions are.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yelling out abuse across the chamber won't change a thing. A very important thing to notice about members opposite is they say that they are in favour of renewables, so don't look at what they say, look at what they do. When they were in office, they did everything they could to stop renewables being built.

Mr TEAGUE: Point of order. It's 98(a): the minister is talking about members opposite. It is a very straightforward question. How many hydrogen jobs have been created at Whyalla since the election? Let's have the answer.

The SPEAKER: Well, like all ministers, there are four minutes in which to give the answer, and I have to say it is actually hard to hear the minister with all the yelling out that's going on. The member for Florey on my right, you may be leading some of that noise, so just a warning to you as well. Can we just have some quiet, thank you.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Every time there is an emerging industry in the green space, it has its critics, and the reason it has its critics is there is a cohort of people in this country who want to cling on to fossil fuels for dear life, and whenever we attempt to break that stranglehold on energy in this state or in this country, it comes up against entrenched interests, and those entrenched interests are powerful.

Mr TEAGUE: Point of order: standing order 98(a). The minister is dedicated to avoiding the answer. He has just proceeded to debate the matter. It's a simple question. If he wants us onboard believing, tell us how many jobs have been created. A simple question requires an answer.

The SPEAKER: I find it really frustrating that every time the minister gets 20 seconds in, someone stands up and says, 'Give the answer.' He still has minutes on the clock to provide the answer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: What I am attempting to do with the opposition is explain to them that when you are building a new industry—we are at the forefront here, the same way we were with grid-scale storage. Grid-scale storage was begun in South Australia and is now the template for every jurisdiction in the western world. It started here. Members opposite were devastated that it worked because they lost their ability to make an attack on the government.

You heard from the quotes I read out from the shadow minister and the leader, who, when they were in office, believed in the promise of hydrogen and advocated for its expansion and its growth and spent government money to try to encourage its investment here in South Australia because they saw the value in decarbonising: trucking, energy, being a reductant for coal and iron ore, to try to remove coal from the iron ore process. They supported it then. But when we do it, they ask these trick questions to try to get a self-serving answer and it is beneath them. We are getting close to an election campaign and they have no energy policy. They have no policy on hydrogen. All we have are the ambitious younger ones trying to get his job.

Mr BATTY: The point of order is again 98. There is less than a minute to go now. The minister should answer the question that he still hasn't answered.

The SPEAKER: I think he is providing some context in the answer and giving some examples of things as he is getting towards the end of his answer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The other point about the way the question was asked is what they want me to say is the answer that they have already written down in their minds. They drafted this question this morning, hoping to get a certain answer. It was all part of a tactic. It's not part of any exercise to actually gain any information. It is simply pure theatre. So how about you come up with your own policies, talk about your policies and we will talk about ours. Until then, just hang on to the 13 you have.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:33): My question is to the Premier. Will the government spend \$600 million on a hydrogen power plant in Whyalla or will it spend it on other projects in Whyalla and, if so, what projects? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr PATTERSON: On ABC radio yesterday, when asked what the \$600 million would be used for, the Premier said:

I'll tell you what it will be used for—it'll be used for the expenditure [of] the economic opportunity in Whyalla.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:33): That's right. The idea is to ask questions to which you don't know the answer. You asked a question and then actually answered it in my opening remarks. I think it's pretty clear what we are committed to. I understand the opposition sees an opportunity in whatever form to pursue a political course of action. That is your prerogative and you will be judged on it accordingly.

I guess, from my perspective—and I don't say this flippantly and I hope this doesn't appear to be trite, but last week when I was up there with Eddie we were meeting people. These are really good people. They work exceptionally hard, whether they are in the steelworks or a contractor. I think all of us are concerned—and I know you are too—about these people and the circumstances they find themselves in.

I met with one gentleman, who obviously I can't name, who does contracting work for the steelworks and he is owed in excess of \$700,000. He employs people and he has had to recently lay them off. When you spend time with people like that—and I have never run a family business; I have been witness to one but I have never run one myself—these people who work for him are obviously part of his family and he has had to let them go.

He was explaining to me the pain that that has imposed upon those families and even on himself as a result of having to make those decisions as a result of not being paid for work that he has done. He is someone who is paying his bills and paying his taxes and doing everything right, and now he is having to make these types of decisions.

Every deliberation that we make as a government, as we bear witness to what is unfolding in Whyalla, I think we have to be thinking about those people first more than anything else. The money that we have got in the budget—the \$600-odd million we've got in the budget—we want to make sure that it's expended in a way that puts those people first, that realises the challenge that they are in but, more importantly, that the way that those people are going to be able to sustain their businesses in the future is that there is a serious plan in place in the context that matters most to realise the opportunity in Whyalla.

We know that hasn't changed; that is, the decarbonisation of ironmaking and steelmaking is the path forward for Whyalla's future, and we want to invest in that. Now, that plan is to invest into the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, one component of which is already essentially in train with the generators, but there is a live question about making sure that that money is expended in concert and in sequence to realising the opportunity.

If we are producing hydrogen and there isn't a customer at the steelworks for that hydrogen it begs the question, 'Is there a better way to sequence the program?' We want to make sure we get this right. You guys are going to do what you have to do, wailing about things and promises and so forth.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: And that's fine, you've got to do that. What I've got to do is make sure that the \$600 million that the Treasurer has allocated in the budget to the good people of Whyalla, and the economic opportunities there, is spent in a way that gets the outcome that we all desire, which is the long-term sustainable future of Whyalla and the economy in the Upper Spencer Gulf, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:37): Supplementary to that: will the Premier guarantee—

The SPEAKER: Hang on, the member for Morphett, I will give you the call, but I will check whether it is a supplementary.

Mr PATTERSON: Will the Premier guarantee that there will be a hydrogen power plant built at Whyalla running on hydrogen and, if so, when?

The SPEAKER: That is a separate question.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:38): You are asking the same thing over and over again. What I have made clear is we are working in concert with the operators of the steelworks to confront those challenges, and what we are making absolutely crystal clear—and I want the people of Whyalla to know that it is true above all else—is that this government is spending \$600 million, and potentially more, on the ground in Whyalla investing in their economic future. We are going to do it in such a way that sustains the steelworks and people's jobs on the ground, because that is the number one priority.

EBERHARDT, MS A.

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (14:38): My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister explain whether there has been any action taken on the complaint which was escalated to the health complaints commissioner by Leah Boyce and her family after the death of their daughter Alexandra Eberhardt. With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr ELLIS: Ally Eberhardt tragically passed away in April 2024 after being treated for a critical illness at the RAH and experiencing complications. The complaint, originally lodged to the RAH direct in February 2024 before her death, was paused for some time while a coronial inquiry was considered, but in July it was confirmed that the complaint would go ahead. Unfortunately, I spoke to Ally's mum on 30 January this year, six months later, and she had not yet received a response and was told that the complaint still had not been assigned a case manager.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Karna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:39): I thank the member for Narungga for his question and for his advocacy on behalf of his local constituents, including Ms Boyce, and also pass on my condolences to Ms Boyce for the loss of her daughter.

As members will be aware, the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner is a statutory position established by this parliament to be independent from the government of the day and provide a vehicle by which patients or their families can have matters investigated, not only public health matters but private health matters or community services matters. They are independent in their operations and they provide a very valuable service for many people across South Australia.

Upon receiving the letter from the member for Narungga this morning, my office has made contact with the Office of the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner and I understand that they will be contacting the member for Narungga's constituents very shortly to make sure this matter is properly progressed.

STATE ECONOMY

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (14:40): My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the house on the South Australian economy?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Police) (14:40): I thank the member for Light for his question because

since we last met at the end of last year there has been further good news for the South Australian economy and this good news continues a now prolonged run of great economic news and reports into the South Australian economy that have been released on a national scale.

Over the break, CommSec released their regular State of the States report, this time for the December quarter in 2024, and according to CommSec South Australia retains its position as the second-best performing economy in the nation, only behind Western Australia and sharing equal second spot with Queensland. This is the second time in a row that South Australia has been ranked as the second-best performing economy in the nation.

Of course, those two consecutive ranks follow three preceding quarterly reports from CommSec that ranked our economy as the best performing economy in the nation, so for five consecutive quarters South Australia has been ranked by an independent economic commentator as being either the first or the second-best performing economy in the nation. That is a remarkable result for our economy because, prior to those five quarterly reports, South Australia had never placed first in the report's 14-year history and that just underlines the economic momentum and progress that has been occurring, particularly over the last three years.

But in the most recent report, the December quarter 2024 report, South Australia has ranked first amongst states and territories on economic growth, with our current growth being 8.4 per cent above the long run average. Our economy has ranked second on construction work done, with current levels of construction activity being more than 15 per cent above the decade average.

We have also ranked second on dwelling starts, thanks in no small amount to the work that the Minister for Housing and Urban Development and Minister for Planning has been undertaking. Those levels of dwelling starts are only slightly below the decade average, which shows that, even in the face of a national housing slowdown due to the extraordinary increase in the Reserve Bank increasing the cash rate 13 times in a small period of time, South Australia's economy is continuing to hold up well with dwelling starts.

We have also ranked second for our unemployment rate, with our unemployment rate currently 30 per cent below the decade average. We have continued to enjoy historic lows in our unemployment rate, particularly over the last three years. Of course, that is a reflection of the strength of the state's job market. Fifty-two thousand jobs have been created since the 2022 state election. To put that in context, that is slightly above the number of people who witnessed Port Adelaide win the first Showdown played at Adelaide Oval in 2014—an extraordinary number of people. Of those 52,000 jobs, 34,000 are full-time jobs.

So our economy is performing well, we are ranked highly in the nation—a position we are not used to—driven by a strong jobs market. It is good news for our state's economy.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:45): My question is to the Premier. Will the government still build its flagship hydrogen power plant if it does not have an offtake partner?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:45): Hypothetical questions are out of order, but I think the Premier has answered this question numerous times. This is the same question asked over and over again.

The truth is I would much rather have a debate about whether hydrogen plays a role in the future economy or not, because we have these contradictory remarks from members opposite. While they are in government they are supportive of hydrogen, they think it has promise, they want to invest in it. The moment they lose office—and we in a bipartisan way continue that, and continue more investment in hydrogen—they simply turn on it because we are doing it. It's just opposition for opposition's sake.

So these hypothetical questions that the members opposite are asking serve no purpose for the political debate whatsoever. They are not about trying to find information, they are not about trying to improve the debate—it is simply about trying to score cheap political points, and I really wish the opposition would follow my lead and rise above it. Just rise above it; rise above the political fray.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I can't hear you from Texas, mate, it's just too far—sorry. As I said, rise above the political debate; no more of these personal insults and all the rest. I would just say let's have a debate about renewable energy, let's have a debate about green hydrogen, let's have a debate about grid-scale battery storage, let's have a debate about wind farms and solar panels, let's have a debate about new industries, let's have a debate about climate change. Let's just have that debate rather than pretend that this is bipartisan, because it's not—clearly not.

Members opposite did not support the transition to a low-carbon economy. They did not support what we are attempting to do. And what they are now attempting is to walk on both sides of the street, one minute saying, 'How dare you not build it. Are you building it? How much will it cost? Will it create jobs?' All these things—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I have to say the excitement from the debutant deputy leader is really inspiring. It really is inspiring—it's just great. It's great to see out of a pool of 13, he is the best you've got.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:47): My question is again to the Premier. Will the Premier pause all government advertising in connection with the Hydrogen Jobs Plan and the State Prosperity Project?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:47): No. No, we won't—and I will tell you why we won't: because of the promise that you talked about from 2018 to 2022. Do I have to read out these comments again about the promise of hydrogen? These are your own words. Why wouldn't we promote it? Why wouldn't we be out there talking to Nippon, to POSCO, to Stegra, to thyssenkrupp about the promise of green hydrogen and what it can do in the Middleback ranges with our magnetite reserves? Why wouldn't we? Of course we are. So, no, we won't stop.

We are going to continue talking about green hydrogen, we will continue to talk about the promise of renewable energy. I have to say, what the opposition—again, rather than an alternative policy, rather than an alternative plan that we can compare and contrast, that we can have an actual debate about, that South Australians can look at and choose between the two differences. All we get is sniping from the sidelines with no alternative plan. It's cheap and it's easy. Do your homework. Ask some real questions.

BOC LINDE

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:48): My question is again to the Premier. What work has BOC Linde undertaken on the government's flagship hydrogen power plant, and how much have they been paid to date?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:49): I don't know the answer to that question.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I don't know the answer to that question. What I will do is I will go away, I will prepare for estimates early, and I am sure I will have an answer for the member as soon as possible.

DUKES HIGHWAY

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:49): My question is for the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, and sorry not to give him a break. Can the minister advise when the Dukes Highway, between Bordertown and the Victorian border, will be returned to 110 km/h? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: The Dukes Highway at that section has been reduced to 100 km/h despite the completion of all significant upgrades and roadworks.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:49): The Dukes Highway is part of our primary freight route between Adelaide and Melbourne. It is a very important piece of infrastructure, carrying just under 4,000 vehicles a day. I understand that of the 4,000 about 40 per cent are heavy vehicles, most of which are B-doubles and road trains. So it's a very well-utilised piece of infrastructure. The advice I have from the agency is that proportion is an extremely high percentage of heavy vehicles for a roadway. I have to say, that reflects the importance of the connection with our largest trading partner, which is Victoria. It is very, very important.

The department advised me that the speed limit on this stretch was reduced to 100 km/h in 2002, two decades ago. The good news is that it reflects an operating environment. We are cognisant of what's going on on the road. We want everyone to be safe. In particular, it's the presence of so many B-doubles. The reason B-doubles and road trains are good for our economy is that it means fewer vehicles but longer vehicles.

Both governments—the Australian government and the South Australian government, for the benefit of the member—have committed half a billion dollars over 10 years from the 2022-23 financial year to improve the safety and reliability of the national freight routes, which includes the Dukes Highway. The future program of works on the Dukes Highway will be heavily influenced by the department's strategic business case for the high productivity network.

Just to bore that down, the commonwealth government and the state government have committed to a very large infrastructure package for the high productivity network. It's reliant on business cases to make sure that we have the right arguments for the right roads. We are doing that work. The Treasurer has given us money in the budget to make sure we can go away and do that work to identify the stretches of road that need that work done. These business cases that we are conducting, for the benefit of this house and other members who are listening online, are also for the Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass as well. Of course, that is something that members opposite cannot. Remember GlobeLink? Jobs and growth.

What are we considering as part of all this? We are considering pavement rehabilitation and resealing, which reduces the risk of crashes and provides better ride quality for all road users, including heavy vehicles. We are considering road widening, which is very, very important, and shoulder widening, shoulder sealing and audio tactile marking, which is very, very important to reduce the risk of run-off-the-road type crashes. The other part is, of course, overtaking lanes, which are very, very critical to the Dukes Highway to make sure we can have the appropriate overtaking so we don't get frustrated motorists who could cause accidents; also curve widening and wide centre treatments.

Once we have done all that, and all the interventions are made, and the assessments are done, we will consider lifting the speed limit again. I have to say, given the high percentage of heavy freight in combination with motor vehicles, the differential speed is the issue on stretches of road like this. I would caution the member, but I will undertake to do as much as I possibly can, once it is safe to do so, to make an application to see that speed limit increase.

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

Mrs PEARCE (King) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. Can the minister update the house on the progress of negotiations with the Albanese Labor government to fully fund public schools?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (14:54): I thank the member for King for her question. It was a proud moment for me and the Premier and this government when we joined the members for King and Newland at The Heights technical school almost two weeks ago today to announce that we have struck an agreement, finally, with the federal Albanese Labor government to fully fund for the very first time in South Australia our public schools. Of course, it was pleasing, as the local member for Modbury Heights, to make that announcement

at The Heights Technical College, where I was also joined by a number of federal members of parliament from the Labor team, who have been integral in getting this agreement over the line.

It has, I have to say, been a hard-fought battle to get here. We stood, and I stood personally, with education ministers from both New South Wales and Victoria outside the federal parliament to call on the Prime Minister and Jason Clare, the federal education minister, to increase their offer, which was originally 2.5 per cent, up to the full 5 per cent, which is how we get our schools to the 100 per cent figure that David Gonski set out as the minimum amount that was needed for a good education all those years ago.

I say it was hard because I have an enormous amount of respect for the federal education minister, Jason Clare, who has had a schooling experience very similar to my own. He went through public schools all the way through. I might somewhat tongue-in-cheek say we both went to the kind of public schools that people aren't moving locations or suburbs to get access to, but nonetheless we are both very, very proud products of public education. It was not an easy thing to stand up and call on him to do more, but we got there.

What it means for our schools here in South Australia, what that 5 per cent means in terms of extra funding across the 10 years of this agreement that the Premier has signed with the Prime Minister, is an extra \$1 billion of commonwealth funding to those schools, an enormous amount of money that we know we need and we know will be put to good use by our educators.

Let me just be clear about the significance of that announcement and the significance of that amount of money. This is the biggest investment in South Australian public schools by a federal government ever. It is something that we should not forget. I am pleased also to advise the chamber that the Malinauskas Labor government has agreed with the federal Albanese government to remove the ability of state governments to count capital depreciation towards annual funding contributions, which comes on top of the 5 per cent agreement from the federal government.

Where will this money go? We are talking about more individualised support for children and students in public schools who really need it, but we need to keep in mind that it's not just about those students who might be behind. Public education should not just be seen in the context of supporting students from only disadvantaged backgrounds because public education is there for those students who are high achievers as well. I think it is very important that in this place we all do what we can to remember that this extra \$1 billion over 10 years of the agreement will also go towards making sure that our educators can really stretch and challenge those kids in our public schools who are already excelling in their learning, and that is what this will enable us to do.

We have agreed with the federal government, as you would expect with such a large amount of money, that it will be tied to some things: improvement in attendance levels, more students completing year 12, giving students the quality learning and teaching they need and supporting our teachers wherever we can to make sure that they can focus on the teaching and learning that we want them to do and not be focused on administrative tasks. I am very proud the Malinauskas Labor government and the Albanese Labor government have finished the job. While we did that, we also delivered on another election commitment here from this government.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:58): My question is to the Premier. How much taxpayer money will be spent on the government's expensive hydrogen power plant this week?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:58): You want a weekly breakdown. How about by the hour? Would you prefer that, or by the minute? This is just a silly, silly question. This is a serious chamber, where the people of South Australia expect us to debate policy ideas. Silly questions like that that are designed to entrap are just silly.

It is time the opposition grew up and came up with its own policy. I am doing my very best here not to launch into them, but I've got to say this is now becoming a little bit pathetic. Let's have a contest of ideas. I am happy to debate the shadow energy minister anytime, any place, anywhere on any topic relating to our portfolio areas, as we should. That's what the public demand of us. But the idea of what is this costing per week, per hour, per day is just silly. You know what the budget is.

OFFICE OF HYDROGEN POWER

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:59): My question is again to the Premier. Does the Premier have confidence in the CEO of the Office of Hydrogen Power and, if so, why?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:59): I do.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:59): My question is again to the Premier. What South Australian companies have been awarded tenders or contracts to deliver the government's hydrogen power plant and what is the value of these contracts?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:00): That is a good question. There are a number of South Australian companies that have been involved in the tender process—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: You're relieved, are you? One of your questions you don't think is completely stupid and you're relieved? You should be very proud of that—hashtag winning.

There are a number of South Australian companies that have tendered for this very important project. There are projects like civil works, there are projects like security. There are obviously dramatic upgrades to electricity infrastructure that are required, but one of the most important things that the team has done with the electricity upgrades is, of course, there is limited capacity in Whyalla and the South Australian government was faced with a very difficult choice here. Given that there was only limited capacity, we could take up that capacity which would sterilise any future investments at Port Bonython.

You might remember there was a process begun by the previous government to incentivise hydrogen—God forbid—production at Port Bonython, where they put out to tender the Port Bonython project, where they had allocated considerable tens of millions of dollars of state government money towards developing that, which, of course, requires energy infrastructure. The questions that we needed to understand were: one, do we sterilise the site and put all of those costs on new contractors who want to build other hydrogen facilities in the Upper Spencer Gulf or does the government do the right thing and bear some of that cost and actually expand capacity to allow greater levels of draw from the grid in that area?

The contractors involved in that are obviously SA Power Networks, ElectraNet, Enerven and a whole series of other small providers. There is a detailed list of providers who have tendered. The Office of Hydrogen Power SA actually has a presence in Whyalla, where we are taking expressions of interest from people who want to work, obviously contractors who want to get work from it. There would be a number of opportunities for people to work.

There are logistics: obviously importing equipment through the port at the GFG site and there are contractors involved making sure that that port is able to bring in equipment as we need, whether it is the generators or any other equipment that might be needed to be brought in through that port. So there is a holistic level of involvement.

Ultimately, I think the point that the member is trying to get to through his questions is that there are foreign entities who have won tenders for this, because hydrogen production ultimately is built by a number of companies offshore. We have already announced BOC Linde—these are German companies—and, of course, there is ATCO which is a Canadian company. ATCO have had a long presence here in South Australia, with their chief executive living in the northern suburbs of Adelaide as a young child growing up while her father worked here. There is a lot of involvement from local contractors and, of course, international contractors, and I would be happy to compile a list eventually for the member.

*Members***SENATOR, ELECTION**

The SPEAKER (15:03): I lay on the table the minutes of the joint sitting of the two houses of the Parliament of South Australia for the choosing of a senator to hold the place rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator Simon Birmingham.

*Grievance Debate***HYDROGEN POWER PLANT**

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (15:03): It is the beginning of the sitting year but for South Australians it is the beginning of the end of Labor's hydrogen taxpayer rip-off. The Labor government seems to live in a fantasy world where the economics of the real world simply does not apply. The Premier sold South Australia a lemon and now his merry men, the Minister for Energy and Mining and the Treasurer, are running interference, desperately trying to manage this crisis that they have created. Do not be fooled by their attempts to blame shift. They are excellent at the PR, but they are meant to be governing this state.

This week in parliament, under opposition questioning, yet another Labor project lies in ruins—another key election promise absolutely shattered. Let's remind the Premier and his team of what they actually promised in their Hydrogen Jobs Plan. They said a Malinauskas Labor government will build 250 megawatts of hydrogen electrolyzers, one of the world's largest hydrogen electrolyser facilities. They said that they would build one of the world's largest hydrogen power stations and they said South Australia's hydrogen plant will reduce the wholesale cost of electricity to industry by 8 per cent.

We know that Labor is great at announcements, but in government even better at spending taxpayers' money—\$100 million and more in government advertising—but the problem is that they just cannot deliver on their promises. They love the headlines, they love the lights, they love the celebrity appearances and the international trips, but when things get tough they fall a bit short.

What I can say to you is when the Premier next week is at LIV Golf, I will be in the Spencer Gulf. When the Premier is at the party hole, I will be at the front bar in Whyalla, talking to workers. Next week, when the Premier is rubbing elbows at LIV Golf I will be visiting the hardworking men and women at the Spencer Gulf where the hydrogen plant, unfortunately, remains a distant dream—a distant dream—because we know that it will not be operational as was promised by 2025, and we know electricity costs have not dropped as promised. It is a complete panacea, a complete mirage; exactly right.

Once again, it is the people of South Australia who will bear the cost of Labor's incompetence. The Premier and his ministers are now in crisis mode because they failed to deliver, and the truth is they are hiding from accountability. Today was one of the most pathetic sets of question time answers that I have heard, and they are better than that.

Under questioning this week, the Premier admitted that the owner of the steelworks is now tens of millions of dollars in arrears to the state. How many times have we asked that question? Multiple times, in this place and outside of this place, and it has taken this amount of questioning to finally get that answer. The opposition's relentless questioning is the only reason that these revelations are now coming to light.

The cracks in Labor's hydrogen scheme are there for all to see. The Queensland government has walked away from it. Fortescue has walked away from it. Origin Energy has walked away from it. What does this Premier know about hydrogen that these other organisations and people do not? We know South Australians are paying some of the highest electricity prices globally, while families and small businesses bear the brunt of Labor's incompetence.

Rather than finding a solution, the Premier is now simply, as he always does, shifting the goalposts. They have shifted the goalposts when it comes to ramping, because they could not deliver on their promise, and now they are doing it with respect to hydrogen. Do they think people are stupid? Do they really think that people are stupid? We know that they promised to fix ramping. They said, 'Vote Labor like your life depends on it.' What have we seen? Thirty-one months of the worst ramping

in state history. They set the test, and they are failing the test. Here again, they have set a test and they are failing this test.

This week, we learnt also that the new Women's and Children's Hospital has been without a project manager for several months—yet another project teetering on blowouts and failure. Where is the leadership? Where is the accountability? Now we have a Premier who has the audacity to effectively pause the hydrogen project, offering no guarantees that it will ever be delivered.

South Australians deserve more than a billion-dollar vanity project on the brink perhaps of collapse. They deserve a government that can deliver. It was the Premier, formerly the leader of the opposition, who said—his own words—'South Australians expect a leader that they can believe and trust will do everything he said they're going to do.'

What it looks like is just another line from just another politician. Meanwhile, the Treasurer, also the part-time police minister, continues to show how incapable this government is of addressing South Australia's real issues.

Mr Brown: He's still doing a better job than when you were police minister.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: I would have made you a minister, mate. Just relax. I would have made you a minister. Just relax. Make no mistake—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Florey can leave the chamber for an hour.

The honourable member for Florey having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: I would have made him a minister, sir. I do not know why he is so upset. Make no mistake, the opposition will continue to hold this government to account every day for every South Australian, until we get a government that can actually deliver.

COMMUNITY SPORTING CLUBS

Mrs PEARCE (King) (15:08): I rise today to share that it was an absolute pleasure to be able to return home to my old stomping ground last week to meet with local community clubs, families and young people who enjoy participating in sport. I certainly know growing up in Port Pirie and being able to participate in sport really helped shape me into the person that I am today, whether it was playing tennis for the Napperby Tennis Club or netball for the Solly Cats and later on St Mark's, or whether it was simply spending my Friday nights at the local basketball or in winter over at the hockey grounds.

This played such an important part in shaping who I am, helping me to develop those all-important skills: how to win, how to lose, how to communicate, how to be able to work as a team, but also that appreciation for community. When I was at things where I was not particularly participating in them, getting out and engaging with the local community—and having a sense of belonging and people to be around—was something I really, truly treasured.

It is a big part here of what the Malinauskas Labor government is wanting to encourage. We know all too well the dangers of social media. We have taken active steps, in terms of the mobile phone ban, to really protect the health and wellbeing of our young people. We know that we need to also equally make sure that we are encouraging young people to live healthy and active lives, and that is exactly why I went back to Port Pirie to engage with the local community, to hear from a regional community just how important a role sport has to play, what is working, and what we should be looking at further.

Sports vouchers certainly were raised. There has been a lot of welcome commentary in terms of the now recent expansion to Sports Vouchers Plus, which started off at the start of this year. It has, of course, now been expanded to \$200, but we are also providing families with greater flexibility. You can spend it all in one go or you can choose to use two \$100 vouchers across activities, seasons, or even if your child is more inclined to take up music. We do not mind what you are doing, as long as it is healthy, active and helping you get engaged in your local community, and we are playing a strong role in helping to support that.

It is really pleasing to see growing numbers in that space as well. In 2023 we saw the highest number of vouchers redeemed in a calendar year since the program's inception in 2015; that being a total of 88,840 vouchers. That was compared to 2022 when we saw 85,444 vouchers, and it is pleasing to see in 2024 we have seen over 92,000 taken up. This just shows that this program is having a continued relevance and appeal to parents, families and clubs alike, and I am very confident now with the new expansion that number is only going to increase further.

Of course cost is not the only barrier that is faced when we are looking at trying to get participation up. We know only about half of our kids are participating in sport once a week, and we want to see that go further. We also know that there are times in a young person's life where we see more significant drops, and certainly with cohorts as well, so it was a really great opportunity to engage with the local clubs to hear what they think and what programs work.

With that, I would like to very much thank Councillor Alan Zubrinich, Deputy Mayor of Port Pirie, for coming and pulling together clubs and organisations from all walks of life to have this conversation, including the Port Pirie Sporting Association, Port Pirie & District Hockey Association, Port Pirie Cricket Association, Port Pirie Junior Football Association, Port Pirie Junior Soccer Association, Full Impact ITF Taekwon-Do, Sun Taekwondo, Port Pirie Netball Association, Port Pirie Regional Gymnastics Academy, Port Pirie Hip Hop Bounce Dance Academy, Port Pirie Rowing Club, Port Pirie Softball Association, Savoy Soccer Club and, of course, the Virtus Soccer Club, and the Crystal Brook Tennis Club as well.

It is a really good collective of different sporting bodies that we have within the region, and it was really great to see what perspectives each of them had to bring to the table. I really enjoyed the visits that I had the following day with some of these clubs. It was great to get out to the netball courts and catch up with Sally and Bec to see the recently resurfaced courts, which were of course a result of the Power of Her grants that have recently gone through. They are absolutely looking spectacular, and the club is certainly in good hands with Sally and Bec.

We then went over to the hockey club where I was able to catch up with Divett, who does such an incredible job as a volunteer helping to maintain the grounds, and I know that their grant for additional lighting is going to make an excellent improvement for the season ahead.

ADELAIDE BEACH MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (15:13): I rise today to speak again on an issue that is incredibly important in my local area: the Beach Management Review that is being conducted by this government. Really, I am here today to make a call to action to the government to get on with it. This government has been very good at reviews and taking its time to consider things, but the time for action is clearly now.

I want to again make it abundantly clear that I have no preference or view as to what technology or method is used but just simply that sand needs to be recycled from north to south in our section of beaches, as is the case on the southern section of beaches on the Adelaide metropolitan coastline and has been the case for more than a decade. To have a different standard depending on which side of the Glenelg Marina you live on is something that should not be acceptable to anybody.

In response, over the last couple of months towards the end of last year, the government conducted a dredging trial, a trial that I think was received with mixed reviews from parts of the community—certainly when it came to the aspect of proposing to dredge West Beach to refill West Beach, the sandbar there that was a proposed sand source having never been mentioned or consulted on prior to the start of the dredging trial.

The key part of this Beach Management Review and what we are seeking the government to do, which is to release the results of the trial publicly and make it abundantly clear what the government is actually going to do in this regard, comes down to page 12 of the government's own document where the review committee made it very clear that there was insufficient information to determine the viability of proposed dredging methodologies. In particular, the three outstanding questions that still need to be answered surround these key things.

The first key issue is the availability of sand in sufficient volumes and appropriate grain size and composition. That is something that needs to be made clear to the community when the results of the dredging trial are released because, as I have said many times in this place, we are happy to consider whatever methods as long as they are real and as long as they are viable, just as the government's own document calls out.

The second point is around the operational feasibility and availability of plant and equipment with adequate timeframes and the ability of dredging infrastructure to recycle volumes that are required, particularly understanding the impacts of weather on operations and operational limitations. Again, this is important. If we are going to go down this track, we need to understand that those target volumes and total volumes can actually be achieved given the weather. We saw on multiple occasions during the trial where the dredging equipment was not able to do its job because of the weather impacts.

The third point concerns broader environmental impacts; for example the proximity of sand source to seagrass meadows and potential impact on seagrass recovery due to disruption of seed banks within sediment and noise levels, and visual amenity impacts.

I just want to go back to the very start of this where we were looking to find a long-term solution to an issue that has plagued the northern section of beaches along our central coast here in metropolitan Adelaide for a long time. For a period of time under the former Labor government, we had thousands upon thousands of truck movements each and every day impacting multiple communities along our coastline. The Adelaide Sailing Club for the last nearly 10 years now has had semitrailers going in and out right next door to their club while they are trying to undertake activities over and over again.

It is my firm belief that everybody in this place, no matter which side of the aisle, actually wants to see a sensible solution implemented here where we can reduce the impact on our community groups and clubs, where we can get to a point where we have a suitable impact, but we cannot keep doing what is currently happening forever. We cannot keep trucking sand from a quarry out in Mount Compass down onto a beach.

For a start, the beach condition is at some of its worst impacts for years. Henley Beach South now is a effectively a low-tide beach only. It is one of the most frequently visited beaches in the entirety of metropolitan South Australia. The government needs to release the review of the dredging trial. They need to nail their colours to the mast about what they are actually going to do for the communities that I represent because far too little has happened in the three-plus years that this government has been in charge of this matter.

WAITE ELECTORATE

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (15:19): Trevor Conlon was a Coromandel Valley man through and through, having grown up with his brother David in what is now an historic but privately owned home located opposite Winns Bakehouse Museum in Coromandel Valley. Their grandfather was the last working baker there, and their parents were instrumental in their conversion of the bakery into the museum it is today.

The community spirit of his parents became deeply ingrained in Trevor as he went from boy to adult, evidenced by his many years of service in the Coromandel Valley CFS brigade, beginning at age 14 then becoming a volunteer firefighter and later a radio officer serving on committees as a chairperson. In more recent years, he still put his knowledge and skills to use as a Community Fire Safe leader and contributed to the local resilience projects.

Trevor was made a life member of the Coromandel Valley CFS, receiving the national medal for service to the community fire service in 2005 and a CFS medal in 2009. Later, Trevor was determined to bring Coromandel Valley's unique history to the eyes and ears of our local community and beyond, working tirelessly to organise and galvanise others to participate in a year-long celebration of the 175th anniversary of the founding of Coromandel Valley, a vision that culminated in being awarded the City of Onkaparinga's 2012 event of the year.

Trevor became chairperson of the Coromandel Valley and Districts Branch of the National Trust in 2013 and, after that, he spent many years managing, advocating, encouraging and putting

in countless hours working to manage and improve the condition of the three National Trust properties: Winns Bakehouse Museum, the Watchman House and Gamble Cottage. He was always looking for ways to engage our community in its own history: local churches, schools, organising bus tours, guided walks, volunteers, regular and special morning and afternoon teas, spotlight nights and many printed brochures, together with encouragement and assistance to other local organisations and individuals to write their own stories as well.

In 2017, Trevor was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his significant contribution to the promotion and preservation of local history and his long history of serving the community. Trevor had an engaging way of telling the stories from our bygone times to the many groups and individuals who visited the venues, and this will be the way that Trevor is remembered most fondly. I thank Glynis Conlon and the National Trust of Coromandel Valley, as well as Maxine Conlon, for putting together these words to help me explain Trevor's commitment to our community.

Trevor was always warm in his welcome to me as well. He was full of interesting facts and stories and, when I was organising an event at Belair Railway Station, he and his beautiful wife, Maxine, were there to help when I wanted to borrow the statue of Patch the dog. Patch was the station dog who would bark when trains were approaching the station. When the signal cabin at the Belair Railway Station burned down, the statue of Patch was one of the only things left standing, and he was saved and lovingly restored to Gamble Cottage.

We wanted to have Patch at the celebration, and Trevor, although he was not feeling well, came with his wife and helped load Patch into the car, and when I needed to return him, he was there again. People come and go in life, but some just feel special, and Trevor was most definitely special. It was an honour to know him. Trevor passed away on 7 January 2025 and left an amazing legacy.

Also over the holiday period my own neighbourhood of Upper Sturt lost another community treasure in Betty Slater. Betty was a most treasured member of the Upper Sturt community. She gave so much of herself from a young age and continued right up until she was 95 years old. Betty was a life member of the Upper Sturt hall committee, which is where I first met her. She was straight to the point, always wanted to call it as she saw it and never sweated the small stuff. One of her favourite sayings was, 'Just get on with it.'

It was never a surprise to find Betty at the kitchen sink at the hall during events doing the dishes right up until her last days as an active committee member, and she made the best cream puffs. Betty's life spanned almost a century. Arguably, her lifetime witnessed some of the greatest changes experienced by any generation. She was also a founding member of the Upper Sturt CFS Women's Auxiliary, a founding member of the Upper Sturt CWA and a life member of the Upper Sturt Tennis Club.

President of the Upper Sturt Soldiers Memorial Hall, John Halsey, said the following about Betty at her memorial:

- Betty's glass was always half full
- She wanted to share it with you, whoever, virtually no matter what
- She loved children, loved family and having and being with friends
- Fundamental things shaped and nurtured her soul—sport, music, community, service, hard work
- She spoke her mind and then moved on
- She was generous with her time and talents
- She knew how to make do and find joy wherever [she could]...

Betty Slater, I want to thank you. I want to thank you for being so instrumental in my commitment to community. We all will miss you incredibly, so much that it is a huge loss to our community. Condolences to Betty's family and may she rest in peace.

SCHUBERT ELECTORATE

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (15:24): The Barossa is gearing up for a few big months ahead, hosting a number of really important events in our region, most notably the AFL Gather Round, which

will be in Lyndoch in April. This is something that we are really hoping businesses in my community will be able to make the most of because we will be welcoming thousands of people from right across Australia into the Barossa Valley.

But one of the key questions that is always being asked is: how will people be getting around? This is why last year I spoke so frequently about rideshare and I am so pleased to note that the government has finally announced over the last six months that they will be lifting the metropolitan boundary and allowing rideshare services to operate in the Barossa Valley side by side with our taxis, just like they have been able to do in Mount Barker, McLaren Vale, the Adelaide Hills, Gawler and, of course, the city.

But, disappointingly, instead of doing this via the stroke of a pen through regulation, the government has made a decision to go through the parliament for these changes, which does leave a question mark hanging over whether rideshare will be fully operational in the Barossa by the AFL Gather Round.

I think it would be really embarrassing for the state and of course the region if we did not have rideshare available because, as I said, we have thousands of people coming to our region and we want them to get out and explore all that makes our region so fantastic, so I am really hopeful that the government can stop dragging the chain on this and make sure that it is rolled out before April. It would be a massive and categorical failure if we have thousands of people who are unable to get around and explore.

Another issue that I would like to draw the house's attention to is hoon driving in my electorate. This is a really big issue for people, particularly in the northern Adelaide Hills part of my electorate, most notably around the Chain of Ponds junction and Gorge Rd. I have been raising this quite frequently with the former Minister for Police, the member for Kavel, and in fact have invited him out to my electorate just so he can see firsthand some of these hoon hotspots.

Disappointingly, over the course of the last year I have noted from people in my electorate that hoon driving is not on the downward and is actually on the upward. After every weekend, my office is contacted by people saying that there is a new location where there is tyre debris or burnout marks.

My community has put forward a number of commonsense measures for the government to consider to help put a stop to this hoon driving, particularly around the Chain of Ponds junction, which is a main thoroughfare between the Adelaide Hills and the city, including things like anti-hoon bars on the road, concrete slabs and an increased police presence around this local area. I would love to see more action in this space and I am looking forward to engaging with the new Minister for Police on this issue so we can try to get some traction, pardon the pun.

Another issue that I would like to raise is perhaps a disappointing one. Max Schubert would be known to many people here within this chamber. He was a Barossa Valley icon and, in fact, he is the namesake of my electorate of Schubert. He was the creator of Penfolds Grange, which is arguably one of the most important wines that has ever been produced here in Australia.

Before Max Schubert went on to make Grange, he operated in secret for a number of years because Penfolds' management at the time had told him to stop wasting his time. I am so pleased that he defied management and kept on creating Penfolds Grange because without him I think the Australian wine industry would not be what it is and without Grange arguably Penfolds would not be what it is as one of our nation's most important brands.

So I was particularly disappointed this week to learn that Treasury Wine Estates had made the business decision to close the Nuriootpa cellar door. This was where Max Schubert first started. He did odd jobs on the floor of the cellar door of the winery in Nuriootpa. I am really disappointed with this decision. I have expressed my disappointment to Treasury and I am hoping to work with them to ensure that Max's legacy, and in fact the Barossa Valley's significant part in Penfolds' story, will continue to be told.

ADELAIDE ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (15:29): I rise to congratulate the recipients of my three local councils' Citizen of the Year Awards. I had the pleasure of attending the City of Adelaide awards, where a community campaign to save a treasured live music venue, a refugee advocate, a young engineer and a hugely successful multicultural sporting festival were recognised.

Inner-city resident, Mij Tanith, was named the City of Adelaide Citizen of the Year in recognition of her tireless work as part of the Circle of Friends volunteer organisation to support refugees when they first arrive in Australia. Mij has helped so many individuals and families obtain visas, gain permanent residency, and escape from conflict, famine and poverty. Although she has never really been formally recognised, her work is deeply appreciated by the many she has helped and supported. Congratulations Mij.

Young engineer Julian Zheng was named Young Citizen of the Year for his work mentoring other migrants by offering career advice and emotional support, while the Save the Cranker campaign took out the Active Citizenship award for their work spearheading the community campaign to save the 171-year-old Cranker hotel. It was so wonderful to see its members receive this recognition and, indeed, it is an excellent example of what can be achieved when the community, government and private sector work together for a win-win outcome.

Congratulations also to the Australian Sikh Games, which was named the City of Adelaide's Community Event of the Year. This was truly a multicultural event, bringing the broader community together, with 3,500 athletes participating and 100,000 spectators enjoying the competition.

In the City of Prospect, author and co-author David Johnston was awarded Citizen of the Year. His works include historical jottings: a collection of around 150 articles about the local Prospect area. Given David's extensive knowledge of Prospect's history, it makes him one of the key go-to people for historical inquiries in our local Prospect community.

Blackfriars' student Nathan Bishop was named Young Citizen of the Year for Prospect for the way he consistently gives back to the community. Over the last two years, Nathan has organised a team in the Walk for Love event, raising more than \$8,700 for the Mary Potter Foundation. In recognition of his efforts, the foundation has honoured him by naming him an official ambassador for the event. Congratulations Nathan.

City of Prospect's Active Citizenship Award went to former Prospect primary school teacher Jenny Rossiter, for her work establishing a Prospect University of the Third Age branch at the Prospect RSL, while the Community Event of the Year went to Churchill Greening. I work very closely with Churchill Greening as it seeks to establish a community garden in the brand-new pocket park that I am delivering for the community on Churchill Road. As part of these efforts, they run a permaculture workshop, along with various working bees, and I look forward to what they achieve in the future when I open the brand-new pocket park later this year.

On Australia Day, I had the pleasure of attending the Town of Walkerville's Backyard BBQ event, which included their Citizen of the Year awards. Congratulations to Citizen of the Year Gregory Brian Crawford AM for his service to medicine—in particular, as a professor of palliative medicine for the University of Adelaide. He has also made significant contributions to the community through musical events as an organ player, and through his involvement with the Adelaide Primary Health Network, local government and the Hospital Research Foundation. He is currently involved in the Walkerville community through the social prescribing project, focusing on connecting the community with health and care solutions. Once the project progresses beyond the pilot stage, it has the potential to be implemented nationally and internationally.

I was so incredibly proud to see a young friend of mine, Indya Dodd, be named Young Citizen of the Year for the Town of Walkerville. I first met Indya when she reached out to me to advocate for increased support for young people experiencing eating disorders, including advocating for the new \$12 million Statewide Eating Disorder Service at the Repat, which is proudly being delivered in a collaboration between the Malinauskas and Albanese governments and Breakthrough Mental Health.

Indya is also a dedicated volunteer for St John Ambulance, and through the Ronald McDonald House hospitality cart program has also provided support and companionship to families at the Women's and Children's Hospital. Congratulations Indya, you are an inspiration to so many young women. The Town of Walkerville's Community Event of the Year award went to the Walkerville Energy and Environment Forum, which I had the pleasure of attending and participating in, and the Active Citizenship Award went to Raymond Dohnt for his dedication to the Walkerville Bridge Club.

Congratulations to all of the award recipients. Thank you for what you do to give back to our community. You epitomise what makes our neighbourhoods in the electorate of Adelaide so incredibly special.

Parliamentary Procedure

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (15:34): I move:

That the house at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 18 February 2025 at 11am.

Motion carried.

Bills

STATUTES AMENDMENT (HERITAGE) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (15:35): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Heritage Places Act 1993 and the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (15:35): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The government committed to introduce legislation to require the proposed demolition of State Heritage Places be subject to full public consultation and a public report from the South Australian Heritage Council and that the report is to be tabled in parliament.

The commitment required the Department for Environment and Water to undertake a review of the existing legislative framework used to evaluate proposals for demolition of State Heritage Places and determine how it can be modified or supported by a new process that ultimately provides greater emphasis on the protection of these places from demolition and more transparency of decision-making.

To achieve the Protect State Heritage Places election commitment, the Statutes Amendment (Heritage) Bill 2025 was prepared. The Statutes Amendment (Heritage) Bill 2025 outlines that on an application to demolish the whole of the State Heritage Place, the South Australian Heritage Council is to prepare a report within a 10-week period. The report will assess the heritage significance of the place in accordance with section 16(1) of the Heritage Places Act 1993.

Additionally, the Statutes Amendment (Heritage) Bill 2025 requires the State Heritage Council to publish a copy of the report and invite public submissions within a four-week period. The South Australian Heritage Council is to finalise the report within four-weeks of the end of consultation and provide it to the minister responsible for the HP act and the report to be laid before both houses of parliament within five sitting days of receipt.

A consequential legislative amendment to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 has been drafted to require that an application for consent to or approval of a development involving the demolition of the whole of a State Heritage Place be accompanied by a finalised report prepared by the South Australian Heritage Council.

The amendment to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 will alert a proponent through the planning system as to the need to apply for the report. The government supports this bill and commends it to the house. I seek leave to have the explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Heritage Places Act 1993*

3—Amendment of section 3—Interpretation

4—Amendment of section 5A—Functions of the Council

5—Amendment of section 14—Content of Register

6—Amendment of section 18—Submissions etc in relation to provisional entries in Register and related designations

7—Amendment of section 24—Alteration of Register if place to be designated as place of local heritage value

8—Amendment of section 33—Effect of heritage agreement

9—Amendment of section 36—Damage or neglect

These clauses update obsolete references and terminology.

10—Insertion of section 37

This clause inserts new section 37 as follows:

37—Assessment of State Heritage Place

The proposed section sets out the process for a person considering undertaking development involving the demolition of the whole of a State Heritage Place to apply to the South Australian Heritage Council for a report in relation to the State Heritage Place. The section also sets out requirements in relation to the contents of the report, public consultation on the report and the publication of the report.

11—Amendment of section 38—No development orders

This clause updates an obsolete reference.

12—Amendment of section 45—Regulations

This clause makes several technical amendments to the existing general regulation making power in the Act.

13—Amendment of Schedule 2—Heritage agreement relating to Beechwood Garden

This clause updates an obsolete reference.

Part 3—Amendment of *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*

14—Amendment of section 3—Interpretation

This amendment is technical.

15—Insertion of section 119A

This clause inserts new section 119A as follows:

119A—Requirement for application involving demolition of State heritage place

The proposed section requires an application in relation to a development involving the demolition of the whole of a State heritage place to be accompanied by a finalised report prepared by the South Australian Heritage Council.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Whetstone.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION (CONDITIONS OF APPOINTMENT - INTEGRITY MEASURES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (15:38): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (15:38): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today, I introduce the Independent Commission Against Corruption (Conditions of Appointment—Integrity Measures) Amendment Bill 2025. The bill will amend the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012 to provide for the entitlement of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption to a pension that closely aligns with the judges' pension entitlements under the Judges' Pensions Act 1971 and fix the salary of the ICAC commissioner to that of a puisne judge of the Supreme Court.

On 12 December 2024, Her Excellency the Governor and Executive Council appointed Ms Emma Townsend as the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption for a term of five years, commencing on 3 February 2025 and expiring on 2 February 2030, pursuant to section 8 of the ICAC Act. Prior to her appointment as the commissioner, Ms Townsend served as the Director of the Office for Public Integrity and before that as a prosecutor in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Ms Townsend is exceptionally well-qualified to serve in the important role of Independent Commissioner Against Corruption, and I am sure all members will join me in wishing her well as she takes up that task. However, Ms Townsend is the first person to hold this role who is not a former judge of the Supreme Court of South Australia.

An analysis of ICAC commissioner equivalent roles around the country has shown that 50 per cent of these are held by former judges, with the other 50 per cent comprising other backgrounds. While the appointment of Ms Townsend therefore marks a departure from practice to date in South Australia in appointing former Supreme Court judges as ICAC commissioner, it is in step with other jurisdictions. In appointing someone who is not a retired judge and therefore not otherwise entitled to the judicial pension, the government considered that it was important to enshrine in the legislation an entitlement for the commissioner to receive a pension that closely aligns with the entitlement for judicial officers under the Judges' Pensions Act.

This entitlement is intended as an integrity measure to reflect the independence of the commissioner and acknowledge that previous commissioners have been similarly entitled to a pension by virtue of their status as former judges of the Supreme Court. Accordingly, the bill amends the ICAC Act to provide that the ICAC commissioner is entitled to a pension by applying the provisions of the Judges' Pensions Act 1971.

To reflect the initial maximum fixed term of seven years and maximum total appointment of 10 years of an ICAC commissioner under the ICAC Act, the new commissioner's pension will apply as follows. The pension entitlement is to accrue after five years of service. After five years of service, there is an entitlement to a pension of 50 per cent of salary, with incremental progression of 1 per cent for each additional six months of service up to 60 per cent at a maximum 10 years of service. A period as acting commissioner under section 11 of the ICAC Act is to count as service for the purposes of calculating the pension entitlement. The pension entitlement is not to be paid out until the commissioner reaches 60 years of age, consistent with how the Judges' Pensions Act applies to judges.

Spouse or domestic partner entitlements and child entitlements are to apply as for judges under the Judges' Pensions Act, but with any necessary modification to the application of that act to tailor it to the bespoke accrual and qualifying periods for the commissioner pension. For example, this will entail a different calculation of a notional pension under the Judges' Pensions Act, since there is no relevant retirement age in the case of an ICAC commissioner. If the commissioner is suspended under section 8(10) of the ICAC Act, the time under suspension is not to count as service for the purposes of the pension.

The pension is not payable, unless the Governor otherwise dictates, if the commissioner is removed from office by the Governor. If a commissioner is later appointed as a judge, any pension payments from their appointment as commissioner cease upon the appointment as a judge. However, previous service as commissioner is to be counted as judicial service for the purposes of the judge's pension, and if a former commissioner is appointed to a judicial office with a salary less than that of a puisne judge of the Supreme Court they will be entitled to the more generous pension at the salary of Supreme Court judge.

There is a relevant precedent for applying the Judges' Pensions Act to other non-judicial statutory office holders, including with modifications. Pursuant to section 10 of the Solicitor-General Act 1972, the Judges' Pensions Act applies to the Solicitor-General as if they were a judge under the act and their service was judicial service. The Judges' Pensions Act may also be applied by the Governor to the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Judicial Conduct Commissioner by instrument in writing at the time of appointment under the Director of Public Prosecutions Act 1991 or the Judicial Conduct Commissioner Act 2015 respectively.

The relevant provisions in those acts allow conditions or modifications to the application of the Judges' Pensions Act as it applies to those officers. While this is a reasonably minor reform, the government considers it an important integrity measure which will safeguard the independence of the Independent Commissioner Against Corruption. I commend the bill to members. I also seek leave to insert the explanation of clauses in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 2012*

3—Amendment of section 8—Commissioner

This clause inserts new subsection (1a) which entitles the Commissioner to salary and allowances at the rates applicable to a Puisne Judge of the General Division of the Supreme Court.

4—Insertion of section 9A

This clause inserts new section 9A as follows:

9A—Pension rights—Commissioner

This section applies the *Judges' Pensions Act 1971* to and in relation to the Commissioner as if the Commissioner were a Judge as defined in that Act and service as the Commissioner were judicial service as defined in that Act. The section establishes that only a person who has completed 5 years of service as Commissioner is entitled to a pension under the *Judges' Pensions Act 1971* by virtue of this section and makes provisions in relation to the rate of the pension and when the pension becomes payable. The section also provides that application of the *Judges' Pensions Act 1971* to the Commissioner operates subject to modifications to that Act specified by the Governor by instrument in writing or necessary or convenient to give effect to section 9A.

5—Amendment of section 10—Pension rights

This clause makes consequential amendments.

Schedule 1—Transitional provision

1—Transitional provision

This clause sets out a transitional provision which provides that new section 9A only applies in relation to a person holding or acting in the office of Commissioner immediately prior to the commencement of that section or a person appointed to be the Commissioner on or after the commencement of that section. In the case of a person holding or acting in the office of Commissioner immediately before the commencement of section 9A, the section will be taken to have applied from the day on which the person was appointed to be, or to act as, the Commissioner.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. D.G. Pisoni.

STATE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION AND FACILITATION BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Police) (15:45): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to provide for the coordination, facilitation and promotion of development in the state for economic, social and environmental purposes, including to support the transition to and economic development of net zero carbon emission industries, to establish the Coordinator General's Office, to make related amendments to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 and the Urban Renewal Act 1995, and for other purposes. Read a first time.

MOTOR VEHICLES (DISABILITY PARKING PERMIT SCHEME) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 27 November 2024.)

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:47): The Motor Vehicles (Disability Parking Permit Scheme) Amendment Bill is an important update to South Australia's existing disability parking permit scheme. I know that the bill seeks to modernise the eligibility criteria, ensuring it reflects contemporary understandings of disability and its accessibility. It removes outdated barriers, aligns South Australia with other jurisdictions and enhances inclusion for those who face challenges in independent mobility.

I am proud to rise and support this bill because it has been a long time coming. I must say it has been the result of tireless advocacy, particularly of one woman—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are the lead speaker; is that correct?

Mr WHETSTONE: Correct—from my electorate of Chaffey, Tegan Cross. Tegan has been to every corner of every department looking for support for herself, as an example, when looking for the support that she felt she needed, particularly with three boys all diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. They are all tall, they are all strong and they are all difficult to handle in public, especially around road safety and awareness. I have seen this firsthand. Tegan came to me a couple of years ago with concerns that she was having trouble finding a suitable parking spot to be able to manage her boys, to be able to do her day-to-day routine of heading to the shops, heading to school; just the challenges of having three boys who were very difficult to manage in public.

What I did witness particularly was getting out of cars, or getting out of their vehicle, in a public space. As I said, I witnessed firsthand that she really did have her hands full, so we sat down and talked about it. There were a number of near misses. As I say, they could not go out in public without real supervision from both Tegan and her husband, Peter.

The Cross family have tried many times to apply for the disability parking permit and for an exemption. Not only did Tegan personally go to ministers' offices and departments but so did I. We came up without the support that we felt was necessary for her to continue to manage her sons in a satisfactory way. What we came up with was that we needed to have a disability parking permit with an exemption for her case.

Many letters went to the Minister for Human Services, the Minister for Transport and other ministers, even to the point of going to the Premier. Ultimately, the Cross boys did not meet the eligibility, as their disability did not directly impair their mobility. It was not so much a physical disability, but it was an internal disability.

The current legislation shows us that the law requires applicants to demonstrate a physical impairment that restricts mobility. This definition excludes people who face mobility challenges, those who cannot move safely and independently in public, and those with significant cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairments, and today we think that will change. It really is reward for a lot of effort.

I must say I have been very proud to work alongside Tegan and other stakeholders to draft the original legislation. I think it would have been at least two years ago that I met with the then Assistant Minister for Autism, the Hon. Emily Bourke, and we worked collaboratively with the Office for Autism. Now, with the new Minister for Autism, it is great to see that we are making steps forward.

Now that we have this legislation before the house, I think it will bring South Australia into line with the rest of the nation. The bill details that the new legislation removes the requirement for applicants' disability to be physical, the biggest hurdle for those who have a mobility issue that is not classified as physical despite the physical implications. It now opens up opportunities for those who have mobility issues caused by cognitive, behavioural and neurological impairment. It is especially important for disabilities such as autism but will expand opportunities for others in the community.

Provisions for temporary disabilities and impairments allow those with a temporary mobility issue likely lasting more than six months to apply. It already exists in legislation, but it makes the terms much clearer. Moving eligibility criteria to regulations gives more flexibility and easy adaptability for the future, but it also ensures the scheme remains aligned with accessibility needs.

It removes criteria surrounding public transport. Applicants will no longer have to demonstrate they are unable to use public transport. Many people with disabilities such as autism are capable of using transport. Often, public transport is not an accessible or realistic solution, especially in the regional areas, where we do not have the public transport services that the people of the city enjoy and use.

It expands eligibility to vision impairments, including both temporary and permanent legal blindness, in the regulations, and it aligns South Australia with Queensland and Western Australia. It is a huge step forward, but it will also be a learning curve. I am sure that the minister will put provisions in place as we transition from what was to what is today. Hopefully, it will be a smooth transition, but I guess in managing it the proof will be in the pudding.

Concerns have been raised over demand and the lack of disabled parks. Councils, businesses and government will have to work together to collect the data and assess the potential impacts of the increased demand. Hopefully, South Australia will be able to meet the demand to ensure that our most vulnerable people can be safe on our roads. Collecting that data, I think, will be an opportunity to collect the evidence if we do need to increase disabled parking spaces. Hopefully, people will use it responsibly, and it will be there for the benefit of people where it once was not.

Moving eligibility into regulations rather than keeping it in the act might reduce the understanding and accessibility, but it is important that the government commits to clear guidelines. So make them publicly available, easy access, and ensure transparency. I want to thank Tegan Cross and her family for the advocacy that she has provided. She was very emotional in early days, but she very quickly realised that she had to work with the authorities. She had to work with the assistant minister, and now the Minister for Autism is stepping up to the plate to make what was almost a dream a reality. Thank you to Tegan for her determination to continue to pursue this.

As I said, I witnessed it firsthand, and today this amended bill will be a great step forward, not only for Tegan Cross and her family but for the many people who have not been able to have that support mechanism to help them with parking, to help them with day-to-day life when they are impeded by some of life's challenges. The legislation is a good step in the right direction for South Australia, and hopefully it is a win for those living with a disability.

Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (15:56): I rise to support this bill because it underlines a basic fundamental call to allow more choice and flexibility for members within our disability community. I have had the privilege working with this fantastic community through past employment, working alongside Minister Rankine when she was disability minister. While this was over a decade ago, it changed my perspective on many things, and one of the key takeaway messages I heard was how

much the community just wanted to be able to choose their own pathways in life, rather than having things so heavily prescribed to them.

It is why over time we saw the rise of self-managed funding, which led to the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and a move away from special schools in favour of sending children to their local school, with the intended aim of giving people more say in the lives that they lead. It is a kind of recipe to life that many of us take for granted, but when your pathway is stipulated more by the system than the head on your shoulders, your options are severely frustrated.

I think I have mentioned it in this place more than once, but one of the other key lessons in life I took from this period was that there was always more work that needed to be done. We have made some decent strides in helping more of our disability community make choices of their own, but I do not think anyone on this side would be comfortable in proclaiming that we have come close to completing this mission.

While there is a bit to talk about within this bill, the change that really captured my imagination when I saw the briefing notes was in regard to the stipulation that an applicant's ability to use public transport must be significantly impeded before a disability parking permit is granted is to be removed. When I go to work, visit the shops or go to see my friends, I have a number of choices on how I get there. Arguably, the two big choices are either to use public transport or to drive my own car.

In an age where we are trying to get as many South Australians to take the bus or a train on our now deprivatised network, why on earth would we be stipulating to people with disability that it is either one or the other? As with many of us, we often shy away from taking the bus or train because, quite simply, it is not that convenient. While I would love more people to appreciate the benefit of public transport, we have the right to choose, so why should this choice not be afforded to others?

There would be numerous examples of where someone with disability could take a bus, train or tram to conveniently get around but then be totally isolated because the network simply cannot cater for their needs. Further, I would not be the only one here who grew up in a place which is not serviced by the Adelaide Metro. Under the current regime, if I had disability or could not get a disability car-parking permit, then there is a big chance there would be places I could not visit because of this current provision.

We should also consider how these old rules compromise people due to the location of pick-up and drop-off points. Just because someone can catch public transport does not mean it is practical or conceivable for them to go the extra distance to the destination that they seek. Shops and businesses often have their disability car parks close to their main entrance, and yet bus stops most often pick up and drop off from the street. And, regrettably, in South Australia we have also had this historical obsession of doing everything we possibly can to build our railway stations as far as possible away from our town centres. So just because you are able to take public transport it does raise question of whether you possess the ability to move well beyond a bus stop to your intended destination.

I am sure there are many limited paradoxes like this written within our laws, and while it pleases me seeing one removed, I hope these actions by the minister serve as a beacon to identify and address more. I need to be careful not to overstate the benefits of this move as I do note that the regulations will still maintain the existing physical mobility impairment criteria whereby applicants who have a temporary or permanent physical impairment will still need to show that their speed of movement is severely restricted. Having said that, shifting this criteria to regulations rather than iron-clad legislation gives me hope there will be more flexibility and capacity for interpretation to be considered against some of the concerns I have just outlined.

I have had the honour of serving on the Legislative Review Committee and it has given me a firsthand appreciation of why the move from legislation to regulation will be advantageous. As the member for Chaffey outlined, in most cases, regulatory changes are faster and therefore more adaptive to problems they seek to solve and the people they seek to help. Having worked with numerous disability advocates, I am pretty sure they will be quick to point out any failings in regulation and I remain optimistic that solutions will be forthcoming at a much faster pace.

We are also using this opportunity to remove any legislative barriers through regulations, specifically allowing applicants who have a significant intellectual, cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairment that prevent them from being able to independently mobilise safely without the continual support of another person to apply for a permit. I have outlined why moving to a regulatory environment will be beneficial but I also point out that as things evolve, regulations can move with them while still maintaining the oversight of the minister, cabinet, the Legislative Review Committee and, ultimately, our parliament.

The Malinauskas government is also responding to many requests from parents with children with autism for access to a disability parking permit to help them safely access shopping and other facilities with their children. This is a massive step forward, and including significant cognitive, behavioural, and neurological impairments also gives rise to a more nimble and responsive regime towards the allocation of permits.

I also want to add that other state and territory governments have taken a similar revisionist approach to modernising their disability parking permit allocations. Experience has shown that jurisdictions like Victoria and the ACT have also expanded their criteria but, overall, the advice that I have read from the department is that they do not anticipate the increased allocation being overly significant. That said, disability car parking is governed through the National Construction Code and I am sure Minister Champion as well as his interstate counterparts are continually watching developments in this space.

There are a lot of other elements that this bill rightly addresses, but what impresses me most is the injection of choice in an area that may rightly or wrongly attract criticism for its inflexibility. Before I finish up, I want to pass on my thanks to everyone who worked hard behind the scenes on this bill, from those who helped in the consultative phase to the public servants that sewed everything together, and indeed our hardworking minister and his team, who are focused on improving every area that they are responsible for.

While as lawmakers we only see the tip of the iceberg, we are grateful for all the hard work it takes to bring quality legislation like this before us. To all the stakeholders involved, congratulations on these changes. There is still a bit more work to be done on the regulatory front, as I understand it, but you deserve recognition on broadening choice and permitting greater flexibility in an area of need.

It is also encouraging to see that the opposition is behind this bill. I must say, I found the story of Tegan Cross outlined by the member for Chaffey to be a very interesting one. The member did say this is a long time coming. I have only been in this chamber for coming up to three years now, and you do find stories like this out in electoral land. It is no surprise to me that a long-serving member has a story of this magnitude that he has worked very hard on. It also reaffirms the fact that appointing the then Assistant Minister for Autism is a formula that is proving to be very successful.

It is fantastic that the Malinauskas government has seen right to now elevate the Hon. Emily Bourke to a full member of cabinet, maintaining or even expanding on the role that she had. I congratulate her, and what I have missed in my speech is that I have not appropriately acknowledged her role as a very powerful advocate in helping to deliver this change. Congratulations to Emily on this particular front.

As I said earlier, while there is more work to be done, I do not think that people need a pat on the back when it comes to disability because, while we might solve one issue, behind us there are many more that need to be addressed. I feel that her recognition and that of the minister, his team and his department ought to be singled out. I would say that this is a good piece of legislation and, with all that I have said and I am sure all that the minister will detail in the latest changes, I commend the bill to the house.

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (16:07): I rise in wholehearted support of this bill. The bill will allow eligible neurodivergent South Australians to be able to apply for a disability parking permit. I believe this will be a game changer for parents with neurodivergent children. By having access to a disability parking permit, it will greatly assist them to be able to safely access parks, community centres, shopping and other facilities in our community.

Under these legislative changes, cognitive, behavioural and neurological conditions will be included in South Australia's disability parking permit scheme. This will allow autistic people, people with autism or the families of autistic children to apply for a permit if their condition prevents them from moving independently without the continuous support of another person. My local community might be interested to know that the disability parking permit scheme has not actually changed since 1998. This is despite there being an increased awareness and understanding of the social and community needs of people living with a disability.

I am delighted the Malinauskas government is updating this act to ensure that the disability parking permit scheme reflects modern practice and supports the needs of people living with a disability in South Australia and indeed my community. In particular, I want to highlight the work of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the member for West Torrens, and our Minister for Autism, the Hon. Emily Bourke, in this space.

We led the world with the first Assistant Minister for Autism and, with the Hon. Emily Bourke's elevation to the cabinet, we achieve another first with the ascension of the autism portfolio to the ministry. In regard to this bill, Minister Bourke advocated to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure for these changes after listening to the experience of autism advocate Tegan Cross, who I now understand is a constituent of the member for Chaffey, and I appreciate his advocacy.

Ms Cross, as we understand, has three neurodivergent sons and had previously tried to apply for a disability parking permit only to be rejected, which prompted her to approach her local member and Minister Bourke. When announcing these changes, Ms Cross told the ABC about her experience, particularly how public places in Adelaide can be very overwhelming for her sons so having access to a disability car park would make it more accessible for her sons to want to go out in public more often and it would provide that sense of comfort for her sons to know that the car is close by if they have to leave and if they did that they were able to leave quickly and quietly.

I want to thank the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister Bourke and Ms Cross for their efforts in championing these changes, and the member for Chaffey, her local member, for his advocacy.

Specifically, the bill will amend the Motor Vehicles Act to update terms to be more inclusive. It will remove the requirement that an applicant's ability to use public transport must be significantly impeded in order to obtain a permit and allow the eligibility criteria for a permit to be prescribed in the regulations. This is really important because moving the criteria to the regulations will allow the scheme to be more responsive and adaptable to future social and community requirements regarding disability parking spaces.

Unpacking these changes further, currently the state's Motor Vehicles Act requires a person to meet fixed criteria, including having what the law describes as a 'physical impairment' that impacts mobility. Under this legislation, the bill changes the term 'disabled person' to 'person with disability' and changes 'disabled person's parking permit' to 'disability parking permit'. These new terms are more inclusive and reflect modern practice.

The bill changes also include removing the requirement in the act that an applicant's ability to use public transport must be significantly impeded by their impairment in order to obtain a permit. It removes any legislative barriers to the regulations specifically including applicants who are legally blind without needing them to satisfy further mobility criteria for a disability parking permit. It removes any legislative barriers to the regulations specifically including applicants for a disability parking permit who have significant intellectual, cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairments that prevent the person from being able to independently mobilise safely without the continuous support of another person.

These changes will address issues with the scheme, particularly for parents and carers of children with autism who require access to disability parking spaces for safety reasons. In this instance, an applicant for a disability parking permit will need a medical practitioner to assess that due to a significant cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairment the person is not able to independently mobilise safely without the continuous support of another person.

The regulations will retain the existing physical mobility impairment criteria. In other words, applicants who have a temporary or permanent physical impairment will still need to show that their speed of movement is severely restricted. No changes are being made to the wider arrangements for how disability parking permits operate.

As mentioned previously, the act has provided the opportunity to improve the eligibility criteria for people who are legally blind. Currently, a legally blind person being transported as a passenger in a vehicle is eligible to be issued a disability parking permit; however, a legally blind person needs to show that their mobility is severely restricted and that they are unable to use public transport under the current criteria in the act.

But not all people who suffer from a sight impairment will be significantly impeded in their ability to use public transport and it has been argued that legally blind persons, through the use of a guide dog or long cane, are still able to access public transport. This can result in unintended consequences and, as such, the intention is that the regulations will specifically reference blindness to clarify and simplify the eligibility criteria. Therefore, the intention is to make legal blindness a specific category in terms of eligibility in the regulations without the need for an applicant to establish a mobility impairment.

Once again, I thank all those who were involved in these reforms and I look forward to these changes being implemented as soon as possible on the passing of this bill. I commend the bill to the house.

Mrs PEARCE (King) (16:14): I also rise to speak on this very important bill. We are a government that is focused on building stronger, more inclusive communities. We led the world with the very first Assistant Minister for Autism, who is now Minister for Autism, and, knowing that one in four Australians has an autistic family member, we are working hard to help make South Australia the autism-inclusive state.

It has been a pleasure this term of government to be able to engage with members of my community who have hidden disabilities, to listen firsthand to their experiences and to see how we can do better in a multitude of spaces. It is where they have been able to raise ideas and thoughts on how we can make things better, safer and more accessible for all. These ideas have ranged from the early years all the way to the final years, with a vast range of subjects that have been touched on. One of those subjects, of course, has been parking permits. I am so pleased to share that not only have we listened to this feedback but we have also investigated the matter and, yes, we agree that things can change—we can go further.

One of the ways we are achieving this is through the Motor Vehicles (Disability Parking Permit Scheme) Amendment Bill 2024. The disability parking permit bill makes amendments to part 3D of the act, to make enhancements to the framework for the issue of disability parking permits, including updating terms to be more inclusive. It will enable the eligibility criteria for meeting the definition of a person with a disability under part 3D of the act to be prescribed in the regulations. By detailing these matters in the regulations, we will enable future amendments to the criteria to be responsive and more easily changed over time.

The bill also removes the requirement that applicants must show that their ability to use public transport is significantly impeded by their impairment. I am particularly pleased to see this change. We are the only Australian jurisdiction to have this outdated requirement and, not only will the change promote consistency with other jurisdictions but it provides people living with a disability and their families with more dignity. In fact, making this happen is something that I have advocated for since meeting with Jack and his family back in 2020.

At just 22, Jack was being treated for a rare blood cancer, aplastic anaemia. This disease consumed his bone marrow within a week of diagnosis and, without enough white blood cells to fight infection, he was in and out of intensive care for over 107 days, 60 of which he was in a coma. This was all before he was able to receive a transplant. A side-effect of the long and difficult treatment was that Jack had a loss of mobility, so much so that he essentially had to start the journey of learning how to walk all over again and, due to the treatment, he relied on the use of a wheelchair to get around.

By not having the permit, Jack relied heavily on his partner, Hannah, to be able to lift him in and out of the car and assist him to an area where she was safely able to set up his wheelchair, which was often some distance away from his seat. It was both demoralising, dangerous and unsafe for both Jack and his partner, Hannah, and a very big concern not only for the two of them, but for their extended family as well who were already going through an incredibly tough time.

Of course, Jack had applied for a permit, but I understand that his application for a disability parking permit was rejected as his doctor indicated that he could use public transport. It was a matter that our now Premier personally wrote to the previous Liberal government about, raising Jack's situation, urging then Minister Wingard to use what powers he had to review the initial decision to reject his application and approve his application for a permit. It is why I am pleased that we are making this very change here today. Unfortunately, Jack has since passed away, but I know we have made a positive change for others who may share his experience.

This bill also deletes the reference to 'physical' in the definition of 'temporary physical impairment'. This will facilitate the expansion of the eligibility criteria for disability parking permits to include non-physical impairments, such as significant cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairments while at the same time encompassing physical impairments. This reflects feedback that I have received from families with hidden disabilities in my local community, like Charmain, whose husband is a totally and permanently incapacitated veteran with a service dog.

If you were to bump into their family at the local shops, you would not be able to tell that there was a member within that family who had a disability, even with their service dog by their side; in fact, so much so people often think that the family is training the service dog to be able to support others in the local community.

As Charmain has highlighted, it does not take away from the fact that we need to ensure that facilities such as shopping centres are accessible to all residents, especially those with young families and individuals with specific needs, like her husband. It is absolutely crucial. It is crucial to the individual's health and wellbeing, it is crucial to support their independent living and is important to help support everyday busy lives of families here in South Australia because I can promise you all they are not alone in this occurrence.

These changes will make a real difference to families in my local community who have experienced tragic circumstances like Jack or who may have hidden disabilities like Charmain's family. For that, I commend the bill to the house.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (16:20): I would like to make a small contribution to this bill. I think it is a very important bill. First of all, I would like to thank the people who have actually made this possible. I would like to acknowledge and thank the former Assistant Minister for Autism, the Hon. Emily Bourke in the other house, who is now the Minister for Autism. I would also like to thank the Minister for Transport in this place, his staff and the people in the department, because while this may not be one of the biggest reforms we bring in, it will change the lives of a lot of ordinary people in a big way. That is the important thing.

The member for Chaffey has outlined a case that was brought to his attention. I am sure there are cases like that right across the state. I certainly have had parents in the past talk to me about the difficulty they have had with children who are neurodivergent in trying to actually get them in and out of a car to a place, whether it is going to the doctor, shopping or schools. The school one is an example I would like to highlight to show how big an issue this is.

For parents who have children who are neurodivergent, getting them across the road or getting them from point A to point B when there is a lot of activity around, particularly around school time, attending school or leaving school, is quite a challenge. If you have two or three children who are neurodivergent, the challenge becomes impossible. Under the previous scheme, they were ineligible for a disability parking permit and often had to park either far away from an entrance to a school or they had to park sometimes in loading zones or some zone which was closer for their own child's safety.

I remember hearing a case about a grandparent who was a carer looking after their grandchildren. They were in a special class in one of my schools. They parked in a loading zone for

the children's safety. They got booked by the council officers, and the council would not remit the penalty. They had to pay the penalty.

The current scheme, unfortunately, allows council officers to choose not to exercise the discretion in what I think is an appropriate way. This person could clearly demonstrate their grandchildren had a disability, etc., but no, these people applied the rules for the rules' sake. My view is you apply rules for the purpose they are intended. What is the objective behind the rule? You need to understand that. When you get told, 'We applied the penalty because it is against the rules,' no—what are the rules trying to achieve? Unfortunately, the current rules do enable council officers to do that, in my view, wrongly.

That was really highlighted to me, and that is not the only case. I have had a number of these cases in my electorate, and I am sure there are a lot of other families who have not come to me or their local MP and have just worn it, unfortunately. It is sad that people on the ground, who have to implement the rules, cannot show more judgement at times; but that is another story for another day.

These changes are also important in another way, apart from the practical changes in people's lives day to day. As I said, it is not a big reform, but it is a big change for those people who benefit from this. It is not a one-off thing: it is people who experience this issue every day. Every day they take their child to school, every day they take their child or a family member to a shop. Every day it is an issue for them. You can understand why they will ask, 'Why are these rules like that?'

It is also important because it changes our thinking about people living with disability from a disability having to be seen, having to be visible, to acknowledging there are people living with invisible disabilities. One of the things that we are also supporting is the Sunflower Project, which tries to get the message out that not all people with disabilities have disabilities that can be seen. There are neurodivergent people and a whole range of other people whose disability is not obvious or is invisible. It does not mean that they do not experience some disadvantage and challenges with everyday life. This bill helps to remove some of those disadvantages and barriers for those lives.

The Metropolitan Fire Service has a program called the Sunflower Project, which is supported by the Office for Autism in our state. It was something that was championed by the former Assistant Minister for Autism, now the Minister for Autism, to make sure the message gets out that we should not make judgement so quickly about the rights of people with disabilities. That is very important. I am going to use a word which has now become a slightly dirty and derided word: this is about inclusion. Unfortunately, in the political world this has become a word you are not supposed to use, or it is used in a negative sense.

For me, inclusion means giving people a fair go. In Australian culture, if there is one thing we strongly believe in it is a fair go for everybody. In other words, it means we give people a fair go to an education, a fair go to work, a fair go to access the health system. We do believe in a fair go. The reason we have one of the best health systems in the world is that we believe that everybody should have a fair go to health irrespective of their wealth. Health should not be linked to a person's wealth: health should be linked to a person's need.

This bill gives a whole range of people and their families a fair go so when they are taking their child to school they have a fair go taking that child to school in a safe way, also making sure that it is as easy as possible to do so. It is a fair go when they go to the shopping centre, where there is a lot of activity, and it gives those people a fair go to take their children with them. As one of the previous speakers said, the assumption is that if they are children they can be easily managed. I have seen some children—and I am not a tall person, I accept that, but some of these children are big, and they are not easily physically managed.

Having in proximity parking that provides for disability is really important for that family. Often, for the people who do not have a child or family member living with disability, it is hard to grasp, but when you have to put up with this every day, it is a real challenge. It is really important that this new provision makes it. It has been a long time coming, but it is here. Like the member for Playford said, we should applaud this reform, but let's not forget there are probably other reforms we need to think about. There are others we need to do as well.

This reform is great. It will increase demand for parking for people living with disability. That is just reality because it will make more people eligible, quite rightly, and it will increase demand, so we need to monitor the impact of the scheme and whether we need to review those matters in terms of the number of parking spaces made available for people with disability.

It also means as a community we need to be responsible and not misuse them in the sense that if you do not have a parking permit to park in the area, do not use it, irrespective of the amount of time. All the excuses in the world do not count, so I think it is important to do that.

I have received feedback from some people who do have a parking permit to park in an area reserved for people with disabilities and that is that some people would like to see harsher penalties. We need to see how things go, how they settle down and whether that is appropriate. We need to see what is happening interstate and what is best practice. I have a person in my community who has been advocating for some years that if you park in a car park reserved for a person with disability and you do not have a permit, if you get caught the expiation should be demerit points, like with any other licence infringement.

I cannot put the case whether that is the right or wrong thing to do, but certainly we need to look at what happens from here onwards, and given that there will be an increase in demand do we need to make sure that we further disincentivise people from parking illegally.

With those introductory comments I would like now to perhaps address the issues of the bill itself and the regulations. I think it is important to acknowledge that this bill amends the Motor Vehicles Act 1959. Importantly, this scheme has not changed since 1998 and clearly things have changed in terms of our thinking about people who are living with a disability in that time.

The bill amends part 3D of the Motor Vehicles Act. The amendments include terms and language more appropriate for today's usage. It removes the requirement that an applicant's ability to use public transport must be simply impeded. As the member for Chaffey quite rightly mentioned, in a lot of parts of our state there is no alternative to parking, there is no public transport or the public transport is overused, etc. There are a whole range of different reasons. Even the department itself acknowledges that if you are more than 500 metres from a bus stop or a train station, that often denies people the appropriate access to public transport.

Also importantly, and something which I will fully support, is that it allows the eligibility criteria for these parking permits to be prescribed in regulations. It enables us to then review things and work out if changes need to be made and can be made more quickly and it is much more responsive. I think we need to respond as community attitudes also change to a whole range of things.

Changing the language is important. It talks about our values as a society and, as I said, even though the word 'inclusion' unfortunately is now used in a pejorative way, I still think that for many the word 'inclusion' means giving people a fair go and language which reflects that should be supported.

At the moment people who are eligible for a parking permit have to demonstrate a physical disability, where speed of movement is severely restricted by the impairment. I will read here, 'whose ability to use public transport is significantly impeded by the impairment'. That will change. Those two things have been a significant barrier for a whole range of people with a disability from living meaningful lives, or without additional barriers to their lives and their families, importantly.

The regulations will retain the existing physical mobility impairment criteria. Applicants who have a temporary or permanent physical impairment will still need to show that their speed of movement is severely restricted. So while the criteria has only changed in one element, it does change who is actually eligible, and that is the big change: who is eligible for this new permit.

There are a number of things that are not changing, but it is removing any legislative barriers to the regulations, specifically including applicants for a disability parking permit who have a significant intellectual, cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairment that prevents the person from being able to 'independently mobilise safely without the continuous support of another person'. That is the technical language for saying if a parent or family member or carer has to actually assist that person to get from point A to point B then they have met the criteria.

Often, that is very clear for their safety as well, not only in terms of their being able to physically do it but for their safety. Often, I have parents tell me that their child would literally run away or run off as soon as they are out of the car, and because they are parked so far away from a whole range of things there is an increase in risk to their personal safety. So that is going to be addressed.

I also understand that no changes have been made to the wider arrangements, which I think in this case is okay. The penalties will stay the same as they are at the moment, as I understand it, but hopefully they might be reviewed if people do not use them responsibly. The visual impairment requirement I understand is not changing. Again, they are people who have actually been eligible already.

As I said, we need to now monitor the increase in the use of car parking. We need to look at that. As has been previously mentioned, the framework for the number of car parks available is actually in a national code, and that is something that the Minister for Planning will need to monitor, to see whether that needs to change. Hopefully, we will not have to do that. Hopefully, we can actually use the existing parking areas responsibly, to make sure that that works. If that does change, we will need to then look at whether we need to do that.

Just one final point: based on what has happened in the other jurisdictions where they have changed the rules to reflect what we are proposing here, like Victoria and the ACT, parking demand has not increased, so we are hopeful that the existing stock of car parks available for people with disability will suffice.

The changes will commence on proclamation, and this will certainly occur after the regulations have been made. I assume that some thought has been given to the regulations already, so they will not be a long time in coming. One would hope that they are made very quickly. I understand that once the changes have been made the department plans to capture data and report on the types of disabilities or conditions for which DPPs are being issued.

Again, by having it in the regulations if this scheme needs to be fine-tuned there will be a quicker capacity for the government to make the regulations in the Executive Council and to fine-tune those. In conclusion, I would just like to say that this reform is a worthwhile one, and certainly it will bring relief and fairness to a number of families in our state.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (16:38): This bill has been a long time in the making. First and foremost, I want to thank the opposition for the indication of their support. That is magnanimous of them, and I am grateful for it. It is always much easier to pass legislation when there is bipartisan support. Interestingly, that is becoming contentious in the public, where, depending on their perspective someone might say, 'You all agree with each other. There is no difference between the two major political parties,' and another time people ask that political parties work together and come up with a consensus. It seems to me here that the government and the opposition are on the same page, and it is a good outcome.

The other person I would like to thank for this is Minister Bourke. Minister Bourke, I think, will be the first to admit that this bill was not her idea: it is the idea of a community that she engaged deeply with. One of the toughest things about being in parliament, and in government, is the thousands of voices that are thrown at you professionally by organisations wanting to have their points of view heard. In fact, while I was just sitting here, there was an interest group sending me messages about another piece of legislation that is in the parliament.

What Minister Bourke and the member for Chaffey have done is go out and speak to the people who usually have no voice—and they have been heard. That is the job of parliamentarians. It is almost like using a tuner to try to find out the voices that cannot be heard over the loud chatter around the usual self-interest.

This bill makes a number of changes, and I want to go through them systematically. We will be going into committee, and I can answer direct questions of the opposition and any other member in the house, but I thought what I would do is just talk generally about some of the changes that are

being made. First and foremost, the department has quite helpfully made me a series of information that I think is important.

The bill does a number of things to disability parking permits. Firstly, it amends part 3D—Disabled persons' parking permits—of the Motor Vehicles Act 1959, and it updates terminology to be more inclusive. That might not seem like something that is very important, but what we have attempted to do is to meet the criteria of the change in the definition of a person with a disability to mean a person who meets disability criteria prescribed by the motor vehicles regulations. My understanding of that is to allow us to remove a requirement of an applicant's ability to use public transport, which is the formal criteria.

Without being critical of any government in particular, because no doubt we have had this similar request when we were previously in government, and of the Marshall government, looking at the responses that I would get from people who were asking for disability parking permits, there was a generic response from the agency on the basis of the legislation that, 'You can catch public transport. You don't need a disability parking permit.' That was unique, I understand, for South Australia, so we are fixing that.

The term 'disabled person' is being changed to a 'person with a disability', and 'disabled persons' parking permit' to 'disability parking permit'. The reason we have done that is again for inclusivity, to reflect modern practices, and it is based on a language guide published by People with Disability Australia, a peak disability rights advocacy organisation. I think that is good, and it is also done in conjunction with the Office for Autism and the Department of Human Services.

Importantly, who is eligible? An applicant for a permit needs to have a disability that falls under the eligibility criteria set out in the Motor Vehicles Act. Currently, the act defines a disabled person as:

...a person with a temporary or permanent physical impairment—

- (a) whose speed of movement is severely restricted by the impairment; and
- (b) whose ability to use public transport is significantly impeded by the impairment.

This means that the requirements are that the applicants have a temporary or permanent physical impairment, show their speed of movement is severely restricted by the impairment, and show their ability to use public transport is significantly impeded by that impairment.

Organisations are also eligible to apply for the disability parking permits if they provide services, including a transportation service, to at least four people who meet the above criteria. So the changes are removing the requirement in the act for an applicant's ability to use public transport and that you need to be significantly impaired to obtain a DPP.

The regulations will retain the existing physical mobility impairment criteria, and applicants who have a temporary or permanent physical impairment will still need to show that their speed of movement is restricted. But we are removing any legislative barriers to the regulations specifically including applicants who are legally blind without them then having to satisfy mobile criteria for a DPP. Importantly, that is for people driving people who are legally blind who are able to get the permit.

The bill will remove any legislative barriers to the regulations specifically including applicants for a DPP who have a significant intellectual, cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairment that prevent the person from being able to independently mobilise safely without continuous support from another person. The final criteria will be set by regulations. These changes will address the scheme, particularly for parents and carers of children with autism who require access to these parking spaces for safety reasons.

The last point I want to touch on is: why remove the requirement for the use of public transport to be an impediment? No other jurisdiction does this; we are the only one left that does it. Instead, other jurisdictions have a mobility requirement. These changes will align us with the rest of the nation; however, we still continue to have a mobility requirement as part of the regulations. I can go deeper into that, if the opposition would like when we go into committee.

These reforms I think address a number of issues. I heard the member for Light talk briefly about additional parking spaces. Rather than make the requirement now in conjunction with this legislation, the government would like some time to settle this in and see exactly how this operates before you rush in and automatically increase the number of spaces that are required for disability parking permits.

I heard what you are saying. I received correspondence from the disability sector about this. I think, to be fair, pre these changes there were calls for more disability parking spaces anyway. I acknowledge that there is a problem, I acknowledge that there is a demand, but we are talking about imposing on the private sector. I just ask for a little bit of patience to see how these are bedded in.

The other thing that the member for Light raised was the potential for issuing demerit point penalties for people who park inappropriately in disabled car parking spaces. This is difficult. I am happy to look at it. Personally, I am not quite sure it is a good idea. Not that I advocate for this to occur but expiation notices and demerit points can be a very unsubtle way of enforcing this given that sometimes people self-assess when they are carrying people in and out using disability parking spaces. I am not condoning people using these spaces without the appropriate permits, but generally I think it is still socially unacceptable for people to park in these spaces unless they have the appropriate permit.

Issuing expiation notices and demerit points could be something the government could consider, but that is not something I have contemplated or am contemplating yet, but I am happy to take submissions from members who might wish to advocate for it or argue against it. I do not want to make a position. Expiation fines are increased annually so I am not sure that demerit points would be the appropriate penalty given that the fine is quite significant. I do not have the actual level of the fine but I am sure we can get that when we go into committee and I can let that be known to the house.

I just want to thank the opposition for their support and their graciousness in supporting this. I also want to thank the member for Chaffey for bringing to light the personal stories from his constituents. This is what this house does not hear enough of. This is the people's house. I have a lot of respect for our members in the upper house but they are not at the coalface as we are. We see our constituents daily, we live among them, and we get these human interactions and these human stories a lot more. I think this place benefits greatly when we hear those personal stories about how government regulations and legislation, or lack of them, impact on ordinary people.

I commend the member for Adelaide, the member for Chaffey and Minister Bourke for doing this and making these changes. I thank the cabinet for their support and I commend the bill to the house.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 passed.

Clause 5.

Mr WHETSTONE: This is really a general section. I would like to get some clarification about the consultation on the legislation with some of the business groups. Some of those parking providers, shopping centres, the LGA, the RAA, the MTA: were any of those business organisations consulted during the legislative process?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It is a good question. No, we did not consult with those bodies that the shadow minister talks of. We consulted with the Office for Autism and Human Services. This reform was based on public feedback from Service SA areas, ministerials and letters from parliamentarians into government.

If we had made changes to increase the number of car parking spaces to be made available for disability parking permits then, yes, I would have extended the consultation to the private sector. But, given that we are not increasing the number of spaces required legislatively to be made available

in car parking, we did not decide to do that consultation. I do not do that lightly, but the level of correspondence, applications and inquiries we were given was becoming overwhelming and it was clear that we were an outlier across the country, so that is why we made the change.

Mr WHETSTONE: I am advised that the minister is in receipt of some correspondence and feedback from disability organisation Purple Orange. They raised five or six suggestions. Are you able to respond to any of their feedback with the concerns that they raised?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The advice I have is that organisation was asking for semantic changes to the language we used. There is a whole series of different terminology that they wanted us to use. It is very difficult when there are a number of bodies that represent people with disabilities, so we settled on one uniform piece of language, which was published by People with Disability Australia. They are a peak body, disability rights advocacy organisation. While that might not assuage some groups, it is very difficult to come up with terminology that will be acceptable to everyone, so we chose what we thought was the peak body and we settled on that.

In terms of the outcome of the actual application of the changes, I am not sure that there was a difference in what they were asking, but what they were asking for were terminology changes rather than actual application changes.

Mr WHETSTONE: We have talked about car parking spaces, but does the government collect data about the supply and demand of disability car parking spaces?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Historically, we have not. We are proposing to begin collecting data through TRUMPS through the application process to try to get a better understanding of location and use and then using the TRUMPS data to try to better understand the data that we receive and its application in the issuing of disability parking permits. But to date we have not been collecting that data.

Mr WHETSTONE: If there is data collected, will there be the opportunity for the holders of disability car park permits to be able to feed that information to you, with concerns of spaces, not enough spaces, adequate positioning of handicap car park spaces and the like?

Obviously, this is a change to what is the norm. We will potentially see more demand on special needs car parking. I do not want to confuse the question, but have you considered using a special needs car park pass rather than a handicap car park pass because the whole crux of this legislation has been around the determination of who qualifies for a handicap car park space? Previously, autistic people did not qualify and they now will under this legislation, so will the language change around what is called a handicap car park permit or will there be consideration for a special needs car park permit?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: We are changing the name to disability parking permit, and the regulations will allow me to change the criteria through consultation to create and capture more people to be eligible, which is what we are attempting to do. I am not sure how to say this without offending anyone: I am not as much interested in terminology as I am in the outcome. The terminology, while important, is not as important as the outcome.

The department have the government's instructions. We think the criteria has been too tight; we think the eligibility is too narrow. We are behind national frameworks and national standards. We have asked the department to go away and bring us in line and to also give us more data on what we need going forward, simultaneously feeding in all the ministerials and correspondence we get from numerous members of parliament on both sides about this issue. So I hope that answers your question. Terminology is tricky but, again, I am more interested in the outcome.

Mr WHETSTONE: Just a bit of commentary: the disability organisations have said to me that they are very fragile with the terminology used, whether it is a handicap, whether it is special needs. They are, as I say, fragile about some of the language used about people who are either disabled or have a physical disability, and so that is the reason I ask the question. Temporary impairment is defined in this proposed new section as being:

...an impairment that, in the opinion of the Registrar, is likely to endure...6 months but is not likely to be permanent.

Is the basis for choosing six months as the minimum threshold to manage demand for disability car parks?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The short answer is yes. Should we give disability parking to someone with a broken leg? There are people who are short-term impaired so, again, this is the difficult part. There are limited spaces.

I remember when the former Speaker fell off a ladder and nearly broke his neck. Depending on the impairment in place, should that person be entitled to a disability parking permit given the limited number of spaces compared to someone who has an impairment that could last six, eight or nine months? So, yes, it is an arbitrary number. What we are trying to catch are people who are temporarily impaired who might not need it long term to make sure there are adequate spaces for people who are using these spaces longer term.

Mr WHETSTONE: I would like to go to clause 5(3).

The CHAIR: Actually, clause 5 is clause 5. Normally, the rules are applied where you are entitled to three questions for each clause. I have now allowed you seven questions but I am happy to give you another question.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you. One final question on this clause: minister, we talked about monitoring the use of data for disability parking once this bill becomes law—you are giving consideration—but are you able to tell us the cost of providing a disability parking space? The minister was on ABC radio saying that the broadened criteria for disabled parking would provide an economic opportunity for businesses to make more bays accessible. Can you expand on that?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I think Minister Bourke made those comments rather than me?

Mr WHETSTONE: That is right. Minister Bourke made the comments on ABC radio.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I do not know what the context is when she talked about economic growth. I am assuming it is the more accessible your car parking is, the more clients you are likely to get. If you have these disability parking permits, if it is an easier car park to get into and go shop, they will take their custom there. I think that is what she is talking about.

In terms of the review about the numbers, the Building Code is reviewed by the commonwealth government, I think, every five years. That review is next year. So the commonwealth government, after the federal election, will announce the outcomes of that review and they will make a decision through the Building Code whether or not there need to be more or less. I am assuming there will need to be more. But that again will have wideranging ramifications for car parking. It is important that it is done with a bit of consideration, which is why this legislation does not contemplate additional car parking.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Who is responsible for managing noncompliance? In other words, who has the authority to place a ticket on a car that is not displaying the appropriate badge or pass or permit on say a council-owned road or a government institution car park or a car park that is publicly owned and that of a parking space in a private car park where already we know that the only option available in private car parks for overstaying, for example, is a civil action of which very few are successful? Anyone who challenges civil actions by shopping centre car parks in particular who charge are normally successful on that basis. Are you able to advise for public roads who can issue a fine and for private car parking spaces who is responsible for issuing fines to people who inappropriately use disability car parking?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Councils are responsible for public roads and public car parks. They will issue their expiations. We do not have parking inspectors in state government. For private car parking in multistorey car parking, those private owners would have their own compliance officers; they do their own enforcement. There has been, I understand, an agreement between state government and private operators to allow—if my memory serves me correctly, there is an ability for private car parks to have their compliance enforced. That is an agreement that was made by previous governments.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Is that a civil case? Would they have to pursue that through the civil courts?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I understand, yes, it is a civil case.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: With your intention that you are going to start to monitor the use of disability car parking, have you considered perhaps disability car parking being allocated for specific times of the day? I know that a Sunday lunch, for example, at a pub may very well require additional disability car parking. We know that usually there would be a higher percentage of older people who would have these passes than younger people and in a family environment for a Sunday lunch, for example, you would expect that there might be more people who would come to that car park which may increase the demand for disability parking.

However, when that pub, at 6 o'clock, starts the nightclub, it may very well be that the data you are collecting suggests that half the number of disability car parks would be available, in which case there would be more room for women, for example, to park closer to the venue and not have these car parks empty. Is that something that you might consider—having time changes or times for disability parking between 11 and three, and then it becomes a normal car park outside those hours—in your review as to whether there is a requirement for more disability car parking due to the changes in this bill?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am not going to lie: it is a good suggestion. The Private Parking Areas Act is not assigned to me, so I cannot speak on behalf of another minister. I think councils could easily do this if they chose to, if it were fitting within the Australian Road Rules for them to allow a time—nine until three—for disability car parking only on the streets. I am sure it would be fine. I think it is a good idea, but I have not put my mind towards that aspect yet.

If I can give the member an outline of what my thinking is right now, my thinking is, as I said earlier, to catch up to speed with the rest of the country on eligibility, have a larger cohort available, and see how that works over a period of time. If we need to make changes in the form of the Building Code or potentially make our own changes, if the government makes a policy decision, I make a recommendation to the minister whom the Private Parking Areas Act is assigned to about this.

I think the idea of a council in and around service clubs, cafes, churches or community halls to, say, have a larger number of disability parking permits for a specific period of time is an excellent idea. It is something that I might write to the LGA on straight after this bill passes. I think it is a good suggestion from the member.

Clause passed.

Clauses 6 to 9 passed.

Clause 10.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, clause 10(2) refers to the eligibility criteria prescribed by the regulations. For the benefit of disability organisations, who would typically prefer as much detail as possible to be included in the act itself, could you outline the sort of detail that would be written into regulations and whether you expect them to be updated with any frequency?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: As I said in the second reading speech, the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria will be basically about removing the requirement about an applicant's ability to use public transport and retaining the existing physical mobility impairment criteria so applicants who have temporary or permanent physical impairments will still need to show that the speed of their movement is severely restricted. The other regulation is about people who are legally blind, without them needing to satisfy the mobility criteria. The last part is, of course, including the criteria for a DPP for people who have significant intellectual, cognitive, behavioural or neurological impairments that prevent the person being able to independently mobilise safely without continuous support from another person.

I am not going to write these regulations: the department and parliamentary counsel are. The government sets the broad criteria that we want to be accepted, and they will go away and do that. This is the way we have done regulations. I just also point out that Minister Bourke and myself would

be more than happy to meet with these groups at your recommendation to discuss these even further if we need to.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (17:15): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES (RESPONSE TO REPORTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

At 17:16 the house adjourned until Tuesday 18 February 2025 at 11:00.