

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 4 March 2025

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

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

The **SPEAKER** read prayers.

Bills

PASSENGER TRANSPORT (POINT TO POINT TRANSPORT SERVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 19 February 2025.)

Mr BASHAM (Finniss) (11:01): I rise just to make a few remarks regarding some correspondence that I have received from a couple of operators in my electorate in relation to point-to-point transport options and put on the record some of their concerns around this. The first correspondence is an analysis that has been prepared by a gentleman called Brendan Faulds, the owner-operator of Need a Lift? South Coast, and he is a private passenger transporter. His comments start:

The South Australian Government's decision to introduce Uber in regional areas is a bold initiative designed to address the shortcomings in our current public transport services. While the goal of improved mobility is commendable, there are several important questions about whether this model will truly serve our community's unique needs over the long term.

1. Government-Led Initiative vs. Market Demand

This move is primarily government-driven rather than based on proven or perceived local demand. Uber could have easily entered these markets years ago by paying a modest \$300 exemption fee. The delay suggests that the company may have recognised inherent challenges in making its model work in regions like ours.

2. Lessons from Similar Regions

Past initiatives, such as the rezoning of the Adelaide Hills from regional to metro, led to unforeseen consequences—rising insurance costs and reports of long wait times (often over an hour) for pickups. Such experiences raise concerns about whether Uber's operations can be smoothly adapted to the distinct challenges of regional areas.

3. Demographic and Technological Concerns

Our community has a higher proportion of older residents, many of whom require specialised services—such as medical transport—and may depend on financial assistance programs (e.g. cab charge subsidies and taxi vouchers). Additionally, the reliance on smart phone technology for booking rides raises an important question: Are many in our community comfortable using such apps? Limited familiarity with digital platforms could leave some residents unable to access these services.

4. Impact on Established Local Services

There is a genuine risk that traditional services, like the Country Taxi Service, might be undermined by the introduction of Uber. These services not only provide transport but also support local employment and offer established financial assistance options. Their potential decline could leave vulnerable passengers with fewer affordable alternatives.

5. Driver Availability and Operational Reliability

Most rideshare drivers are based in urban centres, and they may be reluctant to undertake long, unpredictable journeys—such as trips from the airport to Victor Harbor—without a guaranteed return fare. Without a dedicated local driver base, service reliability in our region could suffer, leading to longer wait times and less dependable service.

6. Infrastructure and Connectivity Limitations

Reliable mobile networks and internet connectivity are critical for the effective operation of any app-based service. In many regional areas, limited connectivity could disrupt ride dispatch systems, resulting in delays and service inefficiencies during critical times.

7. Uncertainty in Pricing and Fare Structures

It remains unclear whether Uber will adopt the same pricing model used in metropolitan areas for regional services. Without transparent information on fares, residents may be concerned about hidden charges, surge pricing during peak demand, or simply higher costs that make the service less affordable.

8. Social Equity and Accessibility

Many local residents, particularly those with disabilities or those requiring regular medical transport, rely on existing financial assistance programs. There is little evidence to suggest that Uber's model has provisions for these vulnerable groups, raising concerns about equitable access to essential services.

9. Cultural and Community Considerations

Regional communities value the personalised, local approach that traditional services offer. A standardised, algorithm-driven service might not align with the cultural expectations of residents who appreciate face-to-face interaction and locally tailored service.

10. The Presence of Uber Does Not Guarantee Service Availability

While the Uber platform may confirm your booking, it does not ensure that a driver will ultimately accept the ride. For instance, consider an 11-minute trip from Milang to Finniss at 8:30 PM. It remains uncertain whether drivers based in areas such as Strath or Victor Harbor would be willing to take on such a short journey, particularly when the return fare is not guaranteed. This raises significant concerns about the reliability of the service for regional residents.

11. Additional Risks to Consider

- **Data Privacy and Security:** Reliance on digital platforms inherently carries risks related to data security. Older residents, who may be less familiar with technology, could be particularly vulnerable to privacy breaches or misuse of personal information.
- **Reliability During Adverse Conditions:** Regional areas often experience challenging weather and environmental conditions. Unlike traditional local services that are accustomed to these challenges, Uber's model may struggle to provide reliable service during emergencies or severe weather.
- **Loss of Personal Connection:** Established local services offer a level of personal care and community understanding that an app-based model might lack. This loss of a personal touch could negatively impact customer satisfaction and trust in the service.

Conclusion

While the intention behind introducing Uber to regional South Australia is to enhance mobility and convenience, the initiative comes with significant risks. From technological and pricing uncertainties to the potential disruption of cherished local services, there are many factors to consider. Given our community's unique demographics, infrastructure challenges, and preference for personalised service, it is essential to monitor this development carefully to ensure it truly benefits our region without compromising the quality and accessibility of essential transport services.

As I said, that is from Brendan Faulds of Need a Lift?, who is an operator in the seat of Finniss.

I also have some comments in relation to one of the local taxi businesses, Orcas Taxis. The owner operator, Vicki Welsh, has also raised concerns going forward. My understanding is that she had a meeting with the minister in relation to these concerns back in October of last year and sent a follow-up letter on 30 October. My understanding is that she has not had a reply to that letter dated 30 October.

Certainly, her concerns are very important. One key question that she raises is a particular issue around the taxi phone number that is currently used, the 13 22 27 number, which is a shared number. Currently, if someone uses that number, if the number is north of Willunga Hill it is sent to the Adelaide call centre and if it is south it is sent to Victor Harbor.

I guess the challenge going forward is: if boundaries are removed, what does that do in relation to that number? Who is going to have to pay for new advertising? Is anyone who keeps using that number going to have an advantage by the fact that they are now getting calls in a region where they previously were not involved? I think there are certainly some concerns of operators in my electorate that I wanted to get on the record.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (11:11): I want to thank members for their contributions to the parliament on this legislation. This legislation has been a thorough piece of work done by my agency on the basis of an election commitment the Malinauskas government made in 2022. We felt that taxi drivers and point to point needed comprehensive reform. Reform is difficult. Reform has often unintended consequences, but nevertheless this is a good package, and I am exceptionally proud of the work my agency has done in preparing this report and bringing this legislation to the parliament.

It is fair to say that the introduction of Uber had some devastating impacts on the taxi industry in South Australia, especially for a lot of people who had purchased taxis, and this is a small way of us acknowledging the hurt that they suffered through that process. I hope it goes some way to alleviating some of the financial harm that was inflicted upon them.

More broadly, these reforms bring point-to-point transport into the 21st century, setting us up for a long period of time. It will make sure that our commuters are safe and that we truly integrate point-to-point travel as a public transport tool, ensuring that the state can utilise all forms of public transport to better support South Australians to move and be active, and to participate in our economy and our community. It will create a culture where people are safe in point-to-point travel and where people who are point-to-point operators are rewarded for their labour and their efforts, and it will make sure that regional communities are well served.

I note the member for Finniss's discussion regarding local taxi operators in his electorate. I understand the concern that they have. I also note the volumes of correspondence I have received from his colleagues asking me to lift the metropolitan boundary, so it is horses for courses in these types of debates. I think this is an idea whose time has come. Yes, reform is difficult, but I think it is the right reform, and I commend the bill to the house.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clause 1.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Minister, can you confirm who was consulted on the bill? What concerns, if any, were raised during that consultation process and how were they addressed?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The consultation included the Taxi Council South Australia, United Taxi Association, Chauffeured Vehicle Association, Country Taxis SA, Des's Cabs, 13cabs, Transport Workers' Union, Uber and DiDi. Consultation with an across-agency steering committee was undertaken, comprising representatives of South Australia Police and the Department of Human Services. We also consulted with the CTP Insurance Regulator, SACAT, the Attorney-General's Department and the Courts Administration Authority.

What came out of that consultation? I think it is fair to say that the taxi industry wanted more compensation for the buyback scheme. I think it is fair to say that Uber were concerned about the rollout of cameras and the speed at which cameras would be rolled out in rideshare. People were concerned about the point-to-point levy increase. There was concern about the ability to maintain ply for hire and maintain the integrity of meters and ranks with the taxi industry. There were a number of people who were consulted and concerned about the timeframe for being eligible for the \$200,000 buyback plate at the point in time that we had to choose. There were some people who wanted that compensation extended.

There are some people who are investors, who do not live in South Australia, who are not being compensated. They raised concerns about not being compensated or not participating in the buyback. There was a whole range of issues that were raised, as you would expect in a reform like this. There were concerns about the abolition of the standards committee and the new process we were attempting to put in place.

As you would expect in such a comprehensive piece of legislation that is so far-reaching into an industry, there were lots of concerns and a lot of appreciation, but, again, it is about getting clarity

on where we go forward. I suppose the biggest concern that I faced throughout this is the length of time taken for the buyback. That has been something that has vexed a lot of cab owners, who are very, very concerned. Of course, there are those people who have since passed on and have left that asset to a partner or an estate, who are looking for compensation as well, so these are things we are having to deal with as well. Verification of ownership is quite difficult in some cases, but by and large it has been a welcome reform. I think the reforms hit the right note, but there are always going to be concerns at the edges.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Thank you, minister. A lot of our questions will be around those issues that you are aware of. We are very aware of the fact that a lot of operators, owners, taxi drivers and rideshare drivers would be listening to this or interested in reading the *Hansard*, so I am wondering if you are able to point out to those who might have an interest in this bill where parts of the bill are mostly affected by a move away from legislation to regulation for managing the changes. I know that has been raised as a concern, as being perhaps less transparent.

So are you able to speak to the predominant parts of the bill that shift from being detailed in the act and into regulations and the reasons for that and also in which of the main sections we see an increase in the minister's powers? If you are able to get that on *Hansard* for those who are following this bill to ease their concerns.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Most parts are already in regulation and will be maintained. Definitions of 'ply for hire' will be continued. I suppose the most controversial aspect of this, the levy, will be formulated as part of the regulations and the reason that is being done is that it is very hard for us to know in advance how much levy we will raise in any one year, which means it is very difficult for us then to know how long the buyback will take. Given the length of time required, it is better to have that within the regulations than otherwise.

The other aspect would be, of course, the abolition of the standards board and having that standard set by regulation and the ability for us to remove drivers and enforce standards. The reason for that, member for Unley, is I think we have been dissatisfied with the way the standards board has operated thus far. I have been personally frustrated with some of the complaints made against some operators who you and I in a quiet conversation would not want driving one of our children around given the accusations made against them.

I think that community standards can be enforced better by the way the government is approaching this. I am in the hands of the parliament, obviously, but my concern has been our inability to get some drivers who have behaved appallingly, who have had some serious accusations made against them, removed from the industry under the current system. I think having that ministerial discretion, which would obviously be operated by the agency on a recommendation to me or whoever is in my chair, is a much more efficient way and a much faster way of enforcing community standards in ply for hire and point-to-point travel.

I will give you some real-life examples. There have been some people in the taxi industry who have decided amongst themselves to claim that meters do not need to be turned on. People are quoting trips from the city to Unley and asking for \$30 to \$40 to \$50 without turning the meter on. When they are questioned, they claim that under the act they had a bilateral arrangement with the passenger and therefore it stands.

My view—and I have had some firsthand experience of this—is that that type of behaviour needs to be stamped out very quickly and the integrity of the meter needs to be defended. It has been very difficult to remove those drivers who have had accusations made against them from the industry. I want to stamp out that type of behaviour very quickly.

There are a lot of pensioners, a lot of vulnerable people, who still use taxis rather than rideshare for a number of reasons, such as technology (not wanting to use mobile phone technologies and apps), preferring to talk to an operator, and booking a taxi and having a taxi come knowing they have the safety and regular use of the meter so it gives them a reliable outcome on what they think their fare is going to be. Having pensioners told that the fare now is \$30 to go around the corner through some sort of bilateral arrangement and then complaints being made is a difficult way for us to enforce it as we are relying entirely on the operators to enforce that.

I am concerned about the way the standards board has operated and their inability to remove drivers from this, such as drivers who regularly have bald tyres, people who are not repairing basic safety equipment on motor vehicles or making sure seatbelts are monitored. I think there are a number of things that I would like to see enforced in a much faster way and I think the new method of setting standards and having it operated under regulations by the agency, on advice from me, to allow me to remove a driver relatively quickly on the advice of the agency, is the appropriate way. I understand that there will be some people who would look at that process and think that is inherently unfair. What we are trying to regulate here is for the ability of people, who can be very, very vulnerable, to get into a point-to-point travel .

I can give some real-life examples to the parliament. There are some very elderly people, people with disabilities, and our young people—who are using point-to-point travel at night, who might be intoxicated, vulnerable and quite young—who need to be protected. I want to have standards in place where we can regulate for safety and we can act very, very quickly if we find that there are rogue players in the industry and remove them quickly, rather than go through a legislative process that could be quite cumbersome and hard to get someone out. Quite frankly I have reached the point where I think we have to have a bit more zero tolerance when it comes to some of the behaviours that we are hearing about. I accept that some drivers will not like it, but I think this is very, very important.

They are the two main aspects that we are moving into regulation; it is the ability to levy the point to point, the value of the point-to-point levy and the standards board. The rest of the things we are putting into regulations are relatively uncontroversial in my opinion, but I am happy to hear from members if they have other views that they think might be controversial, but they are the two that I think will probably garner most of the debate.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: I guess this is more of a supplementary: was there consideration given to throwing out the existing body and rebuilding it to keep that distance from the minister? Like the court system, for example, you cannot have the Attorney-General not happy with court decisions and then saying, 'I am going to decide whether someone is guilty or not and I am going to decide what the punishment is.' Was there consideration given to looking at models interstate or elsewhere that are effective and do remove those risks and those people who are unsuitable for the industry from the industry and, if so, why weren't any of them adopted?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: We have copied what other jurisdictions have done. I suppose the only differences between us and Victoria is they have an independent commissioner, whereas what I will be doing is delegating my authority to the motor registrar or the department to oversee this. It is a very similar approach to all jurisdictions around the country. Again, this is about timeliness and speed. There is a presumption of innocence when it comes to a court process. I think we need to have a bit more speed and flexibility when it comes to this type of service delivery.

I just want to remind the house and I get back to my point about vulnerability and the people who are using these services. Access cab taxi drivers and Uber rideshare, who move people around on weekends from entertainment venues, hospitals and other institutions, or people who are doing metered fares for our vulnerable, are moving some very vulnerable people around and I think it is important that we have as many protections in place as possible, which is why I think these reforms are appropriate and we are actually bringing ourselves into line with other jurisdictions rather than moving away from them.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Is it a function of the minister in any other jurisdiction in the country?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I will get this between the houses, but my understanding is either it is a delegated authority to the chief executives of the agencies in other jurisdictions or a commissioner, but any decision made by me, which will be through a delegate—it will not be me making these recommendations; it will be a delegated authority—is, of course, reviewable in SACAT. So if people disagree with my decision, they can go to SACAT and attempt to have it overturned. But my understanding is that either it is a delegated authority to a chief executive, or it is held within the minister, or it is held within the chief executive. Only Victoria has some sort of independent commission that oversees this.

In terms of the broad structure of the way the passenger transport standards will be accounted for, we are doing it in a national approach. I have to say, I have faith in my officers, just as members opposite did when they were in office. This is not the type of thing ministers will get into day to day; this will be the type of thing that would be a delegated authority, much the same way with mining licence applications. Even though, technically, they are made to me, my agencies assess them and make recommendations to me. I see this as being no different from any other ministerial approval process that is in place.

Given that this is the ability to take someone's job away, I think it is important there be some democratic oversight by a minister to be able to reach in and say, 'Maybe the standards board has been too harsh in this case.' I think the ability to go in if we need to is probably a good thing. That is the way I see it operating, but I am open to suggestions. If there is some other way the members feel would be more appropriate, I am happy to consider it between the houses.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Finally, on that—

The CHAIR: Member for Unley, I have been generous. I have given you four questions.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Just one final one on this, if I may?

The CHAIR: Fine.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Just a request for the minister, if he is able to provide any statistics on those behavioural issues.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I will get that between the houses.

Mr TELFER: Minister, could you commit to an annual report detailing the number of new accreditations for drivers booking services, the number of reasons for cancellations or suspensions, and the outcomes of any appeal, as a regular reporting mechanism?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: There is the requirement under the act already: 24A—Annual report. I would imagine that that information is already going to be included. It is the sort of thing that we would include. If we are terminating someone's licence or suspending them, it is the sort of thing we would report. In terms of the information that we have that we can make publicly available, of course we would—that is the nature of annual reports—but it is overwhelmingly public transport focused.

Mr TELFER: Obviously, as you have pointed out in your contributions, this is an area where there is a lot of interest and a lot of watching, and a need to be open and transparent throughout that process. Would you also be open to publicly publishing performance data such as point-to-point usage in regional areas, passenger wait times or compliance actions taken so that both industry and the public can see how these reforms are actually working in practice?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It would be very difficult after this, because this is not a publicly delivered service: this is a privately delivered service that we are regulating. It would be very difficult for us to assess information from rideshare and regional taxis on their performance levels because these are private contractors, and they are entering into a private contract with someone to move around. We just regulate it.

It would be an overwhelming bureaucracy to put on regional taxis for them to report to government their on-time service running. I am not sure we can do that, but in terms of infringements, the number of taxi licences, the amounts that are being collected through infringement notices and the like, I am sure we would do all that. However, in terms of service delivery it would be very difficult for us to collect that, and I suspect there would be a lot of red tape that could push people out of the industry.

There is a fine line here. What we are attempting to do is create a regulatory framework where a private operator can operate a taxi or run a rideshare vehicle and make money. We want to regulate to a point where we can provide consumers with safe transport—that is, a roadworthy motor vehicle and someone who is driving it who is competent and safe. We would have the appropriate risk-based approach to checking all that, but if we put too much bureaucracy over the top and treat this like a government delivery service or an emergency department, or police response times or

ambulance response times, that would be a very large regulatory burden on operators, and I would suspect what you would find is they do not arrive.

We do have a level of reporting for access cabs, a very small number of taxis, and that is overwhelmingly done for us by the public, who call in and let us know. I am not sure whether what the member is asking for is actually deliverable and, if it were, I think it would be counterproductive.

Mr TELFER: I guess it's about trying to have an understanding of usage and at what level that usage is appropriate, especially in areas where there is a new service coming in or a service that is going to be competing with an existing one.

Minister, have you discussed vehicle age limits with the Chauffeured Vehicle Association; if so, what was the outcome of those discussions? Will there be scope within the regulations to allow for vehicles that are roadworthy to continue operating past the current vehicle age limits, as they do in other states?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I have a great deal of sympathy for the chauffeur drivers on this issue; I know that their competitors in Victoria are able to operate their chauffeured vehicles for a lot longer. I want to see a viable industry, and for us here it is about commuter safety. Some of the augmented vehicles, the stretch limousines, are bespoke and really have only one use, so they are very keen to see these vehicles operate a lot longer. I am just interested in making sure that we regulate for safety.

I want to see a viable industry and I am more than happy to see an extension. What we are negotiating here is how we do that without putting an onerous regulatory burden on them, while at the same time allowing them to work their assets a lot harder and longer. I am a lot more liberal on this than I have been in the past. I think this is something we can work on, and I am very, very sure that we can get something.

I have just been advised that in New South Wales, Victoria, WA and Tasmania they have no restrictions on age: and Queensland is at 30 years. I will just check that and get back to the house. So I am up for a change here. The question is: how long are we consulting?

Clause passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 passed.

Clause 4.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Regarding the definition of 'centralised booking service', the question here, minister, is: will drivers who hand off a booking to another driver be required to obtain booking service accreditation?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: You cannot do it independently. Only a CBS can dispatch work.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: The opposition has heard that regional operators can be especially vulnerable or feel as though they are especially vulnerable if rideshare drivers appear only in high-demand seasons and exit when demand fails. We have also been told of uncertainty about whether a driver can operate both a taxi and a rideshare vehicle simultaneously. I suspect that means the same vehicle in that process, as we understand is the case in Victoria.

My question is: will the bill or regulations include measures to prevent or at least manage cherrypicking of lucrative times/places by rideshare, leaving gaps in off-peak services? Does the minister anticipate allowing drivers to switch freely between taxi and rideshare, and how might that affect the distinct rank and hail exclusivity that taxis have traditionally held? How would a taxi driver, for example, transition—a taxi licence transition—into also wanting to be a rideshare under these changes?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It will be an offence to be a taxi driver and operate a rideshare app so, no, they will be separate, but I go back to my original point about these reforms. Let's take a hypothetical regional community—a seaside community—that has a very large cohort of retirees with a level of base operations for a taxi fleet of, say, 10 to 14 taxis. You swell up, let's say, at end-of-year school celebrations and New Year's Eve, say about 30 to 40 kilometres from Adelaide.

People are concerned that during those peak tourism periods, rideshare will come in and do lots of work and be able to take all that and leave. Well, under these reforms nothing stops a taxi company doing exactly the same: gearing up, putting more taxis on the road, getting them accredited in the same way that Uber or DiDi will. Remember, there will not be a restriction on the number of taxi plates that can be available in country areas, and there will be no restriction on the number of taxi plates in the metropolitan area.

We are looking at balancing the competitive nature of the point-to-point industry because currently taxis are limited to a thousand and currently there are about three and a half thousand Ubers or rideshare vehicles, so they have a competitive advantage. Under these reforms, there will be no cap on the number of taxis. The government will own all the plates and we will just offer them to people who wish to apply to have a taxi, to use ranks and apply for hire and metered fares. But you cannot do both. You are either a taxi driver or you are a rideshare vehicle; you cannot do both.

That might be a reform that members opposite might want at a later date. I am open-minded to reforming once we have taken away licence rights; that is, once we have resumed these rights from people and compensated them, I am a lot more relaxed about the way we reform things. I suppose my overwhelming principle here is that people paid for the right to apply for hire and use cab ranks and call themselves a taxi.

Then the government came in over the top and said, 'We are legalising a competitor to come in.' To be fair to the then Weatherill government, they had overwhelming support from the opposition at the time calling for it, to allow Uber or rideshare in. This is a way of rectifying that and probably going back to what we should have done at the very beginning: buying these taxis back and then allowing, basically, a deregulated market with some regulated aspects over the top where we regulate for safety and maintain the integrity of the meter and the ability of taxis to apply for hire.

There will be no restriction on the number of taxis in metropolitan Adelaide and there will be no restriction in country regions. If there is going to be a massive amount of people flood into a regional community, a local taxi operator will make an economic decision about whether or not it is worthwhile them putting vehicles on, in the same way as rideshare operators will make an economic decision about whether they go and service that area. It will simply be down to an economic decision and all we are doing is regulating for safety with the appropriate regulatory guardrails in place. That is it.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Just picking up on that point, will there be a difference in the cost of a taxi licence and Uber registration? To your point that there are three and a half thousand Ubers and a thousand taxis, my understanding is that the vast majority of Ubers are part-time, they are cars that are owned by the family or whatever, whereas the vast majority of taxis are full-time. Often many of the taxis run 24 hours, which is very rare for an Uber situation, as I have been advised. Is the minister able to give an indication as to what the cost of the annual taxi licence will be and how that compares with interstate equivalents?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: We have not yet decided that. We will wait until the legislation passes and then consult with the industry. I think it is not right to say that Uber drivers are part-time. I think it is fair to say—

The Hon. D.G. Pisoni: Predominantly.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I question that. I think there are large fleets of Uber vehicles—large fleets. People own vast numbers of vehicles that are being operated by Uber drivers that are out in the system. I think the days of someone doing the school run, dropping their kids off and thinking, 'I will make a few extra dollars doing an Uber ride on the way' are over. I think Uber drivers are professional drivers. I think they are doing it as a full-time job. I do not think this is people who are driving to work, downloading an app and then doing work. This is now a professional driver industry the same way taxis are. They are operating as taxis, other than having the metered fare and the ability to hail and use ranks.

I disagree with the member there. I think Uber now is behaving in exactly the same way as taxis, other than being hailed. We are seeing a large number of these vehicles, rideshare vehicles, taking customers illegally, especially at very large events or in the evening and especially on

weekends when they are actually operating illegally as taxis, pulling up to ranks and taking customers from being hailed, rather than booked on an app, and then a bilateral negotiation occurring in the rideshare vehicle.

So it is not true to say that there is this image of the Uber driver who just downloads the app and makes a bit of extra money on the side. These are professional drivers, the overall majority of them, who are operating basically a fleet that is doing full-time point-to-point travel. That is the intelligence that I have from the taxi industry and from some Uber operators as well who own large, vast fleets of vehicles that are leased out to people who operate them as Ubers, and they are operating them as a business.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): Member for Unley, that was your third question just then, but I might—

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: I just have a supplementary on this one.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): If you had a further one, I think the minister would entertain it? Yes.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: On that basis, then—and I accept your update on my understanding of how rideshare has evolved since the last time I had an interest in this area—would it be reasonable to expect that the cost of an annual taxi licence would be similar to that of operating an Uber?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Certainly, what I am very keen to do is to try to equalise the costs. I am very concerned about compulsory third-party premiums, so I am very keen to see those equalised. I still find it amazing that compulsory third-party premiums are higher on taxis than they are on Uber vehicles. I find that very interesting and I think in some way it has fallen through the gaps there.

So, yes, I am very keen to make sure the cost is minimal, but at the same time there is a value in owning or operating a taxi. People know in advance what the fee is per kilometre and what the flag fare is. You know that the vehicle is regularly inspected. You can be dropped off to ranks and picked up at ranks without having to book. You can hail a taxi. Taxis are generally—without wanting to offend people and set the hares running—better professional drivers. I think there is an advantage in owning a taxi or being in a taxi, especially from my perspective as a father of two daughters. I would prefer my daughters to be in a taxi rather than in a rideshare and I make absolutely no apology for that. I would like to see the cost equalised as much as possible to try to give the ability for taxis to compete on an even footing with Uber.

Mr TELFER: This section, minister, is obviously changing some of the definitions and structures. I am curious on a few different aspects in particular. The definition of a 'booking service' refers to requests made by unspecified 'members of the public' in paragraph (a). For the clarification of the house, does this include bookings that are made by third-party organisations—government agencies, businesses, schools, medical practices, etc.—on behalf of, because it is an unspecified, undefined aspect there where it says 'members of the public'?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: A GP who is calling a taxi or arranging a taxi does not need to be accredited as a CBS, no. A CBS is a central booking service. If a third party advertises that they can dispatch taxi work, they will need to be accredited as a CBS. You calling a taxi for your constituent in your office: no, you would not need to be accredited to be a CBS, but you could call a CBS and they would need to be accredited.

Mr Telfer: Or a hotel or a—

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: No, a hotel would call a CBS, so no, the hotel is not a CBS—unless the third party decides that it wants to have people call it unsolicited; then they would need to register as a CBS. But as is the case now, if a concierge calls a taxi for you they do not need to be accredited as a CBS.

Mr TELFER: I am curious, minister, about the reading of the definitions. For clarification, it seems in these definitions necessary for a taxi to be a paid member of a booking service. Is it necessary for a taxi to be a paid member of a booking service if they only want to operate via rank and hail and do not wish to accept bookings from any service?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: If you want to drive a taxi you must be a member of a CBS, yes.

Mr TELFER: Despite whether or not you use that?

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): I am going to take that as a supplementary. This will be your third question now, member for Flinders.

Mr TELFER: Thank you, Acting Chair. The definition of point-to-point services includes pick-up and destinations 'determined by the passenger', which could involve third-party bookings. Does this definition also apply to other passenger transport services such as some of the ones we were talking about earlier: wedding cars, tours, motorcycles, classic or vintage cars, stretch limousines, four-wheel drives? Also, are buses with 13 or more seats included in this definition? Obviously, this could have potential implications for multiple hire arrangements—for some of the arrangements that you see, multiple stops and the flexibility that is within some of those existing services.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The act currently does; that is why we have the ability to exempt them, to facilitate exactly what you are talking about.

Mr BASHAM: My question is in relation to centralised booking services and the question that has been raised by Vicki Welsh from Orcas Taxis. Currently, they operate their own booking service with a call centre. They are using the 13cabs number going into their business. They have access to that number for people who place a call south of Willunga Hill.

Going forward, how do you envisage that being operated when that 13cabs number is now going to be operated by city cabs that may wish to operate in the Victor Harbor area at times and we have the Victor Harbor taxi service operating on the 13cabs number in their area? How do we actually see that operating going forward?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: As I suspected, this is a wicked problem. I think it will not be an issue because the idea of the 13cabs central booking service wanting to operate in Victor Harbor in competition with Ms Welsh is unlikely. But let us say, hypothetically, you are right, and they send 20 taxis to operate there full time: who owns the number? It is a national number. It is a very difficult, wicked problem.

I think we can sort this out commercially. I do not see it as being a problem. I think it is one of those hypothetical problems that could emerge but probably will not. The Telstra boundary will remain in place. The bigger issue is not for Ms Welsh: it is for 13cabs if they wish to do that, because if they move down there, if someone in Victor Harbor wants to catch one of these metropolitan-based taxis that is operating now in Victor Harbor, they will go through to Ms Welsh first because that metropolitan boundary will remain in place.

So rather than it being a problem for the smaller country operator, it is probably a problem for the larger metropolitan operator because they will be deferred through to the CBS that Ms Welsh operates. Do you see my point? So I do not think it is an issue. I am sure there will be some commercial arrangement that they will all come to amongst themselves.

Mr BASHAM: I have another question in relation to country cabs versus city cabs. Currently, there is a different fee structure. Country cabs are receiving a higher fee, tariff fees, than city cabs. How is that envisaged if a city cab decides to operate in a regional area for a peak period? For example, they go down for the summer period and try to operate down there. What fee structures are going to be in place when we are seeing changes with the boundaries?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: They are separate regulations, so we can work that out. To the same point, if I took your argument to its extreme, a regional operator could come to the city, get as many taxis as they like with that fee structure, then move them to regional areas. We will sort this out through regulations. I do not envisage it as being a problem. Probably yours is unique given your proximity to the CBD, but the idea that a CBS will attempt to move down to Victor Harbor to take on 12 taxis I think is a bit far-fetched.

These are hypothetical situations that you can catastrophise in your business models. In reality, I do not think they will occur, and if they are occurring, the outcome is there are more services

and you will have cheaper fares for your constituents. I get a lot of complaints from your constituents and people who visit your community who say that on a weekend, while being out in beautiful Victor Harbor or enjoying fantastic South Australian wines in McLaren Vale, they are finding it hard to get back to their Airbnb because they cannot get a rideshare or a taxi.

The other outcome here, of course, is that your restaurants and nightlife will improve. The town will become safer because people are not drink driving. There is an outlet for people to get home more safely. These are things we can sort out, but in any legislative reform, in any reform process, we can catastrophise each and every clause to an extent that may never occur. I do not see a situation where you will see 13cabs in Adelaide attempting to go down to compete in Victor Harbor. I just do not see it occurring.

What will occur is you will have rideshare. You will have people in Victor Harbor who will download the app, become accredited and drive rideshare in Victor Harbor, and they will swell on nights when it is busy. There will be more of them, and that will take work away from taxis. That is not necessarily a bad thing for your constituents. At the same time, Ms Welsh and her company can expand the number of taxis that she wants at any time. She may say it is a cost; that is true, but if the work is there and Uber or another rideshare company can justify being there, there must be latent work that is not being served.

Mr BASHAM: I guess there is also a question about a concern of the larger company deciding that the Victor Harbor market is lucrative and acting in a predatory way and going down there and trying to seize that area by stealth through literally targeting particular times of the year and putting the local business under enormous pressure when they are doing the day-to-day work the rest of the year. Is the government conscious of that as a potential possibility, and do they have any thoughts about how they might manage that going forward?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: If they were going to do it they would have got country accreditation by now, and they have not. Will that happen in the future? Maybe, but I like the idea of country taxis being able to charge a little bit more, because they are there all year round and they service the community. I also think it is important that we can meet all of that demand, because the consequences of not meeting that demand are (1) people do not go out and enjoy themselves in local restaurants and bars in Victor Harbor or (2) they do and then they drive home. So I think there is a mix here. I am not concerned that this will become a reality, because it could have happened now, and it has not.

Clause passed.

Clauses 5 to 9 passed.

Clause 10.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: I will just raise some concerns that were raised with the opposition by the Taxi Council. The bill consolidates accreditation responsibilities in ways that remove explicit operator accreditation. The Taxi Council worries that this may create uncertainty about who bears certain obligations. Can the minister advise how does the bill ensure that, with no separate operator accreditation, responsibilities once borne by operators will not simply fall unfairly on individuals? What process will ensure large booking service providers remain accountable if they manage many drivers across multiple platforms?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: This is a streamlining of services so we do not have people needing duplicate accreditations to do the same thing. The vehicle accreditation has been moved into the person who owns and operates the vehicle, and the booking service is doing its accreditation, so I am not sure that the concerns are founded, but I am happy to meet with the Taxi Council as I often do and discuss this with them.

I am not sure that their concerns are valid in terms of what we are attempting to achieve because, in the end, accreditation will still be required, so I am not quite sure about the point that the opposition is making in terms of the final responsibility that you are talking about. I am a bit confused about what it is you mean and the question you asked, but I can check with the council between the houses if you prefer.

Mr TELFER: Obviously this aspect here also talks about some of the definitions and clarifications of this process going through. Regarding this aspect in section 27, I would be curious as to what process will ensure that large booking service providers remain accountable if one service provider manages many drivers across multiple different platforms. What measures are in place to make sure that there is accountability for that service provider if they manage drivers across different platforms?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Are you talking about a booking service operating a rideshare and taxi simultaneously?

Mr TELFER: Yes, if there is an overarching that can then utilise multiple different platforms potentially, whether it is taxi and rideshare or whether it is multiple rideshare, for instance.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: There is separate accreditation for booking services, so if you are a rideshare, there is an accreditation; if you are a taxi booking service, there is an accreditation. It is not one accreditation for both.

Mr TELFER: If there are multiple rideshares.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Multiple rideshare?

Mr TELFER: Yes, if you potentially, theoretically, have a service provider that is providing that service and utilising two different brands—two different rideshare operators.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: You would get accreditation for each.

Mr TELFER: In clause 10 section 29(2)(ii) there does not seem to be a differentiation between the driver and the owner/driver. It states:

- (ii) that the accredited person is considered to have sufficient responsibility, skills and aptitude to drive the vehicle or vehicles to which the accreditation relates—

How will that requirement, as put there, be assessed?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: You must hold an accredited driver's licence. That is always a good start. There is a fit and proper person test. There will be a series of tests prescribed with regulation, I imagine. Again, we are regulating for safety here, so I am assuming a police clearance, a working with children clearance—all the normal procedures that you would expect anyone dealing with a member of the public to have in place and that will be required before you become accredited.

In terms of the owner-driver part that you talked about earlier, there will not be owner-drivers of taxis because the licences will be held by the government and just issued to people. People who own the vehicle is a separate issue, but the accreditation to drive will include a driver's licence and all the appropriate checks and balances that we will have to have in place to allow someone to move members of the public around.

Mr TELFER: Further to that, and I appreciate that clarification, there seems to be a bit of uncertainty around the duties of a driver under their accreditation. On page 9, 29C states, 'which applies in respect of the passenger transport service provided'. Where are those different services listed? It is putting out a definition there seemingly without a specified definition. Is this something that will be addressed in the regulations?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The regulations and a gazettal notice.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): Were you after another question, member for Flinders, or are you going to hold your fire?

Mr TELFER: I think I will hold my fire.

Clause passed.

Clause 11 passed.

Clause 12.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: This is the imposition of various conditions, and ridesharing has raised concerns that it grants the minister broad and unchecked power to mandate the use of

unspecified technological systems for booking service providers, potentially imposing untenable conditions and point-to-point transport operators. That is in the view of rideshare. Given a lack of clarity in clause 12, will the minister commit to specifying up-front what technological systems will be required, rather than leaving this open-ended and, if he is not able to do that, can he explain why?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It is just an interface between our system and the booking services system, to know that they are dispatching work to an accredited driver with an accredited vehicle. It is our way of checking to make sure that when rideshare gives you a job that you are an accredited Uber driver with the appropriate checks and balances in place, driving a vehicle that is accredited.

We have not finalised the technology transfer about how that will be done. This is something we would ask—I am assuming we are going to ask the people to verify with us to make sure that that interface works. It is just a protection to make sure that all of a sudden a rideshare company does not just dispatch work to people who are driving vehicles that have not been tested or drivers who are not accredited. That is all it is.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: I think the minister has covered the supplementary questions I may have had on that matter. I guess the question that comes to mind is whether that is the only purpose for which that technology will be used.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, for us it is a safety mechanism. We want to make sure that when a rideshare dispatches work to someone through their app, that is going to someone who is an accredited driver in an accredited vehicle. How they do it: they have to show to us and we will have to be satisfied that the interface works appropriately. We are not going to prescribe to them which software they will use; we just want them to be able to assure us, through a rigorous process, that they are dispatching work to people who are accredited in an accredited vehicle.

Again, I do not want to be too prescriptive here, because I do not want to take away the entrepreneurship of the CBS and booking services in being able to use what they think is the best interface. The government is not best placed to do that, but I am in the hands of the agency here as well, because figure the counterfactual here: you get up one day and ask me the question, 'How is it that John from 17 Robert Street, Unley got picked up by someone after they called a booking service in a car that was 25 years old, driven by an unlicensed driver?' That is the counterfactual, and we are trying to make sure we have checks and balances in place.

Clause passed.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): I acknowledge that we have students from Lycee Ozanam Macon in France joining us today. Bonjour (hello), je suis desole for my French. We welcome you here. They are guests of the member for Light, who would usually be sitting in this chair. I hope you enjoy your morning.

Bills

PASSENGER TRANSPORT (POINT TO POINT TRANSPORT SERVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

Committee Stage

Debate resumed.

Clause 13 passed.

Clause 14.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: This refers to automatic cancellation of accreditation. Rideshare has raised the introduction of automatic accreditation cancellation for certain offences without any right of notice, appeal or redress outside of SACAT. Unlike other jurisdictions, where point-to-point operators receive a notification first and are provided the opportunity to plead the case and can continue to operate during the appeals, with no appeal mechanism before automatic accreditation cancellation does the minister accept that this could unfairly treat point-to-point operators, and what

does he have in place in order to prevent that being unfair, if you disagree with that statement? Why was what rideshare describe as an extreme approach chosen over what they believe to be a fairer notice and review process?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: First and foremost, Uber is wrong—this will apply to taxis and rideshare equally—and, second, it is for those non-discretionary infractions, like loss of driver's licence. You can appeal that in a court, but while you are appealing, you have no driver's licence. We cannot allow somebody to be accredited to drive without a driver's licence. That is the type of offence we are looking at here.

If you are a rideshare driver and you have lost your driver's licence, there cannot be an ability for you to continue your work without a driver's licence. From the moment the driver's licence is cancelled, your accreditation is cancelled: it is automatic. That is what this speaks of, and that will apply to taxi drivers as well.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Just for clarity: an allegation will not be enough for automatic disqualification or cancellation?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, it will for allegations as well. For working with children checks, if that is removed, yes, the accreditation will be revoked immediately, as it should be.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: That is not an allegation. That is if they do not have working with children—

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: An allegation could be made against someone—

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: If a passenger makes an allegation, for example, against a driver for whatever reason, is that a situation where automatic cancellation of accreditation would happen, or would there be a process which determined whether that was a real allegation or whether it was one of a vexatious nature?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: A good question so that we can sort of clear this up a bit. I jump in the back of David Pisoni's taxi or rideshare, and I make an accusation against him. Of course, you have the presumption of innocence, and I would have to prove that. You can defend yourself in the process.

However, if the driver has had their accreditation for working with children revoked by an authority, then, yes, their accreditation is suspended immediately. The process for having that revoked is separate from us, but if it is revoked, you lose your accreditation immediately. That is what the scenario is that we are looking at here. If there is an accusation made against someone through your conduct as a driver, there are remedies and a procedure in place, but if you have part of your foundational accreditation documents revoked then, yes, you lose your accreditation instantaneously.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): Count this as your second question, member for Unley.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Thank you. Allegations can be of a minor issue that might lead to a loss of accreditation if found to be true. It may be a very serious allegation, with just as much proof as the minor allegation, so what happens in that instance? Does the driver continue on a very serious allegation, or is the driver suspended subject to an investigation?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Let's be clear: if someone is charged with an offence, we will take away their accreditation because police have sufficient evidence and they believe they can have a successful prosecution.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: So that is the trigger?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It is the trigger. If it is a minor offence, it will be assessed by the agency on what they think the risk to public safety is. You cannot be too prescriptive here—things change. In my mind, if you are charged with rape, you should not drive a taxi or a rideshare. If you are charged with murder, you should not drive a taxi or a rideshare. If you have been charged with drive dangerous, you should not be driving a taxi or a rideshare.

Mr Telfer: There is a line somewhere—that is the challenge.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: There is a line somewhere and this is difficult to prescribe, because there would be an argument about that line, so it is best to leave it to the discretion, I think, of the bureaucracy on a case-by-case basis to have a look at this and to make recommendations. But as I said, if the foundational accreditations are revoked at any stage, you lose your accreditation, as you should.

In terms of allegations and charges, if there is an allegation of someone taking a longer way to get from point A to B because the customer accuses them of attempting to extract more money, that would be something for which we would not revoke accreditation immediately. There would be an investigation, if we have justified it. If the driver has been charged by the police or the DPP with rape, then yes, we will remove the accreditation. I think that is the type of common sense that people are looking for here. We do not want to attack drivers, but we do want to protect the public.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Just to get some more clarity on that, minister, I do not like to use this example, but you have raised it: if somebody reported to the authoritative body for rideshare that they had been raped but had not gone to the police, how would the authoritative body manage that?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: If there is a claim of sexual assault against the driver, that is why we want cameras in vehicles. We also want to have better protections for passengers. That would be assessed by the agency and they would make a recommendation to me. Suppose we go down the path of what if the assault is not proven and no-one is ultimately charged, and someone has had their accreditation revoked for six months and they have lost their house and whatever it might be—these are the difficult public policy questions that we have to grapple with all the time.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Would your advice be to go to the police?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Absolutely. People should go to the police, and if the police feel that the evidence warrants charging, that would obviously revoke accreditation. Again, I do not think it is the right of politicians to make these judgements; we would want an independent assessment by the bureaucracy, who would make a recommendation. That gives us the democratic oversight, where necessary, to go in and say they have been too overly burdensome or have not been tough enough. This is the difficult part about these judgement calls.

I have to say, if we are too prescriptive here there will be gaps, and if there are gaps we will fall between the gaps. I think it is better to be less prescriptive and allow the agencies the discretion to look at this. I think the guiding principle will be: if you are charged by police with a serious offence and you have lost your accreditation, you lose any of the foundational accreditations that are in place to get your licence to start with. You are out. However, an accusation of poor behaviour by a driver—maybe being on the telephone and swearing or something, whatever it might be—should be investigated.

Again, we are regulating for safety here. We want cameras in rideshare vehicles. I think that is long overdue. At the same time, I do not want to be too prescriptive on that. This can be very expensive, so we have to make sure that there is a way in which we have the ability to monitor what is occurring in rideshare vehicles without it being an overly high infrastructure burden on the driver, because it can be quite expensive. Then there is the burden of how long do we keep this information.

There are a lot of things we have to work through here, but I think, as a guiding principle, we all agree that rideshare should have cameras. Taxis do. All public transport has cameras, except for rideshare; they are the only ones. Taxis have them, buses have them, trains have them and trams have them. Rideshare is a form of public transport, so they should have cameras. I think even Uber would accept that that is an appropriate public safety measure. The question is: how do we do it in a cost-effective way?

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Just a supplementary: you might want to confirm if it is the case that the industry will be part of the consultation process in implementing the safeguards that you are referring to, minister.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: For example, there is an opportunity here, I think, with Uber in the way that they use their app while the app is engaged. Most mobile phones have a camera, and it could be as simple as we make a regulation that the camera must be in the middle of the

vehicle, mounted, and that Uber are able to activate the cameras in the vehicles while the app is being used. While there is a passenger on board, we have a camera and a record.

People have their apps and the drivers have their app, and there is an interface there. Uber are looking at all these sorts of things. I am not saying that I want cameras tomorrow, but what I am saying is that we need to have cameras in rideshare vehicles, and I am up for innovative, entrepreneurial ways of doing this in a way that is cheaper, rather than us being too prescriptive.

Yes, we will consult with industry. We will consult with them to try to make sure we get a good outcome here, because the truth is we do not have the answers and technology is changing quickly, as are smart devices, as are apps, as is the platform that rideshare is using. They are improving each and every day. There are always going to be improvements, so we will absolutely consult, because I think we can get good outcomes.

To be honest, it is probably in rideshare's interest to be able to say, 'Hey, the South Australian government has a law that says your mobile phone, if you are a driver, must be placed in the middle of the vehicle and capture a panoramic view of the entire vehicle with the sound on,' which means that when the app is on and you are in the car it is being filmed and you are safe.

Or you can have another device that allows the camera or the microphone to be on while your app is on and you are in an Uber vehicle. I am not quite sure how we will work this, but I would like to see a safety measure in place for people who rideshare, rather than fixed cameras controlled by the South Australian government. There has to be another way of us doing this where we get a good outcome.

Mr TELFER: I would like some further clarification, minister, because you have been talking a bit about the discretion of the agency and a bit about regulation. This clause does refer a couple of times to 'an offence of a kind prescribed by the regulations' and also 'engaged in conduct of a kind prescribed by the regulations'. You have aerated potential high-level offences, and as we have sort of said there is going to be a line somewhere around that area. To what degree do you envision offences or conduct being specified within the regulations, and how much do you envision it being the responsibility of the agency? Obviously, within the legislation it refers to prescription within regulation. This is the line between legislation, regulation and guideline and/or discretion of the agency.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: There will be some foundational disqualifications.

Mr TELFER: That's in (a).

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes. Then the greyer areas will be through the consultation of regulations and the work that we do post legislation passing. Again, I do not want to be too prescriptive, because I think it is appropriate that we have a level of discretion here, to make sure that we can balance the right of the presumption of innocence and the safety of passengers. We do this now with bus drivers. We do this now with train drivers. We do this now with public servants, so it is not necessarily new. It is just a matter of making sure we get the balance right.

Mr TELFER: Obviously, you have spoken through the consultation process about not just the definition of offences or conduct, as you just have, but also safeguard mechanisms which will need to be in place to make sure that there is not a wrongful cancellation. Will the consultation process on the regulations also include discussion about whether there should or would be a notice period to allow businesses to respond before losing accreditation, so that it is not a hard and fast decision but there is actually notice of whatever it might be—seven days or 14 days, etc.—for there to be an initial response? At this point, it would be the agency coming to a business or an individual. Are you open to something like that being in place? If so, is that through the consultation process?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: For people who are not losing their accreditation for foundational issues like I have talked about, which will be instantaneous, yes, absolutely, procedural fairness will be in place. Of course they should be notified, and of course there will be a process where they are asked to answer questions, so yes. But in terms of the foundational accreditations, we cannot offer people notice. We cannot have someone's driver's licence be cancelled but then another act saying, 'Until you get a notice from the department, you can still operate a rideshare vehicle even though your licence has been cancelled,' so no. The act will say, 'For those foundational

aspects, accreditation ceases when these things happen, automatically,' but if there is an accusation, of course there will be procedural fairness in place. We would have to offer that; otherwise a court could overturn it for us.

Mr TELFER: I agree absolutely with the prescribed requirements of accreditation. I think there is no wriggle room with that. It is around some of the other aspects, obviously in (b) and (c) within this clause. For further clarification, if there is a notice period in place, do you envisage it being a hard and fast set—like I was saying before, a day, a week or a fortnight—or will there be within the regulations a specified process that must be followed before that cancellation happens? Basically, there are obviously going to be technicalities with each of these cases. There could be a risk, if it is a designated time period, that it could be exceeded, but you also do not want to be in a situation where a judgement is extended for that long a period that there will be safety concerns potentially for the public with a driver who is facing these sorts of scenarios.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: To reassure the member, we do this now with the standards committee. It is just that we have to convene a meeting before we can take away someone's accreditation. We are just streamlining this process to make sure it is faster. If there is someone we know who needs to have their accreditation taken away, we do not have to wait seven days to get an accreditation removed because the standing committee has not met yet.

Yes, there will be procedural fairness. Whether we will put in statutory timeframes, I suspect not. I think there are working guidelines that we have been using with the standards committee that will continue to operate, and they are appropriate. But I caution members in this place about being too prescriptive and not giving agencies the ability to be agile. There are some people who should not be driving passenger transport vehicles. We should retain that discretion to remove accreditation. Yes, some of them are businesses, and there are obviously protections that should be in place for small businesses. I understand that, but we are also talking about moving members of the community around who are vulnerable.

Again, for foundational accreditation, it will be instantaneous if it is revoked. There will not be statutory timeframes in place for notification, but procedural fairness will apply. Procedural fairness is a well-established concept of giving people notice—fair notice—that there is an accusation against them and they need to answer these accusations. I think, without being too prescriptive, we can get it right.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Will SACAT have the appropriate resources for these issues to be dealt with in a timely manner? For small businesses, their incomes rely on it. Have you spoken to the Attorney-General about how that might be managed? If so, could you advise the house?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am assured by my friend the Attorney-General that, yes, justice in South Australia is speedy and fast.

Clause passed.

Clauses 15 and 16 passed.

Clause 17.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: This clause refers to public passenger vehicle authorisations, particularly the requirement for prescribed vehicle markings. It allows the minister to impose new vehicle requirements. Will there be consultation with the industry about that process and also is there evidence that the current vehicle marking is insufficient or is not doing what it was expected to do?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, there is evidence. My biggest concern is rideshare drivers and a zero blood alcohol requirement. Breath analysis on a taxi driver in a taxi must be zero at all times and you are in a car that is clearly marked that has livery all over it. You can have no passengers, driving home, and you are required to have zero blood alcohol in your system. You can be breathalysed at any time.

Uber vehicles do too, but they are very hard to identify. What I would like to see is a form of livery that allows police to know that this vehicle is an Uber or a DiDi or another form of rideshare and that the driver of this vehicle at any time must have zero blood alcohol. This is a difficult scenario

for rideshare because, if the member for Unley is correct and these are part-time occupations and people are just turning the app on and off, at what point do they have to have zero blood alcohol?

Does that mean that an Uber driver can drop someone off at a pub, go inside and have a beer, get back in their vehicle and drive home? At what point do we say that you are operating an Uber and are available for hire? Is it when the app is on or off? This is very difficult for us to try to legislate, so I think livery is the best way of making it an easy scenario where, if there is livery on the vehicle, the driver of that vehicle must have a zero blood alcohol content while driving it.

It is an interesting dilemma that rideshare are facing here and I accept it is difficult for them, but public safety demands that anyone who is operating a rideshare vehicle must have zero blood alcohol. How do we test for that accurately? A taxi driver pulled over with no passengers in the vehicle has to have zero blood alcohol. If it is .001, they can be fined and lose their accreditation. A rideshare vehicle gets pulled over with no-one in the vehicle and they simply say, 'I'm not working.' That is not good enough, for my mind. They need to have zero blood alcohol while they are in their vehicle.

The difficult part, member for Unley, is that it could be a private vehicle. You could be right: there may be a small percentage of drivers who are driving mum and dad's vehicle around who are doing part-time work who are just going to uni and turning on the app and doing a body of work just to get to uni—doing one job and that is it. That would be rare, in my opinion, given the information I have that the overwhelming majority of Uber drivers are professional drivers who operate as taxis other than the ply for hire and rank work.

So I think livery is the way to solve this and it will unfortunately mean that people who are operating Uber vehicles must have a zero blood alcohol level while they are operating those vehicles. That it is a blunt tool is criticism I am prepared to accept, but it is the right one.

Mr TELFER: Minister, just for clarification, would that identification potentially include special lights on the vehicle?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am thinking of some sort of identification on the driver's side door so that, if you get pulled over for a breathalyser in a breath test scenario, the officer administering the breath analysis can know it is an accredited Uber vehicle. You might have a much more prominent sticker on the back of the vehicle identifying that it is a rideshare vehicle.

Potentially, specified plates would be the ultimate: hire car vehicle plates, taxi plates or rideshare plates. That is difficult; stickers are much easier. You make the penalties from operating stickers, not having the livery on while you are operating rideshare. Plates would be the ultimate but that might be difficult to actually arrange because, if the member for Unley is right and you are an intermittent Uber driver, it would probably be unfair to turn your personal vehicle into a plated vehicle.

A sticker is not so cumbersome for a driver to have on the front of the vehicle or on the driver's side of the vehicle. You might put some identifying markings, like taxis have, identifying the number as you are getting in and out, to identify the vehicle. You might have some accreditation that must be displayed at all times on the vehicle so that people who are administering the breath test can know that this is a vehicle that plies for hire, that has passengers in it.

I will give you another example. The police have a discretion when it comes to issuing infringements on indicators not working or tyres that might need changing. Often police—often, not always—can say to a driver, 'I've noticed you've got three kids in the car and one of your brakelights isn't working; you might want to get that fixed in the next couple of days. I'll just make a note of it. On you go.' If it is an Uber or a DiDi or a taxi, that is unacceptable at any time. I think identification is very important here, but I am going to allow the discretion of my agency, in consultation with the operators, to come up with what is appropriate on how best to have livery to make sure we can deal with all these issues.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Just on that, I put this scenario: if the vehicle is pulled over at a breath testing station and it is being used in a private capacity by the mother of the student you raised earlier, who is not registered as an Uber driver, what would be the situation? She is not operating as an Uber driver—she is not allowed to operate as an Uber driver as she is not accredited—what would be the situation there and have you thought of a way of dealing with that?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: They will be able to tell whether she is accredited or not. If she is not accredited, there is no problem.

Mr TELFER: We do not want to get too deep into the weeds. You referenced a sticker or magnetics, potentially. Would this be something that would be permanent or temporary, because this is the challenge, the potential intermittent use, or private versus public service, as you spoke about before? Is this something where you would envision that sort of arrangement being in place?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am envisaging some sort of sticker or magnetic application. I think the current PV stickers are too discreet and are not sufficient. Let's be honest, most rideshares do not have these stickers, they just do not, and we have to start enforcing this appropriately to make sure that people know the vehicle they are getting into.

The other scenario, of course, is the public safety aspect of this: knowing that the vehicle approaching you is a rideshare vehicle; knowing that you are getting into the right car. How many times have you driven around Adelaide, where people have seen you turn the corner, because it might be the same make of vehicle that they are expecting, and get close. This can be very dangerous.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: It is even worse in Philadelphia; they do not have front numberplates.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: There you go. Philadelphia: a tough city, home of Rocky Balboa. I want to see stickers. I do not want it to be too cumbersome on operators, I want it to be relatively easy to provide but also visible so people know. Ultimately, I think a plate would be the best way through this, but I accept that there are some problems with that. I think stickers might potentially be easier, and we could evolve down the track to having plates—I am open to all of this—but I think the best, easiest and fastest way is a more prominent form of livery. Uber might want to specify their own livery. They might require their drivers to put livery on. I know there is livery on Uber in the United States where they deliberately want people to know that these vehicles are Uber vehicles. So I have no problem with it. I just think it is a good safety measure to make sure these vehicles are well marked.

Clause passed.

Clause 18.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: What mechanism will replace the passenger transport committee's role in proactively educating or warning participants rather than simply penalising them for minor offences?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: That role is currently done by the department and I imagine that will continue.

Mr TELFER: Minister, an earlier question referred to the capacity within SACAT to be able to consider these, as in manage the workload. This question really is around the relevant expertise necessary. This is obviously something completely different that they will have to consider. Do you believe that, as the nominated appeals body, SACAT will have the relevant expertise in relation to the specifics and obvious nuances of the point-to-point passenger transport industry?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, I do, because they will have the act as a guiding principle and an understanding of what we want from accredited drivers—so, yes, I think they will. They have a good administrative background so I am not concerned about it. We do this now in other forms, so I am not worried about SACAT having the requisite skills. In fact, I have to say, I think the reform is long overdue. Even if we were not doing this passenger transport review and changing legislation, the reform of the passenger standards board is something I would have done anyway because it was outdated and not working and not to the satisfaction of the agency and the motor registrar. So, as a discrete level of reform, that would have occurred regardless of these reforms.

Mr TELFER: You referred in the answer before to the capacity of the department to make these sorts of decisions. Is there a risk, even if it is a perspective, false or otherwise, that the department could potentially be the judge, jury and executioner when it comes to these things? If

they set the standards, if they investigate the breaches, if they impose penalties, is that something which potentially the accusations could be held from within the industry?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I say to that: let them. I have no concern about that at all. Yes, the department will set the standards because it is a public transport, it is a public service. Of course we should set the standards, and of course we should enforce those standards. I have no concern with that whatsoever. In fact, I think that is what the public are crying out for: for someone to set these standards of amenity, safety and reliability. We have not got on to the access cabs part yet, which I am sure we will do in the afternoon after question time, but, yes, I think the public are calling out for the government to set a standard and then enforce it. So, absolutely, I have no problems with that whatsoever and I think it is long overdue.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

Sitting suspended from 13:00 to 14:00.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (NATIONAL ENERGY LAWS) (DATA ACCESS) BILL

Assent

Her Excellency the Governor assented to the bill.

ANIMAL WELFARE BILL

Assent

Her Excellency the Governor assented to the bill.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to welcome to parliament today French exchange students from Burgundy, one of our favourite regions. It is wonderful to have you here. Bonjour! That is about it—22 tours to France and I only know 'bonjour' and 'merci'. They are guests of the member for Light, and their exchange is part of a program with Trinity College, Saint Ignatius and Seymour College. Trinity College is celebrating the 20-year anniversary of their successful exchange program this year, so welcome once again to the Parliament of South Australia. It is terrific to have you here.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of Cathie King, a life member of the Labor Party and the woman who bears sole responsibility for signing me up to the Labor Party back in 2001—my former party, and one that I love and will rejoin at some stage soon.

ANSWERS TABLED

The SPEAKER: I direct that the written answers to questions be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

Auditor-General—Update to the Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2024
Report 1 of 2025 [Ordered to be published]

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

Summary Offences Act 1953—

Dangerous Area Declarations return pursuant to section 83B

Report for Period 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024

Road Block Authorisations return pursuant to section 74B

Report for Period 1 October 2024 to 31 December 2024

Rules made under the following Acts—

Legal Practitioners—Legal Practitioners Education and Admission Council

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

Regulations made under the following Acts—

Fines Enforcement and Debt Recovery—Approved Treatment Programs

Payroll Tax—General (2025)

Ministerial Statement

CROWLEY, HON. DR R.A.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: It is with great sadness that I inform the house of the passing of former Senator of South Australia, the Hon. Dr Rosemary Crowley AO. The passing of Rosemary Crowley is an immense loss to the labour movement, but rest assured her legacy will live on. Rosemary was a tireless advocate for social justice, women's rights and progressive reform. When Rosemary entered the Senate in 1983, she was the first Labor woman from South Australia elected to the federal parliament. Rosemary loved the Labor Party, was fiercely loyal to it and worked tirelessly in its service.

Rosemary Anne Willis (later Crowley) was born in Melbourne, Victoria, in 1938, the second of six children. Her family, her Roman Catholic upbringing and her primary and secondary education at Kilmaire Brigidine Convent in Hawthorn instilled in her a passion for social justice and a vocation for community service. Rosemary completed a medical degree at the University of Melbourne before working as a resident medical officer at St Vincent's Hospital, then as a pathologist at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

In 1964, Rosemary married James Raymond Crowley and lived for a period in Berkeley, California, where James was studying for a PhD. The Crowleys arrived in Adelaide in 1969, where Rosemary took up several roles in the South Australian health system, including tutoring at Flinders University medical department. Having become politically engaged in Berkeley, California, Rosemary joined the ALP soon after her return to Australia and participated in the excitement of the election of the Whitlam government in 1972 and subsequently in the disappointment of Whitlam's dismissal in 1975.

In 1977 and again in 1979, she stood unsuccessfully for the South Australian Labor Party against Australian Democrat Robin Millhouse for the seat of Mitcham in South Australia's House of Assembly. In 1982, Rosemary was preselected to stand for the Senate for the Australian Labor Party and was placed in fifth position on the ALP ticket for the double dissolution election of 1983. There were 10 senators to be elected for each state, and she was the last senator elected, waiting for a month before she found out she had won. She was then subsequently re-elected throughout the eighties and nineties, including in 1996, when she was placed first on the party ticket.

Rosemary saw a clear connection between her work in health and community welfare and her role as a member of parliament. During her first 10 years in the Senate as a government backbencher Rosemary was a strong advocate and defender of the Hawke government's health and welfare reforms. She vigorously supported the program to restore Medicare, the Whitlam government's universal health insurance scheme, and other reforms in the areas of health, occupational health and safety, and family matters. When the Liberal Party's Fightback! package proposed the elimination of bulk-billing, she said, 'I will take the fight about Medicare anywhere, anytime to the people of this country.'

Following the re-election of the Keating government in March 1993, Rosemary was appointed by Prime Minister Keating as Minister for Family Services and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women. During her three years as Minister for Family Services, Rosemary delivered a raft of reforms, including enhancing the Hawke government's program of financial assistance for families with increased family payments, additional payments for low income earners, maternity allowances, disability support programs, carers' pensions, student assistance and the youth training allowance. Child care was also a high priority. The Keating government was committed

to increasing childcare places and Rosemary introduced legislation for cash rebates for the cost of child care for working families and home childcare allowances.

Recognised as a pioneer among female parliamentarians, Rosemary paved the way for greater female representation in politics. As only the fourth woman elected to the federal parliament from South Australia—pretty amazing when you think about it—and the first from the Labor Party, and the only female ALP senator from South Australia throughout her 19-year term, Rosemary argued forcefully for initiatives to have more women elected to parliaments, believing that when women were given a voice, 'they opened huge possibilities for the whole of society.' Rosemary advocated for 50 per cent targets for women in our parliaments, which I am proud to say both the state and federal parliamentary Labor parties now have, and are better for it.

The Hon. Dr Rosemary Crowley AO will be remembered for her fierce intellect, unwavering principles and dedication to serving the community. She inspired countless women to pursue public office and make their voices heard. We send our heartfelt condolences to her three sons, her grandchildren, her five brothers and sisters and to friends and colleagues. While she will be greatly missed, her legacy will endure through the many lives she touched and the positive change she brought about. We honour her memory by continuing the important work to which she devoted her life. May she rest in peace.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:12): On indulgence, I also rise today to join the Premier and this house in expressing our deepest condolences on the passing of the Hon. Dr Rosemary Crowley AO. Dr Crowley's legacy as a tireless advocate for social justice, women's rights and improving the lives of others is one that we all recognise, and her leadership as the first Labor senator from South Australia helped pave the way for women in politics and public service as well.

Dr Crowley's work in health and family services has, no doubt, had a lasting impact on the lives of so many South Australians. Her unwavering commitment to bettering the lives of those in our community is something that we can all acknowledge and admire, and Dr Crowley's work and vision continue to resonate in the lives of those she touched. Her passion for ensuring fairness, equality and opportunity is a legacy that transcends political divides. To her family, her friends and all who had the privilege of knowing her, I also extend my heartfelt sympathy. Dr Crowley's passing is a great loss, but her contributions will endure. May she rest in peace.

ADELAIDE HILLS AND FLEURIEU REGION EMERGENCY RESPONSE

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) (14:13): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE: I rise to advise the house on the current water supply situation in the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region. The South Australian government is acutely aware that the last 12 months have seen rainfall at the lowest levels on record across multiple areas of the state. In response, the government has been working with the primary production sector to support drought-affected farmers and communities through an \$18 million drought support package, which was announced by the Premier and Minister Scriven late last year.

In addition to the devastating impact on farming communities, unprecedented dry conditions are now also putting domestic water supplies of some off-grid households at risk, most notably in the broader Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region, where current demands for water carting services significantly exceed supply.

According to the Bureau of Meteorology, over the last 12 months parts of the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region have seen their lowest rainfall on record for any 12-month period. Last year was also Adelaide's driest year since the Millennium Drought, with only 289.6 millimetres of rain recorded over the 12 months to January 2025, or just over half of Adelaide's average annual rainfall.

In this context, Minister Champion recently announced that production from the Adelaide Desalination Plant would be ramped up until mid-2025. This will ensure that SA Water's customers

in metropolitan Adelaide and connected areas will continue to have a consistent water supply throughout this period without the need for restrictions. This shows the importance of planning ahead and investing in fit-for-purpose water security infrastructure for the long term.

However, across the broader Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region there are many households that are not connected to a mains water supply. In such cases there is always a risk that natural rainwater and/or local groundwater sources will not be sufficient to meet an individual household's needs when conditions remain dry or extremely dry for extended periods.

Off-grid households have traditionally relied on water carting businesses when needing to top up their domestic water supplies. Water carters who provide drinking water supplies are required to be registered with SA Health and there are a range of operators who provide this service on a commercial basis throughout the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region, as well as other parts of the state.

As a result of the extreme dry conditions, there have been reports of very high levels of demand for water carting in the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region, as well as reports of people having to cart in water for the first time in more than 30 years on their properties. There are also reports that these demands significantly exceed the current capacity of the water carting sector, resulting in increased waiting times for some households and no guarantees that water will be available before people run dry.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally commend the water carters for the extraordinary way that they are responding to this emergency situation. Unfortunately, I have heard reports of isolated instances of people being abusive to the water carters when they have not been able to deliver water exactly when requested. The current situation is clearly not the fault of the water carters and they are doing their best in a difficult situation. I would ask that people please remain courteous towards those businesses, most of which are small and family owned, who have really stepped up to help people in their time of need.

I would also like to applaud the great leadership and community spirit being demonstrated by the local community. I am aware of instances where local sporting groups have opened their clubrooms to provide their locals with a place to shower and individuals have offered to open their homes and their taps to people in need. It is really heartening to see the community coming together to support each other in these difficult times.

It is important to note that the situation we are dealing with in the Hills and Fleurieu is not an overall issue of water security. Sufficient volumes of water are currently available to meet domestic supply in this region. The issue that is really affecting off-grid households in this area is the current inability of the water transport market to meet their demands for supply.

To help overcome this supply deficit, the South Australian government is moving to provide additional emergency supply options in the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region for those who have no other means of accessing water. The government will seek to do this in partnership with local government and in a way that complements the crucial ongoing role of the water carting sector, similar to other local government areas across the state. To bring this into effect, the government will be taking the following steps:

1. Through SA Water, the government will initially establish temporary, user-pays bulk water collection points at three separate locations across the Adelaide Hills, being Ridge Road, Woodside, Koennecke Road, Sandergrove and Peggy Buxton Road, Brukunga. A fourth temporary bulk water collection point is also being considered for the southern Fleurieu in or around Aldinga. I stress that this is a temporary emergency response only to help address the current overwhelming demand on the water carting industry.

2. Where water carters report bottlenecks affecting their ability to take bulk water, SA Water will work with them to identify alternative sites for extraction, where possible.

3. The government is working to link water carters with transport supply companies to provide for additional delivery truck capacity to support the water carting sector during these unprecedented times.

4. Through SA Health, the government will support potential new carters who are seeking to enter the sector to assist in the current situation. The Department for Environment and Water will assist in facilitating discussions between new carters and SA Health to ensure that potential entrants are registered promptly, provided the relevant information requirements are addressed.

5. From a longer-term perspective, the government is working with local councils to explore a range of potential measures to help educate and support off-grid households on how to improve their water security and better prepare for future dry periods.

With respect to the temporary user-pays bulk water collection points, the locations of these have been determined by taking into account the capacity of SA Water's mains network to safely supply water at the rate and volume required, as well as considerations of safe vehicle access. Commencing Thursday, the temporary bulk water collection points will be staffed by SA Water personnel from 7am to 7pm, seven days a week. Usage will also be monitored carefully and operation hours may be adjusted in response to demand.

For those who cannot obtain timely access to water supplies from a water carter, these temporary bulk water collection points are intended to provide a source of emergency supply that allows households to collect water for domestic purposes. The bulk water collection points are not intended for commercial stock or watering gardens.

While the bulk water collection point water will be of drinking water quality, there are measures that must be taken to ensure it remains drinkable once it leaves the pipe, including the type of container that is used to transport the water to the property. If these are not food-grade then the water will require treatment, such as boiling, prior to drinking.

It must also be emphasised that the temporary emergency steps being implemented by the state government have been designed to support the water carting industry respond to the current unprecedented level of demand and do not relieve off-grid households from their responsibility to carefully monitor and proactively manage their own water supplies.

With climate change, we expect to see longer and more frequent periods of hot and dry weather. It is critical that households and businesses plan ahead for extreme conditions. While some off-grid households may have been able to rely on their existing rainwater storages or groundwater supplies in the past, this may not be the case in the future. Just as households in bushfire risk areas plan ahead for bushfire, off-grid households will need to be prepared for more frequent extended periods of little to no rain.

Finally, there has been talk in the community about the need to introduce water restrictions in metropolitan Adelaide. I can confirm that with the current operation of the Adelaide Desalination Plant there is sufficient water supply for those connected to the SA Water mains network. This will not change as a result of the government's efforts to address the current inability of the water carting market to meet the demand from off-grid households in the broader Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I call the Treasurer I would just like to acknowledge the presence in the house today of former Speaker, Norm Peterson. Norm was also the former Independent member for Semaphore from 1979 to 1993.

I would like to recount one story. I was a journalist in 1993 the day after the State Bank royal commission. We had all been in the lock-up. I doorstopped Norm out the front of this place when I was working for Channel 10 and I was firing in some pretty good questions, I thought. He said, 'You'll be the one in trouble if you don't stop asking me all these questions. I'm on my way to deliver some bills to Government House to the Governor and if you don't get out of my way I'll have you arrested for impeding the role of the Speaker!'

Norm, it is wonderful to see you again 32 years later. Great to have you here. We won't be arresting anyone today. To Norm's partner, Karen, and to their friends, Keith and Karen, who are here from interstate: great to have you all here.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Mr Speaker, he was a good local member, and mentor to me, as well.

Parliamentary Committees

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (14:25): I bring up the 128th report of the committee, entitled Walkerville Recreation Centre.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Ms HOOD: I bring up the 129th report of the committee, entitled Sewer System Upgrade, Curtis Road, Andrews Farm.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Question Time

POWER PRICES

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:26): My question is to the Premier. What action, if any, has the government taken to lower electricity prices after its abandoned flagship hydrogen power plant. With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The Labor Party's election commitment document said, 'A hydrogen power plant would lower electricity prices for business.'

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:26): I enjoy getting these questions from the Leader of the Opposition.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, maybe if you stuck around and fought, maybe we might have a bit of a contest instead of advancing to the rear so quickly.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Then why interject?

An honourable member: This is starting well, isn't it?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I think it started very well. It's important to note that in terms of election commitments that we made, the opposition (the government at the time) criticised the Premier because he said at a meeting that politicians who turn up promising X dollars in reduction in power prices, as members opposite did—do you remember \$303? Remember that promise?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I heard my young friend say that 'bills came down under us'—if only it were true. The truth is that power prices are down because the wholesale prices that impact business are lower in South Australia than almost every other jurisdiction in the country. I have to say that when I hear members opposite criticise renewable energy, and criticise the role that renewable energy plays in the National Electricity Market, it shows a level of ignorance and ideology that is dangerous to this country and dangerous for business.

I am glad my friend raised the interconnector that apparently we hate. Remember that the interconnector was going to cost only \$1.4 billion and then \$1.7 billion? Interestingly, what is the price cost now of the interconnector? Can my friends opposite tell us all?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It is over \$3 billion—over \$3 billion foisted on the people of New South Wales and South Australia. I have to say that in terms of uncosted election commitments, the idea that members opposite would even mention the interconnector shows a level of disconnect to the concerns of ordinary consumers. Imagine being promised that the interconnector only costing \$1.7 billion to now have more than doubled in cost, more than doubled in cost, is somehow going to lower power prices when it's not even finished. You can yell out 'hydrogen' all you like, it doesn't change the fact that the one election commitment that they made on electricity has failed.

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

Mr TEAGUE: Standing order 98: it is the very example of debate. It was a simple question: what has the government done? All we've got is this parading stump speech stuff about everything but. The minister needs to answer the question. If the Premier won't answer it, the minister has got to answer it.

The SPEAKER: There was a fair bit of backwards and forwards there with interjections and then responses to interjections. Maybe we might get back to those on my left asking a question and then those on my right answering it.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: One of my major concerns when we were in opposition was the lack of development of renewable resources in the state while we were in opposition. It was almost a freeze. When you have no new renewable energy being built and opened while in office and a freeze on renewable energy, it is taking time to catch up.

What we have seen, sir, since we have been in office is, again, more renewable developments being unleashed in South Australia—more battery storage being unleashed in South Australia. What you are seeing is more generation, more contracts being signed and a lot more generation available in the state. That has seen wholesale power prices in South Australia drop.

Our jurisdiction, according to AEMO, is either the second lowest or the lowest in the country when it comes to wholesale power prices on average in the last calendar year. I have to say that members opposite, when they say that they care about business and they care about industry, know that the industry in South Australia operates on a wholesale market. They are the ones to take full advantage of our renewable resources. Right now, heavy industries can buy their power relatively cheaply during the day, but members opposite know that what is causing price spikes to occur is gas prices—something which they are responsible for.

POWER SUPPLY

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:31): My question again is to the Premier. What action, if any, has the government taken to ensure firming in our power system after its abandoned flagship hydrogen power plant? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The Labor Party's election commitment document said, 'A power system requires access to generators that can continuously provide power. A hydrogen power plant will ensure there is firming in the system.'

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:31): Firming is a very important aspect of the government's plans. I think members opposite misunderstand what firming is. The idea of firming is that you use gas-fired generation or battery storage to firm renewables—you know, the things you are opposed to, the generation that you don't like, the generation that you say increases power prices.

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: No, we have not dropped. Unlike members opposite, who sold the generators that we had put in place as back-up reserve to companies that are just simply tolling those and not offering, in fact, retail contracts into the market, what we will be doing with our

generators when we sell them is they will be going to an operator who will be offering retail contracts into the market to lower power prices. This will have a direct impact in increasing the competitiveness of the South Australian electricity market.

One of the unfortunate aspects of the privatisation of ETSA and the sale of our generators is that they have created these monopolies amongst gentailers—that is, people who not only generate electricity but also retail it. Over 67 per cent of our generation is held by three or four retailers in this state. They basically have a monopoly on retail contracts that mums and dads sign at home and a lot of small businesses use.

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Interjections don't change those facts; they are the facts. What is important here is that we have a new competitor in the market. What we will be doing when we on-sell our generators to recover the cost—and we can put it into the Whyalla steelworks—is making sure those generators go to a retailer who is going to compete with AGL, who is going to compete with Origin, who is going to compete with the gentailers in this state, who are charging far too much for power.

Let's go back to the root cause of this. What has caused power prices to increase across the country? Is it renewables or is it gas prices? It's gas prices. Gas is what has caused prices to spike—the cost of gas. Who was the guilty party in this chamber that decided that the second-largest basin in this state, the first gas basin in this country, should not have fracture stimulation occur on it? Members opposite. Here they are complaining about—wait for it—the impact of gas prices on our electricity.

How is it they turn up to the Santos events, they turn up to the Beach Energy events, they drink the cocktails, they wear their R.M. Williams and the chambray pants, they drink the drink and they put their hats on and they talk about being pro-gas while they vote to ban gas extraction in parts of South Australia.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am just one man. We do not have a majority in both houses of the parliament. Members opposite yell out about having a majority. You don't need a majority to get things done—just ask Vickie Chapman. You don't need a majority to do things in this parliament. When we were in opposition we were able to change the constitution. We were in the minority. We were able to establish an inquiry into the deputy premier. We weren't the majority. You would be surprised what you can do when you're not the majority.

Mr TEAGUE: Point of order.

The SPEAKER: The minister has finished.

Mr TEAGUE: He might have finished. Standing order 98: yet another question not answered.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:35): My question again is to the Premier. How many jobs will be lost or foregone after the government abandoned its flagship hydrogen power plant? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The Labor Party's election commitment document says that a hydrogen power plant would deliver thousands of jobs for South Australians.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:35): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question, particularly in regard to the fact that it speaks to jobs in the Upper Spencer Gulf, jobs in Whyalla. I think we know all too well just how committed this side of the house is to jobs in Whyalla, because there is no bigger employer in the Upper Spencer Gulf than steel production. Steel production is the backbone of employment throughout the Upper Spencer Gulf,

particularly in Whyalla and, of course, it goes around to Port Augusta, as the member for Frome or member for Stuart knows all too well, and right around to Port Pirie.

The steelworks in and of itself employs well over 1,000 people directly, and then many, many thousands beyond that, and this government made unapologetically the difficult decision to zero in on the protection of the steelworks so that indeed at one point in the future there may well be demand for hydrogen and for industrial consumption and a decarbonisation.

The SPEAKER: The deputy leader.

Mr TEAGUE: I am conscious he is only a minute in, but he seems to have misheard the question or is deliberately avoiding it. The question was about jobs lost as a result of the abandonment of the flagship hydrogen power plant. The Premier has been hopping into the Whyalla Steelworks. The question is about the hydrogen power plant.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has four minutes on the clock with three to go.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The only jobs that will be lost as a result of the government's decision, to go directly to the heart of the Leader of the Opposition's question, will be the jobs that we are curtailing from the Office of Hydrogen Power as we seek to realign that piece of work and put much of it back. I want to say that as far as that effort is concerned, the calibre of the people who work within the Office of Hydrogen Power lends itself to almost all of those people being redeployed in other roles within the government.

So the answer to the Leader of the Opposition is that what we are working towards achieving, and we believe have already got in train, isn't just the stabilisation of economic policy in the Upper Spencer Gulf but actually growing the employment base up there into the long term, and the best way to do that is to lock in production not just at the steelworks but also at the associated mines where we know there is so much potential.

This government, as distinct from others who have a policy to maybe have a policy one day, is actually doing the serious work, the serious work that actually underpins the decisions that were made by the government a couple of weeks ago to put the steelworks into administration. We know that to the extent—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Hammond!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —that the Leader of the Opposition has had a policy in this area, at any point over the last month—

Mr TEAGUE: Point of order, sir: standing order 98. The question has two parts. The Premier has sort of answered the first bit about lost; foregone is the other one. The explanation with leave went to the thousands of jobs that were supposed to flow from this now forgotten flagship hydrogen power plant. He is not answering the question.

The SPEAKER: I don't uphold the point of order and I don't like you getting up making speeches. We want to listen to the Premier and his answer.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Thank you, Mr Speaker, because I have answered the question that the Leader of the Opposition asked, but more than that we need to talk about what is happening to jobs and the future of Whyalla. To the extent that the opposition has had any policy at all in this area over the course of last month was when the Leader of the Opposition after one meeting with Mr Gupta came out and said we should give him \$50 million.

That is the policy that the Leader of the Opposition was advocating for, which of course could not be in starker contrast to the considered policy on this side of the house where we have put the business into administration, stabilised the business, refunded creditors for the debts they are owed, which we will talk about later on in question time, and then of course made sure that we are not just putting the business into administration but we actually have a plan to get it out of administration.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Flinders! The deputy leader will come to order.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: There is a \$1.9 billion package, predominantly funded by the commonwealth to the tune of \$1.5 billion, to make sure there is an attractive offering to a future owner of the steelworks to make sure it can stand on its own two feet into the future.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for the Environment. What action, if any, has the government taken to protect the environment after its abandoned hydrogen power plant and with your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The Labor Party's election commitment document said:

...firming is usually achieved with traditional coal or natural gas... this process however will produce carbon pollution.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:41): I always enjoy it when my young friend talks about carbon pollution because I know he doesn't believe that carbon is pollution. He doesn't think it is. You notice he doesn't object to me saying that. He likes it. He tells Alex Antic, 'Boss, I'm on board. I don't buy this climate change stuff either.'

This government's record on decreasing carbon emissions and the previous Weatherill government's record on decreasing carbon emissions is second to none. We have done more to decarbonise the electricity sector than any other jurisdiction not just in Australia but the world. Whether it is—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Flinders and the member for Hammond are on their final warnings.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Whether it is grid-scale storage, which members opposite ridiculed and laughed at—

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Hammond can leave the chamber until the end of question time.

The honourable member for Hammond having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: He's the only one we fear, sir. When we were talking about battery storage, they mocked it. When we talk about firming, they mock it. They have no energy plan, no plan to decarbonise. They actively oppose decarbonisation. I have to say that when members opposite yell out, 'You've deferred it,' is the counterfactual here that they would rather us watch Whyalla collapse completely, or are they saying they wanted us to raise another \$593 million of debt to fund Whyalla? Which one is it? Because members opposite can't have it both ways. They can't go up to Whyalla and talk to their only friend and say, 'We completely support what the government did,' but on the other hand come in here and say, 'Why did you cancel hydrogen?'

Mr Whetstone: Have you been out to a farm lately? Have you been out to a farmer lately?

The SPEAKER: The member for Chaffey can leave the chamber until the end of question time.

The honourable member for Chaffey having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I have to say that members opposite know that we are the ones in this house, in this state, who have a decarbonisation strategy. We are the ones who are leading the decarbonisation of our electricity grid. We are world leaders. Members opposite watch and ridicule from the opposition benches. They do it well. They are suited to opposition. They are very good at it. I hope they eventually perfect it.

But I have to say that criticising us for deferring the hydrogen plant to save Whyalla and save steelmaking in this country is an odd tactic for an opposition, especially in a seat like Grey. I bet you that constituents in Grey, who are weighing up who to vote for in the upcoming open election where a longstanding incumbent member is not re-standing, hear members opposite yell out and say we shouldn't have delayed hydrogen to invest in Whyalla.

Members opposite might be thinking to themselves, 'Is this the right strategy, electorally, to be talking about in the Upper Spencer Gulf?' We make no apologies for deferring hydrogen. Ultimately, hydrogen will be needed to decarbonise the steelworks. It's the only way you can decarbonise steelmaking. What we want to do is make sure we still have a steelworks to decarbonise. That's the first step.

APPRENTICES, VEHICLE REGISTRATION DISCOUNTS

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:44): My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. Will the government offer registration discounts to trade apprentices? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: Both the Victorian and New South Wales governments offer registration discounts to apprentices who use their own vehicle for work. This would assist apprentices with the rising cost of living.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (14:45): I thank the member for MacKillop for this very important question, and he is right that it is an issue. We know that we have a pretty big task ahead of us as a state in terms of being able to fill all those skilled worker positions that we need to meet existing demand across almost every single industry that you can name, let alone all the additional growth that we need in the state to meet future jobs. A lot of that growth that we need is in occupations that have a traditional trade apprenticeship pathway. In fact, I think the target for our state alone across the next five years is an additional 78,000 VET-trained staff on top of what we have, which is enormous uplift for South Australia.

Unfortunately, part of the challenge for young people in many cases—and I think we see more of this now with this generation than we have with previous generations—is, for whatever reason, a reluctance to get their driver's licence. Particularly in those traditional trades that the member for MacKillop has mentioned—if we are talking about carpenters, plumbers or sparkies who, when they are doing their apprenticeship, potentially have a different workplace almost every day—it is important that they not only have their licence but have access to a car.

This has been something that has been raised with me as the Minister for Training and Skills for a number of years, not just by the member for MacKillop but by organisations like the Master Builders Association as well who are having conversations with the employers that they represent. They say that often they get to the point with the young person who is about to sign up to an apprenticeship—they have gone through that process and then they ask what is often the final question about whether or not they have a licence and access to a car, because they are going to need to drive to the worksite. They say no they don't, and that's the end of it right there. Of course, that is a huge loss for the apprentice, and the opportunity that that apprenticeship presented for them, it is a huge loss to the employer, of course, and for the state as well.

So we have been looking at what we can do. There are a couple of things that we currently offer through the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). They have a career-driven program as part of the Doorways2Construction program, which many members in this chamber might be aware of. It gives high school students the opportunity to actually work on a worksite and get a cert II. I was recently out in the member for Ramsay's electorate where some students from a school out there had refurbished a Housing Trust property so that it was ready for tenants as part of Doorways2Construction. They will get five free hours of driving lessons, which I think is excellent and really important. I am keen, though, to discuss with the member for MacKillop—and I have been having these conversations with the Master Builders Association—what else we can do.

It is true we don't offer the program that the member for MacKillop refers to that other states do. I think it is a matter of us having a look at what is the best method of attracting young people into

those apprenticeships and making sure they can actually take them up. I think a lot of work probably needs to be done with schools, with high schools as well, in terms of having conversations with young people around why they are choosing not to get their driver's licence, because that is the big change that I am seeing.

Some important work needs to happen around making sure those young people understand at the age they can start getting their Ls, and getting their hours up, that a future job might be at risk if they don't go ahead and have that, particularly given that we are doing a lot as a state and as a government to encourage people who might otherwise have thought that a university pathway was the only option to take a VET pathway as well—and obviously a licence is important. So I am happy to continue discussions with the member for MacKillop and see what we can do. It is a very important issue.

WHYALLA STEELWORKS

Mrs PEARCE (King) (14:49): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the house on state government assistance to secure the future of the Whyalla Steelworks?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:49): I want to thank the member for King for her question. I have seen the member for King out and about in her own community advocating the interests of small business in a whole range of different contexts, and I know she understands better than most the power of small business, to do with family businesses, to be able to employ others, but also these are hardworking people, no different to other workers in other communities.

I've got to say, we were particularly affronted as a government as we spent more and more time on the ground in Whyalla talking to businesses who were in Struggle Street not because they were not getting work but because they were getting work and then not getting paid for it, which is the most egregious set of circumstances. Of course, information that has emerged from the creditors' meeting has put that in even more public view than was already the case. This is something I know that the Minister for Small and Family Business has particularly been attuned to.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to spend some time with some of those creditors, and I want to particularly acknowledge Dave Bruce and Jarrod Starkey from Whyalla Hose and Fittings, who themselves explained on the public record the circumstances that they confronted as a result of creditors not being paid. Thankfully, because this government did the work quietly for reasons that are now well understood, behind closed doors, over many, many weeks and months, we were in a position, following the company going into administration, to at the same time announce a comprehensive support proposition for those creditors, where thankfully, through some of the thoughtfulness from a range of agencies, we have been able to craft a support package that is unlike any other that has preceded it in that creditors are assigning over their rights to a dividend to the state government in exchange for state government paying them some of the debts that they were owed by the business that is now under administration.

I am very pleased to report that, as of only a few moments ago, I am in receipt of advice that these businesses are starting to receive those funds as of today—as of today. Think about that for a moment. This is a government that, within a matter of days, within a matter of days of receiving an application for hundreds of thousands of dollars from local small businesses, are receiving those funds. This is government working at an unprecedented pace to show on the ground to the Whyalla community that the steps that we have taken are acting in concert with their interests rather than against them.

It is a Labor government standing up for working people in Whyalla, and when we talk about working people we are not just talking about wage and salary earners. We are also talking about hardworking small businesses that haven't been receiving pay for the work that they have done. It is an example of which I am very proud, that represents the values of this government but also the determination to use the power that we have at our disposal to get the public sector moving at a pace that otherwise government isn't always famous for, and a whole range of people deserve credit for that, including within senior and frontline elements of the public sector.

We have heard the calls of businesses on the ground. We have responded, we have protected the interests of taxpayers, and we have stood up for those small businesses so that they don't just survive the ordeal that they've been through over the last 18 months or so but indeed they are setting themselves up for the future. This is not just paying them to relieve them of burdens of the past; it is about an investment in their futures, which is consistent with the interests and the future of the state.

OFFICE OF HYDROGEN POWER

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:53): My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier retain the chief executive of the Office of Hydrogen Power, Mr Sam Crafter, now that he has abandoned his flagship hydrogen power plant and, if so, what will be his main responsibilities? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The chief executive of hydrogen receives a total remuneration package of close to \$600,000 a year. He is around the fifth highest-paid chief executive in the SA Public Service, ahead of the CEs who run the departments of education, child protection, primary industries and defence.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:54): The Leader of the Opposition asked a question similar to this in the last sitting week and I confirmed then that it is absolutely the state government's intention to retain the services of Sam Crafter because he is a highly capable individual who we recruited out of the private sector, where he had established a rather successful enterprise around skills to do with energy transition, and I am very grateful for the work that Mr Crafter has undertaken and continues to undertake for the government.

As the Leader of the Opposition referred to in his remarks, and consistent with what we have said on the public record, given the policy decisions that we have had to make in respect of Whyalla we are curtailing quite substantially and dramatically the Office of Hydrogen Power. I have asked the CEO of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr Rick Persse, to undertake an exercise in conjunction with the Department for Energy and Mining and other agencies to assess what that looks like, where the office finally ends up and where we can best deploy Mr Crafter's services in service of the state.

I want to stress to the Leader of the Opposition and others that this does not mean that we are not continuing work in the area of hydrogen. We still believe that hydrogen will play a role in the future, as I know—or certainly the opposition used to have that position, and Mr 'hydrogen, hydrogen, hydrogen' over here certainly hasn't indicated that he has changed his position. So there is a role here and we want to continue to have—

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The Leader will come to order. You asked a question; listen to the answer.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —a position of leadership on this area for the state, but of course it will have a different form than what it has in the past, given the policy that we have announced. So that is being curtailed. We will make decisions around this in the lead-up to this year's state budget, which is obviously well and truly in formulation at the moment, and we will make announcements about that exercise once it is concluded.

OFFICE OF HYDROGEN POWER

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:56): Supplementary to the Premier: will Mr Crafter's wage be reduced in line with the reduced scope of the hydrogen plant?

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

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:56): I principally assume responsibility for the salary and remuneration packages that are formulated for key executives and we make assessments of all public sector executive salaries on a periodic basis as and when they fall due.

OFFICE OF HYDROGEN POWER

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:56): Supplementary—or another question, sir, if you deem it appropriate—to the Premier again: how many staff will be retained in the Office of Hydrogen Power and what will they work on?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:56): I have already answered this question. I have answered this question on multiple occasions. If the opposition want to ask the same question over and over again, that is their prerogative. It's your question time: if the breadth of your creativity is just to get last week's question time and rewrite it and ask the same questions again, then that is entirely for the—

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: What's the DPP doing today?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Yes, we are well aware of how determined the Leader of the Opposition is to give the DPP work. The Office of Hydrogen Power is going through a substantial exercise.

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia: That hurts. That really hurts.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Yes, you are Leader of the Opposition now: congratulations, well done. As I said, the CEO of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is undertaking a comprehensive exercise in conjunction with other agencies, including the office itself, about its future formulation. There are a number of options that are available to government and we will make a public statement as and when appropriate.

ADELAIDE HILLS WATER SUPPLY

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN (Kavel) (14:58): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier please update the house on measures the government is putting in place to support residents in my community who are not connected to SA Water during record dry conditions, particularly at Woodside and Brukunga?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Kavel will come to order!

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) (14:58): I am pleased that a follow-up question has been asked about this very important situation with the challenges for people who are not on mains water who have realised that they are running short, or may, in some cases, have already run out of supply of water and are waiting for the water carting to be able to deliver to refill their storages.

There are a number of other areas that have experienced this. The Barossa and Mid Murray already have arrangements via their councils to have standpipes made available to sell water. It's the kind of model that we are hoping we will be able to work through with the councils in this newly affected area through the Adelaide Hills and down the Fleurieu, where the councils take that intermediary role of being responsible for the standpipes to assist in emergency while, of course, what we are expecting is relatively quickly that the water carters will be able to step up and fulfil the role that is, after all, their business model.

Part of the options that we have been working on is to look at ways to assist those water carters to have access to additional tankers and drivers. We have been put in touch with a transport company that has those kinds of tankers available and we are working on whether the carters are able to accommodate having additional suppliers. They are important elements. So, too, is making sure that SA Water is able to be clear with the water carters where the pressure is sufficiently high that they are able to fill up their tanks more quickly. One of the challenges has been the slowdown in the turnaround in the lower pressure areas.

There is another challenge that has been raised with me recently that there are households in the northern Adelaide area that are on both mains and storage, that they are often able to rely for many months of the year on storage alone and only use the mains as a backup, but because it has been so exceptionally dry they are now starting to be under pressure and so they are all starting to use the mains which means that the pressure has dropped in those areas. There are many challenges for people in the context of a very, very dry year, which, of course, we all hope comes to an end shortly, but we have to prepare for that not to be the case.

Specifically in the seat of Kavel both the Woodside and the Brukunga areas are going to have people from SA Water staffing the bulk water supply areas both at Ridge Road in Woodside and Peggy Buxton Road in Brukunga from 7am Thursday. We have had to be careful in selecting the locations because, as you can imagine, if there are a number of households all at once that want to get in early and start filling up with water the impact on road safety could be potentially very difficult, particularly through the Hills with constrained roads, and so we have selected those sites in the member's area to be very mindful of the best security for people being involved in that water collection.

There will be a charge. I think that's only reasonable. People on mains water pay for access to water. The people who are not on mains water are aware that occasionally carting will be necessary, so we will be having a user supply charge. It won't cover the cost of that model of providing water, but it's only fair to also not undercut the water carters whose business this is, and usually a family business, to help supply water in drier times.

I thank the member for his interest and for his inquiry. Any feedback that he has over the next couple of weeks as this rolls out will be very useful and be taken into account in how we design the program.

ADELAIDE HILLS WATER SUPPLY

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:02): Supplementary.

The SPEAKER: We will see if it's a supplementary.

Mr TEAGUE: Just arising from the answer, I note that the location at Woodside is the closest to Heysen but there isn't any indicated location in Heysen. Can the government give an indication of whether or not such facilities may be available in Heysen at any point in the near future?

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy) (15:03): As I indicated in my statement, there have been three sites selected for now that we are able to open up immediately, so from Thursday morning. They are in Woodside, Sandergrrove and Brukunga. We are also looking at further down in the Fleurieu near Aldinga. Naturally, there will be members of parliament who are anxious to have such water sources available nearer the people they represent. I know the member for King also has people in her electorate who are not on mains water supply. Of course, my opposite number as shadow minister for the environment is another member. There are several who will take an interest in the locations.

These three have been identified by SA Water as being suitable and being safe in terms of traffic management and also suitable in terms of not diminishing the water supply more generally, the pressure more generally in the area, which, of course, is important not only for people who are registered water users, who are regulated water users who are part of the system, but also in the event, and we certainly hope that's not the case, of a fire, that we don't want to see a sudden drop in water pressure. Should other supply sites become available and be evidently necessary, we will certainly look at opening up others, but it seemed important to get moving quickly on the ones that we knew were most likely to work efficiently.

SMALL AND FAMILY BUSINESS SUPPORT

Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (15:04): My question is to the Minister for Small and Family Business. Can the minister update the house on the supports available to small and family businesses in Whyalla?

The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (15:04): Thank you to the member for Newland for this question. The member for Newland very well understands the significance of us being able to support the some 600 small businesses in Whyalla through a very difficult time. These businesses aren't just the ones directly supporting the steelworks but they are more broadly driving the local economy, providing jobs and helping build the local community. They are at the heart of Whyalla and they deserve a government that does stand with them, and that is exactly what we are doing.

As the Premier just indicated, our government has been working for months, carefully planning and taking decisive action to address the challenges in Whyalla, including planning for the critical need to support small businesses.

When I visited Whyalla three weeks ago, I met with the member for Giles, the chamber, the RDA Eyre Peninsula and small business owners on the ground and that was just before the administrator was appointed. I heard firsthand about the pressures they were facing and the uncertainty that they were feeling and the support they needed to keep going.

Before my visit, I had already set in motion plans to make sure there was a dedicated business support officer from the Office for Small and Family Business on the ground in Whyalla. The officer has been there now for several weeks and will remain there, providing hands-on assistance, helping businesses navigate government services and connecting them with the resources they need, and working very closely with John Chapman.

During my visit, I also heard the need for better access to legal advice. The Attorney-General and I acted immediately to boost legal support in Whyalla, securing additional resources for the Legal Services Commission. Their office now has lawyers available to provide on-the-spot legal advice completely free of charge, regardless of a business's financial position.

But we know that advice alone isn't going to pay the bills, and that is why we have provided direct financial relief to the businesses that are doing it tough. We of course have the \$3 million Whyalla Small Local Business Support Grant that is now open, and payments are already flowing. In a matter of days, we have already had some \$30,000 delivered to local businesses that have experienced a reduction in revenue due to the downturn of the steelworks. From everything I have heard in Whyalla, I know these \$10,000 grants are going to provide critical relief—helping business owners cover their rent, pay their staff and keep their doors open.

The Premier has already spoken about the \$50 million creditor assistance scheme. That is already making an impact. I am advised that around \$4 million in funding has been requested through submissions from businesses that are owed money by OneSteel and, as the Premier said, that funding is flowing.

These programs and the action taken by the government to put the steelworks into administration mean that, going forward, these businesses can be confident that if they are providing goods or services for the steelworks they are going to get paid for it, and that is critical. Of course, this is only part of our \$100 million investment through our Emergency Response Package to support Whyalla. Beyond that immediate relief, we are taking important steps to secure Whyalla's long-term future.

We have a number of other programs that are supporting small businesses, including through the Treasurer establishing the Whyalla Special Economic Zone to give local businesses and workers a competitive edge. Going forward, any state government procurement valued at \$220,000 or more in the region, or any project that delivers direct economic benefits, must include a Whyalla Tailored Industry Participation Plan to support local businesses.

We are also providing additional support to the RDA Eyre Peninsula to expand our Small Business Fundamentals Program. There is mental health assistance, including programs like RISE and Mindarma, offering free online support, free mentoring and resilience training, and much more support to small businesses in and throughout Whyalla.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:08): My question is to the Premier. Did the Office of Hydrogen Power provide any advice to the government that recommended that the hydrogen power plant should be delayed or cancelled and, if so, when was it first received?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (15:09): The government's decision around the Hydrogen Jobs Plan and the steelworks was made out of necessity, given the circumstances of the steelworks. We knew that we were going to have to put a very substantial proportion of government funding on the table to attract a new owner. We knew we were going to have to fund the administration. We were able to negotiate, thankfully and very gratefully, with the commonwealth 50 per cent of that cost. We also knew that as a result of administration the transition towards a new owner, the appreciation that a new owner would want to turn its mind to an electric arc furnace and DRI before it was ever in a position to be able to acquire hydrogen, it struck the government as being a decision that we had no choice but to take.

We have been very transparent about that. I know the Leader of the Opposition was up in Whyalla a couple of weeks ago but I am not too sure if the shadow minister has had the chance to go up there or not—

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: That's not—that's good. You would appreciate that particularly in the last week or so there is certainly a sentiment in Whyalla that this has given them the confidence about a plan for the future that they have been looking for for so long and, hence, that's the reason why we made the decision we did.

OFFICE OF HYDROGEN POWER

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:10): My question is again to the Premier. When was the last trip to Europe taken by staff of the Office of Hydrogen Power, and have staff now stopped travelling overseas?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:10): The Office of Hydrogen Power SA doesn't just oversee the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, it also oversees the Hydrogen Hub at Port Bonython. Members might be aware of this. They committed \$30 million to this.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Do you remember this? The Morrison government matched it and their job—that is \$60 million worth of funding for the Hydrogen Hub. The Office of Hydrogen Power SA has been tasked by the commonwealth and state governments in a bipartisan way—it used to be bipartisan anyway—to leverage another \$40 million worth of private investment into Port Bonython. This is at a time when there was bipartisan support with the 'hydrogen, hydrogen, hydrogen' headlines being run by—

Mr Patterson interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Sorry? That's right, \$60 million, and just remind the nice people in the room here today, how many hydrogen developments have occurred at the Hydrogen Hub? Are members opposite saying that their \$30 million investment was a waste? Is that what they're saying? No, Mr Speaker. Some members will have a lot of time to travel soon. If the intel from the Adelaide Hills is correct, someone will have plenty of time to travel soon.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It is on the record, absolutely. I am looking forward to the answer to my proposition to you that you will have lots of spare time soon. The Office of Hydrogen Power SA and all public servants travel, and when they travel they seek permission from their ministers. Mr Speaker, let's be very clear about this: we are interested in someone purchasing the steelworks and getting it out of administration.

My friend the Minister for Trade and Investment is undertaking a body of work with state development to make sure that the steelworks are in a position to be sold. The Treasurer has put up vast amounts of money from a deferral of the Hydrogen Jobs Plan to make sure that we can safely fund the administration. My agency and these agencies are all working together with DPC to do everything we can to make sure that we can get a foreign investor or a domestic investor to purchase the steelworks.

Make no mistake, we are targeting Japan, South Korea, Germany, the United States. We want steelmaking countries to be looking at the steelworks as an integrated option to purchase. If that means sending public servants to talk about the opportunity to decarbonise green iron, to decarbonise iron making, we will be doing that.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Sorry, what countries? The member asked which countries are decarbonising iron making. Japan is looking at it, Korea is looking at it, Germany is looking at it, the United States is looking at it. Every major steelmaker in the world—even China—is looking at decarbonising their iron making. How are they doing that? The same way we want to decarbonise it, natural gas and hydrogen: two commodities, two forms of fuel the members opposite are opposed to. If they need to travel, they will. If State Development, Treasury officials, DEM officials need to travel, they will, because the most important economic priority right now for this state government is the survival of the Whyalla Steelworks.

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:14): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. What work have BOC Linde, Epic Energy and ATCO Australia undertaken on the government's flagship hydrogen power plant, and how much have they been paid to date?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:14): Epic Energy obviously have been looking at a lot of work around the lateral and increasing capacity around the lateral that goes to Whyalla. That work will need to be accelerated now. We are very keen to see more gas supply to Whyalla. The first question is: why? Why would you need more gas in Whyalla? The current supplies to Whyalla are insufficient to operate a direct iron reduction facility for over a million—

Mr Teague: Answer the question.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am answering the question. If you listen quietly and not panic—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Heysen! The deputy leader will come to order or will leave the chamber. It's your final warning. Stop interrupting the minister.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: As I said earlier, when the deputy leader was musing why he is not a KC yet, Epic Energy are doing work on whether or not the lateral can be expanded to increase compression. That is the work we have asked them to undertake for us. They have been looking at that. That work now needs to be accelerated. The reason it needs to be accelerated is for direct iron reduction facilities in Whyalla. When we are trying to market the steelworks, we want to make sure that any prospective buyer knows that coking coal is going the way of the dodo. It is going out of fashion fast.

In fact, even conservatives in New South Wales accept that BlueScope is undertaking its last realign of their blast furnace, because they will be moving to electric arc furnace and direct iron reduction, which will require natural gas and/or hydrogen. In fact, a number of companies have looked at how to get more gas to Whyalla. The work that Epic Energy and the Office of Hydrogen Power SA have been undertaking is about making sure we can get more gas production, more gas availability to Whyalla—that is point 1.

What has ATCO been doing? ATCO obviously were involved in the consortium as part of the generator. They were part of the consortium that operated the generator as part of the Hydrogen

Jobs Plan. That now has been deferred, and the work that has been undertaken we will recoup through the sale of our generators. The thing about our generators is our generators are already in the queue. They have value—a good value. They will be under warranty and arriving in this state by the end of the year. That means we have a capacity to get that generation into the National Electricity Market very quickly.

As for the other parts of the question, we will have a holistic answer for the member at the budget, as we always do. But the most important thing about the work that Epic Energy have been doing with ATCO is giving us the expertise that we need and the engineering that we need to understand exactly the hydrogen life cycle when it comes to energy generation. It is exceptional work. It is work that will not be lost. It is work that we can continue to use going forward, and it will add value to the sale of the steelworks when it comes out of administration.

PORT PIRIE HEALTH SERVICE

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart) (15:18): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister update my community regarding the progress of the improvements to the Port Pirie regional hospital accident and emergency? What benefits will it bring to the people in the regions and also to the staff of the hospital?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:18): I thank the member for Stuart. No-one is a stronger advocate for their local community than the member for Stuart in this place. He is the man who saved Port Pirie and the man who has been advocating for many, many years for further investments in the Port Pirie regional hospital, which we are now delivering.

The current emergency department of the Port Pirie regional hospital is unfortunately too small for the number of patients it sees. It is outdated. It has been needing a new emergency department for some time. That is why we made one of our election commitments to invest in that and to rebuild the emergency department of the Port Pirie hospital, and that is what we are now doing. It was one of the investments that we were able to make, because we cancelled the original plans for the \$662 million Adelaide basketball stadium and invested that money all into health, including at least \$100 million of inter-country health services—

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: The member for Morphett doesn't want to hear about this investment in country health services, but we are absolutely committed to seeing these investments roll out. That is why we are so delighted that works have now started for the new Port Pirie emergency department—a \$15.6 million investment in that department—which is going to substantially increase the size of the emergency department, going from a current 450 square metres up to 700 square metres in the new department.

It will deliver two resuscitation bays, eight patient treatment bays, a low stimulation room, a new emergency department entrance with patient admission and consulting areas, a new covered ambulance arrivals area, ambulance equipment storage and ride-up zone, and new staff facilities including staff stations, offices, utility areas and storage. This is the investment that Port Pirie has been calling for for a very long period of time and it makes sure that we will be able to deliver the healthcare services that the area needs.

Also, at the same time, we have been investing in the clinicians, the doctors and nurses who work in Port Pirie hospital, including a consultant emergency department physician who started in the past year or so, substantially improving the level of care being provided at Port Pirie. We have great ambitions, as the member knows, in terms of making sure that we can improve our training of clinicians in the local area. That is why we are also delighted that we are making that investment in the training hub in the clinical simulation lab for Port Pirie and the broader region, working in conjunction with Uni Hub, so that we will be able to have further training take place, that clinical training component, particularly for nursing degrees, and enable more of those homegrown healthcare heroes in Port Pirie into the future as well.

All of this we need because we know that the demand of the Port Pirie emergency department is going to increase. It is currently expected that we are going to grow from some 12,000 presentations in 2018-19 to over 14,000 presentations in 2031-32. That's why we need this larger investment, that's why we need to make sure that it's fit for purpose so that people can receive the care that they need.

As well as that, we are also investing in the new helipad as well, so a \$2.3 million investment to make sure that the Port Pirie helipad meets those standards. We are delighted, of course, along with the Treasurer and also the Minister for Emergency Services today, to announce the new contract for our new helicopters, which will be faster, can travel longer distances and will provide greater coverage for people in Port Pirie and regional South Australia.

TWO WELLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:22): My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. Can the minister advise the house how the Malinauskas Labor government is ensuring that Two Wells Primary School can cater for the growing education needs of the Adelaide Plains?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (15:22): I thank the member for Light for his fantastic question and it was an absolute thrill, I must say, to join him and the Premier at Two Wells Primary School on Thursday of last week to announce a \$10 million upgrade for that school. I have to say that this is one of the absolute thrills of the job that I do, when I go out to schools like Two Wells, who haven't had very much investment at all over a very sustained period but have nonetheless been offering an incredible quality of teaching and learning there despite the physical infrastructure they have been coping with and managing across that time.

We know we have a number of schools in that category, but we are making the investment we need to make sure we have the learning facilities for young people, not just now in the Two Wells area, but also into the future, because we know it is a rapidly growing area. In fact, I think the number of five year olds forecast to be living in the catchment area over the next 10 years is going to see incredible growth. This is a really important investment now in terms of making sure the young people who will be going to Two Wells Primary School in the next couple of years get a really high-quality education in modern fit-for-purpose facilities, but also making sure that we can actually cater for future growth as well.

Two Wells Primary School was originally established in 1865, but moved to its existing location in 1979. I have to say that there was not a great deal of school stock we were building in the 1970s that has really stood the test of time. It's not going to win any architectural design awards. The Premier, the member for Light and I had the opportunity to join the principal there, Kirsty Brumby, and meet some of the young students and the staff and see the classrooms they were using that were put in place back in 1979 but were actually never intended to still be in use in 2025.

I often comment that, although it is absolutely true that the biggest assets any education system is ever going to have are our teachers and our leaders and our staff, I think there is a case to be made that investment in school infrastructure and new classrooms and the technology that fills those classrooms is more important now than it has ever been. The anecdote I have told in this place before about my own schooling is of going to a small country primary school that was the same classroom that my father and grandfather were educated in that didn't change really at all across those 70 years.

Of course, the rate of change we have seen with technology since I left primary school to now means that really we have to make sure our classrooms and our schools can cater for the skills and capabilities we want to give young people to make sure they can work in future industries and the jobs of today. We have things like 3D printers, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and all those kinds of things that are just commonplace now in our lives. They are commonplace in the workplace and we need to make sure that at our schools, including at Two Wells, our young people have access to those facilities.

It was a really exciting occasion to spend with the member for Light and the Premier, to see the joy that it brought the staff who had worked there for many years who had been really hoping for an announcement like this. It was fantastic. I look forward to working with the school now in terms of the planning and design phase. We have to make sure that not only do we replace those outdated classrooms but we give the school an opportunity to really play a role in designing what they want their school to look like into the future.

Grievance Debate

HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:26): Previously, I have spoken in parliament about how Premier Malinauskas has used the crisis at the Whyalla Steelworks as cover to break one of his flagship election commitments and that is to now delay his hydrogen hoax. The reality is the Premier had already broken four of the main promises associated with his Hydrogen Jobs Plan before the crisis at Whyalla had escalated.

Now South Australians are expected to believe another hoax and that is that the \$600 million that has been budgeted for this hydrogen hoax is going to be not only recovered but allocated across to the Whyalla support package. This is just another ruse by this Premier to not take responsibility for the amount of time and money that he has wasted on three years of his hydrogen fantasy at the same time South Australians are paying the highest electricity prices on record. The reality is that what this means is that South Australians will be left holding a massive bill for the three years the Premier has been distracted by hydrogen.

As part of this deception, the energy minister, who has been in charge both times that Whyalla has been sent into administration, expects us to believe that these now redundant turbines of this failed hydrogen plan are going to be sold for the same or a higher price than what the government bought them for. These are very highly specced aeroderivative turbines that are designed to run on 100 per cent hydrogen, so any future purchaser, of course, is going to have to run these commercially and they are going to have to run them on gas—not political spin, not hot air, but on gas.

But the 2024 state budget revealed the trickery in this because only a fraction of the money spent is recoverable. In this budget, it stated that up to June 2024 the government estimated that \$126 million had been spent of that \$593 million capital works budget for the hydrogen plan. So, of course, in estimates I asked the minister, 'What has this money, this \$126 million, been spent on?' He was forced to admit that \$25 million had been spent on the turbines, so that leaves \$101 million. He admitted it would primarily be spent on engineering design and planning work for the Hydrogen Jobs Plan as we go along. That leaves \$101 million that they have spent. But, of course, now that project is shelved, so will we ever see that money come back to the coffers of South Australians?

Under a normal, orderly engineering design process, there would have been conducted a front-end engineering design to get it to a stage where you could then do a business case so it could be assessed—'Is it technically going to work? Is it commercially going to work?'—and then finally there could be that final investment decision to proceed or not. But, no, not with this government, not when there is taxpayer money to fund it. They rushed into their early contractor involvement process to get it underway with BOC Linde, with ATCO Australia and with Epic Energy. They just raced into this and spent more money on their engineering and design skills here—so there we go.

According to the budget, we are looking at \$100 million spent to June, so you can only wonder how much has been spent since: how much since July to those eight months in between, to February 2025, when the Premier has had to embarrassingly cancel this project with nothing to show for it. At the same time, we also have the Office of Hydrogen Power and we have asked questions today about what they are going to be spending. Up to June 2024 they have spent \$30.7 million. When the CEO is not on a cuttlefish expedition, that money is going more onto this hydrogen fantasy. Of course, that is not part of the capital works—that is in addition to the budget of \$593 million.

Combined, according to the state budget, we are looking at \$130 million being spent on this failed hydrogen plan that has now been delayed and there is nothing to show for it. Of course, we are on the hook for tens of millions more. This is going to blow a huge hole in that supposed

\$600 million that is meant to be going off to Whyalla. Shockingly, to keep this hydrogen fantasy alive, the Premier is saying, 'I am just delaying it.' We know it was soaring towards \$1 billion in costs, so taxpayers potentially are on the hook again for a second time. They have already forked out a lot of money, and they are on the hook for it again. The Premier must come clean. How much was his hydrogen plan going to cost and how much has he wasted?

ADELAIDE ELECTORATE

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (15:31): I rise to talk about a very busy past week in my beautiful electorate of Adelaide. Last Wednesday, I had the pleasure of going along to the Piccadilly cinema in North Adelaide as the keynote speaker for the North Adelaide Precinct Association. What I talked about on the evening was the really exciting future that we have the North Adelaide, whether it is the brand-new Adelaide Aquatic Centre that is really going from strength to strength—we are really seeing the structure take place at the new centre with the arrival of 52 large wooden beams that will form the structure around the brand-new pools—or whether it is the new businesses that are going to be opening in the Eighty Eight O'Connell precinct that are going to give real life and vibrancy to the street.

Of course, there was the recent announcement that we will be working to bring LIV Golf to the North Adelaide Golf Course, which I think will bring so much economic activity and excitement to this wonderful suburb in my community. So thank you to the North Adelaide Precinct Association for having me along last Wednesday.

On Friday, we were able to launch the Adelaide Festival. It is a truly incredible festival, which has the most incredible acts and operas. Of course, Writers' Week is happening and everybody would have seen the large crowds coming past, down King William Street, to attend those various events.

On Friday, I had the privilege of going along to *Innocence*, which is a Finnish opera, based around the events of a school shooting and then a wedding held 10 years after that tragic event. It is directed by Australian director Simon Stone and it is a modern opera. The beauty of it is being able to get different audiences—perhaps those who may have never considered going to an opera before—to try out this incredible art form. It really was incredible. I think everybody who left was definitely touched by the subject matter, the incredible opera, the incredible performances and the amazing revolving set that the opera was held in. So congratulations to the Adelaide Festival, artistic director Brett Sheehy AO, CEO Kath Mainland, and also welcome to the recently announced new artistic director, Matthew Lutton, who will take the reins from next year.

The next day, we had Mass Movement, which was a thousand dancers coming down on the river bank to do a choreographed performance. A shout-out to Jenny from Prospect, who was part of that massive dance, and congratulations to all of those involved. Of course, we have the Fringe on and we have WOMAD coming this weekend. It really is Mad March, so get out there and buy tickets and enjoy everything that our beautiful city has to offer at this very busy time of year.

On Sunday, I was able to hold a stall at the Prospect Road Autumn Fair. A big congratulations to Blackfriars on putting on another successful event. I was able to make friendship bracelets with all the little kids and families in my community and host a little local entrepreneur, Olive. She has a little business called Hey Clay Play Earrings, so I was able to buy a few of those for myself and my daughter Audrey. The idea was that we have all these little local entrepreneurs in our community, and isn't it wonderful that they can come along and join our stall without having to pay the costs of a stall and insurance, as they would if they were doing it on their own. It is a great way of encouraging little business owners in our community.

There was an array of things that we could do at the festival. There was a wool and fibre exhibition that attracted a lot of people, bake sales, music, games, and it was a really wonderful community day. I want to give a big shout-out to Steph in our community. She is our absolute market queen. If she is not holding markets at Blackfriars, she is holding them in Vine Street Plaza and, of course, getting organised for the huge Christmas fair that we also hold at Blackfriars at the end of the year.

Finally, a big happy 60th wedding anniversary to the Wiadrowskis. I popped in during the week to wish them a very happy 60th wedding anniversary. They were married at the North Adelaide Baptist Church. They were going to be celebrating with a beautiful dinner at Lenzerheide and then also at the new Cottage Kitchen on Tynte Street, with family. Thanks for inviting me in for a chat, to look at the wedding photos and to share all the beautiful cards from the Prime Minister, the King, the opposition leader and the Premier wishing you a very happy 60th wedding anniversary.

ADELAIDE HILLS WATER SUPPLY

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:36): I rise to emphasise the long dry that is being suffered throughout the state. It is particularly being felt in the Heysen Hills, where so many of my local residents, constituents, are not connected to mains water and rely on their local water, whether it is underground water or water from rainwater tanks. I welcome the fact that we have heard from the government today, for the first time I might say, some notion of something more than what has been described by my constituency for several weeks now as nothing more than a talkfest in response to our urgent need for an emergency response. When there is a fire or flood, we do not go around blaming the victims: we get in and respond as best we can. This is no different.

For those who find themselves without water, with empty tanks, unable to wash, unable to clean clothes, unable to have something to drink at home, this requires an emergency response. The government needs to put a shoulder to the wheel and get real action. That means delivering water to my constituents among so many throughout the state. I applaud my colleague the shadow minister for water infrastructure, the member for Finniss, who now for many weeks has been calling on the government to do something, and, not only that, but pointing to his own experience last time around, when this government was in power in fact, where practical solutions could be found and deployed. They included getting a hold of milk tankers that are not so much in constant use at this time of the year, suitable for deploying potable water, and getting it to where it is needed for those who are out of water at home.

I stress that this is felt far and wide across the Hills and it is a day-to-day acute matter requiring an urgent response. Communities including Mylor, Echunga, Crafers West, Kangarilla, Bradbury, as far north as Montacute, Scott Creek and Aldgate: residents of those communities have been in contact with me and have been highlighting what I think all agree are the worst circumstances of dry for at least 30 years.

My constituents highlight that they are not looking for a handout. They are proudly resilient. They are proudly self-reliant. For decades, in many cases, they have been very ably managing the precious and scarce water resources that we all rely upon. To give some examples: Nina at Mylor, who is in her 70s and has lived in the Hills for decades, is now washing in a bucket; Mark at Bradbury, who is in his 70s is acutely concerned about the public health risks that are associated with running dry; Lindy at Mylor has been shocked by the high cost of delivery of water, sometimes now on repeated occasions if you can get it when you have put yourself in the queue; and Matthew at Aldgate is a father of children he is caring for at their home. They have been desperate for water since February and the queue now runs, we are told, until May.

People have been waiting months for water and, of course, if we get through March now without rain, it will be five months with basically no rain at all. Members ought also to be clearly aware of the fact that the pressure on local water, including tank water, extends to that water that ought to be kept aside for emergency response for the CFS. Lisa at Montacute highlights that it is a very scary situation indeed when residents are forced to draw upon those resources that ought to be set aside for responding to bushfire emergencies. Just like that kind of emergency, this is a water emergency and the government must get on and deliver, including for my residents in Heysen.

ADELAIDE FRINGE AND ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (15:42): We have hit my favourite time of year. The summer weather lingers and the arts are in the spotlight, and this gives us all the opportunity to imagine a different world, to find laughter, to feel empathy, to question and reflect, or maybe just to find an escape. Enjoying the arts enables us to see the world through different eyes.

With the Fringe and Festival season in South Australia, more than 1,300 different shows are hitting our state in nearly 500 different venues, with just 100 of those in the CBD. We have more than 50 shows in the Adelaide Hills; nearly 100 in the Fleurieu Peninsula, Limestone Coast and Kangaroo Island; nearly 150 shows as far north, west and east as Ceduna, Port Lincoln, Coober Pedy, Marree and Renmark; and, pleasingly, shows in my electorate.

You would struggle to beat the atmosphere in the city at this time of year. It is so joyous to see so many people out in the street, enjoying shows, sharing their reviews, spending time with friends and family, maybe having a drink or a meal, or possibly just sitting and relaxing and enjoying the atmosphere in the gardens.

The Fringe and Festival season really takes South Australia by storm. We know that thousands of interstate and overseas visitors will come to this festival. The Fringe created 306,318 and the Festival 133,345 visitor nights in 2024 and, combined, delivered \$158 million in new expenditure in South Australia. The reason these figures are so large is because both events are world-leading events. They provide many Australian and world premieres occurring here in South Australia, with a variety of genres that is hard to beat: comedy, music, dance, theatre, opera and so many others.

We have WOMADelaide starting on Friday night. I am so looking forward to that feeling you get when you walk through the gates for the very first night. There is nothing quite like it. It is a completely different environment and it is the perfect way to remove yourself from the normal grind and just absolutely indulge in the pleasure that is WOMADelaide.

Having looked at the schedule, I am particularly looking forward to seeing Bangarra Dance and Emily Wurramara play for the first time, and looking forward to once again seeing John Grant perform. WOMADelaide, as we know, has been a leader for many years in providing a sustainable event. Each year they go above and beyond, making it an environmentally sustainable place.

I am so lucky, I have been going to WOMADelaide since the second time it was on and have not missed one since. In fact, my daughter Lucy first went as a nine-month old and given that she is a WOMAD child, she is flying back from Melbourne this week so she can come to WOMAD again. If you are a regular attendee at WOMAD, there are people you always see there and sometimes that is the only place you see them. I do want to acknowledge that I will miss seeing Michelle Hogan sitting under the trees, as she always did.

I would also like to highlight the diversity of both events with artists from many different cultures performing in many different languages and sharing their culture and traditions. One example of this is *Innocence*, which I am pleased to hear the member for Adelaide enjoyed the other evening. This features multiple languages and Indigenous performers featuring their own languages. There are also performers living with disabilities, those from our queer community and a significant number of female performers.

I have been fortunate to see a few shows already. I would like to particularly acknowledge Song Cycles, which I saw at the Town Hall last Thursday night with Lou Bennett performing with the Australian String Quartet. She sang in language for the entire event and it was incredibly moving. I did also see *Krapp's Last Tape* on Friday night. I can say the critics loved it and festival audiences are truly a patient lot, given how the performance began. I have also been lucky to see some Fringe shows and it is so pleasing to see so many people at this time of year appreciating the arts.

FROME ELECTORATE

Ms PRATT (Frome) (15:47): There is a stark contrast in the grieves today, where we hear from our city MP colleagues on the other side of the house about the fun and the frivolity of Fringe and—

Members interjecting:

Ms PRATT: Mr Speaker, I am going to speak directly to you because I did not get to conclude my sentence and that is we absolutely welcome and love activities such as the Fringe. While I was not going to make this point, in the electorate of Frome I have been told by those who want to promote art festivals that we are sad that we are not getting as many.

The member for Hurtle Vale interjects because she thinks I am going to speak about the Fringe Festival. I am going to speak about the drought. I am going to speak about the drought because the beginning of my speech was the contrast that city MPs are in a position to celebrate all the things that are wonderful that are happening in this city.

WOMADelaide is about to kick off. We have the Gather Round coming. We have seen LIV Golf and the Fringe is abuzz. I enjoyed going to the Tour Down Under, but in regional South Australia we are in a drought. The member for Heysen has explained fully the pressures of a lack of water that are being experienced by the residents he represents in the Hills. While I will touch on water today, my farmers need to know that their views, their issues, their concerns are being represented in this house, ventilated in the same way that the member for Gibson is entitled to speak about what is happening in her electorate.

We are not having fun. We are not having fun in Frome. We are in drought and we are in drought in a serious way. We have a primary school, a government asset at which, should there be a brownout—a loss of power—and the bore is dry, these students cannot flush their toilets. That is still not the point of my grievance today, but it is an interruption that is unwelcome in a grievance that has been delayed on a topic that is of great concern.

What I have been doing as I move around the electorate is spending time visiting my ag bureaus. I want to give a shout-out to the 30 young farmers, a new generation of farmers, who came along to the Mallala ag bureau and allowed me to spend time with them. While last year's harvest really was devastating, what I see is a new generation of farmers fully committed to data, to ag tech, to science, to analytics, to the agronomy of their soil and their crops.

This is what they were asked to reflect on: 'Give us a positive and a negative from your harvest.' They thought deeply about reduced yield and overdrafts with banks—there are pressures on them that are not insignificant—but they still came up with the positives; for example, a comparison of who grew canola and who had success with it. Some, Mr Speaker, had grown a GMO version, which I am sure is familiar to you. Dry seeding deeper did contribute to a germination that gave farmers a yield in 2024-25 that they would not have seen 10 or 15 years ago.

Talkback is lighting up; chat rooms on Facebook and social media are lighting up. It is important that I reflect some of those views that have been shared by those who are living this. We are seeing water being carted. We know that dams are dry. There is not enough water storage in the tanks that people have: there are reports that they are down to their last tank or that their bores are salty. That is for communities that are not on the mains.

A shout-out to a fantastic advocate in mental health, Steph Schmidt, who is the Farm Life Psychologist. She is connecting with farmers who are listening to her, making the point that the government has an opportunity to do more to support them. The time that I have been given, while reduced, is not enough. I merely want to say to the farmers who are working in districts like Balaklava, Mallala and all the way up to Jamestown: the Liberal Party are with you and we know you are doing it tough, but keep going.

BLACKWOOD RECONCILIATION GROUP

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (15:52): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Blackwood Reconciliation Group. Our local Blackwood community members began exploring the meaning of reconciliation in 1994 and came to understand the significance of the site on Shepherds Hill Road, Eden Hills, which is now called Colebrook Reconciliation Park. At that site in 1943 stood a building that became the Colebrook Children's Home, and over the decades until it was closed in 1973, some 350 children—Aboriginal children stolen from regional South Australia—grew up in our local community. Neither the children nor the community had any understanding of the truth of their history, the trauma that was generated for themselves and their families, or how it would impact the rest of their lives.

As Blackwood Reconciliation Group formed, its original members built relationships with some of the former residents of Colebrook home and their descendants. These relationships led to a joint commitment to acknowledge the truth of our local history and for the stories of the stolen children to be heard and understood. Colebrook Reconciliation Park was established on the site of

the former home. Members of the reconciliation group have continued to pursue their personal relationships with many of the residents from there.

The Blackwood Reconciliation Group also cares for the reconciliation park. They support educational tours of the site and support and organise public and private events that contribute to truth-telling and reconciliation. One of those events was recognised earlier this year at the City of Mitcham Australia Day honours when it was the Blackwood Reconciliation Walk for 2024. It won community event of the year and was such a fabulous opportunity to really celebrate all of the work that went into that event.

Over many years that event has brought our community together, as we walked from the Blackwood RSL, or previously the roundabout, down to Colebrook Park. Last year the event also coincided with the 100-year anniversary of the first removal of the children from Oodnadatta, and the beginnings of the United Aboriginal Mission managed at the Colebrook Training Centre for Aboriginal Children, the now Colebrook Reconciliation Park.

Further to this, last week I was really honoured to attend the Australia Day Committee's Citizen of the Year Awards where, again, Blackwood Reconciliation Group won Event of the Year and it was a very proud moment for all of the members who managed to get along, as well as their local MP, to see them up there receiving their award. A massive congratulations to all of the members of the Blackwood Reconciliation Group, and friends and volunteers, on that event.

On Saturday night, I was very honoured to join the Blackwood CFS to celebrate their 75th anniversary. That is 75 years of serving and looking after our community, protecting us when we need it, getting up in the middle of the night to go and chop up trees or help people who have been involved in car accidents. It was such an incredible event and I was very chuffed to be able to go along.

We were joined by the chief officer of the CFS, Brett Loughlin; the regional commander for Mount Lofty, Michael Bohrnsen; and the Sturt Group Officer, Dale Thompson. We heard about all of the incredible work the brigade does, not only in our local community but also in regard to advancing firefighter capabilities across the state and even across the country. Lucas Wilson was the captain and he gave a fabulous speech and we shared in some of the incredible stats that came from the brigade, thanks to Brett Loughlin.

From 2023 to 2024, the brigade had 217 responses, which is about 1,219 hours of work done by volunteers to keep our community safe. It is an incredible achievement and I know our community thoroughly thanks them. I was able to put together a bit of a video montage from some of our local community. We had Ben from GD Wholesale, the crew from Joan's Pantry, the Coromandel Ramblers, some of our mountain bike kids, and some local Hawthorndene residents who all got together to say thank you to them on the video. I was very pleased to be able to put that together.

Residents from our local community at Blackwood, Glenalta, Craighburn Farm, and Hawthorndene all benefit from the Blackwood Country Fire Service, as that is their response area, but the Sturt group work always together, including my own Upper Sturt. We are in the Mount Lofty Brigade but we come down and help out as well.

Finally, to Upper Sturt residents who are struggling a little bit with the drought and not having enough water in their tanks, please make sure you check your tanks, check how much water you have, and order water early. We know that there is a waiting period. If it is an emergency the water carters want to hear from you. They are doing their best to help people in emergencies, and I ask you to continue to save as much as you can and be as frugal as you can. It is a tough time but we are all in it together.

Private Members' Statements

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:57): I want to talk about Fabulous Friday. Last Friday was just a great day to be a South Australian. Country Racing SA are putting on some amazing country racing events, and the Port Lincoln Cup was no different. On the Friday there were about 2,500 people who attended that race meeting. It was full of colour, full of young people, and it really

was just a great day. Port Lincoln was on show: the seafood was aplenty and the entertainment, the horse racing, and the fashions on the track really did shine.

I want to congratulate David Reid, the president, and his local member, because they have done an outstanding job. His committee and the Port Lincoln Racing Club have done an outstanding job to resurrect this event and make it what it is today. I Need a Drink was the winner of the Port Lincoln Cup, and it was a back-to-back winner from last year. I want to congratulate jockey Rochelle Milnes, who did an outstanding job in a very tough field, so it really was a great day.

I then moved back to Adelaide for the evening and attended the 2024 TAB Greyhound of the Year. I want to congratulate the outgoing chair, Grantley Stevens, and welcome the incoming chair, David Lewis. It was a great evening. The winner of the Greyhound of the Year, Fantastic Spike, had a sensational year and really did lead by example. He was trained by Liz Chegia and also acknowledged as South Australia's Sprinting Greyhound of the Year. The runner-up was Pet Detective, trained by Ben Rawlings. He was also trainer of the year, and I presented awards to him. He had 231 wins for the year, which is not a bad effort for a trainer, I say. It really is a great opportunity to welcome racing to SA.

The SPEAKER: You might have finished a fair way behind the field with that effort, member for Chaffey. It was very entertaining, though.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:59): I am honoured to share the incredible stories of two remarkable female entrepreneurs I encountered who are making waves in the hospitality industry in the Clare Valley. First, let's celebrate Alison Meaney, the visionary behind Bukirk Glamping and luxury cabins. While I attended Bukirk's seventh anniversary open day, Alison spoke of her story of transforming a run-down vineyard into a thriving glamping destination. Inspired by her love for the outdoors and extensive travel experiences, she has created a unique accommodation that blends rustic charm with modern amenities. From the early days of manually clearing the vines to opening the first glamping tents in 2018 and expanding to the luxurious 'fancy coops' and accessible accommodation, Alison's dedication and creativity have truly redefined the glamping experience in the Clare Valley.

Next we have Katherine Nugent and her business partners, who are behind the new Clare Valley Distillery. Katherine and her business partners have embarked on a journey to bring locally crafted gin to the renowned wine region. Starting with contract distilling in 2019, they faced numerous challenges, including navigating the pandemic. Their vision comes to life this Sunday with a brand-new distillery and cellar door officially opening. I look forward to showing my support by attending the event. Their innovative approach and passion for gin have added a new dimension to Clare Valley's hospitality scene. These women are not just entrepreneurs; they are pioneers inspiring all of us with their determination and ingenuity. They are an example of the many entrepreneurs in the valley and plains, and I look forward to sharing their stories as well.

Mr BASHAM (Finniss) (16:01): We now see from the government a response to the desperate people in the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu region who have been repeatedly asking for assistance. Thank you to the Minister for Water for finally responding to the enormous community pressure in the past month regarding water supply to households not connected to the mains. As far back as 12 February, the minister commended my suggestion for utilising milk tankers, saying, 'Lovely when the Liberals are occasionally constructive, as David has just been. I really, really appreciate that.'

This week I wrote to the minister offering a bipartisan approach to this emergency to look for solutions to help those who are running out of water in their homes, but the minister has not accepted my offer for assistance as yet. It has taken nearly three weeks for the minister to deliver simple solutions instead of implementing solutions immediately, as this should have been an emergency response.

I also acknowledge that there are other regions out there that are facing similar circumstances and still awaiting a response—the Barossa, the Mid North and other regions. We certainly need to make sure that we look after them. As I said, I wrote to the minister earlier this week offering a bipartisan approach. I am happy to work with the minister in a joint task force or whatever structure is required, and that offer still stands.

Mrs PEARCE (King) (16:03): I rise to say a very happy birthday to the Golden Grove mall walkers, who this Friday will be celebrating their 20th year supporting and servicing our local community. This is a fantastic local group that is based at The Grove Shopping Centre. Every Tuesday and Friday morning they meet and get together to actively walk around the centre. It is really beautiful, because it does not matter what season it is and what is happening outside; there is a safe environment for them to be able to get out and be active. Just as importantly, it is an amazing opportunity for residents in our local community to come together and connect. It is just as importantly a wellbeing activity. It is why I love to visit them as much as I possibly can. When I caught up with them during their coffee time afterwards, I was told that I had brought the wrong shoes if I was coming to do a bit of a walk around with them as well.

It is always great catching up with them. I sincerely thank Linda for all her efforts over this period of time to help connect and bring people together, no matter the obstacles that have been thrown in their way, and all of the amazing people I see week in and week out coming there to support one another through any stage of life that they are going through. It is an example of why The Grove is such a hub in our local community. It is more than shops; it is a place that brings people together and looks after them.

Bills

STATE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION AND FACILITATION BILL

Committee Stage

In committee.

(Continued from 20 February 2025.)

Clause 13.

Mr TELFER: Thank you again minister and support staff. As I spoke about when we first started this committee debate, this is a pretty significant piece of legislation and we need to make sure at all levels that we are putting in place a structure like this that it is going to have longevity and sustainability and is not something which can chop and change depending on the mood of the parliament.

Clause 13 is around the minister's representative attending meetings. This is an interesting structure. Clause 13(2) provides:

(2) If CGO considers that a matter dealt with at a meeting attended by a representative of the Minister should be treated for any reason as confidential, CGO may advise the Minister of that opinion giving the reason for the opinion, and the Minister may, subject to subsection (3), act on that advice as the Minister thinks fit.

Can you give an explanation as to why there is no facility available for the CGO to keep the matter confidential from the minister as a whole if the CGO sees reason for this to be so?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Can I thank the member for Flinders for his question. I am advised that clause 13(2) is based on fairly standard provisions in other pieces of legislation, for example, which establish statutory authorities or officers. It is not unusual for a minister to be able to send an observer along to the board meetings of a statutory authority.

I can say from a firsthand perspective as Treasurer, the Treasurer of the day is entitled to send a Treasurer's representative to attend board meetings—for example, of HomeStart Finance or SA Water or so on—to ensure that the responsible government of the day is aware of what is being considered. Then, of course, it stands to reason that from time to time there will be matters that are considered by that forum which are confidential and I think subclause (2) and subclause (3) just provide a regime where that request for confidentiality can be made and that request can also be respected by the minister.

Mr TELFER: Further from that, clause 13(3), which you referenced, provides:

(3) If the Minister is satisfied on the basis of CGO's advice under subsection (2) that CGO owes a duty of confidence in respect of a matter, the Minister must ensure the observance of that duty in respect of the matter, but this subsection does not prevent the Minister from disclosing the matter as required in the proper performance of ministerial functions or duties.

If the CGO believes that a matter requires confidentiality, why is there discretion for the minister to breach said confidentiality as a matter of course within the performance of the minister's duties?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I thank the member for Flinders for the question and an understandable question. Of course, all ministers above all are responsible to the parliament for the conduct of the functions for which they are responsible. For example, in this instance, this would I imagine entitle the minister to be able to respond to a question in parliament, for example, whether it is during a question time or an estimates process or similar.

Presumably, there are other occasions where the minister may also be obliged to disclose knowledge or information, for example, when there is an investigation by one of the bodies such as the OPI or something like that. There are instances where the minister must always be able to furnish information, despite having provisions like this in legislation, such as in the basic conduct of responsible governance or being answerable to integrity agencies.

Mr TELFER: Section 13(1) states:

- (1) A person authorised in writing by the Minister may attend (but not participate in) any meeting of CGO...

Does this provide the CGO with the opportunity to deny the attendance of the minister's representative on the basis that such a person 'may' attend a meeting rather than 'shall'?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: On the face of it, I do not believe so. This clause creates an entitlement in legislation for the minister responsible to have someone on their behalf attend those meetings. Of course, I could imagine that if there is a circumstance where there is some sort of tension or conflict in respect of the individual who is tasked by the minister to attend a meeting, such as a conflict of interest or something like that, that may trigger a preclusion of that particular person from attending on behalf of the minister, but otherwise this clause provides that right to the minister to ensure they have a representative who can be present.

Mr TELFER: Thank you, sir, for your indulgence for one more. This clause provides for a representative of the minister to attend any meeting of the CGO. Will any notes or reports of these meetings made by the minister's representative subsequently be made available to be public documents? If so, what steps will the Treasurer take to make sure these processes are transparent and accountable?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Thank you, member for Flinders, for your question. I am advised that the preceding clause, clause 12, talks about the requirement that accurate minutes must be taken of the proceedings of those meetings and they also need to be published publicly on a website.

Clause passed.

Clause 14 passed.

Clause 15.

Mr TELFER: This clause as well as the subsequent schedule 2, which we will get to later on, require members of the CGO to disclose relevant interests. A relevant interest is one seemingly, by looking at the definition, that is defined by the minister. Would it be possible under the act for the minister to declare that no interests are relevant interests?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: My advice is that what is envisaged there are the standard sorts of disclosures of interests which we would be most familiar with, whether it is financial or pecuniary interests. However, the minister may choose to go beyond those sorts of standard declarations of interests and require the declaration of any further interests that may be particularly of relevance to the job that the CGO will be doing, whether it is somehow development related or something like that. The purpose of the clause is to give the minister the flexibility to go beyond the regular interests that you and I would otherwise be familiar with.

Mr TELFER: So for clarification—and obviously this is talking about development—the regular interests that you are talking about include landholdings, and there are specified guidelines when it comes to parliamentarians and family members. Do you envision that these same sorts of

criteria structures will be in place for a member of the CGO's process of relevant interests under this act?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I think what we would anticipate is that there would be, at the very least, a basic level of disclosure of, say, financial interests, perhaps interests in land or property holdings, and then this creates a discretion for the minister to go further. Whether it is other interests, which may or may not be of relevance to the task that the CGO is doing, whether it is memberships of professional associations or organisations, and so on, we have—according to I think it is called the register of interests act—requirements that members have to fill out. We would envisage a similar sort of regime here, but allowing that additional discretion for the minister of the day to say that it is their belief that there should be additional interests and if it is relevant in their view to the job being undertaken by the CGO.

Mr TELFER: Just extrapolating out a little bit, would it be a relevant interest if a member of the CGO is, for instance, a member of the same political party as the minister?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: It may well be. My advice is it has yet to be determined what the full extent of that would be. My understanding, and I had better get this right, is that we are required to declare and disclose those sorts of memberships and affiliations. So conceivably that would be a similar regime for this, but as I said it has not been settled yet.

Mr TELFER: Supplementary to that—and obviously this goes back to my second reading speech and the contributions—we all want this to succeed. I think these sorts of schemes and regimes do not succeed when they become too political and then there can be a change of mentality with a change of government. Is the decision about what will be included as a relevant interest one which is made subsequently by the minister and put into regulations, or is it subsequently by the minister put into guidelines or some lesser document?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I am advised that it is established by the minister. It is not prescribed by regulation, but just determined by the minister. I am advised that is not too dissimilar to other regimes which similarly seek to oblige statutory office holders to disclose interests, that that can sometimes be done according to how the minister determines interests should be disclosed. I should also say that, while there is not a particular view of the government as to who might undertake this role in the first instance or in the future, there have been people who have undertaken similar roles for state governments in the past who have had party political affiliations.

We have asked Dean Brown to assist us with flood and drought response in the past, and Rob Kerin, and so on. Patrick Conlon is assisting the government in trying to sort out the seemingly intractable issue with governance in Coober Pedy. Quite often, people who still have political affiliations can do really good jobs of this. I think the point that the member raises, in having some comfort that the minister is going to set those requirements in a similar vein to how we are all used to those declarations of interest, is a reasonable point.

Mr TELFER: This is extrapolating out—I would not say the current minister would do something like this—but I agree with the examples you have given about some of the cross-party examples. I see this position as a pretty senior and influential, big-picture position, which provides a foundational backbone potentially for a government's economic vision. Through your explanation, it seems clear that the minister of the day could decide to have only the regulatory pecuniary interest as the obligation rather than some of these others. Is there a risk—and it is probably a short answer—that a minister, whether it is current or subsequent, could make that change so that there is not that transparency in what is a pretty senior position?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I think that is a reasonable point to raise. I guess that is where the function of accountability and transparency comes in. If a particular individual was appointed to the role, and people thought, 'Well, who on earth is this person? Nobody knows anything about them,' you would want to know not only what their credentials and maybe their curriculum vitae looks like but also what interests they have and if the regime is appropriately set for that person to declare their interest. I think that would understandably raise questions.

I would be surprised if that is the case. This is going to be a full-time strategy officer. Governments in the future, whether they are Labor or Liberal—I cannot think of anything else—will

want someone who is not only familiar with making decisions about planning and development but has a skill set capable of working with a range of government agencies, a range of external stakeholders, and probably having to conduct community consultations effectively and equitably. Even when you frame it like that, you are starting to look at a really particular type of person with a particular type of capabilities.

We are confident that we will be able to attract someone to a role like this because, as you said, well designed and legislated this would be an attractive position for somebody to put their hand up for, but it would also deliver significant benefits for the community in speeding up developments. I do think that legislating the fact that there has to be a disclosure, and that there is going to be a regime to determine how that disclosure is made and what is included, hopefully provides a bit of comfort that even if we do attract a great person, the public and the parliament can have confidence that out of all their interests, none of them fall into conflict with the duties that they will have as the CGO.

Clause passed.

Clause 16.

Mr TELFER: This talks about remuneration and there is certainly not very much clarity about what that remuneration may entail: 'entitled to remuneration, allowances and expenses determined by the Governor'. Is the detail of this expected to be set in the regulation, and if so, can you provide a level of formula or a guideline to a comparable remuneration allowance and expenses package that may provide the parliament with at least an indication of what the expectation of the government is in putting this in place?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Again, I think that is a reasonable question. The level of remuneration has not yet been determined. I think the government would envisage that it would be akin to a chief executive salary and, of course, there is a band of chief executive remuneration that the member would be well aware of. I guess if I could provide any guidance, it will be—of course, as it should be for candidates—conversant with their experience and capacity.

We would also think that it would have some relevance to the workload of it, because if it has a fairly light workload, then the office perhaps will not need to be as fully staffed as what it otherwise might be, and also there may not be a need to attract and remunerate a very high-calibre person. Beyond that, I cannot really provide any guidance because we have not considered it at that level and we certainly have not made a determination.

I can also say that the staff of the Coordinator-General's Office are envisaged to be engaged on the same basis as a regular government agency, so with administrative services stream staff in the ASO-2 to ASO-8 bands and potentially a manager of administrative services, and if there are any executives who are appointed below the Coordinator-General themselves, then they would be in the regular executive service bands.

Mr TELFER: I will get to the staff probably in the next clause. I am interested for clarity's sake: is it envisioned that, indeed, this position will be full-time and at a level, as a guideline, comparative to a CEO? To get to a point of responsibility or obligation for a full-time role and subsequent staff underneath is a pretty significant body of work that is probably required. We have talked about what sorts of scenarios there might be around the job requirements. Do you envision coming in at day one with a full-time remuneration package and staff structure when we do not really know what the guidance of the government of the day or the CGO of the day will be, as far as what their potential target projects or economic areas are going to be? Do you envision, from day one, that position starting at that level?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Yes, I think it would be the same as any other worker taking on a new position. The annual remuneration package is known up-front, even as the work may gather in terms of amount and depth, not too dissimilar to all of us when we first made members after the declaration of the poll. Each of the three of us listening attentively to this is probably working somewhat harder today than what we were just after that declaration of the poll.

Where I do think there would be more of a ramp-up would be in the remainder of the office resourcing. No doubt, there will need to be the establishment of an office, there will need to be some

administrative effort and support to enable that to happen and then, as that gets underway, the capacity to recruit staff and attract candidates again with appropriate skills for facilitating these sorts of development activities, and that will occur over time. Overall, in the office there will be a ramp-up, but once this person commences their role they will be remunerated on a consistent basis from one pay period to the next.

Mr TELFER: I appreciate the comparisons, but also it is probably not a very good comparison because this is a role where there will have to be a fair bit of self motivation within the expectations of something like this. We know the functions but we do not know the prescriptive projects. It is unique inasmuch as the CGO walking in, like we did at the start of a term, as you put it. We know what the structure of a comparative role would be. A CGO comes in and basically has to discover for themselves what their role is with regard to specific projects.

This is something broadly under remuneration, but does the minister envision that there would be some sort of structure or outline given to the CGO at the beginning of their term by the government of the day or is it purely going to be the CGO going out and consulting with government, private industry, etc., as to exactly what the focus area of their responsibilities and functions are going to be?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: It is a good question because in establishing the role, and the first person in particular taking it on—this is really a question about the first person taking on the role, not about subsequent people in the future—there is, I guess, that kind of administrative functional task of getting the CGO, the office, up and running, of course, but their role is going to require fairly consistent and ongoing interactions with a range of government agencies.

You could easily imagine that the very early part of their role will be making themselves known and meeting with and forming those relationships with those key internal government stakeholders and then more broadly engaging with the community, including industry groups and potentially the local government sector and so on, about what their role is and how it fits within the overall broader planning regime that we have here in South Australia.

I can imagine that there is conceivably going to be a honey pot effect, much like under the previous Rann government where everybody who wanted to put a patio on was after a major development declaration, whereas it took a little bit of time and education to make it clear to the development community: 'This is your particular development and this is the development application and approval process that is the best fit for you, not necessarily the major development declaration.'

Similarly, I can conceive that the first Coordinator-General is going to have to lift the awareness amongst the community about what the three different paths are of having a project or an initiative considered by the CGO, and working fairly closely not just with industry representatives but also with proponents who might contact the office about whether it is most appropriate for their development or initiative to be lodged with the CGO or if they should just go down the regular process of dealing with council or dealing with other government agencies.

Mr TELFER: We have spoken about the remuneration for the Coordinator-General themselves at the top. This clause talks about members of the CGO as a whole. There is going to be the head, the Coordinator-General role, and those roles below it. What remuneration allowance and expenses level is envisioned—a comparative for this role? Will it be full-time, part-time or on an as-needs basis? Obviously that role is very different to that of the Coordinator-General itself. Can you give me perhaps a comparative example of what you think the roles and responsibilities of a member of the CGO would be with something similar?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: That is a good question. So you are talking about, effectively, the board members?

Mr Telfer: Yes.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: There is a Premier and Cabinet Circular which determines that there are levels of remuneration for different types of government boards. While it has not yet been formally determined what this board will be, I think we would envisage it to be at the same level as the existing SCAP. Now that I have said SCAP, I should probably remind myself of what that acronym stands for: the State Commission Assessment Panel. I think it is customary for it to change

its name and acronym every 18 months. That is currently at the top level of remuneration for government boards and committees, so it is likely to be similar for this.

Clause passed.

Clause 17.

Mr TELFER: We started to touch on this a little bit. Obviously we are looking at a starting point and who knows to where it will develop. Clause 17, for those reviewing *Hansard* or listening in, talks specifically about CGO staff, and provides:

- (1) CGO's staff consists of—
 - (a) Public Service employees assigned to assist CGO; and
 - (b) persons employed by CGO, with the consent of the Minister and on terms and conditions determined by the Minister, to assist CGO.

Are these staff simply seconded from other departments or is this going to be a separate unit from other departments where employees would permanently move to the CGO?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: It could conceivably be both. So there will be, we would imagine, a core office function which will be committed to working solely for the CGO. That would include certainly those administrative-type staff who will be necessary to functionally make the world go around for the office.

There may be occasions where staff are seconded to the CGO from other government agencies. I am not saying this will happen, but conceivably that could be either getting some external planning expertise in or transport or water or environment or something like that. It may also mean that there is the opportunity, as does occur from time to time in some government agencies, to have a legal professional from the Crown Solicitor's Office seconded into that agency to provide regular legal advice as well.

But aside from that, we do envisage that that office will comprise staff who are remunerated on a consistent basis to other members of the Public Service, whether they are administrative services staff or, if there are any executives in there, similar to the SAS level 1 and 2 bands. Does that answer your question?

Mr TELFER: Yes, it answers that aspect. It leads on to another question. This is envisaged, obviously, as a red-tape reducing unit capable of getting a bit of cut-through. Surely it stands to reason that Public Service employees coming from other departments could potentially, if their obligation or responsibility is with the example you gave—like the planning department—there is a risk that the advice or the work that gets done is not with that sole vision of reducing process and red tape but reiterating what a department is already doing.

This has basically been put in place because we see that there are hold-ups, there are blockages, there are challenges to working through process. That process input is put in place and implemented by a department. If we are seconding staff to work within the CGO from that department, is there a risk of that being an area of potential conflict and/or additional blockages?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I can see the point that the member makes, and it is not an unreasonable concern, but I would like to think that by establishing this process effectively what we are trying to do is provide a one-contact point approach for somebody seeking to get a development assessed and considered for approval or some other project or initiative similarly where the role of the Coordinator-General will be to try and seek the advice and input and potential consideration or decision from each of the agencies that are relevant, and do it concurrently rather than what can often occur at the moment, and that is going off with a development application, for example, to the planning department and asking, 'Have you spoken to SA Water yet?' so you go off and do that and you finally get that and then you get told it is transport, and then you get told it is EPA and so on and so forth. You can see that by having this office, in principle the idea is to make sure that that happens in a far quicker way.

But I take your point. If we are removing a key resource from one of those agencies that does the assessment or provides the advice into a development assessment process, does that

mean that that agency is left without that resource and is less able to do it? Yes, I think that is a risk but I would imagine that the chief executive or whomever is senior in that agency and the Coordinator-General would only make decisions about seconding or taking staff on the basis that it was not going to leave a vacuum and stop the existing agency from being able to do its job. I guess that is why the provision is that the CGO can recruit their own staff to be doing that so that they do not necessarily have to draw on those resources from those agencies.

Mr TELFER: Clause 17(1)(b) states that the CGO staff can also consist of:

...persons employed by the CGO, with the consent of the Minister and on terms and conditions determined by the Minister, to assist CGO.

What safety nets are there in place to ensure that such staff are simply approved of by the minister in the same way that electorate staff are approved of rather than staff being hand-picked by the minister to assist in delivering predetermined outcomes? Is there that same tension between roles and responsibilities if there is a particular outcome that the minister is hoping the CGO gets to and they may decide to put a person who they know reflects what their preferred outcome would be into a role within the CGO?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: The purpose of this clause 17(1)(b) is to enable the CGO to engage people who you would generally regard as consultants. That might be an external traffic engineer, an environmental consultant or somebody else with external planning-related capability that would obviously provide a benefit to the office that is not otherwise generally able to be sought from the public sector. I should say that they are employed or they are engaged by the CGO. The role of the minister is just to provide consent for that arrangement rather than the other way around.

Mr TELFER: I have just one more question on this clause. This is once again a tension between trying to put a body in place that provides for expediency around decision-making and a streamlined process for projects. If I was a sceptical member of the public looking in, I would see a coordinator-general on a CEO salary. I would see a staff contingent, whatever it may end up being. I can see another level of bureaucracy, another department or sub-department that has been established by government. We could look at it in a cynical way and say it is more bureaucrats.

Is it envisioned that this will be bureaucrat-neutral? Is this work that is expedited or that would ordinarily be going across the desk of someone at Planning, SA Water or Infrastructure and Transport? Is this something that would be bureaucratic-neutral, or could the accusation be put by a member of the press or a member of the public that this is just another layer of bureaucratic obligation and extra expense on the taxpayers' purse?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I guess the question you are asking is: is it cost-neutral? Are we setting this up and then seeking offsets from other agencies that would otherwise be performing those same sorts of functions that this will be? Not at this stage. We are proposing—and this will be something that you will see when I hand down the budget—to allocate additional resources to be able to create this office and the function.

While any time there are additional staff within the Public Service or additional budget allocations, which can raise concerns from some members of the public that this is bureaucracy out of control or that sort of thing, I would like to think that the creation of this will provide some efficiency and economic benefit to the state. The fact that in principle both major parties and also the development industry would like to see this effort succeed gives an indication that, if it is set up well and conducts itself well and provides real value, then it should be a very positive net benefit to the public sector but more broadly, importantly, to the community as well, because it will expedite, hopefully, money being invested in the economy in whatever the developments are.

Clause passed.

Clause 18.

Mr TELFER: I think I have only one on this clause. This question is about delegation of power, minister. Can the minister direct the CGO to delegate a power to the minister's representative?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: My advice is no, because set out in clause 13, which we looked at, the minister's representative is able to 'attend (but not participate in)'. I think that sets out that they will not have any deliberative role in the CGO.

Mr TELFER: Absolutely, I looked at that, and that is around meetings and decision-making within meetings. This is around delegation of functions of the CGO. Basically, I want reassurance that there is not the capacity here for the CGO to delegate functions to the minister's representative.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Yes, that's correct, because the minister's representative is only attending the formal meetings of that—I am not quite sure it is called this in the legislation, but the CGO board essentially—and outside of those meetings of the CGO board there will be the ongoing management and work on particular proposals which are being considered by the CGO, which that minister's representative will not be present for; they will not be sitting in the corner of the office 9 to 5, Monday to Friday, or at least you would hope not. I think that shows that they will not.

Clause passed.

Clause 19.

Mr TELFER: This clause 19 is obviously fairly broad and it talks about some of the interpretation and structure of the project coordination and facilitation. Indeed, this bill, or something like that has been considered and nigh on anticipated, actually, from not just people in this place but people watching in—oh, there's plenty watching in, sir. At the 2023 local government association AGM, the then local government minister Geoff Brock announced the proposed new position of local government coordinator. Will the local government coordinator be a staff member of the CGO, or a statutory officer or have some status? Will the local government coordinator have a status position in relation to the CGO?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: My advice is that the commitment by the then minister was to create that as an administrative position and that, while they will be incorporated within the CGO, it will not be a statutory officer which is constituted in the same way that the Coordinator-General is.

Mr TELFER: At that 2023 local government association AGM, the then local government minister, Mr Brock, made a commitment that the local government coordinator would have access to the powers of the Coordinator-General's Office; does the government stand by that commitment and, if so, how will that occur practically?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I think if they are working within the CGO structure they are obviously going to have access to the functions of the CGO, but they will not be necessarily exercising the same determinative discretion that the Coordinator-General themselves, or the members of the Coordinator-General's Office board will do, because they will not necessarily be occupying either of those positions. They will be a participant within the broader office.

Mr TELFER: Treasurer, can you explain the interaction between the Coordinator-General's Office and the state local government accord, which was first announced by the Premier at the state Local Government Economic and Development Forum in March 2023?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: My advice is that that commitment by the Premier was basically an agreement for the local government sector to work with government to try to develop a pipeline of projects, which could be considered in due course through the Coordinator-General's Office and that the local government representative that you referred to in your earlier question would have a key role in those projects, or those initiatives, being assisted through the deliberative process of the Coordinator-General's Office. So it was, I guess, an agreement or a framework to work collaboratively together to try to bring projects forward and the role within the office of the particular officer that you referred to before, which former Minister Brock made mention of too, would include assisting getting those projects considered.

Mr TELFER: So for clarification, and I guess this will develop as the process does, what will be the process for local government areas to effectively communicate their pipeline of projects as you put them to the Coordinator-General? Will it be through this individual who is entrenched within the office directly? Will it be through their regional Local Government Association or the Local

Government Association of South Australia? How is this pipeline of projects going to be effectively communicated and thus streamlined through to the CGO?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: That is a good question because a lot of it is going to be determined on what those projects are and who is putting them forward. If it is a chin scratching idea that we would love to see an integrated recreation development in our council area and that is the full extent of the detail that is able to be brought to bear by the relevant council, it may be that it is a little too premature to consider pushing it through the process.

But if the council says, 'Look, we have a proponent who has ownership of a piece of land. This is what they want to do with it,' whatever the development is. 'They have demonstrated to us they have the capital available and are committed to the project, but it is far too complex for us to consider. We think it might be something worth the Coordinator-General's Office looking at.' Then there will be the capacity for any of those three designations to be made, either by the Coordinator-General themselves to effectively call it in, or it could be designated to them by the minister, or if it is a state development area the government may advise the Governor that the area should be declared for consideration by the CGO.

So it is a bit hard to say specifically and conceivably that there will be a bit of chaff that will be filtered out from the wheat, if can put it like that, amongst the projects because no doubt there will be some councils that may take the view that they will just get this up to the CGO so they get it off their desk so they are free to go and do other things. There will need to be a bit of mutual understanding about who should be dealing with what and what sorts of projects should be coming forward from the local government sector. I guess that is, unfortunately, as specific as I can be.

Mr TELFER: Just for clarification, basically the question with your analogy is: who is going to be doing the thrashing of the crop before the decision is made about the separation of the wheat from the chaff? Where are they going to get to and who is going to be making the decisions about—I will give another agricultural reference—the drafting of the sheep from the goats? It is not going to be going all the way up to the Coordinator-General all the time.

Will it be that local government person who is entrenched who is making those decisions? If so, that is going to be giving them quite a lot of power really when it comes to whether they have a council they get along well with or not. They might just flick them off. When we talk about the potential for politicisation, it is another pinch point where that could conceivably happen if it is at that local government coordinator level.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Yes, it is a good question. That local government coordinator, I would imagine, has a bit of a two-way role. While they may be, in one sense, in receipt of projects coming from local governments to go to the Coordinator-General for consideration or to be dealt with by the Coordinator-General, I think it is conceivable that they will also have a role to go from the Coordinator-General to councils to say, 'Please stop saying that Jane Bloggs' patio extension at the back of 18A Strath Terrace is for the Coordinator-General.' That is probably in your bailiwick. There might need to be a bit of a two-way information flow in that respect.

For the projects that are coming from council to the CGO, it still requires not that local government coordinator to make a determination: they might provide some advice to the Coordinator-General or in turn through to the minister, or through to cabinet and the Governor, but it will still be the Coordinator-General, the minister or the Governor who will make the decisions. They may be corralling—and I am sure there is an appropriate agricultural analogy you could use for that—

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: They might be shepherding them—

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: —corralling is fine?—but they will not have the decision-making capacity.

Clause passed.

Clause 20 passed.

Clause 21.

Mr TELFER: Minister, clause 21(1) provides:

- (1) CGO may, on application or on its own initiative, by notice in the Gazette, declare that a project is a coordinated project.

What criteria do you envision a project needs to meet in order for a project to be declared a coordinated project?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: If we turn back to clause 4 of the bill, it provides:

- (1) If the Minister or CGO (as the case may be) performs—
 - (a) a prescribed function in relation to a project;

And then you get down to the paragraph on it:

...[they] must have regard to the economic, social and environmental outcomes of the project (for the State as a whole and in the locality of the project), in addition to any relevant objects or principles under the other Act.

So really it is those three key elements and its significance for the state that will determine whether it should be called in. Clause 21(1) allows for the CGO to use its own discretion, of course, but they may also be requested either by a proponent or, for example, by a council to say, 'Can you take this on and get it out of our hair,' if it is the council, or the proponent may say, 'I have tried to go to the council and the council has said that they can't get to it for however long, because they have so many in the queue beforehand, so would you consider taking it on?' Again, it has to satisfy clause 4 by being significant from an economic, social or environmental perspective. It cannot just be a routine planning application that anyone might make as a normal matter of course.

Mr TELFER: I appreciate you pointing to clause 4. If you remember the debate at the time, it is pretty vague and it is pretty broad. This is why, when we look at the three areas that we are going to be considering—coordinated projects, designated projects and state development areas—there is no differentiation within that description (which you point out in clause 4) around a coordinated project in particular. I am trying to provide some guidance for the house in trying to work out the differentiation between a coordinated project, a designated project or what may be then considered to be the establishment of a state development area. Is there envisaged, perhaps within the regulation or subsequent process, a bit more clarification about a threshold, a trigger point, for a coordinated project?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: It is a good question. It is being kept deliberately broad and unspecific for a couple of reasons. We could have tried to codify particular thresholds, for example a financial threshold, if it is over X million dollars worth of total spend or investment. It is conceivable that there are projects which could meet the threshold but be relatively simple to consider and approve and may not need the sort of detailed, nuanced case management that the Coordinator-General's Office can provide. Similarly, how could you set another threshold in terms of whether it is residential, commercial or industrial? Conceivably, it could be either of those three or it could be some combination of them. It could be based on how much land it impacts or on what sort of social or environmental impact it has.

I think the concern from government is that, if you are prescriptive from the beginning, the loss of flexibility may mean that the Coordinator-General either is never satisfied, those thresholds are never satisfied, so is not actually achieving the purpose for which it has been designed, or it gets overwhelmed with what would otherwise be considered if not routine projects then projects that could quite easily be dealt with in the existing planning regime.

If that was to occur, for example, and somebody says, 'Well, here's my project. It ticks the boxes, or it meets the thresholds that you have designated either in legislation by regulation, or by some other instrument. You need to get onto my thing.' If the CGO is encumbered by a whole bunch of otherwise routine applications, then you can see quite quickly the office is not able to fulfil the purpose for which it has been established. That might not provide much comfort to the member because we cannot be too much more specific. Clause 4 tries to set out that it has to have some significance about it. It has to be worth the additional investment by the state in making its resources available because we think that it has a significant impact on a local area if not the whole state itself.

Mr TELFER: I respect that answer. I am not trying to press the point but trying to provide some clarification for the committee as we consider it. There is obviously an escalation. When we look back at clause 3, which is the interpretation of the definitions, it is a bit of a circular process. For instance: 'coordinated project means a project declared under section 21 to be a coordinated project'. Then, you point to clause 4, which talks about 'primary principle', and primary principle has an overarching perspective on all the different project declarations or state development establishments.

Can you provide some clarity to the committee on what you envisage the differentiation is between a coordinated project and a designated project? Apart from some additional definition in the clause that we are yet to consider, you point to clause 4, which is with regard to 'the economic, social and environmental outcomes of the project'. What would be an example, potentially, of a differentiation between a coordinated project and a designated project? If there is that level of flexibility you talked about for the determination of the CGO, it really does set up the CGO to be an incredibly powerful decision-maker for that point of escalation if there is not more clarification on the differences between a coordinated project or a designated project.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: We are frantically trying to come up with some primary production-related examples. I have been given a couple of examples here which, hopefully, will provide some better guidance.

An example of a coordinated project might be a large renewables-powered data centre that does not necessarily have its own issues, but the government timelines for the different approvals—for example, operating licences under the Environment Protection Act or the Work Health and Safety Act—may be of significant benefit to the development assessment process. The Coordinator-General's Office could designate it as a coordinated project and that will set timeframes for those specific considerations and determinations by those particular agencies around government and will, in principle, try to expedite the consideration of the development.

A designated development might be a proposal to establish a manufacturing facility in a state development area. It is potentially a lot more complex. There are a lot more approvals which need to be sought: not only an operating licence under the Environment Protection Act and the Work Health and Safety Act but there might also be licences that need to be sought under the Electricity Act that may require input from the Essential Services Commission, for example; it may need a water licence to be provided in conjunction with the Department for Environment and Water; and it may also trigger the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Act as well.

By designating that project, it may provide that there is a quick coordination of that to assess whether it can be given a quick no, for example, if it is unlikely to comply with all of the requirements that would be necessary to approve it, or if it is a suitable proposal they can call on the planning approval from the State Planning Commission and try to coordinate that far more complex regime more quickly.

A state development area might be a pre-assessed industrial complex or industrial area in a particular region of South Australia—for example, the area surrounding but also including Port Bonython, those coastal areas—for consideration of new pipeline infrastructure for oil and gas, new port facilities for the grain industry or, potentially, other new industrial facilities related to the Northern Water desalination project. That, conceivably, could be an example of designating an entire area and trying to do a lot of the pre-planning work so that when the actual discrete elements of that lob into that area, it is much more quickly and readily assessed, having had that state development area declaration made.

Mr TELFER: Thank you. I will reflect back on those two aspects when we get to clauses 22 and 23. My final question is on clause 21(2) where it says that the 'CGO must consult with the proponent of the project on the proposed declaration.' Once again running scenarios, does this allow a project proponent to potentially be lobbying the CGO for coordinated project status?

Once again, we are looking at scenarios where if there is an independent person looking in at a process, and you might have a very powerful lobby group, a very powerful potential developer/investor who may put through this subsection consultation pressure on to the CGO to make a decision, is this what this subsection allows for, the project proponents to be lobbying the CGO for them to have a declaration of a coordinated project?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: My advice is that the requirement to consult with a proponent has been included in no small part because the development industry, when we were consulting on the bill, asked for that to be included. I can understand why for two reasons. One is they would conceivably want to be able to have a process where they can put to government or they can put to the CGO their proposal and have it considered as to whether it should be a coordinated project or a designated project, which is understandable.

On the flip side, they would not want the Coordinator-General or the minister to call in a project or to designate a project without the proponent knowing. So the proponent might be some way down the path of dealing with the local council or the State Planning Commission, thinking that they were going through the process, ticking all the boxes and then suddenly they find out that their project has been called in and they think, 'Hang on. What does all this mean? No-one ever told me about this.'

I think that is the rationale behind it. To answer your question: does it give rise to the unreasonable capacity for lobbying? It may, but we have a pretty robust regime around lobbying. Everyone has to be registered and it has to be declared.

Mr Telfer interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I understand that, but how do you determine the difference between just submitting your project to the Coordinator-General for their consideration about whether they will declare it a coordinated project and lobbying? If you are a proponent conceivably rather than just send in a letter or send in a slide deck or whatever, it is understandable that a proponent might say, 'Look, I am thinking of investing a substantial amount of money which I believe satisfies the economic, social and environmental thresholds of clause 4. I would like a meeting to be able to walk you through why you should consider designating it a coordinated project or for the minister even to determine that it should be a designated project.' It is not an unreasonable consideration, but I hope that the lobbyist regime that we have in South Australia provides a bit of public comfort and comfort to the parliament that there is at least some transparency and accountability behind that.

Clause passed.

Clause 22.

Mr TELFER: Minister, in your answer before when you were trying to provide a differentiation between a coordinated project and a designated project, the example that you gave was of a designated project within a state development area, so a specific project within a state development area. Is that inclusive or exclusive, i.e. is the designated project always going to be within a state development area or will a designated project potentially be a standalone designated project? Just because of the example that you gave, it got my attention because maybe that is the differentiation: specific projects within a state development area as opposed to a coordinated one, or is that just a reflection of the example rather than the rule?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: It does not need to be in a state development area. Sorry, that was the fault of the example I gave, so apologies for that. But the reason I gave it is that if you look at the definition in clause 22(1), it says:

The minister may...a designated project if the Minister is satisfied that the project is of significance to the State because, in the opinion of the Minister, the project is of major economic, social or environmental importance (including, if relevant, when the project is considered in conjunction with 1 or more other projects being undertaken, or proposed to be undertaken).

That is where, for example, that establishment of a state development area becomes relevant because it may be a larger geographic area where there are a range of developments proposed to occur in that same general area.

The example I gave before was that kind of Upper Spencer Gulf industrial-type area where there might be some augmentation to the infrastructure that is already at Port Bonython or there might be some improvements to the Port Bonython Jetty. There might be a new export port created there or there might be an accommodation in the larger region of the Northern Water project—a consideration of, 'If you're going to have a desalination plant somewhere in that area and you're going

to have ships coming in to take grain away, how do the outfall pipes from the desal plant potentially get anywhere near the transit route of the ships?' and so on.

Or, for example, there may be a major new housing development in a large geography of if not Greater Adelaide then regional South Australia. If I was to give an example, maybe something like a Riverlea housing development where you have a lot of houses but there is likely to at some stage need to be a school, emergency services facilities or healthcare facilities, policing facilities and so on there. If it is of such a large scale, you might declare that a designated project because you will be needing to make a number of determinations around different discrete developments within that one geography. So that is, I guess, a different, broader example.

Mr TELFER: Just extrapolating that out, does this mean that projects allocated the status of designated projects are to be considered separately or, upon being taken into consideration alongside one or more other projects, do they all become a single, designated project or is this at the discretion of the minister or the CGO?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: There will be a discretion, so it can be done as one or it could be done discretely element by element. For example, say that housing example I gave before, there may be a broader consideration of the housing development and perhaps the transport requirements—the roads and the water and so on—and then it will not be until perhaps some years down the track that there will need to be a separate consideration of a school development or a healthcare facility or an integrated commercial facility, and so on. It would be up to the discretion of the CGO and, of course, the proponent as well.

Mr TELFER: Clause 22(2) states that the minister cannot allocate a project designated project status unless the minister is satisfied the CGO has consulted with the proponent of the project on the proposed declaration. Again, what sort of objective criteria applies to the consultation or is it purely subjective?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I guess there are two elements to the answer that I can provide the member. One is that it is to satisfy that concern that no designation is going to be made without the proponent knowing, so that is one important element. The second element is that it is to be the Coordinator-General or the office that does the consultation and not the minister to provide that separation from the minister and the proponent in that process, and perhaps alleviating some concern about inappropriate lobbying or anything like that.

Mr TELFER: Comparing once again the coordinated and the designated projects, obviously the designated projects are purely on the minister's decision whereas the coordinated projects are the CGO's decision. This is why I was trying to get a differentiation between them: is it an escalated point to get to a designated project, or is it just one where the minister of the day has decided, 'No, this is important. This is politically important. This is strategically, for our government's economic vision, important'—the differentiation between the two.

We could have a scenario potentially where the CGO has considered a project and thought, 'I don't really think this is appropriate for a coordinated project,' but then the minister comes in and says, 'Actually, this is important to me so I am going to designate this as a project. I know that you have already talked to the proponent about the potential, CGO, you have made your decision that you probably don't think it is appropriate as a coordinated project, but I am going to declare it as a designated project and you have to do the work, CGO.' Does this introduce some of those potential party political or individual ministerial interference and/or involvement into the process? Do you envisage that?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I do not think so, no, because it says the minister may, on application—so the minister may be approached by a proponent saying, 'I've got this terrific development proposition that we want the government to consider.'

Mr Telfer: The CGO has ignored me.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Or it might just be someone who has lobbied in from interstate or overseas who is unfamiliar with the administrative landscape of how South Australia deals with these things and thinks, 'I will go to a minister,' and the minister says, 'This is the sort of thing that should be considered by the CGO,' and off it goes.

Of course, the other thing that might be possible is it might be a government project that the government wants the CGO to manage because it is a piece of public infrastructure that is in high demand. For example, in last year's budget we announced a \$200 million expansion to Yatala to put on more prison beds. The minister might say, 'We want that considered by the CGO to expedite it, because we want as much prison accommodation brought online as quickly as possible.' It might also be a public sector project. We are not setting this up, of course, to consider public sector projects, but you could see in that instance how it could just be of the minister's own initiative. When a significant public project like that has been approved, it is foreseeable that a minister might make that determination and ask the CGO to manage the process.

Mr TELFER: I have one more question on this one and then we can finish this clause. This is specifically around the processes of the Coordinator-General's Office and how it might offer a pathway of opportunity for growth-minded councils, for instance. Could a pathway occur by declaring a council-initiated project as a coordinated project, as referred to in clause 21, or a designated project, as contemplated in clause 22?

For example, if a council has a strong proposal for economic development in a particular part of South Australia but has had difficulty gaining the attention and focus of state government departments or agencies, how will the Coordinator-General's Office help? Can these become coordinated projects, or is the process best gone through the Coordinator-General's Office under a designated project, potentially from correspondence or conversations with the minister for them to come in at a designated project area? What do you envision that process is going to look like?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Actually both pathways are possible. If that local government coordinator is able to bring forward a project that meets the requirements of clause 4, then the Coordinator-General could declare it a coordinated project. But it might also be the case, for example, that when we are going to country cabinet, a council might petition a minister directly. The minister might say, 'This looks kind of similar to one I am aware that the Coordinator-General has been dealing with from another council. I will put you in touch with the Coordinator-General,' which may then result in the Coordinator-General saying that they will themselves declare it a coordinated project, or the minister might make that determination to ensure that councils are being treated equitably if it is not declared by the Coordinator-General themselves, so both paths are possible.

Clause passed.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

CRIMINAL LAW (FORENSIC PROCEDURES) (BLOOD TESTING) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

CRIMINAL ASSETS CONFISCATION (REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

At 17:35 the house adjourned until Wednesday 5 March 2025 at 10:30.

*Answers to Questions***VAILO ADELAIDE 500**

In reply to **Mr TELFER (Flinders)** (12 November 2024).

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Police): I have been advised:

1. The timing and number of payments under the naming rights sponsorship deal for the Adelaide 500 are commercial in confidence.
2. The naming rights sponsorship for the Adelaide 500 event includes the benefit of a corporate hospitality facility. Therefore, there are no separate corporate hospitality facility payments to be made.

*Estimates Replies***POINT TO POINT LEVY**

In reply to **the Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley)** (21 June 2024). (Estimates Committee A)

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining): The Department for Infrastructure and Transport estimates that Access Taxis will contribute approximately \$192,000 under the transport service transaction levy in 2024-25, based on 16,000 Access Taxi trips through the Access Taxi Centralised Booking Service each month.