

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 20 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.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to welcome into the gallery today guests from Adelaide, regional South Australia and interstate, who are attending for the select committee report on endometriosis and the noting of the final report.

Parliamentary Committees

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ENDOMETRIOSIS

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (11:03): I move:

That the final report of the committee be noted.

One year ago tomorrow, on 21 March 2024, this house supported my motion to establish a select committee to inquire into endometriosis. We resolved to investigate and report on a number of critical issues related to this condition, including the prevalence of endometriosis in South Australia, current treatment options and support, barriers to diagnosis, the impacts on employment and education, as well as research and trials. Today, I am incredibly proud to stand before you to speak to the completed report, knowing that our government has, in principle, accepted all of the recommendations.

My personal journey with endometriosis began two years after giving birth to my son. I barely remember the early days of the condition. It could be that I had it a lot longer before that, because, as we have learned through our journey in the endometriosis committee, endometriosis does not always present with pain symptoms, but I do recall the pain worsening over time. I was prescribed the pill back to back, followed by a Mirena IUD, and I underwent two laparoscopic surgeries. For a while after these I was okay, but eventually the pain returned. It was during that time that I felt I was left to navigate this condition on my own, relying only on Dr Google for answers.

My GP never mentioned or suggested multidisciplinary care, I never knew that I could have received help from physiotherapists and no-one ever asked me how I was doing in terms of my mental wellbeing. Through this inquiry, my hope is that our recommendations, especially around educating GPs, students and the public, will allow others to learn about the various ways to access care more quickly.

One of my most significant takeaways from chairing this committee was the vast amount of research being done in this space, not just here in South Australia—although we lead the way—but across the country and globally. We are leading the way, and it is essential that we continue to support our researchers in the work that they do.

It has taken a long time for women's health issues to gain the attention they deserve, and as my colleague the member for Badcoe said here yesterday, it has also taken time for there to be enough women in parliament who can not only support a motion to establish a select committee but also talk openly about their deeply personal experiences. I am so pleased that the motion to establish the committee was supported unanimously, and I am deeply grateful for the contributions of all

members, whether in support of motions, whether for the committee itself or even in the corridors. Thank you.

Endometriosis is a chronic inflammatory condition that occurs when tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside of it. It is a prevalent yet underdiagnosed condition affecting girls, women and those assigned female at birth. Women do not choose to have endometriosis: it chooses them. Over the course of our inquiry, the committee received 85 submissions from individuals with endometriosis or their family members, academics, researchers, government agencies, health professionals, not-for-profit organisations, advocates and sector unions. We also held 16 oral hearings where we heard from 72 witnesses, including two regional hearings in Berri and Mount Gambier, which were warmly welcomed by local communities.

Visiting the regions opened our eyes to the benefits of multidisciplinary care as well as the challenges faced by those living far from medical imaging or major hospitals. I want to thank the Berri Barmera District Health Advisory Council for their incredible work in organising local healthcare providers, who already collaborate to support their community, to come together and share with us what they are doing to continue to work in this space and support women. I also want to thank the witnesses from Mount Gambier for sharing their stories. It was worthwhile us making those trips because the stories we heard down there can be different to the ones we heard locally in the city.

One of the key findings from our inquiry was the significant impact endometriosis has on young people, particularly those in high school or those just starting their careers, university or TAFE. The emotional and social toll is immense and we were inspired by the courage of young people who spoke to us about their experiences. I am hopeful that the report and its recommendations will lead to earlier diagnosis as we know that when left untreated the pain of endometriosis can become normalised.

The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health estimates that one in seven women born between 1973 and 1978—that is me—will be diagnosed with endometriosis by the age of 44 to 49, and many younger women will be diagnosed much earlier. The evidence we heard suggests that endometriosis not only affects individuals but places a strain on the health system, with frequent hospitalisations, emergency department visits and long waitlists for specialists. In the past, laparoscopy was the only way to diagnose endometriosis, leading to delays. However, new diagnostic tools like transvaginal ultrasound and MRI are now available, providing a less invasive, more timely and cost-effective approach.

We are fortunate in South Australia to have researchers leading the way in this field, and I want to acknowledge the work of IMAGENDO and the Robinson Research Institute team. It was a meeting that I had back in 2022 with them that inspired me to use my position as a member of parliament to advocate on behalf of sufferers and, in doing so, pursue the establishment of this committee. Thank you.

After all the evidence presented, the primary goal of the committee is clear: to reduce the time it takes to receive a diagnosis and improve health outcomes for individuals with endometriosis. Early and accurate diagnosis not only improves the patient's mental health but also minimises the number of doctors and medical professionals a person needs to see before getting a diagnosis. This can reduce the financial burden on both individuals and also our healthcare system. After careful consideration, the committee has made 20 recommendations to address key areas, such as education for medical professionals, information for students and the general public, the creation of multidisciplinary care teams and better support for those in regional areas.

With delay in diagnosis experienced by many we recommend that there be a focus on education, not just of the sufferers of the disease but of the healthcare professionals tasked with caring for these patients. This education should not only be delivered at the start of their careers in tertiary institutions but be ongoing for GPs, emergency doctors and nurses, sonographers and allied health professionals.

We heard from multiple witnesses that they had nowhere else to turn, and they ended up in emergency departments for care, only to be dismissed. We also were made aware that there is not a recording mechanism for those suffering pelvic pain within our EDs, so even trying to determine how many sufferers end up in emergency is difficult to quantify. We have made the recommendation

that local health networks review how presentations to their emergency departments due to pelvic pain and endometriosis are clinically assessed and managed, including the specific number of presentations, so that accurate data can be collected.

Encouraging our healthcare providers to increase their education, and providing them with tools for diagnosis, will better support their patients, and it is our hope that it will reduce that time to diagnosis. Tools like checklists need to be available to determine if someone may be suffering from endometriosis. These checklists can also be provided to patients for them to monitor their own conditions. There are already some tools in this space, such as EndoZone, RATE and PIPPA. Our recommendation is that the commonwealth government work with the RACGP and researchers to assess any existing and/or develop an endometriosis symptom checklist and make it available to all GPs to assist them with addressing their patients' needs.

We also understood the need for education programs for young people. Talking more broadly about what is and is not normal through school-based programs will help identify those who need better support earlier, and stretching this to sports clubs and tertiary institutions will also capture those who may have developed symptoms after they have left school or attended schools where education was not delivered.

This is not just for those who can be or become sufferers, but the committee understands the need to educate everybody. Endometriosis may only affect 50 per cent of the population in terms of risk of becoming a sufferer, but it actually impacts 100 per cent of our population. We heard from parents, daughters and partners whose role as a support system is incredibly important. We need to be educating our boys and men about this disease as well.

Endometriosis affects many aspects of life, including a sufferer's ability to be active and play sport, yet exercise is considered helpful for treatment. Supporting and educating not only those who battle this disease but also coaches and other players will see everyone being on a level playing field, so that they can pursue their sporting dreams.

The committee made several recommendations in regard to the federal government's role in ensuring treatments and diagnostic tools are more widely available and not dependent on your bank balance, and we are very pleased to see the announcements recently made by the federal government in this space. Endometriosis does not discriminate and all sufferers need access to care.

I would like to take a moment to thank the Labor government for their commitment to better supporting women and their reproductive health with their recent announcement of half a billion dollars in investments, including a review of the Medicare Benefits Schedule and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, items used to support the diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis, and much more, and I am pleased that we are all on the same page in wanting to support women who battle endometriosis.

I remember the toll endometriosis took on my work life. For a long time I chose to suffer in silence, trying to push through the pain with ineffective treatments, often at the cost of my cognitive function. There would be days when I got out of bed only to crouch on the floor in agony when painkillers could not even attempt to combat the pain, and where I could barely see how I would be able to function.

The thing with endometriosis is that you never know what you are going to get from month to month. You can try to control what you eat, what you drink, and have exercise and do all the right things and be hit with a terrible flare-up. You can also have a month where you cannot be bothered with any of that and sail through. It cannot make up its mind what it is going to do to you from one month to the next, but the bad months most definitely outweigh the good ones, and it is very hard to explain to others why you are not your normal chirpy self.

It was not until I had an understanding boss at the Finance Sector Union that I finally opened up about my condition and it was liberating. During COVID, the ability to work from home helped me manage my condition, being able to take a break when pain was too much or until the painkillers took hold. I was fortunate to have an understanding employer who, once I explained my condition, knew they had to do more for all workers, and I was very pleased that our committee heard directly

from the Finance Sector Union and other unions about the work they are doing to support their members through enterprise bargaining and discussions with employers.

We need more employers who are educated about endometriosis and who are willing to offer flexible work arrangements. We also need to recognise the impact of this disease on a person's ability to study or work, and ensure that people can access the support they need to continue to contribute to society.

By bringing together employer groups and public and private sectors and unions to discuss and exchange ideas and experiences with the aim to better support workers, it is my hope that they will see that in supporting sufferers who have reproductive health issues they will have better workplaces and more productive staff.

Early detection is also crucial in minimising the progression of the disease and potentially reducing the severity. This can make a significant difference in ongoing treatment, as many sufferers do not want to rely on medications with the side effects. Reducing the need for heavy doses of painkillers or hormonal treatments can dramatically improve someone's quality of life. One important aspect of our inquiry was recognising the link between endometriosis and adenomyosis, another debilitating condition that often coexists with endo. The committee's recommendations aim to contribute to the timely treatment of adenomyosis as well.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of the individuals and organisations who contributed to this inquiry. Many of you are here today. Your courage in sharing your personal stories has been invaluable. I would also like to thank my fellow committee members, the members for Dunstan, Unley, Frome and Torrens, as well as past members, the member for Mawson and also the member for Elizabeth, for their support and contributions to this inquiry. I also extend our thanks to the member for Chaffey and the member for Mount Gambier and their office staff for their assistance in our regional hearings.

Thank you to the committee staff, Alison and Jennefer, and to our Hansard staff for supporting us with our work. Of course, I must thank the Minister for Health, Chris Picton, who just walked in on time, for supporting the motion to establish this committee from the very beginning.

To all the endo warriors, endo friends and your support crews, your stories matter. Together, we will continue working towards better outcomes for those still waiting for a diagnosis and for those yet to embark on their journey to becoming a woman. Thank you for your courage. For everyone in health care and research, keep going. You are making progress. I am optimistic that this report and its recommendations will also contribute to paving the way to a state where endometriosis is no longer a taboo subject and where women feel supported in their journey with the condition.

March is Endometriosis Awareness Month, and it is nice to see yellow everywhere. Its theme this year is Endometriosis Explained, exploring both how endometriosis must be better understood by the general public and better explained to patients by all healthcare practitioners, and I believe many of the recommendations from this report align with this theme. Thank you to everyone who has come along this morning to be here for this very important day when women's health finally commands the agenda, as it should.

Ms PRATT (Frome) (11:17): I rise on behalf of the opposition, of course, to support the report that we see being adopted by the house from the Select Committee on Endometriosis. I want to commence my remarks by welcoming all of our fantastic guests here today. It is a credit to the member for Waite and to our secretariat support that we have been able to remain in communication with you for an event like this, a moment like this, where parliament can open up the doors and share with you your very personal experience. It is remarkable to see how many women and men have been able to give time to support our contributions today, so thank you for coming. I have learnt a new phrase member for Waite: endo friends. We welcome you.

I add my compliments and my support to the work of the committee, and I thank the member for Waite for bringing to both sides of the house an opportunity for us to really delve into the barriers and impediments but also the opportunities through policy that we are seeing delivered in the 20 recommendations today. It takes a motion, it takes an idea, it takes bipartisan support and conversations about how we are going to do this.

I share the committee work not only with the member for Unley, who joins me, but the member for Torrens and the member for Dunstan. I note that we also had early support from the member for Elizabeth and the member for Mawson. I think it is really important to share how far we have come that men and women can have these conversations, not only the clinical academic conversations but those that are often uncomfortable for the sufferer. Without that honesty and transparency and vulnerability, we probably would not be able to deliver a report like this.

Special mention to Alison and Jennefer. I can see them in the chamber and they will be known to our guests. When we embark upon select committee work like this the research and the coordination is undertaken by parliamentary researchers, and we thank them very much for the time they put into coordinating, for example, the trips that the committee took to the regions. It was really important that we did not just capture the story from sufferers who live in metro areas, but what it looks like to be an endo friendo sufferer in the regions.

I represent the Mid North. We travelled to the Riverland and also to the South-East. From a regional health perspective, it was a bit of a baptism of fire to explore what services exist in country health, but I think also refreshing to find that the regions are doing exceptionally well with fewer resources but a lot of get up and go, a lot of determination. What we see in the country is that ability to do more with less most days.

The takeaway points that struck me from being on the committee are to be summarised in the following way. Through the inquiry that was conducted over the last 12 months, we were able to highlight critical issues surrounding the diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis in South Australia. We heard from expert witnesses, including healthcare professionals and researchers who emphasised for the committee the necessity for enhanced education and awareness, particularly within the education system, to support young girls. Education was a theme from not just the primary school space but all the way through to the health workforce.

Dr Jane Chalmers noted the stigma associated with pelvic pain and the inadequacies in current healthcare pathways, such as prolonged wait times for specialist consultations and limited access to holistic treatment options. Professionals and practitioners who presented to us pointed out the chronic underfunding of psychological services, which is quite a gap in the experience, and the need for more specialised physiotherapists in pelvic pain management. It is not just one symptom, it is not just one physiological complaint, but it is a whole-of-body experience.

Our inquiry certainly revealed systemic barriers in accessing diagnostic imaging, with many women facing financial constraints and long wait times for necessary procedures. Witnesses, such as yourselves, advocated strongly for improved referral pathways, the establishment of multidisciplinary teams, and the need for a comprehensive approach that includes psychological support alongside medical treatment. I think we really need to see the two of those working in concert.

The inquiry also addressed the economic implications of endometriosis, highlighting the significant costs associated with delayed diagnosis and inadequate treatment options for many people. Participants called for reforms in Medicare billing practices and the introduction of educational programs aimed at both healthcare providers and the general public to normalise discussions around endometriosis.

Overall, the inquiry underscored a pressing need for systemic changes to improve the healthcare experience for those affected by endometriosis, advocating for increased funding, better training for healthcare professionals and a more compassionate approach to patient care. The committee has found the right balance in the recommendations that will be shared with the public going forward.

We did, I think, agree—it was certainly my experience through the witnesses that came through—that South Australia is nation-leading when it comes to research: cutting edge, innovative, bold research led by the professionals who choose South Australia as their base. I am sure that is a credit to the universities, the institutions that support that research, but we do not want to lose that edge.

While we have the minister's attention, I know this is something that the government is focused on: how do we maintain the edge we have as a state, how do we make sure that we as a

state keep investing in you and your experiences, in your lived experiences and your academic research? With the research you have already gifted back to the country—rising tides support all boats—your work will support women interstate.

I felt that with the 20 recommendations and the work we did we uncovered the following themes—and this was certainly my takeaway. Education is something that is missing from the primary school system. What does that look like? Health literacy for students, better understanding of their bodies, and building confidence in our teaching workforce to bring that curriculum and that conversation back, with parents understanding.

If we can support young people to understand the changes that are taking place in their bodies or what is not normal, what they are experiencing, and how that is then communicated to GPs, that is the first stepping stone. Then there are the barriers, or the gaps perhaps, in education for some GPs who have been in the field for a long time, who are time-poor and under-resourced but who are doing their best to diagnose symptoms that perhaps they have not understood are tied to endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain.

I think workforce planning will be a really important focus for governments as they analyse these recommendations. I have spoken about research, and we needed to better understand the complications and barriers about billing, about pricing, about affordability of appointments that take you through treatment, the inequities I have observed for women who are suffering with endometriosis symptoms but also for female GPs or GPs who are prepared to provide longer consults and who are therefore financially disadvantaged compared to their peers.

I hope you can see we have dedicated a lot of time and attention to better understanding what your experience has been. You have lived with judgement, and doubt, and disbelief, and there are issues around productivity that we are working towards. With those contributions, we support the report of the Select Committee on Endometriosis.

Ms O'HANLON (Dunstan) (11:27): I rise humbly to speak on the tabling of the final report of the Select Committee on Endometriosis. I had the great honour of joining this committee midway through last year, and I have to say that it has been a profound experience to bear witness to the testimony we have heard.

I do not suffer from endo, nor do I suffer from persistent pelvic pain—and boy, do I consider myself lucky, because the testimony I have heard from those who do has been heart-rending. It has truly impacted me as a woman and as a mother of a young daughter.

From the get-go I want to pay tribute to two witnesses, two of many incredibly brave witnesses. These women are phenomenally brave, they are tough. They had to be; life did not give them a choice. These women, and all women who suffer from this cruel, horrible and debilitating disease, are warriors, and I recognise you.

The first endo warrior I want to mention is Deanna Wallis. Hers was the first testimony I heard, and I can honestly say it changed what I thought I knew about the world. Deanna gave evidence of the multiple surgeries, but worse, the multiple dismissals of her personally and—I do not think it is a stretch to say this—of her humanity.

Her desperate search for a means of having something resembling a normal life, a life free of the constant pain, led down a path of surgeries and other invasive procedures that I think anyone who does not suffer from endometriosis would simply not believe possible. Yet for endo sufferers such treatment is sadly often normal. In spite of all this, Deanna is an advocate. She is an endo ambassador with Endometriosis Australia and the director of Wallis Cinemas, of which she is extremely proud.

The second person I want to mention is Lucy Savage. What a brave, intelligent and passionate young woman you are. For anyone who feels at this point that they do not understand the impact endometriosis is having on women, young and old—but in this case far too young—I urge you to read Lucy's evidence.

The toll endometriosis wrought on what most of us would identify as an entirely normal, though impressive, teenage life was horrific but, strong—as every endo warrior needs to be—she

fought her way through the fog of pain and did something extraordinary with her experience. She created a magazine, *XOXO, Endo*, to help raise awareness amongst young people, the wider community and health professionals because, in her words:

...if I could go back in time and speak to the GP who took my symptoms and diagnosed me as an emotional teenager, I would like to give her a copy of my magazine.

Lucy, I hope you sent a copy and I hope they gratefully received it, because you and your story will change lives.

Deanna, Lucy and all who suffer from endometriosis: I am sorry for what life has thrown at you. Thank you for your bravery, passion and advocacy. My hope is that your bravery, combined with the efforts of committees like the one we are reporting on, results in meaningful funding changes that one day—and the sooner the better—bring you and future sufferers a cure, and in the meantime, better treatment and support. To both Deanna and Lucy's mums: I salute you. I salute you and all mums and family members like you who have had to bear witness to your beautiful girls' pain, no doubt often feeling helpless. As a mum myself, I know that in itself would have been an unbearable hardship.

As we have heard in this place already, endometriosis is an issue that affects thousands of South Australians and an issue that for far too long has been ignored, dismissed or misunderstood. We know there is a huge number of people suffering, often in silence. We heard about the simply outrageous timeline for diagnosis: six years or more. Six years of struggle to work or be educated, six years of cancelled plans and six years of struggling to be taken seriously. Six years of physical pain and the emotional toll of being unheard, doubting yourself and being let down by a system that is not working as well as it should.

This is exactly why the parliamentary Select Committee on Endometriosis was formed. This was not just about gathering statistics or looking at medical studies, it was about listening to real people and their experiences. We were asked to investigate, amongst other things, treatment and supports available, barriers to getting a diagnosis and accessing care, how endometriosis affects employment, the education available for young people and health professionals, and what research is currently being done—but more than that, we wanted to give people a platform to be heard. So many people living with endometriosis feel isolated. Their pain is often invisible to the outside world and they are left to struggle through it alone.

The committee invited submissions from anyone with a story to tell or expertise to share, and the response was excellent. We received 85 submissions and heard from 74 witnesses, including individuals living with endometriosis and their family members, health professionals and researchers, advocacy groups, unions and government agencies. We went beyond the city to ensure those in regional communities were heard as well, with hearings in Berri and Mount Gambier. Time and again, what we heard was both devastating and eye-opening.

Like Deanna and Lucy, people told us how hard it is just to get a diagnosis. For years they are brushed off, told their pain is normal, or misdiagnosed with conditions like irritable bowel syndrome or—wait for it—anxiety. When they finally do get diagnosed, they are faced with another battle: actually accessing care. We heard there are simply not enough specialist clinics or treatment options available. Waiting lists are too long and even when people do get in to see a doctor, they are often given bandaid solutions instead of real, lasting care.

The financial toll is enormous. Endometriosis is expensive. Surgery, medications, specialist appointments: none of this is cheap. Many people are forced to cut back on work hours or even quit their jobs altogether because they simply cannot keep up. Sadly, there is a huge gap in education. Young people are not taught enough about endometriosis, which means they may go years without realising that their pain is not normal.

Even many doctors do not have enough training to recognise the symptoms early, leading to delayed diagnoses and inadequate treatment. The system is not working the way it should and the people suffering from endometriosis are the ones paying the price. The good news is we also heard from incredible professionals who, through their own passion and dedication to their patients, and in spite of the barriers, have created meaningful and effective solutions.

The committee has put forward a number of recommendations to improve the way we diagnose, treat and manage endometriosis in South Australia. We need to tackle the long delays in diagnosis. We need to support the professionals already providing dedicated and effective multidisciplinary care, where general practitioners work alongside specialists, nurses and allied health professionals. We need to ensure we provide the framework that enables the sorely needed additional dedicated multidisciplinary endometriosis clinics, particularly in public hospitals.

Workplaces also have a role to play. Policies like reproductive health leave and flexible work arrangements could make a huge difference. Just as important is fostering a workplace culture where people with endometriosis feel supported and understood. We need to invest in research. There is still so much we do not know about endometriosis: what causes it, why it affects some people more severely than others, and what the best treatments are. Continued research in clinical trials will be key to improving outcomes in the future. Ultimately, we want to create a healthcare system where people with endometriosis do not have to wait years for answers, do not have to fight to be taken seriously and do not have to sacrifice their jobs or financial security just to manage their condition.

I want to thank every single person who contributed to this inquiry. To those who shared their personal stories, whether through a submission or by appearing as a witness, your voices have shaped this report. We hear you and we will continue to fight for better outcomes.

I want to thank my determined colleague Catherine Hutchesson, who is herself an endo warrior and who ensured the establishment of this committee. Your dedication and passion for this issue have been invaluable. I also acknowledge all my fellow committee members across the life of this committee. A huge thankyou goes to the parliamentary staff who supported us throughout this process: Alison Meeks, who is our secretary, and Dr Jennefer Bagaporo, our research officer, without whom the work of committees like this would not be possible; and the Hansard team for ensuring every single word was recorded so that these stories can be heard long into the future.

This report is a step in the right direction, but our work is far from over. We must continue to push for better awareness, better health care and better support for those living with endometriosis, because no-one should have to fight this battle alone.

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (11:36): Welcome to all the endo warriors and the endo friends who are joining us in the gallery. It is a real pleasure to have you here to see this conversation happening about a really important topic. I think it is really fitting that we are tabling this report in Endometriosis Awareness Month, when it is so important that we shine a light on your experiences and the challenges that you are facing on a daily basis.

I think the importance of this report is that you have probably seen enough of talking and enough of shining a light on the challenges that you are facing, and you would like to see a little bit more action to help you with your challenges. That is exactly what today is about, and that is exactly what your experiences, which you have shared with the committee, are going to ensure—that we can get some better outcomes for you.

As has been discussed in the chamber already, one in seven people suffers through endometriosis. There are so many challenges that have already been discussed, concerning diagnosis, treatment and managing support for endometriosis. I think some of the barriers that the committee went through are really important, and you would be feeling them on a daily basis: the normalisation of pain, timely access to and availability of health and medical professionals and services, the cost, professional development among health and medical providers, and education and health literacy. Through the 20 recommendations, I am really hopeful that all those areas can be addressed and that we are paving the way for a better future for you all on your journey.

I would like to give a special shout-out to a local constituent of mine, Felicity 'Fizz' Hampel, who is in the gallery today. She is an endo warrior herself, and I encouraged her to share her experience with the committee. I would like to echo comments that your submission will make a big difference for the future of not just you but everyone who is with us in the gallery and those one-in-seven people in Australia and South Australia who are suffering like you.

Felicity—or Fizz—notes that she was blessed in her workplace to be supported in her chronic illness. She notes that she is one of the very small number of endo sufferers who have the confidence

to be vulnerable. She noted in her submission that balancing medical appointments and therapies and working a full-time job with chronic pain and fatigue impacts her differently on a day-to-day basis.

This year, Fizz stepped back into part-time work to focus on her health, and it has had a huge financial impact and a huge mental impact. In fact, in Fizz's submission, she said:

As a young 26-year-old single income earner, still living at home with my parents, it is hard to see the financial stability of staying part time if I want to apply for a house loan anytime soon; this, in itself, is a burden weighing down on my mental health.

As if getting a home was not challenging enough in the current environment, Felicity has had to go part-time just to deal with her mental health challenges and, of course, challenges through endometriosis.

The disappointing thing is that she is not alone. In fact, I had a look at Endometriosis Australia before coming down here to make my remarks and 70 per cent of women have had to take unpaid time off work to manage their endometriosis symptoms, with 50 per cent saying that the lack of flexibility in the workplace was a significant problem.

Whilst Fizz notes that she had a positive experience with workplace support, she did not have a positive or successful journey when it came to treatment. In fact, Fizz went to her first gynaecologist over 10 years ago and was dismissed, with the doctor only mentioning endo when Fizz had advised that there was a family history of it. In her submission, Fizz talks through the excruciating, unexplainable pain, the challenge to put the energy she needed into her work and a range of other heartbreaking realities she has faced.

I know Felicity through a range of things, including her work at Redeemer Lutheran School in Nuriootpa. She is very active in the local Nuriootpa footy club and she is a ball of energy, but to see your words written on the page speaks to the hidden element or the silent element of the illness that you are suffering.

Fizz is also an organiser of the local endometriosis support group, along with her sister, in the Barossa Valley and last year they raised \$7,000 through a quiz night and I am looking forward to joining them again in a couple of weeks' time. So thank you, Fizz, for your report.

My good friend and hopefully future colleague in this place, Dr Anna Finizio, has opened up about her battle with endometriosis. Anna has written for national publications such as Women's Agenda, highlighting the gender health gap and the impact that it has had not just on women but the entire community. Her own experience with endometriosis really has made her such a fierce advocate for improving investment and awareness around women's health. I do not believe that she did provide a submission to this committee, but I wanted to share her story in this place as well. She says the following:

Like many women, my journey to diagnosis was a long one. Quite simply, it was a battle, not just with my own body but with the health system. I spent the last years of my twenties in crippling pain. I had lost control of my body. Some days I felt so hopeless that I wondered if a life like this was a life worth living.

The years it took for me to be diagnosed came at a great cost financially, professionally and personally. I was led down rabbit holes, I was poked and prodded and referred until finally, two weeks before my 30th birthday, I underwent a laparoscopy where I was formally diagnosed with endometriosis. It had attached itself to a number of my organs. But what I thought was the end of my journey was only the beginning and I had already spent thousands of dollars just to get to that point.

When the pain and other symptoms had returned not long after my surgery, I was told by my surgeon that there wasn't anything else he could do. Yes, I had the diagnosis that explained the pain that I had experienced in the past, but I had no plan to help me manage it into the future. I was left to continue to try and navigate a health system which has consistently failed women who remain understudied, underdiagnosed and undertreated. Not only had this condition taken so much from me already but my biggest fear was that it had also taken my ability to be a mum. In two weeks, I turn 39. Endometriosis has changed the course of my life.

Those are Anna's words. I think it is so powerful that women share their experiences like this and they show that vulnerability, because that is how we are going to continue to get action in this place.

More than 70 women shared their experience verbally through the committee. I commend everyone who is here or at home watching this: well done, and including more than 85 people who

have made submissions to the committee, whether that be academics, endo friends, endo warriors, yourself, health officials, health and medical professions, government agencies, and so on.

Before I wrap up, just touching on Anna, she was our Liberal candidate for the seat of Dunstan. I was out doorknocking with her and it was really hot one day, and she was hurled over the footpath in excruciating pain. I thought that it was because it was so hot, and I said, 'Maybe we should have a bit of a breather, Anna.' She said, 'No, I'll be fine.' I said, 'No, I really think that we should be taking a breather,' and she said, 'This happens every single month.'

I thought, 'How is it okay that someone is living in such pain and it has become so normalised?' It was on that day that I found out that Anna was an endo warrior and that that underpinned everything that she was fighting for, so well done Anna. Well done to all of the committee members, particularly the Chair, the member for Waite, who has obviously done a remarkable job—likewise, the members for Dunstan, Frome and Unley—in pulling together this report for the parliament to consider.

I am genuinely hopeful that through this process it is not just about collecting statistics and having another report for the parliament but about paving the way for meaningful action for you. I hope that this is just the beginning of another chapter and that we can see some meaningful action as a result. Thank you for being here in the gallery today. Thank you for sharing your stories. I look forward to working collaboratively across the chamber and across the political divide to try to get some outcomes for you.

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (11:46): I rise today as a member of the committee to speak on the report before us. It is no accident that we stand here in this place this morning, having yesterday tabled the report on the Select Committee on Endometriosis, during what is now known as Endometriosis Awareness Month. That is why many of us here and those in the gallery today are wearing yellow.

I know that for many of you here in the gallery this has been a very difficult journey. While I would like to say that the journey would end, that is not going to be the case, but this is going to provide opportunities for you that you have not previously had. I know that as I have family members myself who have suffered severely with endometriosis, and continue to do so. It is something that was not spoken about. When you went to the doctor you were told, 'Live with it. It's okay. You're making a bit of a fuss.' Today, that is the end.

From now on, we know from both this report and some of the work that the federal government has been doing that it will be life changing for many people who have not yet been diagnosed but are still on that journey. The implementation of the 20 recommendations will make a difference, along with the commitment by the federal Labor government to fund an additional 11 specialised endometriosis and pelvic pain clinics, which would bring the total to 33 across the country.

This demonstrates that there now exists a genuine understanding of the urgent need for access to specialised care for the almost a million Australians who are living with endometriosis. It will assist in early diagnosis, resulting in sufferers with this life-altering condition avoiding years of doctor visits and hospital presentations and being told that the days of monthly agonising pain is normal and you just have to put up with it.

It is no wonder that not only the physical but also the mental wellbeing of so many girls and women has been seriously impacted. It affects their daily life, their work life, their career, relationships, their ability to achieve some of life's goals and, sadly in many cases, their ability to achieve and maintain a pregnancy through to the delivery of a healthy baby and healthy mother. We know that having you in the chamber today is important to us and it is important to you, but shining a light on this condition is important to all of the women and girls in the future who are going to be facing these challenges.

I trust that the report before us today will take us some way to improve the journey of those facing the challenges of living with endometriosis. I want to thank all of you here today who have shared your life story, including your family members and your loved ones. In particular, I would like to do a special call-out to Deanna Wallis. I know that you have been persistent and continued along

this journey. I would like to think that in some way you also will benefit through the outcome of today's report.

I would like to now just move to the committee. We have been sitting for 12 months. We have heard from so many in the medical profession, and I would like to thank those from the medical profession who have dedicated parts or all of their medical practising to assisting those with endometriosis. I know we will catch up in a little while at the morning tea. I also want to take the opportunity to thank the Chair, the member for Waite, for initiating this journey and for her passion for making a difference for endo sufferers and their families. It is also good to know that the report before us means that it also will impact on those who have not yet been diagnosed and on women and girls who come in the future.

I would like to thank my colleagues from the committee: of course, the member for Waite and Chair—excellent job—I know so much of your time and energy has gone into this; the member for Dunstan; the member for Frome for your absolute dedication and commitment; the member for Mawson; the member for Elizabeth; and, of course, our secretariat, Alison Meeks and Dr Jennefer Bagaporo—everyone, really. You start a committee and you commit to it. When you go onto a parliamentary committee, you say, 'Right, I have to dedicate that time and energy to it.' But I have to say that once this journey started, there was not just 100 per cent given but 100 per cent-plus.

I hope that today gives you some peace in knowing that the recommendations have been accepted, I understand in principle, and will now be pursued and go some way to assisting you on your journey.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (11:52): I rise to make some comments on the report and to thank all those who came forward and told their personal stories, those who are working to support women with endometriosis and also those who are researching the disease. I entered this select committee straight off the back of the select committee on UTI and the common theme is that women's research comes secondary to men's research; women's health comes secondary to general health.

I have a daughter who is a pharmacist—a pharmaceutical scientist with a PhD in pharmacy—and she will tell you time and time again that in health science research it is the men who are the subjects, because women's bodies are too complicated. It is not new for anybody in this audience, or their partners, as to how much more complicated women's bodies are compared to men's. The way monthly cycles interrupt the research process means we cannot have women when we are testing this drug or this drug, and consequently we see women at the end of the line.

I am very pleased that there is a recommendation in this report—it is down at No. 20, but it is there—that there be a stronger emphasis on research for women's health. I actually believe that there is also a role for the state government to weight research grants in favour of women's health, particularly those that are put aside for medical research into medical health here in South Australia. I also learnt through my participation on the committee that there is not a lot done on the pharmaceutical side of research. A lot of the work is surgical and a lot of work is pain relief, whereas we know that pharmaceutical science has come forward in leaps and bounds over the last 50 or 60 years.

It would be good if there was money to back research into developing pharmaceuticals that could stop that growth for women, for example, who are of child-bearing age but are not planning to have children at that time—perhaps a pharmaceutical product that could make those adjustments so as that growth could stop outside of the womb—or, for those who have finished the child-bearing part of their lives, they could be prescribed with a drug that could deal with the situation on a more permanent basis, rather than the very strong impact the surgical processes have on the body.

It is an area that is attacked regularly for women. There are, of course, caesarean sections for birth, there are hysterectomies and there are operations to help manage endometriosis. I would very much like to see a much stronger emphasis on research—women's research in particular. Consequently, I support the recommendations. I thank the member for Waite for the opportunity to participate in the process and learn more about this situation as a man who has not had to experience it second-hand, or with a partner but who has learnt so much from the time that you have given the

committee in sharing your experiences and advising what was being done in the scientific world about dealing with this process.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (11:56): I am going to speak very quickly, given we are up against a hard deadline, and I want to allow the member for Waite to conclude her remarks before 12 o'clock. We, as a state government, welcome this report. This is a landmark report. This not only shines a light on this very important issue of endometriosis but also sets a path forward for how we can improve services for women. There is no doubt that there are thousands of women across this state who have been poorly served by health services, by clinicians and by medical specialties and we want to make sure that it does not happen in the future.

I thank the member for Waite for raising this, for spearheading this, and for being open about her own personal experiences as well. I want to thank all of the people who have contributed evidence towards this. We need to make sure that the discrimination that has been in place in the medical profession for too long changes. This is going to be a big part of that. We accept the recommendations in principle and now the hard work begins in terms of the implementation of those recommendations. I also thank the other members of the committee—the members for Dunstan, Torrens, Unley, and Frome—for their work as well.

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (11:58): Thank you to all members for their contributions. I do want to pay special thanks to the member for Unley. This is the second women's health committee that I have been on with him, and he is a tireless advocate for equitable research and equitable care for women. It has been enlightening to always hear from him around what his daughter experiences and also his absolute advocacy for women in that space, so a big thankyou. Thank you also to the member for Frome who is always very wise and always has a lot to contribute. I appreciate that we are on opposite sides of the chamber, but this committee has been about doing it together and I appreciate all of your submissions and all of your support.

On 5 July 2022, I stood in this place doing a grievance about endometriosis for the very first time. I was a little worried, given I was about to talk about blood and guts in the houses of parliament, but I did it anyway. In that speech, I talked about research. In the last line of my speech that I would like to quickly reflect on, I said, 'With 830,000 women having endometriosis in Australia, it is time that we stood up and helped them.'

Fast-forward to March last year, when we established the select committee, and now we are here today talking about that report and its recommendations. We are all here together: our committee members, our members of parliament and all of our people who provided us with submissions, whether you are a sufferer, whether you are a researcher, whether you are a clinician, a GP, an advocate or a union. We are all here together; we are all standing together.

As we heard, the line in the sand has been drawn. From here on in, it is all about moving forward: making sure that our sufferers feel heard and also that we are doing all the things to make sure we have better health outcomes for women who are struck by this disease. As I said before, endometriosis chooses us: we do not choose it.

Thank you everybody for your comments. I look forward to now sharing some time with all of you over a Parliament House scone and a cup of tea. I commend the report to the house.

Motion carried.

Bills

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 19 March 2025.)

Ms CLANCY (Elder) (12:01): I rise today to speak on the Emergency Management (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill. The Emergency Management Act establishes the legislative framework and principles for coordinating the necessary activities before, during and after identified

major incidents, emergencies and disasters. It assigns key accountabilities and provides authority to effect response and recovery operations.

The act has been crucial to our state time and time again over the nearly 20 years since it was first put in place. It was needed in the management and response to COVID-19, the recent River Murray floods, the statewide blackout in 2016 and a number of bushfires, including those in late 2019. It is likely it will be needed even more as we continue to see the effects of climate change through an increase in natural disasters.

The horrific fires in California might have been happening when we were sweltering through our summer, but it was in winter for them—horrific fires blazing for weeks in winter. Climate change is real. Our farmers have seen the changes for years, and cities are now experiencing its effects more and more. We do not have to look far to see the damaging effects of climate change. I am sure many, like me, refreshed the BOM radar over and over again looking at Queensland and northern New South Wales as Tropical Cyclone Alfred loomed.

I want to thank all the incredible people who worked so hard to keep people safe during the extreme weather faced up there, including many volunteers. Back in 2011, I witnessed the inspiring determination of Queenslanders following the floods that started in late 2010. My friend Ryan was doing so much to help people and I wanted to contribute as well, so I flew up to Brisbane and helped sweep sludge out of people's homes near Goodna.

It was awesome to see communities coming together to support one another, people helping others when they have lost everything themselves. The Mud Army, as it became known, formed in the thousands, and there is a beautiful story in Trent Dalton's book *Love Stories* about what the Mud Army meant to a woman named Moana, so please add it to your reading pile.

I would like to now share part of a statement on ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred by Emergency Leaders for Climate Action, which is a coalition of former fire and emergency service leaders from every Australian state and territory. Here it is:

As 38 former Australian fire and emergency service chiefs who have directly responded to countless extreme weather events over the past five decades, we are deeply concerned about the trend of worsening extreme weather disasters, fuelled by climate change.

The ongoing impact of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred on communities in northern New South Wales and southern Queensland highlights that many Australians are increasingly being impacted by consecutive, compounding climate disasters including heatwaves, drought, fires, storms and floods, leaving little time for recovery. Many people impacted by flooding and damaging winds from Alfred are still re-building from the record breaking catastrophic 2022 floods.

Queensland has had to deal with many disasters in the last seven years, including bushfires and floods in 2018, Black Summer in 2019/20, floods in 2022, bushfires in 2023, more bushfires in 2024, floods in January 2025, and then TC Alfred in March 2025. The climate is changing and this is becoming our new reality.

Make no mistake, this is climate change in action and as the world warms at record rates, impacts unfortunately will worsen, whether it be catastrophic bushfires like our Black Summer, Maui in 2023, the winter firestorms that devastated Los Angeles this year, the deadly 2024 Spanish floods, and now the major impacts of a slow-moving ex tropical cyclone that reached as far south as northern NSW, something we can expect more of in future.

Scientists are very clear: climate pollution from the burning of coal, oil and gas has intensified not only hot, dry weather that fuels catastrophic fires, but also the frequency and intensity of extreme rainfall events.

TC Alfred was made more intense by record hot ocean temperatures, higher levels of atmospheric moisture, and higher sea levels. Similarly, the successive storms and intense rainfall that led to the devastating 2022 floods in many parts of Queensland and NSW were intensified by climate change.

Scientists have tried to warn us for decades but were not listened to until after the change of Federal Government in 2022. We are now living through the predicted consequences of increasing climate pollution and inaction for many years by governments worldwide.

Fire and emergency services and the Australian Defence Force are now having to respond to more frequent and extreme natural disasters, stretching their capacity. More intense, frequent extreme weather events put emergency responders in greater danger, for longer and more often. As former emergency service leaders, this fills us with dread, particularly when selfless, brave responders lose their lives trying to save others.

All Australians are suffering from the ravages of the climate crisis right now, and Governments at all levels must acknowledge that prolonging the use of fossil fuels will make future disasters even worse. This is why slashing climate pollution this decade must be a top priority. At the same time governments must invest heavily in adaptation and community resilience measures to keep people safe. Australia has made progress in recent years, but we must go farther and faster. The safety and wellbeing of all Australians, courageous emergency responders, and our kids' futures depend on it.

As we approach a Federal election, Australia can't afford to slip back into climate denial, inaction, and far-off 'solutions' that will actually increase climate pollution.

Despite the massive impacts of ex-TC Alfred, in some ways this time we 'dodged a bullet'. Its slow movement meant that residents of northern New South Wales and south-east Queensland, as well as emergency services and Federal Government agencies including the ADF had time to prepare. This helped save lives. We acknowledge the focus that the Prime Minister and dedicated public servants in rebuilt agencies, like the National Emergency Management Agency brought to the response effort, working hand in hand with the Premiers of Queensland and New South Wales. This was in stark contrast to the previous Coalition government's mismanagement during the Black Summer bushfires, as well as the devastating floods in early 2022.

Time was on our side for this cyclone, but we are fast running out of it when it comes to staving off much worse impacts.

We no longer have the luxury of time to put off dealing with climate change.

Australians, and the emergency services that protect them, cannot afford our country once again slipping backwards on climate action. This is the time all political parties and candidates should be pressed on how they will act immediately to deeply cut climate pollution, and how they will build up (certainly not cut back) the public service in critical areas including climate research, weather forecasting, and emergency response and recovery agencies that we rely on to protect us all.

For those who tuned in halfway through, that was a statement from Emergency Leaders for Climate Action.

As a state government, we are committed to doing what we can to address and mitigate the effects of climate change. Last year we introduced a bill to modernise the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act to provide a more contemporary legislative framework to deliver South Australia's climate change policy objectives.

The bill, which passed the Legislative Council on Tuesday with amendments and then this house yesterday, enshrines in legislation South Australia's short-term and long-term emissions reductions targets to help limit the extent of climate change. The bill also provides for improved climate risk assessment and climate adaptation measures, including sector planning to support South Australians to respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already in train.

When that act came into operation in 2007, it was the first of its kind in Australia. It has guided policy and planning in our state to achieve world-leading outcomes in renewable energy generation and climate mitigation. The bill is an important part of the South Australian government's broader policy agenda to deal with climate change and respond to the declaration of a climate emergency. It replaces the South Australian target of at least a 60 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with our current state target to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

A net zero target was first adopted by the Weatherill government in 2015 and aligns with Australia's national target and commitments under the 2015 Paris Agreement. A short-term target for at least a 60 per cent reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 is also enshrined in the act as well as a state target of 100 per cent net renewable energy generation by 2027.

Our federal counterparts, the federal Albanese government, is doing a lot too, setting the target of net zero emissions by 2050 in law while working towards reducing Australia's emissions by 43 per cent by 2030 and maximising cheap, clean, reliable, renewable energy to get our energy grid to 82 per cent renewables by 2030, with 750,000 rooftop solar systems installed since they were elected. It delivered a 25 per cent increase in renewables in our national energy grid in two years and ticked off enough renewable energy projects to power almost seven million homes, with record numbers in the pipeline.

The Albanese government is investing in battery storage and transmission to ensure reliable power everywhere, rewiring the nation with \$20 billion to modernise our national energy grid. It is improving charging—

Mr Whetstone: She must be speaking on the wrong bill.

Ms CLANCY: Do you want to make a point of order?

Mr Whetstone: I wasn't talking to you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms CLANCY: I will not respond to that but I would like to make it very clear that climate change is leading to more emergencies, so it is very, very relevant to the bill that is before us currently.

Members interjecting:

Ms CLANCY: Get up. Up you pop! I did not say the pandemic.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Chaffey, you have a chance to speak. I think you have exercised your chance to speak, so I suggest you listen to others like others listen to you, even if they disagree with you.

Mr Whetstone: I am listening.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Quietly. No, quietly.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Chaffey, do you wish to leave the chamber?

Ms CLANCY: I think that a flood is an emergency, so I think it is worth talking about climate change and the increase in events like floods and bushfires when we are talking about emergency management. An emergency is not just a pandemic, but if the member for Chaffey, who has the River Murray flowing through his electorate, thinks that the only type of emergency possible is a pandemic, I note that.

Other things the federal Albanese government is doing to mitigate climate change are ensuring the benefits of reliable renewables are shared with households and businesses and creating thousands of jobs. It has established a new vehicle efficiency standard to give people more choice of cheaper and cleaner cars, established a Net Zero Economy Authority to help regions and workers adjust to the move to a low-carbon economy and has secured a strong future for Australian-made aluminium with a \$2 billion green aluminium production credit.

Knowing climate change is resulting in more intense, frequent emergencies, this Emergency Management Act must be as effective and fit for purpose as possible. To ensure that is the case, an independent review of the act was conducted by PG Consulting, the first full-scale review of the Emergency Management Act since its commencement 20 years ago. The proposed legislative amendments are informed by the extensive stakeholder engagement undertaken throughout the course of the review.

The review received feedback from the emergency management sector, multiple levels of government, non-government and volunteer organisations and the general public. The government considered the recommendations and observations contained within the final report and chose to publish the final report with an accompanying government response which accepted, or accepted in principle, all of its recommendations.

This amendment bill has been developed to incorporate all 28 recommendations made in the final report of the independent review. Two of the significant amendments are introducing the role and powers of a state recovery coordinator and introducing a new declaration category that would support the scale up and down of emergencies.

The State Recovery Coordinator will strengthen emergency management arrangements, with them responsible for, among other tasks, leading state-coordinated recovery planning and recovery operations when it is determined a state-recovery response is required for an emergency outside of a declaration period.

Part of the impact of an emergency declaration is the message it sends to communities about the seriousness of an emergency. The current declaration is quite a blunt instrument, as we are either in a declared emergency or we are not. In the act, we have a declaration framework where we have identified major incidents to a major emergency to a disaster. Each category brings with it a different understanding of the severity of the situation.

These changes made within this amendment bill will strengthen the act and ensure our legislative framework provides a basis for effectively managing all stages of emergencies into the future, whether that emergency be a pandemic, a flood, a bushfire or a number of other potential natural disasters, or otherwise. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12:16): I rise to make a brief contribution. We are supporting the bill. It is following on from a review that has taken place after the act was enlivened on the very rare occasion of a one-in-100-year pandemic that the state, along with the rest of the world, suffered through and had to manage over an extended period of time.

It was under those circumstances that the operations that the act had contemplated were really tested and stretched beyond what had been contemplated for these purposes, as a result of that one-in-100-year pandemic. It is right to draw a distinction between no doubt significant events that the state has had to deal with, like the significant fires that have occurred in recent years and, of course, the flood that was experienced more recently, but those are not the occasions for the application of this act.

This act is concerned with the circumstances a state might find itself in, previously contemplated to be of very short duration, where there is such an acute moment of emergency that it is necessary to apply a whole different set of emergency management arrangements. It was for the reason that when the one-in-100-year pandemic hit the state—the COVID-19 pandemic—and it was necessary to apply this act that then carried on for a great length of time. We managed it under the act, and that just had to be part of what was being adapted to, along with so many other things that were in the nature of the response.

I think what is well to do in the course of this debate is to really draw that distinction between the events that are handled by our emergency services, sometimes with the help of the appointment of some superadded coordination on the one hand, and the likes of the pandemic on the other. The whole purpose of this bill is to now revisit the act in the light particularly of that experience, with a view to making it fit for purpose should we ever have to face like circumstances again, and maybe hope that we do not.

I want to take a moment in the course of this debate to pay tribute to former Premier Steven Marshall and to the former Minister for Health and Wellbeing, the Hon. Stephen Wade, who were, as members of this parliament, both the leading lights leading us through that pandemic. Both of them have given thoughtful contribution to the review that took place that informed this bill, along with so many others who were at the forefront of confronting the pandemic, so I pay tribute to them both.

They were both, although now both no longer in the parliament, thoughtful, diligent and committed (such as they are) to provide feedback that has led to these changes that will hopefully set the state in good shape should it be necessary to confront circumstances of that nature again. So it is important that the parliament take the responsibility to consider a review after such an extraordinary one-in-100-year pandemic event and that those changes find voice in a bill which will serve to improve such future response in the event that it may be called upon. Let us hope that does not occur for the better part of another 100 years. I commend the bill.

Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (12:21): I rise to make a brief contribution on the Emergency Management (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill, which, of course, is a critical piece of legislation that strengthens our state's ability to confront the evolving challenges of emergency management. I remember back at the beginning of 2020 the immediate aftermath of the terrible fires we saw in 2019-20. At the time, that was a significant—well, it still is—natural disaster and there were reviews planned into that. If my memory serves me correctly, that was the very beginning of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements.

I thought at the time that would really bring into focus some of the issues we are discussing today and some of the recommendations that have come out of the most recent review. But, of course, as the previous speaker pointed out, that was pretty soon superseded and blown out of the water, in fact, by the COVID-19 pandemic. I think in some ways, even though the royal commission did its work and released its recommendations, some of the important recommendations and some of the work of that royal commission and the review into the fires here in the state were somewhat subsumed by the response—properly—to the COVID-19 pandemic, but here we are.

The COVID-19 pandemic, of course, focused everybody's mind on the Emergency Management Act. As the member for Heysen pointed out, we saw that piece of legislation tested and pulled in every direction such as we have never seen before, and those responsible, from the Premier to the police commissioner to the State Coordinator, were obviously very stretched. They were tested. They were put through things they had never been put through before and that has obviously informed the now review of and now amendments to the act, which I think are absolutely necessary.

For nearly two decades, of course, that act has stood as a pretty robust framework. It has guided South Australia through some of its darkest hours, whether it is the River Murray floods we have talked about, the 2019-20 fires, the 2016 statewide blackout or, of course, most recently the COVID-19 pandemic. The act has been a cornerstone of resilience. It has provided the authority and the coordination, as I said, from the government through to the State Coordinator role necessary to respond and to recover from such crises.

But the world is not static, nor are the threats we face. South Australia, like the rest of the world, finds itself in a shifting emergency management landscape. Climate change, as the member for Elder has very succinctly pointed out—much to the consternation of the member for Chaffey—has ushered in more frequent, more intense and often concurrent emergencies, whether they are floods, fires, or storms, and they have tested our preparedness like never before. Again, I point to the 2019-20 fires as an example of that.

Add to that the rise of new threats such as cyber incidents and it becomes clear that we cannot rest on the successes of the past. We must adapt, refine and fortify our legislative tools to meet the demands of the future, and that is precisely why the government commissioned the independent review into the Emergency Management Act. This is the first comprehensive review since its inception 20 years ago. Again, the review into the 2019-20 fires and the royal commission into natural disaster preparedness, I think was the title of it, looked at some of these issues and touched on the Emergency Management Act, of course, but did not constitute a wholesale review of the act itself. It was probably well overdue.

The review was conducted by PEG Consulting, and it was not just a cursory glance: it was a thorough examination with extensive stakeholder engagement. We heard from everybody from the emergency management sector, all levels of government, the non-government sector and, of course, the volunteers, who often form the backbone of any emergency response and recovery.

So the final report of this review delivered 28 recommendations, all of which the government has accepted either in full or in principle, and I imagine there are others that the government is working through. Those recommendations are as follows:

1. The Emergency Management Act objectives and guiding principles be amended to reference:
 - mitigation, including recognising this is a shared responsibility;
 - that volunteers are key contributors to South Australia's emergency management efforts; and
 - that specific planning for vulnerable people is required.

Obviously, that involves a whole-of-government response.

2. The definition of 'recovery operations' be expanded to include activities on private property.

3. References to the 'scene' of an emergency should be recast to take account of all hazards.

4. The prescription of membership of the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) and procedural matters should be removed from the Emergency Management Act and dealt with via the minister's guidelines and chair's duties.

5. The Emergency Management Act should assign responsibility for an assurance function to enhance the current arrangements for oversight and accountability.

6. To support the evolving types of emergency responses required, the Emergency Management Act should add a fourth declaration category so that the State Coordinator may use section 25 powers in anticipation of, or in the scaling down of, a declared major emergency or disaster.

That is an important point. The ACT and Tasmania state of alert models should inform this declaration category, and we will get to that shortly.

7. Amend the Emergency Management Act to allow for an alternative extension process for a disaster if, due to the impact of the disaster, both houses of parliament are unable to approve an extension.

8. Reinstate the temporary powers from the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act 2020 to the Emergency Management Act for a comprehensive and flexible framework for managing declared emergencies.

9. Amend section 25(3) of the Emergency Management Act so that the State Coordinator is not required to take advice from a particular source and may take advice from any source the State Coordinator considers appropriate.

10. Provide the State Coordinator with an information-gathering power to determine whether there is, or is likely to be, an emergency that warrants the making of a declaration. Regulations should be able to be made relating to the use of the power.

You can see clearly reflected in some of these recommendations the experience of government and the experience of the State Coordinator himself, through the COVID-19 emergency, finding expression in some of these recommendations.

11. The Emergency Management Act include a section that provides ministers with the ability to dispense with procedural requirements of another act during a declaration period.

12. Incorporate an explicit mechanism in the Emergency Management Act to facilitate the mobilisation of the public sector workforce when necessary to respond to a declared emergency.

13. The Emergency Management Act should establish a (separate)—and it is important to emphasise separate—position of Recovery Coordinator. The role should not be limited to the declaration period.

14. The Recovery Coordinator should be an authorised officer who reports to the State Coordinator during a declaration period.

15. Powers should be available to the Recovery Coordinator on the making of a regulation, which should specify the purpose, duration and any conditions on the use of those powers. This could include the nomination of a minister that the Recovery Coordinator will report to—that is outside of a declaration period—and recovery powers should include (but not necessarily be limited to) land access and powers for constructing or removing temporary structures.

16. The use of recovery powers should be time-limited, but an extension process subject to parliamentary scrutiny should be available.

17. Information sharing powers should be available to the Recovery Coordinator and be underpinned by the trusted access principles outlined in the Public Sector (Data Sharing) Act.

18. The Emergency Management Act should be amended to clarify that section 25 powers retain primacy over other powers in the act.

19. The minister responsible for the administration of the Electricity Act 1996 should be able to give a direction that is reasonably necessary to respond to an electricity supply emergency to any person or class of persons.

20. The electricity supply emergency declaration period and its extension arrangements should be amended to align with the processes and timeframes for a major emergency declaration.

21. It was recommended that we amend section 27D to ensure that the type of information that may be requested is not inadvertently limited.

22. The Emergency Management Act should permit the minister responsible for the administration of the Electricity Act 1996 to share information with the State Coordinator.

23. The Emergency Management Act should provide equivalent protections to such protected information as the Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018 (SOCI Act).

24. The protections afforded by the Emergency Management Act should be expanded to address information that may be commercially sensitive and information that may be held by a person (who is not engaged in the administration or the enforcement of the Emergency Management Act) as a result of a direction issued under that act.

25. The penalty for confidentiality matters in section 31A of the Emergency Management Act should be increased to be commensurate with other legislation.

26. The Emergency Management Act should make it clear that liability protections do not extend to workers compensation claims which result in adverse outcomes for individuals following emergency management directions relating to their workplace.

27. The volunteer and employment protections should be strengthened to include a remedy.

28. The Emergency Management Act should have a review clause that requires it to be reviewed every seven years to ensure it remains fit for purpose and reflects contemporary emergency management practice.

As I said, these recommendations, all of which the government has either accepted or accepted in principle, were informed largely through the COVID-19 pandemic and the direct involvement of both the government and the relevant ministers, but also of the police commissioner in his role as State Coordinator in order to make the Emergency Management Act more flexible and more responsive to the needs, particularly in areas of recovery.

I will turn to the two most significant amendments proposed in the bill, starting with the introduction of the State Recovery Coordinator. Recovery is no longer an afterthought in emergency management; it is a vital pillar. Too often, the focus falls on the immediate response to a crisis, while the long, arduous process of rebuilding lives, homes and communities is left under-resourced and under-coordinated. This bill changes that.

The State Recovery Coordinator will lead statewide recovery planning and operations, stepping in when a coordinated response is needed, whether during a declared emergency or, importantly, beyond it.

During a declaration, the State Recovery Coordinator will operate as an authorised officer under the State Coordinator, holding delegated powers akin to those of the Assistant State Coordinator—Recovery under current arrangements.

This bill empowers the coordinator with recovery powers activated by regulation—powers tailored to the specific emergency, whether that is erecting structures on private land or bypassing usual approval processes to expedite rebuilding. These powers will be clearly defined: the regions affected, the purposes they serve and the timeframes in which they apply.

This flexibility ensures that recovery efforts are neither delayed by bureaucracy nor left without authority when the cameras and the headlines move on. Moreover, the State Recovery Coordinator will have the ability to share and request information to support recovery efforts. It is a practical measure that ensures decisions are informed and effective. It is important to note that this

is not about creating a new layer of red tape; it is about equipping a leader with the tools to rebuild stronger and smarter.

The second major amendment introduces a new declaration category: the state of alert. This was an important focus of the review and the recommendations. We need some flexibility in the Emergency Management Act so we do not have the situation where it is either a declared emergency or not an emergency. That gives the government flexibility, it gives agencies flexibility, and it importantly gives the State Coordinator a lot of flexibility. Under the current act, we face a binary reality: we are either in this situation where a declaration of emergency is enacted and all of the processes and powers that are commensurate with that declaration are enforced, or we are not. There is very little flexibility in terms of the way that operates now.

It is a fairly blunt instrument, and it is very effective in clear-cut disasters. It was extremely effective, of course, throughout the majority of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like the member for Heysen said, I want to commend both the police commissioner acting as State Coordinator and former Premier Steven Marshall for their response, particularly their initial response to the pandemic. I think it was largely without fault in those initial stages, but, as we have said, we all ran up against the limits or the inflexibility of the Emergency Management Act as it stood and as it currently stands.

We all recall the peaks and troughs of that emergency. There were moments of acute danger followed by periods of cautious relief, only for the threat to surge again with variants like Omicron. A major emergency declaration carried a weight that at times felt misaligned with the lived experiences of South Australians.

The state of alert, of course, addresses this gap. It provides a mechanism to scale up or scale down our response, maintaining necessary powers like border closures or quarantine measures while sending a proportionate message to the community about the level of risk. Imagine, for instance, a moment during the pandemic when the immediate threat had eased, yet vigilance was still required. A state of alert could have signalled that we were not in the grip of a full-blown emergency but nor were we free of danger. It offers a middle ground between the normal state of affairs and a crisis, ensuring that our response matches the reality on the ground.

Beyond these headline changes, the bill also incorporates a recommendation to facilitate the mobilisation of the public sector workforce during emergencies. This mechanism, aligned with updates to the South Australian Public Sector Mobilisation Policy, will ensure that our skilled public servants can be swiftly deployed not just during declared emergencies but whenever a coordinated response is needed. This, again, is a practical step that recognises the value of our public sector workforce in protecting and rebuilding our state.

Importantly, this bill preserves what works. The core elements of the act—its flexibility across a broad spectrum of hazards, its clarity for agencies and organisations—remain intact. These are features that stakeholders have told the government that they value deeply, and the government has listened. The amendments do not overhaul the act; they enhance it, ensuring it remains fit for purpose in an era of unprecedented challenges.

As I close, let me reflect on why this matters. Emergencies do not discriminate. They strike urban and rural areas alike, the prepared and the unprepared. They test our systems, our communities and our resolve. Nowhere, of course, was this more apparent than in the COVID-19 pandemic but also in much more localised and perhaps much more intense situations, such as in the 2019-20 fires, Wangary fires and Pinery fires. All of those localised events tested our systems and demonstrate that emergencies and our response to emergency, and particularly our response to recovery, needs a lot of flexibility.

This bill ensures that South Australia is not just reacting to these crises but also anticipating them, managing them and, again, importantly, recovering from them with greater strength and coordination. It is a testament to the lessons of the past 20 years and a commitment to safeguarding our future. I commend the bill to the house and urge all members to support it.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (12:39): I stand in support of this bill. Before I address the specifics of the bill itself, I would like to provide some context on why this bill has come about and make some comments relevant to this discussion. This bill will come into effect when there is an

emergency, followed by the initial response and the recovery, and this bill deals with the third part of that equation, namely, dealing with the recovery.

It is important that we also understand the emergency part and the response part first to make sure that we provide the context for that recovery, with which this bill deals. The emergency obviously deals with group of people who are affected by the disaster, whether it be a flood, bushfire or any other natural disaster that affects people. With that in mind, the state's resources are put towards the initial response phase and the response phase generally involves people within the SES, the CFS, the Metropolitan Fire Service, SAPOL, ambos and a whole range of other people, whether they be in the environment sector or are people rebuilding Stobie poles, cables, etc.

It is important to understand that for this bill to work effectively we need a really good response first. It is important that we have the resources and capabilities of our emergency services, like the SES. I am happy to acknowledge that there is major investment in the SES in my electorate: we have a new SES unit being built. I think it is the first to be built in over 20 years. Further, it has a record number of volunteers in training at the moment, and later this year that SES unit will be ready to respond to any floods, car accidents or any other response required—storm damage, etc.

It is important I say that because, just earlier this week, the Premier announced a major growth plan for the northern parts of Adelaide, including Gawler and further north. With that growth comes a lot of challenges, and we also must deliver the services we require to keep those communities safe. At the moment the only SES units are based at Salisbury or Kapunda, and this new service in Gawler will be able to respond to any flood related to the south or north Para or Gawler rivers, but also to any other emergency in that area. I am glad to hear that it is going to be well covered by volunteers.

We also have the CFS when it comes to bushfires. I am fortunate to have a CFS brigade just down the road, so I feel quite safe and, should any event occur, the response will be quick. Throughout the Mid North region are a number of CFS units and they do their very best with the resources they have. But, I must confess that some of the feedback I am getting is that there are some difficulties in recruiting at the moment for volunteers, and the volunteers are the backbone, the lifeline, of our CFS, so as a government and a community we need to make sure that we create opportunities for volunteering, while fully understanding what are the barriers to those people recruiting.

The CFS in the metropolitan areas or urban areas is supported by the Metropolitan Fire Service. We have one of those in Gawler and we have a retained unit in Kapunda. My understanding is that the Kapunda unit works really hard but is struggling to find recruits to do the work and often they are not available to respond to emergencies. Again, it is incumbent on us as both as a government and as a community to make sure we have the resources available in every community to respond in a timely fashion to minimise any loss of life and to minimise any damage to property.

SAPOL, in an emergency, plays a really important role in ensuring we maintain law and order and that we are able to make sure the volunteers in the various sectors, and even other emergency services, can do their work safely. Sadly, in the case of an emergency people sometimes act a little irrationally and cause more difficulties for our emergency services workers, so SAPOL plays an important role. I note that the government is making a huge effort in recruiting and also supporting our police force, as well as putting a lot more resources into our police force to ensure they are able to do the work they need to do—again, in a timely fashion.

Ambulance officers also play an important role in an emergency, whether they are paid officers or are volunteers through the St John's Ambulance Service, or other volunteers. It is no different to a lot of other paid or voluntary services; we need to make sure they have the actual resources to do their jobs well.

I raise these matters to give a full picture of what we are talking about today, to make sure that these people, the people in the response part of any emergency, can do their job well knowing that once they finish their job the recovery process starts. It is increasingly clear, particularly around major bushfires which may burn for days or weeks, and sometimes up to months, that the recovery process does not start after the response part but often starts during it.

Recovery processes start as soon as it is safe to do so, to ensure that we secure property and secure life. As a result we need a recovery system that is a bit more flexible and responsive, and that is where this bill comes in. What this bill does is modernise recovery response processes to make sure we do not have any hold-ups, misunderstandings or lack of clarification or clarity in terms of whose role it is to do what and when.

We are now preparing to amend the Emergency Management Act that: establishes the legislative framework and principles for coordinating activities before, during and after identified major incidents, emergencies and disasters; assigns key accountabilities; and provides authority to effect response and recovery operations.

The current act has been in place for nearly 20 years, and during this time it has provided a sound basis for the state's ability to manage and respond to emergencies and incidents. The act has served the state well through a number of significant disasters, including the River Murray floods, the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2016 statewide blackout, and multiple bushfires, including the Pinery fire (which was in part of my electorate at the time) and the 2005 Wangary fires.

Despite our preparedness to date South Australia, like the rest of the world, is experiencing a changing emergency management landscape. We are facing threats from climate change resulting in more frequent, intense, longer term and at times concurrent emergencies, as well as new and emerging threats such as cyber incidents. In order to ensure the state is best placed to deal with future challenges, an independent review of the act was conducted at the request of the state government.

This was the first full-scale review of the Emergency Management Act since its commencement 20 years ago. The proposed legislative amendments are informed by the extensive stakeholder engagement undertaken throughout the course of the review. The review received feedback from the emergency management sector, multiple levels of government, non-government and volunteer organisations, and the general public.

The government considered the recommendations and observations contained within the final report and chose to publish the final report and accompanying government response, which accepted, or accepted in principle, all its recommendations. The amendment bill has been developed to incorporate all 28 recommendations made in the final report of the independent review, in one way or another.

There are two significant elements to the proposed changes and amendments sought. One is to introduce the role and powers of a state recovery coordinator, and the other is to introduce a new declaration category that would support the scale up and scale down of emergencies. As I said, what this bill does is quite rightly recognise that what we need is a seamless process from emergency to recovery. This bill helps to do that.

In terms of the proposed state recovery coordinator, recovery efforts have become an increasingly important element of emergency management, and the provision of a state recovery coordinator within the act will strengthen emergency management arrangements. The State Recovery Coordinator will be responsible for, amongst other tasks, leading state-coordinated recovery planning and recovery operations when it is determined that a state recovery response is required for an emergency outside of a declaration period. Recovery powers are often required after a declaration to progress recovery operations, or even when a declaration is not called. It was recommended that the role of the State Recovery Coordinator be identified in the act and have powers that come with it.

The government accepted that during a declaration period, as an authorised officer, the role will have the powers available to it as delegated by the State Coordinator, similar to the current arrangements for an assistant State Coordinator—Recovery. Outside of a declared emergency, there will be questions about when a recovery power should be exercised that may take a matter outside of a usual approval process; for example, one that may require development approval, and that was certainly the case on Kangaroo Island.

The scope and detail of powers required may vary depending on the type of emergency; for example, it might be appropriate that regulations provide notice to a private landowner if recovery

powers are to be used to erect a structure on private land. For this reason, it is appropriate that recovery powers are activated by regulation and that other processes are streamlined through that process. The regulation could specify the powers that are available, the regions that are captured, the purpose for which the powers may be deployed and the period for which the recovery declaration applies.

During a declaration, to maintain authority and a command and control dynamic, the State Recovery Coordinator will report to the State Coordinator—again, this bill makes it quite clear who is accountable for what activity and leadership throughout the response and recovery phase. Other powers the State Recovery Coordinator will have are the ability to share information as required and to request information to support the recovery process.

As I mentioned, the second key part of this amendment is to introduce a new declaration category that would support the scaling up and down of emergencies. In terms of the state of alert, it is proposed that part of the impact of an emergency declaration is the message it sends to communities about the seriousness of an emergency. There needs to be a high threshold for an emergency declaration, which will be clarified. The current declaration is a fairly blunt instrument, as we are either in a declared emergency or we are not, and that lack of flexibility can, at times, hinder the appropriate response and recovery efforts. Through the categories in the bill all the powers remain the same, except in a major emergency or disaster declaration where powers are retained by the State Coordinator.

The challenge with the COVID-19 situation was that there were peaks and troughs throughout the emergency where the traditional understanding of a major emergency declaration was at odds with the COVID reality that South Australians were living—again, reinforcing that we need to be able to scale up and scale down the response and recovery process as required, and we need the flexibility to do so and the right accountabilities and leadership.

The review agreed that a state of alert may have allowed the powers required to manage the pandemic to be in place—e.g. border closures and quarantines—while community messaging around the threat could have been more proportionate. For example, prior to the Omicron variant there was a view that the COVID threat was diminishing. A step-down to a state of alert may have allowed for the restrictions required to maintain certain protections, while simultaneously messaging that, while at the time the risk to the community was not on par with a major emergency, the state was on alert for what could be a rapidly changing risk. That is the key element of this bill: the capacity to be flexible in our approach to response and recovery.

One recommendation that was accepted in principle from the review was that this would incorporate an explicit mechanism in the Emergency Management Act to facilitate the mobilisation of the public sector workforce when necessary to respond to a declared emergency. Certainly, in this case there was a health response, but also, for example, there is the capacity of schools to respond. Other institutions need to be able to respond, and there need to be certain powers and clarification of who does what to make sure that we respond in a timely fashion to minimise the impact of any disaster.

This recommendation was included in the amendment bill, but it is proposed that this mechanism will also specify the need for a public sector mobilisation response outside of a declared emergency, in accordance with amendments being made to the South Australian Public Sector Mobilisation Policy. We have an incredible public sector that can be utilised in terms of emergencies to make sure we are kept safe. If there is one thing we learned from COVID-19, it is the importance of having the capacity in our public sector to respond quickly without fear or favour. That is one thing we learned from that event, and where we were lacking public sector capacity it was made very clear that there was a need to maintain that.

Importantly, the bill preserves the key elements of the current act that are highly valued by stakeholders. The act is well understood by the agencies and organisations who work in the emergency sectors involved in the state's emergency management arrangements. The bill also maintains the flexibility provided in the act to carry out emergency management activities across a broad spectrum of hazards. This is core to the utility of the current act.

In conclusion, the changes made within this amendment bill will strengthen the act and ensure that our legislative framework provides a basis for effectively managing all stages of emergencies, from the emergency itself through to response and to recovery, to make sure that the people affected can be attended to quickly and that both life and property can be saved.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (12:56): I thank all the members of this place who have spoken on the emergency management bill at its second reading. Thank you for your contributions on both sides of the house. I think it is true to say that the South Australian public welcomes bipartisanship whenever the two major parties can come together and provide it. It is especially important in areas around emergency management.

There is no place for partisan politics when it comes to how the state responds in a crisis or in an emergency. There is no place for misunderstandings or political pointscoring when it comes to how we respond to a bushfire or a flood, or indeed something that had previously been almost outside the realms of possibility, or so it seemed, in terms of the COVID pandemic. Of course, these things can be upon us in the blink of an eye. We often do not get the opportunity to see the emergency slowly coming towards us, although sometimes there is a bit more opportunity. I point to the floods as an example of that, where we saw the crisis unfolding and it gave us the opportunity to try to put things in place where we could before the impact was truly felt.

But that is not often the way that these things work out, particularly in the case of perhaps a bushfire, for example. There have been lots of high-profile examples of those in recent years, and they have caused the loss of property and sometimes of life. It is important that we do our work in this place as legislators to make sure that we are constantly updating the legislation that governs how we respond—the legislation that gives powers to the police commissioner or the other chief executives of our emergency service organisations to make sure that, when a crisis hits or when an emergency hits, they are in a position to respond straightaway and they have the powers they need.

It is of course also important that there is a really strong level of confidence in the South Australian public that, when these things happen, we will respond and they will be protected and that the first responders and the government departments are in a position to do that well—that they have the powers available to them that they actually need and that we are not operating under a piece of legislation that is outmoded, outdated or behind what the equivalent agencies in the jurisdiction over the border might have. We need to make sure that we are constantly remaining vigilant and that we accept that it will never actually get to a point where we have—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister, you are required to seek leave to conclude your remarks, if you wish.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debated adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 13:00 to 14:00.

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Government Response to Standing Committees—Legislative Review Committee—
Petition No. 84 of 2021—SA Ambulance Services Resourcing—
Government Response—27 February 2025

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

Children and Young People, Office of the Guardian for—Child Protection in South Australia
(from the Report on Government Services 2025)—Report—February 2025

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

Education and Care Services Ombudsman and National Education and Care Services
Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioners—Annual Report 2023-24
Public Sector Act 2009—Overseas and Interstate Travel—Minister for Education, Training
and Skills—Report—March 2025

Ministerial Statement

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE: SA AMBULANCE SERVICE RESOURCING

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:00): With your leave, sir, I seek to address the house in relation to the petition.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: The petition regarding SA Ambulance Service resourcing was tabled by the member for Croydon, now the Premier, in 2021. I am pleased to report that since the time of the petition the Malinauskas government is building a bigger health system for all South Australians.

In our first three budgets, our government has delivered \$7.1 billion in additional funding for our health system. We are adding more than 600 beds right across our health system. That is the equivalent of more than two additional QEH hospitals. We have added more than 1,400 clinicians above attrition since coming to government. That is 691 extra nurses, 329 extra doctors, 219 extra ambos and 193 extra allied health workers.

We are also providing the necessary funding for our ambulance services to deliver more paramedics, more ambulances and new ambulance stations. Of course, this is in stark contrast to when the petition was tabled, when:

- the previous Liberal government cut \$13 million in funding to SAAS in its first two years, according to the Productivity Commission;
- the 90th percentile ambulance response deteriorated to 71 minutes—the worst in the nation by far; and
- only one out of three ambulances turned up on time, potentially risking the lives of thousands of South Australians.

Whereas now there is a two-thirds chance of that priority ambulance arriving on time rather than a two-thirds chance of it arriving late. This translates into thousands more patients every month receiving their ambulance on time.

Of course, we know that there is more work to do, and we will continue to deliver increased capacity in our health system to meet demand, ease pressure on our hospitals and reduce ramping. I can advise that many of the committee's recommendations are already in place or have been completed, with work progressing on others. This government will always back our hardworking ambos, along with our doctors and nurses, and we will keep investing in building a bigger health system.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would like to welcome to parliament today guests of the member for Black, Thomas and Amy Wadsworth—it is great to have you in parliament with us today—and also some Fringe performers from the UK. I do not want to breach any parliamentary standards by saying their full name. The second name is Shakespeare and the first one involves the results of maybe having a few bevies on the stage, which is part of the act. To James, Charlie and Richard, welcome back.

They come to the Fringe every year. I met them in 2020 for the first time. Their favourite Fringe show is question time. They came three times last year. As a fellow Fringe performer who did a standup at the 2017 Fringe, I can see where you are coming from. It is great to have you here.

We had Heather Croall in yesterday and a lot of people from the Fringe who were guests of the Minister for Arts. We are getting close again to cracking through that one million tickets sold for this year, which is great for our economy. If you just look at the crew from the Shakespeare show, they have been here for five weeks and they have spent lots of time on Kangaroo Island, in McLaren Vale and they have gone up to the Barossa (McLaren Vale is still their favourite) and they have had a great time.

As well as all the visitors who come here to go and see performances, we actually have performers coming from around Australia and around the world to enjoy South Australia, to talk about it on their social media and to inject money into the visitor economy. So welcome to everyone.

We are going to have some Indigenous students here, who are guests of the Attorney-General. They are in year 10 and they are work experience students doing a program through the Attorney-General's Department. They are not here yet, but they will be during question time.

Question Time

AMBULANCE RAMPING

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier stand by his key election promise to fix ramping? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: The South Australian Labor government has delivered the 33 worst months of ramping in our state's history.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:06): The Leader of the Opposition asks: are we committed to our election commitments on health? Of course we are.

Mr Pederick: How well is that going?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The member for Hammond interjects, 'How is that going?' Well, if you are in Mount Barker, which services the member for Hammond's electorate quite substantially in places like Murray Bridge, it is going pretty well actually. Because, if you have driven around Mount Barker, what you would see is a brand-new ambulance station, what you would see is a brand-new—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: You might learn something. What you would also see in Mount Barker is a whole brand-new hospital coming alive, a hospital that is only being built because this government was elected at the last election. If you want to know what would be being built as we speak if the other mob were elected at the last election, it would be a basketball stadium. Instead, we are building a whole brand-new hospital over there in Mount Barker, servicing the member for Hammond's electorate.

Let's choose another electorate, shall we? If you are down in the southern suburbs, like where the member for Davenport and the member for Gibson are, amongst other advocates, we are building a massive extension to the Flinders Medical Centre, an in excess of \$400 million investment into the Flinders Medical Centre, giving it the capacity it deserves. If you are in the northern suburbs, the Lyell Mac is already a lot bigger today than what it would otherwise be, and we know there are yet more beds coming online for the Lyell Mac this year.

If you are in Modbury in the north-eastern suburbs, we know that Modbury's got more beds coming online this year, along with a cancer centre, amongst other services. In the western suburbs of Adelaide, you are bearing witness to growth at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and better services as a result of that. All of this additional capacity was committed to at the last election. In fact, we wanted to make sure that our commitments of reducing ramping and improving ambulance response times, which of course has been delivered—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Those opposite make a political shriek, but in actual fact if you call 000 today you are more likely to be alive than what would otherwise have been the case four years ago—because you cut the Ambulance Service. We are investing in the Ambulance Service.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Members on my left will come to order! The member for Chaffey, the member for Frome and the member for Schubert, you are all on your final warnings.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: When the member for Schubert was trying to work out the social media for the former Premier, we were sitting around formulating policy that has seen the Ambulance Service invested in and grown. Now when people call 000 the Ambulance Service is more likely to roll up on time rather than late, and that is the difference between life and death. Each of the commitments, whether it be around the Ambulance Service or more beds or specific services, we made very explicit commitments, each of them progressively being ticked off one after the other.

Would we like to see better results in terms of ramping? Absolutely. We have been transparent about that. In fact, more than just being a little bit transparent, we have done transparency unlike those opposite even were willing to contemplate. When you were hiding the ambulance ramping figures under the carpet, we committed at the election that we would release them each and every month, and we have honoured that commitment in full. So we're up for the transparency, we're up for the policy debate, we're up for the compare and contrast because it is stark, it is distinct, and the people of South Australia can see it.

POWER PRICES

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:09): My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier stand by his election promise to reduce South Australian power prices by 8 per cent? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: At the 2022 state election, Labor promised South Australians that its Hydrogen Jobs Plan would lower wholesale electricity prices by 8 per cent and deliver thousands of jobs for South Australians. The average household bill has gone up by about \$800.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:10): I remember the election campaign pretty clearly. I gave an address at the SACOME function. It was a function arranged by SACOME, where they hosted the former Premier at one point during the course of the campaign, then they had myself as the then Leader of the Opposition. I got asked about energy prices, and I gave an answer there that I have said repeatedly in other forums. I may even have referred to it in the Sky News Press Club debate, the Sky News debate that we had during the course of the election campaign.

I made it clear, specifically in the SACOME event, that we weren't formulating our Hydrogen Jobs Plan with the objective, and we weren't running around spruiking the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, telling people that it was a policy to reduce power prices, it was an industry policy, and we made that clear. Do you know what happened when I said that at the SACOME function? I think within a few hours SALibMedia—the member for Schubert might have been typing out the tweet for all I know, or someone else; it's okay—was tweeting that, 'Oh, Labor leader Peter Malinauskas says the Hydrogen Jobs Plan won't reduce power prices.' So all you need to do is go look at your own Twitter feed and you will see that I was very transparent about this.

The reason why we were adopting that position was because we had seen the failures made of other governments, and there is a string of them, admittedly on both sides of politics, but including the former government, which were saying, 'Oh, we are going to produce power prices by X dollars,' and you didn't.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morphett!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morphett, I am calling out your name and you are still yelling. You are on your final warning.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The simple fact is you didn't, and the facts bear that out. And if that were true, then maybe you would have performed a bit better at the election than would otherwise be the case, because power prices matter to people and it's important, and we have been transparent about what we are seeking to do in respect of power regime. We have already instituted the firm policy that has been legislated through the parliament, I think with bipartisan support from the opposition, which demonstrates that we are delivering policy outcomes that presumably they agree with.

More than that, in each and every budget, the Treasurer has been at pains to make sure that we are making a difference with respect to cost of living, and there have been very tangible commitments that we've made around trying to mitigate the impact of global energy prices soaring, post the Ukraine conflict, that are not just oriented towards households but also businesses. In direct response to the Leader of the Opposition's question, we were very transparent about our advocacy on these matters in the lead-up to the election, to the extent that even you were quoting it yourselves.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I call the leader, I missed someone. There's a new sheet here with the guests in the gallery that I missed. We have people here from the Plympton International College's International Women's Day Committee and some students as well, and they are guests of the member for Badcoe and also for the Minister for Child Protection and Minister for Women. Sorry to interrupt you, leader.

Question Time

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): My question is to the Premier. How many houses have been built since the government's February 2023 media release and how many will be built by the 2026 state election? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: On the 12 February 2023, the government announced that it would release four land sites, with a promise that construction would begin in 2024.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:14): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question; in fact, there's a theme of important subject matters in respect of health and energy and now housing. In respect of housing, there are any number of policy actions or statistics that on this side of the house we can point to but, rather than listen to anything that I say, why don't we assess what the independent bodies would say about this government's housing policy?

The housing industry of Australia, one of the pre-eminent organisations that is a national body, a national industry body, that represents housing construction providers in this country—whether it be construction companies or whether it be developers—most recently, in recent weeks in fact, conducted a nationwide analysis ranking every state around the country in terms of housing policy and they gave them a score out of 10. South Australia was given nine out of 10, which made us an unambiguous first in the nation in respect of housing policies that have been instituted by this government.

The opposition might seek to dismiss the housing industry of Australia. Well, how about the Business Council of Australia? What are they saying with respect to this government's housing policy? The BCA again puts South Australia ranked number one in the country with respect to our housing policies, amongst other examples. How about in terms of actual performance as distinct from policy settings? Again, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in their State of the States report,

which assesses what is actually happening in new dwelling starts around the country, puts South Australia number one.

So you don't have to believe us, but I think there is an obligation upon those opposite to actively consider whether or not they should believe the independent associations who don't go out of their way to do one government a favour over another—

Mr TEAGUE: Point of order, sir: standing order 98(a). The question was very specifically about the number of houses built since a media release on 12 February 2023. The Premier is self-evidently debating the question in the broad. The question asked for a specific answer on houses built.

The SPEAKER: We have been over this a few times. The Premier and ministers have four minutes to answer questions, and they are allowed to provide background and supporting information and evidence, and I think from what I am hearing from the Premier, that's what he is doing. He is painting a picture of what the housing industry is up to in South Australia.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: To go to the specifics of the Leader of the Opposition's question: I know the Leader of the Opposition knows this, he does pay attention to basic cursory principles, and that is that people who build homes in South Australia by and large are private landowners, private developers and the industry themselves. We do not submit to anybody, least of all the opposition and the alleged party of free enterprise, that it should be government's responsibility to build every home in this state.

We believe in building homes—don't get me wrong. We do believe that Renewal SA should be activist. We do believe that Renewal SA should be partnered with the private sector and make interventions in places like Southwark and Prospect Corner and Seaton and the other developments that we are undertaking but, by and large, those active investments by government are actually quite distinct and comparatively small to the overwhelming majority of housing development in this state that happens in the private sector. So we don't build the homes, they do.

Our job isn't to sit around and score them. Our job is to make sure that we are putting in place the policy framework that allows them to do what they do well. To that end, if you believe in the power of the market, if you believe in the private sector as we do in this government, we work in partnership with them. They are saying, 'Let us get on with the job, these are the actions we want you to undertake,' and we are delivering for them, and those independent rankings speak volumes to that end.

STATE ECONOMY

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:18): My question is to the Premier. Are South Australians better or worse off under Labor? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: Since coming into government in 2022, analysis has shown that households with two average income earners have suffered a decrease in household savings of more than \$11,000 per year.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:18): Again, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and maybe, for the sake of consistency, I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to again contemplate not what we say about ourselves but what others say about the state of South Australia. The Leader of the Opposition's question goes to the heart of whether or not the economic policies of the government are resulting in strong economic performance.

To that end, it is not a bad day to ask, because today the Australian Bureau of Statistics have released their labour force statistics and I am pleased to report to the chamber that the unemployment rate in South Australia is 3.7 per cent. It is the second lowest unemployment rate in the nation outside of Western Australia on a state-by-state basis. It speaks to a labour market that is substantially outperforming the rest of the country.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: But don't just look at the performance of the labour market; let's look at other industries too, whether it be the commonwealth State of the States report that has us as number one or whether it be on economic growth in this state. What is gross state product, where is gross state product on a per-capita basis, and what is the best performing state in the country in terms of gross state product on a per-capita basis? It is South Australia. On a whole range of different metrics and indices, on any objective assessment South Australia is outperforming the rest of the country.

The Leader of the Opposition would have people believe that his questions would seek to demonstrate that somehow in South Australia we are going backwards relative to the rest of the country, and the opposite is true. If you ask the question in totality in the context of elections, well, there will be an election. There will be an opportunity in 12 months' time for people to assess whether or not South Australia is doing better or worse under this government in comparison with the rest of the country.

But the more important point in making an assessment is: who actually has a plan to set it up for the long term? Who is doing the serious grunt policy work? Who is making the hard decisions to accommodate the growth that is now coming our way, in a way that hasn't come before us in decades? Who is making the tough decisions around planning? Who is doing the land reservation? Who is getting the pipes in the ground? Who is making the tax reform for first-home buyers so they have half a chance? Who is actually doing the work around rental reform, for instance, so that renters in this state have a better chance than they otherwise would? We are getting on with that task.

And what is the policy, what is the housing policy and the planning policy, from those opposite that they are submitting to the people of this state? It is a policy-free zone. It is a complete vacuum of policy. When we were getting together at the end of last year and planning on how we wanted to hit the ground running at the beginning of this year and what were the policy objectives we had in the first quarter of this year, I don't mind disclosing that we anticipated that at the 12-month mark those opposite would be releasing a big bang policy about what they wanted to take to the election. We are waiting; we are still waiting. But that is okay, because the vacuum that they create in terms of policy we are happy to fill, because this is a government with ideas and ambition for the future of the state and we are going to keep getting on with the task.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Gibson is warned. The member for Stuart.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thought you were warning me!

The SPEAKER: Never.

LEIGH CREEK POLICE STATION

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart) (14:23): My question is to the Minister for Police. Can the minister please update the community of Leigh Creek and surrounding locations re: the staffing of the Leigh Creek Police Station? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain a bit further.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: This station serves not only the people of Leigh Creek but also the smaller communities surrounding Leigh Creek and the ever-increasing tourism traffic. The station has not had a full-time or permanent officer for over 12 months. When there is an officer there, they are only there for spasmodic periods and the station is vacant at many times. When can the community of Leigh Creek expect the full staffing of this station?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Police) (14:23): Can I thank the member for Stuart for his question, because I know that he not only pays a keen interest to these matters in his electorate but he is the first to raise it with ministers when it comes to matters that are of concern to his community—including, for example, the allocation of policing to regional communities like at Leigh Creek.

I think the member's explanation to his question was pretty instructive for the circumstance that the community of Leigh Creek finds itself in, where police are struggling to allocate permanent resources to Leigh Creek. It is not because the resourcing in total is not available. It is because they are finding it difficult to find individuals who are willing to be based in Leigh Creek. What that has meant is that they have had to provide police resourcing from other locations in regional South Australia to come in and conduct policing operations for a period of time, before going back and returning to those areas.

Of course, we should all be cognisant that while there has been a significant change in the community of Leigh Creek over the last 10 years there is still a resident population and from time to time they need to have access to police resources. While the two full-time positions which are funded for Leigh Creek are still being worked through and it is being done through temporary placements, what is happening is that police are being allocated from Marree, albeit about 120 kilometres away, as well as Hawker, about 155 kilometres away, in order to provide some regular visibility and accessibility to those policing resources for the local community.

This has also meant that South Australia Police, led by the police commissioner, have had to ensure the provision of additional benefits, supports and subsidies to police to get them to work in some of these regional locations. Of course many, particularly the other regional MPs in the chamber, would be familiar with the fact that on graduation, for example, from the Police Academy, it is not uncommon for a cadet to nominate a regional community to work in for a period of time, which would then give them the opportunity either to stay in that community or to be based in another service area subsequently. While that has been a really popular way of attracting people to initially work in a regional community and then those officers have found that they have enjoyed the experience so much that they never want to leave, the trend over the last 10 or so years, I am advised, has changed somewhat and they are finding it necessary to provide those additional incentives.

It is also one of the reasons why the Minister for Housing, through Renewal SA, is undertaking the regional housing strategy to build more fit-for-purpose housing for government employees—whether they are police, whether they are teachers, whether they are nursing or other health staff—to provide them with contemporary, attractive, modern accommodation which can house these critical government workers out in regional communities and also take the opportunity to work with councils and try to build that opportunity for the councils to have a much larger housing development when that is undertaken. All of those efforts will continue. The commissioner has spoken to me about this matter directly, and we are endeavouring to fix the problem as quickly as we can.

ENVIRONMENT VOLUNTEERS

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (14:27): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier update the house about action the Malinauskas government has taken to activate volunteers in relation to our environment?

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) (14:28): I am delighted to answer this question from the excellent member for Waite, who herself is a very active volunteer with the environment and in other areas in her community. There are a couple of great truths, I think. One is that, given the state of our environment today, the environment needs us as much as we need the environment. Humans need to get active to help protect and restore the environment and, of course, humans benefit enormously. People benefit enormously from a healthy environment and their engagement within it.

The other great truth, of course, is that a dose of money is very helpful, as the Treasurer would be very well aware, and one of the best ways that we can use money is by giving it to volunteer groups, because the effect of a relatively small amount of money with a very active group of people makes it seem like a much larger amount of money—a truth that the Treasurer is also a bit of a fan of.

When we were in opposition, one of the actions that we undertook was to spend a lot of time with volunteer groups, with people who were active in all of the different fields of responsibility in government, but I, of course, with people involved in the environment, such as Friends of Parks, such

as landcare groups, to say, 'What is it that we can do to make things better for you and therefore, through you, for the environment?' We crafted a number of policies and commitments to support them in those activities, and I am pleased to report that not only, of course, have we acquitted the election commitments, as you would expect us to do, but they have had real impact in the way in which people have been able to be active in supporting the environment.

For example, we allocated \$3 million to the Friends of Parks and Nature—they recently changed their name from Friends of Parks to Friends of Parks and Nature. They have over 5,000 volunteers and there are 148 groups so you can imagine the reach—\$3 million out to them has made a significant difference.

As some examples, the Kangaroo Island Wildlife Network has been able to purchase emergency response equipment. As we all know, they are a bit prone to fires in Kangaroo Island and that is a very necessary part of their management. Also, we are working in and around Piccaninnie Ponds with the Friends of Mount Gambier Area Parks, being able to monitor the impact of water quality down around Piccaninnie Ponds, which, as I have mentioned several times in this place, is under severe stress; and it being under severe stress means that primary producers will, should the groundwater be compromised, also be under stress.

We have the installation of rainwater tank telemetry along the Heysen Trail. The Friends of Heysen Trail are a very active group in every sense of the word—active in their volunteering and on-ground work for the environment and obviously active in the sense of being good walkers. There are also the motion-sensor cameras for monitoring native fauna and feral animals. We all know the impact of feral animals on our environment and the need to take control over their impact on it.

In addition to the \$3 million, we have also allocated \$6 million to landholders, people who are largely primary producers but who want to see the environment being protected and want to have the capacity to invest in their properties. By adding \$6 million to support native vegetation agreements, we have been able to not only increase the number of native vegetation agreements but also add value for those people who have them, through the capacity to do fencing to keep stock out and the capacity to get in and do some weeding. I have spent time with primary producers who are so proud of their ability to put aside some parts of their land to support the environment.

We have \$2 million that has gone straight to Landcare and to the Conservation Council to assist in their engagement with community—with Landcare it was partly a case of just providing insurance for Landcare groups so that they weren't broken by the insurance costs individually themselves—and \$2 million to citizen science projects, where we get people who are enthusiastic about the environment out and also gathering information that can help guide the way in which we protect our precious environment and make sure that it's available for the enjoyment of humans as well as the capacity for primary producers to keep producing for all of us.

AMBULANCE RAMPING

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:32): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Is the health minister aware of any correspondence sent to emergency physician Dr Megan Brooks from the Attorney-General and, if so, did he support it being sent? With your leave, sir, and that of the House, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: Dr Megan Brooks told the health services committee last week:

It is a matter of public knowledge that I had correspondence from the Attorney-General which was horrible as a clinician to receive and to be talking about my motivations for doing this. It was deeply upsetting to have my motivations questioned and to say that I somehow had an agenda to embarrass the state or something similar to that.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:32): I thank the member for her question. I understand the Attorney General had questions in relation to this matter yesterday or the day before in the other place—and I refer the member to the *Hansard* in relation to his answer that he gave.

Having said that, I also refer the member to the previous statements that I and the Attorney-General have made in relation to this matter, which was that the issue in question was in relation to

the certificate that had been issued by the Coroners Court. The desire from the government was to seek clarity in terms of the use of that. It was a new mechanism in the Coroners Act that had not been used before and Dr Brooks, in fact, has given that testimony to the Coroners Court and certainly that has now resulted in her being able to provide that evidence. The government's question in terms of the Coroner's certificate that was issued was ultimately upheld by the court, and it was appropriate, I think, for the Attorney-General's Department to seek clarity in terms of the use of that certificate, and that was the key matter in question for the government, rather than whether Dr Brooks gave evidence.

AMBULANCE RAMPING

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:34): My question again is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. How does the minister respond to comments made by emergency physician Dr Megan Brooks regarding the Griggs-McNeil report and will he now instigate a new investigation as a result? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: Dr Megan Brooks told the health services committee last week, 'I have several concerns with the Griggs-McNeil report.' She went on to say:

So there was a flaw in their investigation of whether there were...any incidents. I have subsequently raised this with Professor McNeil, and I believe it was acknowledged that the correct process wasn't applied. If they had taken the time to speak to experienced emergency clinicians we would have told them where to look. I am not sure who they spoke to.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:34): I think clearly the shadow minister has an ongoing campaign to try to sully the reputation of Dr Bill Griggs and Professor Keith McNeil. I support Dr Bill Griggs and I support Professor Keith McNeil, who independently looked into this matter and have provided a report. Clearly, the outcome of that and the words of that speak for themselves, and the government is implementing the recommendations of that.

AMBULANCE RAMPING

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:35): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. What action is the minister taking to get to the bottom of allegations made by clinicians to SASMOA about administrative involvement in clinical care? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: Bernadette Mulholland from SASMOA told a parliamentary inquiry last week:

...two weeks ago I was called into a local health network in an emergency department where it is now alleged the administration instructed clinicians to take patients off the ramp instead of taking patients from the waiting room.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:36): There are clear policies in place in relation to this matter, consistent with the previous government and under this government. If evidence is furnished in relation to particular allegations, then they will be looked into appropriately, but I am certainly not aware that that evidence has been presented.

LIMESTONE COAST MINING

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:36): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. Will the minister commit to conducting an independent investigation into the potential risks associated with rare earth mining operations on the Limestone Coast. With your leave, Mr Speaker, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: The state government has released results of its research aimed at understanding the attitudes of locals who are concerned about the impacts from mining activities. However, locals would like to see science-based research conducted.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:37): I want to thank the member for MacKillop. He is a pretty fierce advocate for his local community. It's no surprise that he is asking questions of the government in the parliament about the Limestone Coast and about protecting local communities, but I want to assure him we are no different. We want to make sure that Limestone Coast is protected as well. We want to make sure that any associated risk with any type of mining activity is entirely dependent on proposed mining techniques, processing methods, location, environment, existing land uses and groundwater conditions.

The onus is on a project proponent to propose a project through the Mining Act via a mining lease application that considers all the above factors that I just mentioned. It's not a matter for us to tell the mining company how to safely mine. What we ask them to do is to prove to us that they can safely mine, taking into account all those factors, and that we independently verify those through scientific methods.

If you are proposing to mine in a particular way, we will ask you to provide evidence to back up the proposition about how it is mined and then we will independently verify it. To date, we have not received such a proposal from that mining company. I suppose what the member and the community are asking us is, 'The community are proposing that mining be conducted this way. Therefore, prove to us this way is safe.' The assurance I can give the local community is we will not approve any mining method unless the proponent can prove to us it will not have an adverse impact on the environment, on the local community, and that it can coexist with other forms of industry that are in the area.

I want to assure the member that the legislation members opposite introduced and voted for in the last parliament is the regulatory framework we will be using to assess this mine. The mine framework that we use in the Mining Act is something we have inherited from the previous government, and the previous government before that made changes. It is continually improved by each and every parliament. There may even be considerations in this parliament, even as we are getting close to the end of it, for further changes. It is constantly evolving and changing.

My main message to the people of the Limestone Coast is that this is not a political decision; this is a scientific assessment, an analysis of what the proponents are proposing. So as well as commissioning an independent investigation into every possible potential design of a project, which could be over a large geographical area, for us to then assume what they are doing and then attempt to give the community a scientific response to a proposal or what we receive, is not feasible.

We need to check this a bit, because I think there is a misunderstanding about the way the Mining Act operates. We receive a proposal and we assess it. We don't assess ideas, we don't assess the potential mining technique, we assess the actual mining technique. I hope that goes some way to answering the member for MacKillop's questions, but I am more than happy to be available for his community to answer any questions personally as well.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LABOUR FORCE

S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (14:41): My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the house on the state of the South Australian labour force?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Police) (14:41): I thank the member for Gibson for her question, because it is yet more good economic data for our state again, reaffirming our place as a national leader when it comes to economic performance and a substantial improvement on where things were three years ago.

In today's figures there are more than 61,000 South Australians now in work who were not three years ago, 61,000 more people in jobs—an unemployment rate, as the Premier referred to before, of 3.7 per cent. There have only been 15 monthly reports from the ABS Labour Force since its inception in 1978—and what a fine year that was—and of those 15 months, all of those where the unemployment rate for South Australia had a three in front of it have been in the last three years under the term of the Malinauskas Labor government. It is a really strong economic performance.

We are also seeing, once again, that South Australia is leading the pack in this regard—only behind Western Australia, of course, as they make full use of all the other states' GST to grow their economy.

As the Premier said, you do not have to take our word for the state's economic performance. You have CommSec, quarter after quarter rating our economy as the best performing or the second best performing economy in the nation, and the Business Council of Australia, as the Premier referred to before, labelling South Australia as the best place in Australia to do business, the best place in the country to do business. The Property Council, as the Premier also referred to before, labels it as having the best planning regime in the country, to make sure that as we tackle our share of the nation's housing crisis we are best placed to tackle it.

Even our close comrades at the Institute of Public Affairs rate this government and our economy as performing strongly—even our traditional comrades at the IPA. The South Australian Business Chamber, previously Business SA, have most recently reported that business confidence and business conditions are on the way up in South Australia. Further, there are more businesses in business today than there were three years ago.

The Premier has made absolutely clear, not just today during question time but over the course of the three years, the ambitious policy agenda we are committed to rolling out to grow our economy. It has been three years since the last election. This is the fourth and final year of this parliamentary term. In football parlance, it's the fourth quarter. For those opposite, the premiership quarter is already done. That was last year. Your captain got reported and is still before the tribunal. You have lost some key positions to the other team. You are struggling, aren't you?

You have to get some policies out. You can't just keep complaining. You have to get some policies out. If you want to grow the economy, you have to have an agenda, you have to have things you can get behind. We are all waiting. All the pressure, all the focus, is on the Leader of the Opposition. Has he got a better vision for South Australia? We all doubt it.

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, ELECTIVE SURGERIES

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:45): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister confirm that all elective surgeries cancelled at the Women's and Children's Hospital last week are now rescheduled?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Karna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:45): That's my understanding from the Women's and Children's Health Network.

HEALTH SYSTEM, WINTER DEMAND

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:45): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Does the minister guarantee that there will be no system-wide Code Yellows called this winter? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: SASMOA said last week at the health services committee, 'I don't think we are ready for winter.'

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Karna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:46): Certainly, the government is doing every single thing possible to make sure that we are prepared for winter, but more than that to expand the capacity of our health system. We released a winter plan just a couple of weeks ago, which outlined measures that we are taking across the system to make sure we can expand our capacity to be able to cater for an expected increase in winter demand that we will see. This is in stark contrast to the previous government, where I think in one out of four years there was a winter plan put in place.

The measures include a number of additional beds that we will be opening across the health system. The Premier referred to a number of those. We are utilising every possible additional capacity to make sure that we have additional room for patients to be seen. We are doing this at a time that we are seeing an increasing number of patients who are stuck in our system waiting for a commonwealth aged-care place. That number has more than doubled. It is now over 250 patients

who are stuck in our beds. That is the equivalent of more than the size of Modbury Hospital taken out of our system waiting for aged care, which is a significant issue.

Despite that, we are using every possible lever to expand our capacity and make sure that people can get seen through the winter period. Of course, it's a timely reminder for people to make sure that they are doing everything possible as well to prepare for winter, firstly, in terms of influenza vaccines, secondly, in terms of COVID vaccines and, thirdly, in terms of RSV, where there is now going to be a program for protection for pregnant women and ultimately for babies where that vaccine wasn't taken up in the first instance available this year. So there are a number of measures in place that will be available to make sure that people can stay well, can stay healthy and not need to be in our hospital system this winter.

CHILDCARE CENTRES

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Education. How many childcare centres in South Australia do not meet minimum standards and are currently classed as 'significant improvement required' or 'working towards reaching the minimum standards' and has the government addressed all Royal Commission into Early Childhood Education and Care recommendations that relate to childcare standards? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr COWDREY: Recent data from the Productivity Commission shows there were more than 2,300 serious incidents in South Australian childcare centres in 2023-24, including serious injury, ambulance attendance and missing children, an increase of 40 per cent in three years.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (14:48): I thank the member for a very important question on a very important topic. I am sure a number of members of this place will have followed the national news this week that was broken in a story by *Four Corners* about some very disturbing incidents of abuse and neglect towards a young person in a childcare centre in New South Wales.

I saw that exposé and read a number of follow-up articles that were written about that incident and similar ones. Of course, I took a great deal of interest in that as the minister responsible for those areas in South Australia. It is also true to say that any incident like that, the ones referred to by *Four Corners*, or the ones alluded to by the member for Colton, should be taken seriously by all ministers and everyone in this place—and we absolutely do.

The first thing I might say specifically in response to the member's question is that in the case of the *Four Corners* story, the two private childcare providers the subject of that story don't operate in South Australia. That is not to say that we should not be looking at what happened in New South Wales and making sure that there are things in place so they cannot happen here in South Australia, but those two providers in question do not operate in South Australia.

There has been some talk from those opposite and certainly interstate this week around whether or not there needs to be some kind of broader inquiry into incidents such as this in the childcare system in Australia. My answer, when asked that on ABC radio this week, was a very clear one. It was alluded to in the member for Colton's question to me, which was around the fact that we had a royal commission, which was primarily about how we go about delivering on the election commitment that we made here in South Australia back in October 2021, that if we were elected to government, we would roll out three-year-old preschools starting from 2026, and we are on track to do that.

The royal commission headed up by the Hon. Julia Gillard not only made recommendations on how this government should roll out three-year-old preschool but also looked at private childcare providers as well because, of course, part of the model recommended by the Hon. Julia Gillard about how we would roll out three-year-old preschool is to utilise an existing capacity in the long day care sector. It was only right that we looked around at what was occurring there and make sure that some steps were taken, as the member for Colton correctly pointed out, to make sure that assessment and ratings are done under the national scheme. We do have some catching up to do on that.

I can inform the house that one recommendation in particular, I think it was recommendation No. 7, was that the state government ensure sufficient resources are available to the Education Standards Board, which is the independent regulator here in South Australia—

Mr TEAGUE: Point of order: standing order 98(a). Again, this is all very interesting debate but the question that the minister should have within his grasp was how many childcare centres are in these categories. It's a question that begs a straightforward answer in terms of a number.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Members on my right will come to order. Member for Newland! As I have mentioned before, the minister has four minutes to answer the question and I think it has always been accepted that they can create a case around their answer and provide information, which I am pretty sure is what the minister is doing.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, Speaker. I was asked specifically about recommendations from the royal commission, and I was reading out the pertinent recommendation from the royal commission which I have in front of me because I actually foresaw that might be a question I might get today. In a bid to make sure that I could give you an answer, because I assume that's why you are asking the question in the first place, I have brought it in and I am providing that to you. If you give me the decency of the last 45 seconds, I will keep going and I will give you the answer to the question that you asked.

That recommendation was that we actually properly resource the ESB. The ESB is the Education Standards Board, the independent regulator, that does the work which prevents these kinds of things from happening. They have been begging for that money all through 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 and you lot said no, no, no and no. What did we say? We accepted the recommendation and we have put \$7 million more into the independent regulator, and do you know what that has resulted in? It has resulted in a 63 per cent increase in visits to childcare centres—a 63 per cent increase in visits to centres so they could actually do this important work. That's why we accepted the recommendation.

YORKE PENINSULA POWER OUTAGE

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (14:53): My question is to the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services. Is the government concerned about the impact the recent power outage on YP had on emergency services? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr ELLIS: During the blackout, all phone towers in my electorate went dark and ran out of battery. There was no way to contact CFS volunteers if a fire had started and no way to contact ambulance volunteers if an emergency occurred. Should phone towers have a better backup battery to last for longer?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (14:54): I thank the member for Narungga for this very important question, and I take it as the minister representing the Minister for Emergency Services in this place. Obviously, those power outages raised a lot of complications for service delivery but also for first responders in areas like the ones that the member for Narungga represents.

I will happily take it on notice and seek a response from the minister, but there are a few things I can say in the interim, and that is around the system that our emergency services use now, including the CFS. Although we still have a Government Radio Network, as I understand it, and we still have a fleet of generators that will go out to sites to make sure that that system can be charged and still utilised in the case of an emergency where there is no power, fewer volunteers like to use that system and prefer to use the phone system now on their smartphones, which is understandable.

I think the situation that we saw with power outages can certainly create some complications in terms of how those communications are kept up, how members of the public are able to communicate with the CFS for instance and then how the CFS command are able to communicate to their volunteers to make sure they can respond. I am told that there was still provision of pagers there, so that could be done, but I will seek an answer from the Minister for Emergency Services

around what is done more broadly in terms of keeping that communication up in situations where volunteers might not actually have access to a pager and might be relying on the information coming to them through their mobile phone.

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (14:56): My question is to the Minister for Tourism. Can the minister update the house on the state's tourism industry since March 2022?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:56): I thank the member for Adelaide for the question. Well, I didn't think we could do better than we did during LIV Golf, but on the March long weekend we hit our record hotel occupancy of 10,662 rooms. This is something that is proof in the pudding that we came to government in 2022 taking tourism seriously, and we came at a time when the industry had been impacted like they had never been before. It was a time to build back, it was a time to build confidence, and we have done that.

We have had some amazing events during the March long weekend. Of course, traditionally it is the Adelaide Cup, but of course we had the Fringe. We are here on track today, as the Speaker has just said, that we are nearly at a million tickets. I think if all of us can book a show or two over the next few days we can achieve it. The Fringe was on, of course, and WOMAD. I also had the chance to go the Motorsport Festival, which is an incredible event and it has increased its capacity by about 40 per cent. So in many different ways we saw the March long weekend as an excellent weekend, as it has always been, but we are really hitting our stride.

Since 2020, of course, we have had \$2.2 billion in hotel construction or hotels that have been opened. This is important because we are hitting those really high occupancy rates at a time when we have got more rooms and higher quality rooms than we have ever had before. Just yesterday the Premier and I announced that InterContinental, impressed with what is happening in South Australia, has committed to the Barossa Resort and Spa, with 150 rooms and \$100 million of impact to the construction. It will really add to the immersive opportunities that you can have in the Barossa.

You know we have been talking about it a lot because Gather Round is around the corner and we are going to have those two games in the Barossa, but part of it is the legacy that we leave. We have seen that beautiful new oval that is going to be there. There are some conference facilities, but what we have seen is that it makes people pay attention to the Barossa as well. Of course, in the Economic Recovery Fund the Treasurer put money forward for regional tourism accommodation, and the Barossa was front and centre of that, so we will see that rolling out in the next few years.

Of course, with aviation links we were hit so hard, as was the rest of the world, when we closed our borders. So, on coming to government, over the last three years, that has been a clear focus for myself and the Tourism Commission and the government as a whole. We have seen Emirates come back and of course China Southern as well. We remain committed because we now have 20 per cent more connection points and seats coming in, but we need to make sure we are out there marketing it and bringing people in as well.

Of course, I am talking about what we have done in the last three years, but there's so much more to come along, like Illuminate in July. We are really loving getting our coats and hats on and seeing that wonderful time here in the city. The British & Irish Lions are coming on 12 July. Last time, we had 30,000 to 40,000 people coming along to see this game. Just today, I released an expression of interest that will go to AEDA because we want to make sure that businesses in the city and North Adelaide know how important this is. We want to make sure they are open, they are connected and take full advantage of this high-spending, high-drinking crowd that is coming our way. We have increased money to the bid fund, which means extra time for conventions and conferences.

INCOLINK

The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (15:00): My question is to the Premier. When was the Premier first made aware that the Victorian CFMEU-owned Incolink has—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: You don't like it when we point out the dealings of your mates, your bikie-infested CFMEU. You don't like that, do you?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Members on my right!

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: You don't like it. Your business partners in politics—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Florey can leave until the end of question time. The member for Unley, you will be seated.

The honourable member for Florey having withdrawn from the chamber:

The SPEAKER: I can't hear the member for Unley and his question, so please, members on my right, stop yelling out. Member for Unley.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: Thank you very much for your protection, sir. When was the Premier first made aware that the Victorian CFMEU-owned Incolink had purchased an interest in the Adelaide City Council's Market Square development, and does he have any concerns about the CFMEU's involvement in the project?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (15:01): The government has taken an interest in the Market Square development more broadly at a high level because we think it's a great development for the state. I remember first being briefed on the proposition for the Market Square by the former Rundle Mall management chair and market chair, Theo Maras, some years ago and expressing unequivocally my support for that development more broadly and being very keen to see that happen. We followed it closely. I think the state government is potentially taking occupancy in some of the office parts of Market Square, which is a good thing.

In terms of decisions that are made by the developer and who is investing and what the Masters Builders Association, in conjunction with other representatives on the board of Incolink in Victoria, are deciding in respect of private developers, obviously we have no line of sight over that. I am aware that there is a share in it. I cannot remember exactly when I got told that. I can't remember if I read it or heard it, but I think this has been in the public realm for some time. As I know the member for Unley would appreciate, this isn't something that the South Australian government has anything to do with, with respect to that private developer and how they are funding their program of works.

I think the inference from the member for Unley in his question is: does somehow this mean that the South Australian government fails to repudiate the bad behaviour that was seen within the CFMEU in Victoria? Of course not. Anybody familiar with myself or any other member of the state cabinet understands what good industrial relations looks like. We are very proudly of the view in this government that the Australian trade union movement has a role to play, particularly in the economy at the moment, now more than ever, where we see workers' wages wanting to be heading in the right direction rather than the wrong direction. Real wage growth is an aspiration that I think every government should have, and I think unions play a role in that regard.

That, we believe, is best achieved through thoughtful, pragmatic and responsible trade union leadership, and the actions of the CFMEU in Victoria are anything but that. We reject them wholeheartedly and always have. Anybody who knows my record as a trade union leader would be well familiar with that. I think this sort of feigned, pretend, trying to create this idea that somehow we think the CFMEU in Victoria represents good trade unionism is just rubbish. Anybody who knows us knows it is rubbish, and we actively repudiate it—no different to those in opposition—but the member for Unley knows that. The member for Unley equally knows that, whoever is the private developer responsible for the Market Square development, they make their own decisions about how they fund their developments.

CFMEU

The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (15:04): Has Geoffrey Watson SC, the investigator commissioned by the administrator of the CFMEU, contacted any minister or their office as part of his investigation and, if so, which minister or ministers or their officers?

The SPEAKER: Is that a question to the Premier or to the ministers? The Premier.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (15:05): To the best of my knowledge, I haven't been contacted. I am happy to take that on notice. I am not aware of any emails or anything of that nature. Because the Victorian CFMEU is so disconnected and far removed from the South Australian government, I can't imagine that anyone has received any inquiries, but I am happy to take that question on notice and come back to the member for Unley.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I would just like to give a shout-out to Jack Harrison, who is in the gallery today—a student from Christies Beach High. He was here during the Teen Parliament last month and did an extraordinary job—one of the greatest speeches I have ever heard in here. It is really good to have you here at question time. I think you guys all behaved a little bit better than what we have seen today.

Grievance Debate

STATE LABOR GOVERNMENT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (15:06): I have to say that today I rise somewhat with a heavy heart because across this great state South Australians are suffering—not because of circumstances beyond our control but because of this government's wrong priorities and, quite frankly, sheer incompetence. At a time when people are crying out for leadership, for action and for hope, this Premier and this government have all the wrong priorities. It is a government that is failing those it was actually elected to serve.

Let's start with the housing crisis. What we need is less lip-service and more slabs laid. Recently, I was speaking to a struggling South Australian: she is a 62-year-old hardworking woman who just wants a safe and affordable place to live. The resident earns around \$35,000 a year and she has seen her rent almost double since 2023. She is now spending over half her income on rent as it is. She found a home through an affordable housing provider, but get this: she was told that she does not earn enough to qualify for cheaper rent. It is bureaucratic nonsense like this that is putting South Australians at risk, with many on the brink of homelessness. This is the new face of homelessness in this state.

The government claims to care about housing, yet when it has the power to change this type of thing with the stroke of a pen, it refuses to act. While thousands struggle to find a home, where are the 23,000 homes this government promised? What confidence should Australians have in their ability to deliver the 61,000 homes that they promised when not a single slab has been laid on any of the four land releases since 2022? Labor is all talk and no action, and struggling South Australians deserve better from this Premier and from this government.

Then, of course, you have farmers and the drought. This week, we saw that because the Premier would not go to farmers the farmers came to the Premier. Fed-up farmers came to Parliament House because they are being ignored by this Premier and his minister. I stood with Andrew, for example—a farmer who was in tears. A grown man—a farmer—in tears on the steps of Parliament House. His industry—an industry that feeds this state literally and makes up a substantial amount of this state's GDP—is on its knees.

The Premier was asked what would he do to help, and his response was something like, 'We are turning our minds to how best we can do that.' I mean, give me a break. We have been in a drought now for several months—many, many months. Meanwhile, some ministers of this government want them to hold on until the June budget for more support. How does this government not understand that farmers cannot wait? They are not just asking for help; in some cases they are actually begging for a lifeline.

Then you have ramping. There was a question asked today but not really answered. These have been the worst 33 months of ramping in our state's history. They never said anything about ambulance response times on the corflutes from what I remember. It was pretty clear to me. This Premier was elected on a promise to fix the ramping crisis. Recently, we heard from a woman whose

78-year-old husband was rushed to the Lyell McEwin Hospital with suspected stroke symptoms, but instead of urgent care he waited for not one hour, not five hours, not ten hours but 15 hours—a 15-hour wait while suffering from a suspected stroke. This is not a health system; this is a disgrace.

This is not an isolated case. There are many more cases like this. We now know that around 125,000 hours have been lost to ramping since this government was elected—effectively 13 years worth of ambulances stuck outside hospitals. We know that Labor promised to fix it. Instead, for 33 months it has been worse than it has ever been.

They promised the Hydrogen Jobs Plan. Instead, what have they done? They have basically abandoned their only substantial energy policy, blowing, what is it—we cannot get an actual answer—around \$100 million or more in the process and still paying their Labor mate \$600,000 a year, and for what? What is this guy doing?

As you can see, this Premier has all the wrong priorities, and quite frankly South Australians deserve better. They deserve a government that cares more about people than politics. They deserve a government that puts farmers first, that puts everyday people first—not the Premier's schedule first. They deserve a government that keeps its promises. Instead, what do they have? They have a government that cares more about spin than solutions, that is more focused on PR than policy, and more concerned about announcement than delivery.

Labor has failed South Australians, and every day they remain in government more and more people will unfortunately pay the price. The Premier will not act but we will. South Australians deserve better than this and in 12 months' time, come the next election, they will get it.

MAILLEY, MR C.

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (15:11): I rise today to highlight and recognise the vitally important work being done by Naracoorte's own Senior Constable Chris Mailley, who last month was awarded South Australian Citizen of the Year at a reception at Government House. This prestigious recognition followed his earlier accolades as Naracoorte's Citizen of the Year on Australia Day and Police Officer of the Year in September 2024. Senior Constable Mailley is a deserving recipient of these honours due to the profound impact he has had on keeping people safe and his tireless work in addressing domestic violence.

Senior Constable Chris Mailley began his role in the family violence investigation section just three years ago. Originally a UK police officer, he joined SAPOL in 2009, bringing with him 15 years of experience in high-pressure departments such as the riot squad, firearms, drug units and covert operations. Senior Constable Mailley and his family moved to South Australia in 2010, initially intending to stay temporarily in Naracoorte while waiting for a position in Mount Gambier. However, they soon fell in love with the area, with Senior Constable Mailley finding purpose in his police work and his wife, Amanda, becoming a respected midwife and nurse in the region. He became involved in various community initiatives, including constructing the BMX track, running drug awareness forums and supporting the local high school.

When Senior Constable Mailley began his role in family violence investigation, he quickly realised the lack of support for domestic violence victims in the Upper South-East. He took it upon himself to innovate and solve this problem, creating partnership models between the police and the community. His efforts led to the establishment of the Upper South-East Domestic Abuse Program, which provides emergency financial support for victims, including accommodation, transport and relocation assistance. One example of this program's success was when Senior Constable Mailley was able to secure interstate flight tickets for a domestic violence victim trying to escape a life-threatening situation. This was done in a mere 27 minutes and ultimately saved her life.

Senior Constable Mailley's program not only responds to immediate crises but also focuses on preventative measures. This includes a youth respectful relationships program aiming to change mindsets and attitudes in the next generation, ensuring they understand what behaviours are acceptable. This program has successfully tackled various complexities of domestic abuse, including same-gender relationships, child abuse and elder abuse.

One of the key strengths of the Upper South-East Domestic Abuse Program is its simplicity and efficiency. With little to no red tape, the program operates with the cooperation of an independent

volunteer committee. It receives no government funding and instead relies on donations and fundraising, allowing it to offer immediate support to those at risk.

The program has attracted widespread support from businesses, sporting clubs and community groups, exemplifying how communities can tackle social issues together. Not only has this initiative addressed the immediate needs of domestic violence victims but it has also focused on changing the cultural mindset around domestic abuse. It has created a cohesive and united community, demonstrating the power of collaboration and community involvement in tackling such critical issues. This grassroots approach has allowed for a more tailored and rapid response to domestic violence, making it a model that could be replicated in other regional areas.

Senior Constable Mailley's passion for helping victims of domestic violence is reflected in his approach to the issue, which he defines as investigation, intervention and predominantly victim management. He acknowledges that dealing with vulnerable individuals who are affected by physical or sexual abuse, coercive control, child abuse or elder abuse requires both compassion and creative problem-solving. Senior Constable Mailley says the work is ongoing, and it is testament to his deep commitment to his adopted community. His aim is for the South-East region to be recognised as providing the best domestic violence support in the state.

In conclusion, while the Upper South-East Domestic Abuse Program is a beacon of innovation and community collaboration, it is important to recognise that government financial support plays a vital role in sustaining such activities. However, it is equally important that the government allows these community-driven programs the autonomy to operate without unnecessary bureaucratic constraints. By reducing red tape and empowering local leaders like Senior Constable Mailley, the government can ensure these vital programs continue to make a meaningful impact on the lives of domestic violence victims. This balance of support and flexibility is crucial for creating lasting change in regional areas and beyond. Thank you, Senior Constable Chris Mailley.

RIVERLAND WINE INDUSTRY

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:16): I rise today to give an update on the Riverland wine industry. This week, we heard the government spruiking, saying that our wine industry is in good shape, but the engine room is not. They stated that exports of 11.8 million litres of wine went to China in November alone, valued at more than \$93 million—that is \$7.88 a litre—and that none of that is Riverland product. How do we fix the problem? We are seeing a global decline in consumption, particularly of commercial wine, and the Riverland is wearing the brunt of that decline.

The opinion of some in the Riverland's wine industry is that a mandatory code of conduct will fix the problem, but it will not. It will not address the long-term challenges within the commercial wine sector. Instead, wine grapegrowers must be honest with themselves and look to consider the level of structural adjustment within their business. They do not necessarily have to remove it all, but all their hard work and dedication to the industry must be recognised and rationalised.

However, they should look to include alternative commodities within their business model. I have witnessed what structural adjustment means to small family farms. Look at the Queensland sugar industry in Mackay. The corporates continued on their merry way, but the family farms did not have the deep pockets and they had to consider their options wisely. Currently, the state government is looking to buy 7,000 hectares of profitable prime ag land for housing. There is another opportunity for the Riverland to further diversify the management of their irrigated farmland.

Between 95 and 97 per cent of the Riverland's wine is exported as a bulk product. The consumption is in decline and the trend is also declining. The government's role is to provide an education service on a viable alternative. It is about helping struggling growers to make informed decisions, and the current management regime of vineyards and vineyard properties is entirely in the hands of horticulturalists in the Riverland.

But we cannot keep doing more of the same and expecting the government to fix the problem. It is the consumer who can fix the problem. Diversity in our trading countries, particularly India and Asia, is looking us in the face. If the wine grapegrowers continue to rely on government to solve their problems, they will continue to lose ground and continue to lose money.

There are economies of scale to make wineries more profitable, which can only mean more wine processed, and at the moment the more wine processed the less return to growers. It is all about supply and demand. Instead, growers might consider focusing on reward for effort for better quality varieties that are making returns. It is a variety versus varietal, a red versus white, decision to be made.

While small parcels of Riverland fruit are being marketed, patches of alternative fruit are paying dividends, particularly in the white varieties. I have concerns that the federal government's water buybacks continue to prey on the vulnerable Riverland wine industry. It only shrinks the local economy and decimates the viability of a local food and beverage sector. I sympathise with the growers wanting to sell their water for many reasons, but I say to them, 'Please consider selling your water to your neighbour or retaining it in the local distribution network within South Australia.' Once that water is sold to the commonwealth it is gone forever, that economy has been taken away.

Some say it is around the corner from the election. Some opinion pieces are hitching decisions made in a lead-up to an election and are using the local paper as a platform to blame others and direct others into a dark corner. Instead, we should be actively lobbying all levels of government and industry every day, all the time, irrespective of how far out from an election we are. I must say that I have travelled the corridors of power, no matter where, no matter when, to lobby in the best interests of the Riverland and its horticulture sectors.

Government reports and committee recommendations do not put money into growers' pockets. While we wait for the government to take action, wine grapegrowers continue to lose money and lose faith in the industry. Driving consumer demand is the only thing that will give lasting certainty to the commercial sector.

Sir, as you would well know, the wine industry has been through a very tumultuous and challenging time. It is time for those grapegrowers to make a decision. They cannot keep doing more of what they are doing and expect a different result. The world's consumption is in decline. The trend is that human consumption is becoming less and less. There are more challenging commodities within the beverage sector that are forcing those Riverland irrigators, those Riverland winegrowers, to make a decision and make it soon.

BROOKS, MR R.

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (15:21): Today I rise to honour the extraordinary life of beloved Prospect local Ross Brooks, a man whose journey from the quiet life of a farm in Booborowie, to a life rich in love, wisdom and compassion touched so many of us. Born on the family farm, Ross grew up with a strong sense of work ethic and community. He attended North Booborowie Primary, but at a young age he left school to work alongside his family on the farm where he honed the skills that would serve him throughout his life.

His dedication to his family was evident from the start. In 1964 Ross married the love of his life, Maxine, and together they raised four beautiful children, Rebecca, Sam, James and Nick. Through all the challenges, Maxine and Ross's love for one another only grew stronger. Ross's career led him to join Correctional Services and it is this role that saw him relocate to Adelaide. It was here that his dedication to ensuring that his children had opportunities greater than his own truly flourished. But beyond his work, it was Ross's unwavering decency and strong sense of social justice that set him apart. He was always a champion for fairness, respect and dignity.

One memory that stands out was a visit to Trash and Treasure, scouting for antiques. There a former prisoner recognised Ross and with deep respect called out to him, and I quote, 'You were the only decent screw in that place,' remembering how Ross had treated him with respect during his time in prison. It is moments like these that reveal the profound impact Ross had on those around him. It was not just his role in Correctional Services but the way he approached life, always with fairness, kindness and humanity, that made him such a beloved figure.

Ross also had a love for the finer things in life, from his beautiful collection of arts and antiques to his passion for opera, ballet and the theatre. His intellectual curiosity and refined taste showed that he was truly a man of great depth. He possessed a remarkable intellect and a profound appreciation for the arts, fine food and wine, passions he joyfully shared with those he loved. Many

of his most cherished moments were spent around the long dining table in the back room of his beautiful home, where he presided with warmth, wisdom and lively conversation.

His garden in Prospect, where he lived for 45 years, was another testament to his nurturing spirit. It was there in that magnificent garden that Ross would carefully rescue bees from his pond, even fashioning a little ramp to allow them to drink and collect water safely. He showed respect for every creature, no matter how small. 'They know,' he would say, 'that if I help them they will help me with the garden.'

As a dedicated Labor member and true believer, Ross's unwavering passion for social justice defined his character. He was solid, he was staunch, and he was loyal. He was also generous with his time, his experience and his judgement. He had a disarming sense of humour and did not tolerate either laziness or grandstanding from political representatives. In 1982, when the then Labor candidate for Torrens, Mike Duigan, opened a campaign office on Prospect Road with just a desk, a chair and a phone, the first through the door was a couple who said, 'Hi, we're Ross and Maxine, and we're here to help.' That was the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

Maxine and Ross really were the quintessential couple of their local street. When John Bannon was Premier, he would use Maxine and Ross as sounding boards for what was happening or not in Prospect. If acquaintances started to veer into Tory territory, Ross would initially chide them on their loss of commitment before quietly letting them go.

His steadfast commitment to advocating for marginalised groups and championing human rights remained central to his identity. A poignant symbol of his support for his LGBTIQ+ family and friends was his regular choice to wear a rainbow jumper, a simple yet powerful gesture of solidarity. The disappointment of the unsuccessful yes referendum deeply affected Ross. He struggled to comprehend how fellow Australians could reject support for their Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Ross was a man who truly valued his family and friends. He was loved by so many, and he loved them in return. He was a man of great respect, humanity and generosity, and those who knew him are better for it. In his final years as his health declined, Ross remained steadfast in his love for his family and his garden and in his unwavering sense of humour. While we are deeply saddened by his passing, we are comforted in knowing that his suffering is over and that his memory lives on in each of us, in particular his wonderful wife and children.

As we remember Ross today, we celebrate the beautiful life he led, a life of love, service, respect and immense intellect. He truly was an extraordinary man and we will miss him terribly. Thank you to his dearest family and friends for being here today to honour him, and all my love to Maxine, Rebecca, Sam, James and Nick. Vale Ross Brooks. We will never forget you.

SCHUBERT ELECTORATE

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (15:26): I would just like to echo a couple of comments made by the member for Chaffey in relation to the wine industry. Last week, I was fortunate enough to head out to Seppeltsfield and see the cogs in action, the wheels in action, for what is hopefully a big vintage and a quality vintage. I want to give a shout-out to everyone who is on the grind right across the region in our wineries, doing various jobs. Every single person whom I saw at Seppeltsfield last week plays such a significant role in ensuring that the Barossa's reputation, the Adelaide Hills' reputation and, in fact, the reputation of our wine industry right across South Australia is projected well onto the international stage. Well done to everyone who is on the grind with the vintage. Keep at it. I am hopeful for some really quality produce at the end of it.

One issue that I really wanted to address today—and it is often commented on in this house—is around housing affordability. This is one of the biggest issues that particularly young people are coming to my office about. It is certainly something that we hear from right across all ages. It does not matter how old you are, how young you are, housing affordability and access to affordable renting is a big issue and one that collectively we need to work to get on top of. We know that the housing market is extraordinarily tight and, for many people, buying their first home is simply out of reach. That great Australian dream, that idea that you can get a piece of land, put a home on it and secure it for you and your family well into the future, is drifting further and further away.

There were some interesting reports that came out this week and in recent times. This one I found particularly interesting. A \$150,000-plus household income is needed to afford new housing across multiple suburbs in Adelaide—extraordinary. Property Council research reveals that Adelaide is now the nation's second most unaffordable housing market after Sydney when considering prices relative to income. The bleak outlook is intensified by the forecast of a more than 10 per cent surge by 2030 in the proportion of household income required to service a mortgage for an entry-level Adelaide home.

Then we have rental affordability, which is at its worst level in almost two decades and possibly the worst in the state's history. This is an enormous issue that is impacting people right across South Australia. It is impacting people in my own local electorate, where we have barely a single home available for rent. It is a huge concern for regional communities, and it means that young people are leaving our region, unable to put down their roots. That really concerns me, because we want our young people and our next generation to stay here locally, but they cannot live with mum and dad forever. They want to buy a home, and these recent reports are really concerning, showing that the great Aussie dream of owning your home is drifting further and further away.

Before the pandemic South Australia was actually the second most affordable state, which I found really interesting. One lever that the Liberal Party has put forward as an option to improve this is in relation to stamp duty relief. We are pleased to see that stamp duty relief is on offer for those who buy a newly-built home, but there is currently no assistance for those who want to purchase an existing property—and for many people building a new home is just not as feasible as buying an existing one.

When we know that people are already feeling the pinch from cost-of-living pressures, every single dollar that can be saved counts. That is why I was really pleased that the Liberal Party is pushing for a \$10,000 stamp duty discount on existing properties valued up to \$750,000 for first-homebuyers. We have called on the state government to act. It is not too late; we have the budget coming up in a couple of months' time and, if the government is not up to the task on that, then if we are elected at the next election we will certainly be implementing that. It will provide great relief to so many people right across the community.

In the short time I have left I want to give a shout-out to all the regional shows right across my electorate. We have had the Tanunda Show and Angaston, and we had Mount Pleasant on the weekend, which was an absolute doozy weatherwise. Well done to all the volunteers who worked around the clock to pull these together. I am really looking forward to 2026 with all the shows, and I encourage all members to come out and have a look at what we have to offer in the regions.

HINDU FULDOL FESTIVAL

Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (15:31): I know words will not do justice to the uplifting experience that was Pushpadolotsav 2025 but, in consideration of the significance of the event, and on behalf of the hundreds of local BAPS members who joined me, I feel it is important that I cement this special memory firmly into the South Australian *Hansard*. Also known as Fuldol, this famed Hindu festival of colour is known for the throwing of vibrant-coloured powders and its deep spiritual significance.

I have spoken to the chamber before about how privileged I am to have the BAPS Mandir within my electorate, one of over 1,300 around the world. If ever you want to see a beautiful building, unofficially labelled as one of the Seven Wonders of Adelaide, please take a visit to Greenfields to feast your eyes on something that is truly magnificent. However, while bricks and mortar matter, the people inside eclipse the incredible architecture with their selfless acts of kindness that are seen across the community I am privileged to represent.

Just before I elaborate on the weekend, to add further context BAPS is a Hindu denomination overseen by 92-year-old Mahant Swami Maharaj, the sixth guru, which has over one million devotees worldwide. According to the last census back in 2021, 7,412 South Australians reported speaking Gujarati at home, with many living within the Playford electorate and drawn to their spiritual home of the local mandir.

While I am usually hesitant to leave the electorate, I was delighted to accept the invitation to join 18,000 visitors from across the world for 15 and 16 March. Watched by an over-49 foot metal statue of Tapo murti Neelkanth Varni, and joining us at the newly inaugurated BAPS Mandir and Cultural Precinct in Kemps Creek, Sydney, the Prime minister welcomed His Holiness. I think his words summed up the significance of the occasion perfectly:

His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj comes to us with a message that is for all Australians: 'In the joy of others lies our own.' It is an honour for all of us that you have chosen Sydney to celebrate this occasion for only the second time in 115 years.

While I am strictly biased towards Adelaide, I give credit to Sydney and the event organisers for their incredible work. Catering to thousands of visitors in a semirural setting, staying on top of crowd control and logistics and ensuring the place looked and stayed immaculate was no easy accomplishment but was pulled off without issue.

I might have been the only interstate MP present, but it was an honour for my son and I to share the occasion with local state MPs, Warren Kirby, Nathan Hagarty and Charishma Kaliyanda, and federal counterparts, Chris Bowen and Anne Stanley. Thank you for making us feel very welcome. In expressing appreciation, I thank Deepak Patel from my community for being an incredible host.

After dinner, I accepted the offer of doing Darshan of Swamishri—I apologise if I did not sound right. My understanding was that I would be sprayed with a few drops of coloured water, only to soon realise that, as I passed a parked water truck, it would be anything but a light sprinkling. For the record, this was an absolute joy and, to quote a constituent, Karen Smith, 'It was the best waste of a suit ever.' The photos of my white shirt looking rather yellow from the sanctified saffron-scented water suggested this was the case, but in an endorsement to Sard I am wearing the same shirt right now. The suit may be a different story, but I have every faith that our friends at the newly renovated Hollywood Dry Cleaning & Alterations can pull off a miracle.

The following day I was back at Kemps Creek to receive the honour of a personal blessing from His Holiness. I felt a bit odd being lined up with the immaculately dressed Andrew Charlton MP while I was in very casual clothes, but in my defence I found out that it was actually His Holiness who operated the hoses by remote control the previous evening that ensured my clothing supplies were heavily depleted.

While this is lighthearted, I am beyond words to describe how special and deeply meaningful it was to receive the blessing. To then be presented with a floral garland after His Holiness addressed the further gathering of 5,000 reinforced this as a memory I will cherish for the rest of my life. I want to pass on my deepest thankyou to BAPS for sharing with me what they cherish. With an underlying message of peace and joy through kindness to others, their thread in the tapestry that we call Australia is one that I deeply appreciate.

Parliamentary Procedure

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (15:37): I move:

That the house at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 1 April 2025 at 11am.

Motion carried.

Bills

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (15:37): I am pleased to have the opportunity to continue my remarks about this very important piece of legislation. As I observed before the lunch break, there are a lot of very important reasons that

governments take action to update the legislation that governs how we respond in emergencies, but one of those I think which is often overlooked is the importance of making sure that we maintain public confidence in our systems and give South Australians a very strong sense of confidence and reassure them that we are constantly updating that legislation that does govern how we respond in emergencies.

There are a lot of reasons why we need to do that, of course, because these situations change. Sometimes we might see a jurisdiction across the border do something different that we might want to adopt. I might give the example, of course, of the COVID pandemic as a very recent and real example of where we might face an emergency situation that we had not really foreseen and where we do not even have a historical template, if I could put it that way, in terms of how we might respond to a situation like that.

Of course, it meant that in what almost felt like the blink of an eye we were forced into trying to respond to very challenging circumstances, the likes of which we had not seen before. There was a great deal of, I think it is fair to say, panic amongst the public around what COVID would mean and what they should do to protect themselves and their loved ones. There was probably a lot of consternation and debate around what the appropriate powers were for government and for police commissioners, who were, in most states, tasked with the responsibility of being the chief responder, along with the chief of public health, in this case Nicola Spurrier. So it is important and timely that this work has been done by PEG Consulting.

I know the people behind PEG Consulting very well. They did an excellent review, I thought, into the Construction Industry Training Board or Construction Industry Training Fund Act, and made a whole lot of recommendations there, almost all of which we adopted and have now put through this place and have enacted. Those two people are Tahnya Donaghy and Ingrid Haythorpe and, as a government, we have relied on their services again here in terms of the work that has been done around reviewing the Emergency Management (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill and looking at things that we can put in place to make sure that we are best practice here in South Australia in terms of how we respond and proposing in this amendment bill some sensible reforms.

There have been a number of speakers who have taken the time to make a contribution on this bill and again I would like to take the opportunity to thank them for doing that. It is great to see bipartisanship in areas like this. The public like to see different sides of politics, for the most part, come together and agree on things for the betterment of the whole state. It is hard to think of too many areas where that is more important than emergency management. As I observed earlier, there is really no place for political squabbles when it comes to how we respond in times of emergency.

Some of the key amendments that are being proposed in this bill include introducing new elements to support responding to future known and unknown events, including the introduction of a new category of emergency declaration. If a politician in this place had used that line about future known and unknown events five years ago, people might have shaken their heads and rolled their eyes, but now that we are in a hopefully post-COVID, post-pandemic world, we all know that it is a very real and live possibility that we do face something that we have not faced before and where there is no template in terms of how we respond.

The state of alert style of declaration may be used prior to or following a major emergency declaration to assist with the scaling up and down of emergency management activities and better support public messaging. The public messaging thing, of course, is always important. I have used the example a number of times already about how important it was during COVID, but in situations where it is a faster moving emergency, perhaps a bushfire, obviously it is absolutely critical that we get that right. It is not just about providing information to the public about how they might prepare in the long-term sense against whether it is an oncoming flood or perhaps a pandemic, but in the case of a fast-moving bushfire it is critical and it needs to be timely that we provide advice to people about how they protect themselves and their loved ones in the immediate future, what they should be doing and give them up-to-date advice about what we are seeing in terms of where the fire is moving, how fast it is moving, where it is spreading and where they can go to get support.

Any work that we can do around not just assisting with the scaling up and down of the emergency management activities but also supporting better public messaging I think will be very

welcomed by people outside this place, on that note, improving clarity, including aligning the process and timeframes for extending electricity supply declaration periods with major emergency declarations. It is timely that we are speaking about this, given the events that have happened on Yorke Peninsula in the last week or so with power outages.

I had a question today from the member for Narungga in this place during question time around the challenges that posed in terms of keeping communication systems up and running and operating, not just in terms of between emergency service personnel and the use of the Government Radio Network (GRN) but also how the CFS for instance, or the SES, might actually contact their volunteers to make sure they are able to respond in a time of emergency when perhaps the power is out or a mobile phone tower's signal is down and there is no 4G or 5G network

I thought it was a very good question by the member for Narungga and it brings into sharp focus the challenges that we can face in times like that when power might go out. Including aligning the process and timeframes for extending that electricity supply declaration with major emergency declarations is really important, and I am pleased that we are suggesting changes there. These changes overall will strengthen the act and ensure our legislative framework provides a basis for effectively managing all stages of an emergency into the future.

Some previous historical examples that I have not touched upon that are worthy of mention in my comments here include: the statewide blackout of 2016, which we all remember very well; multiple bushfires, including the Wangary fires of 2005; I have mentioned the COVID pandemic; I would also point out the floods that we had in the Riverland, with incredible scenes that none of us will forget.

I certainly will not forget seeing those vast tracts of water and parts of towns and areas completely submerged and the way we were trying to respond. Sometimes where governments do not get it right is that you do need to treat an emergency, like a flood or like a fire or like a pandemic, once you get into the post-response phase, as a genuine opportunity to do things better. There is nothing like having lived through some kind of crisis like that to be able to take the learnings from that and then apply them to legislation in parliament and make sure that things are updated appropriately to reflect whatever we saw in that emergency. We need to make sure we make improvements so that, if we are to face it again, we are in a better position to actually respond.

In the case of this Emergency Management Act, it commenced 20 years ago, which in the scheme of the life of a piece of legislation is a very long time, and this was the first full-scale review of the act since that commencement 20 years ago. If you think about all the things that have occurred in that 20 years in our state alone, right back to the Wangary fires, but also the statewide blackout, other significant fires, the Riverland floods, the COVID pandemic—a whole range of things that this state has had to face in the 20 years since this act was put in place—it really speaks to how important it is that we use the opportunity that a review of the act provides us and the expert advice that PEG Consulting has given us in terms of making important changes.

I acknowledge that the speakers from the other side of this chamber have provided positive comments as well around the need to do this and to provide bipartisanship, mostly because I think we are largely in agreement in terms of the things we need to do. I think we understand on both sides of politics that it is not really going to instil confidence into the public if they hear the government of the day and the opposition of the day squabbling over what we should do in terms of how we respond during an emergency. It is not likely to fill someone with confidence to think, when the rubber hits the road and we are actually in an emergency, whether it is a bushfire or flood or whatever it might be, that instead of our politicians spending their time responding they are arguing over exactly how it is that we should respond.

I will conclude my remarks by thanking all those who have taken the time to make a contribution. I want to thank not just PEG Consulting but all those stakeholders—and there were many—who made submissions here, which is really important. Given that we rely on so many people, many of whom are volunteers, to support us in times of emergency, it is vital when we go about doing this work as legislators to review an act and make amendments to an act that we do not just assume that we have the answers ourselves. We need to give those people out in those stakeholder groups, the people who are out there holding a hose during a fire or fixing up a roof during storm or filling

sandbags during a flood, the chance to be heard as part of this process. The things that they see can then be reflected in the recommendations that a consulting firm like PEG makes and in the recommendations that ultimately the government of the day makes to this place.

I want to thank all those who took the time to be a part of that stakeholder consultation. I can reassure you that you have been listened to. A lot of the recommendations that are being proposed here in this bill have stemmed from the consultation that we have done with stakeholders, and I think that is really important. I hope that goes to providing to them a bit of confidence and optimism when they see, ideally, these changes, if it is the will of the parliament, brought into effect, and that they see that actually the government will listen, that we do appreciate their efforts as volunteers, that we do understand that they are often the experts in terms of what is needed on the ground when an emergency occurs and that in the process we have gone through as part of the first full-scale reviews of this act in 20 years since it was first enacted we have genuinely listened to them.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3.

Mr WHETSTONE: Clause 3, subsection (2). Recommendation 1 of the review was that the EMA guiding principles should include reference that 'specific planning for vulnerable people is required'. How does this amendment require specific planning?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Chaffey, for your question. I might just clarify. Is your question: when we refer to 'specific planning for vulnerable people is required', what do we mean by specific planning or what specific planning do we think might actually be needed?

Mr WHETSTONE: Recommendation 1 of the review was that the EMA guiding principles should include reference that 'specific planning for vulnerable people is required'.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: My understanding is that it will be inserting a requirement into the act, but when emergency planning is being put in place by agencies, they need to take into account that something specific in each of those cases needs to be considered for vulnerable people in those communities, separate to a more one-size-fits-all plan, that there needs to be a kind of carve-out or special consideration given in those plans to what is being put in place to protect vulnerable people in those communities when the emergency hits.

Mr WHETSTONE: The review also states that in the 2009 Victorian bushfires nearly half of the people who died were considered 'vulnerable' because they were under 12, or over 70 years, or suffered from a chronic illness or disability. Given the broad definition of 'a person at risk' during an emergency, how does the amendment ensure that the guidelines encompass those vulnerable people?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I thank the member for Chaffey, and I am very happy to have another go at this if this does not get to the nub of your question. You use a good example here of the Victorian bushfires, and half being under 12 or over 70. My understanding is that we are not suggesting within this that the plans should assume at each point or at each different emergency that everyone under 12 and everyone over 70 should be considered at risk, because that is not necessarily the case. Those people are not automatically captured, but the planning around vulnerable people in an emergency still needs to be considered and be a bit more specific.

For instance, in a bushfire in a certain area, ask who the people are who might be at risk there, instead of having a cookie cutter or an overlay to say, 'In every single case, what's your plan for everybody under 12 and what's your plan for everybody over 70?', even if responders push back and say, 'But people in this case under 12 or over 70 are not necessarily at risk.' That would not achieve the aims of the act. I think it is more about making sure that we consider in each case who are the people at risk, who are the vulnerable people, and to have a plan for them, but of course taking into account—yes, you are right—in the case of the Victorian bushfire a number of the people who fell into that category were under 12 and over 70.

Mr WHETSTONE: Again, referring to subsection (2), recommendation 1 also suggests reference to volunteers as key contributors towards SA emergency response. How does this amendment fulfil that recommendation?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Thank you, member for Chaffey, for your question. I think what we are getting at here is perhaps doing something that we may not have done well as governments in years gone by, which is actually using this legislative instrument to formally acknowledge the role that volunteers play. I think there was a sense that that had been missing. The recommendation from PEG Consulting that there should be recognition actually in black and white within the Emergency Management Act would be an appropriate step to take to make it clear in the document that guides how we respond that goes through this place that we do acknowledge the very significant role that volunteers play in emergency management, and that is what we are proposing.

Clause passed.

Clause 4 passed.

Clause 5.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, I refer to clause 5(3). What other acts is this amendment intended to extend to?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I think I have an answer to your question. Instead of me listing all of the acts that it will have an intersection with, because I understand there are a lot of those, I am told that this will have an overriding effect over any other act. So if the commissioner, for instance, wants information-gathering powers from another area of government or from an area of government that might be governed by a different act, the power that we are proposing and given here in clause 5 will override all those acts and provide that power for the commissioner, I think in this case, to seek information from that part of government.

Mr WHETSTONE: The amendment applies to part 4 of the act. Are there any sections besides section 24B and section 25 that require disclosure of information?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Sorry for taking a bit of time. The advice I have is that, for example, it might not just be the police commissioner seeking to access the information-gathering powers under clause 5 but it might be other ministers of the Crown. I think a good example might be that the Minister for Energy might seek to use these during an emergency to gather information that would pertain to what we do about keeping the power going during a time of emergency. So it is not just exclusively for the use of the police commissioner, who might be the state emergency coordinator or controller at the time, but it could be used by other ministers to seek information relating to the role they would play in an emergency response.

Mr WHETSTONE: Section 27B is a similar section but it protects an obligation to keep the identity of an informant secret. Why was this protection not included here?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Which clause was that?

Mr WHETSTONE: Clause 5(3).

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Member for Chaffey, if I could just clarify: is your question why those protections are not included or why they are?

Mr WHETSTONE: Why was this protection not included?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Around informants, essentially?

Mr WHETSTONE: Yes.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Okay, thank you. The advice I have is that it was thought not to be necessary to include those protections in this act. That is the best advice that I have. Apparently, it was considered whether or not it would be needed. The advice I have is that although it is included in some other acts of parliament, including, I think, the ICAC Act, it was not thought here that having those protections would be needed.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): That was your third and final question on that clause.

Mr WHETSTONE: That was clause 5.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): That is right.

Mr WHETSTONE: We are moving on to clause 6 now.

Clause passed.

Clause 6.

Mr WHETSTONE: Minister, at clause 6(3), which website will the guidelines be published on?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The DPC website, I am advised.

Mr WHETSTONE: At subclause (4)(a)(ii), what will the terms and conditions of the members be?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Perhaps if I could just clarify: this is a question on clause 4(3); is that right?

Mr WHETSTONE: Subclause (4).

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Subclause (4) of clause 6?

Mr WHETSTONE: Subparagraph (ii). Would you like a bit more clarity to it? Can you confirm that the guidelines will include term limits of office, eligibility for reappointment, terms of vacancy, allowances, and expenses of members?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand; yes.

Clause passed.

Clauses 7 to 13 passed.

Clause 14.

Mr WHETSTONE: Has the government decided who will be appointed as the State Recovery Coordinator?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand our intention, or the government's intention, is it will remain as the Chief Executive of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Mr WHETSTONE: Can the recovery coordinator's position be held by a volunteer?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am told no.

Mr WHETSTONE: Will the recovery coordinator have staff directly employed under them and, if so, how many FTEs?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand they currently do and they will continue to do that. The most specific figure I can give you is the current team is under 10, but that will continue in terms of the changes being made in this act.

Mr WHETSTONE: Clause 14, section 18A: what will the recovery coordinator's salary be?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I might just clarify, in that last question are you referring to the community recovery coordinator, like an Alex Zimmermann as opposed to the DPC?

Mr WHETSTONE: Yes.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand the current level for that role is about a SAES 1, which I think is—and I am being as specific as I can—off the top of my head about \$200,000.

Clause passed.

Clause 15 passed.

Clause 16.

Mr WHETSTONE: What is the reason for the title change in clause 16 and why is it not consequential? I guess the explanation of the clause says that the change is consequential, but it does not provide why.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am told it is because we are adding in this state of alert, which is a change the bill is proposing, so it is consequential to that.

Clause passed.

Clause 17.

Mr WHETSTONE: I move:

Amendment No 1 [Whetstone-1]—

Page 6, line 37—Delete 'in which' second occurring

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 18.

Mr WHETSTONE: New section 21A: will all section 25 powers be granted during a state of alert?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes.

Clause passed.

Clauses 19 to 22 passed.

Clause 23.

Mr WHETSTONE: New section 24B: how will it be determined what information the State Coordinator reasonably requires?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I think the best example is if a control agency were to go up to the coordinator and say, 'We think we need this information,' or, 'We think something might have happened that precipitates us needing that information.' I think that would pass the reasonableness test.

Mr WHETSTONE: Does all the information obtained under this section immediately become immune to FOI, even if it was not immune before?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: The answer is basically no.

Mr WHETSTONE: Why are these powers listed under section 24B instead of section 25, given that section 24 is about disasters and section 25 is about powers?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: It is a good question. As it is explained to me, if we were to have it in another section that would potentially force the government of the day to make it public. There is the risk that if we were already in a vulnerable state, as the state of South Australia, and then had an act that forced us to make something public that could increase that international vulnerability. That is the reason it was put in this section.

Clause passed.

Clause 24.

Mr WHETSTONE: Re section 25, what is the reason for the title change?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand that the change from 'power' to 'general powers' is because 'powers' might make it appear as though that is an exhaustive list of the powers they have, whereas in fact there might be other powers from outside of that clause. It is to more accurately represent that fact.

Mr WHETSTONE: Section 25(2) clarifies that powers are subject to both the regulations and this section the act. Can you explain the reason for the addition?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Which clause was that, sorry, member for Chaffey?

Mr WHETSTONE: Can you just explain the reason for the addition to section 25(2)? There is an addition to subclause (5).

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): Just so I follow you, member, are you talking about on page 10?

Mr WHETSTONE: I am talking about page 10.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): Yes, subclause (5)?

Mr WHETSTONE: I am referring to section 25(2), subclause (5).

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): And the words 'but subject to'?

Mr WHETSTONE: I am referring to:

(5) section 25(2)—after 'but subject to' insert 'this section and'

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): Is that clear to you, minister?

Mr WHETSTONE: The change is 'but subject to', or 'this section and'.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I understand it is a technical change to make clear the interactions between that section and other sections.

Mr WHETSTONE: Alright, so in section 25(3) the removal of subsection (3) ensures the State Coordinator can take advice from whomever they deem necessary; however, does the State Coordinator still have the power to authorise the provision of certain goods and services that were part of that section?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Yes.

Clause passed.

Clause 25.

Mr WHETSTONE: Regarding section 26AB, is there a mechanism or a safeguard that prevents the minister from overturning an act or law prescribed by the regulations under subsection (3)?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: Member for Chaffey, I am told that, yes, there are circumstances in which ministers are able to have powers to make temporary arrangements during a declaration. The example that was just given to me was around community visitor schemes, perhaps, where powers are put in place—probably the COVID pandemic is a good example of where people might not be permitted to leave their home or move outside a certain radius—and it prevents important functions like community visitor schemes. There is provision in the act for a minister to have the power to make what would only be temporary arrangements during a declaration to make sure those functions could still occur.

Clause passed.

Clause 26 passed.

Clause 27.

Mr WHETSTONE: With restrictions of recovery operations on private property being removed, is the State Coordinator under any obligation to inform an owner of a property of the work being undertaken?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: I am told that although this act does give power to the coordinator to go onto private land without the permission of the landowner, which of course in some emergencies would be necessary, particularly if they cannot, for instance, get hold of the private owner in time, our intention is to include in regulations that the coordinator would inform the landowner of their intention to go and do that.

Mr WHETSTONE: Will the government commit to having guidelines for the recovery coordinator to follow before carrying out operations on private property?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: My advice is that the intention is to have in regulations some guidelines around what powers the coordinator will have when they go onto private land in an emergency like the ones that we are, I guess, envisaging here, if that makes sense.

Clause passed.

Clause 28 passed.

Clause 29.

Mr WHETSTONE: I move:

Amendment No 2 [Whetstone-1]—

Page 14, line 6—Delete '—delete subsection (2)' and substitute:

and (3)—delete subsections (2) and (3)

Amendment No 3 [Whetstone-1]—

Page 14, line 13 [clause 29, inserted subsection (2)(b)]—After 'the Governor' insert:

(provided that any such approval must also be in writing and published in a manner and form determined by the Minister)

The first amendment is just streamlining.

Amendments carried; clause as amended passed.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

STATE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION AND FACILITATION BILL

Committee Stage

In committee.

(Continued from 4 March 2025.)

Clause 23.

Mr TELFER: Obviously, we are in the middle of going through the different steps for the process. We have already previously talked about the coordinated project aspect and the designated project. Clause 23 talks about the state development areas. Clause 23(2) provides that the minister may make a recommendation for a state development area based on:

- (c) the protection, conservation, ecological restoration, climate adaptation or enhancement of the environment.

If clause 23 applies to economic development, how exactly does such a clause encourage economic development? We do not oppose the goals outlined by the clause but merely want to understand the existence of such a clause and how it is consistent or otherwise with the other goals of the bill.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: My advice is that that particular subclause allows for the creation of an area of land in order to provide some sort of environmentally appropriate offset for the purposes of a development. My advice is that that ability to be able to have an area designated for that purpose is consistent with existing planning laws but given a fresh voice here.

Mr Telfer: Is native vegetation separate to this type of development?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: That is my understanding, yes, but I will see if I can get some further particulars. Yes, it is, primarily for the existing types of native vegetation offsets that we are currently familiar with in the current planning regime.

Mr TELFER: I think my question here probably flows from that a little bit. It is well understood in regional areas the challenge of dealing with the Native Vegetation Act, the additional costs, the additional obligation. I hope that within the process here there is an opportunity to be able to not necessarily circumvent that process but at least try to streamline it and make it so it is not such an economic burden on potential developers. Clause 23(3) states:

The Minister may not make a recommendation that a specified area of land be established as a State development area if any part of the area of land is within a protected area.

Given the Native Vegetation Act, which does not apply to the Adelaide metropolitan area, why does this clause exist given how widely regional South Australians probably view the Native Vegetation Act as a handbrake, as a roadblock, not only on economic development but on community safety as well in many circumstances?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: My advice is that this relates to areas which already have a significant level of protection under existing either laws or planning determinations, and that includes, for example, the Adelaide Parklands, the Arkaroola Protection Area, or national parks in particular.

Mr TELFER: And not necessarily under the Native Vegetation Act. The thing I have appreciated about this process is that it is such a substantial piece of legislation being constructed, with the way we are going about it. In particular, the bill seems to be silent on cross-border mechanisms. Given the opportunity that may exist in cross-border zones projects, there has been a lot of talk previously with my colleagues in the South-East, both local and state government, on the Green Triangle; for instance the Riverland potentially could have involvement in that sort of cross-border zone project potential. Are there any mechanisms in the bill, for instance, through the declaration of coordinated projects for addressing cross-border complications such as differing legislation and additional agencies, other state government relations?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: My understanding is that, earlier in the bill, at clause 10, there was a function of the Coordinator-General to be able to cooperate and negotiate with other jurisdictions, for example, for the purposes of carrying out their overall functions, to facilitate the consideration of applications under the act. To extend the example that I gave last time we were discussing the bill, overall the purpose of the Coordinator-General is to provide a coordinated one point of contact approach for an applicant to deal with the state government, and then by extension having that statutory officer or their office being able to undertake those same discussions with, in your example, interstate jurisdiction agencies on their behalf as well.

So rather than dealing with the four or five state agencies, to give the example, the Coordinator-General does it for them, that also means they would not have to be dealing with eight or 10 once you consider, for example, the Victorian or the Western Australian or the Northern Territory or the Queensland or the New South Wales jurisdictions as well.

Clause passed.

Clause 24.

Mr TELFER: This clause, Functions—projects generally, gives the capacity for the CGO to vary or specify time periods relating to certain functions. Clause 24(2) provides:

- (2) A section 24 notice must not apply a time period to the performance of a coordinated function, or specify a period within which a coordinated function is to be performed, unless the period applied or specified is a period ending at least 20 business days after publication of the notice.

Why is a section 24 notice limited to such a lengthy period of time, rather than such a function being able to be undertaken in a shorter period?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: The purpose of the bill, generally speaking, is to try to hasten planning processes, which often can take months. Specifying a period of not shorter than 20 days I think indicates the desire for some of these planning functions or assessment functions to be undertaken more quickly but strikes a balance with not being so hasty as to be unreasonable or frivolous in dealing with the matters.

This also countenances processes, including consultation periods or other periods of liaison with the community or other agencies, and a period of 20 business days (or four business weeks) is not an unreasonable minimum period of time for there to be an adequate consultation process.

Clause passed.

Clause 25.

Mr TELFER: Clause 25 talks about the designated function that a CGO may call in. I draw the minister's attention to 25(7)(e), which provides:

- (e) in a case where the designated function is the making of a recommendation or giving advice to a Minister under the designated Act and CGO makes the recommendation or gives the advice (in accordance with this section) to the relevant Minister, that Minister may make the decision to which the recommendation or advice relates without regard to any matter relevant to the making of the recommendation or giving of advice (and any requirements of the designated Act in relation to the making of the recommendation or giving of advice are taken to have been satisfied for the purposes of the relevant Minister's decision).

My question is on what basis is a minister entitled to basically ignore advice and disregard all CGO submissions in making a decision? Why does the advice of the CGO assume no weight simply because the CGO provides advice on the designated function? This is a bit of the conversation that we have had in previous weeks, really. What is the point of a CGO if a designated function allows the minister to basically completely ignore the recommendation of the CGO?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I thought your question was going to be whether I thought one comma was really sufficient to break up an eight-line clause. My advice is that the subclause allows a minister, in making their decision, to be able to make that decision without needing to strictly follow that act's procedural requirements on how the advice or the recommendation is to be given. So in the context that the Coordinator-General is assuming some of the functions of different agencies across government that each have their own legislative procedural framework for considering applications, given that the purpose of the Coordinator-General is to not only deal with but to try to expedite those processes, this clause ensures that the minister is able to do that in a way which is not necessarily consistent with those procedural requirements.

Mr TELFER: With a substantive clause like this, taking into consideration not just whichever current minister is going to be in charge of this but future as well—it certainly piqued my interest, it is fair to say. I am also interested in how the CGO will gather the expertise and information necessary to make decisions that are usually made by state and/or local government bodies. For example, the bill gives the CGO the power to call in powers exercised by a council in relation to the subdivision of land. When a council performs its planning functions, it is not just thinking about the business needs of a particular developer or a particular project but must take into account the needs of the local community—not just in the short term but in 50 years down the track, potentially.

So if the CGO has called in expertise—its council planning powers, for instance—how can we be sure that the CGO in its decision-making on a project as a whole is taking into account considerations for some of that core community function which may be involved in a potential project: parks and gardens, street lighting, footpaths, on-street parking, etc.? I have written down a whole big list, but you get the idea—some of the basic community infrastructure that decision-makers at the local government level are making sure they put proper planning into when considering developments.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: As part of the process of calling a function into the remit of the Coordinator-General, first the original designated entity must be consulted with. In the example that you give about local government, there would need to be a consultation with local government. There would also be the ability—for example, with state government agencies that have a fairly technical lens that they place over applications, such as the Environment Protection Agency or Energy and Mining or coastal protection, etc.—for the Coordinator-General to have the capacity to call in resources from that agency to assist with this.

I should also point out that it is conceivable that there will be occasions on which local government will be looking to offer up the consideration of an application rather than have to do it themselves, because of how either complex or resource-intensive it would be for them to try to do it. I guess the fail-safe with this is again that the minister has to be the ultimate decision-maker after the consideration has been made.

In the same way that the local government entity has a keen mind as to how the developments can impact their local community and what impact it will have for ratepayers or local amenity or environment, etc., that is also a similar lens. As a minister responsible to the house and as one of 47 members, the minister has to carry that responsibility of understanding how a

development approval or rejection is going to impact a particular community where that development is proposed to be based as well.

Mr TELFER: Obviously, we are surmising and presuming, perhaps, the sorts of projects which could be included in these sorts of projects, but the legislation is relatively broad in looking at what future potential projects there could be. In calling in a power, is the CGO required to consider and weigh up concepts like the public interest?

These potentially very broad powers that the CGO has could, potentially, override legislation or regulation, potentially override the views or the wishes of many experts or qualified persons in both state and local government. Should the bill contain an overriding requirement for the CGO to consider and weigh up the public interest more broadly? Could the CGO call in a power and exercise it in a way that results in that sort of obligation? That perspective, I think, is an interesting one.

You talk about the different departments that may be called in for the perspective, but the public interest is something which, I guess, at elected member level is something which is the responsibility in the end. Is it the same answer? You say that the final decision sits with the minister. Is that the same sort of obligation you see, as far as that broader public interest?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: The Coordinator-General has to consider the responsibilities under each of the acts which are still relevant to how that development is assessed for that particular purpose. Using the examples I mentioned before—the Environmental Protection Agency or Energy and Mining—they have a structure around how they consider applications relevant to them, and that still has to be applied. It is just applied by the Coordinator-General rather than the client agency in that respect.

Overarchingly, to get to the broader context of your question, back in clause 4 we canvassed the primary principle about why a project or an application would be considered by the Coordinator-General or the minister. It has to consider the economic, social and environmental outcomes of the project, both for the state as a whole and also for the locality. There is an obligation, I guess, at the granular level in terms of the application of existing requirements, that that overarching primary principle applies about how those three outcomes—economic, social and environmental—apply locally and also for the benefit of the state. I used the term 'lens' before, but that layering of the considerations that have to be undertaken by the Coordinator-General means that it is very thorough but, importantly, one of those lenses is the local impact across those three different domains.

Mr TELFER: To some degree it is getting down to finer detail, but as to the concept more broadly, could the CGO call in a power and exercise it in a way—when we are looking at a local government area, for instance—that results in an ongoing cost for a council? For example, could the CGO approve the construction of a community wastewater scheme (CWS) in a manner that required the council to pay for the operation and maintenance cost of the wastewater facility?

Unfortunately, throughout the state SA Water do not have to deal with all the wastewater; it is often the obligation of a local government entity and the ratepayers and the fee payers that go with that, if there is an extra obligation that is created because of the CGO calling it a power of construction—wastewater, but also stormwater. If the CGO approved stormwater pipes that were too narrow and then they had to be replaced for bigger pipes, once the obligation of the original design and delivery of the project is completed and the responsibility for that ongoing infrastructure is in place—often it could be for a local government area—who covers that cost? Who bears that cost if a council is required to increase its rates as a direct consequence of a decision of the CGO? Would the council be able to seek recompense from the Treasurer, for instance?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: It is a good question, because the examples that you give are ones which are contemporary, I think. We are spending almost literally an unimaginable amount of money fixing the CWMS in Tea Tree Gully. That is a good way of demonstrating how, for example, the approval of perhaps quite a significant housing development might have costs in the future.

That is currently the case and it will no doubt continue to be the case. I would like to think, though, that the obligation to consult with local government in the first instance, if they are otherwise the entity that should be considering the matter, will provide an opportunity for that local government entity to ensure that its concerns are heard and raised.

Secondly, in that context, knowing that you are in receipt of advice from the council saying, 'Well, if this thing gets approved, we estimate we are up for X, Y and Z costs per annum over a 30-year period,' I would surmise that that would heighten the obligation on the Coordinator-General and their office to ensure that the way in which the development or the application is being put for consideration takes that into account and has some sort of mitigation, or it might indeed be an obligation that is dealt with between the proponent and the council. I cannot stand here and say that this will ensure that if it would otherwise be dealt with by a council, if it is going to be dealt with by the Coordinator-General that it will not have any extra costs.

As we see with housing developments, councils are very, very quick to complain about how much it costs to pick up the bins. Without exception, they never raise the fact that for every new household there is a fresh council rate notice which generates four quarterly payments of council rates into their coffers. It is a valid argument, but it is an argument that has two legitimate sides to it as well.

If we get outside the housing context, you are right: the councils continue on with their campaign of wanting to levy new charges or council rates onto electricity generators, for example. In my view, in the middle of what is described by them as 'a cost-of-living crisis', coming up with a new impost on electricity generation costs I would not have thought was the most opportune time, but that is a matter for them, not for me.

I understand that those arguments will continue to be put, but there are also developments, for example, which may occur in communities. The member for Hammond is very familiar with what goes on in his electorate, whether it is through Big River Pork, for example, let alone all of the other food manufacturers and primary producers. Yes, it will have an impact on the council area, but it will have a corresponding strong economic impact as well, providing jobs and economic activity and opportunities for families living in those council areas.

Within all of those examples is that initial obligation to consult as well as the inherent burden that comes with taking on this responsibility to make sure that you get it right, particularly when you are getting that feedback, both during the initial advice and the mandatory consultation periods from local government, for example.

Mr TELFER: I have a supplementary under that one, with your leave.

The ACTING CHAIR (Ms Stinson): Sure.

Mr TELFER: I get the two different sides, because I have seen firsthand both those different aspects. As a local government entity, you do not want to be the one responsible for an obligation for your community in the future. In conversation with the CGO through the consultation process they could be setting a bar like this for infrastructure, where they expect not just currently but also for the medium and long term the project will require that level of infrastructure.

The CGO will be having to develop a recommendation, which in the end will go to a minister. This is where we started with the bill and the challenge for a role like this is not to be politicised. In the end there is going to have to be a decision-maker, who will basically come in and set a service level, a standard of construction expectation. Is it once again the case that the CGO will go through the consultation process with all the different agencies, including local government, and then make a recommendation to the minister, and the minister will make the final decision on whether they are satisfied with that service level or infrastructure investment level?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I understand the point you are making. I think you are right to make the point about a development which is being considered by the Coordinator-General, which is going to have a really significant impact on a local government area, and the council is jumping up and down about it because they are worried about those impacts, whether they are economic, social or environmental. They are promulgating publicly that they are concerned because, for as far as they know, there is not yet sufficient mitigation of those impacts on their community.

That is going to rest heavy on either the Coordinator General in providing their advice to the minister or the minister in making the decision. They will make that decision in the knowledge that if they do not take into account the concerns that local government has raised then they can expect to hear about it, and potentially feel the political effects of that when the next cycle comes around.

I think the structure set up in the bill, where there is a requirement for consultation and there are the existing planning considerations and processes that remain in place but I just bought into somebody else's responsibility rather than local government's in this concern, means that all of those issues should be ventilated in the same way that they would otherwise have been. If there is an unacceptable impact—economic, social or environment—or there is a burden created, then that would also create the opportunity, if not some form of obligation, for the Coordinator General, and subsequently the minister, to only give an approval in recognition of that burden and whether there have been some mitigating strategies put in place.

This is just as comprehensive a process as the existing regimes—except, hopefully, a bit quicker and a bit a bit easier to navigate for proponents. But it is not just as comprehensive, it is potentially more thorough, because you have more sets of eyes over it and the decision rests heavy with the minister. We have got the planning minister in the chamber at the moment, as disorderly as it is—

The Hon. N.D. Champion interjecting:

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: That's right; he is omnipresent, he is with us always, the planning minister. No-one in this chamber would understand better than he that when you are making the final decision you become responsible for all the characteristics of whatever that application is.

I am sure whether it is him or the previous planning ministers we have had in the proceeding four years, they all understand that it is their name that sticks with that. Just as we talk about, or have been talking, about infill development or the Mount Barker development, that is not usually personified with the name of the particular developer; it is usually personified with the name of the particular minister. We do understand that that responsibility rests with the minister, and I hope that means it enhances decision making rather than detracts from it.

Mr TELFER: Is there a risk or a danger that the accelerated process of the CGO will mean that there is not enough time to properly consider those future ramifications? I know we are talking hypotheticals here, but we spoke earlier in the debate about the developments that happened with the AUKUS arrangements, the significant long-term potential there. If you are streamlining a process without understanding all those different aspects properly, and I hope there is not that much fat in the current system that it is languishing for lack of effort, is there a risk that that streamlining process will mean there is not that fulsome consideration of those future costs?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: It is a good question, because with AUKUS we tend to think of the Osborne shipyards, and no doubt when the shipyards are expanded—and I think the commonwealth says they will need to triple the size of the shipyards, triple it for the purpose of building nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines. That is a type of development that we have not had here in South Australia. Without putting too fine a point on it, they have to ferry out a nuclear reactor, they have to unload it off whatever the vessel is that has brought it to Australia and into South Australian waters and to Osborne, they have to put that thing on the dock and then they have to get it inside the boat and plug it in and turn it on.

Mr TELFER: It sounds very simple.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: That is my understanding of the process, anyway, so I don't know what the fuss is. All the facilities, protections and safeguards that dealing with such a sensitive piece of kit will require are of course intense, but I come back to my earlier comment that we are using existing processes and placing them with another entity. Yes, they may be accelerated, but no step in the process will be missed and getting that balance right between stopping something dragging on for months or years and making sure that it happens but there is a minimum period of 20 business days means that there is adequate consultation.

Having said that, I used to represent the bottom half of Lefevre Peninsula when I first came into parliament and I am very aware that no matter the strictures of this bill, no matter the periods of consultation, no matter the minimum number of business days that have to occur, there are some people in the community who are deeply unsatisfied with the fact that we are undertaking this economic and industrial activity in our state and the provisions of this bill will never be enough for them. But I do genuinely believe that we have struck the right balance between it being thorough and

open and consistent with current processes but expedited in a way that we can start generating this economic, industrial or other activity for the benefit of the state.

Clause passed.

Clause 26.

Mr TELFER: I refer to clause 26, 'CGO may impose, amend etc conditions on certain decisions'. Minister, I will cast your attention to clause 26(3), where it states:

- (3) If the decision maker for a designated decision is a Minister, CGO may only act under subsection (1) or (2) with the approval of that Minister.

Again, for a theoretical, independent body, the minister does not necessarily retain a veto but rather the CGO has its hands tied on any direction relating to a minister, so what is the point of a CGO being in place if there is this provision where it cannot direct a minister where the CGO believes the minister is failing to meet project standards?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: There are a couple of elements to this. One is that we cannot have an arrangement where the ultimate decision-maker is the minister and the CGO is issuing written directions to the ultimate decision-maker, i.e. the minister. We cannot have somebody who has the legislative authority to make a decision as the minister being bound or constrained or required to undertake a decision, or particular elements of that decision, by a statutory officer, otherwise there is not much point in the statutory provision of the minister being the decision-maker.

The second part is we also want to see through this bill that the CGO is acting consistently with how the minister will either want to consider the decision or make the decision. So, for example, you do not want the CGO to start imposing particular conditions that are required on the proponent, if they get an approval, that are inconsistent with what the minister wants.

You raised, for example, native vegetation offsets. You do not want a determination made about native vegetation offsets where the minister might take the view as, 'Actually, the offset has to be consistent with the scope and the scale of the development, and I am not sure that you have imposed that condition appropriately. You have not identified enough or you have gone unreasonably over the top,' for example. They are a couple of different ways of explaining why you would have those provisions as set out in the bill.

Mr TELFER: It is a bit circular, is it not? That is the challenge with this because the basis of the process is to streamline and try to make sure there is efficiency within it and having that independent lens over the top, but in the end, if a CGO is in a situation where they are having to be double guessing themselves, checking with the minister as far as processes go—I am not reflecting on any particular minister—things can sit for a period of time on the desk of a minister as much as anything. This is why I would take the answer that you have given in the perfect world, but this clause is a bit circular. Clause 26(7) states:

If a notice under subsection (1) is given to the decision maker, the decision maker—...

- (b) must not impose a condition on the designated decision that is inconsistent with a condition that is directed to impose under subsection (1).

In the event of the decisionmaker and the CGO coming into a conflict or disagreement over whether a condition is inconsistent with another condition, where does the final say rest? Does the CGO retain the final say in the process itself? I understand the minister has the final say in the final decision, but as a process evolves and the CGO is developing a recommendation to go to a minister, where does that final say sit? Does it fall with the CGO or within the discretion of the minister?

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Yes, it is a good question. If you go back to clause 26(3), the CGO can only act under subsection (1) or (2), that is, issue one of those notices or directions. They can only do that with the approval of the minister. It is not possible under the bill for the CGO to be issuing one of those written instruments unless the minister has approved it. I think that clarifies that the minister retains primacy in that arrangement.

Mr TELFER: I do not know if I will get to a question or not, but this is where we get down to the logistics of the process of this and the risk of politicisation, the risk of there being the best decision on an item that suits the political party or the electorate. You spoke before, when talking about the

relationship with the local government area for instance, that the minister would wear the political blowback basically, potentially, so they are always accountable to that.

The reverse of that is that there could be the risk of the wrong decision being made for political reasons. Rather than the minister going too far with that process, they might hold back because of the concerns of that political process, so I think the CGO's independence is paramount. This is what you are trying to communicate, but in the end it is a political decision, not just at the end but through the process as well.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Yes, I think it is a good way to elaborate on that responsibility of being the final arbiter or the final decision-maker in the process because, whether it is the CGO or whether it is the Coordinator-General or whether it is the minister, that obligation remains the same. With the minister, there is a heightened level of accountability, of course, because they are responsible to the parliament as well as every four years electorally.

You have made a couple of references to the potential politicisation of it, but after your 30-year parliamentary career, once you tire of your frontbench duties, someone of your experience in representing local communities, understanding portfolios, etc., coupled with the fact that you have been a Local Government Association president and a mayor, might be a perfect candidate to be a coordinator-general, for example.

Mr Telfer: A glutton for punishment.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: Indeed, a glutton for punishment. I do not think you should be too hard on our class, for example, of a person who might be undertaking that role because, in the context of the concerns that you have raised regarding these past clauses, it is arguably someone of that ilk that is going to be better placed to balance the competing interests and concerns about a proposed development rather than someone who is just very, very practised at administering the planning law.

When I articulate it like that, I am sure you are thinking, 'Yes, I know what those local considerations are, I know what the legislative considerations are, I know how I should be thinking intuitively about considering how to get that balance right between the different competing objectives.'

Clause passed.

Clause 27.

Mr TELFER: Clause 27 is about the review of certain decisions. Clause 27(11) provides that the decision-maker has power to do anything necessary to implement the CGO's decision—'anything necessary'. Given the obvious breadth of this clause, what limitations apply to the ability of the decision-maker to implement the decision of the CGO? There is no limitation and there is the power to do anything necessary.

The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN: I am advised that, in the event that a decision is made and then subsequently substituted, this provides the capacity for the decision-maker to implement the decision that is taken by the Coordinator-General. If there is any variance between the original decision and the substituted decision, this power is for the CGO's decision.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ELECTIONS) (AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN AND COMPULSORY VOTING) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

PASSENGER TRANSPORT (POINT TO POINT TRANSPORT SERVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill with the amendments and suggested amendment indicated by the following schedule, to which amendments and suggested amendment the Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the House of Assembly:

Schedule of the amendments made by the Legislative Council

No. 1. Clause 43, page 36, after line 12—After subclause (3) insert:

(3a) Section 64—after subsection (2) insert:

(2a) The Minister must ensure that consultation is undertaken (in such manner as the Minister thinks fit) with the following classes of persons before any designated regulation is made under this Act:

- (a) persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, represent industries involved in the provision of passenger transport services;
- (b) persons who, in the opinion of the Minister, represent consumers of passenger transport services (including consumers with disabilities or other special needs).

No. 2. Clause 43, page 36, after line 19 [clause 43(4)]—After inserted subsection (6) insert:

(7) In this section—

designated regulation means a regulation that is, in the opinion of the Minister, made for the purpose of implementing the *Passenger Transport Act Review* undertaken by the government of South Australia and published in August 2024.

Schedule of the suggested amendment made by the Legislative Council

No. 1. New clause, page 36, before line 1—Insert:

41A—Insertion of section 62B

After section 62A insert:

62B—Application of levy amounts

(1) Amounts collected as point to point transport service transaction levy amounts under Schedule 2 may only be applied for any 1 or more of the following purposes:

- (a) the provision of public transport services in the State;
- (b) the administration and regulation of the passenger transport industry in the State;
- (c) measures to improve disability access to passenger transport services in the State;
- (d) the facilitation of active transport in the State;
- (e) implementation of a prescribed scheme under section 52AB.

(2) In this section—

active transport means walking, bicycle riding, scooter riding or other self-propelled means of transportation.

Consideration in committee.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments and suggested amendment be agreed to.

The Hon. D.G. PISONI: The amendments have come down and the one disappointing factor in the amendments is that the amendment from the Hon. Ben Hood was not accepted by the Legislative Council, and that was to have a sunset clause on the amount of the levy. I have been in this place long enough to know that once a tax has increased or a tax is in place, rarely is it removed voluntarily. The increased levy had a specific purpose and that was to fund the buyback of the licences to remove the perpetual licence system that has been in play here in South Australia for almost as long as the history of taxis, until this legislation.

I understand that the amendments that we are accepting do specify some more detail about how the levy is to be spent, but I take the house back to the original reason why the \$1 levy was introduced back in 2016. It was about the compensation for taxi licences, and the argument that we have heard time and time again from the government on the increase in the levy was for the compensation, now for the removal of the perpetual licence.

I am using this opportunity to put on the record that we are concerned about the levy being there permanently, and the new reasons for justifying the levy once the funding or the money that is raised from the levy has funded the buyout, and so having a sunset clause would have forced a future government to either continue the levy through legislation or, alternatively, let it go.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: On indulgence, may I just very briefly thank some staff on the passage of the bill. I want to thank Emma Kokar, Olivia Hubbard, Matt Osborne, Sarah Clark, Stuart Gilbert, Minister Scriven, the Attorney-General and, of course, the crossbench in the upper house for their exceptional work.

Motion carried.

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

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

At 17:37 the house adjourned until Tuesday 1 April 2025 at 11:00.