

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 19 February 2025

The **SPEAKER (Hon. L.W.K. Bignell)** took the chair at 10:30.

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

The **SPEAKER** read prayers.

Bills

STATUTES AMENDMENT (ASSAULTS ON POLICE OFFICERS) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (10:32): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Bail Act 1985, the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 and the Sentencing Act 2017. Read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (10:32): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Statutes Amendment (Assaults on Police Officers) Bill 2025 this morning to do two things: first, to back in our frontline police officers and better protect those who protect us every day and, secondly, to send a very clear message to any coward who is thinking of harming or attacking or assaulting a police officer, and that is if you do so and you are found guilty you will go to jail.

The introduction of this bill is in a very concerning context where we have seen a really big increase in assaults on police over the past couple of years. Indeed, it was recently reported that assaults on police are up nearly 40 per cent over the last couple of years during the term of this Labor government. I am sick of seeing our police treated as some sort of punching bag. We have seen very recent examples of disgusting behaviour towards our brave police officers, everything from our police officers being attacked savagely with swords to our police officers being run over with vehicles.

Then, of course, we had a case last year before the courts that caused not only great concern among police but, I think it is fair to say, outrage amongst the community more generally when we saw a pregnant police officer savagely and viciously attacked on Rundle Street. Severe injuries were inflicted by an offender who I think showed very little remorse and got to walk away from court without serving a single day in jail after sentencing.

That was of course the case of Raina Cruise. The name that we probably do not hear as much when we talk about Raina Cruise in the media is Senior Constable Anthea Beck, who was the police officer on duty that evening, who was trying to do little more than her job of protecting us and was subject to this savage attack. The recent *Police Journal* describes some of that attack on Senior Constable Anthea Beck. I will quote a small passage:

Beck had responded to a disturbance and encountered drunk, out-of-control street offender Raina Cruise, who took only seconds to get violent.

It came after a polite police request simply to talk to Cruise and her two male companions. But none of the three was up for a polite conversation. Indeed, the trio was instantly hostile.

Cruise raged against Beck, whose hair she grabbed and ultimately ripped out in chunks. She also let fly with her fists and feet as Beck copped multiple punches to her head, face and body and kicks to her legs and torso. And Cruise was the heavier, taller and more powerfully built of the two women.

In danger of copping a punch which might well have knocked her out, Beck managed to grasp and deploy her pepper spray. It had no effect on Cruise. Beck wound up with droplets in her own eyes and then struggled to see.

But she still fought on to do her duty, which was to try to overpower, contain and arrest the rampaging Cruise. She stuck to the task, not only despite the battering but also without the slightest hint that she was carrying her first child.

It is a harrowing account of a disgusting attack on a police officer.

Last year, Raina Cruise was found guilty of the offence of assaulting a police officer and was sentenced to three years and eight months' imprisonment, with a non-parole period of two years, but that sentence was suspended and Raina Cruise walked out of that courtroom without serving a single day in jail after sentencing. When that happened, Senior Constable Anthea Beck posted a statement with her reaction to that sentencing. She said:

The work and emotional labour put in by so many people for the last three years has been reduced to insult. I am disgusted, disappointed. But more I am afraid for my colleagues and friends, expected to uphold and protect, but cannot expect the same for themselves.

What does this outcome say except you can be found guilty of causing harm to an emergency service worker, and at worse expect the inconvenience of a lengthy court proceeding.

That is all that has occurred here: the inconvenience of a lengthy court proceeding in response to a vicious attack on a servicing police officer.

The Police Association president also issued a statement at the same time. I note and thank the Police Association for their advocacy in the legislative reform that we bring before the house today. The Police Association said, and I quote:

Farcical sentences like this one only serve to embolden criminals and demoralise police. It makes a mockery of the system when, after what she did, an offender like Cruise can walk away from the courtroom and simply return to her every-day life. This is not justice.

It is not justice. The introduction of this bill today is designed to bring a bit of justice back for our police officers. These despicable attacks need to have penalties and need to have sentences that are in line with community expectations, and I think in this example we have seen a failure of that, and we have seen that underscoring the need for legislative reform. It is not the only example, it is just the most recent to capture public attention.

It was the former Liberal government that last undertook law reform in this space, amending the Criminal Law Consolidation Act to create an aggravated offence for assaulting a prescribed emergency worker—that is under section 20AA—and that holds a maximum penalty of 15 years. That was an important reform. It provided the means and ability for a court to convict and sentence individuals who conduct these assaults on police. But, unfortunately, we are seeing a continued prevalence of assaults on police, and we are seeing that the courts are just not imposing the sorts of sentences that that legislation might have intended or, indeed, the community might expect. That is why the opposition continues its proud tradition of law reform in law and order today.

The bill before the house does three things broadly. The first is an amendment to section 20AA of the act, the provision I referred to earlier that the former Liberal government introduced in 2019, to impose a mandatory imprisonment of a period no less than six months for a person who causes harm to a police officer acting in the course of their official duties. This is in clause 3 of the bill.

Secondly, the bill removes the ability for a court to suspend the sentence that is imposed when someone is found guilty of such an offence. This is in clause 4. Time and time again we see a heavy sentence imposed and a significant non-parole period imposed, but then an ability to suspend the sentence, which sees very little consequence for the offender and I think sends the wrong message to any other person who might think it is a good idea to go and attack or assault a police officer. Through clause 4 we are amending the Sentencing Act to ensure that in most cases the sentence of imprisonment cannot be suspended.

Thirdly, the bill introduces an amendment to the Bail Act to have a presumption against bail for those who have been taken into custody for this particular offence. This is an amendment to section 10A of the Bail Act, which lists a number of offences that we see as appropriate to have a

presumption against bail. We think that the gravity of the offending when a police officer is involved, an assault on a police officer causing harm and doing so in a deliberate and intentional way, meets that threshold and is also appropriate to add to that list under section 10A.

If you assault a police officer you will go to jail. If you assault a police officer your sentence will not be suspended, and if you assault a police officer you will have a presumption against bail. None of this is a particularly novel approach. Indeed, we see similar reforms in many jurisdictions across the country. All of Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have some sort of scheme for mandatory custodial sentences for assaulting a police officer.

We know that the Police Association supports legislation in this sort of intent and have recently written to the Attorney, I understand, urging some of the reforms that are contemplated in this bill. It is so important that we send the right message to our police officers and to those cowards who think it is a good idea to attack them. It is particularly important during this police resourcing crisis that we find ourselves in.

We know that we have a shortfall of nearly 200 police officers on the beat. We know that one in three SAPOL employees are considering leaving the force in the next three years. Indeed, Senior Constable Anthea Beck herself described one symptom of the police resourcing crisis during her own ordeal, when she said, and this is a quote from the Police Association Journal:

A compounding issue on that busy Saturday night-Sunday morning was that back-up was minutes away.

Anthea Beck said:

I could hear comms, or whoever was on the radio, calling for help for me. I recall hearing them ask: 'Is there any free patrols to come?' But I knew there wasn't. I knew the rest of my team was on foot in Hindley Street. So it was just like: 'Who's going to come?'

That is starkly illustrating the police resourcing crisis that we face. It is critical that we as a parliament show police that we have got their back and we protect our frontline policer officers.

The SPEAKER: Do you seek leave to continue?

Mr BATTY: I will conclude. We need to show the police that we have their back. Enough is enough. We should pass this law today and protect our police.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

Parliamentary Procedure

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (10:45): I move without notice:

That standing and sessional orders be so far suspended as to enable the consideration of a government bill to take precedence forthwith over private members' business.

The SPEAKER: I have counted the house and there being present an absolute majority of the whole number of members of the house, I accept the motion.

Motion carried.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I move:

That standing orders be and remain so far suspended as to enable the introduction of a bill without notice forthwith and its passage through all stages without delay.

The SPEAKER: I have counted the house and there being an absolute majority of the whole number of members of the house, I accept the motion.

Motion carried.

*Bills***WHYALLA STEEL WORKS (CHARGE ON PROPERTY) AMENDMENT BILL***Introduction and First Reading*

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (10:48): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Whyalla Steel Works Act 1958. Read a first time.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I move:

That the allotted time for the remaining stages of the bill be five minutes.

Motion carried.

Second Reading

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (10:48): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I commend the bill to the house and seek leave to have the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

The Bill I am introducing today seeks to ensure the Crown has appropriate monitoring and enforcement rights and powers regarding the State strategic asset of the Whyalla steel works, and its associated facilities including the mining works and transport, storage or trans-shipping facilities, hereinafter referred to as the Whyalla steel works.

It amends the *Whyalla Steel Works Act 1958*, formerly the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's Steel Works Indenture Act 1958, which approves and ratifies an Indenture between the State of South Australia and OneSteel relating to the operation of its steel works in Whyalla.

The Act came into being after lengthy years-long negotiations with the Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP), where a bargain was struck, and the company was provided relevant prospecting, mineral and land rights and commitments to infrastructure, in return for which the company would build the Steelworks within 10 years and pay the relevant rates and royalties.

Summarising the deal, the then Premier explained 'this represents a bargain made between the two parties. In my opinion, it has given this State something that will be of inestimable value in the years to come'.

The preamble of the original Indenture, found in Schedule 1 of the Act, recognises the establishment of steel works in South Australia would greatly increase the economic strength of the State and provide opportunities for the employment and advancement of its citizens and be instrumental in influencing other industries which substantially depend on the products of the Company in their processes of manufacture to establish operations at Whyalla.

The steel works today is as important to Australia, the State and the Whyalla community as was contemplated by the introduction of the Act in 1958.

The steel works provide work for several thousand people and produces steel products of critical importance to the Australian Economy, such as long products including rail, structural beams and columns, steel angle and piles used for domestic and large scale industrial and infrastructure projects.

Whilst the steel works have not been without challenges since their establishment, such as the appointment of a voluntary administrator in early 2016, these challenges have always been overcome.

The sale of the steel works out of administration to Steel manufacturer Liberty House GFG occurred in September 2017 and the GFG Alliance continues to be the owner and operator of the steel works today.

The State has made significant efforts to supporting Whyalla's mining, smelting and manufacturing operations. A Steel Task Force was established in 2015 and a State commitment was made to provide \$50 million to support co-investment in capital infrastructures to secure the sustainable future of the Whyalla steel works. Unfortunately, the owners of the steel works have not brought forward a compliant project proposal to access any of that funding.

The situation we find ourselves in today is one where the Crown is owed millions of dollars in mining royalties and water debts by OneSteel Manufacturing Pty Ltd the legal entity that owns and operates the steel works.

It is also being widely reported that there are also significant debts owed to a broad range of suppliers to the Whyalla steelworks and multiple stop works by suppliers have been reported over the last few months as suppliers

attempt to recover their debt. These stop works by unpaid suppliers include critical contractors across mining, port, rail and steelmaking operations.

The blast furnace, a critical component of the Whyalla steelworks, experienced two prolonged outages in 2024, impacting the production of steel products. As publicly stated by the GFG Alliance Chairman, efforts are still continuing to stabilise and accelerate production.

I am, with the rest of Government and the Whyalla community, concerned.

The State has sought to work with OneSteel on the repayment of their debts. As the continued operation of the Whyalla steel works is of utmost importance, every opportunity has been given to the company to manage this situation.

Attempts to rectify this situation have, however, been unsuccessful and the State has an obligation to the people of South Australia to act on these non-payments.

Whilst the mining royalty debt is secured by way of first ranking charge over all of the property of the Company save in respect of real property and the SA Water debt is secured by way of first ranking charge over all real property in relation to which water services have been provided, the enforcement rights are imperfect.

One debt is a charge over everything but land; the other is over only land and not anything else.

This is a situation that has not emerged through any intention of Parliament but instead has only become apparent when rights are considered as a whole.

Some of the enforcement mechanisms available to the State, such as suspension and cancellation of the mining tenement leases, are effective general enforcement mechanisms in relation to mining tenements, however, in this specific circumstance exercising these rights would significantly impact the continuity of the steel works and the Whyalla community.

In essence, our enforcement rights fall at extremes – either insufficient to enable effective redress or so strong as to potentially operate against the continued viability of the Company's operations.

The Bill therefore seeks a minor amendment to the *Whyalla Steel Works Act 1958* to ensure the State has the appropriate rights and powers to act on these debts, in a manner that protects the continued operations of the Whyalla steel works. Specifically, it would avoid the risk that the State cannot use the powers under the Corporations Act of the Commonwealth so as to maximise the chances of the Company, or as much as possible of its business, continuing in existence.

The amendment creates a first ranking charge over all property of the Company for any amount owed by the Company to the Crown or an agency or instrumentality of the Crown, securing payment of the amount owed.

The charge is presently enforceable by the Minister for Energy and Mining, as the Minister to whom the Act is committed under the Bill.

Importantly, various enforcement mechanisms that enable the State to act on the debts owed in a manner that is consistent with the objective of protecting the continued operation of the Whyalla steel works are provided for in the Bill.

It is important to note that these changes do not apply to mining tenures more generally nor do they modify the general law in relation to how the State recovers debts.

These changes only apply to debts owed in respect of the entity operating under the Indenture.

This is appropriate—the indenture has granted special rights and privileges in exchange for investment and the payment of royalties. Given there has been neither investment, nor payment of royalties, the State should have available to it remedies commensurate with the rights and privileges granted.

We are not seeking these amendments for the purpose of placing repayment of our debt above other suppliers. We strongly believe that GFG should pay all its creditors, not just the State of South Australia.

A further challenge that has been highlighted by the current circumstances affecting the GFG Alliance and the Whyalla steel works is the lack of transparency provided to the State regarding this State strategic asset.

The Bill seeks to rectify this by requiring the Company to submit annual audited financial reports to the Minister and enabling the Minister to seek documents or information from the Company by written notice.

To contribute to assurances to the State that the Whyalla steel works are being appropriately operated and maintained, the Bill requires the Company to provide greater transparency of risks and actual disruptions to the steelworks operations. Furthermore, the Company must also facilitate access for persons designated by the Minister to Company works or facilities for inspection and reporting purposes.

At the end of the day, if the steelworks had been appropriately managed, the enforcement and information gathering powers contained in this Bill would not have been necessary to introduce.

I need to emphasise that the Act and Indenture does not contemplate the Whyalla steelworks ceasing operations, indeed there is an implicit assumption of their ongoing operation.

The State also does not see an end of steel making in Whyalla. The Company has access to significant magnetite ore reserves, suitable for the transformation of the Whyalla operations to a green iron and steel hub.

This Bill will provide the State with better visibility of this State strategic infrastructure into the future.

It also enables the State to act on debts owed in a manner consistent with securing the securing the immediate future of the Whyalla Steel Works and moving towards a sustainable long-term future.

I commend the Bill to Members.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Whyalla Steel Works Act 1958*

3—Insertion of sections 3A, 3B and 3C

This clause inserts new sections as follows:

3A—Charge on property

The proposed section creates a charge over all property of the Company securing payment of amounts owed to the Crown or an agency or instrumentality of the Crown by the Company. The proposed section further sets out various matters in relation to the effect, terms and conditions of the charge.

3B—Charge declared to be a statutory interest

The proposed section provides that a charge of a kind created pursuant to section 3A is declared to be a statutory interest to which section 73(2) of the *Personal Property Securities Act 2009* of the Commonwealth applies.

3C—Provision of reports and information etc

The proposed section:

- requires the Company to provide certain reports, information and documents to the Minister in a manner and in circumstances set out in the provision;
- requires the Company to notify the Minister in writing as soon as practicable after becoming aware of planned or unplanned significant disruptions, or a risk of significant disruption, of relevant Company works or facilities;
- allows the Minister to issue guidelines to the Company specifying the kinds of events that will constitute planned or unplanned significant disruptions or a risk of significant disruption, of relevant Company works or facilities;
- requires the Company to facilitate access to relevant Company works and facilities by persons designated by the Minister for the purposes of inspection and reporting to the Minister in accordance with the proposed section;
- creates an offence with a maximum penalty of \$1,000,000 if the Company refuses or fails to comply with a requirement under the proposed section;
- creates an offence with a maximum penalty of \$1,000,000 or 2 years imprisonment if a person makes a statement that is false or misleading in a material particular (whether by reason of the inclusion or omission of any particular) in any document, information or answer given under the proposed section;
- provides that information provided under the proposed section is not liable to disclosure under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (10:49): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Motions

SPORTS VOUCHERS

Mrs PEARCE (King) (11:03): I move:

That this house—

- (a) notes that more than 90,000 sports vouchers were redeemed in 2024, helping South Australian families save over \$9 million and ensuring more children and young people can participate in sport or recreation activities;
- (b) commends the Malinauskas Labor government on the doubling of sports vouchers from 1 January 2025 to allow families to claim two \$100 vouchers per eligible child each year and the expansion to include music lessons; and
- (c) commends the government's increased focus on increasing participation for all South Australians to ensure they benefit from the mental, physical and emotional benefits from being part of the sport or recreation they love.

It is really pleasing to share with the house that last year we had a record number of more than 95,000 claims for sports vouchers across South Australia. It has been a growing trend since its inception in 2015, with 707,000 claims being made within our state, providing over \$60 million worth of support. It is a rising trend. Looking at the 2022 figures, we saw that we had 85,000 sign-ups. In 2023, we saw we had 88,000 sign ups. Now, seeing the phenomenal number of 95,000 sign-ups, we know we are on the right track to helping young people in our state get involved and active in their local communities, living healthy, active lives.

I would like to highlight some of the statistics that we have been seeing in our regional communities as well. Last year, in the Murray and Mallee region, we saw a 10 per cent increase of up to 3,924 claims made. On Kangaroo Island and the Fleurieu Peninsula, we saw an increase of 10 per cent as well, totalling 2,944 claims made. In the Yorke and Mid North region, we saw an increase of 7 per cent, with 4,193 claims made. Over in the Adelaide Hills, we saw a really phenomenal uptake of 12 per cent, going up to 5,666 claims made. Barossa, Light and Lower North also had good strong increases in participation and uptake of this program of 8 per cent, which took it to 5,118.

It just goes to show that there is a strong desire within communities, families, sporting bodies and the like to help our young people get engaged and that we are hitting the mark with the uptake that we are seeing in this space. It is really pleasing as well that this year's trend looks like it is going to be stronger than ever, with January receiving a record number of claims, more than 11,000 claims made in the very first month. That is a 164 per cent increase on the January figures that we saw last year.

For a bit of fun, the most popular activities include soccer, gymnastics, swimming, Australian Rules and dance, and I highlight this because it goes to show that the expansions over the years have been received well, seeing as both dance and swimming have also been included and reflected in the uptake that we have seen already in January. The regions have seen massive growth for the first month of this year with the expansion. In Nuriootpa, we have seen a tenfold increase; we have gone from 13 last year in January up to 138. In Mount Barker, it is 120 up to 153; Mount Gambier, seven up to 70; and Hayborough, 25 up to 44.

It just goes to show that there is a really strong response from our local regional communities as well as what we are seeing in our metropolitan communities, making sure that all South Australians, families and young people are receiving the supports that they need to encourage them to live healthy, active lives. It goes to show that this program is having continued relevance and appeal to players, to families and to club organisations all across our state, which is something we have continued to work towards, ensuring that we are achieving and supporting in as many ways as we possibly can.

I know that this year will be a strong year because this is a year where we have seen an expansion that is going to provide local families in our state with greater flexibility and choice in how they access these sports vouchers, now Sports Vouchers Plus. It also importantly gives more clubs and sporting bodies the opportunity to encourage this important program for the local communities because they are able to say you can hold the vouchers and choose to spend them a little later in the year.

We know kids often play sports across seasons, or they might be playing multiple sports, or maybe they have a different interest and music is their avenue. No matter what it is, we want to help encourage our kids to embrace these healthy lifestyles, which is why one of the expansions is ensuring that not only have the vouchers doubled but you are given the option to spend them in two ways, either with two \$100 vouchers across activities or across seasons, or you could spend it all in one go if that is what works best for the family and the household as well.

We are including music because, as I said, we want to ensure that kids are living healthy, active lives, engaged and connected in their local communities. Music is just as important an avenue that we can support our kids to embrace, no matter where they are and where they live. We have had a pretty firm vision within our government that we want to ensure that kids are getting off screens and are active in their local communities. We know the detrimental effect addiction to screens and the like can have on our young people and the impressions that screens can make on them at such an important time in their growth and development.

We have taken active steps in that space, of course, with the banning of mobile phones in our public high schools, which we have seen a really strong reaction to and we are seeing good results as a result of that. We have certainly taken steps to lead the way in the steps that we have been taking in terms of the social media ban as well, which I am really pleased to see now has a national approach to help protect our young people. But what is just as important is ensuring that we provide avenues that our young people can embrace in place of these, where we possibly can. With that, I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Bills

SUMMARY OFFENCES (KNIVES AND OTHER WEAPONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

WHYALLA STEEL WORKS (CHARGE ON PROPERTY) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

Motions

SPORTS VOUCHERS

Adjourned debate on motion of Mrs Pearce (resumed on motion).

Mrs PEARCE (King) (11:12): As I was saying, it is just as important to ensure that we are providing healthy avenues for young people to embrace instead of social media screens and the like wherever we can, which is why it is such a pleasure to be doing work in this space.

I was not an extraordinary sportsperson at all in my younger years, but I did absolutely love being involved in sports and local clubs, and now when I look back I actually recognise that not only was I active in playing sports but a lot of my social life revolved around sports and the like. I certainly was not a basketball player but I spent a lot of my Friday nights over at the basketball courts when growing up, and in winter it was over at the hockey as well.

It was important, looking back, that I had this because it gave me social circles and communities to get ingrained in and it provided me something to do, somewhere to be and people to

support me as well. It really instilled that community sense of pride that is so important to reflect on because it is something you take with you long into your adult years. It is why this role is so important.

We know the benefits that can be provided and the skills that can be taught to a young person through embracing sport, recreational activities and music endeavours and the like. We know it teaches you how to win, how to lose, how to communicate, how to work as a team, how to problem solve, how to develop resilience and, importantly, to have a sense of connection to a community and a community pride, which makes local areas within our state such special places to live in. With that, I commend the motion to the house.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (11:14): I, too, rise to support this motion. It is a great motion. It is an important motion that has been exercised since 2015. I remember quite fondly when I was the shadow sports minister the talk was about how we better promote our young people onto the sports field and out to be more active. Back in 2015 there was much more reckoning, with people realising just how much time their children and young ones were spending away from activities and sport and preferring screen time. What we have seen over a number of years is this really has been a good way to spend taxpayers' money.

When this voucher program was initiated back in 2015, it was a \$50 program per child to help promote activity and more engagement with sport. Along the course of time we have amended it, and I think we have made it better. We have made it more inclusive. Those of us in this chamber who have been policymakers have seen fit to not only broaden the horizon of what sports and activities are eligible but also increase the amount of support for those young ones to be active, participate and be part of a local sports club.

If you look at relevance from 2015 at \$50 per school voucher and you look at the cost of playing sport—the cost of membership and tuition, which is what the vouchers are there for—it is about on par. Even though we have seen an increase in that voucher program, the cost of living has increased, the cost of providing tuition has increased, the cost of membership has increased and the cost of being a participant in a sporting program has increased significantly, just like everything else has. I think what I have seen and what I promoted back in 2015—and, sir, if I remember rightly, you were the sports minister at that point in time.

The SPEAKER: Correct; and we worked in a very positive, bipartisan way and I want to thank you for all the cooperation you gave as the opposition sports spokesperson.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you. My memory runs long with some of the great work that you did as a sports minister. But I think more importantly, what we have seen is the adaptation of the program. We are seeing more people aware that there is this program in place to help them, to promote, to be there to make young people more active and to have their brains more sports orientated.

I always said that sport was better for brain development, it was better for health outcomes and it was really good for social networking, not only for the children, the five-to-13 year olds, but also for the parents to get out and about too. They have to take their young ones out to sports training and out to participate in sport on the day, and it has made parents more active in pursuing their children's pursuits.

What I have seen in a bigger long-term picture is that community engagement has been much better, and it is helping advance the sporting clubs. More participation and more membership gives an opportunity for clubs to spread their wings and have bigger programs, better equipment and better arenas or better sports grounds for the sake of being better at sport.

I would like to think that this program will in some way, shape or form promote activities. It will give better scope for our young ones to aspire to be better at sport. It will inspire them to live their dreams. Many of these young ones aspire to one day play AFL football or aspire to compete at the Olympic Games or the Commonwealth Games. It is about aspiration, and I think what this voucher program has shown us is that this is probably one of the great ways that we are spending taxpayers' money.

I understand the health system, the education system and other frontline services need to be supported by the taxpayer, but this is just a great initiative that I have witnessed since coming to

this place. We as legislators and policymakers get ridiculed for wasting taxpayers' money. We get ridiculed for not spending it appropriately or to the public's expectation. What I am seeing is that the voucher program is being expanded. It has more participants.

Over the course of time, the number of vouchers continues to increase, somewhere around 10 per cent. Even though we are widening the scope for people who are eligible to be able to get the two \$100 vouchers, what I am seeing is it is giving competitive sport a larger cohort of membership. It is giving sport a much larger scope of participation, particularly for these early adopters. It allows young children who are well balanced and have good sporting prowess to spread their wings and potentially try another sport with the assistance of the voucher program.

I will not go into the current number of vouchers that have been used or applied for, but what I can say is that the proof is in the pudding; that is, the program continues to grow and continues to be out there. One of the stats that I did read—and I was a little disappointed—is that children in metro sporting groups are by far much better at accessing the voucher program. I would urge all regional MPs here to better promote the voucher program. Get out into your community and put it out there that this voucher program is available to every five-to-13 year old, whether they are aspirational participants, whether the parents are looking to get them off the couch or whether they are looking to get out there and better participate in community sporting programs.

As the Speaker has said, this was a bipartisan approach. It was seen as doing good for community, doing good for young South Australians—the aspirational and potential sporting stars who will be part of our sporting future. The proof will be in the pudding. Those voucher programs have been in train now for 10 years, and we will be starting to see the fruits of this program's success and the coming of age of participants. They are now young adults who will be looking to really flex their muscle in their chosen sports. Let's hope that we will see some of these young recipients of sports vouchers do our state and our country proud and do well in their sport.

What I must say is that the numbers of vouchers in my electorate of Chaffey have been pretty well received. About 2,200 vouchers have been distributed, to the tune of about \$220,000. That money goes into community clubs and community service and helps to make those community clubs better. It helps to attract volunteers. It helps parents to become more engaged. As I have said, the voucher program has tentacles that are far-reaching. They are there to make community sport, school sport, all sporting activities, better and more attractive and more affordable, because for many people it is costly to take their children into a sporting environment. It is not just about membership; it is about the attire you have to use and the time that sometimes parents have to give up. The Sports Vouchers program really is well worth celebrating, so I congratulate the mover of this motion. It is a good motion, it is a good program, and long live sports vouchers here in SA.

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL (Mawson) (11:24): It is a bit of a different view from here. It is good to see the Hansard people after almost a year. I have been looking out while you have sat there above me. It's very nice to see all of your smiling faces!

I rise to support this motion and place on the record my thanks to many people along the way. When I was a member of the Labor Party and Minister for Sport we took this to the 2014 election. I have to say it was one of the most popular things that I ever did being out on the hustings talking about, to people from all walks of life. When you are running a family budget we know how tight things can be and if people are making choices between food, fuel and sport for their kids, quite often sport for the kids was one of the first things that got cut in a family budget, so it was a great initiative, one that was backed in by Premier Jay Weatherill at the time and the Treasurer, as we took that to the 2014 election.

I also want to thank Paul Anderson, who ran the Office for Rec and Sport in those days, and Kylie Taylor who is now heading it, but she was there playing an important role. I really want to thank someone who has always been a great mentor to me, Marg Ralston, who was my sports adviser at the time. She looked at what was happening in other states where they had introduced vouchers so that we could come up with the fairest and most equitable system that did not lose a lot of money.

We wanted the best way to get money into people's pockets and in the most direct way possible, so we had to come up with a system that could not be rorted but also that did not waste a lot of money in administration. To Marg, for the great work that you did in my office and before that

as the head of the South Australian Olympic Committee, I want to place on the record once again my immense gratitude for your work.

These vouchers not only have an impact in the sporting sphere but it reaches over into the justice system, it reaches over into health, particularly the mental and physical health of young kids, and sets them up for, hopefully, a lifetime of healthy habits, whether that is physical fitness or whether it is eating the right things. Sport teaches people of all ages how to be better communicators, how to work in a team environment, how to make decisions, how to win well and, more importantly, how to lose well. Our education system is a terrific place for young people to learn, but the sporting fields and courts are also really important.

The member for Chaffey mentioned in his speech the bipartisan approach that we have taken to sports vouchers, and I have to say that the Liberal Party was very much onside from day one when the member for Chaffey was the opposition sport spokesperson. But I also want to put on the record my thanks to Corey Wingard for the work he did as sports minister, increasing the scope and the payments for the sports vouchers. That was backed up by Labor when Labor came back into power as well. So I commend this motion to the house. I thank the member for King for bringing this in, and I want to recognise the great work she is doing in her assistant minister role, working to increase the participation of young people in sport.

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (11:28): I, too, rise to make a brief contribution to the motion, and thank the member for King for bringing this motion to the house. It is very timely because yesterday I filled out the sports voucher form for my daughter, Audrey, to undertake club soccer. It was great just to be able to fill it out, tick the box, \$200 off her soccer fees for the year, which is such a big help for any family.

I had the pleasure in the first week of the school year to visit a couple of my local schools and just stand at the front of the school gate at drop-off and pick-up times to talk to parents about the importance of this voucher system. I think they were blown away by the fact that they have access to up to \$200 off their children's extracurricular activities, whether that is sport, whether it is dance, whether it is Scouts or Girl Guides, and, importantly, we have expanded that program to now include music lessons as well.

I was a sporty kid, growing up in a country town. I do not think you have much choice—it is a bit of a religion, but I also loved my music education but that was always a bit of a juggle for many families, particularly for my mum, being a single mum, to be able to afford the various netball, basketball and tennis fees and, on top of that, my piano lessons as well.

I know how much of a help this will be to so many families, not just in my community but across South Australia, and a unique part of the Sports Vouchers Plus program, as we are now calling it, is that parents can choose to split that \$200 across a couple of activities. If they choose they could spend \$100 on their child's sport or swimming lessons or dance and also leave \$100 perhaps for the child to learn a musical instrument.

Let's be honest about what is really at the heart of this program, and that is getting kids off screens. It is about getting them active, out in their community, keeping fit, both physically and mentally, making friends and really just having a good time that perhaps does not involve a video game or a TV show or—heaven forbid—YouTube. I know as a parent how challenging that can be. I very much commend this motion and congratulate everybody who has been involved in the Sports Vouchers program from its inception and I really encourage parents to get on to the Sports Vouchers website, fill out that voucher and get \$200 for your family.

Ms PRATT (Frome) (11:31): I am confident that for all the contributions today we will only hear the positives about this sports program. The Sports Vouchers program, of course, was expanded and doubled from \$50 to \$100 under the Marshall Liberal government, but here we are in a collegial way recognising how important these vouchers are for all young people to be encouraged and assisted to engage in sporting activities. That is never more top of mind or obvious than in regional communities, so I welcome the contributions my regional colleagues are making today to demonstrate the take-up and the popularity of the Sports Vouchers program.

In the electorate of Frome the Sports Vouchers program is exceedingly popular and it is only growing in the right direction. To date, from January to today, the voucher take-up in Frome is already 460, which is wonderful. That is to a value of \$46,915. It is clear that there are lots of providers who understand the importance of promoting this to young people and parents, who, as we have heard, find it a fairly user-friendly process to fill out that paperwork.

I want to speak very specifically about what is happening in Frome and what that participation rate looks like. At the top of the leaderboard is the Clare Valley School of Dance, ably lead by Kate Mensforth. It is a perfect opportunity to celebrate a business and leisure pursuit, a hobby and an activity that so many young children in the Clare Valley districts participate in. I want to acknowledge Kate's hard work in relocating a much-loved school of dance from its old location in the main street over to the valleys now. It is a spectacular second-storey dance hall where the kids are surrounded by an entire community focused on their athletic pursuits.

We have swimming pools, the basketball stadium, squash courts, the gymnasium, the football, netball and tennis courts all together in one precinct. The work of Kate Mensforth in modernising and having a vision to relocate a cohort of students really has set the standard for this school of dance. Ninety-two vouchers have been accessed for young people to be involved in dance. There are many more all around the district, including the Owen Private Swim School, the UMA martial arts at Balaklava, the Eudunda Tennis Club, the Kapunda Tennis Club, the Adelaide Plains Equestrian Club and the Kapunda Bombers Basketball Club.

The Hon. N.D. Champion interjecting:

Ms PRATT: 'Go the Bombers' says the member for Taylor and I highly agree with him.

The Hon. N.D. Champion: Former under 17, even.

Ms PRATT: I am not going to allow more contributions from the member for Taylor into my Kapunda anecdotes. He can make his own, but 'Go the Bombers,' he said.

I want to explain to the house how important these vouchers are by analysing some of the data that is available on the take-up of the scheme. For those of us who have accessed the website, we can extrapolate who lives where and who is accessing the data. While I will give the top five, I am going to conclude with a different message, and that is the smaller pool of users. A total of 56 vouchers have been accessed by families who live in Clare, 54 vouchers in the Two Wells district, 43 vouchers in Freeling, 42 in Lewiston and 39 in Kapunda. That is to date.

The message that I want to leave the house understanding is how important this voucher scheme is and how important being involved in outdoor activities is for young people, whether they live in the country or not. The voucher scheme allows a family to access a \$100 voucher to improve equity of access to some of these activities. It is the tiny communities in Frome that are activated or supported by these vouchers.

I give a shout-out to the small towns and the small families that live within Waterloo, Templers, Manoora, Grace Plains, Fords, Buchanan, Wild Horse Plains, Thompson Beach, beautiful Salter Springs, Rhyne, Redbanks, Leighton, Julia, Hamilton, Korunye and Terowie. These remarkable townships stretch from Two Wells to Terowie. Once you cross the Gawler River you are in prime regional real estate, but some of these towns that I am referencing are very small. They do not have a tourism economy that attracts lots of people. They may not have a shop in the town, but families live there, families farm there and these vouchers have enabled perhaps one child in one town to have access to sport. I support the motion.

Mr DIGHTON (Black) (11:37): I rise to support the motion as well. I commend the Malinauskas government for doubling the voucher system, and I commend the member for King for her work in promoting this excellent service. I note her recent visit to Port Pirie to do just that. It is also, Mr Speaker, good to hear about and acknowledge your work in initiating this many—

The SPEAKER: I am very old.

Mr DIGHTON: —years ago. I have seen firsthand the impact that participation in sport can have on other areas of life. As a teacher and leader for 16 years at Sacred Heart College, I saw what happened when students and young people participated in sport on the field, and engaged with each

other on the field and on the court, and the positive impact that had when they came into the classroom and interacted there. It really created a sense of team building. In many cases, that physical activity supported self-regulation. I can tell you that after lunch in a school it is very important that students have had an opportunity to run around, because it helps with that very last lesson, which can be particularly challenging.

Participation in sport and other activities is really important for individual students, both physically and mentally and to create that sense of social wellbeing. Yesterday, I referenced a report in my maiden speech, a PISA report which talked about a link between belonging and academic achievement. That report demonstrated that Australian students have lower levels of belonging in comparison to many other nations, and therefore their academic results are lower as well. That is one factor we need to be aware of.

I would say that a sense of belonging is not just important for academic outcomes; it is really important for wellbeing in general. It goes well beyond just the classroom and the school because, in our society, creating a sense of belonging is actually really important. I am sure we would all agree in here that our sporting clubs and our other community organisations help to create a sense of belonging, so I want to reference the great sporting clubs and community clubs that are within my electorate, my community, for the work they do in supporting and promoting a sense of belonging and connection.

I am indulgently going to read out in the house a few of those names: the Cove Cobras Football Club, the Brighton and Seacliff Yacht Club, Christophers Taekwondo Academy, Cove BMX Club, Cove FC, Cove Cricket Club, Cove Tigers Netball Club, Dover Square Tennis Club, Hallett Cove Beach Tennis Club, Hallett Cove Little Athletics Centre, Hallett Cove Netball Club, National Karate Academies, Seacliff Calisthenics Club, Seacliff Community Recreation Association Incorporated, and Seacliff Gymnastics—which is where my son, Albie, participated in KinderGym and pre-gym and absolutely loved that experience, so this is a shout-out to them for their support of us over many years.

There is also Seacliff Hockey Club, Seacliff Surf Life Saving Club, Seacliff Tennis Club, Seacliff Uniting Netball Club, Sheidow Park Cricket Club, Southbank Tennis Club, Trott Park Fencing Club, Westminster Hockey Club and the Zanshin Freestyle Karate Holdfast Dojo, among many others.

It is great to hear that in my electorate last year there were 2,410 vouchers issued by 198 different providers, which represented over \$240,000 worth of vouchers for the people in my community of Black. Again, I want to reiterate how fantastic it is that we have this initiative. It is great to hear that it has been a bipartisan initiative over successive governments and parliaments. I really want to encourage many in our community and our families to take up this voucher system to ensure that we have more and more participation in our community to benefit our society going forward. I commend this motion to the house.

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (11:42): I, too, rise to speak to this really important motion. It has been fantastic to hear from members across the aisle about how important this initiative is for local communities, and I, too, pay tribute to your work in this space, Mr Speaker, so thank you very much.

As has been mentioned, cost should never be a barrier for kids wanting to get active and for families wanting to get their children off the video games, off YouTube and out into our fantastic local clubs. When in government, as has already been mentioned, the Liberal Party did double the sports vouchers from \$50 to \$100. That was really successful, and it is great to see this being extended even further to provide additional hip-pocket relief to families who are obviously doing it pretty tough at the moment. We have to do everything we can to keep children active and engaged. Given the significant cost-of-living pressures that families are facing right across Australia, including in my own local electorate, this is certainly welcomed.

Looking at the local level, I thought, as have other members, that it would be really interesting to go onto the website that is available to see how many local families have taken up this opportunity to claim the vouchers. I have looked at this pretty regularly, and in fact just this morning I had a look at what happened in 2024. Last year, there were over 2,500 local families who took up this

opportunity of the sports vouchers. What that means is that there is \$255,000 going back into the hip pockets of local families, which I think is amazing.

This year we have already seen 862 vouchers being claimed. That is more money going back into the hip pockets of hardworking families, and it also means that more and more children are getting active in our local clubs, which gets a big tick from me. It is great to see that the vouchers have been claimed across such a wide variety of sports and local providers, from the Adelaide Dirt Kart Club to karate and taekwondo clubs, skating clubs, calisthenics, judo and, of course, basketball, netball, soccer and hockey clubs.

I am sure it will not surprise people in the house that AFL has been the top activity in Schubert where we had 782 kids using vouchers for their local footy club or for Auskick. Soccer and netball are not very far behind. It is great to see dance coming in at No. 4. This was an expansion that was made possible by the former Liberal government. I know that there are a lot of local families in my community who have children who might not want to play netball, hockey, basketball or football, so to broaden the eligibility criteria is fantastic. I note that it has been expanded to scouts and other things too, which has been really welcomed because it is ultimately about getting kids out of the lounge room, off their screens, off YouTube and into activity of some form, whatever that may be.

As I have reiterated, I will allow other colleagues to make contributions to this, but cost should never be a barrier to physical activity. Putting money back into the hip pockets of hardworking families is really important. It gets children off their TV screens and active and engaged in local clubs right across our community. I support the Sports Vouchers program and I encourage all local families to hop on the website, have a look at their eligibility and take those vouchers to ensure their kids can get active as well. I commend the motion.

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (11:46): I rise to speak on the sports vouchers motion in South Australia. As a regional member, I encourage my community to be involved because, as we have heard, cost should not be a barrier for young people being involved in sport and activities, especially in regional South Australia where we know that cost of living and distance, and the costs associated with that, can be a deterrent, but the cost of involvement should not be. This is why this program of sports vouchers is one that is supported across political lines and one which both major parties understand plays a significant role in helping kids and families be involved in their local sporting communities and local communities as a whole.

Last year, in the electorate of Flinders there were nearly two and a half thousand vouchers utilised. This is a number that is very comparable across a lot of the different electorates. It is great to see the pick-up on these opportunities right across electorates in South Australia. In the electorate of Flinders, the sports of Aussie Rules and netball are the two most prominent. There are 23 different football teams and netball clubs in my electorate—23—which is why I cannot get to every best and fairest or even every Mail Medal.

Last year, there were 744 applications for Aussie Rules sports vouchers, which now includes girls' Aussie Rules, and the netball contribution of 633 vouchers—obviously the two most prominent sports—but it is encouraging to see that other sports have been active in encouraging their members and prospective members to apply for these sports vouchers. These include sports such as gymnastics, hip-hop dance, basketball, soccer, jazz and classical dance, hockey, swimming, cricket and athletics. The opportunities that these vouchers open up for families that may not necessarily be able to afford for their kids to participate in these sports does provide that extra encouragement and extra incentive, which is welcomed by all parties.

As I said, in the electorate of Flinders, right across the sporting landscape and activities in general, these vouchers have been applied for and this is why the opposition have been supportive of the work that has been done by the government to double the sports vouchers—likewise in the last term of the Liberal government, to double the number at the time as well—making this an effective program which can be utilised by families, by kids and by sporting groups right across the state of South Australia.

Can I just say to my community, if you are not utilising these sports vouchers for your kids, have a look at every opportunity that you have to be able to do it. There is now the opportunity to help with the cost of music lessons as well, another activity. Take up the chance to be able to help

with some of the challenging costs that we are all facing at the moment with the cost-of-living crisis and be involved in your local community, because strong local regional communities are what really provide a foundation for the long-term sustainability of regional South Australia in particular.

Mrs PEARCE (King) (11:50): I will be brief, but I just want to thank everybody for their very kind words to this motion. It is really heartwarming to see that across the house there is support for getting our kids off screens, healthy and active in their local communities and a recognition of how important Sports Vouchers Plus has been in helping to support that.

Mr Speaker, it was remiss of me, but thank you very much for the important work that you did to help develop this program and initiate this so families for the last 10 years have been able to be provided with support in terms of cost of living and accessing sport in their local communities. I acknowledge the growth of this program over the years as well, recognising that across the board, we are looking at ways to support families and what works for them to make sure that this stays relevant in local households as well.

I also quickly would like to touch on what the member for Black mentioned in terms of self-regulation because it is a really important reminder that there are so many benefits that can be recognised through participating in sport. Self-regulation through activities and through sport then helps lead to better outcomes in other areas of a person's life, in the case provided in terms of their education. To the member for Chaffey, I would like to reiterate the points made about local MPs needing to get out there and promote this program as much as they possibly can. It is a really important tool, and we will see more uptake of this program if there is more understanding about what is available and how to do that.

So I encourage all, where they can, to promote it within this place but outside of this place as well. If you are a sporting club that has not yet signed up to the program, please go onto the Sports Vouchers website. It is a really great place to have a look at what is available. It is really easy to sign up, and you could be helping so many families in your local community as a result as well as receiving your own benefits in doing so. With that, I thank everybody for their comments to the motion.

Motion carried.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (11:52): On behalf of the member for Bragg, I move:

That this house—

- (a) notes an increase in various crimes since March 2022;
- (b) notes that South Australia has a shortfall of nearly 200 police officers;
- (c) notes that the SAPOL recruitment, retention and resourcing crisis is having an impact on frontline policing and community safety; and
- (d) urges the government to provide sufficient resources to SAPOL to prevent crime.

Those tasked with looking after our communities should get all the support that they see necessary to be able to perform those duties, especially those on the frontlines, such as our SAPOL police officers. Some of the stories that we have seen in the media and that we, the opposition, have heard from officers, community members and officers' families about some of the challenges that have been faced by SAPOL officers in the line of duty are truly distressing.

Even just earlier today, the member for Bragg moved a motion specifically around violence towards police officers because at the moment the challenges around recruitment and retention really are writ large for the community of South Australia and especially South Australia Police. We know that there is a significant shortfall in the numbers of SAPOL officers actually able to be out on the frontline. This is a challenge that has been faced for several years, and this is why we in the opposition have been loudly calling for there to be appropriate attention and action from the government.

The challenges around recruitment then have an echo effect when it comes to retention. The numbers of police officers who we are seeing leaving the force—not just changing roles within SAPOL but absolutely drawing a line on their policing careers—is distressing. I have talked to a lot

of officers who have been in the position where they have just absolutely had a gutful of having to deal with the challenges that they are facing, and they are shifting to other careers that do not have that level of stress.

The big challenge is that these officers are not necessarily at the end of their career and are retiring; these are officers who are at the peak of their career. These are senior officers who are deciding to move away from the force. This is leaving a void not just as far as numbers go but as far as experience and capability go.

It is all well and good bringing in new recruits, but if you are losing just as many at the other end you are not gaining ground. If you are bringing in junior officers who need a level of training and experience that only comes with time and you are losing existing officers who have that experience, there is always going to be a lesser outcome for communities.

This is something that we have seen pertinently in metropolitan Adelaide and areas within some of the district policing areas in Adelaide that are feeling especially challenged with some of the numbers that we see, but the echo of these challenges faced in metropolitan areas reaches us all the way out in the regional areas.

I speak with officers right across my electorate. Police officers are telling me of the challenges that they are facing in covering not just the amount of crime but also the amount of distance that they are responsible for. At the moment, for instance, we have the situation where in between Ceduna and Port Augusta there may be one police officer covering that whole area of the Eyre Highway. Not only is there crime that they have to deal with day to day but there are also the challenges and the risks around vehicle accidents that come with such a prominent highway.

I speak with officers right across my electorate; I am not going to name names because they speak to me in confidence. When I hear stories of officers having to go hundreds of kilometres away from their station to be able to go to incidents and events, that means there is a significant void that is left in the meantime. If I have an officer who is all the way up into some of the outback areas of South Australia and suddenly there is a shark attack, for instance, on the West Coast—and sadly this is something we have seen recently—that response time is significantly challenged because of that distance which they are having to follow.

We have seen police stations close. It was only recently that the police stations at Wirrulla and Minnipa were closed. They may be small communities, but they are communities that are isolated. The challenges that come without having law enforcement in those areas is significant. We have seen some nefarious characters start to gravitate towards these communities that do not have police representation to them now. Also, the significant distance of Highway 1, which was covered by these stations previously, means that now officers are having to travel from Ceduna, from Streaky Bay or from Port Lincoln, and teams are spending more time driving to incidents than actually trying to catch the people who are causing concern within the communities.

It is in the most far-flung areas of our state that the challenge with recruitment, retention and resourcing is truly laid bare. I speak to officers at Ceduna and I speak to community at Ceduna. They are crying out for appropriate attention from this government, because at the moment they are at their wits' end. There are businesses that are having to face criminal activity every single day, there are communities that are feeling unsafe, and there are challenges with holding police officers in these positions for an extended period of time.

Let me give you some examples of the distances they are having to cover. I will just say that in my region the new local leadership has taken on a significant role that covers Port Lincoln to Whyalla to Ceduna, and everywhere in between; it has taken on a significant job. In no way are the words that I speak ever negative towards the work that is done on the ground by our police force. They do incredible work but that needs to be backed up by appropriate resourcing from government, and especially in areas of regional South Australia that are dealing with the tyranny of distance.

So whether this is in Whyalla, where I was on Friday, hearing some of the challenges that business owners and community are facing, or whether it is in Ceduna where I constantly hear of the calls from community to have better representation from SAPOL and have those positions filled, instead of trying to recruit people, actually put in incentives and scenarios where you can hold officers

for an extended period of time so that they can be a part of the community there, so they can gain that trust of community.

Or maybe it is in Port Lincoln where I am seeing challenges around youth crime, but also the level of disrespect for the rule of law within our community is starting to become more and more stark. So, if we have communities that are not feeling safe, and if we have people in their homes who are not feeling safe, there needs to be appropriate action from government. This is why this is a really important motion the member is bringing today about making sure that we sufficiently resource SAPOL to be able to prevent crime and keep our community safe, and do it in a way which is actually effective and efficient.

I have talked to that many police officers who are fed up with the process, the paperwork, and the carry-on, because they got into the force to do two things: to keep their community safe and catch the bad guys who are doing the wrong thing. We should be supporting them to be able to do that core function and do it in a way which is effective for the expectations of our community. I commend the motion.

Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (12:01): I rise to oppose the motion by the member for Bragg. I know it is a difficult job being the shadow minister for police, perhaps more than any others, but you have to get your facts right, otherwise all you are doing is undermining the good work of the police force in South Australia and we on this side of the house support our police. The member for Bragg's motion talks about additional police on the beat. Let's just look at the claims he made, and this is a quote from the member for Bragg:

Well this is smoke and mirrors...He's shut down two existing taskforces—

I am not sure whether he is referring to the minister or the police commissioner, presumably the minister—

tackling youth crime—

Mr Batty interjecting:

Mr ODENWALDER: Well—

and he has replaced it with one and given it a new name. There's no boost to police on the frontline.

The member for Bragg is claiming that there is 'no boost to police on the frontline'.

Mr Batty interjecting:

Mr ODENWALDER: Let's compare it to what the commissioner said during the announcement, and I quote directly:

Mr Batty interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Excuse me, member for Elizabeth. Member for Bragg, if I remember correctly you were heard in silence. I suggest you—

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Chaffey, do not interrupt when I have the floor. I suggest you listen to the member for Elizabeth's comments in silence.

Mr ODENWALDER: As I said, it is important to get your facts right, and the claims made by the member for Bragg are simply incorrect. It is not me saying that; they are not the Minister for Police's words. I will directly quote from the Commissioner of Police, I am not putting the words in anybody's mouth and I am not making incorrect claims about the state of our police force:

As a result of government funding that saw us employing more police security officer[s]...

The commissioner continues:

By creating this taskforce, the function remains the same but we now have permanently dedicated people undertaking those duties and it means that we no longer have to drag people out of patrol cars to fulfill that function—so it puts more police on the frontline.

'More police' according to the commissioner, but not according to the member for Bragg. Further, he makes claims about police numbers overall and, again, I quote the member for Bragg:

...in fact we have 10 per cent less police today than we did five years ago.

Notwithstanding the fact that the quantifier is wrong—it should be 'fewer' and it is one of those very few occasions perhaps where I wish Speaker Atkinson were here—latest figures from SAPOL show that there are now 4,537 active full-time sworn police officers, which is actually slightly above the last data available for the Marshall Liberal government which show, as of 30 June 2022, the number of sworn officers was 4,534.

In fact, over the term of the Marshall Liberal government—and the member for Flinders and the member for Bragg were not members of that illustrious government, but the Leader of the Opposition was. Not only was he a member of the government, he was a member of the cabinet. Not only was he a member of the cabinet, he was the Minister for Police. In fact, over the term of the Marshall Liberal government, sworn police officers declined from 4,678 at 30 June 2018 to 4,534 at 30 June 2022—down 3 per cent.

Mr Batty interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bragg, I have called you to order once. If you speak again, you will be defying my order and I will chuck you out.

Mr ODENWALDER: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, for your protection. It is true that South Australia Police found itself in the same predicament as many other employers in South Australia. The strength of our labour market means that our unemployment rate is at historic lows, with 52,000 jobs being created across our state and 23,000 job vacancies remaining. This leaves many local employers, including SAPOL, fighting for talent to attract more people to their workforce. Of course, like the rest of the community, South Australia is experiencing a relatively ageing workforce with an increasing number of retirements. However, to claim that the Malinauskas government is not investing in police flies against the facts. It is another case of the member for Bragg misleading the public and undermining the work of not only the government but the police force.

Since coming to office in 2022, the state government—

Mr BATTY: Point of order, sir. Standing order 127: it is a personal reflection. He is saying I am trying to mislead the public and undermine the police force. It is a nonsense, and it is not the place for it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, which—

Mr BATTY: He is personally reflecting on me, sir. He is obsessed with me. He should get back to the topic of the motion. I know the former shadow police minister might like to be the police minister and just give it a good crack but he—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bragg, what standing order are you referring to?

Mr BATTY: 127.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Which states?

Mr BATTY: It says that a member must not make a personal reflection on another member or impute improper motives to another member.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There was no personal reflection.

Mr Batty interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think you spend too much time in front of a mirror, member for Bragg.

Mr Whetstone: That's a personal reflection.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is a personal reflection. He is in front of a mirror—of course it is a personal reflection.

Mr ODENWALDER: If it assists the house, I withdraw and apologise for claiming that the member for Bragg is misleading the public, but we will let the facts speak for themselves, perhaps. Since coming to office in 2022, the state government has committed an additional \$334 million to support SAPOL, including:

- \$82 million to recruit an additional 189 sworn police security officers by 2024-25 to allow the redirection of existing sworn police officers to priority frontline operations;
- \$12.2 million to accelerate police recruitment and training;
- \$9.3 million to facilitate the redeployment of 24 police officers into priority policing duties by civilianisation of various positions in SA Police;
- \$25.3 million to deliver the National Firearms Register;
- \$19 million to develop and implement the digital police station; and
- \$18 million to construct a new police station in Naracoorte.

As I said, the member for Bragg and the member for Flinders were not members of that government but, as I said, there was one very prominent member of that government who is now the Leader of the Opposition and indeed was the Minister for Police.

I admit there were several police ministers. I will not reflect on some of those who were not in the house, but certainly the Leader of the Opposition was the Minister for Police for a significant time of the Marshall government. They imposed close to \$50 million of cuts to SA Police during their term in office. In addition, the state government and Police Association of South Australia (PASA) have reached an interim agreement on a significant package of reforms to support the attraction and retention of South Australian police officers.

The Malinauskas government has also introduced the toughest knife laws in the nation, outlawed posting and boasting about criminal activity and announced a crackdown recently on copper theft. If we are going to talk about crime statistics, as the member Flinders did, under our government crime across the state has fallen year on year for the fourth consecutive month. In the month of December the number of reported offences was almost 3 per cent down on the previous year and more than 3 per cent lower than in November. Offences against property also dropped in the year to December by 5 per cent, or 4,457 fewer offences. The latest SAPOL data also shows a 23 per cent drop in homicide and related offences, a 22 per cent decline in robbery and related offences against a person, and an 8 per cent drop in sexual assault.

We, on this side of the house, oppose this motion. The motion itself is misleading, it undermines the good work of SA Police, it misrepresents the government's commitment to strengthen our police force and to strengthen law and order policy in this state, and it fails to recognise that this government is fixing up the mistakes of the previous four years under the Marshall Liberal government when the Leader of the Opposition was the police minister, so we oppose this motion.

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (12:10): I rise to speak in support of this motion. I think there has never been a more important time to have a motion like this before the house. It feels like we cannot open a newspaper or turn on the television or listen to the radio without hearing more reports of violent home invasions in the suburbs, random attacks on our streets, or small businesses being crippled by shoplifting. These victims of crime are who I am trying to speak to through a motion like this. They are the people I most care about, while those opposite seem more interested in throwing barbs at the opposition. We have heard this very speech before from the part-time police minister, repeated now by the former shadow police minister—I must say with a bit more gusto this time, I think, so I do commend him.

He wants to talk about facts, and the unfortunate situation that those sitting on that side of the house find themselves in is that the facts say crime is rising under the Malinauskas Labor government. If we look at the crime statistics of the current rolling year compared to the final year of the Marshall Liberal government we see massive increases in crime right across the board, whether it is assaults or acts intended to cause injury (as they put it), a 25.8 per cent increase, or assaulting

police, something that was subject to debate a bit earlier, up 35 per cent. Homicide is up 11 per cent, threatening behaviour is up 59 per cent, robbery-related offences are up 13 per cent, property damage is up 6 per cent, sexual assault is up 9.5 per cent, and theft from a shop is up 44.6 per cent.

These are the facts that people are living and breathing every day. These are not just numbers, these are victims of crime that those opposite seem to just not care about, frankly. They do not seem to accept that we have a problem. What we just heard from those opposite is, 'No, it's okay. Everything is fine and crime is actually falling.' You have taken the bait and you have fallen for a bit of a trap, I think, over there.

Mr Odenwalder interjecting:

Mr BATTY: Maybe one day. There are a few problems with this approach. The first is, just on the face of it, that many crimes are in fact not falling. Indeed, I can cherrypick statistics as well as the member for Elizabeth, and we see that acts intended to cause injury are up 7 per cent in the most recent statistics. We see threatening behaviour is up 12 per cent in the most recent statistics. We see that graffiti is up 14 per cent in the most recent statistics. But what the member for Elizabeth wants to talk about are some perhaps minor year-on-year improvements for the rolling year.

I think one example he might have cited was shoplifting was down 3 per cent in the most recent month. That is great, but it has gone up 40-something per cent over the past two years. So while those opposite want to celebrate a 3 per cent drop apparently in the last month, we are going to shine a light on the fact that shoplifting has increased by 44 per cent. Just go and ask a small business and you will find out. Instead of denying the facts, get on with acknowledging that there is a problem and then get on with your job of fixing it. So we are just not going to accept that these small improvements, apparently, cancel out these massive increases we have seen in the preceding two years of their term.

The other problem with highlighting apparent small decreases in crime is that South Australia has one of the lowest rates of reporting crime in the entire country. This does not say that shoplifting is falling a little bit; what it says is that reports of shoplifting are falling a little bit. I think people have just got so fed up with reporting crime, it has become so commonplace, that people are just not reporting any more, because they know that the Malinauskas Labor government is not going to do anything about it.

The final reason why it is a really foolish position to take, to try and tell everyone that there is not a problem, is because it is just not what the community is experiencing. It is just so divorced from people's personal experiences out there in the real world. The member for Elizabeth has done it, but the Premier himself has done it. The Premier last week I think—there is no date on this—took to Facebook to do some sort of bizarre victory lap about how crime is not a problem anymore. He tweets out on Facebook, 'Crime across the state has fallen year on year for the fourth consecutive month.' What a strange time to do a victory lap when crime on the whole has increased dramatically under his term of government.

I do not usually read the comments, but these ones were interesting, and I want to spend a bit of time just explaining to those opposite what their constituents actually think, what those out there in the real world actually think. Instead of just obsessing over whether the opposition said this or that, instead of doing that why don't we actually listen to what those in the real world say.

The member for Elizabeth and the Premier say that crime is falling. Well, let me read you some of these. Sarah says, and I quote:

Are you sure? Because our area (5070) has had nothing but theft, break-ins (houses and cars), peeping toms. There is a community page on Facebook that I'm on and every single day. There are multiple posts of things happening in the area—including footage of a guy looking into windows of people's homes.

Anita says:

I would suggest it's much more likely that crime reporting has dropped, not the crimes. Less members available to take reports.

Kirsten says:

Not in my area it hasn't. In fact it has gone up and more violent.

Amy says:

Doesn't seem that way.

Vicki says:

Crime falling? Youth crime is disgusting.

I don't know that the member for Elizabeth has seen any of this or spoken to any of these people.

Disy says:

Our laws need to be overhauled and made tougher. Stop letting kids out on bail over and over again. People are not safe in their homes at shopping centres, workplaces etc., etc.

Amanda says:

Seriously! Kids as young as 11 are running wild and are not being held accountable!!!

Gin says:

'Crime falls' because there are no SAPOL officers to attend to calls. There's methamphetamine crimes everywhere plus it's causing the mental health and homelessness crisis.

There are many of these. Kylie says:

My son was attacked a few weeks ago by a group of 15 twenty year olds in their car.

Allan says:

Crime reporting has fallen not the crimes. Can't get a policer officer when you would need one so no point ringing them.

Andrew says:

Crime's fallen because we've given up on reporting it.

Davina says:

Peter Malinauskas I thought recently you have had to add extra police to Rundle Mall due to the increased crime. Was there not the tobacco wars/crime getting out of control at the end of 2024. Been a number of shootings as well in suburbs. Not sure your figures add up.

Adam merely questions:

Is this a parody account?

Greta says:

What a load of rubbish.

Natasha says:

Maybe more people are getting away with crimes going under their radar.

Jeff just has a question:

Are you sure?

And there is a little thinking emoji; he is not too sure I don't think. David says:

I don't know what you are smoking but I will have some. It depends on how the crimes are reported or not reported.

Mario says:

Falling and pigs fly! Salisbury shopping precinct begs to differ.

Justin directs his comment to the member for Kurna:

Try walking through Colonnades or Noarlunga train station. I can assure you crime isn't falling down there...Chris Picton MP promised to clean this mess up and still hasn't.

Nikki, who seems to be a small business owner, says:

Send more to Findon. They steal from my store daily.

Millicent says:

No it hasn't!!!....all I'm hearing is lies and broken promises.

Brad says:

8 cars broken into last week around South Plympton.

Damien says:

Get real man if you know how.

Annie says:

Hmmm not sure about that.

Les says:

Peter Malinauskas as if you can even say that with a straight face.

Carrol says:

Because you have robbed regional areas this infuriates me. We don't even bother to call now, what's the bloody point. #Riverland #WildWest.

Which I am sure the member for Chaffey will be interested in. I look forward to visiting the member for Chaffey's electorate to talk to those people on the ground about the serious issues facing them, and I suggest those opposite do the same, instead of just coming in here with their cheap debating points. Margaret says:

Could have fooled me!!!

Martin says:

It's fudging the numbers to suit the narrative.

Rosey says:

After watching the evening news every night I can't see how those figures come about seems to be crime is worse than ever!

I could keep going, but I am, sadly, time-limited. My point is that this is not happening by accident. This is happening because we have weak laws under the Malinauskas Labor government. This is happening because we have a dramatic shortfall of police under the Malinauskas Labor government. Instead of coming in here and denying a problem, they should get on with their job of fixing the recruitment and retention crisis in South Australia Police.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:20): I am going to rise and make a contribution to this motion, because it is an important motion. I have listened to the member for Elizabeth, and I am a little bit shell-shocked that he is in denial about what is actually happening out there on the ground. We all know that as South Australians we are seeing an increase in crime on our streets. We are seeing shop theft up now 51 per cent, as of September 2024.

Assaults on police is one thing that really does worry me. As a former shadow minister for police, I listen to the police regularly. I speak to them, I meet with them regularly, and they are telling me that many new entrants into the force are very, very concerned about the threat of violence against them for upholding the law. Robbery is up 26 per cent. Homicide is up 25 per cent. Sexual assault is up 12 per cent.

South Australians deserve to be safe. They deserve to feel safe, but what we are seeing is a lack of initiatives in attracting and retaining police officers. New entrants into the force is also really a head scratcher for the government. They have come in and they have played the blame game on a former government, three years ago. What I can say is that this current government—this Malinauskas Labor government—should hang its head in shame. We have a part-time police minister who has just been jettisoned in. We have crime on the increase, but we are seeing a reduction in police presence, particularly in regional South Australia.

As I said, SAPOL is under-resourced. We need more cops on the beat. We need to attract and retain more, so that we can actually have a sustainable police force. A total of 14 stations across the state have had reductions in service, as police announce plans to change the operating hours for administrative services. Police stations in Berri, Port Pirie and Mount Gambier will go from being

open 24/7 to standardised operating: 9am to 5pm on weekdays, and 9am to 3.30pm on the weekend for those that are already open on Saturdays and Sundays.

We are now watching those who are going to commit a crime wait until those police stations close, and then they are open for business because the police stations are not. Stations in Nuriootpa, Gawler, Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Ceduna, Coober Pedy, Port Augusta, Mount Barker, Murray Bridge, Naracoorte and Millicent are also affected by standardised hours, which came into effect in December 2024.

In my electorate of Chaffey, there is no police station that is open 24 hours a day. Previously, Berri was the only station. My electorate covers 31,000 square kilometres. There is no full-time dedicated police station open 24/7. Swan Reach, Morgan, Blanchetown and Karoonda have no dedicated SAPOL service. Again, these small communities are now becoming more isolated with the Labor government's approach, which is uniform centralised services.

Renmark is a town of over 12,000 people, and it has no police station at all. It has been closed. It did have a sign on the door stating that it was temporarily unattended, but they have now removed that sign and that police station is closed shut. There is just no presence at all. As I said, it is the largest town in the electorate, and the closest temporary police station is at Berri. Once Berri closes—we do need a police station open. This is exactly what the member for Bragg has just stated. When we reduce police station hours we reduce reporting and we reduce notifications by people who are feeling unsafe, or who want to report a crime, or who want to go to the police because they have an urgent need.

We need a better recruitment strategy. We look at what Queensland have done: with over 2,000 people in the recruitment process, they have been linked to a successful story. It is better incentives, it is cost-of-living allowances, it is accommodation allowances, it is about the police academies being upgraded and updated to deal with the current situation. It is about relocation costs and HECS debt incentives. Queensland have spent \$87½ million over five years.

I notice that the member for Elizabeth spruiked about how much money his government have put into the police force, but what are the tangible outcomes? Money talks, but it is not actually getting the outcomes that every South Australian feels are necessary to be safe in their homes, to be safe in their communities and to be safe in the day-to-day walk of life.

Yes, we do need to retain and, yes, we do need to recruit, but we need to do a better job at it. I know that there have been programs looking at recruiting police officers from other countries, but at the end of the day, while we are seeing assaults on police officers, it is not an attractive proposition. While we are seeing a lack of resources it puts more pressure on the fewer police officers that we have, and it is putting more pressure on the day-to-day mental health of our officers who need those resources and who need to feel as though they are part of a force that is backed by the government.

Currently, what I hear when talking to police officers and talking to community people is that they are feeling unsafe. As I said, they are now not reporting because there is no-one at home: the shop is shut, the police station is closed. To think that they would have reduced hours on a weekend—I just do not understand what their thinking is around that. This is a budget-savings measure, nothing more.

Are we seeing police station hours in metro Adelaide being reduced? Are we seeing fewer officers coming into a metro station? Those are the questions that need to be answered. I know what is happening in the regions and I know what is happening in my electorate of Chaffey, and it is not good, it is not pretty and it is putting more and more pressure on those who are there and remaining in the force. That is why we are having trouble retaining those officers, because they are being stretched from pillar to post and they do not feel that they have the support of this state government.

It is a motion that I felt strongly enough about to get up and talk about. It is a motion that I think needs to be addressed. Throwing money at it, hand over fist, is just not fixing it. The member for Elizabeth has told us how much money the Malinauskas Labor government have put into the police, but why is it not working? Why is that money not sticking? There are some questions that, potentially, the Premier needs to address.

I do support the member for Bragg's motion; it is an important motion. It needs to be recognised that our police force in South Australia is on a diminishing support base and is losing officers more than it is gaining them.

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (12:29): To summarise the debate, we on this side want to do what we can to support those SAPOL officers who are doing the important work of keeping our community safe. This is about actually putting processes in place that help them in the job they are doing.

We have a real issue in this state with retaining police officers. Why is that? Because they do not feel supported in the job that they are doing. This motion clearly articulates the challenges around recruitment and retention. It clearly says that we are urging the government to provide sufficient resources to SAPOL to prevent crime.

If this government is going to be resting on its laurels when it comes to some of the challenging crime statistics that have been brought to bear and articulated well within this debate, I think it is a sad day for South Australia because right around our communities across the whole of South Australia community members and businesses are coming to us and saying that there is an issue here, that we need the government to be understanding this issue and they need to be giving it their full attention. I commend the motion.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes12
 Noes.....22
 Majority10

AYES

Basham, D.K.B.
 Hurn, A.M.
 Pisoni, D.G.
 Teague, J.B.

Batty, J.A. (teller)
 Patterson, S.J.R.
 Pratt, P.K.
 Telfer, S.J.

Gardner, J.A.W.
 Pederick, A.S.
 Tarzia, V.A.
 Whetstone, T.J.

NOES

Andrews, S.E.
 Brown, M.E.
 Close, S.E.
 Hildyard, K.A.
 Michaels, A.
 O'Hanlon, C.C.
 Savvas, O.M.
 Wortley, D.J.

Bettison, Z.L.
 Champion, N.D.
 Cook, N.F.
 Hood, L.P.
 Mullighan, S.C.
 Pearce, R.K.
 Szakacs, J.K.

Boyer, B.I.
 Clancy, N.P.
 Dighton, A.E.
 Hutchesson, C.L.
 Odenwalder, L.K. (teller)
 Picton, C.J.
 Thompson, E.L.

PAIRS

Cowdrey, M.J.

Fulbrook, J.P.

Motion thus negatived.

ENFIELD STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (12:35): With the utmost of respect, it is my pleasure to move:

That this house notes in 2025 Enfield State Emergency Service Unit celebrates its 60th anniversary and expresses its deepest and sincerest appreciation to volunteers, past and present, for their service, acknowledging their kindness, bravery, sacrifice and dedication in helping to protect lives and maintain community safety.

I must confess that when I first got into this role, I had formed the view that my community was serviced by the great team at the Salisbury SES. It was not until I took a tour of the Salisbury facilities and saw a map of the territory they covered that I realised that the electorate of Playford was split in

half, with a team based in Enfield providing coverage across Parafield Gardens, Mawson Lakes and Green Fields all the way up to Kings Road. This prompted a very apologetic MP to front up to their headquarters in Northfield to beg for forgiveness and part with a few dozen Krispy Kreme doughnuts.

Fortunately for me, the Enfield unit have a good sense of humour, and it has been a pleasure ever since getting to know these fantastic volunteers. Before I delve into this speech, I want to be clear that, having served as the adviser to the emergency services minister and having the privilege to visit many SES units, I feel it must go on record that across the state these people are the salt of the earth. While I may be singling out Enfield today, I think you are all brilliant. Specifically in the case of Salisbury, I will most certainly make sure that your day in this chamber will also come.

This year, the team at Enfield celebrate their 60th anniversary, and this gives us time to reflect on the volunteers who have selflessly served many communities not just within Adelaide's inner to mid north but across the state and indeed the country. Back in 1962, out of fear of Cold War nuclear attacks, the Playford government appointed a part-time commissioner and full-time deputy commissioner of civil defence. Local councils were then given the task of educating the public and training volunteers in this field. While the fear of nuclear attacks subsided, the seeds had already been sown for six decades of success following the establishment of the Enfield unit in 1965.

This was a decision of the local council, with the initial headquarters established at the old Enfield council chambers at the corner of Regency and Main North roads. As I was told, this was then sold to Tom the Cheap to set up a supermarket, with the unit lined up to move into a tin shed. The suggestion did not go down too well, resulting in a very successful plan B that has stood the test of time. What was once the Enfield rubbish dump was then filled in and made way for a new and vastly improved headquarters for the team, which has served as home ever since.

While there is always work to be done in improving facilities, to say the early days were modest, with converted baker's vans and an open-top fire truck, would not be too much of a stretch. Beginning with two ex-transportable Housing Trust houses, a former wartime munitions store and an asbestos-ridden condemned church that served as the training hall, slowly and gradually facilities became more fit for purpose. While the church took a lot of acrylic paint to stabilise its asbestos, it is fondly remembered for its beautiful polished floor for dancing and for its A-frame roofing that got good use in rescue drills.

While I will keep this brief, gradually the mantra of civil defence slowly evolved as the service became more focused on responding to natural disasters, with a change of name to the SA Civil Defence and Emergency Services and by 1974 adopting the name South Australian SES. I could go on for a bit, even homing in on the origins of civil defence and how they can be traced further back to the Second World War, but today's motion is really intended to celebrate the service, history and dedication of the Enfield unit.

To spell out its importance to us historically, I raise two key events that really have become ingrained in our local psyche, these being Cyclone Tracy and the Y2K bug, and how the Enfield unit was pivotal in our state's response to both. As someone who lived in Darwin for a few years, I am fascinated by the strategic role the headquarters played in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy. For several weeks after the devastating events, the facility was serviced 24/7 as the radio room monitored and communicated with the convoys of aid heading from Adelaide via Port Augusta and Alice Springs as they reached Darwin.

This became the state nerve centre, with information relayed across the country, made possible by the unit's tower that sits up on high ground and the very long HF antenna system facilitating communication across the country. The efforts were valiant, with volunteers sleeping on chairs in the radio room to ensure everything stayed afloat during one of our country's most difficult chapters. A significant number of members also ended up at Adelaide Airport, emptying out the planes and helping out with evacuees, assisting them with registration, and then cleaning the *Hercules* aircraft out before they were sent back to the Top End.

The communications equipment used by the unit also meant the site for a long time was considered backup to SES headquarters. It climbed the final rung of the ladder for one night only, with Enfield serving as a marshalling point and SES headquarters in the management of the Y2K bug. With considerable worry that the power would go out in the CBD, the headquarters' direct road

access to all corners of the city meant it was perfect to stage crews from multiple units. Members remembered the final day of last millennium fondly with a massive barbecue, a lot of camaraderie and a few laughs when midnight struck and everyone quickly realised nothing happened and they all went home. I am sure they all felt a lot better than I did the next morning; I can recall waking up with a hangover not too far away from the site in Northfield.

These may have been two of the major jobs that they have been involved in, but we know that jobs come in all shapes and sizes. Last financial year alone, the team answered 314 requests for assistance. I understand the most frequent tasks centre around fallen trees, followed by storms and flooding, building impact and civilian rescue.

Locally we have a lot to be grateful for, but this appreciation extends further with teams of Enfield volunteers sent interstate to events in New South Wales, Western Australia and Victoria. In the last fortnight we also had a member return from North Queensland who had assisted with the horrendous flooding that they recently experienced. While it remains fresh, let's not forget the gallant effort made by members for the assistance they rendered in the Murray River floods of 2022-23. It is not just locals who benefit when these selfless volunteers come together to aid the community. Hopefully it is all quiet on the horizon, but occasionally we might get a year of extreme weather, such as the 2016-17 financial year when the team answered 647 requests for assistance all over our state.

In putting this speech together, there was consensus that I take a moment to reiterate that the unit, and indeed the remaining 68 in South Australia, are made up of volunteers. There is no money involved, just the sense of satisfaction one gets from giving back to their community. At present there are a healthy 42 official members but there is always room for more, so do not hold back: contact unit manager, Kon Kotsiou, if you think you could make a valued impact on this front.

As I mentioned, Kon is the current unit manager but over the 60 years a further nine have come before him. Back in the early days the position was known as unit controller, originally held by W.S. Britton and later assumed by Noel Hodges, Bill Arnold, Noel Salmon, Arno Attema, Fred Lawrence, Peter Cumberworth, Scott Jameson and Jacob Brodie.

From this I want to highlight the help I have received from Arno Attema in putting this speech together. Arno's contribution to the Enfield group and the SES in general is very special and deserving of praise. While he is based out at Netley these days, collectively he is still going strong at 56 years of service, of which 45 have been spent at Enfield. Hidden between the lines of this motion is a very special mention to you, as I am sure there are legions of people who may not be here today or in such a fortunate position without your selfless commitment.

Interestingly, I found out that through the Enfield SES, Arno also met his wife, Lesley. The unit's current longest serving member is Patrick Thompson who has worn the orange overalls with pride for 24 years and nine months. Noteworthy to this is his wife Karen's contribution at 21 years, giving a total of 45 years for this amazing couple. For this, and the remaining crew members, I say a heartfelt thank you.

Noting that the unit runs on the support of volunteers, the importance of donations and support they receive from the community should also be stressed. The team asked me to give a shout-out to Bunnings, in particular their Windsor Gardens store that has allowed them to host their barbecues to raise some extra funds. Bunnings has been generous in donating vouchers for an upcoming raffle that will be drawn on 10 May.

This day is particularly important to celebrations as part of the South Australian History Festival with Enfield SES hosting an open day. The community are encouraged to come along, see some incredible equipment and volunteers at work, as well as gain an appreciation for history that I have only scratched the surface of. Of course, if anyone wants to add to the raffle prizes, anyone in the room, they would be most welcome. While I have dropped one hint, there is room for a few more, so if anyone has their chequebook handy, the team would not say no to a bitumenised car park, new computers, or the chance to get their training tower back up and running—hint, hint.

In wrapping up, I also want to end with some extra thanks to deputy unit manager, Julie Williams, and Nick Farr, who along with Kon and Arno were amazing in helping me pull this history together. I also want to include just a few words from the Mayor of Salisbury, Gillian Aldridge, who,

when she found out I was doing this speech, asked me to include a few of her own words, and I quote:

For sixty years, the Enfield SES have served our community through storms, floods and other emergencies. Their dedication embodies the true Aussie spirit of mateship, and our city is safer and stronger because of their service.

She is not alone in reflecting this sentiment of gratitude. We all have a lot to thank you for and these words will never underline the full extent of our appreciation. I thank members past and present, and with that, I commend the motion to the house.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the next speaker, is that the unit which Rosco belongs to? I do not know his full name.

Mr FULBROOK: I am unsure.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:46): As the shadow minister for emergency services, and on behalf of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I want to congratulate the Enfield State Emergency Service Unit on its 60th anniversary. It is a great motion to recognise those members past and present and the SES unit turning 60 this year. It is an impressive accomplishment and milestone. The community and all those involved should be proud. We all know that in the case of an emergency the phone rings hot at a branch when people are looking for support and help when dealing with unannounced storms or activity.

The Enfield SES has around 45 active volunteers. They train together every week, learning new skills, pumping techniques, heights training, rough terrain navigation, using power tools and chainsaws, first aid and much more. They have been an instrumental unit for the northern suburbs area. Particularly in 2024, they assisted other SES units 14 times and responded to 292 requests for assistance throughout the year.

At the end of the year, the unit also handed out several awards. The Rookie of the Year went to Salomé. The Manager's Award went to Betty, and the Tim Jones Memorial Award went to Rajesh. Late last year a time capsule was buried to celebrate 50 years for the SES, and it will be opened in 2049. The unit was recently able to purchase a new trailer thanks to grants and donation support from the local community.

To celebrate 60 years, they will be having an open day on Saturday 10 May from 11am. It is a great opportunity for the local community to engage, to go out there and meet the volunteers who give their time and effort, and sometimes put their life on the line to keep people safe. So come out, meet the volunteers, have a look at the important work they do and learn about the history through interactive displays.

While we are celebrating 60 years at Enfield, I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the emergency service personnel in my electorate of Chaffey. Chaffey is no different from any other SES frontline responders. Many SES and CFS stations across the electorate contribute to the state's volunteer base. I have branches in Blanchetown, Baramera, Loxton, Berri, Renmark and Paringa. The Riverland operations coordination unit has three teams, at Renmark, Berri and Loxton.

We do rely heavily on their service. The Riverland has seen more than its fair share of natural weather events that have created chaos around the river and its corridor. Obviously, we have seen a number of damaging storms over recent years. With those storms usually come power outages and a significant amount of damage. A lot of what we have in the Riverland is irrigated, whether it be trees or horticulture, which means that they have an artificial root system that does not penetrate down deep, so when we see big wind events and storm events, we see a lot of trees blown over and a lot of power lines that have been brought down. We always see those emergency services, particularly the SES personnel, on the ground.

In 2019 and 2020, we had significant bushfires. Of course, who could forget the most recent, 2022-23, flood event? SES played a lead role in preparation and clean-up—preparing for storms and natural weather events and recovery response. Seven hundred personnel came from right around South Australia to help with preparation for the floods. We always say that there is plenty of time to prepare, but there is never enough time to prepare for the unannounced.

The SES are a great example of dedication and selflessness shown for and on behalf of our community. I want to acknowledge all of our SES emergency services volunteers right around South Australia. Thank you for the outstanding work and dedication that you give to keep our communities safer but also respond to those weather events.

I would like to wish the Enfield SES all the best for their 60th anniversary celebrations. For those local community people, if you have a moment, get down there and visit their history day and celebrate 60 years of success.

The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (12:52): I rise to support this motion. I want to thank the member for Playford for bringing the motion to the house and for the kind words of the member for Chaffey as well. I want to congratulate the Enfield SES on 60 years of outstanding service provided to my local community and, more broadly, congratulate all South Australian SES volunteers.

The Enfield SES is located in my electorate, right next door to beautiful Stockade Botanical Park. They have an active membership of about 45 devoted members. As others have said, there is an open day to celebrate their 60th anniversary on 10 May, which I will be at. It is part of History Festival, and I encourage everyone to attend. They had a similar open day in 2024, which gave a really good insight into 60 years of history of the Enfield SES. It is a good chance to explore their facilities and see the displays, so I encourage everyone to attend on 10 May.

I really want to thank the Enfield SES community for their commitment. Of course, 2024 was not a quiet year. They had 292 requests for assistance. Most of those were fallen trees, but there were also some flood situations and some incidents involving building impacts which they helped with, so we are very grateful for their assistance. They also helped with other SES and other agencies on other occasions as well.

Volunteers at the Enfield SES are completely devoted, and they really do exemplify the dedication and commitment in stepping forwards in moments of crisis to help protect and serve our community. Whether it is the aftermath of a severe weather event or road traffic accidents, they are absolutely incredibly important to our community, and I think we should all be thanking our SES volunteers for their service.

Of course, the Enfield SES does incredible work. They are also very active participants in our local community. They participate in events like the Port Adelaide Enfield council's Christmas pageant and the Bay to Birdwood motoring event, and they have really strong bonds with our community. They certainly show a very strong community spirit and support for our local community. If anyone bumps into an Enfield SES team member, I certainly hope you thank them this year for their service and particularly congratulate them on their 60 years.

In recent years we have seen an increase in severe weather events and destructive storms, and the Enfield SES has consistently been on the front foot, really demonstrating their immense level of skill and commitment. Clearing fallen trees, dealing with damaged rooftops and helping vulnerable members of our community has been a really important part of their work.

They are comprised of a diverse group of volunteers, from teachers to tradespeople, to students, to retirees. They undertake extensive training to equip themselves with the necessary skills required for those emergencies. I have had an opportunity to see firsthand their training procedures, which include rescue techniques, first aid, chainsaw operation, and incident management. All of those programs are really vital to making sure that they operate effectively and safely under pressure.

Despite their volunteer status, these men and women exhibit incredible professionalism, skill and dedication, often seen in full-time emergency personnel. They willingly sacrifice their precious time with their families, give up their weekends, and even put their own safety on the line to protect their fellow residents. To ensure that the Enfield SES and all SES units throughout South Australia can continue, it is important that we come together to support these frontline volunteers and to encourage volunteer recruitment. That is really critical in this day and age.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every volunteer at the Enfield SES. They are the backbone of community safety during times of crisis. We, in this place, want them to know that we stand with them in appreciation and support for the significant contributions they make. Their

dedication does not go unnoticed and our community is infinitely safer because of their hard work and selflessness.

With that, I want to wish the Enfield SES a happy 60-year anniversary. I want to thank Kon and the team at the Enfield SES, and thank the member for Playford for bringing this motion, and I commend it to the house.

Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (12:57): I want to thank both the member for Chaffey and the member for Enfield for contributing to this motion. The member for Chaffey touched on—probably in a more profound way than I did—how proud the community is of both this unit and also the SES more broadly. I would like to reiterate his sentiment by just saying that we really do feel the pride in having these people walk amongst us in the community. He also highlighted how they have played a pivotal role in assisting other SES units across the state. I am quite certain that, over time, it would have included units from his part of the world, especially during the River Murray flooding crisis of recent years.

Interestingly, and I am really grateful that he raised it, he mentioned a time capsule. When I was doing my research on the whole thing it was put to me that there was a time capsule recently placed within the unit. I do not want to be incorrect but I think there might be more than one. If this speech and the contribution from the other members have any historical value, maybe in a few years' time they can refer back to *Hansard* and take my words with some element of authority that there is something to look at underneath the surface, and I am sure it will be useful.

I will move on very quickly to also say thank you to the member for Enfield for her contribution. She supports the SES without fail. I know that she is very proud to have them within her community as well. I will end by saying congratulations to the Enfield SES. If anyone is watching, please attend the History Festival on 10 May and, most importantly, if you can, join up. I commend this motion to the chamber.

Motion carried.

The SPEAKER: I think, if I remember correctly, I attended the 50th birthday celebrations. I did, thank you.

Sitting suspended from 13:00 to 14:00.

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Capital City Committee—Annual Report 2023-24

Remuneration Tribunal—

Remuneration of Auditor-General, Electoral Commissioner, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, and Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner, Determination No. 19 of 2024

Remuneration of Auditor-General, Electoral Commissioner, Deputy Electoral Commissioner, and Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner, Review of Report No. 19 of 2024

Ministerial Statement

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:06): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Today I can announce that the Malinauskas Labor government has taken strong and immediate action to secure the long-term future of the Whyalla

Steelworks by placing the business's owner into administration. GFG is no longer running the steelworks.

The state has appointed KordaMentha as the administrator of OneSteel Manufacturing Pty Ltd under section 436C of the Corporations Act 2001. OneSteel is part of the GFG corporate group and is the legal entity that owns and operates the Whyalla Steelworks and associated mines. During this period of administration, the administrator investigates options, including sale of the business, with the ambition of delivering the best outcome for creditors and the continued operation of the steelworks. The administrators will be able to trade on and pay all debts incurred during the period of administration. This means, critically, that workers and contractors will be paid.

KordaMentha has advised the state government that it intends to appoint experienced Australian steelmaker BlueScope to act as a special adviser to assist in the operation of the steelworks during administration.

The state government took the decision to place OneSteel into administration after losing confidence in the financial capability of GFG to pay its bills as and when they fall due. The government has equally lost confidence in GFG's ability to secure the funding needed for the ongoing operation of the steelworks. The government gave GFG every opportunity to make good on its promises and to bring creditors back into terms. It has failed to do so.

The government has received expert advice from its Steel Task Force that a continuation of the status quo and a lack of investment risks the steelworks deteriorating to the point where creditors will be impacted even further and where it will be difficult, if not impossible, to turn the operation around. In light of this advice, the state government has acted decisively and expeditiously.

The appointment of the administrator was facilitated by an urgent and minor change to the Whyalla Steel Works Act 1958, which passed state parliament this morning. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my parliamentary colleagues, in particular the Leader of the Opposition, for supporting this legislation and expediting its passage. The parliament was today operating for team South Australia, and I want to thank all members for getting this done.

This amendment makes GFG's existing debts to the state government apply as a charge across all, rather than some, of the real property of OneSteel and makes them readily enforceable. The legislation, which is specific to the Whyalla Steelworks, also imposes new transparency obligations on its owner. Early and proactive steps will be taken by the state government and the administrator to stabilise operations and explore a possible sale to a new owner in a way that keeps the assets together and the steelworks operational.

Whyalla is critical to sovereign Australian steel. It is one of only two Australian steelworks, produces 75 per cent of Australian structural steel and is the only domestic producer of long steel products. Steel from Whyalla is how Australia can build and maintain its infrastructure, whether it is railways, high-rise towers, housing, windfarms, transmission lines, bridges, defence assets or hospitals.

Whyalla steel is present in big infrastructure projects, from Optus Stadium in Perth to the Western Sydney Airport terminal, to the Cross River Rail project in Brisbane. Without Whyalla steel, Australia would rely on steel from overseas amid a deteriorating strategic environment and a national housing crisis.

For months, my government has been carefully planning a strategy to address the challenges unfolding at the Whyalla Steelworks. Later today, I will be travelling to Whyalla where I expect to make further announcements about my government's steadfast commitment to support the people of Whyalla and deliver the industrial transformation required to realise the economic opportunity opening up in Upper Spencer Gulf. The South Australian government stands with the people of Whyalla and will not let them down.

Parliamentary Committees

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (14:11): I bring up the 57th report of the committee, entitled Subordinate Legislation.

Report received and read.

Question Time

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): My question is to the Premier. What did the government find out this morning that it did not know a day ago, a week ago, a month ago or a year ago?

The SPEAKER: That's a fairly open question. The Premier.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:13): What we knew late this morning that we didn't definitively know until it transpired was the will of the parliament to pass a piece of legislation that would facilitate the state government making the decision that we have.

The state government clearly has been working on a plan for many, many weeks—indeed many, many months. I have made that known in every possible forum that one could imagine over recent weeks. I have been rather transparent that we have had a plan. Of course, when you have a plan, though, you want to make sure it's one that you can execute. I am very glad that as it stands right here right now we have been able to execute a plan that stabilises the future of steelmaking in this country.

The objective that we have had is one that is very plain and very clear, but in order to be able to arrive at your objective you have to do the work—you have to do the work behind the scenes. There are a mountain of questions that have to be answered to make sure that everything is methodical, you have everything lined up, and then you are ready to act. That is what we have been working on behind the scenes. I know the Leader of the Opposition would like us to do that work in full public view, which would mean in the full public view of Mr Gupta himself. We would rather have a plan that works. We would rather have a plan that gets executed and delivers the desired outcome.

Now, we have been able to do that. I have to say from the government's perspective, for those of us who have been working on all of this for hours on end, it is liberating to be in the position we are now in where we can talk about it transparently and openly with the people of South Australia. What is even more liberating and what gives us even more comfort is the knowledge that, for every single creditor, for every single worker at the steelworks right now, they are in an infinitely better position right now than they were this morning.

By putting the steelworks into administration, it means a few key fundamental things. First and foremost, if a contractor goes into work this afternoon and performs a function at the steelworks, guess what? They are going to get paid for it, and they are going to get paid for it on decent terms. A worker going to their shift tonight at the steelworks knows that they are not going to wake up tomorrow and find out they are being made redundant, because the administrator is providing and has provided the government assurances about the future of those workers at the steelworks.

So now, we can start to restore confidence. Now, we can start to wind back the uncertainty that has been in place for weeks and months as a result of OneSteel Manufacturing not being able to provide that certainty to the government or the people of Whyalla and all associated industries that operate around it. Administration provides certainty. It provides clarity. It provides payment. It provides work for those people who have been going without it over recent weeks. You only have to spend a moment on the ground in Whyalla to know that first and foremost what people have wanted more than anything is someone to step up to the plate, someone to intervene, someone to act, someone to do something—and this government has done it now.

This government has done it. We have not rushed it. We have done it not a moment too soon and not a moment too late: we have done it exactly at the right point in time to derive the outcome that we all aspire for. For that, I am grateful to an extraordinary number of people who have been working around the clock behind the scenes, too many to name, but that does include indeed in this moment in time every member of the parliament who supported that legislation this morning in a timely way. For that, we are grateful. It was team South Australia getting to work, and the people of Whyalla will be better for it.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:17): A supplementary question to the Premier: could the administrator cease operations of the Whyalla Steelworks?

The SPEAKER: That is not a supplementary: that is a separate question.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:17): The administrator has very clear and strict obligations under the Corporations Act, and those obligations are first and foremost to the ongoing operations of the business and its creditors, because the creditors of the business are best served if the steelworks—that is to say, the business—is a viable ongoing concern. That is the administrator's obligation, not too dissimilar to the objective that we have as a government to make sure that this is an enterprise that continues to produce steel for the country over the foreseeable future.

Appreciate and understand this: without an administrator fulfilling its obligations under the Corporations Act, where would we be right now? We would be in a parlous state where the ongoing operation of the steelworks would be under the custodianship of GFG, and we all know what that looks like. So it does not take much consideration to arrive at the conclusion that to be at this point is a far better one than where we were only hours ago.

We approach the future with a far greater degree of confidence this afternoon than what many people would have gone to work with in Whyalla this morning. Know this: this is just the beginning. The government's actions that you have seen put into place today are just a first step. Tomorrow, we will make another big one—a big one—where this government will demonstrate the depth of its commitment to the people of Whyalla and sovereign steelmaking in this country.

Today was just a first step. I can't wait to get up to Whyalla this afternoon to look in the eyes of the workers I have been meeting with for weeks and months, to sit down and talk to the contractors who have looked to the government to take a strong and decisive act, and explain to them exactly what we have done and why we have done it but, more importantly, to give them hope about what we are literally going to do tomorrow—because it is big. We do that because it is important. It is important to the country.

We cannot live in a nation where we are the world's biggest exporter of iron ore and one of the world's biggest exporters of metallurgical coal, but not have the capacity to put the two together to make iron and steel. We have that ability as a nation. Whyalla has been at the centre of that exercise for decades. They have done our nation proud—in times of war, in the first instance, producing the goods that were required for the nation's defence.

They are going to be able to do that tomorrow because we have a considered, thoughtful policy that isn't just about making sure that the steelworks survives but makes sure that it is set up for the future. That is what we are committed to; that is what we are going to deliver. To the extent that everyone else in the parliament shows their support for that endeavour as much as they have this morning, it will be very much welcome.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:21): Will the Premier right now guarantee that operations at the Whyalla Steelworks will not cease following it entering administration?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:21): The guarantee I give the Leader of the Opposition is that the likelihood of this steelworks having an ongoing future for decades to come is far greater today than it was this morning because of the actions that this government has taken.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:21): My question is to the Premier. Now that the Premier won't give that guarantee, what impact will the appointment of an administrator at Whyalla have on the employees of the steelworks?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:21): Well, it will mean that they go to work tomorrow and know they are going to get paid. It will mean that they go to work tomorrow in the knowledge they are not going to be made redundant. And here is a question for the Leader of the Opposition: what's your plan, what's your policy? If the Leader of the Opposition wants to depart—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The Leader of the Opposition yesterday bounced in here after one meeting with Mr Gupta and said, 'Give him 50 million bucks.' If the opposition leader's plan—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Members on my left and members on my right will come to order! The next person who speaks out of turn will be ejected. We had peace in our time this morning and a rabble this afternoon. Let's bring it back to a cordial afternoon of good questions and good answers.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Mr Speaker, it's a really simple one: if you don't support the steelworks going into administration then you must support it being in the ownership of GFG. We formed the view that it was time for a change, a different course of action. Anyone from the South Australian parliament that wants to raise their hand over the coming days and weeks and seek to criticise this course of action simply just needs to state from the outset that they think that the status of the business under GFG was better. That is all they have to do.

That is an option that is available to the Leader of the Opposition; that is an option that is available to all those opposite. I would invite you to consider that position very carefully. I invite you to think about that position very carefully, but nonetheless it is your prerogative to advocate for the interests of GFG. Here on this side of the house we are advocating for the interests of a secure steelworks into the future for the country. We are advocating for the interests of the people of Whyalla. Whether you are a creditor or a worker this government stands with you. This government is willing to make the hard decisions. This government is willing to put itself in a position where it has done all the work and wears the responsibility. But if you want to be in a position of responsibility, if you think you have a better plan, then you had better start telling us what it is. You had better start telling us what it is, and in the absence of that we would be grateful for your support.

MOBILE PHONE BLACKSPOTS

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:24): My question is to the Premier. Has the Premier had discussions with Telstra about poor mobile coverage in our regional areas? With your leave, Mr Speaker, and the leave of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: Constituents have come to me in the last 12 months about the diminishing mobile service in my electorate, which has become even worse since the 3G has been switched off. Our office has received more than 100 complaints about our poor service. No doubt other regional members suffer the same sort of feedback.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Police) (14:25): I am grateful, as I know the house is grateful, for the member for MacKillop's persistent advocacy on behalf of his community. It is important—and doubly so in this instance—when it comes to mobile phone coverage, because there would be other members in this place, particularly members that represent regional South Australia, who would be familiar with parts of their community that don't always have equitable access to mobile phone coverage.

That is important for a whole bunch of reasons that any of us could readily imagine as we go through the regular tasks of daily life, but it becomes particularly important when circumstances become more demanding on people if there are challenges, such as what a lot of regional South Australia is going through with dry conditions, or if there is an emergency, whether it's a flood or a drought and so on.

I am pleased to advise the member for MacKillop that Telstra has been making representations to the state government about a partnership with Telstra and the government of South Australia, as well as the commonwealth government, to boost mobile phone coverage across the South-East of our state and that includes 27 new mobile base stations across the Limestone Coast. My advice is that that will add somewhere in the order of 2,400 square kilometres of new 4G coverage, approximately a 44 per cent increase in coverage for these important mobile telephone services.

For example, if the member for MacKillop was wanting to call a hotline about the condition of jetties, for example, he would be able to do that from the vast majority of his electorate once these base stations are installed. I am sure that would be welcome news for many people down in the South-East. Please don't ask me to repeat the number! So I am really pleased that, particularly the Department of Primary Industries, the Department of State Development and I think also the staff within Treasury and the South Australian Financing Authority, are working to conclude that agreement with Telstra, and that would be really welcome news for his constituents.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Torrens, I would like to welcome to parliament today councillors from the City of Playford, the Deputy Mayor Chantelle Karlsen, Councillor Gay Smallwood-Smith, Councillor Shirley Halls and Councillor Katrina Stroet, who are guests of the member for Elizabeth. Welcome to parliament. We like it at about this temperature. It got a little rowdy before but hopefully a little bit more of this will—

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The SPEAKER: What was that, member for Flinders? Okay. I am just reminding you that those interjections are disorderly. The member for Torrens.

Question Time

POLICE RECRUITMENT

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (14:28): My question is to the Minister for Police. Can the minister update the house on police recruitment and how investment in police is getting more police onto the frontline?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Police) (14:28): I am pleased to report to the house further improvements in the number of police who are being recruited to protect our community, Mr Speaker, because as you would recall from the last sitting week it was my great pleasure to remind the house of the more than \$300 million that the Malinauskas Labor government has committed to bolstering resourcing for South Australia Police.

That has included significant additional funding for the recruitment of sworn police officers but also for police security officers, not only to make sure that we can accelerate the catch-up in the number of sworn officers out on the streets protecting the community of South Australia but also to recruit even more police security officers so that they can take on some of those more support-type roles that have so far been undertaken by sworn police officers, thereby releasing those sworn police officers onto frontline duties.

When I provided that update to the house, Mr Speaker, you would remember that we had just had the police commissioner announce that he had released 70 sworn police officers onto frontline duties thanks to that boost to police security officers that was provided by this government. It is wonderful to have the Leader of the Opposition congratulate the Premier on his leadership in this matter because it is really important that we continue to bolster police numbers.

We have quite proudly had the record for some time now of having the highest proportion of sworn police officers per capita of any jurisdiction in the nation other than, of course, the Northern Territory. So amongst all of the states, we have the highest number of police per capita. These are

not our figures; they have just been reconfirmed by the National Productivity Commission in their Report on Government Services.

Last week, I had two wonderful occasions to celebrate further advances in this area. I had the real pleasure to attend a police graduation ceremony at the Strathfield Terrace police academy, itself comprehensively redeveloped thanks to funding from a state Labor government. We had 16 new police officers graduate—another boost to sworn numbers on the frontline. Two graduates had valuable and transferrable skills from time spent in the Australian Army, while two others brought their experience from the Australian Federal Police and also from the Victorian police force, including one police officer, Rory, who was in the Australian Army for four years as a rifleman and crew commander.

It was great to see the number of officers from diverse walks of life including those who had Vietnamese, Greek, German, Sri Lankan and, importantly, Irish roots joining the police force. On Friday, I had the pleasure of attending another graduation ceremony for police security officers—of course, another cohort of police security officers bolstering the workforce of South Australia Police, where in turn we are looking forward to releasing more sworn police officers onto frontline duty.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:32): My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier guarantee that not one person at the Whyalla Steelworks will lose their job following it entering administration?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:33): I want to say—and the Leader of the Opposition knows this—it has been painful to witness that people have been losing their jobs in Whyalla now for a while. The member for Giles, who is on his way up to Whyalla, has facilitated for me to be able to meet people who have been directly affected in such a way. Because it is not strictly a one-employer town but a one-industry town that is so dependent upon a single enterprise, there are a lot of people who have already lost their jobs. What we've got to do is try to stem that; we've got to try to stop further job losses happening into the future.

Businesses, as they evolve, make their own decisions about how much labour they employ, particularly non-government enterprises, which this is, but what we've got to do as a government is get our policy settings in place to maximise the likelihood of as many people being in work as possible. The administrator has assured the government that it will have no plans to make people lose their jobs in the immediate future. They've got to get in there and stabilise the business.

As I have said in the parliament recently, at the moment, as it stands, as steelmaking production ramps up, there has actually been more demand for labour than there has been supply. There is overtime happening at the steelworks, so we have every confidence that the workers of the business itself are in a good position.

The bigger issue is about how we can stop the redundancies happening from contractors who are critical to the operations of the steelworks. When they are not getting paid, when their debts are not getting paid, of course they have been making tough decisions to let people go—people who are the owners of really unique skills that are critical to the ongoing operations of the business—and that has all been compromised.

I guess that's what precipitated the action, which in some respects goes back to the Leader of the Opposition's very first question today. The state government was in receipt of advice that says, the way things are going, they are getting so bad that it could end up arriving at a point where it becomes irredeemable. If we allow that to transpire, we would look back on this moment and say, 'Why didn't we act sooner?'

That's not to say that acting now isn't without risks. I speak plainly about this to the Leader of the Opposition and the people of South Australia more broadly: this is a wicked problem. Wicked problems rarely have a suitable solution that solves everything, so there are going to be challenges in front of us. There is no doubt about that. There are no absolute guarantees of anything in these circumstances, except to say that, with the advice that we had received from the Steel Task Force, we know that the path that we are now on provides a greater degree of certainty for everyone in Whyalla than the path we were on before under the ownership of GFG, and that's the point.

Does this path guarantee an absolutely perfect outcome? No more or less than any other path. But it does provide more certainty than the one we were on this morning, and that's why we have made the decision we have. It's not an easy call to make. This is a government doing this; it is not one business to another. This is a government doing it, which makes it unique in its circumstances. But it speaks to the responsibility that we feel to not sit back and just be another creditor, to not sit back and just observe. We are different. We have a different responsibility and a different power to respond to it, so that is what we have done, and we fundamentally believe it's the right thing to do.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:37): My question again is to the Premier. Has the Premier sought or received advice as to whether GFG could pay its debts when they fall due and payable? If so, when did he receive that advice?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:37): The advice that the government has received is largely from the Steel Task Force through to the cabinet and is in confidence, as the Leader of the Opposition is well aware.

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: That's right—that's the way the cabinet process works. The cabinet process is one that we treat pretty seriously in terms of the information that comes into it. But what I would say, as I referred to in my previous answer, is that the Steel Task Force provides us advice about the state of OneSteel Manufacturing in terms of its financial credibility. I think that advice wouldn't surprise anybody. There are countless businesses not getting paid. People are doing work and they are not getting paid for it. In fact, there are people who are paying for work in advance, and they are not having the work done by GFG and contractors. That is in full public view, so it's hardly surprising that the state of affairs for OneSteel Manufacturing financially is not good.

But as big of an issue is the state of the steelworks in its operations. This is an old and ageing plant. It requires care and maintenance, no different to any other piece of machinery. When that's not being done, it compromises its ability to operate. For a piece of technology like a blast furnace, that is not a good position to be in. These blast furnaces are designed to turn on and then never turn off. You don't want to be tinkering with it. If that were to turn off, that would be very problematic, unless it was done in a deliberate way. We now have people in GFG, in the steelworks, who are putting the work into the blast furnace and its ongoing operations, and we hope to be able to stabilise it as best as possible, but now is the time to act so as to avert more problems arising into the future.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:39): A supplementary to that: has the government allowed GFG to trade whilst insolvent?

The SPEAKER: It's not a supplementary.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: We're not directors of the company. What's wrong with you?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:39): The Leader of the Opposition has—I will avoid the temptation to say this in a disparaging or gratuitous way, but the Leader of the Opposition is a student of the law and he would understand even the most basic elements of the Corporations Act, which means that the obligations on making the assessment of being able to pay debts as and when they fall due strictly fall on the directors themselves, of which there are four or five at GFG. So that's their obligations. Our obligations are to the future of the steelworks in Whyalla more broadly, and that's what we have been considering all our judgements through the prism of.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:40): My question is to the Premier. Could the Premier please inform the house how it used KordaMentha and BlueScope to help it with its decision-making around Whyalla and a recent announcement today? With your leave, Mr Speaker, and the leave of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: One of the important things that I would hope that the government has done here—and all credit to their strong convictions and speed at which they have moved today, and thank you for this—and one of the things I want the government and this house to also understand is that when you talk about KordaMentha, it is a financial guru; BlueScope is a steel-making business. One of the things I hope you will allow them to do for you is to look at the sensitivity analysis of every dollar that's going to be spent there, what the future may look like, and I am hoping that that will then translate to a good outcome for this state and this government.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:41): The member for MacKillop asks a really important and thoughtful question, and I thank him for it because it goes to the heart of some of the challenges that we have and why we have responded in the way that we have, and some of the preparatory work that has been put in place.

In recent minutes, I think, there has been a statement released by the chief operations officer of BlueScope Steel. BlueScope, as the member for MacKillop accurately identifies, is an Australian-listed company, it is an Australian entity which produces Australian steel principally out of its operations in Port Kembla but also in other parts of the country. There has been a sense of stewardship between BlueScope—an affinity between BlueScope and the operations in Whyalla now for some time. GFG has called on BlueScope expertise, particularly around the blast furnace, and there have been other issues in terms of the acquisition of coke and other critical elements to keep the steelworks going. That relationship is almost like a brotherhood or sisterhood between the two organisations because there are only two of them in the country, and that is to everyone's credit.

BlueScope have released a statement just in recent moments that refers to a statement, that was in my media release and also in remarks that I made here today in my ministerial statement, that KordaMentha has advised the state government that it intends to appoint Australian steelmaker, BlueScope, to act as a special adviser. That is a relationship that exists between KordaMentha and there would be a special adviser, and it may be BlueScope, and BlueScope have put out a statement that I guess implies interest in being able to do that. That would be a great outcome.

It's important for people to appreciate that the administrator operates independently owing to its obligations under the Corporations Act. The administrator is no-one's puppet, including the government's. While we put the company into administration, the administrator does not work for the government; it works according to its duties. But that means that KordaMentha is independently around to make its own judgements as the administrator, including appointing a special adviser, which may indeed be BlueScope. That would be a great outcome if it were to transpire.

Without me compromising the independence of the administrator—which we would never do—I would say that I keenly anticipate any announcements that KordaMentha may make about the relationship it forms with any would-be special advisers on the operation of the steelworks. I also no longer anticipate but welcome the statement that has been made by BlueScope, only moments ago, that speaks to their interest in Whyalla.

That is a good thing. BlueScope is a great Australian company. It released strong financial results only on Monday. At the golf on the weekend I was very grateful to have as guests creditors of Whyalla and also BlueScope Steel CEO, Mr Mark Vassella. I am very appreciative of the relationship that we have and the interest he has in the steelworks operations in Whyalla, and I hope it continues for some time to come.

FLINDERS ISLAND

S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (14:45): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier update the house on action the government has taken to rehabilitate Flinders Island?

The SPEAKER: Minister for Transport, you are blocking the way there for the Deputy Premier. There's a bit of a traffic jam at the top there.

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) (14:45): Thank you very much for the question, and thank you for the

call, Mr Speaker. I was doing my best to respond. Just to locate Flinders Island for people, it is the fourth biggest island in South Australia and it is about 30 kilometres off Elliston. Interestingly, it was named by Matthew Flinders allegedly after his younger brother, Samuel Flinders, although I am not sure how you could tell that it wasn't just named after the family, Flinders. Anyway, that's what he has claimed, and I am sure it's what he told his younger brother.

The island is privately owned. The Woolford family has owned it for a very long time and run primary production on there, and has long nursed an ambition to see it become much more back to the natural environment that existed before Europeans showed up. They are a terrific family, very dedicated.

It has, as one would expect, experienced what much of South Australia has experienced, and Australia has experienced, in the way that the environment has deteriorated. There are a number of feral species there and an absence now, a local extinction, of a number of marsupials. It's a replica on a small scale of what has happened in so much of South Australia, but just as it is an example of what has gone wrong in the past it is also poised to be a beacon of hope for how we can restore nature, and in combination with the federal government, with the family and with the state government, in part through the Landscape Board and in part through Parks and Wildlife, we are going to see the restoration of a very healthy environment right there.

Yesterday, I could have been accused—and often am accused—of being too generous and kind to people, on all sides of parliament, in saying when I was talking about the restoration of birdlife in the Mount Lofty Ranges that this is something that was a shared ambition. I suppose I often speak more in hope than in real expectation. This is another example where the previous government had reached out to the Morrison government and received a small amount of money to contribute to this, but it was woefully inadequate.

What is really important is not just that we think that there should be some work done and we think it would be a nice idea and the local family who owns it probably wants it, but we actually need a government that is prepared to act, that is prepared to invest. Not only has the South Australian government Landscape Board put up more money but, importantly, the Albanese government has almost tripled its commitment, in order to be able to properly see the transformation that we want to see.

What will that look like? To start with, it will be the eradication of pests—the cats, the rats and the mice that have infested that land—that the Woodford family have been asking for assistance with for some time. We are now going to be able to get on, now that we have adequate funding from the federal government to really go through a decent eradication program.

What will then follow is bringing back those marsupials: the wallabies that we want to see there and the bandicoots. It is important that they come back, because they are gorgeous animals that people get excited about. I don't know how many people have talked to me about phascogales since we talked about their restoration up north, people who had never heard about phascogales before but are excited by their coming back. But it's about more than that because, once you have those species there, you have the aeration of the soil, you are allowing the proper planting of vegetation and you are starting to see the restoration.

That may or may not interest people here, but it interests young people. We have somebody in the gallery today, young Summer Woods, who is a year 6 student who has come and asked me, 'What is parliament doing to make nature stronger, and what is the government doing to restore nature?' And this is what we are able to show as an example, through commitment, through funding and through having the right government in Canberra that is prepared to put its money alongside what it is interested in seeing.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:49): My question is to the Premier. Is Sanjeev Gupta, or any entity related to him, a creditor of OneSteel Manufacturing Proprietary Limited? If so, to what value and what priority?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:50): I am pretty sure that the shadow attorney-general would also be familiar, I would hope, with the Corporations Act and understand that is entirely a matter for the administrator.

Members interjecting:

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

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:50): My question is to the Premier. Who is funding the administration?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:50): The administration is fully funded, and tomorrow the vehicle through which the administration is being fully funded will be announced.

The SPEAKER: The deputy leader?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Deputy leader, do you want a question? The member for MacKillop?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide?

HEARTKIDS SA

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (14:51): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister update the house on any government investment in services for children impacted by heart disease, and their families?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:51): Credit to the member for Adelaide for having a question and raising it in this house, which can't be said for everybody in here.

There are 185 babies each year in South Australia who are born with congenital heart disease, which is obviously very devastating for those families who are impacted. There are some 18,000 South Australians who live with that condition, and across all of Australia there are some 250,000 people who are impacted by childhood-onset heart disease. One baby is born with CoHD every three hours; it's one of the largest causes of infant death in Australian babies under the age of one year.

Because of that, there is obviously a big impact upon those families, not just because of the health impacts but we also know that many of those families have to travel to the specialist surgeons who undertake that work at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

I first met with HeartKids some four years ago, during the midst of COVID, when we were meeting a number of families who, amidst border-crossing issues and a whole range of other problems they were encountering during that time, were having difficulty in terms of their regular contact with their specialists and their surgeons, and HeartKids was there to support them. HeartKids is an incredible charity that supports families right across Australia. At that time, because of the additional pressure that they were seeing, they asked the then government, the then health minister Stephen Wade, for support, to provide them additional support to help them in the work that they do.

They were denied that support at that time. The government said that there wasn't funding available to help them do that, which I thought was really disappointing, given that I met a number of these families and heard about the difficult circumstances that they were facing, particularly with the Victorian lockdown for a lot of that period of time.

In one of the commitments we made before the last election, the now Premier and I made a commitment to HeartKids that we would commit \$1 million over four years, to provide to HeartKids, to be able to provide more support for these families, for kids who have been impacted by congenital heart disease. What that has now enabled HeartKids to do is run out some really significant programs in South Australia to support these families. Namely, in terms of mental health, they have been able

to provide essential mental health services for both children and families dealing with the challenges of congenital heart disease. We know that early intervention is obviously important and the support that can be provided to these children, and of course their families supporting them, is important.

Importantly as well it has enabled them to provide additional regional support, extending vital resources and support to families in regional and remote areas, ensuring that children who are impacted no matter where they live across the state have been able to receive support. Also, it has enabled what is called the Better Beginnings program. I am really excited that in the past few days we have been able to announce that that Better Beginnings program is now going to be rolled out nationally after the work that has happened here in South Australia.

This means that families are getting face-to-face support, including visits from occupational therapists in play therapy, and this program is really all about that early intervention from birth to age four to deal with the risk of neurodevelopmental delays for those children. HeartKids, with the rolled gold service that we are doing, are able to roll that out across the rest of the country. It's a great partnership, it's helping these families and we are really thankful to HeartKids for the work that they do.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:55): My question is to the Premier. What impact will the administration have on access to Whyalla Port?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:55): Whyalla Port is controlled by another company, but OneSteel Manufacturing, which is now in administration, has contractual obligations and contracts with the port, so I suspect now that OneSteel Manufacturing is in administration and the administration is fully funded, access to the port should flow freely.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:56): My question is again to the Premier. Have any suppliers ceased supply or stopped work at the Whyalla Steelworks today?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:56): Not that I am aware of, but I was getting very concerned. We had been informed that a number of key critical suppliers, especially things like oxygen to the blast furnace, were being paid on a weekly basis. Those payments were meant to be made on Friday of every week. Last Friday, OneSteel Manufacturing did not make its payment for key componentry for the blast furnace, which was of great concern to the government. That would mean that the blast furnace could not operate. I understand that they continued their service, but this is how precarious the operations at OneSteel Manufacturing were under the operations of GFG.

Now that the administration is fully funded, those creditors, those suppliers, those critical suppliers know that when they deliver services to the steelworks they will be paid. They will be paid in 14 days, not 90, 180 or not at all—they will be paid.

I said today in the press conference and I will say it again to this parliament, I hope that the workers at Whyalla do all they can to protect the blast furnace until the administrators are on site, protect the critical infrastructure. They do not take any instructions from GFG officials, they take instructions now from the administrator who has been lawfully put in place and in key control. It is important that we secure the critical infrastructure in Whyalla to make sure that it is safe. We make sure that all the critical componentry that is required, all the critical components to maintain a blast furnace, are maintained. I think what you will see now in Whyalla is a lot of activity very, very quickly, including a lot of maintenance that has been left undone for lack of funds.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:58): My question is again to the Premier. Have any contractors removed their equipment from the Whyalla Steelworks today?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:58): I have had nothing verified, but the usual

procedure is that the administrators will control entry and access of the plant. I don't know. If you have an example you would like to share with the house, I am happy to hear it. I don't know what individual people are doing, but ultimately whenever something goes into administration there is a lot of misinformation that can get out there from people. The truth here is that the administrators are fully funded. That means that bills will be paid going forward. That means that this is not that work will cease, this will be an ongoing operation. We want to get a good outcome for creditors and we want to get a good outcome for Australian steel manufacturing. I don't have anything verified. If the member has something that he has verified that actually occurred, he should share it with the house.

PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Ms CLANCY (Elder) (14:59): My question is to the Minister for Child Protection.

Members interjecting:

Ms CLANCY: You're going to be okay. How is the government strengthening programs and opportunities for young people?

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD (Reynell—Minister for Child Protection, Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence) (14:59): Thanks very much to the member for her question and her commitment to helping ensure that children in contact with the child protection and family support system are safe, loved, nurtured and afforded the best opportunities to participate in and enjoy community life.

Through partnerships with some outstanding organisations, our government is taking dedicated steps to provide young people in contact with the system with programs and opportunities that provide practical skills, nurture their sense of belonging and self-worth and help them to know that they are not alone and that they deserve every opportunity to participate in community life and to thrive.

Just a few weeks ago, I was really happy to be able to visit Operation Flinders with our outstanding South Australian police commissioner and Chair of the Operation Flinders Foundation, Grant Stevens, CEO David Wark and a very brave and articulate young man to hear about how our government's investment will see 24 more young people just in this school term take part in the Adventure Mentoring program. This opportunity will provide outdoor adventure training and mentoring for young people in contact with the system, helping them to build self-confidence, positive relationships and really valuable life skills.

Each participant receives the support of some extraordinary mentors two to three hours a week for 10 weeks, with activities tailored to the participants' particular interests. The activities that those young people have nominated include kayaking, mountain bike riding, abseiling, hiking, and the list goes on. Since the commencement of this DCP and Operation Flinders partnership in 2024, 70 young people in care have taken part.

I look forward to continuing to hear about the experiences young people involved this year have and how those experiences help them to confidently navigate their journey to adulthood. This investment demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that, no matter their circumstances or starting point, children and young people in contact with the child protection and family support system are given every opportunity to equally and confidently participate in every aspect of life, knowing that they are supported by people there for them.

Participating in and attending sport is another powerful way we are ensuring people in contact with the system take part in South Australian community life. Through a partnership with the Adelaide Crows Foundation's Crows Care program, 500 tickets are being provided to children and young people in care for Adelaide Crows home games this coming season. The initiative provides unforgettable moments for carers and their children and that sense of being part of a great big community family. This partnership is excellent, and I thank the Crows for it.

It sits as part of our broader partnership between DCP, the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing and a range of outstanding state sporting organisations that are each bringing to life the mantra that supporting children who most need us is everybody's business. These programs speak

to our dedication to ensuring that children are at the centre of everything we do, that they have opportunities and stability as they grow.

Recently released RoGS data has shown that South Australia leads the nation in terms of creating stability, with 96.2 per cent of children exiting out-of-home care to a permanent arrangement not returning for 12 months and 88.5 per cent of children in care for two years or more residing in one or two placements. This figure is two percentage points higher than the previous year and represents our state's best result in this area.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:03): My question is to the Premier. What impact will the Whyalla Steel Works (Charge on Property) Amendment Act have on other secured creditors, and when were they consulted?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (15:03): First and foremost, the amendment that was made in the parliament this morning—and I thank the opposition again for their support to facilitate that—puts in place the ability for the state to take the action that has since transpired. The principal impact that will have on creditors will be, of course apart from the obvious fact it is in administration, that there is a stabilisation of the business that we think in the long run will be to their benefit.

We did not obviously engage with other creditors about our legislative plans because that was only decided and confirmed by the cabinet yesterday and then confirmed and decided by the parliament today. That, of course, doesn't allow for other creditors to be made aware of the state government's plans, because to make them aware of those plans would be to make other people aware of our plans in a way that would potentially compromise the plan itself, so that would of course not be prudent.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:05): In light of the time the Premier has indicated, has the government received any advice as to the constitutionality of the act, including consideration of the consequence of the High Court's decision in Bell in Western Australia?

The SPEAKER: That's not a supplementary; that's a separate standalone question.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (15:05): I thank the—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Well, I tell you what.

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

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The question from the shadow attorney-general pertains to legal advice that the government may have sought. Clearly, when the government is taking on a circumstance as serious as this one, with the gravity that this one has, we have sought to engage some of the smartest minds in the nation.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: KCs—heard of them?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: We have indeed engaged silks who have been judged by their peers to be worthy of that title and we are very confident that the government has taken that advice into active consideration in every judgement we have made.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:06): Will the government guarantee that the blast furnace at Whyalla won't be turned off? And what urgent orders have you sought or obtained to assure that outcome?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:07): First and foremost, there is an indenture act that requires the operations of a steelworks to maintain a mining licence. Anyone who attempts to close steelmaking in Whyalla will be in breach of the indenture—a pretty simple equation.

As I have just said, the administration is fully funded. Now, if GFG has fallen into administration because the directors believe that they were trading insolvent and there was no bank—because you might remember, sir, when Arrium went into administration last time, they were in administration and the big four Australian banks were the ones who funded the administration to try to retrieve their debt.

In this situation, tomorrow we will reveal the full extent of the funding, but to say that the administrators are fully funded I have no expectation whatsoever that the blast furnace's closure is imminent in any way. My concern—and you might have noted that the bill that you voted for today gives me the ability to send in experts to examine the health of the blast furnace. We have engaged blast furnace experts. We were denied access by GFG.

Mr Teague interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: You know, if I was going to ask for legal advice, it wouldn't be from you. Alright? I am not trying to dismiss suburban lawyers at all, alright? No. They are very good and they work. They have excellent, excellent, excellent work, right? But what I am talking about is that the administration is fully funded. There is an indenture in place. There are legacy contracts in place.

OneSteel Manufacturing has contractual arrangements in place. The administrators will take control of all the audited accounts, if they exist. They will examine those, they will make assessments about what reporting they make of those. You might also have noticed, if you have read the bill that passed this parliament today, that it gives me the ability to call for audited accounts. I have written numerous letters to directors of GFG asking for audited accounts and access to the blast furnace to make sure it is healthy enough and can be maintained.

As I said in an earlier answer to a question, what sent a real shiver up my spine was on Friday when I was informed by a creditor, that had a long legacy of debt with GFG, and had been paid in advance for oxygen supplies to the blast furnace, that that supply of oxygen was becoming precarious. That meant that the government was now aware that even the smallest steps that were critical to the operation of the blast furnace were now becoming under threat. Cheap shots from the chief seats about this is unfair.

The SPEAKER: The deputy leader has a point of order.

Mr TEAGUE: Standing order 98: the Premier said not more than a few minutes ago that this was the time to be open and transparent. The simple question is: can he give a guarantee that the blast furnace will not be stopped and has he got orders to assist to that end? He hasn't answered that question.

The SPEAKER: I think the minister has been answering the question.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The administration is fully funded. The first calls we made were to the workers who support the blast furnace and what we have said to them is to only take instructions from the administrators and preserve and protect the blast furnace at all costs. As time goes on, people will become aware of the government's heightened concern about the blast furnace and we maintain that the blast furnace is integral to the operation of Whyalla.

SCAM PROTECTION

Ms THOMPSON (Davenport) (15:11): My question is to the Minister for Seniors and Ageing Well. Can the minister update the house on action being taken to protect older South Australians from scams?

The Hon. N.F. COOK (Hurtle Vale—Minister for Human Services, Minister for Seniors and Ageing Well) (15:11): I thank the member for this question and also for her commitment to protecting the community. Some 16,892 scams were reported in South Australia last year, with almost half of these reported by people aged over 55. Sadly, dodgy online and telephone operators see older people as targets to be fleeced and not as valued members of our community. This government led the nation when it came to helping young people stay safe online and I am pleased to advise the house that we are also looking out for older people.

In the past two months an illegal website was discovered calling itself The Seniors Assistant. Sadly, the only thing it assisted was taking people's personal details and then their money. It was asking people to hand over their information and pay \$29 to lodge an application for a Seniors Card. To be clear, becoming a Seniors Card member is completely free and it gives you access to a range of discounts—we discussed this only yesterday—and deals include free 24-hour public transport, that this government introduced in July 2022 when we delivered on our election commitment.

The scam artists weren't stupid, they started doing this as people were waiting for the release of the new deals and discounts directory so more people would be searching online for information about Seniors Cards. The scam was discovered when our staff who process applications noticed requests being sent from a generic email and then noticed this same email popping up on multiple occasions.

Apologists for scam artists might suggest that this website was not all that bad because it was doing what it promised to do and that is submitting a person's application so that they actually got the Seniors Card, but we know from other scams that dodgy operators will often give an ounce of honesty to build some trust and then abuse the trust by suggesting they can now help with your banking, investments, or maybe even your love life.

The good news is that we will now never know how far they were going to take this because we smashed it pretty quickly. As soon as the scam was detected, the Seniors Card team in my department contacted the 70 people whose names were linked to the generic email addresses that were used by the scammers. They were all encouraged to contact their banks and report the situation to Scamwatch and the Australian Cyber Security Centre. My department also contacted Scamwatch and the Australian Cyber Security Centre who reported it to Microsoft, Google, the domain registrant, the IP host provider and the payment processing provider.

Staff collaborated with colleagues interstate because the dodgy site had also been targeting older people in Queensland and Victoria. This work resulted in the site being removed as the top search result on Google and a site warning being applied. This is not some little box in the corner of a screen; it is a full red screen, the type that you might be a bit worried about if it popped up at work. It appears before you on the web page telling you to watch out. When my staff tried to access the site recently, they could not even get through because it has actually been removed.

I commend my colleague the Minister for Consumer and Business Services, who does a huge amount of work in this area to protect many different groups in the community. We sadly cannot stop every scam, but it is a great result when we can identify something early and knock it over before more people get harmed. I want to assure the public that the Seniors Card is as good value as ever and is completely safe to apply for. Just go to seniorscard.sa.gov.au and it will go straight to my amazing team. You do not need a third party; it is free to apply. If anybody asks you to pay for the privilege, tell them to nick off and report it to the authorities.

Grievance Debate

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (15:15): It has been a significant day in South Australia's history and we have attempted to act in a bipartisan manner wherever possible today. We know that GFG is no longer running the steelworks and the state has appointed KordaMentha as an administrator of OneSteel Manufacturing Pty Ltd under section 436C of the Corporations Act 2001. Make no mistake about it: at the moment, this is a Labor government that is in absolute chaos, and the Premier and his government are scrambling because they have allowed the situation in Whyalla to spiral.

The government has known the full extent of this issue for over six months. Whether it is in this place or outside of this place, we have been asking for months and months, how much is the arrears from the royalty payments? How much is owed in SA Water payments? How much is owed to creditors and what is the government doing about it? For over six months, we have been asking for things like the Whyalla Steel Task Force minutes—more secrecy from this government. Now at one minute to midnight, they are trying to secure these businesses to give certainty to families in Whyalla who are already on the brink, and have been on the brink for some time.

Today was an extraordinary moment in the history of this parliament, but the ripple effects in the town of Whyalla and the state of South Australia will be certainly felt for generations. From the outset, I want to stress that we on this side of the house are all on team South Australia. We are all on team South Australia, which is why this piece of legislation passed today in a matter of minutes, but I must make it clear that the government must not mistake this support for a blank cheque or an absence of scrutiny and accountability.

We will now be closely monitoring and scrutinising every next step, every next decision extremely closely, because the stakes are too high for this state. This is what an effective opposition does. It is why this issue came to light in the first place. It did not come to light because the Premier or his team decided to bring it to light; it came to light because the opposition raised questions in this house and the government finally buckled under the pressure to finally capitulate and provide some answers, under scrutiny from this opposition.

We have been sounding the alarm. The alarm bells have been ringing for months and months and months since September last year, but all we have been met with is secrecy and spin. Even this week, we called for an answer to this problem. It is about time the Premier put people before politics. It is not always about the right photo opportunity; it is about the people of Whyalla. We know that the government has known for a very, very long time about these unpaid debts. Through this time, the Premier has taken his eye off the ball. Instead, what has he been focusing on? He has been focusing on this hydrogen hoax. Well, how is that going? We hope that this has not come at the cost of any more jobs and small businesses.

Since we first uncovered the debts owing to the state from the owner of the steelworks, we have been left completely in the dark on the government's secret plan until literally minutes before legislation was rushed through the parliament today. South Australians have been asked today to provide an incredible level of trust in this government. At the moment, there is a trust deficit in this government.

This government have far more information available to them than those on this side of the chamber, because they refuse to release the minutes of the Steel Task Force. They do not even keep records of these meetings, as we discovered in a parliamentary committee last week. The people of South Australia have a right to know why the government made the moves it did today. That is why, when the dust settles and we go through the decisions that have been made by this government and the advice that they relied upon, we will continue holding them to account.

We have held this government to account for months. We have been asking questions about this for months. In fact, we were ridiculed about this and our constant calling for the Steel Task Force minutes. We asked the Premier if he would in fact put OneSteel Manufacturing into administration, and he would not answer the question.

The secrecy and the spin makes it incredibly difficult to continue to put any trust in this government, but we need to ensure that the Premier is not dealing false hope to the people of Whyalla and the Upper Spencer Gulf. Our commitment to the people of this state is that we will continue to scrutinise every decision, every next step and every move that this government makes.

MARILYN JETTY SWIM

S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (15:20): It is the first Sunday in February, and it is 7am. You are putting on a pair of white bathers, and already you start feeling a bit nervous. Next minute, you are putting on a blonde wig. You have your black eyeliner out, and you are putting a mole on your top lip and putting bright red lipstick on. I tell you what: it is a nerve-racking experience. You drive down to Dunluce Castle and find yourself in a sea of hundreds of Marilyns, and suddenly you feel awesome. It is an incredible experience. We are all gathered there thanks to Sarah Tinney and her efforts to raise thousands of dollars for the Cancer Council in South Australia.

Sarah Tinney, I am so proud to say, was recently awarded an Order of Australia medal for her efforts in this space. As she says, it all began some years ago as just a light-hearted conversation that she was having with friends at the surf club. She was talking about doing a fundraiser with a difference. She thought, "We are out by the Brighton Jetty. We could have a swim around that, put a

floatie on—we'll be right.' She thought that one way to make it fun was for everyone to dress like the fifties icon Marilyn Monroe, and from that the Marilyn Jetty Swim was born.

She determined that she wanted to fundraise for the Cancer Council because of the unfortunate news that her mum was experiencing cancer and ultimately passed away. It was only months later after spruiking this idea with her friends that she started to get a bit wobbly about this venture, and I can see why. She called a mate and was ready to say, 'I'm not really sure if we should go along with this stunt.' Her friend told her that she had just received the news that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. From that moment on, she knew she had to go forth.

It is so fabulous that each year this event keeps growing. The first year, in 2014, there were simply 50 Marilyns, which really is quite extraordinary for an inaugural event. At that time, they raised over \$26,500. This year, however, 765 Marilyns took part. Because it is a fun event, it is fantastic to see each year more and more men getting involved and also enjoying the opportunity to don a wig and some red lipstick. Amongst the 765 participants this year, they raised \$395,790, all to support the Cancer Council. We know the Cancer Council does such important work funding research for cancer prevention, advocacy and support programs as well. We swim around the iconic Brighton Jetty, ably supported by the Brighton Surf Life Saving Club who are out there ready to give a hand if anyone finds themselves in need. Of course we have all taken the proactive approach and we are all wearing an inflatable ring as we paddle our way around the jetty.

This year was the 12th year and it was an absolutely fabulous event to witness. I have already started getting my crew together to swim it next year, so I look forward to the participation of even more Marilyns. I can say that it is really an absolute hoot because you just feel ridiculous but you know it is for such a good cause, and for that reason I think it is so effective. People travel to be a part of the Marilyns. They travel from regional South Australia but some people have even travelled from overseas to be part of it.

It is fantastic that we have it in Brighton. It is at the peak of the summer season. There is the Brighton open water swim on just afterwards, so the Brighton Surf Club are incredibly busy at this time of the year, and it is also the final weekend of the Brighton Jetty sculptures, so that is once again another reason to be down at Brighton over the summer season.

The SPEAKER: Sticking to the metropolitan coastline, the member for Colton?

PINK & BLUE SWIM, WALK OR RUN

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (15:25): I think this speech may have even more in common actually in fact with the previous speaker, and I am pleased to follow the member for Gibson in her acknowledgment of the fantastic swim in her electorate that raises money for the Cancer Council. In consecutive weeks along the Adelaide coastline we have surf clubs and community groups raising fantastic funds for much-needed research and support for cancer charities in South Australia.

In my area that means the Pink & Blue Swim, Walk or Run at the West Beach Surf Club. The event has gone from strength to strength over the years it has run, to the point where more than 1,500 participants took part in the swim this year, whether that was a 250-metre swim, a 500-metre swim, a kilometre swim or varying distances of walks or runs. In the very early stages of this event, there were simply a number of West Beach Surf Club swimmers who came out and had a swim around. I was there in the very early days of this event and have seen the progress and the growth of it and the significant funds that have been raised each and every year. It is truly a testament to the West Beach Surf Club and the organising committee who hold this event each and every year.

I was pleased to hear that more than \$100,000 was raised through the event this year. When added to the years before, it means that the surf club has raised more than \$700,000 in total, with all of those proceeds going to St Andrews and the Prostate Cancer Foundation of South Australia, to support breast and prostate cancer research and support. That number, being so significant, is made even more special by the fact that this is a community organisation that delivers life-saving services to our community, that runs a bistro, that does a range of other things for our local community and, instead of raising funds to support its own operations, they have decided go out and raise significant funds to support charities that absolutely need it.

The West Beach community more broadly get on board each and every year and, in fact, to the point that the organising committee—whether that be Paul Rafanelli, Melinda, Lynne and others who are involved in that organising committee—was recognised by the City of Charles Sturt, not for the first time, for being the community event of the year. That is much-deserved recognition for the organising committee and, more broadly, the West Beach community and surf club for the amazing work they do in regard to that event.

While the dress code may be slightly less interesting perhaps than the swim a little further down the coast, we do have everyone in pink and blue, wearing the appropriate cap and recognising on that day family members, friends or loved ones who have been affected by those cancers. That is really at the crux of it and what drove this event to get started: people at the surf club with personal connections to cancers that have affected the community more broadly. While each and every year we appreciate and recognise the funds that are raised, we understand the personal connections and stories from where this event came.

I would also like to recognise some of the significant events that have happened around the local community in the last couple of weeks. We have had the opening of the Henley library along Seaview Road, the redeveloped Henley library, which has seen a consolidation of the Henley community centre. I am really excited about the fact that the Henley Town Hall, which had largely sat unused for many parts of the year, is now well and truly integrated into that space at the corner of North Street and Seaview Road and Military Road.

Now we essentially see a community hub, where we have the RSL positioned with the library and more broadly the community centre, all effectively working together and making the most of what is one of the most significant heritage assets in our local community. It is fantastic to see that building restored to its glory and being used by our local community now each and every day.

We have had the Zdravei Bulgarian Festival, academic assemblies and sports club presentations. There really is no more apt truism in the western suburbs than that when the sun comes out, so does our community get about. I look forward to meeting and seeing many of our community members over the few weeks that we have left of the summer period. We will get out there with our bathers and perhaps have a club swim at the surf club sometime soon too.

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY AUSTRALIA

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (15:31): I rise today to talk about a very exciting announcement that happened in my local community of Prospect this morning. If you, like me, often set your alarm for quarter to three in the morning to watch the mighty Liverpool play in the English Premier League, you will know the joy and pain that comes with following the mighty Liverpool Football Club. Today, Liverpool came to Prospect.

The Blackfriars Priory School has announced an exciting partnership with Liverpool, where they launched the International Academy Australia. This exciting initiative will basically bring what is called the Liverpool Way, the Liverpool way of teaching soccer, to our local community in Prospect, to benefit not just Blackfriars students but young people all across our local community and the wider metropolitan area.

I was proud to speak as the local member at the launch, and basically what we talked about was the fact that Liverpool lives by its values of ambition, commitment, unity and dignity. Those values really closely align with the Blackfriars Priory School, so it was a perfect fit to bring this Liverpool Football Club International Academy Australia to Blackfriars.

It is going to be able to provide a high-performance soccer program for Blackfriars students, where the coaches, school staff and volunteers are able to be coached in the Liverpool Way to then provide this program by the academy. What I was really excited about was the opportunity for this program to go broader, both to go into our local community and to be offered to other young boys and girls across our state.

I come from a soccer-mad household at the moment. I was just talking earlier about filling out the sports voucher for Audrey as she begins her journey into club soccer, playing for the Adelaide University Soccer Club. We really are absolutely obsessed with soccer, not just in our household but in Prospect and also in the wider community, so we are incredibly proud of this partnership with

Liverpool. What it really does at the heart of this is get our kids off screens and out being physically active, playing sport with their peers and making friends, ensuring that we can have physically and mentally healthy and happy kids in what is increasingly a digitalised world.

That is why our government has been taking massive strides in this space, not just from a policy sense of leading the nation in the conversation around banning young people from social media and the dangers that exist in the social media world, but also looking at opportunities for more kids to remain active. That includes our Sports Vouchers program, which we have doubled to \$200 per child per family, from reception to year 9, and investing in community infrastructure that our young people can access.

This infrastructure includes the brand-new Adelaide Aquatic Centre, literally just down the road from Blackfriars; the new Walkerville recreation facility (for which I am partnering with the Town of Walkerville to deliver) which will return community sport and recreational services to the heart of Walkerville; and our massive investment in netball with the netball stadium. I know that is a hugely popular sport. I did try to lead Audrey down that path, but she has chosen soccer, and I am very happy for her.

We are providing opportunities for more young people to remain physically and mentally active. This is not just about throwing money at sport; this is one of the best preventative health measures that we can make in the future of our young people. So I want to congratulate Blackfriars on being part of that movement to keep our kids healthy and happy, and I want to congratulate Liverpool. I believe we have a 6am game tomorrow, so I will not have to set the alarm too early for our game against Aston Villa. We are on top of the table. I just want to thank everybody involved and say: you will never walk alone!

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Clancy): I am sure Melanie Chisholm, aka Sporty Spice, will really appreciate your contribution as she is also a big Liverpool fan.

NICOL, MS M.J.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta) (15:36): Today I would like to draw to the attention of the house the life of the wonderful Margaret Jean Nicol. Margaret was born on 24 July 1943 and sadly passed away on 31 January this year, aged 81 years. She was a proud member of the local community in Athelstone, Morialta and Campbelltown in South Australia.

We were in attendance at Darroch House last week for her funeral service. It was well attended by friends and family and so many people she had worked with across the community. That included her friends at Soroptimists; her friends through Kiwanis, in particular the Athelstone Kiwanis Club; her friends; and people who respected her and remembered her fondly from local government.

She served the community for a decade on the Campbelltown council. I saw former Mayor Max Amber and former Campbelltown councillors, including Neville Grigg and indeed former Campbelltown councillor and current Tea Tree Gully Mayor Marijka Ryan and others.

Margaret had an interest in politics beyond her local community and a focus on supporting people who she considered were adding to the community in all sorts of ways. That was reflected not only, I trust, in my attendance but also through that of former member for Norwood Vini Ciccarello and former member of the Legislative Council Carmel Zollo.

On Monday I was with Cavaliere John Di Fede on Radio Italiana cinque centotrentuno. He was reflecting, as a former colleague of hers on the Campbelltown council, his own disappointment that he missed the funeral, but we were able to share with listeners of Radio Italiana some of those experiences, and so many of their listeners of course were her constituents, representing the Gorge ward in Campbelltown council.

I first met Margaret 25 years ago and got to know her well over the last 15 years. She became a family friend. She and my mum, Veronica, would attend meetings together and they would occasionally attend concerts together. Margaret was an avid supporter of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and enjoyed public engagements. She was a regular at quiz nights. She would always have somebody new to introduce you to or some engaging, interesting story to tell. She had a contribution to make, invariably.

At the funeral, the family, in their presentation, had a note, which I would like to share with the house: 'Margaret will be remembered for her unashamed curiosity, her unstoppable nattering, her unrestrained love of colour, her unsurpassed care for others, her unrelenting addiction to experience and unwavering passion to include. She was the loving wife of Stuart, who passed away a little over a decade ago, the beloved mother of Alasdair and Graham, the loved Auntie of Melanie, Deborah and Phil.'

I knew Margaret fairly well. I had not, however, seen her very much over the last year or two, and for that I am sorry. I am absolutely going to miss her, as will so many from our community, but not in any way in comparison to how much her family will miss her. My thoughts are with them, and I am sure the thoughts of the house are with all the members of her family. We offer our condolences and respect. Vale Margaret Nicol.

NATIONAL SMALL-TOWN REINVENTION CONFERENCE

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:39): I wish to advise the house that Kapunda has been successful in its bid to host the 2025 National Small-Town Reinvention Conference in September this year. The conference is organised by the Bank of Ideas, which is led by Peter Kenyon and is designed to bring together local government, community leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators to share ideas and strategies for breathing new energy, ideas and innovation into small towns committed to thriving futures.

Australia has 1,614 country townships with populations of under 5,000 people, including 1,088 townships with fewer than 1,000 people. Despite over 80 per cent of these small towns facing stagnation or decline, they continue to serve as crucial hubs for agriculture, mining and tourism, supporting a population of 1.13 million people and making their reinvention of national importance.

This conference aims to inspire and empower communities to take charge of their own destinies and create sustainable thriving futures. This year's conference, as I mentioned, will be held in Kapunda from 22 to 25 September. The announcement was made recently in Kapunda by Mr Peter Kenyon, the director of the Bank of Ideas. A number of organisers and key stakeholders were briefed on opportunities the conference offers the local region and particularly the local businesses in the region.

The theme for the 2025 conference is 'Prosperity through connection, collaboration and community'. The event will shine a spotlight on our community, showcasing our rich history and our commitment to innovation and growth. It is a fantastic opportunity for us to learn from others based on their experiences and also to share our successes across the state.

I would emphasise that this is actually a national conference and all small towns and community organisations around Australia are most welcome to present at this conference, as are people from South Australia and particularly people in the Mid North region. As I said, the conference will bring together from across Australia some of the brightest minds and some of the most passionate individuals dedicated to the future of our small towns.

It is an opportunity for all of us—and hopefully some members of this chamber and the upper house will also attend—to gain new insights, build valuable connections and explore innovative and sustainable solutions to the challenges we face. The goal of the conference is to help small rural communities build prosperous futures by building on their strengths, harnessing the resilience of their communities and collaborating with like-minded neighbouring communities.

The inaugural National Small-Town Reinvention Conference was held in Pickering Brook, a small rural community in the Perth Hills in WA in 2024. The founder and director of the Bank of Ideas, Mr Peter Kenyon, has over 30 years' experience in promoting growth and prosperity in communities through social innovation. Last year's event attracted 120 participants from 60 small towns across Australia. Attendees left inspired and equipped with practical tools and strategies to apply to their own rural communities.

It is very important also to emphasise that it is not a case of just getting people to replicate what they learn at the conference, it is about inspiring people's ideas to see what they can do to identify assets in their communities and how to build on those assets to help those communities prosper.

Mr Kenyon said that it was certainly a unique experience of sharing and learning from the amazing creativity that is occurring right across small-town Australia as rural communities instigate initiatives to respond to demographic and business decline. He goes on to say that the need for such an annual experience that highlights small-town innovation was a common theme of participant feedback. He said he was excited that the event will occur in South Australia this year, especially in a region with a long history of innovation and community building passion.

This year's event promises to build on that success, offering even more opportunities for learning and collaboration. For more information, people should visit bankofideas.com.au. If they go to that site they will actually learn about the Bank of Ideas, last year's conference and will also get an idea of this year's event. I commend that conference to everybody here.

Private Members' Statements

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Ms PRATT (Frome) (15:44): I rise to bring attention to a wicked problem that has been bubbling away in Freeling for a couple of months now. Freeling, sadly, seems to be the epicentre of a number of government failures, of failed projects, of neglectful inattention when it comes to 70 per cent of the classrooms having asbestos stickers on them. The police station has been closed down. The police house is gone. The CFS station is still a hay shed, and here we are with a water problem facing the extraordinary and much-loved Wheatfields aged-care facility.

In the last week I have been able to broker a meeting with the government, and in good faith the Minister for Planning has made his department available. What we are trying to work on is a resolution to a very wicked problem that is starting to compromise a fantastic project that expands aged-care beds in country areas, a \$25 million grant from the federal government invested in the Southern Hemisphere's biggest project to date. What we are working towards as a community is to make sure that this problem about water supply is solved, that beds are secured and we do not see more ministers required to help problem-solve what seems to be a solution that is available to the government.

Mr DIGHTON (Black) (15:46): I would like to speak about the Hallett Cove Lions Club and the work they do within my community of Black. I was recently inducted as a Hallett Cove Lion and would like to thank my sponsor, Jill Kimber, for her support and encouragement. I want to recognise the board of the Hallett Cove Lions—the president, Sharon Bond; the vice-presidents, Andrew Wood and Keith Noble; the secretary, Bill Jarman; the treasurer, Tom Kimber; the directors, Darren Bailhache and Faye Moreton; the Lion tamer, Stephen 'Rocky' Stone—and all the members of the Lions Club.

The Lions Club do wonderful things within our community. On Saturdays and on Thursday mornings, they have an op shop in Hallett Cove, which is very popular. Last year, my wife was taking my son, Albie, to kindy. He cracked it. Claire decided to pull into the op shop. She managed to get a little something, and Albie was then happy to go to kindy. They are incredible life-saving things that the Lions Club do.

They run the Barn Cafe, which serves breakfast, lunch and brunch. They provide educational scholarships and assistance with programs to the local schools. They run community barbecues; in fact, last year I had a week where I went to a community event every single day, and the Lions Club were there cooking a barbecue every single day. They are very impressive. They do terrific things. Another thing they do—

Members interjecting:

Mr DIGHTON: Is that it? Am I finished? They do a beautiful ANZAC Day memorial service, which is very moving.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Odenwalder): Ninety seconds presents its own challenges.

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (15:48): I would like to draw the attention of the house to a petition that is circulating in my local community. Our Barossa local newspaper, *The Leader*, has launched a petition about the Barossa hospital. It is just to again draw the attention of the government to the importance of this project. I would encourage anyone who has not yet signed this petition online to

do so or to pop into my electorate office, where you can sign a hard copy of this. The money is in the budget to purchase land for the Barossa hospital, and securing this land is so important.

There is no need for this to be delayed any further, so we would encourage the government to lock that in. We know that so much work has already gone into laying the critical foundation to build a Barossa hospital. Of course, the next step is for the government to commit the money required to build it. As I am out and about in my local community, I am speaking with people who are saying to me that if the government can find millions and millions of dollars for a piece of sporting infrastructure in our community, they should also be able to find money for a critical piece of infrastructure just like a Barossa hospital.

With our health system under significant strain at the moment, now is the time to get this hospital. It has never been more important, particularly with the fact that we have 25,000 people moving into our region over the next decade. I thank *The Leader* newspaper for bringing this petition to our local community and am looking forward to tabling it in the months ahead.

Ms CLANCY (Elder) (15:50): Each year, for a number of years now, on the Sunday in February that falls closest to 16 February I have attended a remembrance service in honour of the nurses who died in the Bangka Island massacre on 16 February 1942. When the *Vyner Brooke* was sunk in 1942, nurses swam to shore and then they were asked to turn around and walk back into the ocean where they were gunned down. Twenty-one unarmed nurses died and one, Vivian Bullwinkel, faked death and then, when she was sure they had left, made her way back to shore.

If it was not for her, the sole survivor, we would not know of this massacre. Her incredible strength, and the strength of all of those nurses, is something that I think is really important we stop each year to consider, reflect on and be thankful for.

I attended with the member for Reynell, the member for Hurtle Vale, the member for Waite and Louise Miller-Frost, the member for Boothby. I also attended with my favourite young woman, miss seven—soon to be miss eight—because I think it is really important that the next generation is also aware of the incredible sacrifice that has been given by many Australians.

Bills

STATUTES AMENDMENT (TOBACCO AND E-CIGARETTE PRODUCTS—CLOSURE ORDERS AND OFFENCES) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:51): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Retail and Commercial Leases Act 1995 and the Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:52): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I rise to introduce the Statutes Amendment (Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products—Closure Orders and Offences) Bill 2025. This government has demonstrated its strong commitment to tackling illicit tobacco and e-cigarette sales in South Australia. Through recent amendments to the Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997, the government introduced nation-leading powers and penalties in 2024 to make a big impact on this illegal industry.

These include increasing the penalty levels from an upper limit of \$75,000 previously to \$1.5 million. In addition, these new laws allow the issuing of a closure order on a premises so that authorised officers of the courts can immediately close down this form of unlawful activity. The new powers and penalties ensure that there are very significant implications for selling these products and that the fine levels are no longer just a cost of doing business.

These new measures have already been used by both Consumer and Business Services and South Australia Police to seize illicit products across the state. As of 13 February this year, approximately \$12.5 million worth of illicit products has been seized by our enforcement teams. This includes more than 10 million cigarettes, more than four tonnes of tobacco, more than 400 kilograms

of shisha and more than 55,000 vapes. These seizures have occurred between July 2024 and February 2025, less than an eight-month period. Since the law started on 13 December 2024, the Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs has issued six interim closure orders and applied for one long-term closure order, which is currently progressing through the courts.

As part of Operation Eclipse, South Australia Police is sharing intelligence with Consumer and Business Services to assist them with their enforcement work, as well as liaising with Victoria Police and other law enforcement agencies. Shared intelligence between law enforcement agencies has identified that up to 75 per cent of the illicit trade of tobacco and e-cigarette products in Australia is being controlled by organised crime groups. As a result, the Commissioner of Police has requested additional powers to tackle this issue in South Australia. The government is willing and prepared to provide our enforcement agencies with the tools that they need to disrupt and end illicit tobacco trade in this state.

The Statutes Amendment (Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products—Closure Orders and Offences) Bill 2025 seeks to amend both the Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act and the Retail and Commercial Leases Act 1995. The amendments to the Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997 will provide additional powers to police similar to those in the Tattooing Industry Control Act 2005, which provide police the power to undertake additional searches of premises suspected of selling illicit products, including searches for drugs, weapons and explosives. They introduce greater penalties for those in the possession of or supplying commercial quantities of illicit tobacco and e-cigarette products with fines of up to \$6.6 million; create a provision for information relating to the closure of unlicensed premises to be made available publicly; and provide greater clarification for information sharing between our enforcement agencies, as well as the ability to disclose information relating to illicit activity to interested parties, such as the owner of the premises or their agent.

The bill will also create an offence for a person who, being the owner or having the control or management of a premises, causes or permits another to engage in prohibited conduct, such as the sale of illicit products on that premises. An example of this might be a situation where a premises is leased by a criminal enterprise to tenants as part of illicit activity.

It is important to note in this context that causing or permitting an offence must be a positive act and would not apply in instances where landlords only became aware of such conduct. It would clearly need to be a situation where this person knowingly causes or permits another to engage in prohibited conduct on the premises. The provision is not targeting innocent mum and dad lessors, property managers or real estate agents. The intent is to focus on disrupting organised crime operations.

To support these new provisions amendments to the Retail and Commercial Leases Act 1995 are also included in this bill, which allow a lessor to terminate retail shop leases if a long-term closure order under section 69CC—Long-term closure order of the Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997 is in effect.

A provision has also been included to allow the parties of a lease to apply to the Magistrates Court to do anything necessary or desirable as the court thinks fit to resolve disputes which may arise from a long-term closure order. For example, as some lessors may find themselves out of pocket because of a long-term closure order, this provision will allow them to apply for compensation, including but not limited to the loss of rent, costs associated with the potential failure to make good on the requirements of a lease, or the clawing back of incentives of long-term lease arrangements.

Despite the decline in rates of smoking, tobacco remains a leading cause of death and disease in Australia and it is estimated to cost the South Australian economy over \$2 billion a year. Australia has some of the toughest requirements for tobacco products in the world, including plain packaging, health warnings, restrictions on flavours and pricing. These measures have played a big part in driving down smoking rates and preventing the uptake of smoking by non-smokers, particularly younger people.

Sir, with your leave and that of the house, I seek to have the remainder of my second reading speech and the explanation of clauses inserted into *Hansard* without my reading them.

Leave granted.

In recent years, our attention has also turned to e-cigarettes, or vapes, which had rapidly increased in South Australia and across the country, especially among children and young people.

The South Australian Government was an active player in the national vaping reforms as well as taking other strong actions against this serious health problem, including:

- running hard-hitting media advertising campaigns about vaping, across radio, outdoor and digital platforms, including Instagram, TikTok and YouTube;
- supporting schools with an education campaign, resources and staff training aimed at preventing children taking up vaping and helping those who want to quit;
- introducing new vape and smoke free areas that commenced on 1 March 2024—banning vaping and smoking in a variety of public outdoor areas including at our schools and childcare settings, and under 18 sporting events; and
- imposing tougher licence conditions on retailers to reduce the illegal sales of tobacco and vapes.

Pleasingly recently released research from the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) showed vape use among young South Australians has significantly reduced thanks to Australia's world leading vaping laws.

The research found 2024 vaping rates among 15 to 29-year-olds reduced by around a third to 10.8%, when compared to 2023 (15.1%).

Vaping rates among the 30 to 59 age group also dropped by around half from 6.7% in 2023 to 3.6% in 2024, while overall, vaping rates for people aged 15 and above were reduced by more than a third, 6.7% in 2023 to 4.3% in 2024.

This comes as the Minister for Education has reported that suspensions relating to vaping at South Australian schools has dropped by a staggering 50%. In Term 1 of 2023 there were 388 suspensions compared to 186 in Term 1 of 2024. A trend of greater than 50% has continued throughout terms 2 and 3 of 2024 compared to 2023.

This latest data shows the Federal and State Government's vaping reforms are working to prevent a new generation from becoming addicted to nicotine.

However, the illicit tobacco and vaping products currently available in our community have the potential to reverse these successes.

Therefore, this illicit tobacco trade is not only a law enforcement and compliance issue but also a public health issue.

These measures support the Government's investment in evidence-based initiatives such as public health campaigns, delivery of quitting services and reducing the community's exposure to second hand smoke, including through recent smoke-free and vape-free laws introduced in early 2024.

The Government remains committed to achieving the ambitious target of achieving a daily smoking prevalence of 6% by 2027 and this Bill is another step to support our work in meeting this target.

The sale of illicit tobacco and e-cigarettes products is not a 'victimless crime'. Smoking and vaping causes harm to the whole community, not just the individuals who choose to smoke or vape. This includes the reports of firebombing we have seen, that have spread from interstate into South Australia.

Additionally, there are very real harms associated with using these products – particularly through the development of high levels of nicotine dependence by young South Australians, and the very serious associated health risks.

I would like to thank the Commissioner for Police for his ongoing support and the suggested amendments which have initiated the development of this Bill, further disrupting the trade of illicit tobacco and e-cigarette products for the benefit of all South Australians.

I would also like to thank Preventive Health SA for their work in preparing this bill along with Consumer and Business Services and SA Police.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Retail and Commercial Leases Act 1995*

3—Insertion of section 47

This clause inserts a new section as follows:

47—Long term closure order

The proposed section provides inserts the following provisions to be taken to form part of a retail shop lease if a long term closure order under section 69CC of the *Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997* is in effect in relation to the premises to which the lease applies:

- the lessor or the lessee may terminate the lease because of the long term closure order by giving not less than 28 days written notice to the other (or such shorter period as agreed between the parties);
- if a dispute arises between the parties to the retail shop lease as a consequence of the long term closure order, the Magistrates Court may, on application by a party to the lease, make such orders (including orders for the payment of compensation) or do anything necessary or desirable as the Court thinks fit to resolve the dispute.

4—Saving and transitional provisions

This clause provides saving and transitional provisions to allow amendments in this Part to apply in relation to—

- retail shop leases irrespective of when the lease was entered into; and
- long term closure orders irrespective of whether the order was made before or after the commencement of the amendments.

Part 3—Amendment of *Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act 1997*

5—Amendment of section 33—Possession of certain tobacco products

This amendment makes a technical amendment to the wording of the provision for consistency with other offence provisions in the Act.

6—Amendment of section 39B—Offence relating to possession of e-cigarette products

This amendment makes a technical amendment to the wording of the provision for consistency with other offence provisions in the Act.

7—Insertion of Part 3 Division 6

This clauses inserts a new Part 3 Division 6 as follows:

Division 6—Miscellaneous

45A—Possession and supply of certain quantities of prescribed product

The proposed section sets out 2 new offences if a person who, without lawful excuse:

- has possession of a commercial quantity or a large commercial quantity of a prescribed product; or
- supplies to another person a commercial quantity or a large commercial quantity of a prescribed product.

Higher penalties apply for the offence in relation to possession or supply of a large commercial quantity as opposed to possession or supply of a commercial quantity. Differing penalties apply for each offence depending on whether the offence is committed by a body corporate or an individual, with higher penalties applying if a second or subsequent offence is committed.

The quantity of a product that constitutes a commercial quantity or a large commercial quantity is to be prescribed in the regulations.

A prescribed product is defined as—

- an e-cigarette product; or
- a prescribed tobacco product within the meaning of section 33(2) of the Act; or
- a prohibited product within the meaning of section 39C of the Act.

45B—Offence related to engaging in prohibited conduct on premises

The proposed section creates a new offence if a person who, being the owner of premises or having the management or control of premises, knowingly causes or permits another to engage in prohibited conduct on the premises.

Differing penalties apply for each offence depending on whether the offence is committed by a body corporate or an individual, with higher penalties applying if a second or subsequent offence is committed.

Prohibited conduct is defined as conduct constituting an offence against certain provisions of the Act listed in the proposed Schedule A1.

8—Insertion of section 66AA

This clause inserts a new section as follows:

66AA—Further powers of police officers

The proposed section sets out a number of additional powers that may be exercised by police officers in relation to premises that an officer reasonably suspects are being used for the purposes of, or in connection with, the unlawful sale of tobacco products or e-cigarette products. These include the power to carry out general drug detection under the *Controlled Substances Act 1984* and random weapon and explosive searches.

9—Amendment of section 69—Powers in relation to seized records or things

This amendment inserts a new paragraph into the section to provide a power to take and test a sample of any thing seized in accordance with Part 5 of the Act.

10—Amendment of section 69CC—Long term closure order

Subclauses (1) and (2) make a number of technical amendments to insert references to the Magistrates Court consistent with other references in the section.

Subclause (2) amends section 69CC(3) to allow the owner of premises in relation to which an application for long term closure order has been made to apply to the Court to be a party to proceedings in relation to the application.

Subclause (4) inserts a new subsection which gives power to the Court, on application by the owner of premises in relation to which a long term closure order is in effect, to make an order amending or revoking the long term closure order, with the Minister being a party to the proceedings in relation to such an application.

11—Insertion of section 69CE and 69CF

This clause inserts new sections as follows:

69CE—Certain information relating to closure orders may be made publicly available

The proposed section allows the Minister to make certain information in relation to a closure order publicly available in the manner determined by the Minister.

69CF—Protection from liability

The proposed provision provides that despite section 86A of the Act, the Crown incurs no liability for a decision of the Minister, or by any person acting on behalf of the Minister, to exercise or not to exercise powers under Part 6A.

12—Amendment of section 78—Disclosure of information

This clause inserts 2 new subsections. Proposed subsection (2a) authorises the disclosure of information by an authorised officer in relation to premises in respect of which a closure order is in effect or that the authorised person reasonably suspects are being used in connection with the offence against the Act to—

- the owner or occupier of the premises; or
- an agent of the owner or occupier of the premises; or
- another prescribed person.

Proposed subsection (2b) provides that despite section 86A of the Act, the Crown incurs no liability for a decision of the Minister, or by any person acting on behalf of the Minister, to disclose information of a kind authorised under proposed subsection (2a).

13—Insertion of section 78A

This clause inserts a new section as follows:

78A—Commissioner of Police may provide information to Minister

The proposed section provides that, without limiting any other Act or law that requires or authorises the Commissioner of Police to disclose information, the Commissioner of Police may disclose to the Minister any information on any matter relevant to the operation or enforcement of this Act.

14—Insertion of Schedule A1

This clause inserts a new Schedule as follows:

Schedule A1—Prohibited conduct

The proposed schedule lists the offences constituting prohibited conduct for the purposes of the offence provision in proposed section 45B.

15—Transitional provisions

This clause makes transitional provisions consequent on amendments in the measure.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Telfer.

PASSENGER TRANSPORT (POINT TO POINT TRANSPORT SERVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 18 February 2025.)

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:59): I just want to spend a moment or two just to close off the comments I started yesterday. As I said yesterday, I think this bill has a lot of good things in it and I think it is one which we should support. It will certainly improve things, but we will just keep some things under review because I am still concerned, particularly for those peri-urban areas like my own seat, the seat of Light, and similar areas, where some of these reforms may or may not work given the unique circumstances and nature of those communities.

In particular, I would want to make sure that responses by point-to-point services for short trips are good because at the moment it is quite dreadful in Gawler. Even though we have a statewide service now which was licensed to service that area, it is not supporting those short trips which are required in communities like Gawler and even in smaller towns.

Another thing is that I would want to make sure about access services. I have had a number of complaints regarding access cabs and I want to make sure that they are actually available. I hear a lot of stories about them turning up late or not turning up at all, and people living with disability or caring for someone with disability actually deserve better. With those comments, I support the bill and commend it to the house.

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (16:00): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Passenger Transport (Point to Point Transport Services) Amendment Bill 2025. There are obviously many different aspects and components to this bill that are being considered. As has already been mooted by the opposition, there will be a series of questions through the committee stage so there will be more clarity for our communities and also the industries that are impacted by this piece of legislation. Obviously the bill in its entirety proposes some significant reforms to South Australia's point-to-point transport industry which impacts taxis, rideshare, and chauffeur services.

Obviously the move from the government they say is necessary to modernise the industry and implement the elements of the taxi industry support package from the 2024-25 state budget. There are many different aspects that have already been discussed at length in a number of the second reading contributions. As a regional MP, obviously the bit that I am interested in is the aspect of the bill which removes the existing metropolitan boundaries for rideshare services. This is a move that will allow rideshare companies such as Uber and DiDi to be able to operate statewide, including in regional areas where they have not previously been able to.

There has been much call within regional communities for this to be implemented to allow some flexibility and freedom in trying to properly reflect what the needs of regional communities are. Indeed, we have heard from regional communities right across South Australia—even in Flinders, which is a fair distance away from the metropolitan area—that there need to be greater transport options for communities that struggle with taxi availability.

We do have to be cautious in this, and we have heard concerns and perhaps you would say warnings from taxi operators that potentially an influx of new competitors into already lower-demand areas such as regional South Australia could destabilise services and potentially lead to inconsistent availability and driver shortages in off-peak periods. This is something which needs to be enacted in a wise way and in a strategic way when it comes to regional South Australia in particular.

The opposition have been active in making sure we are engaging with some of the potential rideshare companies, and my colleague the member for Schubert has already spoken about conversations with Uber regarding the potential for regional South Australia. Obviously, while Uber Australia supports such a change, there will need to be time to put structures in place to be able to onboard enough drivers in regional areas. In an area such as the southern Eyre Peninsula, for instance, in my electorate of Flinders, there are a number of movements of people into that community through what is the second busiest passenger airport in the state.

There are a lot of movements of tourists and locals going back and forth. There is an existing taxi service in place in Port Lincoln. I have heard from my community that there have been uncertainties and concerns about getting that existing taxi service to appropriately suit the needs of the existing community demand and also what potential there could be for rideshare services to be in place in Port Lincoln and for a more sporadic service during some of the busier times in regional South Australia such as major events and concerts. For instance, during the much-loved Adelaide to Port Lincoln regatta there is a significant influx of people coming in without vehicles to drive around.

There is great potential in regional South Australia for rideshare opportunities to be put in place. That could potentially open up the opportunity for areas a bit further away from Port Lincoln—Coffin Bay, Tumbly Bay and the like—where there are some ingenious ways that people manage to transport themselves. Obviously, in regional areas there is also a lesser supply of hire cars. I have heard a variety of different stories of people who just make a friend down the street and pay them a certain amount of money to drive them out to Coffin Bay to enjoy the sites and tastes of Coffin Bay before trying to find their way back.

Something like this in place in regional South Australia could potentially hit an aspect of the demand market which is not currently being appropriately serviced, but we do have to be careful in regional South Australia that we are not undermining those existing taxi services. The opposition have already pointed out their support for the bill. We will be asking questions to get a word of surety, I guess, for regional communities that the balance is right when it comes to putting some of these rideshare expansion opportunities into regional South Australia, especially into my electorate of Flinders. With those comments, I indicate my support for the bill.

Ms STINSON (Badcoe) (16:07): I rise to support the Passenger Transport (Point to Point Transport Services) Amendment Bill 2025. Obviously, I am the member for Badcoe, which is an inner south-western suburban seat, and we are of course quite blessed with travel options in my area. Not only do we have, I think, quite fantastic public transport with tram, train and bus services but also taxi services are quite willing to service our area and also Uber and other rideshare services as well.

However, as a person who grew up in regional Australia—the house may not know that I spent all of my childhood in regional Australia, whether that was in Western Australia, country New South Wales or the Northern Territory—I am certainly very familiar with some of the things that especially those opposite have raised in relation to this bill.

One of the things I found as a child and then especially as a young person, as a teenager who wanted to go out and do things and see the world, was the challenge of transport from regional areas. I think I started taking the XPT, the CountryLink train, down the coast of New South Wales when I was about 14 or 15 to be able to go and see relatives in Sydney, all the way from what was then my hometown in Port Macquarie, New South Wales. That was quite a big and long journey. I think it took about eight hours to get there, but I remember the sense of great responsibility and trust that was placed in me when I got to go by myself.

That is one reflection of the time taken and even the inconvenience and lack of services that I remember from my childhood and the challenge of living in regional areas and being able to access transport services that were going where you wanted, when you wanted to be there.

So often job opportunities, social opportunities or family opportunities were dictated by what the CountryLink train schedule said rather than when you might actually want to travel. Going to see a family member who lived in the city was not a matter of just popping along to see them, it was a matter of great planning and some expense as well, to be able to book the ticket and get down there and then get back again.

It is not the kind of thing I experience now in Badcoe where I only need to drive about five minutes or maybe walk half an hour to see everyone in my electorate, but that experience as a child was one of days and weeks of planning to be able to go to the city or to go to another capital city or to another regional centre to be able to apply for jobs, to be able to see my relatives and to be able to have a bit of fun as well.

Those have been my reflections as I have been listening mainly to those opposite who have been expressing their experiences of travel and transport when reflecting on this bill. I also think that it is incredibly important that this house does in fact pretty much go out of its way to service our regional communities. As a person who did grow up in a country community, there are many challenges, not just transport, but access to a range of services, government or otherwise, that people living, working and building a family in regional areas experience.

Reflecting on this bill, I think that it is a good sign of the commitment that we do have to those regional areas, to people in our country communities who, as I heard someone only the other day refer to as the productive part of our population—not that the other part is not productive but that they are doing a lot of the producing and primary industries and we should be grateful for that and we should be reflecting on that in where we put our attention as policymakers.

The other matter I wanted to reflect on in this bill is that obviously the taxi industry will be affected. I note that the taxi industry continues to call for state government support to address the decrease in metropolitan taxi licences and leasing values, and for the impact of the introduction of rideshare upon their business viability to be catered for. Based on information from the industry, the taxi industry has seen a reduction of over 50 per cent of taxi work since the introduction of rideshare.

I turn to this point and make these points because I do have quite a high number of taxi drivers in the electorate of Badcoe, particularly in the western part of the seat. I thank those people for coming and raising issues with me over a period of time in relation to taxis and the position that they find themselves in, in relation to rideshare, but also other matters well. I am well aware that in my community there is a large number of people with a direct interest in this bill and, in fact, their livelihoods depend on being able to provide those services.

The review that stimulated this amendment bill recommended an annual licensing regime where licences would be issued by the state government on an uncapped basis, that is that they would be unlimited. The licences would be valid for 12 months and could be renewed but would still be subject to an annual fee. This also means the cancellation of current perpetual metropolitan and access taxi licences. The review recommended that annual licences would not be able to be privately leased, sold or shared.

Of course, the bill does implement those recommendations for review of the taxi licences. The bill implements the recommendation of the 12-month annual taxi licence and that that licence would not be leased or transferable, and would be issued on application by the department for an annual fee. The annual fee amount is not actually prescribed in this bill. Those who I am sure are tuning in to hear this from my electorate may go looking for it but you will not find it in this bill. It is yet to be determined, and I understand it will be in the regulations.

The question is: how will the taxi industry be compensated? The taxi industry reform package is being implemented to enable a transition to new models for metro and access taxi licences. Eligibility for payment under the package will be through a buyback scheme, as determined by the minister, who will prescribe eligibility by notice in the *Gazette*. Once again, you will not find that in this bill, but you will find it in the *Gazette* at a later stage.

The review recommended that eligible metropolitan taxi licence holders receive a payment of \$200,000 for their first licence and a payment of \$10,000 for each subsequent licence, up to a total of six licences. The review also recommended that all access taxi licence holders receive a payment of \$100,000 for their first licence and \$10,000 for each subsequent licence. In consulting on the review with industry, in addition every metro taxi licence holder will receive \$10,000, not only those who are eligible for the buyback.

I am aware that there are different models in different states, and different amounts paid at different stages or different numbers of taxi licences, but having spoken with the minister about this

I believe that we have struck the right balance in the figures that we have arrived at, that the government has arrived at, and how they are to be applied.

I do not think it is the case that necessarily everyone will be happy with particular amounts, given their particular circumstances, but obviously a line has to be drawn somewhere, and I think that the government has gone to great lengths, with a very detailed report and very detailed consultation, to try to arrive at something that it is as fair as it can possibly be. The buyback will be funded by increasing the point-to-point transport service transaction levy by \$1 and a portion of the Adelaide Airport service fee.

Access taxis are something I get a lot of questions about in my electorate, and obviously access taxis are incredibly important. They are very important to people in my electorate, but indeed across the metropolitan area and across the state, so it is important that they are duly considered in this bill, and I believe they are.

Access taxis are operated under a special vehicle taxi licence and are specifically designed or adapted to carry passengers who use wheelchairs, scooters or other large or ride-on mobility aids. Drivers undergo special training to increase their understanding, knowledge and skills in order to cater effectively for passengers with disabilities.

I was reminded of just how important that additional training is—and really that our taxi drivers here in South Australia are very conscious of their obligations, having undergone that training—when I listened to a story on *AM* this morning on the ABC, which was actually about a case interstate where a woman had had her bookings cancelled 32 times with a rideshare service. She was taking a case, I think, to the equal opportunity tribunal, to raise the point that once the provider became aware that she had an assistance dog those drivers had cancelled her booking.

Obviously, it will be fought out in front of the tribunal, but on face value—and certainly the story reflected this—that is not consistent with our laws. There are obligations on taxi drivers and on rideshare operators to make sure that people who have a mobility aid, or an assistance dog for that matter, are enabled to use point-to-point transport. That case this morning that I was listening to really piqued my interest, and of course it is timely that that has come up when we are today debating this amendment bill.

Certainly, I will be watching that case with an eye to whether additional training such as our taxi operators undergo is needed for rideshare services, to make sure that people in our community do have fair and equitable access to transport options.

Access taxi services are currently delivered via the centralised booking service (CBS). Currently, Suburban has a contract with the state to deliver access taxi booking services, and then they deliver access taxi services with the operators and the drivers. Access taxis are privately owned, they do general taxi work and disability work and they often have a second radio. Taxi companies also take multiseat vehicle bookings and use access taxis. Operators are independent traders and permitted to do general taxi work, and prohibiting them raises issues around restricting trade. There are, however, conditions that apply to drivers and operators that restrict the ability to do general taxi work during peak times and that aim to ensure bookings made for access taxi work are prioritised, as they should be.

There were some issues identified in the review—that very thorough review I referred to earlier—in relation to access taxi services, particularly around availability and reliability, which have been identified over an extended period of time. The review also found that customers who rely on access taxi services continue to receive what they view as poorer service, including taxis running late or not arriving. That is incredibly disappointing.

This restricts the ability for people with a disability to engage in everyday activities that many of us of course take for granted. Each month, on average over 500 people with a booking are forced to wait more than 30 minutes for an access taxi. There is obviously some work to be done there to try to improve those figures and make sure that people are getting the access that they need.

I might finally reflect again on, as I said earlier, the importance of ensuring that we are providing point-to-point services to regional communities. I do note that from time to time we have

very exciting events in our regional communities. Of course, we have Gather Round coming up, and we would love to see people participating in that as fully as possible.

I hope that, with the passage of this bill, we do see these services provided to regional communities across the state, not only so that people can enjoy their social lives, which we hope they will, but so that they can participate fully in the economy and obtain and do the jobs that they wish to do, and so they can see family and keep their community connections. These are things that so many of us in inner suburban seats like my own have actually taken for granted for quite some time.

I would like to thank those who have been involved in developing this bill, particularly the Minister for Transport, who has kept in touch with me about the development of this bill, particularly in relation to the compensation for taxi drivers. He and I share a boundary, so he, like me, has a number of taxi drivers in his electorate. They are a force to be reckoned with.

Former Mayor John Trainer, who is in fact a former member and also former Speaker of this place, is a very strong advocate for the taxi community. I commend him deeply for his work. Not only do I hear him on the radio but of course I catch up with him from time to time. He is constantly about advancing the needs of his industry, the industry that he represents with taxi drivers. I know that the Minister for Transport also keeps in close contact with him and has listened to the points that he has raised, as well as those from individuals in our communities who are affected by this bill.

With that, I recommend the bill to the house. I thank the minister and his staff and all those who have worked so hard to develop this.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the next speaker, I would like to formally acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the former Speaker of the House of Assembly, the Hon. John Trainer, who is also the former Mayor of West Torrens. I would like to acknowledge your presence in the gallery today.

Bills

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (BARRING NOTICES AND OTHER PROTECTIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 28 November 2024.)

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (16:24): I rise today and indicate that I am the lead speaker for the opposition in regard to this bill, the Education and Children's Services (Barring Notices and Other Protections) Amendment Bill 2024. In doing so I also note the opposition's support of the bill before us today and acknowledge that there has been an indication to the opposition that there will be a range of amendments moved by the government in regard to the bill as introduced to make some changes that have already been foreshadowed and signposted to the opposition. Largely, I do not think there are any issues in regard to those particular amendments, but we will work through those through the regular process of committee as we endeavour to move through progress on the bill.

The bill before us is seeking to make changes to the interpretation of the existing act around a range of issues to update those interpretations to ensure that they are better contextualised in the setting of education and the delivery of education services to our young people today. It is unfortunate in many respects that the parliament needs to be discussing and debating this issue. I think everybody understands that for many children who are in an educational setting their primary and strongest advocates are often their parents or their caregiver or the person who has responsibility for them.

Unfortunately, from time to time, there are instances where that strong advocacy can step over a line. There have been instances—and the minister obviously has significantly more information available to him in regard to those instances—reported through the Department for Education that were included in the minister's speech and information that is provided publicly that demonstrate significant increases in behaviour that nobody in this place can condone by any stretch of the imagination.

As I said, the bill seeks to update the interpretations that are relevant to better contextualising in a modern context the education setting and understanding many of the activities that are undertaken in this regard, issues of offensive and threatening behaviour and behaviour that continues over a period of time. We are now in a world where online chat groups, forums and Facebook groups are where these issues can often be perpetrated. The bill today seeks to contextualise those issues into the understanding.

It also seeks to ensure that behaviour of that nature that is undertaken in settings outside the school itself but still part of the child's educational setting are captured by the regime. For students who are going away on school camps and undertaking learning outside the standard learning environment on campus, it is clear that updates to this act should ensure that all those education settings are captured by the bill before us today.

To go back to why we are here: there were, frankly, harrowing and unacceptable examples provided by the minister in his speech, which were communicated more broadly publicly, in regard to the interactions between parents, caregivers and teachers. While there are existing powers under the act to provide barring notices and to respond in other ways, the real burning fire as to why this bill is before us today is outlined by the significant increases that have been seen in both those two areas.

The minister noted the 200 per cent increase in the number of barring notices that have been issued in public schools alone, and that in itself is significant, but also a 250 per cent increase in other operational responses, which may take the form of many things but may be warning letters or reminders about expectations of respectful behaviour. Quite frankly, I agree with the minister that that is an alarming rise. I note that in the minister's second reading speech he made clear that this issue is one that has arisen since the change in government. It was brought to his attention in 2023 by the Australian Education Union South Australian branch and, I am sure, many teachers in his travels as the education minister getting out and about through schools in South Australia.

It is important that we address this for a range of reasons. I think it is important to ensure that all parents understand the expectation that is on them as truly the supporters and advocates of their children when it comes to their children's schooling journey. I do not think anyone in this chamber, by any stretch, wants to diminish that role, but what this amendment bill is seeking to do is make it very clear where that line stands and that it is unacceptable on any occasion to talk about physical violence towards a teacher.

To see the stories that have been alluded to again, where teachers have effectively been stalked, harassed, pursued and yelled at from beyond the grounds or inside—it is clear that that is unacceptable in any setting, no matter how passionate somebody is, but particularly in the context that a school is a workplace for those teachers who go there each and every day.

It has been noted that the work that was done by the former education minister, the member for Morialta, and acknowledged by the minister again in his speech to this place on this bill as well, about the moves that the public sector is trying to achieve in terms of retaining workforce permanency was part of that. But clearly, if somebody is not able to come to their workplace without fear of this sort of behaviour occurring, that is something that needs to be addressed.

One of the other precursors for these changes was laid out in the Australian Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey that was conducted in March last year, which found that the behaviour of some parents and caregivers was a major contributor to the stresses faced by school leaders, with principal responses suggesting parents were the top source of issues.

Let us reflect on that. The primary issue taking up the time of principals within our schools at the moment is not necessarily a focus on children's wellbeing, not necessarily a focus on children's

learning and not necessarily a focus on where improvements can be made within the school, but one of the primary stressors and things that take up the time of our leaders within our schools at the moment is the behaviour of parents.

Clearly, we support this bill and support the changes that are being proposed within the bill. The significant increasing of penalties across the board in the interventions available and also the changes within barring notices, of course, are helpful in that, but it is clear that there is a broader culture piece of respect that we need to ensure that every parent understands.

I have been lucky enough in my interactions with our local public school that I have seen nothing but respectful discourse. In fact, one of the things that I have been pleasantly surprised by—and in fact inspired by, in some ways—is the fact that the school leader is seen at least once a week out on the school crossing point on the entry into school: there greeting children and greeting parents as they drop their children off at school. I think that sends a pretty important message that the leadership of the school is available to each and every parent or student, and it also ensures that there is a clear and open line of communication should ever it need to happen. I really respect the way that that particular school leader has gone about making himself available.

As I have said, there is no reason that, across whichever parts of the state, any of our teachers or our principals should be subjected to the sorts of things that have been outlined in the contribution by the minister. The steps that have been proposed in this bill to increase penalties and to change provisions around the issuing of barring orders are reasonable. I look forward to the committee stage of the bill, where we will look in further detail at the amendments that have been proposed by the government to this point and also ask just a couple of questions more broadly around some of the clauses that have been proposed. With those words, I commend the bill.

Ms THOMPSON (Davenport) (16:36): I, too, rise in support of the Education and Children's Services (Barring Notices and Other Protections) Amendment Bill 2024. I do so for good reason. Teachers, leaders and other school staff, not to mention students, deserve to feel safe at work and in their places of learning. All schools and preschools can and should be environments in which everyone who walks through the door feels appropriately supported. Sadly, that right has been undermined by a 200 per cent increase in barring notices issued by government schools and an increase of more than 250 per cent in other formal responses, including warning letters and respectful behaviour reminders.

The feedback received by this government is loud and clear. A major contributor to teacher and school leader stress is the unacceptable behaviour of some parents. In fact, reports by principals threatened with violence tell us that two-thirds of their intimidators are parents or caregivers. It is an uncomfortable truth, it is plainly unacceptable and it is why we are taking action.

The bill we debate today seeks to address these problems by strengthening the Education and Children's Services Act 2019, specifically part 8. Today, after significant consultation with those who the bill protects, the state government proposes that we expand the types of harmful behaviour captured by the act, including vexatious communications with or about a staff member, offensive behaviour directed at students involved in an education activity away from their school, and offensive behaviour outside a school's boundary, such as yelling abuse from outside the school gate.

It will increase the penalties for all offences under part 8 from \$2,500 to \$7,500 and add a 25-metre protected area around a school where any notice applies to directly address that point of abuse being hurled from outside a school's boundary, in particular that with an intention to intimidate staff, students or other parents. Having recently spoken with school principals in my electorate of Davenport, I know that these proposed changes, if agreed to, will be warmly received. My confidence in that statement sadly stems from the experiences of principals and teachers in my community.

I was told a story of how several years ago a primary school student attempted to take their own life inside a classroom. The incident resulted in the school entering lockdown and unfortunately the trauma did not end there. As you would expect, learning of an incident like this, whether you are a school staff member, another student, or the child's family, would be exceptionally difficult, and until you find yourself in such a situation—and I sincerely hope nobody does—it's hard to know how you would react. But that does not give anyone the right to walk into a school and direct their

frustrations at school staff. School staff are employed to help our children grow and develop, not render advanced mental health treatment.

Following the incident the student's caregiver became aggressive with staff, resulting in police attendance. The caregiver then turned down offers of external mental health support for their child and generally refused to cooperate—which, in itself, is cause for serious concern. Teachers have enough on their plates and managing legitimate student welfare concerns while caregivers push back on offers of assistance, all the while hurling abuse, is not in the job description. Understandably, all of this culminated in what the principal describes as the most challenging day of their career.

But it is not the only example of why these strengthened laws are required. I have also received reports of an incident in which a parent, sadly one involved in a family dispute, laid hands on a teacher, an act which can only be described as physical assault. No matter the sensitivities, there is no event in which a parent's or caregiver's personal circumstances can be used as an excuse for assaults on school staff or acts of intimidation, and it is disappointing that this is a matter that we need to address so specifically.

In the wake of this additional incident, staff were said to be scared leaving school each day not knowing if and when an incident like this might occur again and if they themselves could be targeted. As a matter of fact, the words used by one principal were, 'Every teacher could share a story.' Disappointingly, in some instances intimidation tactics appear to extend beyond the school grounds as well.

I am sure it comes as no surprise to learn there are teachers and school staff across the state that have received threatening emails from parents and caregivers. I remember this particular principal describing many of those emails as always coming in capital letters and bold. These are threats directed at good people and those doing an important job, which is to ensure our children receive the education they need to succeed in life. Put simply, teachers cannot give 100 per cent to the job if they are working in fear. So now we are left to draw a clear line in the sand.

A matter on which I have spoken previously, and an initiative that I know is already making a real difference, is the mobile phone ban introduced by this government earlier in the term. The Department for Education data shows that there was a 63 per cent decline in critical incidents involving social media in terms 1 and 2 of 2024, compared to the same period the year before the ban was in place. This is a significant step in the right direction.

Another concern for South Australian teachers is an unrealistic expectation for schools to resolve bullying that occurs over social media at home, knowing that students simply cannot access these platforms at school anymore. Again, South Australia was on the front foot here with world-leading reforms to restrict social media access for children having been adopted by the federal government last year.

While I have the opportunity I would like to thank our federal colleagues for moving so quickly to enact our proposal. Each of these policies reflects this government's commitment to a workforce that is among the state's hardest working, and it is fair to suggest among the state's most passionate too. It is a workforce that is so deeply committed to the job and to their students and in turn it is our responsibility to ensure that those school employees feel safe at work and as safe as they possibly can.

The bill we seek to speak to today, as well as those I have just referenced, are born from a want to improve outcomes for the education sector, and that is an improvement in student wellbeing as well as improvement for staff wellbeing. As a sizeable majority of parents and caregivers do the right thing by their children and their school communities I am thankful for the fact that this legislation will have little to no impact on their school engagements. However, for the few that do require stronger deterrents and who do need their behaviours regulated, know you are on notice. To the teachers who called for more, I trust this bill brings about the change that you have been seeking. Thank you again for your detailed contributions during consultation, your dedication to your students and your want to protect your colleagues in the workplace. We are a stronger state for all that you do, and with that I commend this bill to the house.

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (16:44): I rise to speak on the Education and Children's Services (Barring Notices and Other Protections) Amendment Bill 2024 introduced in this place by the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. As a former teacher, I can say how privileged I felt on completing my studies, being entrusted with the most precious thing in the lives of hundreds of parents I met over the years, namely, their children, who were to become my students—four years of tertiary study preparing you for the classroom environment, preparing you to be the best teacher you could be, knowing that each child was special and brought with them their own story, their own journey.

A teacher's job does not finish at the end of the school day. There is much preparation that goes into lessons and responding to the needs of each child in your classroom. Just as no child is the same, no day is the same, and you must be prepared to respond to the learning needs and evolving situations as they arise. Our educators, principals, teachers and support staff understand that learning environments from preschool through to primary and high school are important, and they make a significant contribution to student outcomes today and into the future. That is why I stand to add my voice here today in support of this bill, a bill that makes some significant changes to the act, a bill that will provide our school leaders and the Minister for Education the authority to respond to abusive behaviour from parents and family members or carers towards staff in our schools.

In doing so, it will fulfil our government's commitment to improve protections for staff and students in our schools and preschools made during recent enterprise bargaining negotiations. We have listened to our school leaders, to our teachers and other staff along with their representatives about cases of threatened violence relating to some parents and caregivers. We have heard that it has increased over the years, and that it is a major factor contributing to stressed educators and the reason why some who have been teaching for a relatively short period of time, and some for many years, are, with a heavy heart, making the decision to leave the profession.

This is happening around Australia. We do not want this to be the case for South Australia. Given that many would have completed four or more years of study, along the way accumulating a HECS debt, it is a decision that is not made lightly. It is a loss to the individual, their family and our school communities. With a 200 per cent increase in the number of barring notices issued by government schools and more than 250 per cent in other responses, including formal warning letters and reminders about respectful behaviour, the passing of this bill is so important.

It is not just our government schools; it is important to our independent and Catholic schools as well. The minister has assured us that these concerns are being raised in meetings with interstate counterparts and the federal Minister for Education. They are not isolated to South Australia. The bill before us will build on the types of harmful behaviour already captured by the act. This includes, for example: vexatious communications with or about a member of staff; offensive behaviour targeted at students when involved in education activity away from the premises of the relevant school, preschool or service; and offensive behaviour that occurs just outside the boundary of the premises such as yelling abuse from outside the school gate.

It will increase the penalties for all offences under part 8 of the act from \$2,500 to \$7,500, and it will add a 25-metre area around a school where any notice applies. This is to curb behaviour where banned parents stand on the edge of school grounds in an attempt to interact with or intimidate staff, other parents and students. More specifically, the bill allows for a barring notice to be issued in respect of a school, preschool, or education and care service where the designated person reasonably believes that it is necessary.

Considerable consultation on the bill revealed stakeholders strongly support the changes. In my electorate of Torrens, I have had a number of conversations with stakeholders, with parents, with grandparents and with teachers. Some stakeholders suggested areas where the bill could be strengthened and that feedback was considered in the bill before us today. Others provided feedback on operational and policy considerations or concerns to support the implementation of the changes in a way that is inclusive and promotes the best interests of children.

Importantly, for clarity, the bill as with the current provisions in part 8, will not prevent parents, caregivers and other community members from raising reasonable complaints or advocating for their children's needs. Respectful behaviour in a timely manner and appropriate setting is all that is sought.

Measures that form part of this bill aim to promote positive interaction with the staff of schools, preschools and other services by improving safeguards against the worst kind of bad behaviour. Further, contained within is also a thorough review process available to any person who receives a notice, whereby a minister of the day can overturn or amend a notice.

There is no place in our schools, preschools or education and care services for violent, abusive or threatening behaviour. Our teachers, our educators, our support staff and principals and our students deserve an environment where they can feel safe and free from harassment and harm. For our children and students to thrive, we need to ensure our schools, preschools and education and care services can focus on providing the best education and care possible.

The bill demonstrates a government that is listening, acknowledging the issue and addressing the problem. We value our educators, who put their students front and centre. In addition, we have taken steps to secure our teaching workforce, implementing our election commitment to convert some temporary staff to permanent positions as a priority, along with our decision to reinstate the regional zone incentive, with extra money paid to staff who choose to move to regional, rural and remote schools in our state. Of course, we also have the autism teachers in our primary schools, who are playing a significant role supporting classroom teachers. Our government understands our responsibility to address the issues confronting our teachers today and also, importantly, secure future generations of teachers. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr DIGHTON (Black) (16:51): I rise to support this legislation. Like the member for Torrens, I am a former teacher and also a school leader. I can speak from firsthand experience about why this legislative reform is needed. Before I do, I want to start by talking a little about why positive partnerships between schools and families are so important. Absolutely, in my experience student achievement, student development, student wellbeing occurs when there is a really positive and constructive relationship between parents, families and the school.

I have already spoken a bit in the house about the importance of belonging and community. When families work in partnership, when there is that positive relationship between a school, between teachers, it helps to create a sense of belonging. Later, I will talk a bit about some examples of incidents that have not assisted to create a sense of belonging.

As the head of campus at Sacred Heart College, the first thing I would say to families when I met them for the first time was to encourage them to really feel like it was a partnership, that they were part of the journey, a really critical part, in the development of their children in their learning. Unfortunately, with the busyness of our world and our society, there are some parents who struggle. Having just started the journey with my son, who has just started at school, I can attest to that busyness of life and then coming home to help him with his letters, which I probably have to do tonight at some stage, so I can understand that.

But it is critical that if a parent engages with their children about their learning, that has an impact on their achievement. In fact, there are a number of studies which point to that very thing, that the improvement and the academic achievement can be linked to the way parents engage in learning. Even the simple thing, instead of saying, 'How was your day?' and changing that to, 'What did you learn?' is a powerful way of ensuring that you are engaging with the child in learning.

I would say, and I want to be really clear, that my experience as a school leader for the past eight years, and a teacher for 16 years, is that absolutely overwhelmingly the families and the parents that I have engaged with have been incredibly positive, and I think that would be the experience throughout many of our schools, in that the vast majority of our families are very positive and I think it is important to recognise that.

There is a particular area—again, I have raised this but I want to raise it again because I think it is relevant to this idea of working in partnerships: one of the changes that we have seen in our schools over the past—certainly in my time as a teacher—is the increase in students with a disability or students who have an educational adjustment due to their learning disabilities and difficulties. According to the latest report by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 25.7 per cent of school students last year received an educational adjustment due to disability. That is up from 18 per cent in 2015.

Supporting families and supporting students with a disability is a great example of the critical need to work in partnership with our families, and for schools to work in partnership with families. For students with disabilities, the educational adjustment includes a personalised plan for learning or an independent education plan, depending on the different terminology in it, and this is critical to supporting a student in their learning, and making sure that the teacher has a full awareness of the recommendations from external providers about what will best support students with their learning. What I found and what is critical is that there are regular reviews about that. Again, that is the importance of working in partnership, that ability for parents to come in, talk to teachers, review plans, and make sure that those plans are suitable.

If passed, this bill will fulfil the government's commitment to improve protections for staff and students in schools. I think that is really important, and I know that this is a bill that will cover all sectors including independent and Catholic as well as public schools, because there has been wide consultation. The bill will provide a framework for all schools, both for the department but also for independent and Catholic schools to use. Whilst many schools would have good processes and policies in place already that outline, for example, the types of communication that can occur between families and perhaps response times, the opportunities for engagement for people to meet with teachers and school leaders, this will provide some additional assistance.

There has been an increase in the number of barring notices issued in government schools and more than a 250 per cent increase in other responses such as formal warning letters and reminders about expectations of respectful behaviour. Those are examples. Unfortunately in my time, I have also had to write letters regarding expectations, providing parents with reminders of respectful behaviour. The behaviour of some parents and caregivers is a major—

The Hon. K.A. Hildyard interjecting:

Mr DIGHTON: No, it was not to the member for Reynell. I am happy to put on the record that the member for Reynell's child was excellent, and she was an exemplary parent in the community where I was lucky enough to teach.

The Hon. K.A. Hildyard interjecting:

Mr DIGHTON: Yes, thank you. The behaviour of some parents is a regular contributor to stress. I will go into it in a bit more detail, but certainly I experienced behaviour from parents that absolutely contributed to my stress, both through the day and into the night unfortunately. I saw the impact absolutely on the teachers I led and supported in terms of their emotional response after receiving what could only be described as intended harmful emails directed at them. I can assure the house that it can have a significant impact on teachers, a significant impact on their ability to perform their core role, which is the teaching of our students.

I note also in particular that two-thirds of reports by principals and school leaders who were threatened with violence related to parents and caregivers. That has not been my experience, but I am certainly aware of the surveys in South Australia and around Australia about the impact on principals. I am aware that in some jurisdictions there are difficulties in appointing principals and leaders to roles because of the stress of the role, and some of that is caused by threats and those types of things that are directed towards them.

In speaking with the minister and listening to other speeches in here of the significant amount of feedback and consultation that occurred with the various stakeholders, schools and representative unions, including the Australian Education Union and the Independent Education Union and others, I am aware of this particular issue, and the lived experience that I have seen from my teachers would be clear about those impacts.

The bill will—and I think this is particularly important—expand the types of harmful behaviour captured by the act. These include vexatious communications with or about a member of staff; offensive behaviour targeted at students when involved in an educational activity away from the premises of the relevant school; offensive behaviour that occurs just outside the boundary, such as yelling abuse; increased penalties; and a 25-metre area around the school where the notice applies.

I want to pick up on a couple of those particular changes. Vexatious communication can be in the form of emails. Unfortunately, it is also in the form of social media now, where it is

commonplace for that to occur. It is certainly an area where I have seen an increase in that particular type of behaviour. I have, unfortunately, also witnessed behaviour from parents and caregivers towards other students outside of the school. Again, it is really disappointing that that behaviour would occur. The impact on the particular students that I saw was really detrimental. If we think about learning, it is difficult enough without having to put up with that sort of threatening and inappropriate behaviour.

My experiences were that I would receive emails from families which were intended to cause distress. I found that absolutely challenging. As someone who has just gone through a really quite difficult by-election, I feel like I am pretty tough, but it certainly had an impact on me, and from what I have seen it has a significant impact on teachers, both creating a significant emotional response and then also meaning they have to take time away from school to manage the distress caused by that aggressive behaviour from parents towards them.

I note the significant consultation. I do want to reiterate that this is absolutely about making sure that there are provisions that support positive interactions. While there are elements that talk about the increase in penalties and that sort of stuff, it might be seen as if the focus is on the stick, but absolutely this is about making sure that there is really clear understanding about ensuring that parents understand the responsibility and the benefits of having positive relationships with schools and with teachers.

There is absolutely no place in any workplace for this sort of behaviour to occur, particularly in schools, where teachers are, in my experience, absolutely dedicating themselves and going out of their way because they are absolutely passionate about children and absolutely passionate about supporting learning. They should not have to put up with behaviour that is vexatious or aggressive in any way.

We must be committed to raising the profession in the eyes of the public. We must raise the profession so that we attract more and more teachers to the profession and encourage more and more people to choose it as a great vocation. A legislative reform like this will assist that to happen. It will make it really clear, and be a clear reminder, to our families, to our parents and to our public that teachers absolutely need to be respected in their role as teachers.

I have talked a lot about teachers, but I would also like to recognise that, in my experience, teachers would not be able to do their work without the absolute support of educational support workers and admin staff. I know of particular situations where it has been the educational support officers, student support officers or admin staff who have borne the brunt of inappropriate and aggressive behaviour. I want to encapsulate the people who work in schools—teachers, educators and support staff—as examples of people who absolutely need to be supported. These legislative changes will do that. I commend the bill to the house.

S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (17:06): I rise to support the Education and Children's Services (Barring Notices and Other Protections) Amendment Bill 2024 because whether it is violence or abuse in the home, on the sports field or in our schools it is never acceptable. It is not acceptable for our teachers, principals, school services officers, admin staff or preschool educators to feel unsafe at work due to the actions of parents and caregivers.

This bill, if passed, will fulfil the government's commitment to improve protections for staff and students at schools and preschools, made during the recent enterprise bargaining negotiations. Schools and preschools need to be safe and supportive environments which, like all other work environments, deserve to be free from violence, threats or abuse, whether physical, verbal or psychological.

Shockingly, there has been a 200 per cent increase in the number of barring notices issued by government schools and a more than 250 per cent increase in other responses, such as formal warning letters and reminders about expectations of respectful behaviour. This can no longer be tolerated. The behaviour of some parents and caregivers is a major contributor to the stresses faced by teachers and school leaders. Two-thirds of reports by principals who were threatened with violence are related to threats directly from parents and caregivers.

It is clear that decisive action needs to be taken to protect the educators, students and volunteers in our schools, as feedback from leaders, teachers, other staff and their representatives has been clear for some time now: this issue is getting worse and so we are taking action.

This bill seeks to address these problems by building on and improving the protections in part 8 of the Education and Children's Services Act 2019. We need to ensure that deterrents are in place to ensure parents and caregivers think twice before displaying any violence, threats or abuse in our schools and preschools. The bill does this by expanding the types of harmful behaviour captured by the act. This will include, for example, vexatious communications with or about a member of staff, such as approaching, communicating with or otherwise contacting the person, whether electronically or otherwise, or publishing material about the person, whether electronically or otherwise. As we know, this so often occurs on social media platforms, where it can spiral out of control and have terrible impacts on the people being targeted.

It also covers offensive behaviour targeted at students when involved in an educational activity away from the premises of the school. This might be at a camp, at a sports or swimming carnival, at swimming lessons, excursions or school functions, or offensive behaviour that occurs just outside the boundary of the premises, such as yelling abuse from outside the school gate. No matter where this violence, threat or abuse occurs, it is not acceptable. In fact, recently in my electorate, a school staff member was harassed by a member of the community at the local hardware store.

This bill will also increase the penalties for all offences under part 8 from \$2,500 to \$7,500 and add a 25-metre area around a school where any notice applies. This is to curb behaviour where banned parents stand on the edge of school grounds in an attempt to interact with or intimidate staff, parents or students.

I understand that feedback on the bill revealed stakeholders strongly support these changes, and I am not surprised given these changes are in fact common sense. I further believe there was some feedback related to operational and policy considerations or concerns to support the implementation of the changes in a way that is inclusive and promotes the best interests of children. This is what we always like to hear from our educators.

As parents, we know there are times when it is legitimate to raise concerns regarding our children's education. I must say I am fairly pleased to be finished with the educational journey of my two children but, of course, whilst they were at school I did want them to receive the best education possible. Therefore, the measures in this bill, as with the current provisions in part 8, will not prevent parents, caregivers and other community members from raising reasonable complaints or advocating for their child's needs. Rather, they seek to promote positive interactions with the staff of schools, preschools and other services by improving safeguards against the worst kinds of misbehaviour.

Much better outcomes are achieved when calm and constructive conversations are held to improve children's educational outcomes. There is no place in our schools, preschools or other education and care services for violent, abusive or threatening behaviour. In fact, there is no place anywhere for this, and that is why our government is taking action. Our teachers deserve a workplace in which they feel safe and free from harassment and harm. Every worker deserves to feel safe and free from harassment and harm. They deserve to return home safely, not mentally stressed or physically injured due to the behaviour of others.

For our children and students to thrive, we need to ensure our schools, preschools and education and care services can focus on providing the best education and care possible. This, unfortunately, cannot occur if they are concerned about attending work or cannot live safely in their personal life due to the behaviour of a few parents and caregivers.

I would like to thank every teacher, principal, school services officer, preschool educator and volunteer in our schools for their service to all our children. It might be a minority of parents and caregivers, but one incident is too many. I commend this important bill to the house.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (17:13): I would like to make a few comments in support of the bill. As I just indicated, I support the bill. I also understand the need and the purpose of the bill. A number of previous speakers have elaborated on that, so I do not wish to repeat all those provisions.

I would like to make some observations, though. The observation that I would like to make is really an extension of the insightful comments made by the member for Black. It goes without saying the relationship between the school, the parent and the child underpins the success or otherwise of the child's wellbeing, growth and education. What we need to do is ensure that there is a positive relationship between the school—whether it is the principal, the teachers or whoever represents the school—the parents or the caregivers of the child and the child themselves.

When that relationship is not a positive one, even though, if you like, the conflict may be between the parents or the caregivers and the school, it is the child's wellbeing that actually suffers the most. I am sure as MPs we have all had parents come to us when the relationship between the school and the caregivers or parents has broken down in some ways or there has been some barring order given. My observation or concern is, rather than just having barring notices and doing this sort of activity—which is important; in the end, it is important to protect teachers and schools, etc., and I am not disputing that. How do you rebuild the relationship, though?

It is one thing to set expectations through laws, policies and procedures, etc., which are part of that foundation. How do you actually rebuild the relationship to make sure that this does not continue? I have seen some of these relationships spiral out of control to the extent that I am not sure even a barring order is sufficient, and in fact sometimes I think the police are involved as well, and that helps nobody.

So just a word of caution is to make sure that we, as a government, as a society, put mechanisms in place and make resources available to make sure that we fully understand what are the drivers to the behaviours that lead to the break-up or the breakdown of the relationship between the school and the parents or caregivers. If we do not get that right, as I said, it is often the children who suffer the most. I have seen children withdrawn from schools where the relationship between the parents or caregivers and teachers or the school have broken down. I have seen children withdrawn from school and not being in some school setting. That is not a good outcome.

It will always be the case that there will be parents and caregivers at the margin where you can do as much as you try and it just will not work, and I accept that. What we need to ensure though is that, apart from those few on the margin, when parents do for some reason act inappropriately, we get a better understanding of what is driving that behaviour to see if we can actually intervene in different ways to address that behaviour. We do want them to behave properly and appropriately towards teachers and principals. I think it is appropriate.

Nobody should be subjected to abuse. I am sure MPs here do not like it when their staff are abused by people coming into their offices. I do not like that, so clearly I do not like any teacher, principal or anybody in a school setting getting abused either. It is not appropriate. But sometimes when we make the time and resources available to understand what drives that behaviour, we actually do get a better outcome, and ultimately the beneficiary of that better outcome is the child themselves.

What we do not want is parents and caregivers behaving inappropriately, the child is withdrawn, and then we have the next generation of people who perhaps behave in the same way. That is the worst outcome. So while I acknowledge the need for this legislation and I support it, I think sometimes we need to go beyond the law to resolve a problem. It needs perhaps some resources and other things to actually be addressed, and that would be my observation and caution, while I support these new changes.

Ms CLANCY (Elder) (17:18): I rise today in support of the Education and Children's Services (Barring Notices and Other Protections) Amendment Bill 2024. In the years since COVID, Australia has seen a countrywide teacher shortage. Fortunately, here in South Australia, we have implemented strategies to recruit and retain teachers across both metropolitan and regional areas.

Our state government has focused on competitive remuneration packages, enhanced support within classrooms and support for early career teachers through mentorship programs. However, research continues to indicate that most teachers are not sure if they will remain in their profession until retirement. The proportion of teachers planning to leave the profession before retirement has continued to grow from under a quarter in 2020 to more than a third now.

There are many different reasons teachers choose to leave the profession, and the reasons tend to not be very surprising. Teachers report that their jobs are becoming increasingly more demanding as the range and diversity of tasks expected of teachers continues to contribute to unsustainable workloads. As the sister of a teacher—shout-out to Mr Clancy—I understand teaching is emotionally demanding work and it is work that takes place before, between and after the school bell rings. Teachers must constantly consider the emotional needs of their students and manage behavioural challenges within their classrooms while continuing to teach.

One way we have been able to support teachers is through our mobile phone ban in public secondary schools that came into place in 2023, which has shown significant improvement in student behaviour and interactions. On the anniversary of the ban's introduction, Department for Education data showed that there had been a 63 per cent decline in critical incidents involving social media in the first two terms of last year compared with the same period in 2023 before the ban was in place. These incidents included cyberbullying, circulation of explicit materials, derogatory content being posted online and other concerning online behaviour.

The data also showed a decline in matters reported to the department centred on students not complying with the mobile phone policy or overall behaviour involving phones, along with a reduction in the incidence of violence, particularly involving kicking or punching. Changes like this benefit not just the students but school staff too. In the wake of the phone ban coming into place, principals reported immediate changes in student behaviour, with many wanting to engage in extracurricular activities or clubs in break times. Happier students take a little bit of pressure off our incredibly hardworking teachers.

Understanding the extent of teachers' work—including time spent working on weekends, doing administrative tasks, and the ever-increasing correspondence with students and families via emails and apps like Seesaw—is crucial to improving the work-life balance of South Australian teachers.

As we have all witnessed recently in the news, it is not just the behaviour of students that teachers are now having to worry about. It is incredibly disappointing that there has been a 200 per cent increase in the number of barring notices issued by government schools in South Australia, while other responses such as formal warning letters have increased by 250 per cent. Data shows approximately one-third of incidents involving the issue of a barring notice involved people who had already been warned about their behaviour.

The latest Australian Principal Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing report found that the behaviour of some parents and caregivers is a major contributor to the stresses faced by school leaders. Parents and carers were reported by principals to be involved in bullying, cyberbullying, gossip, slander and sexual harassment. Shockingly, of those principals who reported being threatened with violence, two-thirds experienced these threats from parents and caregivers. Teachers report that these types of behaviours from parents are impacting their physical and psychological safety at work, their wellbeing and their capacity to carry out their work effectively: to teach our kids. I hear it over and over again from friends who are teachers: it is getting harder, and in large part that is more often than not because of the behaviour of the parents, not the students.

I suspect that when you picture yourself teaching, you see yourself at the front of a classroom, enthusiastically sharing knowledge and encouraging students. You do not see yourself sitting at home at night on your phone fielding abusive emails after 9 o'clock at night. Teachers are now threatened and harassed not only in their physical workplace but via email and on social media and that can happen at any time, day or night. Feedback received from leaders, teachers and support staff has included being audio or videorecorded without consent and being subjected to gossip and inappropriate online commentary.

It is clear these issues are only getting worse and action is required. The changes proposed by this bill will empower site leaders to respond to a broader range of behaviours that compromise the safety of teachers and students within school grounds.

In relation to barring notices, site leaders will now be able to issue them in a broader range of circumstances, such as if they believe a person poses a risk to the physical, emotional, psychological or wellbeing of any person on site or related premises being used by a school. This

change is necessary to protect the school community at external events, such as sports days or off-campus excursions from the person issued with a barring notice.

A site leader will also be able to issue a barring notice to a person engaging in vexatious communication with staff. This is behaviour including but not limited to: an unreasonably high frequency of communication; repeatedly and deliberately ignoring reasonable requests; unreasonably diverting school resources; communications intended to cause distress or harassment; or causing a source of stress for staff members.

Expanding barring notices for vexatious communication is necessary to address inappropriate and derogatory material being published about staff online and on social media platforms. Under the current act, a police officer, teacher or school leader can direct a person to leave school premises. Under our changes, the circumstances for a direction to leave will line up with the circumstances a person can be issued with a barring notice for. On the ground, this will mean a police officer, teacher or school leader will have the authority to direct a person to leave premises being used by a school, such as a pool, sports centre or the Museum. This will enable teachers to safely conduct their students at a range of educational premises without the threat of a barred person interrupting their work.

Currently, a person who has been directed to leave is not permitted to return for 48 hours. This bill will change the time period to two business days or until the school has finished using the related premises. A person directed to leave on a Friday would previously have been able to return on the Monday morning, not giving staff the time to consider or put in place further action. Two business days will allow staff to prepare their next steps within working hours and not add to their existing after-hours workload.

It is important to note that while the circumstances under which a barring notice or direction to leave can be issued have been broadened, the threshold for using this response does remain high and therefore are relatively rare in our schools.

It is incredibly unfortunate that we have to make these provisions within the act to protect teachers and students. Schools should already be safe places and teachers should be respected, appreciated and celebrated for the incredible work they do for our children and young people.

We cannot allow teachers to continue to be harassed while doing their jobs while on school grounds or out in the community. The Malinauskas Labor government will continue to do everything we can to ease the burden on South Australian school teachers; protect them and their wellbeing and keep them in our classrooms. I commend this bill to the house.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (17:27): I appreciate the opportunity to add a few comments to my second reading speech and to acknowledge those who have spoken in support of this bill today. First of all I thank the member for Colton and I thank the opposition for indicating their support for these measures. It is always good to hear that we can maintain a bipartisan position on things like keeping our teachers and SSOs and principals safe, not only due to issues around school safety but also issues around how we can maintain our teaching workforce and how we can encourage more young people to put their hand up and be teachers. These are going to be issues that will stay with us for many years.

I also acknowledge the members for Elder, Black, Gibson, Davenport, Torrens and Light for their contributions as well. I know being a member of parliament, particularly in the state parliament, is one of those occupations where you do have a lot to do with schools. You do build up a relationship with teachers and with principals, particularly as you seek to support them in the important work that they do. I might add that there are a lot of people in this chamber and this parliament at the moment who have school-age children, whether it is primary or secondary school, so we see these issues up close. In the case of the member for Elder and others, some have direct family members, or in the case of the newly minted member for Black, who was a teacher himself, they understand what this kind of abusive behaviour towards existing staff can do.

I have absolutely no doubt in my mind—and I am sure the former ministers for education, the members for Morialta and Port Adelaide, would agree—it has been a big contributing factor, particularly post-COVID, for a lot of early retirements. People are deciding that, if they are faced with

that kind of abusive behaviour from a parent and are nearing the end of their career, they simply do not want to put up with it anymore. I think it sends a very negative message to those who might be contemplating being a teacher in the future, so it is important that this parliament takes all the steps available to it to protect our teachers wherever we can. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

At 17:30 the house adjourned until Thursday 20 February 2025 at 11:00.