

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

### Thursday, 13 November 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 Committees*

### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: ADELAIDE AIRPORT LIMITED WATER TRUNK MAIN PROJECT**

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

That the 155<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Adelaide Airport Limited Water Trunk Main Project, be noted.

As part of preparations for expansion at the western end of the Adelaide Airport terminal, SA Water is working in conjunction with the Airport to replace an existing water trunk main. Constructed in 1938, the trunk main is one of three that feed Adelaide's western suburbs and was originally located in a road reserve before the land was rezoned for the Airport in the 1950s. It is now located under the main runway, taxiways and the aircraft apron, as well as running adjacent to the southern edge of the terminal building and car park.

Presently, the trunk main tunnel is in sound condition; however, its location does impose a weight restriction for aircraft. As part of the planned Airport expansion, the trunk main will be decommissioned and a new ID-750 trunk main constructed with an alignment away from key Airport infrastructure. The new trunk main will maintain water service to current connections as well as include provision for future Airport developments.

The new permanent alignment will relocate the trunk main to the east, away from Airport runways and structures, which will enable future growth and expansion of the Airport as well as provide easier maintenance access for SA Water. The agency is responsible for the design of the new alignment, and Adelaide Airport will engage the contractor for the relocation works.

SA Water has stated that the preferred alignment will be determined in collaboration with the Airport following a multi-criteria analysis, an approach consistent with the options assessment process followed by SA Water for capital works projects. Construction is anticipated to commence in the second quarter of next year, with the expectation to be practically complete by the year's end.

Adelaide Airport will bear the complete cost to design and construct the water main realignment. This is consistent with past practice, where functional assets are relocated for the benefit of third parties. Once complete, Adelaide Airport will gift SA Water the new water infrastructure to maintain and manage. As such, this project is considered unregulated.

The project is expected to cost \$60.1 million and, as an unregulated project, Adelaide Airport will be funding the project in its entirety. SA Water expects no increase to operating costs, with the agency stating that future operational expenditure is likely to reduce due to the new pipe replacing an ageing asset. Adelaide Airport will be responsible for procuring materials and contractors for the project's construction. SA Water is using its existing frameworks to provide support. These frameworks will offer experience in delivering efficiency through collaboration, innovation, consistency, planning and programming.

Adelaide Airport will engage approved SA Water contractors and will be responsible for evaluating service value for money. The project is being managed in accordance with the agency's project management methodology by a project manager from SA Water's capital delivery group. The project manager is responsible for the development and delivery of the design of the project, as well

as managing its construction, including seeking necessary approvals. SA Water states it has requested that Adelaide Airport implement regular work health and safety and environmental audits during the construction phase of the project.

SA Water and Adelaide Airport are jointly facilitating risk assessment workshops with relevant stakeholders to identify and evaluate business, operational and project risks. Key risks include (a) that SA Water may inherit a constructed asset not to agency standards, (b) project delays for which Adelaide Airport has commissioned jointly developed sequencing, tie-in, shutdown and handover plans, and (c) impacts to Airport operations. The project team will utilise existing Airport procedures and controls that are in place for onsite contractors and approvals.

This project will be undertaken on commonwealth land in accordance with the Airports Act and the Airport Environmental Protection Regulations. The regulatory framework applies to the management of all on-ground environmental issues, including air, soil, water, noise and chemical pollution. The commonwealth government is responsible for the administration of the Airport environmental regulatory regime, including appointment of an Airport environment officer authorised to make decisions regarding compliance with regulations and standards.

An Airport building controller is responsible for regulating building activity at the Airport. SA Water anticipates the building contractor will liaise with the environmental officer concerning environmental considerations. The project will also require the contractor prepare a construction environmental management plan. Tenderers will be required to submit proposed sustainability considerations, which may include things such as low carbon technologies for vehicles, equipment and the compound; solar power sources for onsite facilities; transport planning to minimise fuel consumption; sustainability policies, targets and strategies; environmental procedures and response plans; evidence of environmental training of contractor personnel; and environmental hazard reporting procedures.

The contract will be required to also comply with the Adelaide Airport's Aboriginal Sites, Objects, and Remains Discovery Procedure. A search of the central archive identified one Aboriginal cultural heritage site to the east of the project location. Should any other Aboriginal cultural heritage be uncovered, works are to cease immediately and a heritage consultant be engaged. The agency states that native title has already been extinguished over the Airport.

Adelaide Airport will be responsible for public consultation as well as engaging internal and external stakeholders and partner organisations through the project life cycle. Adelaide Airport will liaise with SA Water's stakeholder engagement team through the project to ensure external communication is managed in line with SA Water's policies and procedures. The agency has circulated project documentation amongst relevant departments, which have indicated support for the project.

The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to the Adelaide Airport Limited Water Trunk Main Project. Witnesses who appeared before the committee were Emma Goldsworthy, Senior Manager of Capital Delivery at SA Water, and Darren Burton, Project Manager at SA Water. I do want to thank the witnesses for their time.

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

Motion carried.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: ELECTRICAL INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES PROGRAM**

**Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (11:09):** I move:

That the 156<sup>th</sup> report of the Public Works Committee, entitled Electrical Infrastructure Upgrades Program—Tranche 1, be noted.

SA Water, the agency, has identified a number of sites where high-voltage switchboards and associated electrical infrastructure have become hazardous and may pose threats to system reliability and maintenance. The Electrical Infrastructure Upgrades Program is designed to enhance safety of site personnel, improve hardware resilience, safeguard system reliability and ensure uninterrupted water supply. The proposed project is the first of two stages and will provide upgrades for the Murray Bridge and Morgan systems.

The high-voltage switchboards and associated electrical equipment at the identified locations have exceeded their serviceable life span and they present safety risks, particularly those related to arc flash exposure. In an arc flash event, electrical faults cause current flow through the air between two live high-voltage conductors. This can release energy temperatures as high as 20,000°C, leading to severe injuries such as third-degree burns, loss of sight, internal burns, permanent hearing loss and more.

Despite the agency's implementation of stringent access controls and use of maximum-rated PPE, the residual safety risks do remain unacceptable and interim mitigation measures such as upstream isolations are increasingly disruptive to operations and maintenance activities. They no longer represent a reasonable long-term approach to maintaining levels of service within the network.

Site-specific factors, such as asset condition and layout, operational criticality and constructability are being considered within the design and have informed whether full replacement or targeted upgrades are required. The project will construct new switch rooms at Murray Bridge Onkaparinga Pump Station 3, Morgan Whyalla Pipeline Pump Station 1 and Murray Bridge Onkaparinga Pump Station 1. Supporting works will include:

- new high-voltage switch gear, including associated connections with ElectraNet and SA Power Networks;
- installation of power control and communications cabling with complete support systems;
- remote high-voltage switching panels;
- critical building services including lighting, fire protection, security, arc ducting and earthing;
- enabling civil works; and
- decommissioning and cutover of existing systems.

The project may require some land acquisition at the Murray Bridge Onkaparinga Pump Station 1 workshop to the levee bank area cable run, as well as Murray Bridge Onkaparinga Station 3 to enable upgrades to a power network transformer. The exact details of land to be acquired will be determined as part of the detailed design phase of the project and any acquisition will be undertaken in accordance with the Land Acquisition Act. The project schedule anticipates construction to be completed at all locations by the end of the third quarter of 2028.

The project is expected to cost \$147 million, and the agency does not expect additional operational costs as a result of the project. The operating and capital costs of this project are funded through the 2024 Regulatory Determination and are approved by the Essential Services Commission. The project will, therefore, have no impact on SA Water's overall borrowings or contributions to government.

SA Water has included the delivery of the project within the agency's Wastewater Major Framework Program. Procurement has been conducted in accordance with the agency's policies and procedures and conforms to all applicable Treasury and government policies. The agency uses procurement frameworks and enables the sequential award of work, incentivising suppliers to perform well to ensure continuity of work.

The agency states that this delivers significant efficiency benefits through collaboration, innovation, consistency, planning and programming. Option analysis and concept design was completed by SA Water Engineering and the award of the design and construct package shall be in accordance with SA Water's Delegation of Financial and Procurement Authority, as well as applicable Treasury and government policies.

The project is being managed in accordance with SA Water's Corporate Project Management Methodology by a project manager from the agency's Capital Planning and Delivery Group. The project manager is responsible for the development and delivery of the overall project, including seeking the necessary approvals and management of the selected contractor.

SA Water has a business management policy and framework which is used to identify risks, determine related impacts and develop mitigation strategies. Potential risks identified include:

- extended lead times due to external factors;
- delays due to ElectraNet requirements to deliver enabling works (but there has been a stakeholder plan prepared); and
- uncontrollable environmental conditions for which detailed design has included comprehensive site investigations and enabling works to have been planned to complete before winter.

An environmental control plan has been prepared to ensure the project is delivered in compliance with relevant regulations. The selected contractor will be required to establish a construction environmental management plan outlining the general environmental controls and mitigation measures that will be implemented during project delivery. A site environmental plan will be developed to address site-specific environmental management requirements and associated approval conditions. SA Water will monitor the execution of both plans by means of site inspections and audits.

SA Water states it is reviewing relevant and available information regarding the likelihood of encountering Aboriginal cultural heritage. The design and construct contractor will be required to comply with the agency's standard operating procedure for the discovery of Aboriginal heritage during construction work. Should any Aboriginal sites, objects or remains be found, works will cease immediately, and the contractor should contact an environment and heritage expertise representative.

It is a prerequisite that site employees be familiar with the requirements of these procedures prior to conducting ground disturbance works. Working in flood plain areas of the River Murray may require monitoring pending final design and alignment of the cable run from the workshop to the levee area at Murray Bridge Onkaparinga Pump Station 1. Native title implications are being reviewed for all three locations, with further advice to be sought from the Crown Solicitor's Office. The agency states no local estate heritage is listed within the vicinity of the proposed works alignment.

Internal stakeholders and partner organisations will be kept informed throughout the project life cycle via project progress meetings. SA Water states that the submission has been circulated amongst relevant government departments, and they have indicated support for the project.

The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to the Electrical Infrastructure Upgrades Program—Tranche 1. Witnesses who appeared were Emma Goldsworthy, Senior Manager from SA Water, and Greg O'Grady, Senior Project Manager for SA Water. I thank the witnesses for their time.

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

Motion carried.

### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: SWAN REACH ELEVATED WATER TANKS RENEWAL PROJECT**

**Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (11:16):** I move:

That the 157<sup>th</sup> report of the Public Works Committee, entitled Swan Reach Elevated Water Tank Renewal Project, be noted.

The proposed project from SA Water, the agency, will construct new elevated water tanks at Swan Reach to ensure reliable water supply for customers within the region. The works will replace aged tanks at the SA Water treatment in Swan Reach, 170 kilometres north-east of metropolitan Adelaide. The treatment facility was built in 1978 and comprises four fibre-reinforced polymer tanks with a total capacity of 180 kilolitres. These assets supply water for approximately 700 customers in the region and have reached the end of their design life. Replacement of the tanks and infrastructure is a high priority to ensure ongoing delivery of the agency's regulated standards of water services for SA Water customers.

The proposed works will decommission and demolish the existing aged tanks and supporting structures, as well as construct two new 90-kilolitre elevated tanks on an adjacent tract of Crown land. The replacement works will include supporting structures, pipework, inlet and outlet arrangement, as well as associated infrastructure. The decision to construct the new tanks on land adjacent to the existing facility is really important, as it prevents interruption to customer drinking water supply, ensures safety to site personnel and maintains access to the water treatment plant.

During concept development, SA Water conducted investigations into two options compared against a do-nothing base case. These investigations considered technical and financial components, risk assessment and net present value, resulting in the following options:

- the first option involved demolishing the existing elevated tanks and constructing a new 180-kilolitre storage facility incorporating four 45-kilolitre elevated tanks and associated equipment;
- the second option proposed demolishing the existing elevated tanks and constructing a new 180-kilolitre storage facility incorporating two 90-kilolitre elevated tanks and associated equipment.

The second option was determined the preferred option as it presents significantly lower risk to existing SA Water infrastructure while also addressing the key drivers of the project. Construction is anticipated to commence in the first quarter of next year with the expectation for the project be practically complete in early 2027.

The project is expected to cost \$12.4 million and the operating and capital costs for the project will be funded through the 2024 regulatory determination. The project will therefore have no impact on SA Water's overall borrowings or contribution to government. A section of pipework will require the acquisition of land through an easement on adjacent private land and land acquisition will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant land and property acts.

SA Water uses procurement frameworks that enable the sequential award of works to suppliers, incentivising suppliers to perform well to secure the continuity of work. This model delivers significant efficiency benefits through collaboration, innovation, consistency, planning and programming.

In June last year, the agency extended its major framework partner agreements and the Swan Reach Elevated Water Tank Renewal Project has been included in the agency's water civil major framework program. The procurement process has been conducted in accordance with SA Water's policies and procedures and conforms to all applicable Treasury and government policies. SA Water Engineering has been responsible for the analysis and concept design, and a design and construct model has been selected to deliver the project. SA Water states that a major framework partner will submit a proposal to complete the project.

The project is being managed in accordance with SA Water's corporate project management methodology by a project manager from the agency's capital planning and delivery group. The project manager is responsible for project development and delivery including seeking approvals and managing works.

SA Water uses a business management policy and framework to identify and manage project risks. Key risks identified include (a) increased safety concerns due to tasks required at elevated heights, for which the design does include a detailed construction execution plan, (b) impacts on local native vegetation due to the increased site footprint, for which the design conserves vegetation where possible, and (c) network isolation issues and service disruptions for customers during tie-in activities, for which detailed planning is in place for shutdowns, effective coordination and impact assessments.

SA Water's corporate-wide policies reinforce a commitment to operating sustainably to support viability now and into the future, and the selected contractor will be encouraged to develop processes that consider short and long-term, local and global, environmental, social and economic considerations. Initiatives include the efficient use of resources, the use of local expertise and contractors, reducing carbon emissions, flexible processes and products, and recycling and re-use.

An environmental control plan has been prepared to ensure the project is delivered in compliance with the relevant legislative frameworks. Under the Water Civil Framework Delivery Partnership, the contractor has an established construction environmental management plan outlining general environmental controls and mitigation measures. A site environmental management plan will be developed to address site-specific environmental conditions.

SA Water states that the proposed easement where the new elevated tanks will be constructed falls within the First Peoples of the River Murray Mallee Native Title Claim No. 2. This claim is currently in the process of being negotiated and a consent determination is not likely until next year. SA Water is in the process of providing the native title claimants with a notification of works, and senior representatives have advised the agency that they have no concerns with SA Water building the infrastructure on this site. Assessments indicate a low risk of encountering or impacting Aboriginal heritage and the construction contractor will be required to comply with SA Water's standard operation procedure for the discovery of Aboriginal heritage. Additionally all site construction employees will attend a site-specific Aboriginal cultural heritage induction. The agency has identified no project impact on state heritage places or items.

SA Water is in ongoing consultation with the Mid Murray Council and adjacent landowners to manage and minimise construction impacts. Internal stakeholders and partner organisations will be kept informed throughout the project life cycle via project progress meetings. Project documentation has been circulated amongst relevant government departments which have indicated support for the project.

The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to the Swan Reach Elevated Water Tank Renewal project. Witnesses who appeared before the committee were Emma Goldsworthy, Senior Manager, Capital Delivery, SA Water, and Sami Abou-Hamdan, Senior Project Manager, SA Water. I do want to thank the witnesses for their time. Based upon the evidence considered and pursuant to section 12C of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991, the Public Works Committee reports to parliament that it recommends the proposed public work.

Motion carried.

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: CAPITAL UPGRADE OF WATER TRUNK MAIN  
INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE REGIONAL NETWORK AREA PROGRAM**

**Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (11:25):** I move:

That the 158<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Capital Upgrade of Water Trunk Main Infrastructure in the Regional Network Area, be noted.

This project from SA Water (the agency) proposes to upgrade water trunk main infrastructure in Port Pirie South, Risdon Park, Risdon Park South, Crystal Brook, Yankalilla, Normanville and Carrickalinga—some areas that would be well known to you, of course, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, though I have never heard them referred to by the acronym that SA Water referred to.

**Ms SAVVAS:** The works aim to improve the reliability, pressure and water quality to these regional networks, ensuring they are suitable for population growth. SA Water operates and maintains more than 27,000 kilometres of water mains across South Australia and that is, of course, growing in my own community; we are adding mains every minute of the day. As part of this renewal program, SA Water has identified three separate replacement and expansion projects.

Project 1 will replace a section of the Betaloo trunk main. Constructed in the 1930s, the main is part of a major pipeline network that feeds water from the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline at Crystal Brook to the Bundaleer trunk main near Mundoorra. Water from the trunk main is used primarily to supply Crystal Brook and its surrounding farmland.

Project 2 will replace a section of the Port Pirie South trunk main. Constructed in 1961, the water main supplies approximately 2,800 customer connections within Port Pirie South, Risdon Park South and Risdon Park. The pipeline is experiencing an increased number of failures, resulting in an increase in unplanned customer water service interruptions, so it was, of course, very important to get it done.

Project 3 will duplicate the Yankalilla/Normanville/Carrickalinga trunk main, which supplies water to approximately 2,500 customer connections. The area has seen substantial growth over the last decade and is expected to grow significantly in coming decades. In recent times, during high demand periods, the existing infrastructure has not been able to provide sufficient inflows into the system storage tanks, risking water security in the region. The works will duplicate the existing main, following a new northern route to bypass a forested area.

In total, the projects will install approximately 11.6 kilometres of new pipeline. All three projects will also involve the addition of new valves and fireplugs. The works will provide for future population growth needs, as well as ensure compliance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and relevant performance targets. Construction is anticipated to commence in the first quarter of next year, with the expectation to be practically complete in late 2026.

The project expects a capital expenditure of \$36.2 million, and the agency does not anticipate additional operational costs after its completion. A majority of the works will be undertaken on SA Water easements, and the agency will establish new easements as required. Any works undertaken on Crown or council land will be undertaken, of course, in accordance with the Water Industry Act.

SA Water uses procurement frameworks that enable the sequential award of work to suppliers, incentivising high performance to secure the continuity of work. This model delivers significant efficiency benefits through collaboration, innovation, consistency, planning and programming.

SA Water has included the delivery of the Beetaloo and Port Pirie South projects in the pipeline delivery partners program of works. This procurement process for establishing this framework has been conducted in accordance with SA Water's policies and procedures. Award for the design and construct packages shall be in accordance with SA Water's delegation of financial and procurement authority, and applicable Treasury and government policies.

The project is being managed in accordance with SA Water's corporate project management methodology by a project manager from the agency's capital planning and delivery group. The project manager is responsible for project development and delivery, including seeking approvals and managing works.

SA Water uses a business management policy and framework to identify and manage project risks. Key risks include: potential costs and scheduled impacts for which controls have been identified, damage to council assets and private properties for which detailed preconstruction and dilapidation surveys will be undertaken, as well as the development of a construction methodology and a stakeholder management plan, and underground services or other construction challenges for which detailed planning and design include identification of services as well as geotechnical investigations.

SA Water's corporate-wide policies reinforce a commitment to operating sustainably to support viability now and into the future, and the selected contractor will be encouraged to develop processes that consider short and long-term, local and global environmental, social and economic considerations. Initiatives include: efficient use of resources, use of local expertise and contractors, reducing carbon emissions, flexible processes and products, and recycling and re-use.

An environmental control plan has been prepared to ensure the project is delivered in compliance with the relevant legislative framework. Under the Water Civil Framework Delivery Partnership, the contractor has an established construction environmental management plan outlining general environmental controls and mitigation measures. A site environmental management plan will be developed to address site-specific environmental conditions. Both plans will be monitored by site inspections and environmental audits.

The agency is in the process of reviewing native title implications at the three project locations. An independent heritage risk assessment will be undertaken at each location. Should works encounter or impact Aboriginal heritage, the construction contractor will be required to comply with SA Water's standard operating procedure for the discovery of Aboriginal heritage. Additionally,

all site construction employees will attend a site-specific Aboriginal cultural heritage induction. The agency has identified no project impact on local or state heritage places or items.

SA Water is in ongoing consultation with adjacent landowners to minimise construction impacts. Internal stakeholders and partner organisations will be kept informed throughout the project life cycle via project progress meetings. The submission has been circulated amongst relevant government departments which have indicated support for the project. The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to the capital upgrade of water trunk main infrastructure in the regional network area project.

The witnesses who appeared were Emma Goldsworthy, Senior Manager, Capital Delivery, SA Water, and James Martin, Senior Project Manager, SA Water. I thank the witnesses for their time. I would also like to thank yourself, Mr Speaker, as well as the member for Stuart, for your written statements in support of this project for your respective electorates.

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

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart) (11:32):** I take great pleasure in speaking on this very briefly. As the member has indicated, I did write a submission supporting the project for regional trunk upgrades through SA Water.

One of the things I am very pleased to see is that there are a lot of water trunk upgrades across regional South Australia, particularly in the area around Port Pirie, Crystal Brook and associated areas. Mr Speaker, you and I are both advocates for regional South Australia in ensuring opportunities are there for future growth.

In my community of Port Pirie and surrounding areas, Crystal Brook and so on, there is lots of interest regarding not only opportunities for business but also a relocation of people coming in from the Eastern States. If we are going to have people coming in we must have security of the water supply. The water pipelines in that area are very old and antiquated but this project will see the renewing of the trunk line areas there and also give security and confidence to the people coming into those areas. I have great privilege in endorsing this report.

**The SPEAKER (11:33):** I would just like to say a few words about this process. While I always welcome any sort of infrastructure upgrade in the area, the report actually bundled together three different projects from three different parts of South Australia, which made it hard to follow as a local member of parliament.

The bit that related to the area that I represent in the seat of Mawson was Carrickalinga, Normanville and Yankalilla, which was referred to in an acronym—which I think was CNY, or I might have got the order around the wrong way, but I have never in the whole time I have lived in our local area heard of Carrickalinga, Normanville and Yankalilla referred to as that acronym or any acronym. Also, the report called those towns 'suburbs'; they are definitely not suburbs. To SA Water, I think you can do better in terms of pulling together your reports, but, again, thank you for the work that is being done in my local area.

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (11:34):** I rise to briefly make a contribution and reflect on your commentary, sir. I appreciate the correspondence that you sent to the Public Works Committee, our committee, on this project. Rather than speaking about the detail, I would like to highlight the challenge of the lack of detail within this process.

The Public Works Committee is such an important aspect of the parliament's oversight of capital projects that are put forward by the government, the departments and the associated corporations for consideration of significant expenditure in our state. This one is an example—and we have already heard from the Chair of the committee on a number of these different projects—that really underlined to me the differences between the way that the departments and corporations present material.

If anyone takes the time to reflect on *Hansard*, good on them; if they take time to reflect on *Hansard* of committee meetings, they deserve the utmost respect of all of us. In that committee meeting, I highlighted that while I certainly do not discount the importance of significant investment especially into regional water infrastructure, the lack of detail within this presentation, the bringing

together of three disparate areas for an allocation for consideration by the Public Works Committee that have no correlation between them—and it is a project worth over \$30 million when these three are put together—and the lack of information that was provided to the committee was a real concern for me.

I highlighted this to SA Water at the time. I want to make sure that the minister responsible for SA Water oversight is aware of it as well because, as we know, there is going to be a significant investment into water infrastructure, and the information that is provided to the Public Works Committee and thus to parliament as a whole needs to be more thorough. We need to have greater insight into the different aspects of this so that we can properly make the judgement on whether we recommend, as the Public Works Committee, the expenditure that is put forward by SA Water.

Every other department that presents to us—whether it is about complex housing proposals, infrastructure and transport, or education, which we heard from later in that committee—gives us as committee members detailed insight into the different aspects of the project, how much of the allocation is design cost, how much of it is project delivery and a lot of the componentry costs of it as well. SA Water continues to fail the committee when it comes to giving us enough information to be transparent and make well-informed decisions.

Sir, I am glad that you highlighted a few aspects in your correspondence; I did so in the committee meeting. I hope the minister takes this up on behalf of the committee and on behalf of the parliament as a whole. SA Water needs to make sure they keep parliament well informed with transparent information so that we can have a more pure and fulsome insight into the expenditure they are doing through their capital projects. The one that is highlighted within this report really was scant in detail and it left me as a committee member really scratching my head as to exactly what was going to be achieved through this allocation.

**Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (11:38):** I would like to thank all members for their contributions. I would like to acknowledge that we well and truly have taken on that feedback as provided by members and by you, Mr Speaker. We are in the process of drafting communication to SA Water asking for a more thorough and robust submission and perhaps evidence presented to the committee in the future. I am also happy to advise the house and the members who are so interested that I have also spoken with the minister about those concerns.

**The SPEAKER:** Excellent work. Thank you for the leadership and the advocacy that you have taken up on behalf of the people of South Australia.

Motion carried.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: BORDERTOWN NEW WATER TANK ARRANGEMENT PROJECT**

**Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (11:39):** I move:

That the 159<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Bordertown New Water Tank Arrangement Project, be noted.

In preparation for projected growth in Bordertown and its surrounds, SA Water (the agency) will install storage tanks at Tatiara District Council's new industrial state development. Bordertown has a population of approximately 3,000 people and is located on the Dukes Highway 275 kilometres south-east of Adelaide. The town sources its drinking water from six bores located 10 kilometres to its west in the Cannawigara.

Currently, water is pumped from bores to the elevated tank within the Bordertown township via a water main that follows Cannawigara Road. In addition to the industrial precinct development in the town's west, Bordertown also expects the construction of an additional 200 residential dwellings in the coming years; good news for Bordertown. The council anticipates significant growth from these developments and water infrastructure upgrades are urgently required.

The proposed works will support the growing water demand while also enhancing the reliability and security of its supply system, which currently lacks sufficient capacity to support future development. SA Water has determined that the addition of nine megalitres of water storage will support the council's 10-year growth projections and will ensure reliable service during peak demand. In addition to the new water tanks, the proposed works will construct the associated pipework and

pump station, as well as a new transfer main. The project will also include integration works, including tie-in infrastructure to the existing elevated tank, as well as communications and surge protection.

Construction is anticipated to commence in the third quarter of next year, with the expectation to be online in the third quarter of 2027 and the remaining infrastructure delivered in early 2028. The project is expected to cost \$55.9 million and the operational budget is expected to increase by a projected cost of \$1.8 million over a 10-year horizon. The operating and capital costs of the Bordertown New Tank Arrangement Project are funded through the 2024 regulatory determination and were approved by ESCOSA. The project will therefore have no impact on SA Water's overall borrowing or contributions to government.

Land purchase for the site has already been agreed between SA Water and Tatiara District Council. SA Water uses procurement frameworks that enable the sequential award of works to suppliers, incentivising suppliers to perform well to secure the continuity of work. The agency states that this model delivers significant efficiency benefits through collaboration, innovation, consistency, planning and programming.

In June last year, the agency extended its major framework partner agreements and the Bordertown New Tank Arrangement Project has been included in the agency's Water Solutions Major Framework Program. The procurement process has been conducted in accordance with SA Water's policies and procedures and conforms to all applicable Treasury and government policies. SA Water engineering is responsible for the analysis and initial concept design, and a design and construct model has been selected to deliver the project. The agency states that a major framework partner will submit a proposal to complete the project.

As the project cost is greater than \$55 million, assignment of the project to the major framework partner will be reviewed and discussed with the procurement portfolio manager and other key stakeholders prior to assignment. Award for the design and construct package will be in accordance with SA Water's delegation of financial and procurement authority and relevant government policies.

The project is being managed in accordance with SA Water's corporate project management methodology by a project manager from the agency's Capital Planning and Delivery Group. The project manager is responsible for project development and delivery, including seeking approvals and managing works. SA Water uses a business management policy and framework to identify and manage project risks. Key risks include:

- (a) timing and completion of the commissioning works across multiple sites may not meet the agency's quality requirements or public expectation, for which SA Water is working closely with the major framework partner to develop a commissioning strategy; and
- (b) delays or shortages in procuring materials, for which the project team is identifying lead time, securing suppliers and considering project milestones.

Design and construction risks will continue to be evaluated during the detailed design process via safety, design and project constructability workshops. SA Water's corporate-wide policies reinforce the commitment to operating sustainably to support viability now and into the future, and the selected contractor will be encouraged to develop processes that consider short and long-term local and global environmental, social and economic considerations. As mentioned in previous submissions, initiatives include: efficient use of resources, preference of local expertise and contractors where possible, reduction of carbon emissions, flexible processes and products, and recycling and re-use.

An environmental control plan has been prepared to ensure the project is delivered in compliance with the relevant legislative frameworks, and the contractor will be required to establish a construction environmental management plan outlining general environmental controls and mitigation. A site environmental management plan will also be developed to address site-specific environmental conditions, and these plans will be monitored by regular site inspections and audits.

Assessments have indicated a medium risk of encountering or impacting Aboriginal heritage, and the construction contractor will be required to comply with SA Water's standard operating procedure for the discovery of Aboriginal heritage. Should any Aboriginal heritage be encountered, work is to cease immediately, and an environmental and heritage expertise representative should be contacted. Additionally, as per other projects, all site construction employees will attend a

site-specific Aboriginal cultural heritage induction. The agency states that native title has been extinguished, both in the subject land parcel and the relevant road reserve. There is no impact on local or state heritage places or items that have been identified.

SA Water is in ongoing consultation with Tatiara District Council and adjacent landowners to manage and minimise construction impacts. Internal stakeholders and partner organisations will be kept informed, and the submission has been circulated amongst relevant government departments which have indicated support.

The committee examined written and oral evidence in relation to this project. Witnesses who appeared include Emma Goldsworthy, as well as Stephanie Harper, Senior Project Manager for SA Water. We also received a letter of support from the member for MacKillop concerning the project in his electorate.

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

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (11:46):** It gives me great pleasure, and may I say a big thank you to the Public Works Committee and the Chair on this development for Bordertown. Bordertown is one of the towns in my electorate of MacKillop, on the Dukes Highway, not far from the Victorian border, and it has what I would have to say are growing pains. It has a number of issues in regard to the development of the town—population growth, it has a meatworks, Blue Lake Milling, and other types of businesses there, even a hemp business—and it is a real industrial mecca with growing pains around services.

One of those issues was water. It has been expressed that all the new industrial sites taking place are not even being fitted to the mains water due to the fact that there is not enough for the town's growth. The infrastructure being proposed here, and the storage and extra pipework, is absolutely beneficial to the town and it will help, but what it does not do is add any more water in volume from a resource that is already under an immense amount of stress.

The resource is a freshwater basin—and I stand to be corrected but I think it is called Poocher Swamp and basin. This freshwater basin and lens of water, as they might describe it, is very fresh and potable. There is plenty of water around Bordertown but it is not all suitable for potable water for the town due to the salinity levels. If you put another bore elsewhere, for irrigation and industrial use of water, it still does not meet the town's requirements around potable water and the levels of salinity. That is still an issue for Bordertown, as is the fact that this resource is already under stress.

There is talk of extending the Keith pipeline to Bordertown that comes from Tailem Bend. It extracts water from the River Murray, and this has been looked at, and they are talking around \$40 million to extend that line, and that might be on the bottom end. There was talk about even doubling that. The other part we are also investigating—and I am not sure about the quantum and how much it would provide—is that the pipeline from Keith does come down the railway line towards Bordertown, probably more than half the way, but I am not sure of the size of the pipe and how much extra water it could provide Bordertown because of the shortage it has.

I have to say thank you very much to the state government for its advocacy, not only on this water development but we also have housing developments and other projects going into Tatiara to try to help build what I call a very strong proactive council, led well by the Mayor Liz Goossens. Sadly, we have seen the stepping down and resignation of CEO Anne Champness, who has been a strong advocate and has spent eight years on the Tatiara council. No doubt, the Tatiara councillors would have been very supportive of this development, which we see the Public Works Committee has talked about here today and has now supported.

This is a great step in the right direction for Bordertown. It does help out with infrastructure and maintaining a reliable supply water to the town—full stop. Whether the resource is already under stress does not matter. Please, can we all just note that Bordertown already has this shortage issue, with the basin that it is sucking out of under an immense amount of stress. The other thing that is a bit ironic is that Bordertown does not even have enough electricity to supply its town. It has a diesel generator because the powerlines are too small or they are too old. That is the sort of thing that

Bordertown has suffered, which is very much consistent with even the water. So we not only have power issues but we also have water issues.

One of the things that has been lost, and maybe cannot be considered that well, is renewable energy, some small type of desalination. None of these types of projects have been considered strongly because renewable energy cannot get into the town because of the contract around this diesel generator, which then stops any sort of desalination process that might work with a solar development there to help add to the water and fresh water of this basin that is under stress.

All I can say to the South Australian government is please keep considering Bordertown. It is a really strong, growing business. It is growing well and it just needs infrastructure and upgrades, like we are seeing from the public works. Thank you very much to the Public Works Committee.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:51):** I will make a brief contribution with regard to this water tank project at Bordertown. It is an interesting project that has just been outlined by the member for MacKillop, which will increase their storage capacity of groundwater for the town, which is essentially their sole available water resource for the town. It will increase that resource by about 20 times. However, again, it does work on a resource that does not want to be overallocated. Groundwater is one of those strange beasts. You cannot see it and you have to—and you do—trust the water scientists who deal with the studies of groundwater.

It interests me quite a bit. This is a \$55 million project, and my understanding is there were some investigations around extending the Keith pipeline, which I believe was somewhere around \$45 million or \$46 million to extend that pipeline to Bordertown. The interest I have in that pipeline is that where I live, my property in Coomandook, is on an offshoot of that main pipeline. We have offshoot pipes running down the Dukes Highway and Parkin Hall Road at the back of my property. That is our total water supply because our groundwater is not potable.

We have been told that if an extension was put on there would be enough requirements for Bordertown. I do not know whether that accounts for any growth above the already strained industrial and town needs, because if it does not a pipeline would need to be built for over 160 kilometres from Tailem Bend and a whole new pipe put in, which would be a major construction that has not happened since the Keith pipeline was put in, in the late sixties, I believe, which was visionary at the time, to make sure that those of us from Tailem Bend to Keith, and just beyond Keith, could have potable water not just for our towns and households but for our stock, which are totally dependent on that water.

Yes, there are some people who have put in bores to use some saline water and blend it. That comes with a lot of expense and your own private desalination plant. It certainly has been done in places where people have a lot of stock, especially a lot of cattle that can get very, very thirsty, especially on a hot day, just to reduce the cost.

My inquiry would be to SA Water as to what the plans are into the future, acknowledging this puts a lot more water into storage for Bordertown but does not increase the volume available in total from those bores around the Cannawigara area. Whatever investigations are going to be put in place in the future for extending that water supply, I believe the only real way to do it is to extend the Keith pipeline. If that does not have enough capacity, all the members in the area will need to know, especially those of us who rely on that vital River Murray water just to survive, quite frankly.

We would like to know the outcomes of those investigations. I certainly note that this tank will absolutely increase the availability of just-in-time water by 20 times, which will be a huge boost. It is interesting that it comes in at a very close number to what we have been told in the past would be the extension of the Keith pipeline.

Motion carried.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: BELLEVUE HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (11:55):** I move:

That the 160<sup>th</sup> report of the Public Works Committee, entitled Bellevue Heights Primary School Redevelopment Project, be noted.

Based on the evidence considered by the committee, and in order to give the local member time to speak to her submission, pursuant to section 12C of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991, the Public Works Committee reports to parliament that it recommends the proposed public work.

**Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (11:56):** I rise today in support of the Public Works Committee report, and I thank all the committee for their work on this. The project means a great deal to our Bellevue Heights community. It is not just about new buildings, it is about giving students, staff and families the learning spaces they deserve and supporting a school that not only delivers quality education but is so caring and nurturing of its young learners.

Bellevue Heights Primary School is a truly special place. It brings together families from many different cultural backgrounds in a school that celebrates inclusion, respect and curiosity. When you visit the school, you can feel that sense of community. You can see children who care about each other, who love learning and who are taught to value the land they learn on and the people around them.

The school has faced many challenges. The main building they have is now over 50 years old and has been unserviceable for the past two years. Their teachers have had to be incredibly resourceful, combining classes, adapting lessons and making the most of every bit of space available. Despite these challenges, the quality of education has remained outstanding. That is a testament to the leadership of Principal Margot Bradley and Deputy Principal Kirsty Whibley, the teaching staff, the support staff and the families who work together to make sure every child thrives.

I have spent time at the school and spoken with the teachers, students and parents and their resilience has been remarkable. They have kept their spirits high and they have kept their focus where it belongs: on the children. This redevelopment will give them what they deserve: a modern, flexible and sustainable learning environment that reflects who they are as a community.

The new design includes contemporary classrooms, breakout spaces, a studio and workshop, teacher preparation areas and wonderful outdoor learning spaces that bring the outside in. It will also include a community and cultural hub, a space that will bring people together, celebrate diversity and strengthen the connections that already make Bellevue Heights Primary so special.

What I love about this project is how thoughtfully it has been designed. The colour palette, the earthy reds and ochre, connects deeply to country and honours the spiritual relationship Aboriginal people have with their land. The soft greens and blues reflect the surrounding landscape, bringing a sense of calm and belonging. It is a building that feels like it belongs where it is going to go.

Of course, this respect for the environment is nothing new for Bellevue Heights Primary. The school is a leader in environmental education. The students have created their own national park on the grounds for which they are the park rangers, caring for the native vegetation they have planted based on endangered grey box grassy woodland native to the area. They have also planted an Indigenous garden designed by their First Nations students, which tells the Kurna creation story of Tjilbruke.

This year, the school joined the SEEDS program, Stewardship of Endemic Endangered Species, one of only six schools to be selected. This gives the teachers, volunteers and eventually the students real hands-on experience in caring for native plants and wildlife. You can see their enthusiasm. I was there on Monday night, able to share some time with them in our bushfire forum, and the teachers, the kids and the parents were all pretty excited. The project itself will also take on sustainable development, which allows the children to learn about things like the use of solar panels and natural ventilation. The new landscaping will continue that work, using native and waterwise plants, bush tucker species and plants that attract local birds and insects. It is an environment designed to grow learning in every sense.

The community and cultural hub will also be a wonderful addition. I know this will mean a lot to parents and families who have been asking for a place to gather, share meals, hold events and celebrate. For a school with such a rich mix of cultures, this hub will be a beating heart of the community and a place where everyone feels welcome. Like I said, on Monday night we had our bushfire forum. Once this place is built, we will be able to have events like that and be able to utilise

that space. We held the community barbecue in the car park and had to head up to the hill to the hall, so this will be a fantastic addition.

The redevelopment is about more than bricks and mortar, though. It is about opportunity, it is about pride, it is about giving the children the best possible start in life in a setting that reflects their values, respect, inclusion and care for the world around them. The students are excited, the staff are ready and the families are eager to see this vision come to reality. I know once it is complete it will have a lasting impact not only on the school but the whole community.

As a local member, I have seen firsthand what a difference the project will make. On Monday, while I was there, I took special note of where the building that is going to be demolished was. It was dark and lifeless, so I am pleased the school will soon have a new shiny home, a place that will bring people together.

I am proud to support the Public Works Committee's report on the Bellevue Heights Primary School redevelopment. I commend it to the house and urge that the project be delivered as swiftly as possible so the students, staff and families of Bellevue Heights can begin this excellent new chapter.

Motion carried.

### STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

**The Hon. R.K. PEARCE (King—Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (12:01):** I move:

That the report of the committee be adopted.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. R.K. PEARCE:** I move:

That the alterations to the standing orders as adopted by this house be laid before the Governor by the Speaker for approval pursuant to section 55 of the Constitution Act 1934 with the request that Her Excellency approve the alterations to take effect from the commencement of the next parliament.

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (12:02):** I commend the Standing Orders Committee report. What the adoption of this report does is change the standing orders, which is no small thing. Standing orders are very important in the way we run this place. They govern the conventions of this place. Some of them are ancient, some of them make no sense to anybody outside this place, but they are all very important. This does change the standing orders in some substantial ways, but it is not as dramatic as it sounds, because what it in fact does is give effect to what we have actually been doing for quite a while now, in some cases as far back as 2018 that some of these sessional orders have been in place. All this does is formalise them and make them the permanent or semi-permanent governing processes of this house.

Perhaps most important are the changes to the private members' motions part of the week that we all look forward to so much. The changes essentially do a couple of things. They get rid of the ridiculous race at the end of the year to populate the *Notice Paper* with motions and this sort of competition across the house to see who can populate and dominate the private members' motions agenda for every Wednesday of sitting.

The most substantial change probably, even though it is not that dramatic, is that notices of motion lapse after 12 sitting days. As I said, that has the effect of reducing that ridiculous race to the bottom that we have at the end of the year, but it also demands that there are a great deal of collegial conversations going on across the house, particularly between the Government Whip and the Opposition Whip.

Bearing in mind this may be my valedictory, I do want to place on the record my appreciation for the member for Unley and the collegial way we have worked over the last four years in not just these changes to the standing orders, which I think have improved the functioning of the house no end, particularly on Wednesday mornings, but also in organising all the matters of the house over the last four years. I want to place that on the record.

It does make several changes. I think that is probably the most interesting and important aspect. What it does not do, and I hope the Speaker hears this, is resolve the problem of the private members' bills—the problem from our side anyway. From our perspective there is a problem because

the Speaker gets frustrated with us every Wednesday morning as we put bill after bill after bill. We clearly oppose most of those bills on the government side.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr ODENWALDER:** We pass some of them, to be fair. We have passed some of them. The reforms that I think the Speaker has expressed that he wants have not found fruition, not particularly because the government does not want them but because I do not think we have found a way yet to make that fair to the opposition. I could stand up here every Wednesday morning and, although it would be fairly unconventional, I could move en bloc every Wednesday morning that all the private members' bills be postponed. I could just do that. I could postpone them until 2030, if I wanted to. But we would not do that (a) because it is unconventional but (b) because of the good and collegial relationship I have formed with the member for Unley. With those words, I want to commend this report to the house and commend the adoption of the changes to the standing orders.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (12:06):** I, too, support this report and the recommendations that we are confirming today. The actions are not new and changes to standing orders are not new. This is probably the second time I have seen significant changes to the standing orders in my 20 years here. In my first year or two in this place, we did not start until 2pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and then the 10.30am start on Thursday was a historical start. When the sessional orders that were first introduced by the Hon. John Gardner, the member for Unley—

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** Morialta, actually.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** —Morialta, sorry; I am the member for Unley—by the member for Morialta, as Leader of Government Business, obviously Thursdays was a time when there was Executive Council and it seemed to make sense to move things around. Sessional orders were then brought in to change that 10.30 start to 11 o'clock, in exchange for the earlier start on the Wednesday.

That has run now under two governments, despite the fact that the Labor opposition at the time opposed that change. They saw the benefit of it in government and they continued with that sessional order for their full term, their first term here in government. I am pleased that that is now going to be a permanent change. I am disappointed that they did not take our lead, when we were in government, from 18 to 22 and have a 30-day period in which questions on notice must be answered by ministers. That was a sessional order that unfortunately this government did not continue with.

I will not repeat what the member for Elizabeth said but I will express how much I have enjoyed working with the member for Elizabeth as the Government Whip. He will be missed on his retirement and to this day I still cannot understand how he has been missed time and time again in being on the front bench in government. He was on the front bench in opposition and it is a loss to this parliament that he was not able to use those talents as a minister. I thank him for his leadership on this bipartisan issue and ensuring that it went from a concept of an idea, with the two of us discussing how we could make some changes to standing orders to make it more efficient.

Do not forget we are building on the historic changes that have happened in this place since the very early days of the House of Commons where the blood line was put in place to stop sword fights, for example, and the mace was introduced as a weapon for the Speaker to control unruly members of parliament. Of course, those two pieces have evolved now into members having to sit in their allocated space in order to speak, not just behind the blood line but in their allocated space—an improvement to the accessibility and the ability for members to be heard on behalf of their electorates. Of course, the mace is now no longer used as a weapon but as a symbol to remind everybody who is running the show, and of the authority of the Speaker.

Just as the evolution of that violent past has turned into a chamber, where very civil and fair debate can be conducted, these changes that we are adopting today into the standing orders will introduce another improvement that has identified issues that have evolved since the last change to standing orders. So I support them fully and again thank my colleague, the member for Elizabeth, for his cooperation, not just on this report but also, of course, as a fellow whip. He has done a great job in making this a much more pleasant place to attend every day. So, for that, I thank him.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta) (12:11):** I will be very brief. The member for Unley said most of what I want to say, but I do want to add my recognition of the member for Elizabeth as the best Labor Whip that I have experienced in the 16 years I have been in here. In times when he has potentially had to undertake that which his party has asked him, he has shown courtesy, goodwill and good faith, and he has always had the good grace at least to look a little bit awkward about it.

But seriously, what we are doing here today is actually relatively substantial. There have been a few times when the standing orders have been updated without bipartisan support, and it usually works out okay: we are still here and we are doing fine, and the people in South Australia are well served by this parliament. If there is going to be a difference of opinion between the sides, it is always much better put into a sessional order than a standing order. The process for this has been outstanding.

Things have been trialled in sessional orders; they have been supported by both sides. The 90-second statements have been an innovation quite recently. There was the matter that the member for Elizabeth talked about. The member for Unley and the member for Elizabeth worked together and have developed something that improves the functioning of this parliament, and the collegiality between the sides that is forced upon the whips, and that is going to have some positive outcomes.

There was the matter that the member for Unley talked about, which we put in place in 2018, to improve the flow of the week. Wednesday mornings for private members means that, if the government has business that must be transacted, and they know that then they would have a certain amount of time on Thursday that that can still be done, it removes what used to be unnecessary late-night sittings on Wednesday nights as a regular occurrence.

Now, there are some 3½ hours of government business available on Thursday, while still allowing the country members to get home on Thursday night. In the past, there was literally only that time between grieves and the end of the day. Country members were often stuck here late on a Thursday night and, indeed, we were often having government business late into a Wednesday night to address the issue on Thursday.

These matters may be small in some ways, but it costs a lot of money to keep this building going after 6 o'clock on a Thursday, and that used to happen a lot more unnecessarily. It also delivers, I think, better parliamentary practice when people are behaving in a more collegial fashion. So I think that has been a good thing too, and I commend the motion to the house.

Motion carried.

### *Bills*

## **TAFE SA BILL**

### *Final Stages*

Consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments.

(Continued from 12 November 2025.)

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The opposition supports the motion and thanks the government for their collegial behaviour with the Hon. Dennis Hood in dealing with these matters. They supported our amendments in the upper house, we supported theirs, as I understand it, and here we are, and may the TAFE organisation and the people of South Australia benefit from this work.

Motion carried.

## **SCRAP METAL DEALERS BILL**

### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 12 November 2025.)

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (12:17):** I rise to make a contribution on the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill 2025 and I indicate that I will be the lead speaker for the opposition, which, of course, recognises that this is a bill attempting to solve what we accept is a very big and perhaps growing problem, and that is the problem of copper theft.

We know that increasingly copper theft is becoming a very big issue, particularly on building sites. In 2023-24 alone we know there have been over 2,000 instances of scrap metal theft from building sites, and I think the Master Builders Association estimates it is costing their industry in excess of \$70 million each and every year.

What it is doing is obviously not just an inconvenience but is a huge cost that is being borne by those who are the victims of this crime. It is probably pushing up the price of housing as well and, frankly, it is downright dangerous. We have seen videos released of people trying to rush out onto railway lines to steal copper, and there are live wires being exposed on building sites. It does risk someone getting seriously hurt. It is a big financial cost, it is a big inconvenience and it is a bit of a safety risk.

The government seemingly acknowledges this and announced quite sometime ago that they had a plan to deal with it, which is the legislation now before us. It has taken over nine months for this legislation to arrive here. It was in February of 2025 when the government first promised tough new laws to crack down on copper theft, and their media release at that time said:

The Malinauskas Labor government is promising a suite of law reforms to crackdown on the theft of copper and scrap metal.

That was in February 2025 by the very newly appointed police minister—who, of course, was the previous police minister—and frankly we have not seen or heard much about the issue since then, which I think is disappointing. Obviously there is a cost to the delay here. If we know this is costing millions of dollars each year, we would have liked to have seen a bit more urgency and perhaps a bit more thoroughness in the process to bring this legislation before the house. It was indeed only once the opposition highlighted the government's inaction on this issue last week or the week before that we saw this bill released just yesterday.

What this bill will do, according to the government, is provide for the regulation of prescribed scrap metal dealers and dealing in prescribed scrap metal. It will make it more difficult to move and dispose of stolen scrap metal, and provides for increased powers for South Australia Police to search, seize and remove evidence from premises. It will also prohibit the buying or selling of scrap metal using cash or cryptocurrency and require proof of ID and accurate records for all scrap metal transactions.

The parliament is now in the fairly unenviable position of having to consider this bill, a bill that has been foreshadowed for nine months, in about nine hours. This bill was introduced only yesterday for the first time. A draft was, I think, provided to the opposition the day before. It is very difficult, frankly, to determine whether the final form of this bill will be an effective solution to the problem that the government has identified. It is an unenviable position that we are in, but it is not an uncommon position, of course.

I commend the industriousness of the new Minister for Police for bringing a flurry of legislation into the parliament over the past couple of weeks, but it does beg the question of what the government has been doing in this portfolio for the past few years and it does put the parliament in a very difficult position when we are being asked to consider legislation that we have hardly had a chance to consider and consult on.

In the past day or two or three, we have had the opportunity to try to speak to as many stakeholders as we can. I think it is fair to say that, as a general rule, the housing industry strongly supports the legislation that the government has introduced. I have had the opportunity to meet with the HIA over the past year on the issue of copper theft more generally and I thank them for their advocacy on this issue, particularly Stephen Knight at the HIA. I had the benefit of hearing from Master Builders recently; they support this bill and have been advocating on the issue of copper theft for some time. The UDIA also supports this bill, I understand. I also had the benefit of a briefing from South Australia Police just yesterday afternoon. I understand that SAPOL supports the bill and I

thank those officers for their time yesterday in helping us understand this piece of legislation that we are debating with very little notice.

On the other hand, we have also heard from a number of scrap metal dealers and I think it is fair to say that they oppose this bill. They have made various submissions throughout this process, some a little while ago, but apparently there has been another follow-up round of consultation more recently that has taken place in a bit of a hurry. I think there is a concern amongst a lot of scrap metal dealers that their concerns have not been appropriately listened to or responded to. A number of members of parliament received an email earlier this week from the Waste and Recycling Industry Association raising some concerns with this bill. They said:

The Waste and Recycling Industry Association SA has significant concerns regarding details within the proposed Scrap Metal Dealers Bill 2025 scheduled to be introduced to Parliament this week. Despite claims by the Government that consultation has been adequate engagement with the industry was rushed, with short timeframes to respond and with no follow up on any of the issues raised. Feedback provided by the recycling industry has largely been ignored in the draft Bill.

I have also had the opportunity to talk to another scrap metal dealer who has concerns about this bill and has particular concerns around the consultation process and attempts to engage in a constructive manner that he feels have not been well received. I will read out some of his concerns. He states:

We believe this bill will be HIGHLY counterproductive.

We have made it clear that the introduction of non-cash payment in NSW has led to increased criminal activity that has proven difficult, if not impossible to police.

Members of the police apparently have experienced violence, and it is now not being policed.

We are led to believe that police do not want to enter certain areas so as not to put themselves in danger.

We ask, what investigations have been made based on our previous submission and has SAPOL done any investigations into the practical implementations of this proposal.

Does SAPOL believe it has both the expertise and sufficient personnel to police this adequately.

He went on to say:

Within the last week, the ABC has made us abundantly aware of the refuse problem in SA.

It appears that several councils have a refuse dumping problem and this is costing taxpayers unnecessarily.

It is having both a safety and environmental impact.

As per our submission, this bill will cause more rubbish to be dumped.

Some fairly legitimate concerns have been raised. Frankly, part of the problem in legislating in this sort of way, in this rushed manner at the end of the year, is that you perhaps do not have time to adequately consult with stakeholders and get that detail right. Perhaps part of the problem is having three or four, or four or five different police ministers over the past few years as well. I am thankful to this police minister for bringing legislation before this parliament. I do just wish we could have seen it earlier and perhaps been able to respond to some of these stakeholder concerns.

In talking to SAPOL yesterday, I think the minister or the government has tried to take some of these concerns into account in the final form of this bill, which some of these stakeholders may or may not have seen. In particular, it removes the licensing scheme that was originally proposed but, perhaps more importantly, limiting most of the operation of this act to what is a defined term 'prescribed scrap metal'.

Most of the provisions in this act are only going to apply to that category of scrap metal, which includes catalytic converters, items comprised of copper, prescribed electrical and telecommunication fixtures and fittings, hot water systems, rail fixtures and fittings, prescribed water meters and other classes prescribed by the regulations. I understand that the minister might be taking into account some of the other concerns raised by stakeholders when drafting those regulations.

There is also a clause in this act, which is a review clause that has been added into the bill that has been introduced. We welcome that. It provides for a review of the act after three years. I do foreshadow that I will be moving an amendment to see that review occur after one year. That is really just reflective, I guess, of two things. First, we are conscious that this is a big change for the scrap metal industry and we want to, as soon as possible, make sure that it is working in the intended way.

Is it reducing copper theft? Is it operating fairly for scrap metal dealers? Is there going to be a problem with scrap metal on the side of our streets? Can it, in fact, be policed?

We want to take into account that context, but also take into account the context that we are looking at this in a fairly quick manner now. I do concede it has been a nine-month lead-up, but some feel that this final round of consultation might have been a little bit rushed, so the sooner we can have that review to make sure the legislation is operating as intended the better. I might leave it there, having foreshadowed the amendment, which we can talk to in committee.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12:29):** I rise today in support of this bill which introduces the long-overdue regulation of the scrap metal industry in South Australia. At present, South Australia remains the only jurisdiction in the country where the scrap metal industry is not regulated. This bill brings us into alignment with other states and territories for greater oversight in this area. The purpose of this bill is clear: to reduce the incidence of opportunistic metal theft within South Australia and to protect our communities, businesses and infrastructure from the costly consequences of these crimes.

Metal theft may sound minor to some, but its impact is far-reaching and expensive. Master Builders South Australia has estimated that metal theft costs the construction industry more than \$70 million per year. That is a staggering figure, and money that could otherwise be invested in new projects, new jobs and new opportunities.

Copper theft in particular has been on the rise across our state. Items such as copper piping, electrical cabling and catalytic converters are frequently targeted by thieves. These materials have high resale value and can be easily traded through unregulated markets, and that is precisely what this bill aims to stop. The consequences of these crimes go well beyond the immediate financial loss. Theft from building sites causes costly delays and disruptions to the building and construction industry. When critical materials or equipment are stolen, projects are halted, workers are stood down and communities are left waiting for essential infrastructure to be completed.

This bill seeks to address these challenges through four key provisions, and the first is through registration. All scrap metal dealers will be required to be registered, ensuring that only legitimate or accountable operators are able to trade in scrap metals. The second element is transaction records. Dealers must verify the seller's identity using photographic identification, obtaining their signature and maintaining accurate digital records of all transactions. This measure will create a traceable record of every transaction and ensure accountability throughout the supply chain.

The third element is around payment regulation: cash, cheque, cryptocurrency and in-kind payments will be prohibited. All transactions will need to be made via digital payment methods which are secure, transparent and traceable. This will make it much harder for criminals to anonymously profit from stolen goods.

The fourth element is around enforcement. The bill strengthens the powers of South Australia Police to inspect premises, seize evidence and take action against noncompliant operators. Importantly, it introduces closure orders, allowing authorities to temporarily shut down businesses that fail to meet the new standards.

In addition, the bill establishes specific rules for dealing with vehicles. It will be illegal to purchase scrap motor vehicles where the vehicle identification number has been removed, defaced, obliterated or altered. This measure will make it far more difficult to disguise stolen vehicles and sell them for scrap. Collectively, these reforms will reduce the theft of valuable metals and help dismantle the black market that enables these crimes. By making it harder for stolen materials to be sold, we make the crime itself less appealing. Let me be clear: it is already a crime in South Australia to steal; however, the existence of an unregulated scrap metal market has made it easier for criminals to exploit the system and profit from their actions.

The ripple effects of metal theft are significant. We have seen public transport delays caused by copper cabling stolen from train lines and signal boxes; we have seen disruptions to internet and telecommunication services when cables are ripped from Telstra pits; even local sporting clubs have suffered with light towers stripped of valuable components; essential car components are being

removed from vehicles parked on our streets; and hot water systems, copper piping and cabling continue to be stolen from building sites.

When I built my house in Salisbury, the water meters were taken off, and it delayed the construction process. Although there was, of course, insurance that the builder had, we were surprised one night when suddenly things that had been put in the ground disappeared. It is incidents like this that cause inconvenience, financial loss and frustration for individual businesses and communities alike.

The bill has been carefully designed to ensure that regulation targets criminal behaviour, not legitimate operators. Law-abiding scrap metal dealers and recyclers perform an important role in our economy and in environmental sustainability. This legislation recognises that and focuses enforcement where it belongs: on those attempting to sell stolen goods, particularly copper. By removing this lucrative market that currently exists for stolen metal, we take away the incentive for theft. The government and South Australia Police have undertaken extensive consultation throughout the development of this legislation. Feedback from industry, community stakeholders and law-abiding enforcement has been invaluable in developing this bill. Amendments have been made to earlier drafts to ensure it is both fair and effective.

We have to make sure that this works. As the last jurisdiction, we had been obviously given the opportunity to look at what has been working in other states, and when we implement this we can roll this out very well. Further consultation will occur following the passage of this bill to help inform the detailed regulations that support its implementation. This bill represents a balanced, practical and necessary response to a growing problem. It protects legitimate businesses, supports our construction and infrastructure sectors and reduces opportunity for criminal activity.

Given our focus, our Housing Roadmap and our desire to increase opportunities for South Australians to buy and build their homes in the metro area and throughout the regions, the timeliness of this bill is even more important. We do not want delays. We want to make sure that when people have invested and made that decision, we limit opportunities to prevent theft and that theft impacting on the timeliness of that build and on that construction industry. We know it is an industry we want to encourage more people to become a part of through apprenticeships and traineeships. We need this, whether it is the nonstop South Road, the AUKUS project, and of course the Housing Roadmap particularly is something that will need more people in construction.

I recognise the work of the current police minister and the former police minister in bringing this bill to the house. When you have changes like this, consultation is really important. The regulations, of course, the practicality of how this will work day to day, will be very important. I commend this bill to the house.

**Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (12:37):** I rise to make a really brief contribution. I have not had a chance to consult with my community about the ins and outs of this bill, unfortunately, such is the speed at which it has been progressed through this parliament. But I do have at hand a couple of examples from our community about the impact that the theft of copper and metals has had and perhaps some evidence of the fact something needs to be done to change it.

The most stark and damning example of the impact that the theft of these metals is having is at the Copper Coast Sport and Leisure Centre. In August last year, there was slated to be the Disability and Lifestyle Expo, which had some 70-odd stallholders there ready to present their wares and their ideas for how they can improve the lives of people living with a disability. It was all slated to go and set up, and overnight, after the whole show had been set up, someone broke into the compound through the car park around the footy oval, levered open the power box, where a great deal of electricity runs through, tied a strap around some copper wiring and piping inside that power box, a high-voltage power box, tied the other end to the back of the car and then just took off at full speed. They ripped the copper out of that power box and kept driving and took it with them presumably to scrap and sell on to someone else.

That, for one, is an incredibly dangerous thing for someone to do, and they must have been in an awfully perilous and desperate situation to have to undertake that action, but, two, it left our community without a significant asset. So the rec centre was out of action for at least the next day and, if memory serves, it took quite a bit of time to get back online and restore that power box activity. It meant the lifestyle expo, to which a great many of the stallholders had travelled from elsewhere to present, had to be postponed.

We had to pack up that expo the next day, using only sunlight to see our way around. It meant that the rec centre was out of action, the gym could not be air-conditioned and the basketball courts were not able to host the weekly competition. It had a tremendous impact on our community, just for the sake of scrapping a few bits of copper piping or wiring out of a live high-voltage power box. That had a tremendous impact on our community and perhaps is evidence of the need for change.

I did a bit of research and found a story in the local paper that reported there had been seven examples of copper theft around that time, so it is quite a prevalent issue in our electorate. Perhaps that has something to do with the fact that we have quite a bit of building work going on on the Copper Coast. There are houses going up aplenty. There have been houses going up aplenty for quite some time, and with that comes opportunity for thieves to steal those materials while they are in use as building material.

I want to relay one more story. It is third-hand so I cannot take direct credit for having talked to the character in it, but I am aware of a plumbing apprentice—not in our electorate candidly—who was tasked with the role of plumbing an entire Housing Trust home ready for its fit-out in the following days. He managed to do it. He spent the whole day plumbing in copper piping here and there so that it was ready to be hooked up and set up. When he returned to work the next day, after having completed that task, he found that the entirety of the copper piping had been removed from that property and he was tasked with restarting the house again the next day. He spent two days in a row piping up this house with copper piping only to find that it had been taken.

Clearly there is a problem with this. I have not had a chance to consider the finer details of the bill, such is the speed with which it has been presented but, hopefully, it solves that problem or at least ameliorates it and we get on with retaining some of those metals where they ought to be. I look forward to seeing the passage of the bill. I wish I had more time to think about it, but such is the way this week has transpired and is transpiring.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:41):** I rise to make a very brief contribution to the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill. As the member for Narungga has identified, we have had a very brief time to consult on this bill but we have managed to have a conversation with our local scrap metal merchant in Murray Bridge, Shannon Watson at Enviro Scrap Metal Recyclists. He has indicated to me that he already takes ID from everyone who trades in scrap at his premises and he keeps a record of everyone who trades.

He also has police attend his property occasionally and he works with them just in case they can identify any potential stolen copper or such scrap in his yard and he works with them because he is aware of scrap theft, copper theft, that happens all over the state. So he already has those procedures in place and he is happy to work with the police when they visit. He did make one observation, though: he finds it interesting that bottle and can recycling is not involved in this legislation, but I am assuming that is because generally bottles and cans are not stolen, certainly not in the same capacity as copper.

He runs a very worthwhile business in Murray Bridge, which services not just Murray Bridge but surrounding areas and especially when they do scrap pick-ups from farms, when they take the big magnet out, load it up and get rid of a heap of wire or old car bodies or such like scrap, and it is a great service.

The local council seems to give him a hard time about some of his operations and I wonder why because he runs a very good service. It is in behind fencing and it is something that we need to do to make sure that we recycle goods appropriately so that we can make full use of that recycling. I do commend his business.

Just on the discussion around the theft of copper, I think it is at least the second time—maybe the third—that the hot water service that services my electoral office was knocked over again this week, or the copper pipe that services it was taken off. We are certainly aware of these issues happening.

Shannon also emphasised that, yes, it will come at an extra cost to scrap metal dealers because they will obviously have to inform customers that they need to have account numbers to

transfer money instead of a cash transaction. I think he is understanding of it coming. I am glad he was aware of this legislation, noting how quickly it has been presented to the house. I do not how long he has been aware, but it would not have been long. It will have an impact, but he just wanted to make those few points to me, and I said I would certainly raise them in the house. I am sure there will be a few questions asked in committee, and I am certainly keen to see our amendment in regard to the one-year review progressed.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (12:45):** I also rise to add a few words in support of the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill 2025. In some ways, given we are essentially talking about copper, this is a perverse outcome of something that is actually really good. As people know, in my electorate metals in various forms provide a significant part of our economic base. Obviously, the steelworks in Whyalla use a degree of scrap, but you do not have many people out and about stealing scrap steel. That is because we talk about scrap steel in terms of how many dollars per tonne. When we talk about copper, though, we talk about it in terms of how many dollars per kilo, so it is an incredibly valuable product and, as a result, attractive to thieves.

As I said, in some respects this is a perverse outcome of something that is really good. South Australia is blessed to have what is a growing copper province, especially in the north of our state, at Carrapateena, Prominent Hill, Olympic Dam. Oak Dam is going to be another big potential copper mine. It is going to be joining the ranks of copper producers under the umbrella of BHP in the not too distant future. Then we have deposits like the Fremantle Doctor and others, so it is in the interests of this state to have high copper prices.

We know that, globally, there are very few big deposits of copper being found, but here in South Australia it is still incredibly prospective. I want to see copper prices go up and up because it is going to be excellent for this state, especially if BHP commit to the twofold to threefold increase in copper production in the north of our state.

Obviously, it produces a little bit of a cloud—and it is a little bit of a cloud compared to what is something massive—in that high copper prices provide an incentive for people to go and steal copper from various locations around the state. When it comes to building in regional communities, we have already faced challenges. For instance, there is already around a 30 per cent premium when building in Whyalla because you often have to mobilise people and equipment from the metropolitan area. When you add something like a copper theft to that, it just adds to the cost of construction.

Not only does it add to the cost of construction, there is also the targeting in both the metropolitan and regional areas of essential services and telecommunication equipment. People break into Telstra and Optus sites to try to get their hands on copper. Here in the metropolitan area we have seen the consequences of people going into our rail infrastructure looking for copper. That can have a profound impact and, indeed, it has had a profound impact.

I was a bit surprised to see even catalytic converters in cars were targeted. I am not sure how much copper is in a catalytic converter. I do not imagine it would be much. Another thing, and maybe it is an unintended consequence of the electrification of the light vehicle fleet, is that when you look at electric cars they have two to three times as much copper in their production as combustion engine cars.

Copper is incredibly essential and the consequences of people stealing copper can be very serious indeed. This bill aims to reduce opportunistic metal theft within South Australia and with it the costly disruptions to the building and construction industries. There is a whole range of victims, from the people who are building, the companies involved, insurance companies—a whole range of things. As has been said, the regulatory environment around copper and other scrap metals in South Australia has lagged behind the other states. Through this bill we have an opportunity to align ourselves with what is being done in the other states. It is an important bill and the figure of what this costs, on an annual basis, in South Australia is not a minor figure. The figure that has been used is about \$70 million a year so it is not insignificant.

It has not happened in my electorate, as far as I am aware, but I know that sporting clubs in a number of electorates have been targeted and, especially in relation to lighting in those clubs, that can have a major impact. I mentioned catalytic converters; modern exhaust systems also contain copper as do water heaters, which has been mentioned—and the member for Hammond having three taken, how unlucky can you be? I hope the security has been boosted at your place to ensure a bit of protection in the future.

The bill has been carefully designed but there is always going to be an issue when it comes to consultation. I am always a big fan of doing an effective and detailed consultation so that you try to avoid the unintended consequences. It is good that there is going to be a review. It is good practice when we look at legislative changes, because we do not anticipate what the unintended consequences are going to be. To come back, in a year's time, to review the bill and the regulations that sit under the bill, is a good thing. Like a lot of good legislation it is an iterative process. It is important that we are open to constructive, fair criticism, if any is forthcoming, to see how we can modify what needs to be done.

It does come in surges, depending on price. In some respects the targeting of copper has a long history. I remember as a teenager, not long in Whyalla, they were building the Telecom building—in the great days when we had essential services in public hands—and there was all this copper, all this copper piping and other materials. It was all souvenired by a thief and that caused a lot of disruption to the building of that particular structure.

I also recall, and it is interesting to reflect now I am here in parliament, my first job courtesy of my dad, who thought it would be a good idea if I had a part-time job during school holidays to earn some cash in hand. That job was on a dump face in Whyalla, in the middle of summer—with all the maggots, with all the dust. Your job was to walk along the dump face and go in amongst it to find anything of value. If you did see some copper, you extracted the copper.

I do not look back upon that job with any great pleasure, but it did provide some interesting perspectives. Indeed, when you go back over all of those years, copper was still a valuable asset. The driver—and it depends on the quality of the scrap copper—is that it can fetch anywhere up to \$11.50 a kilo.

So if you can find a good stash of copper, and copper from here, there and everywhere, and you have some way of disposing of it, you can make yourself a bit of money. Even copper that is somewhat contaminated by wire or solder still fetches around \$10.50 a kilo. So it is potentially a valuable product. That is why the incentive is there. It is why we need to clamp down on it and do what we can that over time is going to be effective. That will ensure that these costs that have been imposed—that \$60 or \$70 million cost on an annual basis in this state—can be reduced, and hopefully greatly reduced.

As I said at the beginning, I want to see copper prices go up and up, because that will be incredibly good for South Australia. I remember speaking to some geologists a few years back at the Andamooka pub—the old Tuckabox—and at that time they indicated that they were confident that South Australia would become a major international copper province. In the meantime, we have this consequence of copper fetching high values, and we do need to address it.

**Ms O'HANLON (Dunstan) (12:57):** I rise today to speak in support of the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill 2025. This is an important piece of legislation that responds to issues that are growing across South Australia—issues that are affecting ordinary Australians, local businesses, sporting clubs and, in fact, entire communities. Metal theft is not a new problem, but the scale and disruption we are now seeing requires a modern and balanced response. The bill before us has been carefully designed to reduce opportunistic theft, protect our communities and remove the incentives that currently encourage our criminal activity. It will also bring South Australia in line with other countries and other states that already regulate this industry.

At the moment, the scrap metal industry in South Australia is entirely unregulated. We know that most businesses in the sector do the right thing, but the lack of a clear framework creates gaps that criminal groups are more than willing to exploit. It is already a crime to steal metal—that is very clear under existing law—yet the existence of an unregulated market gives offenders confidence that they can steal copper piping, cabling, catalytic converters and other valuable metals, then dispose of them with little risk of being detected. The result is significant community disruption. It is also incredibly costly. The Master Builders Association of South Australia estimates the cost of metal theft to the building and construction industry alone to be more than \$70 million each year. This does not include the impact on individuals, households or public services.

Many of us in the chamber will have spoken with residents who have been directly affected. Metal theft is no longer a hidden crime; it is quite visible in many suburbs, and it is causing real

distress. To give a local example, earlier this year my neighbour, Sam, had the catalytic converter stolen from his car, and the damage to the front end of his car was obvious and significant. As many members would know, catalytic converters contain valuable metals and can be sold quickly for cash. This kind of theft is becoming more common. It is quick, it is targeted and it leaves ordinary people with costly repairs and major inconvenience.

Another example was brought to the attention of my office by one of my constituents, Kim. His neighbour was building a new home. When they arrived at the site one morning, they found that all of the newly installed copper piping had been stolen. Offenders had even removed the copper from the gas hot water system and, in doing so, they caused a gas leak that created a serious safety risk, not only for the property but also for the local area. This incident shows how far some offenders will go when the perceived reward outweighs the perceived risk. I wrote to Minister Boyer on that, adding my voice to the need for something to be done. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

*Sitting suspended from 13:00 to 14:00.*

### **STATUTES AMENDMENT (SUPERANNUATION AND OTHER PAYMENTS) BILL**

*Message from Governor*

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

*Petitions*

### **DUCK SHOOTING PROHIBITION**

**Ms THOMPSON (Davenport):** Presented a petition signed by 22,500 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to prohibit duck shooting in South Australia.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

### **PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

Report of the Executive Officer for the Joint Parliamentary Service Report  
12 November 2025

Independent Review of the Implementation of the Equal Opportunity Commissioner  
Recommendations Report September 2025

Joint Sitting to receive an address from the State First Nations Voice Minute  
13 November 2025

First Nations Voice to Parliament, South Australian—Annual Report 28 November 2024 to  
13 November 2025

By the Treasurer (Hon. A. Koutsantonis)—

Public Sector Act 2009—

Overseas and Interstate Travel—Minister for Energy and Mining Report 8 to  
9 September 2025

Overseas and Interstate Travel—Minister for Multicultural Affairs Report 11 to  
12 September

Overseas and Interstate Travel—Minister for Education, Training and Skills Report  
26 to 27 August 2025

Overseas and Interstate Travel—Minister for Health and Wellbeing Report 11 to  
13 September 2025

Overseas and Interstate Travel—Minister for Primary Industries and Regions  
Report 12 September 2025

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

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and National Boards—Annual Report 2024-25  
Health Advisory Council—Annual Report 2024-25  
Balaklava and Riverton  
Bordertown and District  
Hills Area  
Mannum District Hospital  
Port Broughton District  
Port Lincoln  
Quorn Health Services  
Local Health Network—Northern Adelaide Annual Report 2024-25  
National Health Funding Pool—Annual Report 2024-25  
National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and National Health Practitioner Privacy Commissioner—Annual Report 2024-25  
Pharmacy Regulation Authority—Annual Report 2024-25  
SA Health—Response to the Coroner's findings into the death of Michael Lionel Richard Weetra Report October 2025  
Suicide Prevention Council—Annual Report 2024-25

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

Children and Young People, Office of the Guardian for—Child and Young Person's Visitor, Training Centre Visitor and Youth Treatment Orders Visitor Annual Report 2024-25

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

Skills Commission, South Australian—Annual Report 2024-25  
TAFE SA—Annual Report 2024-25

By the Minister for Trade and Investment (Hon. J.K. Szakacs)—

Attorney-General's Department—Suppression orders made pursuant to Section 69A Annual Report 2024-25  
Civil and Administrative Tribunal, South Australian—Annual Report 2024-25  
Freedom of Information Act 1991, Administration of the—Annual Report 2024-25  
Victims' Rights, Commissioner for—Annual Report 2024-25

By the Minister for Housing and Urban Development (Hon. N.D. Champion)—

Housing Trust, South Australian—Annual Report 2024-25

By the Minister for Planning (Hon. N.D. Champion)—

Architectural Practice Board of SA—Annual Report 2024-25

By the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water (Hon. L.P. Hood)—

Environment and Water, Department for—Southern Kangaroo Island Marine Park—Management Plan Amendment 2025

## VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** We have some guests with us in parliament today for question time. During the lunch break, the Minister for Education and I were very pleased to be at the Muriel Matters Awards, where awards were given to students from year 7 to year 12 from right around South Australia—and it is pleasing to see about 29 per cent of the students were from regional South Australia, including Madeline, who is over here from Kangaroo Island; it is great to see you. To hear

the stories of the great work that these students are doing in their local community to advance democracy and to advance strength in community is truly inspiring.

We are very fortunate to be able to look at the next generation and know, for those of us who are ageing, that we are going to be in very safe hands with the types of emerging leaders that we have got coming through. Thank you for your presentations. Congratulations on your awards. I would again like to thank the Minister for Education; our education team here, led so well by Natalie Badcock; and all the people from the independent school sector, Catholic school sector and the government education area for making this happen.

We have Frances Bedford here. Anyone who was in this place while Frances was the member for Florey will know how passionately she advocated to promote the work of Muriel Matters and to get these awards up and running. I also want to acknowledge the member for Morialta, who was the education minister at the time when these awards were instigated, and I reckon the deputy leader was the Speaker when these awards were instigated. They are a tremendous thing for us to do as a parliament to show that recognition, but also for students across South Australia to learn about the pioneering work that Muriel Matters did and to remind people that you can do really important work and change the world from outside of parliament. Congratulations to everyone involved.

We have some students here from Christian Brothers College, and they are guests of the member for Playford and the member for Adelaide. Welcome along to question time. Good to see you all. A lot of waving going on up there, very excited.

We have James Osborne Jackson, who is a guest from the United Kingdom, and he is a guest of the member for Elizabeth. So welcome to you, to parliament as well.

#### *Parliamentary Committees*

### **ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (14:10):** I bring up the seventh report of the committee, entitled Inquiry into South Australian Housing Availability.

Report received and ordered to be published.

#### *Question Time*

### **AMBULANCE RAMPING**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:11):** My question is to the Premier. Will ramping be fixed by the state election? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** After urging South Australians to vote like their life depends on it and promising to fix it, the state has endured 41 of the worst months of ramping in South Australia's history.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:11):** I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question because it provides a bit of a platform to be able to speak to the extensive, indeed exhaustive, work the state government is doing with respect to health. It's interesting; we've had the Leader of the Opposition, on a number of occasions since his tenure as being Leader of the Opposition, ask questions of this nature, as you would reasonably expect. But what you never hear from the opposition—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides will come to order!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** What you never hear from the opposition is a critique of any of the policy interventions that we have chosen to make. Let me give you examples. Obviously, the state government, as part of our health policy we took to the election, said that we would open up 300 extra beds as a government, and what we have delivered is 600 new beds to the system. We said that we were going to employ 300 nurses, and we have employed 1,400 extra nurses over and above attrition.

We said that we were going to employ 350 ambulance officers. Not only are we delivering the ambulance officers but we are delivering the stations, the upgrades, the ambulances themselves and all of the things that are required to make a difference on the ground, none more important of which than improving dramatically ambulance response times. In reference to the Leader of the Opposition's question, that is the difference between life and death. What we saw about this time four years ago is people calling 000—with the lights and sirens required in an emergency, that is to say a life-threatening emergency—and then they would wait, and then they would wait, and then they would wait again, and eventually, maybe, the ambulance would get there, but it wasn't likely to be on time.

In fact, from all of the publicly produced data and evidence, it was likely—likely—the ambulance would be late. In fact, you had a one in three chance for an ambulance to roll up on time. Fast-forward to where we are now. If someone calls 000 with the same life-threatening emergency, guess what? Ambulances rolling up on time. We have improved ambulance response times.

**The SPEAKER:** The deputy leader?

**Mr TEAGUE:** Point of order: standing order 98(a). The question is: will ramping be fixed? The Premier is debating some broader criteria. He is not addressing the question. He needs to address the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I will keep listening to the Premier, but he's talking about a situation that was in place in this state before the last election and what's in place now and I don't think he has veered off that track.

*The Hon. D.G. Pisoni interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** I don't need your help, member for Unley.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We are going to miss the member for Unley. Those interjections will be sorely missed. The Leader of the Opposition's question went directly to the question of patient safety and the Leader of the Opposition—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hammond can leave until the end of question time. I am not going to put up with all this noise from either side. We have students in here from around the state and when they are conducting their discussions in their classrooms, they are going to behave a lot better than some of the behaviour that we have seen here in the first four minutes of this question time.

*The honourable member for Hammond having withdrawn from the chamber:*

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** While it is true that our most recent ramping numbers for the month of October didn't see the best numbers in the last six months, what I would also say is what matters most, and we said this during the election, including when those opposite were critiquing the government's policy—because that was the difference between us and you, of course, we had a health policy at the election.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We had a health policy. You had a policy for a basketball stadium, as the member for Gibson rightly points out. Let's just go to the nub of the issue, when we go to the nub of the issue—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Elder, you are on your final warning. The member for Morphett, you are on your final warning.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** As a result of the effort that we have put into all things related to the Ambulance Service—and, of course, the reason why ramping matters isn't because the patient doesn't get care while they are on the ramp, because we know that of course they do, what matters is the fact that that is an ambulance that is not out on the road responding to another call that comes in.

But where are we at? During the calendar year of 2024-25, 21,271 people received a lights and sirens response on time in comparison to 2021-22. Just listen to that again carefully: that's 21,000 South Australians more who received a response time on time in a lights and sirens emergency from the state's Ambulance Service. So had the policy been maintained, had the last state election delivered a different result, yes, it is true there would be a basketball stadium under construction, but there would be 21,000 people less getting an ambulance on time.

**The SPEAKER:** Premier, there is a point of order from the deputy leader.

**Mr TEAGUE:** I am conscious you might tell me I am too slow on my feet. The Premier is refusing to answer the question. He is now proceeding off in a variety of other directions. It is a simple question and requires an answer.

**The SPEAKER:** That wasn't a question, that was a very longwinded statement. The Premier has addressed the substance of the question and he is also talking about the wider ambulance response situation that we have here and he's comparing it to what it was four years ago. I think it is the sort of answer that South Australians want to hear.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** I will round out with comments not from me or the health minister or any member of the government, but it's worth noting what the Coroner themselves said when they handed down a report that was looking into ramping from a coronial inquest—this is from a court, in effect. The Coroner acknowledged that the inability to get an ambulance to people who need it had drastically reduced. More than that, they said, 'SA Health had made enormous investments in capital projects and redevelopments' and go on to speak to the effort and the value of the policy that the government has to address the challenge at hand. We will continue to do it.

#### MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:18):** My question is to the Premier. How does the Premier respond to the AMA's Public Health Report Card: Mental Health Edition 2025 and what new action will be taken? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** The opposition is informed the report shows patients admitted to SA's public hospitals with mental health-related conditions during the 2023-24 financial year waited an average of 11 hours and 18 minutes in overcrowded EDs, which is a 70 per cent increase over the past decade.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:19):** Again, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. It again goes to the work that the Minister for Health has been delivering as a result of the policy effort that was put in before the election, because we went to the election with a health policy. What we said very clearly was that we were going to open up mental health beds in the state of South Australia.

You have to be capable, as a government, of doing more than one thing at the same time to address a challenge. The first thing is this: we acknowledge that in a perfect world you would see investment into mental health effort that actually prevents someone from having to go to a hospital in an instance. Having said that, we also acknowledge that notwithstanding all of the effort that one can place into that endeavour, there will still be some patients who necessitate hospital admission when it comes to a mental health condition.

Of course, we have seen the challenges with mental health around the nation and, indeed, around the Western world increase. What we have done as a government is deliver on our commitment to open up a lot more mental health beds, and not just in metropolitan Adelaide but also throughout regional South Australia. We have mental health beds opening up in Mount Gambier—that is a very good example of that.

Just on the weekend I was with the Minister for Health at Noarlunga Hospital opening up 24 purpose-built, brand spanking new mental health beds there. Of course, we opened up those beds only a month or two after I was with the minister, along with the member for Cheltenham and other western suburbs MPs, at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, where we opened up 24 beds, and we are not very far away from being at Modbury, opening up another 24 beds.

This is a government that is opening up for the first time brand-new mental health beds with a whole new model of care with a very deliberate policy to make sure that we do not just receive patients who need mental health care and then have them released into the community, but we actually have those patients coming into the system and providing the acute care that they need at the point of admission, including in an ED, and then have appropriate facilities with a new model of care to have them stepped down where they can potentially have a length of stay of anything up to months before they are then discharged into the community.

At the heart of that policy is to make sure that that patient gets better care but also that it reduces the likelihood of their readmission. We see, when it comes to acute mental health conditions, that readmission rates are high. Every time that we prevent a readmission by having a new facility with a new model of care, not only is that a better outcome for the patient and the community and the family around them, but it is also of course one less patient unnecessarily readmitted back into our emergency departments, thus freeing up a bed.

What that speaks to is a comprehensive policy effort. We are not just opening up beds willy-nilly. What the Minister for Health is doing is opening up beds in strategic locations with very specific purposes and needs to make a difference where we can. That is why we end up seeing results that translate down the food chain, so to speak, in terms of improved response times.

Again, as we sit in the second to last sitting week of the parliamentary term, the contrast could not be more stark, because what we have on this side of the house is a policy to invest in the health system, particularly as we have an ageing population, and what they are doing is coming up with \$7 billion black holes in their budget with one commitment alone. That can't mean much good for the state's public health system. We welcome the policy distinctions, and we look forward to continuing to prosecute them between now and the election.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Schubert and the member for Frome are getting a little rowdy there. The member for Elder, you are on your final warning and I am going to put a little 10 per cent loading on that, and the member for Waite as well. If we can all just keep it down that would be good.

#### MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (14:23):** My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier consider it acceptable for mental health patients to be stuck in hospital EDs? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** It was reported in the *Sunday Mail* that a mental health patient was stuck in a hospital ED for five nights, believed to be a national record unfortunately.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:24):** No, and that is exactly why we are implementing the policy response that we are doing. Of course, we would have loved to have clicked our fingers and had 100 extra mental health beds open up overnight, but it has taken time to design. We have done that in conjunction with people with lived experience. We have done that in conjunction with clinicians and now we are seeing these projects open.

As the Premier said, in the past few months we have seen a new mental health rehabilitation ward open at the QEH—24 additional beds there. On the weekend, we saw the opening of 24 additional mental health rehabilitation beds at Noarlunga Hospital. Within months, we will see a third one of these additional new capacities coming into the system at Modbury.

There will be three new additional mental health rehabilitation wards, extra capacity and a new model of care to make sure that we do not have a revolving door for people in mental health acute crisis, that we are not giving people back to the community before they are well, that we are giving them the tools and the treatment that they need to get better and to not re-present to our emergency departments.

This is what was advised to us by the college of psychiatrists and by the College for Emergency Medicine, endorsed by them as one of the key responses that we need to do in terms of

the entire ramping crisis, and particularly the impact that this has on people with mental health in our system.

Of course, that's not all that we are doing. We are also expanding mental health at Flinders Medical Centre. Twelve additional beds going into the Margaret Tobin Centre will open within months to provide additional acute capacity for the system, which is much needed as well. We are also building a new centre opposite Lyell McEwin Hospital, with 16 beds there in a crisis stabilisation unit to help people avoid having to go to the hospital entirely. They will be able to go to the Medicare Mental Health Centre, which will be co-located with the Crisis Stabilisation Centre, and get their treatment there.

In addition, as part of the new Mount Barker Hospital, which I know the member for Kavel is particularly excited about, this will have our first ever mental health capacity in the Adelaide Hills—12 mental health beds going into the Adelaide Hills. Within months, we will see the opening of the new mental health step-down unit at Mount Gambier, understanding the need in that community for mental health services and trying to reduce the impact on the rest of the hospital there and also we do not want to see people having to come to Adelaide for that treatment. There is also additional mental health capacity to come in the new Women's and Children's Hospital.

We have a huge suite of different investments that we are making. As the Premier said, the response that we have in terms of ramping has been commended and endorsed by the Coroner in his report as extremely comprehensive and well thought through, but the key part of that we have made from the beginning is an overemphasis on mental health investment, because we are concerned about people who get stuck in an emergency department bed waiting for a mental health inpatient bed when those beds are full and we do not have enough capacity.

Over many decades and over both sides of parties in government, we have seen a reduction in mental health capacity in our state and we are turning that around now. We are doing that as fast as we can and we are seeing that happen right now. Forty eight of those beds are already open with additional ones to come. Of course, it is not just the hospital system that we are investing in, we are also investing in the community. One of those features is the work that we are doing with the co-responder model between police and our mental health system so people can get that care through those health clinicians without coming to emergency departments.

#### PROTON THERAPY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:28):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Will proton therapy be delivered in South Australia and, if so, when? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mrs HURN:** Last night, 7NEWS reported that the proton therapy unit plan for South Australia will likely be shelved.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:28):** I read that entire transcript of the interview with the federal health minister last night and when I say it was a pretty partisan interview, it was about, basically, a local journalist, I think in Victoria, being pretty keen to try to get a proton therapy unit in Victoria. When I read those responses, what I saw was a commonwealth government that is looking at options, but obviously South Australia is well placed. We are dealing with some legacy contracts signed by the previous government, which I have to say are unique in their concept.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I am talking about the indemnity you gave to a—

*Mr Telfer interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Interrupting and running your hand in the air is not the same as asking a question. If you are worried about this, why don't you ask this question?

*Mr Telfer interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Flinders will stop with the constant interjections and commentary.

**An honourable member:** He's answering his question, sir.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** He's trying to answer something. As I said, after reading the transcript of that entire article, I am confident that South Australia is best placed to have a proton therapy unit here in South Australia. We have done everything possible to work towards this. Obviously, we have challenges, but we are working through those, and I am quietly confident, of course, that we can do this.

The proton therapy project remains at a juncture. Major building works at the Australian Bragg Centre were completed in 2023. In October 2024, SAHMRI terminated its contract with ProTom International and the supply of the proton therapy machine due to being unable to deliver it under the contract.

As a result, it won't be delivered as planned. We have spoken about this publicly, and there is some action underway, but I am convinced the commonwealth government are looking for an alternative funding option. I think that will work out well for South Australia. We will wait and see what the commonwealth government come back with, but no doubt other states are looking at this as well. This is something that will serve South Australia well. We have teams working up, being ready to deliver these services, and I am quietly confident that South Australian will prevail.

#### **NARACOORTE HOSPITAL**

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:31):** My question is to the Minister for Health. Can the minister advise if locum doctors are still being used to provide care at the Naracoorte hospital? With your leave, Mr Speaker, and the leave the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr McBRIDE:** Doctors from the adjacent Kincraig Medical Clinic used to provide on-call services at the hospital; however, that contract has not been renewed.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Karna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:31):** I thank the member for MacKillop for his question and his interest in all health services in his electorate and particularly in the Naracoorte area. As I am sure the member and other members may know, the arrangement between SA Health and the Limestone Coast Local Health Network and the Kincraig Medical Clinic was terminated under the previous government.

Since then, the doctors from the GP practice have not been regularly used to provide those emergency medical services at the Naracoorte hospital. They have been engaged to provide a variety of other services. In particular, obstetric services is one of the critical services that they help to provide for Naracoorte in supporting birthing in that community, and we certainly thank them for that.

We took the approach when we came into government that we wanted to repair relationships with general practitioners in country South Australia, and Naracoorte was one of those areas across the state where we had seen a breakdown of relationships between the local health network and general practitioners. There are a number of others. In particular, in the member for Stuart's electorate there had been a number of those areas where we had seen a breakdown.

Our leadership of those local health networks now is very different, and we have a significant outreach and communication dialogue with those general practitioners. We have a much better relationship in Naracoorte with the GPs than what we did previously. We stand ready to work with them in terms of if they can provide general practitioner support to the emergency department. I understand that that has happened on occasions, so they do provide that support at some stages when there is need for them to do so. At this stage, they are not looking to do that return on a permanent basis to provide that support, but I think we stand willing to work with them if that could be the case into the future.

Obviously, they have workforce pressures, as other general practitioners across the state do. That is why we are also taking a number of meaningful steps in terms of trying to address workforce pressures for general practitioners and for our regional workforce across the state. One of those key areas which I am always very keen to talk about is the work that we are doing in terms of the Single Employer Model. This rolled out for the second time in Australia here in South Australia,

in Riverland through the Riverland Academy of Clinical Excellence. That has been a very successful program.

We have been able to recruit new doctors into that program for a five-year course of study, working between SA Health hospitals and general practices. That has seen significant demand from doctors in the Riverland area and it is a real bright spot in the country in terms of our medical workforce supply because of that. We now have agreement from the federal government to expand that to other areas across the state and that is now rolling out for the first time this year in other areas across the state as well. We are very hopeful that that is going to be one key component in terms of making it more attractive for people to undertake studies so as to become a rural GP and undertake rural generalism.

The other very positive element is the work that Flinders Medical Centre is doing. In particular, on the Limestone Coast but also in the Riverland, Flinders University now has dedicated extra places, and is using some of its existing places in medicine, devoted to people undertaking their entire degree based in regional areas. So people can now do the entirety of their medical training based in regional areas as opposed to having to go and do it all in the city and then, after a decade of working and living in the city, we ask people to move to regional South Australia. That has been turned on its head now and we think that that is going to be a really positive development.

### JOBS GROWTH

**S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (14:35):** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the house on how the Malinauskas government is attracting high-tech, high-paid jobs to South Australia?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:36):** I thank the member for Gibson for her question. The member for Gibson has made a number of contributions in this state to important causes around improving people's living standards, one of which was as a union official in a related field, representing engineers in this state, of which we need a lot more. The reason why that is important is because when we talk about that level of skill we are talking about more secure jobs and better paid jobs, which is good for living standards. So it is not surprising that the member for Gibson has a particular interest in this subject matter.

Earlier today I had the great privilege to be standing with Vanessa Hudson, the CEO of Qantas, along with the Minister for Trade and Investment, the member for Adelaide, the member for Playford—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —Florey, sorry; I always get them confused—and the Assistant Minister for AI, the former member for Playford and now the member for Florey, and we—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my left will come to order. I can't hear the Premier.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —announced that Qantas will be establishing over 400 jobs in South Australia as a result of the strategic partnership it entered into between the South Australian government and Adelaide University, the new Adelaide University and more specifically the Australian Institute for Machine Learning, which the Assistant Minister for AI has been working with collaboratively. What this will see is not just any types of jobs being established here in South Australia but the majority of those over-400 jobs, starting to be employed next year, are all new. The ones that aren't new are jobs that are being relocated from Sydney, and some from overseas, more specifically India, in an onshoring effort to Australia calling Adelaide home.

The types of jobs that we are talking about are high-end, highly skilled jobs associated with AI and other digital technologies, as a result of the work that we have been doing collaboratively with Qantas. They are establishing a brand-new innovation unit, or product innovation centre, in Adelaide that is all about all things that the customer interfaces with with Qantas digitally, whether it be your Frequent Flyer account, whether it be you making a booking, whether you are following what happens to your baggage when you land: all things digital, all things technical that the customer interfaces with will be based in the product innovation centre which is all about productivity, all about technical innovation, right here in Adelaide.

Those are the sorts of jobs that we are really chasing because they are the ones that improve the state's economic complexity and see demand for labour in a different form that speaks to improved living standards. While we were there today—we made the announcement at the Australian Institute for Machine Learning that was established way back when during the course of the Weatherill government and is located at Lot Fourteen and is now to be formally aligned to the brand-new university—we were talking to students about the work and the studies that they are undertaking in the fields of machine learning and AI.

They spoke almost in a way that we couldn't have scripted better ourselves, talking about how much they love AIML and how much they love studying here. Many of those students had come to Adelaide because of AIML but are now speaking to the fact that they can take those studies and work for a cutting-edge employer, like Qantas, in a practical way. So they can study the most front-end of technology here in South Australia, and then work in the same field here in Adelaide.

It's a strategic partnership, it's a long-term one, and it's innovations like this that have resulted in yet better unemployment numbers like those that came in today that we see and have become accustomed to in South Australia.

#### PROTON THERAPY UNIT

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:40):** My question is to the Treasurer. When did the Treasurer last speak with the federal health minister about having a proton therapy unit in South Australia, and what was the nature of those discussions?

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:40):** I am always friendly with my good friend Mark Butler. People don't remember this, but Mark and I were preselected for two seats together in 1995. He was going to run for the seat that is now Badcoe and I was running for the seat that was Peake, and Mark and I—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I am just trying to be polite. I am concerned about the level of partisanship and I want people to follow my example. I think if people followed my example, we would all get along much better.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I like to reach across the aisle where there will be more Labor members sitting across there as well. I can't remember the exact date, but it was recently. I will get you the exact date so I don't give a misleading date to the parliament. The point that I make to Mark Butler, the point that I make to the commonwealth government and the point that I make to anyone in the commonwealth who listens—as recently as the trade minister, a few days ago, at Woolworths in Mile End—is that the fastest way to get proton therapy treatments—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** No, we were opening a brand-new distribution centre.

**Mr Brown:** Someone said 'shopping' and he got excited.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Someone said 'shopping' and he got excited. Actually, it's about the right time, isn't it, too? Grocery time. Isn't that when you like to go and wander around the shops and have a look?

The point that I make to all my commonwealth colleagues is this: the fastest way to get this therapy in Australia is in South Australia. We have the building, we have commitments from the owners of the building, we have commitments from the South Australian government and SA Health are building a team. The fastest place to get this therapy up and running is here in South Australia.

I am convinced that the commonwealth government will do the right thing and choose South Australia and obviously, ultimately, can find a new funding source. That's what Mark Butler is doing. He is an exceptionally good health minister, and I think he is one of those members of parliament from South Australia who is having a real impact in Canberra. We are very lucky on this side of the house to have such impactful members of the federal cabinet from South Australia. They are united,

and it's not rare. What is rare are shadow ministers for net zero. I have a great deal of affection for the member for Morphett, and I am just worried about him. We might have to put him under glass as an endangered species.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Point of order, sir—98(a).

**The SPEAKER:** I think the Treasurer has finished.

### **NEW WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:43):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Has the minister requested an update on the forecast cost and completion date of the new Women's and Children's Hospital following the Auditor-General's Report No. 9 into state finances? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mrs HURN:** The Auditor General's Report highlights this year's budget's observation that, and I quote:

...labour shortages across different construction trade skills continue and are not expected to ease in the short term, resulting in longer project completion time frames and some increased costs.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:44):** I thank the member for her question. I speak very regularly with our team who are working on the new Women's and Children's Hospital. I think as late as last week I had my last update with them, and the answer is very similar to our last sitting week or the sitting week before when questions were asked about this matter.

We are certainly confident in terms of the 2031 construction completion timeline. The team are working very well to that. You only have to drive down Port Road to see the significant amount of construction that is already taking place on that site. The stage 2 architecture team has been working very well with our clinicians on the planning for the next stage of works. We are certainly very happy in terms of the progress to date.

In terms of the cost of the project, the answer is the same as previously as well, that we have a budget—\$3.2 billion—but we know that there is pressure in terms of construction costs right across the world, and we are obviously working through that. We have not reached the stage of signing construction contracts for this project yet—that is likely to happen mid to late next year—but we are obviously working to try to make sure that we can balance to get the best outcome for taxpayers and ultimately to make sure that we can get the best outcome for women and children in this state. This is going to have to be a building that stands the test of time for decades and decades to come—

**The Hon. A. Koutsantonis:** A century.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —if not a century, as the Treasurer says. We need to make sure that it delivers the best possible outcome. So we are balancing all of those things, and we will do so throughout the final procurement process for this project. Of course, we did take the difficult decision when we came to government to move the site of that project, which is now allowing us to build a hospital that is going to be set up for the future. It is going to be bigger.

It is going to have a broader range of critical health services in it—such as additional pathology, such as a sterilisation unit, such as a helipad—which were not part of the previous design, where we were trying to squish a very small floor plate to fit a whole range of different things on it. That basically led to this project, between successive Labor and Liberal governments, seeing no progress take place for about a decade. Well, progress is now happening. This is a project that is going to deliver for women and children for many, many decades to come, and we are really excited about what this is going to deliver.

### **NEW WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:46):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Will the minister publicly release the six-year plan for the design and construction of the new Women's and Children's Hospital, and if not, why not? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mrs HURN:** The minister has previously told this house that there is a detailed timeline of when all of these elements will be happening in terms of both design and construction over the course of the next six years.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:47):** Similar to when I was asked a very similar question in the last sitting week, the answer is very similar in terms of there are various bits of planning that are happening iteratively, and they are being released to clinicians as we do that work. As each stage of that concept design and functional design brief is done, we are consulting with clinicians on that.

We are making that available for clinicians and our consumer representatives as well, which is a critical part of the planning of this hospital as well because we need to make sure that all of their input can go into it. Of course, not everyone will get everything they want, but it is important that we make sure that we hear from all the voices as part of the design of the project. We will keep doing that throughout the course of our planning and construction of this important project.

### CIRCULAR ECONOMY

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:48):** My question is to the Premier. Is the government in favour of the circular economy? Mr Speaker, with your leave and the leave of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr McBRIDE:** There is a concern from industry in my electorate that this type of economic model is not being utilised, despite the diversity of businesses in our region that are willing to engage in such a framework.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (14:48):** I thank the member for MacKillop for his question. I love visiting the member for MacKillop's electorate, along with the member for Mount Gambier's. I aim to get down there quarterly. I am hoping I can get down there between now and the next election.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** You should think about that interjection. The thing about the member for MacKillop's electorate and the whole of the Limestone Coast is the extraordinary economic diversity that it has. There is obviously what it's famous for in terms of primary production, but it's also about making sure that every element of the primary production food chain, so to speak, is utilised and put into the most productive of means in a range of different forms. That is, of course, what the circular economy speaks to in terms of its opportunities in the South-East, and the South-East probably does it better than most other parts of the world.

If we look at areas like treated timber, where we see timber being grown in the South-East, treated and then being used in vineyards, for instance, in the member for MacKillop's electorate, 700,000 to 1.8 million CCA posts such as those need to be disposed of due to breakage or vineyard redevelopment or removal, and it costs the state each year. In March this year, the state and federal governments announced an \$800,000 commitment to develop a serious national framework for the recycling and re-use of that timber in a way that will benefit industry but also the environment. It speaks to an effective and productive use of such resources.

We are also doing this in collaboration with Wine Australia and other agencies. This is, like I said, an example of where the private sector sees an opportunity and is collaborating with government, not just in terms of funding but also collaboration with our agencies and industry groups to see to the productive circular economy just in that instance. Then, of course, we've got Green Industries SA that frequently partners with RDAs, including on the Limestone Coast, to look at opportunities in and around such moments.

That's just one example, but when we think about the forestry sector in particular—which I know the member for MacKillop is an enthusiastic supporter of, as he is with all primary production on the Limestone Coast—one of the reasons and one of the motivations that this government has to invest as aggressively as we have in the forestry sector is because we see that as being one of the best examples of the circular economy delivering dividends for the environment, because of course we see a great decarbonisation attribute associated with the forestry sector but also the efficient and

effective use of every last bit of fibre not once, but over and over and over again in many different ways.

But that only happens when you see industry collaborating with government, particularly around R & D, which is why we are so excited about the prospect of opening up the Forestry Centre of Excellence in that precinct in conjunction with the technical college, which I popped in on when I was down there a few weeks ago and it looks absolutely magnificent—made, of course, out of locally produced GLT and CLT, probably from your electorate, I would have thought, and seeing that come to life. So when we invest in R & D we are investing in the circular economy, which means we are investing in the environment and the economy, but it's the primary producers of the South-East who bring this to life and they deserve great praise for it.

### PROJECT COSTINGS

**Ms STINSON (Badcoe) (14:52):** My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer inform the house about the importance of robust costings of initiatives, and any alternative views?

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:52):** It is important to get costs right. Getting costings wrong can lead to disastrous outcomes. Let's take three examples: building 200 megawatts of gas-fired generation for as little as \$175 million, setting 50¢ Adelaide Metro fares for only \$240 million, and delivering radiotherapy on the Limestone Coast for just \$1.5 million per annum and \$6 million over forward estimates. All up, that's \$421 million over forward estimates. Is that a true cost? Unfortunately for the Liberals, it's not \$157 million across the forward estimates; it's more than double their undercooked costs, and I will explain why. My friend the only shadow liberal minister for net zero left in the country, if you're ordering a brand-new—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** It's going to be an awkward Christmas party, isn't it? Anyway, in today's market, \$175 million for 200 megawatts of gas-fired generation is a severe underestimation. The problem for the shadow minister for net zero is that he has based his costs on sticking his finger in his mouth and putting it up to the air. If he had gone to the 2024-25 GenCost, a publicly available document released a month before unveiling their energy policy, it shows that 200 megawatts of gas-fired generation in today's money is \$491 million. It is not just a little bit off, it is a magnitude order off.

If the Leader of the Opposition became Premier and stuck to his word and ordered these generators, he would blow out his budget by 180 per cent already, but there is more: 50¢ fares. Sensationally, the opposition say that they can deliver this for only a quarter of a billion dollars. But, if you make peak services practically free, I have got a surprise for you: those buses will become very, very busy and you will need more buses.

I have asked the Department for Infrastructure and Transport to cost this. The other part, of course, that they haven't costed is their calls for more security. So they make an announcement of 50¢ fares without making any new provisions for any more buses or depots, call on us to have more security, lower fares making them basically free and then expect there won't be any need for more security. I asked the department to do a body of work about what this is likely to cost and, of course, the department say to implement this policy it would cost South Australians \$421 million across the forward estimates.

My favourite is radiotherapy on the Limestone Coast. The opposition, who are medical experts, say that they can deliver this for \$1.5 million per annum or only \$6 million across the forward estimates. They have got this wrong. This is \$45 million across the forward estimates—\$45 million across the forward estimates. Every single policy that they have announced they have gotten wrong. There is \$3.7 billion in commitments already and the campaign hasn't started, and over \$2 billion of calls on the government over the last four years. That is nearly \$6 billion, and I haven't even started about them wanting to abolish over \$8 billion in revenue.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Point of order. I call on the Treasurer to table the document to which he referred in the course of the answer.

**The SPEAKER:** I don't think he was referring to a document.

**Mr TEAGUE:** He claimed to in the course of his answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Well, I don't know.

**Mr TEAGUE:** He said he got a body of work and then he referred to it.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Point of order: I ask that the deputy leader withdraw that term, 'He's just making it up.'

**The SPEAKER:** Can you withdraw?

**Mr TEAGUE:** I said, 'You're just making it up'—question mark. It's a question. The Treasurer in the course of his answer—

**The SPEAKER:** The deputy leader can leave the chamber until the end of question time. I have been trying to get your attention.

*The honourable member for Heysen having withdrawn from the chamber:*

### NEW WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:58):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Who is the lead on the formal consultation with clinicians regarding the new Women's and Children's Hospital—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my right will come to order. I can't hear the question.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Planning can leave until the end of question time.

*The honourable member for Taylor having withdrawn from the chamber:*

**The Hon. V.A. Tarzia:** He's been doing it all day, sir, all day.

**The SPEAKER:** He's been doing it all year.

**Mrs HURN:** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Who is the lead on the formal consultation with clinicians regarding the new Women's and Children's Hospital since the appointment of the new design team? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mrs HURN:** The minister has confirmed to the house that consultation has commenced but failed to identify who is leading that process.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:59):** Jane Jennings is leading the consultation work with clinicians. She is a very experienced health official who has been an executive in the Women's and Children's Health Network and has been seconded to the new women's and children's project for some time now. She has been doing excellent work in terms of conducting those consultations not only with our clinicians but also with our consumers, integrating that work with the design team and also the building team and the rest of the project, and she certainly has my full support.

### REGIONAL HOSPITAL HELIPADS

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:00):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Does the state government's contract with Babcock mean that regional helipads are noncompliant with the current aircraft fleet? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** In response to questions on the 29 October, the minister said:

...we are trying to work through with Babcock to make sure that they are satisfied that they can be operated safely.

However, the opposition has been advised that some regional helipads are now noncompliant due to the size of the current Babcock helicopters, and aircraft in Toll's contract fleet will be smaller.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:00):** I am not sure where some of that information has come from, which I don't believe is true at all. Certainly, the information that I provided in the last sitting week still stands in terms of the work that we are undertaking, being led by the chief executive officer of the Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network on behalf of all the local health networks, to work with Babcock to make sure that we can get those helipads open as soon as possible. We already have seven of those helipads now open and operational, including Berri, in the member's electorate, which opened in the past fortnight or so.

I have to say, since we last met, I saw some of the comments from the member for Chaffey on ABC in relation to this matter which, I have to say, I thought were pretty disgraceful. There were claims that the member for Chaffey made that a death was attributable to the helipad's construction. I thought that was a new low, unfortunately, made without particular evidence. The truth is that, in relation to that matter, there was a fixed-wing aircraft that was determined by MedSTAR and by SAAS to respond to that incident. There are arrangements in place where a rotary wing, a helicopter, can go to Berri, if need be, before the helipad was open, but there also wasn't any delay in terms of the commissioning—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** Yes, because it was still under construction. There was no delay in the commissioning of that. There was also the ability for a helicopter to land at the nearby airfield and provide that support, if that had been the determination of the clinicians who work in MedSTAR and SAAS to make that determination. That was not the case. That was not the decision that they made in those instances.

Obviously, it was an operational decision that they had made. I think it's particularly unfortunate that the member for Chaffey has sought to try to play politics with such a serious issue. We, of course, all extend our condolences to the family who lost a loved one. But for the member for Chaffey to play politics with that matter, where a helipad was under construction, and there were alternative arrangements in place, if that was determined, I think is pretty disgraceful.

### FARM FIREFIGHTING UNITS

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:03):** My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. How many grants for farm firefighting units have been approved and paid through the government's Regional Capability Community Fund to applicants outside the Greater Adelaide and peri-urban areas in the past four years? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** The opposition is aware of a cohort of approximately 60 farmers in the Mid North who have advised none of their applications for funding over the past four years have been approved.

**The Hon. R.K. PEARCE (King—Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:04):** I thank the member for his question. This is a really important initiative that's helping to keep so many people safe in their communities. It plays an important role in helping to support our emergency services as well. As someone who is a local member in a peri-urban area, I write to my constituency each and every time, encouraging them to apply for these grants because we know it plays an important role in helping to incentivise these works.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister for Trade can leave question time until the end of question time. The member for Florey is on his final warning.

*The honourable member for Cheltenham having withdrawn from the chamber:*

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, continue.

**The Hon. R.K. PEARCE:** I am pretty confident on the needs of my local community. I know it's something that they have taken up and it's something I have supported them in doing each and

every time there has been a round, because I know it is so important to support communities to feel safe and equipped and prepared, particularly with the season that we are coming into this year.

We have been really proud of the grants that we have been able to issue to date, which go across a vast area of our communities across the state and provide so much support in myriad ways. I know, Mr Speaker, your community has received quite a few grants as well, as have many other members' communities in the area.

In terms of the specific amount that has been issued over the last four years, it's something I can certainly delve into and get more information back to the member. I would also like to state that if there are members of the community who are concerned, I am more than happy to have a conversation to better understand their needs, and if there have been issues about the applications and what we might need to do, I am more than happy to raise that with the department as well.

### COUNTRY HEALTH SA

**Mr BROWN (Florey) (15:06):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister update the house on the government's health investments in the Fleurieu Peninsula?

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:06):** I thank the member for Florey for his question and his interest in all matters of health, in particular this one in relation to the Fleurieu Peninsula.

I can update the member that we have made some significant investments in health in the Fleurieu Peninsula, in particular, the opening of a new emergency department at the Southern Fleurieu Health Service, the hospital at Victor Harbor. This is a \$16.8 million investment in expanding health services for people in Victor Harbor and across the south coast. It is being jointly funded by the Albanese and the Malinauskas governments—so I thank our federal colleagues for their support for this project.

It increases the number of spaces fourfold, from five to 20 spaces for patients to be treated at the hospital. It includes a new extended care unit with three beds for clinically stable patients, two new patient consulting rooms, a low-stimulus room for patients experiencing distress, six enclosed treatment spaces, six open treatment bays, and two new emergency resuscitation beds.

I want to thank all the team at south coast for the work that they have done putting this together. It is an absolutely magnificent outcome. It is really going to serve this community—which we know is both growing but also ageing—very well into the future and give our team of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals finally the infrastructure that they need to be able to best serve that local community.

You would have thought that this would have been welcomed by everybody. You would have thought that this would have been received with rapturous support.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** Who could oppose this? There was somebody unhappy with the opening, and unfortunately this did upset the member for Finnis. The member for Finnis was very upset that I went down last week to go and visit the new emergency department and I did not invite him to come along. He thought that I was going to be having a ribbon-cutting ceremony, so he organised his own ribbon-cutting ceremony of the event himself. So the unofficial ribbon-cutting of it was all him.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Unley.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** I understand it is—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI:** I understand it is a breach of standing orders to use props.

**The SPEAKER:** It is a breach of standing orders to use props, and I will ask the Minister for Health to put that picture of the member for Finnis away.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** I apologise, sir. I will put the picture of the unofficial opening by the member for Finniss away, but I hope that he enjoyed visiting what we have delivered for the south coast community, with his ribbon, with his big novelty scissors. We did not do a ribbon cutting but I am glad he was there to provide unofficial support and get some photos of it.

**The Hon. A. Koutsantonis:** Are you allowed to use scissors, mate?

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** Hopefully he got to see what the Malinauskas government has delivered for his community, which is much in excess of what was delivered by him when he was sitting around the cabinet table and absolutely nothing happened on this project, and nothing was being delivered for the south coast community. We now have a government which is delivering for health and which is making sure that we have the investments that we need.

**The SPEAKER:** It's very rowdy up that backbench. The member for Morialta is lucky to survive until his valedictory at 5 o'clock.

**An honourable member:** Another one?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Colton has the call.

#### **ADELAIDE BEACH MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

**Mr COWDREY (Colton) (15:10):** My question is to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water. When will the government release the results of the dredging trial undertaken in response to the Adelaide Beach Management Review? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr COWDREY:** In answer to a similar question in question time on 16 October, the minister stated that whilst she had received an initial briefing the issue is currently delegated to the Attorney-General with the expectation that it will be handed over to her office soon. It has now been approximately one year since the trial was completed and the residents of my community in the western suburbs are still waiting for the results to be released.

**The Hon. L.P. HOOD (Adelaide—Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (15:11):** I thank the member for his question. As I indicated in a previous sitting, the issue does remain with the Attorney-General in the other place. I understand that it is a complex and challenging environmental issue. I know it's very important to that local community, and the Attorney-General has obviously had carriage of that issue for some time. As I said in the previous answer in the previous sitting, it does remain with the Attorney-General and when an announcement is imminent he will release it.

#### *Grievance Debate*

#### **ALGAL BLOOM**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (15:11):** We know that the Christmas Pageant was last weekend and we know that Santa Claus is coming to town but, unfortunately, all that the people of South Australia are getting for Christmas from this Labor government is debt, blowouts and broken promises.

This week the Auditor-General's Report tabled in parliament laid bare the Labor debt bomb awaiting future generations. State debt will soar to nearly \$50 billion over the next four years which threatens to force, it says, potential service cuts and also suck government spending from where it is actually needed most. We know that at the moment this government is spending more servicing the interest on state debt than we do on our own police force. This is despite all the apparent concern about spending from the Premier when he was on this side of the house.

The Auditor-General points out that SA's interest expenses as a percentage of gross state product will be higher than basically all other states. Only a new Liberal government would unleash the true economic potential of our state. This week the Premier and his arrogant Labor government were also at pains to excuse themselves for their failure to act fast enough when reports of the algal bloom first arose earlier this year and devastated coastal communities right throughout our state.

The federal Senate inquiry report into algal blooms in this state was published this week and it spelt out in clear terms the absolute failure of this Labor government to respond to the toxic algal

bloom fast enough. The report revealed a mess of delay, handballing of responsibility, internal miscommunication and, of course, the public health response that at one stage was described as haphazard. Within the document we find astonishingly that:

The federal government was not formally advised by the state government about the impact of the algal bloom until the end of May, almost three months after it was first noticed.

While coastal communities suffered, what did the state Labor government do? They took weeks to seek disaster relief funding, with the report further revealing that the state government did not apply for National Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements until 18 July 2025, three weeks after the algal bloom was confirmed in some parts. Meanwhile, local councils were left footing the bill. As the report says, local governments were forced to bear the brunt of clean-ups at a significant financial cost.

Then we come to the issue of communication. We all remember the Premier confidently telling ABC radio in October that a lot of people referred to the algal bloom as the toxic algal bloom and he said it is not toxic. Yet, the government's own website sometimes said otherwise. Respected estuarine ecologist, Faith Coleman, said that the harmful algal bloom is undisputably toxic. She said:

We're getting a lot of mixed messages throughout this bloom—and we know that it is toxic to fish because they're dying.

The state government finally admit the primary algae was a different species entirely: *Karenia cristata*. It took them eight months to work that out. We saw what this did in places like South Africa where it has ripped through parts of industries, especially abalone. The report says that this has had the effect of further diminishing trust from a wary public.

What has become abundantly clear is that we need accountability in this state. We need it more than ever. Our coastal communities were not just let down, they have been absolutely kept in the dark and gaslit. The Liberal Party is calling for a royal commission into the cause, the impact and the response to the harmful algal bloom to get to the bottom of it to make sure that we are more resilient for next time. Only the Liberal Party has a plan to restore public confidence and trust, and we have also unveiled more of our plan to act where Labor has failed.

Recently, we announced our plan to deliver the biggest tax cut in the history of our state by phasing out stamp duty completely by 2041 but also to increase housing supply. We recently also announced a tough new 'break bail, face jail' policy to fight back against crime in our community. Today, we have again seen reports of devastating criminal activity in our community with a government that has gone soft on law and order in our suburbs.

We want to ensure that serious offenders face serious consequences and we have backed it up. We have backed it up with new recruitment and retention policies to ensure that we have the best police force that is properly resourced so that South Australians can rely on it. These are bold policies. We are ambitious for the future of our state and will keep releasing more policies into the future.

### DUCK SHOOTING PROHIBITION

**Ms THOMPSON (Davenport) (15:16):** Today, I received and tabled a petition signed by 22,500 South Australians, the largest petition received by this parliament this term, calling for an end to recreational duck shooting in our state—22,500 South Australians from every region and every walk of life, all saying with one voice that this outdated cruelty must end. That is an extraordinary act of civic participation and it deserves recognition in this chamber.

I want to acknowledge the tireless work of the RSPCA South Australia, Birds SA, the Conservation Council, South Aussies for Animals and every volunteer who has spent the last five months standing outside shops, markets and local events collecting handwritten signatures. They have brought this issue from the wetlands to the steps of Parliament House and it is people power in its purest form.

In 2023, a parliamentary inquiry into native bird hunting examined this issue in depth. It heard from hunters, scientists, conservationists, wildlife carers and animal welfare experts, and the evidence was sobering. The inquiry found what many in our community already knew, that monitoring

and enforcing compliance across vast wetlands is almost impossible, and that too many birds are wounded, not killed outright.

The RSPCA presented footage from the very first day of the 2023 season, footage not taken by regulators but taken by independent observers, showing wounded ducks left flapping on piles, dogs encouraged to snap at still-living birds and inhumane attempts to kill injured ducks by windmilling them by the neck or stomping them into the ground. These are not isolated incidents. These are scenes witnessed year after year, and the scale of suffering is significant. The RSPCA estimates that as many as 10,000 ducks each season may be left to suffer slow, painful deaths after being shot. One experienced hunter told the committee he refuses to shoot ducks at all, not because he is against hunting but because the wounded rate is simply too high.

For those who have never witnessed it, it is important to understand what duck hunting actually involves. A shotgun does not fire a single bullet. It sprays hundreds of tiny metal pellets into the air, a wide cloud of shot aimed roughly towards a moving bird. The birds on the edge of that spray are struck in their wings, their legs, their backs, injured but still alive. Some birds fall into the water and struggle, others fly on with pellets embedded inside them, only to die slowly over hours or days from pain, infection or predation. It is not clean and it is not quick. As even hunters told the inquiry, wounding is inevitable, not because shooters lack skill but because the very method makes cruelty unavoidable.

When we talk about sport, let's be honest about what that means. It is hundreds of lead pellets scattered through the air, hitting living creatures at random. Duck hunting in South Australia is carried out by less than 0.05 per cent of the population. There are 711 permit holders in a state of 1.8 million people, yet each of those hunters can legally shoot up to 10 ducks per day across a three-month season. It is a pastime for a few but suffering for thousands.

The vast majority of South Australians, as multiple polls have shown, want this cruelty to end. Three independent polls in recent years found around 70 per cent of South Australians support a ban, and almost 90 per cent of South Australians say that when animals are killed it should be done quickly and humanely. That standard is simply not possible during duck shooting.

As the RSPCA points out, we do not talk about wounding rates in abattoirs because humane killing requires control, precision and certainty. Shotguns in a wetland cannot deliver that. Other states have grappled with the same question. New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia all banned duck shooting decades ago. South Australia remains one of the few states that still allows recreational shooting of native birds.

Every year, volunteers from rescue groups and the RSPCA spend their weekends retrieving wounded birds, comforting the dying and witnessing suffering most of us never see. They do this because they believe that every life matters, and their evidence, their lived experience, must be part of this conversation. As the Conservation Council has noted, people living near wetlands are tired of the gunfire, tired of injured birds washing up on their properties, tired of seeing habitat disrupted and breeding disturbed.

So today, as I table this petition, I do so with deep gratitude to the RSPCA, to all partner organisations and to every South Australian who signed their name to this case—22,500 signatures. Our community has spoken.

### **ALGAL BLOOM**

**Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:21):** The Labor government has failed our community. All along the coast from Glenelg North down to Glenelg South, the toxic algal bloom has wreaked havoc on marine life, the natural environment, our local economy and the health of the local community. It is a community that has seen firsthand that Labor has completely mismanaged the handling of the algal bloom. We have had the Premier say that the algal bloom is not toxic, yet now, shockingly, we have scientific experts who have identified that it is toxic. The Premier's discredited spin has left a discoloured, stinking stain on this Malinauskas Labor government.

My community feels let down by the response from this government to the algal bloom. Locals have had to deal with thousands of marine animals washing up dead on our beaches and algae-laced foam blanketing our coastline. The government has tried to downplay the seriousness of the toxic algal bloom to spin its way out of the reality that they have been slow to act and have been playing catch-up.

In the past week we have seen two different reports lay bare the slow, fragmented response to the algal bloom by both the state and federal governments. One report by 20 eminent scientists identified a new and highly toxic algae species as the main culprit behind South Australia's devastating algal bloom.

This is in stark contrast to the Premier's attempts to gaslight South Australians over the preceding months saying that the algal bloom is not toxic, such as one time when he said, 'A lot of people refer to the algal bloom as the "toxic algal bloom"—it's not toxic.' Despite the Premier's assurances to the contrary, experts now say that the algal species causing mass fish deaths, dolphin deaths and serious health symptoms in beachgoers produces powerful neurotoxins. Marine science professor Gustaaf Hallegraeff said, 'It's much more serious—it impacts the nervous system.'

A Senate inquiry into the algal bloom also released their report, which outlined that the response from both the state and federal governments has been slow and inadequate. It revealed that the state government became aware of the algal bloom in March but that in the first few months the government expected the toxic algal bloom to go away with winter storms. Meanwhile we had massive fish deaths occurring across the South Australian coastline.

Then, in July, with the government sitting on the sidelines—the Premier even took a holiday to a beach presumably without algae—thousands of dead marine animals started to wash up on Glenelg's beaches. While the Premier was on holiday, I was visiting our beaches regularly to see firsthand the devastation to marine life. Having lived in Morphett for the last 20 years and spending countless hours volunteering as surf lifesaver or just enjoying the coast, I understand the emotional distress that so many people in our community had because of this devastation.

The impact of the toxic algal bloom has been significant. It has affected both mental and physical health. It impacts people's daily lives. One resident of Glenelg told the Senate committee:

The response from both the state and federal governments has been perceived by many in South Australia as slow and inadequate. This feeling of being let down has been widespread.

We then found out the government's first formal request for commonwealth funding and support was made in July of 2025.

To fill the void of information from the state government, I held an algal bloom community forum to bring together independent marine experts to try to answer some of the questions that my community had. Again, the state government was playing catch-up when they started rolling out their own forums after this, with the Premier controlling the message. When the beaches started being blanketed in discoloured foam, members of my community started contacting me complaining of respiratory and skin conditions. The Senate inquiry report details concerns about the timelines and accessibility of updated health advice, particularly for those with pre-existing health conditions like asthma, only coming in September.

It seems the state government's response has been all about saving face rather than protecting the community, and my coastal community of Morphett is fed up with the excuses of the state Labor government. They were too slow to act when they found out about the algal bloom. They have botched the public messaging for at-risk members of our community and they have slow-walked relief to local businesses. We have been let down and both the Liberal opposition and I will not stop fighting for our coastal communities.

#### GILES ELECTORATE

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (15:26):** I am more than aware that this is the penultimate week of this parliament and that I might not get the opportunity to do a grievance next week—no, I am not going to announce my retirement, I am going again—but it is an opportune time to reflect on some of the things that have been achieved in my electorate. I cannot go past the major one which was the unprecedented intervention in order to rescue the steelworks and the mining operations in Whyalla. It was a massive circuit breaker for my community which was facing an incredibly challenging time, both workers at the mine sites and at the steelworks and many of the local contractors who had built up businesses over many years—they have family businesses in many cases—facing going to the wall.

So that intervention, both the unprecedented legislative intervention and the package that was delivered, was a godsend. The \$2.3 billion package to support administration, to put money on the table for a potential new owner or consortia, to look after the contractors was incredibly warmly welcomed.

Just recently I attended the annual business and tourism awards in Whyalla and the Premier attended. I think he was struck by the turnaround, by the buoyancy in the room. It was a sell-out audience and the mood, compared to a year previously, was incredibly positive. It left a real mark. People recognise what has been done through this parliament and in partnership with the federal government to do the right thing by the Whyalla community.

Of course, we did more incredibly good stuff in other parts of the electorate. In Port Augusta, it was great to see the opening of the Port Augusta Technical College, a real plus for the Port Augusta community. We all know the importance of vocational education, especially in my part of the world. The technical college itself is yet another element that helps build Port Augusta as a service hub for the region.

Given that the technical college has accommodation, students have been attracted from around not just my electorate but electorates further afield. The member for Narrunga would be interested to hear that students from Kadina are coming up to the technical college in Port Augusta and doing a block of work there, so that is an incredibly positive thing for Port Augusta.

We provided \$3 million in funding for the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden, something that is unique to Port Augusta and something that is deserving of support. There is a fantastic volunteer group up there that does an amazing amount of work. The Port Augusta council is also one of the major supporters of the Arid Lands Botanic Garden. For people who have not been to that facility, I would encourage you to go; it does a lot of really good stuff.

At long last, we have seen the wharf refurbishment at Port Augusta. I think it is out to tender, but that tender might have now concluded. Once again, that is a partnership between the state government and the federal government to do a body of work that has been neglected for too long. We will see the revitalisation of that important wharf, both from a historic perspective and from the perspective of the central business district in Port Augusta. To see that come back to life would be a great thing.

Also in Port Augusta is the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the multidisciplinary hub that has been created there—a fantastic initiative by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. I am proud that we as a government have contributed \$1 million. There is so much more to say, but maybe I will get another grievance and finish it next sitting week.

#### **AMY GILLETT BIKEWAY**

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (15:31):** It was a sea of lycra in my electorate of Schubert this morning. We were out at Mount Torrens, where so many people joined from right across the Adelaide Hills to officially open stage 4 of the Amy Gillett bike path, which is something that as a local community we have been advocating for for quite some time. I particularly want to thank a number of people who have worked so incredibly hard and had really strong voices in making sure that this local project comes to fruition for my local community.

At the moment, we have a situation where the Amy Gillett Bikeway now finishes in Birdwood. Up until this morning, it finished in Mount Torrens. But now, with this additional 5.2-kilometre section, it takes the entire Amy Gillett bike path from Oakbank all the way through to Birdwood, at 22 kilometres. We are hoping that the next stage will be to Mount Pleasant.

Pleasingly, The Barossa Council were out at this community event because they, too, are excited about ensuring that the Amy Gillett bike path gets all the way to Mount Pleasant. In some exciting news, they have actually put some money in their budget to get this work underway. In fact, in the latest budget, The Barossa Council allocated \$100,000 to begin its work on their section from Randell Road all the way through to Mount Pleasant. This includes things like vegetation clearance, the construction of a rubble path suitable for walkers and gravel-bike riders, with plans to seek future funding to ultimately seal this section.

I would like to acknowledge, if I can, the fact that this is a really important legacy point for the Gillett family. It is a lasting tribute for Amy Gillett who was, of course, an exceptional South Australian

athlete whose life was tragically cut short training in Germany in 2005. This pathway really honours her memory and her passion for cycling. Her parents, Mary and Denis Safe—who were not there this morning—have been incredible advocates for this project over many, many years. Their strength and commitment have been instrumental in ensuring that Amy's legacy continues to inspire road safety awareness and community connection right through this bikeway.

Ever since I became the member for Schubert, this has been an item on the agenda list for my local community. One thing that I heard loud and clear, whether it was out doorknocking, whether I was at the shops in Birdwood, was that the community really wanted every single sphere of government to work closely together and get this done for the local community.

I am so pleased that with our collective efforts we have finally been able to make this happen. I saw locals out there this morning who have been advocating for this extension for years. I saw cyclists in their lycra, both young and old. I was not out in my lycra, but I am very much looking forward to getting out and enjoying this bike path over the years ahead with my little family, like I am sure that so many families right across the electorate will.

It is also about the business benefits that this will bring to my local community. I was having a chat to Alison from The Fold, whose business is on the main street of Birdwood, Shannon Street. She established her cafe in the main street of Birdwood, waiting for this day to come. I was so delighted to see her out at the official opening in Mount Torrens. She was making coffees for everyone. They have gone to such effort, really, to make their cafe cycle friendly. I have no doubt that many people from across the Adelaide Hills and beyond will be flocking to her cafe and the many businesses right up and down the main street of Birdwood.

I am really excited that this day has finally come. Many in the local community questioned whether it ever would, but this project again is a testament to persistence. It is a testament to what can be done when all spheres of government work really positively together. This really is a pathway that will be a great boost for our local community in many ways. I encourage everyone to come out and enjoy the northern part of the Adelaide Hills, all the way from Oakbank now to Birdwood. Of course, our focus now turns to the next stage, which is getting it all the way to the Barossa Valley.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (15:37):** As we approach 16 November, World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, a United Nations endorsed day to honour those lost and injured on our roads, I want to support the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, who put in the public arena the road safety plea from the Women's and Children's Hospital trauma team. Road accidents are everyone's nightmare, and doctors and nurses at the Women's and Children's Hospital are pleading with South Australians to take extra care on our roads, with new data showing an alarming number of children hospitalised for horrific road injuries.

The hospital paediatric trauma service has treated more than 470 children since 2023 to September this year for injuries suffered on South Australian roads: 293 children were injured in single or multivehicle crashes, 41 children were hit by cars on their bicycles and 91 children were hit by cars as pedestrians. Trauma staff at the hospital say many motor vehicle incidents are preventable, and many serious injuries are caused by inexperience, distractions and peer influence as well as risk-taking behaviour.

I reflect on my own family's experience with road trauma. We pretty much had an idyllic childhood until the day our lives changed forever. We lived opposite horse stables and wide, open paddocks, and the footpath at the time was hard dirt on a good day and mud on others. My dad and younger brother and sister crossed the road near our home to go to the paddock to pick grass for our pet rabbits: Snowy, Mopsy, Blackie and Cottontail. Returning with the grass, through driver inattention, a car veered onto the footpath, hitting my little sister Michelle. She was four years old.

For many months, our parents sat vigil by her bedside, where she lay in a coma in the Adelaide Children's Hospital. Together with my brother and older sister, I spent night after night and weekend after weekend in the hospital's waiting rooms, reading, colouring, playing games and, on a clear Saturday, trying to watch our beloved football team, the mighty Double Blues, play at Adelaide Oval using my dad's binoculars.

Michelle was eventually moved to Estcourt House, where she was to spend the next five years. There she remained in a state of semiconsciousness, not able to speak or move and being fed intravenously, while recognition through a smile or tears brought us some joy and hope. For those years, we travelled the 20 kilometres up to five times a week, bringing her home only for special occasions as she needed special care. At the end of my year 7, Michelle died as a result of her injuries.

So at a young age I learned how events over which you have no control can up-end your life. Road trauma injuries and death mean life will never be the same. All the 'if onlys' will not change it. Every Christmas, Easter, birthday, wedding, birth—every family gathering means there is one less chair, one less voice, one less family member to hug.

Young children are particularly vulnerable to car injuries, often involved in incidents with moving vehicles in low-speed areas such as driveways, yards and car parks. An alarming statistic: sadly, one child is run over in a driveway every week in Australia. That is why South Australians are being urged to stay alert both behind the wheel and on foot, with vehicle injuries remaining a leading cause of child trauma admissions. Recent trauma data also shows a high rate of incidents occurring in young people aged 15 to 24, with crashes significantly increasing as young drivers transition from a learner's permit to a provisional licence.

I recognise that road trauma impacts more than the victim, their family and loved ones, so today I want to acknowledge its impact on all who assist in the care of road accident victims at the site of the accident, on the journey to the hospital and in our emergency departments, wards and rehabilitation facilities. I also take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the dedicated medical professionals at our Women's and Children's Hospital, which recently became the second paediatric hospital in the country to achieve formal Level 1 Trauma Verification from the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. This accreditation acknowledges the high level of care the hospital is providing to trauma patients, as well as excellence in research and education.

In closing, I acknowledge and thank the dedication of the Road Trauma Support Team of South Australia in supporting grieving families and facilitating community remembrance, including through its annual memorial service where loved ones are honoured with photographs, reflection and solidarity. This year, it will be held at St Helens Park, 39 Prospect Road, Prospect from 10.30am for an 11am start on Sunday 16 November.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

**SITTINGS AND BUSINESS**

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Minister for Police) (15:42):** I move:

That the house at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 25 November 2025 at 11am.

Motion carried.

*Bills*

**LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (DISCIPLINARY MATTERS AND FIDELITY FUND) AMENDMENT  
BILL**

*Final Stages*

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

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (SUPERANNUATION AND OTHER PAYMENTS) BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Received from the Legislative Council with a message drawing the attention of the House of Assembly to clauses 4, 10, 18, 21, 23, 26, 27 and 28 printed in erased type, which clauses being money clauses cannot originate in the Legislative Council but which are deemed necessary to the bill. Read a first time.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS REVIEW) BILL***Final Stages*

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

No. 1. Clause 10, page 5, after line 1 [clause 10, before subclause (1)]—Insert:

(a1) Section 15(6)—delete 'three' and substitute '2'

No. 2. Clause 12, page 5, line 23 [clause 12, inserted subsection (1)]—After 'received' insert ', and the name of each nominated candidate,'

No. 3. Clause 17, page 6, after line 36—Insert:

(1) Section 47(1)(b)—delete 'second' and substitute 'third'

No. 4. Clause 21, page 11, after line 7 [clause 21, after inserted section 81A]—Insert:

81B—Certain campaign arrangements or understandings to be disclosed

(1) If 2 or more candidates in an election or elections in the area of a council enter into an arrangement or understanding to do either or both of the following:

(a) to incur expenditure jointly on electoral material relating to the election or elections;

(b) to keep gifts of money received in relation to the election or elections in the same account,

each candidate must, within 1 business day of entering into the arrangement or understanding, give notice of it to the returning officer.

(2) A notice under subsection (1) must state the names of the candidates who have entered into the arrangement or understanding and comply with any requirements of the returning officer.

(3) The returning officer must, as soon as is reasonably practicable after receiving a notice under subsection (1), ensure that the notice is published in a prominent location on a website determined by the returning officer until 30 days after polling day for the relevant election or elections.

No. 5. Clause 25, page 12, after line 16 [clause 25, inserted section 91B, after inserted subsection (2)]—Insert:

(2a) A meeting held by a council under this section must be presided over by the chief executive officer of the council, or a person appointed by the chief executive officer (who must not be a candidate in the general election).

No. 6. New clause, page 14, after line 17—After clause 30 insert:

30A—Amendment of section 76—Allowances

Section 76—after subsection (12) insert:

(12a) Amounts must be withheld from the payment of allowances to a member of a council, and paid to the Commissioner of Taxation in accordance with the Pay as you go system under the *Taxation Administration Act 1953* of the Commonwealth, if—

(a) that system contemplates amounts to be withheld from such payments; and

(b) the member requests, in accordance with any requirements of the council, that such withholding occur.

No. 7. Clause 31, page 14, lines 21 to 25 [clause 31, inserted paragraph (c)]—Delete inserted paragraph (c) and substitute:

(c) reimbursement of expenses (not exceeding the prescribed amount) incurred by the member in producing printed material in prescribed circumstances or of a prescribed kind (other than excluded material) necessary for engaging with the community in relation to local government matters.

No. 8. Clause 31, page 14, after line 25 [clause 31, after inserted paragraph (c)]—Insert:

- (2) Section 77—after subsection (2) insert:
- (3) In this section—
- excluded material means—
- (a) electoral material within the meaning of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*; or
- (b) material produced or distributed between the close of nominations and the close of voting for a general election of a council or a periodic election.

No. 9. New clause, page 15, after line 39—Insert:

34A—Amendment of section 227—Removal of moveable sign

Section 227—after subsection (2) insert:

- (3) If—
- (a) a local electoral poster to which section 226(2a) applies is exhibited in contravention of that subsection; or
- (b) an electoral advertising poster relating to a State election is exhibited otherwise than in accordance with section 226(3)(caa); or
- (c) a designated electoral advertising poster to which section 226A(1) applies is exhibited in contravention of that subsection,
- an authorised person may order the person who authorises exhibition of the poster to remove it from the road or road-related area.
- (4) If the authorised person cannot find the person who authorises exhibition of the poster, or that person fails to comply immediately with the order, the authorised person may remove and dispose of the poster.

No. 10. Clause 38, page 16, line 29 [clause 38(1), definition of *default person*—After 'who' insert:

has been nominated by the chief executive officer under Schedule 1 clause 3B(1) to vote on behalf of the body corporate or group in an election or poll and

No. 11. New clause, page 16, after line 32—After clause 38 insert:

38A—Amendment of section 24—Allowances

Section 24—after subsection (12) insert:

- (12a) Amounts must be withheld from the payment of allowances to a member of the Council, and paid to the Commissioner of Taxation in accordance with the Pay as you go system under the *Taxation Administration Act 1953* of the Commonwealth, if—
- (a) that system contemplates amounts to be withheld from such payments; and
- (b) the member requests, in accordance with any requirements of the Council, that such withholding occur.

No. 12. Clause 39, page 17, lines 1 to 5 [clause 39, inserted paragraph (c)]—Delete inserted paragraph (c) and substitute:

- (c) reimbursement of expenses (not exceeding the prescribed amount) incurred by the member in producing printed material in prescribed circumstances or of a prescribed kind (other than excluded material) necessary for engaging with the community in relation to local government matters.

No. 13. Clause 39, page 17, after line 5 [clause 39, after inserted paragraph (c)]—Insert:

- (2) Section 25—after subsection (2) insert:
- (3) In this section—
- excluded material means—
- (a) electoral material within the meaning of the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*; or

- (b) material produced or distributed between the close of nominations and the close of voting for a general election of the Council or a periodic election.

No. 14. Clause 41, page 17, lines 18 and 19 [clause 41(6)]—Delete subclause (6)

No. 15. Clause 41, page 17, after line 32 [clause 41, after subclause (9)]—Insert:

- (9a) Schedule 1, clause 3B(1)—delete '(a *default person*)'
- (9b) Schedule 1, clause 3B(3)(a)—after 'Commission' insert:  
or another appropriate public body

No. 16. Clause 41, page 21, after line 11 [clause 41(16), after inserted clause 24A]—Insert:

24B—Certain campaign arrangements or understandings to be disclosed

- (1) If 2 or more candidates in an election or elections in the area of the Council enter into an arrangement or understanding to do either or both of the following:
- (a) to incur expenditure jointly on electoral material relating to the election or elections;
- (b) to keep gifts of money received in relation to the election or elections in the same account,
- each candidate must, within 1 business day of entering into the arrangement or understanding, give notice of it to the returning officer.
- (2) A notice under subclause (1) must state the names of the candidates who have entered into the arrangement or understanding and comply with any requirements of the returning officer.
- (3) The returning officer must, as soon as is reasonably practicable after receiving a notice under subclause (1), ensure that the notice is published in a prominent location on a website determined by the returning officer until 30 days after polling day for the relevant election or elections.

Consideration in committee.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Motion carried.

## SCRAP METAL DEALERS BILL

### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

**Ms O'HANLON (Dunstan) (15:46):** These are not isolated cases. We see copper cabling ripped from Telstra pits, causing internet and telecommunications disruptions for homes and businesses. We see delays to public transport networks when offenders target train lines, signal boxes and associated wiring. Sporting clubs have had their light towers stripped. Residents have had water meters taken. Builders have lost cabling, hot water systems and other materials from construction sites, often setting projects back weeks.

These crimes create frustration, financial loss and safety hazards across our state. The rise in these offences is driven by several factors: cost-of-living pressures play a role, the high market price for copper increases the value of stolen goods and the absence of regulation in South Australia thus far makes it easier for criminals to turn what they steal into profit. The government and South Australia Police have been very clear that the intention of this bill is not to target legitimate scrap metal businesses or to interfere with normal commercial activity. The focus is on stopping criminals who see the current system as an opportunity.

The bill contains four key provisions that work together to remove the lucrative market for stolen metal. The first is registration. Scrap metal dealers will be required to register, which creates a transparent framework similar to what exists in other states. Registration supports accountability without placing unreasonable burdens on industry. The second is transaction records. Dealers will

need to keep accurate records of the transactions they undertake. This is a commonsense measure. It helps ensure that the source of metal being sold can be identified. It also helps police to investigate and prevent crime without targeting innocent businesses.

The third is a prohibition on payment by cash, cheque, cryptocurrency or in kind. This is a crucial change. It reflects what is already in place in other jurisdictions and is widely supported by law enforcement. Cash-based transactions make metal theft more attractive to criminals because cash is hard to trace. Removing cash and similar payments helps close off the avenue that offenders rely on. The fourth provision is enforcement. SA Police will have the tools they need to ensure compliance. The bill does not seek to apply unreasonable penalties to businesses doing the right thing, it simply gives police a clear framework for identifying unlawful activity.

Throughout the development of this bill, government and SA Police have engaged in multiple rounds of consultation with industry and stakeholders. They have listened to feedback, improved earlier draft versions and made sure that the measures strike the right balance. This has been a genuine process of working with the sector to ensure that regulation is fair, workable and proportionate.

The next step will be the drafting of regulations and, again, stakeholders will be invited to contribute. Regulation works best when it is informed by the people who work within the system every day. This approach ensures that South Australia introduces a scheme that is strong, targeted and effective, while also being practical for industry.

The benefits of this bill are clear. It will reduce opportunistic metal theft. It will limit the disruption to the building and construction industry, to sporting clubs, to households and to public infrastructure. It will protect residents from crime and reduce the burden on businesses that currently bear the cost of replacing stolen materials. Most importantly, it will remove the incentive that drives much of this offending by closing the unregulated market that makes it profitable.

South Australians should be able to trust that when they leave their car parked at night, it will be intact in the morning. Builders should not have to worry about copper piping disappearing from a site they secured the night before. Sporting clubs should be able to turn on their lights without wondering if the wiring is still in place. Families should not face gas leaks because someone has stripped their hot water system for copper. These are very basic expectations, and this bill helps restore them.

Metal theft affects the entire community, is costly, disruptive and at times dangerous. The Scrap Metal Dealers Bill 2025 offers a balanced, sensible and carefully considered response. It supports legitimate businesses, aligns us with other jurisdictions and gives police the framework they need to tackle a growing problem.

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Minister for Police) (15:50):** I acknowledge all those who have made contributions to this debate from both sides. There are a few comments I would like to make in relation to some of the issues that have been ventilated through second reading contributions in here, if I may.

One thing which came up from the member for Hammond, and it has been raised in other forums as well, is around whether or not it will have any effect on our much-loved can and bottle recycling program and whether or not, for instance, kids will still be able to go down to the recycler and cash in their things. I am reassured there will be no change to that. It will not be affected by the change that we are proposing here.

The member for Bragg read out some comments which have been made by the Waste and Recycling Industry Association South Australia. I have seen that feedback too. I thank them for it. In New South Wales, the prescribed number of days is six. The feedback from industry here in South Australia sought a minimum of 10 days, and we have drafted 12 days.

I understand, with regard to a lot of the other concerns from the Waste and Recycling Industry Association, and in the changes made in between the drafting of perhaps the first version of the bill they saw and this version, a lot have been dealt with, which is good. One was around the need for provisions appointing authorised officers outside of SA Police, such as Consumer and Business Services. We listened to that feedback and inserted the provision of authorised officers in part 19 of this iteration of the bill. The Commissioner of Police has the power to appoint a person or class of persons to act as authorised officers for the purposes of the act.

There was feedback from other stakeholders about how we deal with whole vehicles. Whole motor vehicles are an aspect which we will need to work through with stakeholders, including the Motor Trade Association. Prescribed scrap metal does not include whole motor vehicles—that probably does not come as a surprise to anyone here—but does include catalytic converters, which we know are a highly sought item for theft because they contain copper. Our intent is not to capture catalytic converters which are parts of whole vehicles. As I have said already, we are very happy to work with stakeholders, including the MTA, who have raised a lot of these issues, as we develop the regulations. I have given my commitment to that in this place.

Volume of transactions is another thing that has come up both here and outside of this place as well. The requirement to send all records to SAPOL is a really important part of the changes we are making here. I think members would understand why, and that is because the current state of play is that, if a transaction that perhaps occurred under the current regime that was dealt out in cash to the person who brought the scrap is later thought to be stolen, the ability for SAPOL to obtain records or perhaps an electronic transaction, so that they can actually do an investigation, is practically zero.

We understand that whenever you regulate something and put a procedure in place like this, there is a degree of paperwork, I accept that, but those logs that we are asking to be put through to SAPOL are integral to the good function of this bill should it pass. We need those out there who have been illegally trading in, for instance, copper to know that, each and every time they go to do that with scrap metal or copper that is illegally obtained, a log will be kept of that and if they have obtained it illegally there are the means and data for SAPOL to follow up on that. I think SAPOL have shown as part of this process their willingness to work with scrap metal dealers. That is something that I certainly want to do as well and we will continue to do that.

In terms of the additional resources that are needed, one reason that led to SA Police and the government revisiting the draft scheme was around being clear what those extra resources might be. We do not want to regulate every single thing a scrap metal dealer does. There is no need for us to do that. We are trying to be as precise and as prescribed here as we can be, in terms of the pieces of scrap that this bill will cover. That led to the change from a licensing scheme to one which focuses on the character of those involved in the industry and the traceability of certain transactions as well. I think that covers off on most points.

It is my intention that we will support the amendment put forward by the member for Bragg; it is a fair amendment. We agree to bringing it forward from a three-year review to a one-year review given this is a substantial change, and there are still some concerns in the industry around how it will operate. I think it is prudent for us to do that 12 months after it has come into effect, when we will look at how it is operating and decide whether or not we might be able to do things better and tweak some things. I thank all the members from both sides of the place for their contributions to this debate.

Bill read a second time.

*Committee Stage*

In committee.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Bragg, you have an amendment at clause 34, so are you suggesting we go straight there?

**Mr BATTY:** I might just ask a couple of questions on clause 1, but I do not anticipate being too long and I thank the minister for concluding the debate, which I think will shortcut some of the committee.

Clause 1.

**Mr BATTY:** There have been some issues raised about the consultation, particularly over the past month or few weeks—the latest flurry of consultation. Can I just ask who the minister, and indeed the government, consulted on this bill and, in particular, what was the feedback from scrap metal dealers and what changes were made to the bill that is now before the house in light of their feedback?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** I thank the member for Bragg, and I will give a short response in terms of what the consultation looked like, and then a flavour of what the feedback was from the stakeholders that were part of the three rounds of consultation, and then perhaps point to three specifically important examples of things that were changed as a result of that.

There was the consultation that occurred through YourSAy, and then in September another round of consultation after that, and then last week another very short round of consultation, again to check with stakeholders who had been part of the earlier rounds of consultation to see if they were supportive, happy, etc., with the changes that had been made through that consultation.

The feedback initially from the scrap metal industry was that they wanted it to be prescribed items more so than general items, which I think makes a lot of sense, and we have sought to do that. It was changed from a licensing scheme to a registration scheme and that was, again, directly due to the result of feedback from stakeholders.

Due to direct feedback from the MTA, auto dismantlers were included but those who were part of the MTA's remit that were not auto dismantlers were excluded. That is probably a broadbrush stroke view of what has happened and what has changed.

**Mr BATTY:** Referring to the round of consultation, the short round that happened last week, was the copy of the bill that is now before the house provided to those stakeholders during that round of consultation and, if so, when? Was there an opportunity for them to provide feedback and what did that process look like?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** I am told that as part of that short piece of further consultation, the third round essentially last week, the bill was provided and we did seek feedback, and I believe we received some as well from those stakeholders.

**Mr BATTY:** What feedback was received at that time? Presumably if it is the same bill that is now before us, it did not lead to any final changes, so can you just identify what the remaining concerns might have been from stakeholders in that last round last week?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** This is not an exhaustive list, and if you would like us to get more precise information I am happy to do that. HIA provided feedback to say that they were happy with the bill. There was a discussion, I think, with Ai Group about the inclusion of manufacturing or otherwise. As you would no doubt be aware, the general feedback from some in the scrap metal industry was that they would rather cash stay as a form of payment. That was one thing that we have not been prepared to compromise on.

Clause passed.

Clause 2.

**Mr BATTY:** This is the commencement clause. Can the minister provide any indication on when it is intended for the act to commence? I suppose, as part of that, will the minister commit to consulting further with stakeholders, including the scrap metal industry, on what the regulations to accompany this bill will look like?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** In terms of the commencement, I am told the step that will occur now, if this bill is successful in passing the parliament, is further consultation, which I touched upon in my comments around what the regs will look like. There are systems, I understand, that need to get up and running around the registration process. Obviously, there is a crossover here with the digital police station and other commitments we have made around the reporting of some of the data that we used in the digital police station. I am told that it will be the 2026-27 financial year, middle of next year, possibly a little bit after that, by the time all that is done.

Clause passed.

Clause 3 passed.

Clause 4.

**Mr BATTY:** This clause sets out the definition of 'prescribed scrap metal'. I just want to confirm that the scope of this bill basically just covers that prescribed definition rather than a broader category of scrap metal, so it would still be okay to pay for scrap metal that is not prescribed scrap metal with cash. Also, perhaps as a second branch to that question, is this definition and this limiting

of the bill to prescribed scrap metal something that has changed between what you characterised as the second round of consultation in September and then the bill that was presented to the house?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** As to the first part of the question, the no cash component is only in relation to prescribed metals. The example that was given to me was if you wanted to go down and dispose of your fridge, which is not a prescribed item, you can do that and you can get paid cash. In terms of changes to the definition, yes, as a result of round two and between rounds two and three of consultation, the definition was changed to be more about the condition of the scrap metal rather than where the scrap metal came from. That was as a result of the stakeholders. We thought it would be more accurate and do a better job of stopping that scrap metal that is being stolen, which, of course, is the purpose of this bill.

**Mr BATTY:** It does appear to be a lot more targeted with that more narrow definition. One argument that has been submitted by some in the scrap metal industry is that people who have all these items—if you have a whole heap of copper on your site—know how valuable it is, and responsibility to protect it therefore should lie with those who have it. Do you agree with that argument put by the scrap metal industry, or do you think this sort of regulation is more appropriate?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** My answer to that is we need to do both those things. I actually think both those things are probably happening. This is the bit that has been missing. As you no doubt do as well, I talk to the Housing Industry Association and Master Builders. I was on a housing build site this week and talking to the owner of that company about all the extra security stuff that they are now putting in, including cameras. They have a live stream to some of their sites so they can check in and see what is going on. Yes, that is going to have to happen, sadly, because there is a cost that is borne there, which I am sure gets passed on to the eventual home owner at some point, but this also needs to be done. We need to be doing probably both those things.

**Mr BATTY:** I just want to put two more of their arguments to you. Firstly, around the practical implications of the bill, I think we have talked about the New South Wales example before. Do we have any evidence on how that rollout has worked in New South Wales and whether it has led to less criminal activity? I think there is a contention by some it has, in fact, led to more criminal activity because it is very difficult to police what we are legislating now. Do you think we have the capability and resources and ability to police it properly?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** They are good points, and this has been raised with me as well. As has been put to me, because this is something that I raised as well, currently there is no regulation. The provisions of this bill will give SAPOL information, should they need it, to be able to actually investigate and track down someone who might have stolen something on the basis that there is an electronic paper trail of money being given to them.

The onus is put on scrap metal dealers now if they believe, with a reasonable suspicion, that the person bringing the scrap metal to them has obtained it illegally. They need to report that. That could well result in an uptick in reporting at some point, which is kind of what it is designed to do. We might see that because, hopefully, if that is occurring, people will use the new means we seek to create here to report what might be a theft.

The example that was given to me by SAPOL is the way they currently oversee the second-hand dealers act and the provisions there. It is the opinion of SAPOL that that has been really successful and worked well in terms of trying to stamp out that illegal activity that has occurred historically through second-hand dealers as well, which we are now seeing shift on to scrap metal.

**Mr BATTY:** I just want to put a final argument that the scrap metal industry has raised in some of their submissions, and it is around illegal dumping. There is a contention that this sort of legislation might lead to more refuse dumping, and that might cost taxpayers and have an environmental impact as well. Are there any concerns from the government's perspective around that, and how are we acting on them?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** Yes, this is a scenario that has been countenanced as well. One of the reasons, as I understand, for the one-off fee for registration for scrap metal dealers was the consideration that, if it was a yearly fee, some scrap metal dealers might choose to no longer be

scrap metal dealers, and then the availability of places to dispose of scrap metal legally might be reduced. You could see that.

We are hopeful, though—and this gets back to the earlier question the member for Bragg asked. Because those items that are usually the subject of illegal dumping, such as fridges and things like that, can still be traded for cash, hopefully, as long as we get the information piece right, people will understand that they can still do that and it will not lead to it, but we will have to keep a close watch on it. I am advised we will need to keep a close watch in regional parts of South Australia particularly.

Clause passed.

Clauses 5 to 13 passed.

Clause 14.

**Mr BATTY:** This is the clause dealing with the prohibition on paying with cash. The suggestion that has been made by some in the scrap metal industry is, instead of having a blanket prohibition on cash, whether there might be some cap on the value of cash payments. Is this something that has been considered by the government and dismissed for good reasons or not? Can you maybe talk to that; and is there any concern that, by not allowing cash for very small transactions, whether it might make the transaction itself a bit unviable when you have the transaction costs associated with it?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** I am informed it only relates to the prescribed items, not those outside that, for instance the fridge. In relation to a cap, that was considered. I am told that, because what we are dealing with here is illegal activity, we believe that even if you had say a cap up to \$50 that it would be exploited by those who are currently in the illegal trade and they would go around to multiple scrap dealers in a bid to always keep beneath the cap. Personally, I think that is right because we are dealing with, in the case of those people who are stealing it off sites, some pretty unscrupulous people who will find a way to get around any kind of provision like that.

Clause passed.

Clauses 15 to 33 passed.

Clause 34.

**Mr BATTY:** I move:

Amendment No 1 [Batty–1]—

Page 20, line 37 [clause 34(1)]—Delete '3 years' and substitute '1 year'

I do not have any questions.

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** We support this. I think it is a fair amendment to bring forward the review from three years to one year. Who knows who will be doing this job—I have no idea—but if I am lucky enough to be doing it, I will be very interested to see what the results of that are and if it is functioning well or otherwise.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Long title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

#### *Third Reading*

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Minister for Police) (16:20):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### **RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 12 November 2025.)

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:21):** I rise to address the bill. I indicate I am the lead speaker for the opposition and, at the outset, I indicate the opposition's support for the bill. The bill really needs to be read alongside the 2023 bill, which provided for a whole range of new arrangements in relation to residential tenancies. That bill we opposed, and the reasons for that are on the face of the record.

The bulk of the provisions of this bill are either uncontroversial correction improvements or they are rendering the circumstances more fully consistent with the 2023 bill. I note that the 2023 bill left, it has been found, the provision in a couple of respects for—notwithstanding a newly introduced regime in which no more than one increase in rent might be applied in any 12-month period—the capacity for a contract to be entered into, nonetheless, that provided for automatic rental increases on its own terms at a rate greater than annually. That is one of the substantive changes that is the subject of the bill.

I just highlight that what might be said about that is that the government bringing that on now will, I am sure, also characterise it as something that it would have intended to do on the first time around. So I am not going to say more than that, but those who are following closely will be reminded that there is a substantially new and different set of arrangements that are in place in relation to residential tenancies, chiefly the result of what was done a couple of years ago.

The minister has incorporated with leave the government speech into *Hansard* yesterday afternoon. That is a very thorough contribution to the debate. I am not going to rehearse it here, but I will draw attention to the *Hansard*, commencing at page 14090 at 10 minutes to 4pm yesterday and the pages thereafter, which contain both the second reading speech and the explanation of clauses.

I take the opportunity to note as well that we are here close to the end of the sitting calendar for this year and, indeed, for this parliament. So while I would ordinarily be inclined to be a little bit critical of the pace that this has come on, in the circumstances, this will allow for the bill to make it to another place in time for the final sitting week, which I understand will facilitate its passage should it gain necessary support there before the parliament wraps up for the year. So there is some method in that regard, and I do not protest too much about the pace in those circumstances.

I also appreciate the sensible way in which the minister's advisers and the department have made themselves available and, indeed, have made some extra efforts to ensure that the provision of information has been made available. That is noted and appreciated.

It is not a matter of a bill that is making only technical changes. Undoubtedly the bill contains further changes of substance, but they are characterised in the way that I have described them. It is in those circumstances that the opposition supports the bill, rendering perhaps a more complete and coherent treatment of the subject matter that is primarily the subject of the 2023 bill. There will be an opportunity to consider it in the time between the houses as well, but for the time being, I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (16:27):** I rise today in support of the Residential Tenancies (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025, which continues this government's commitment to ensuring South Australia's rental laws are fair, modern and balanced, protecting tenants' rights while giving landlords the clarity and confidence they need to manage their properties effectively. This bill builds on the most comprehensive review of South Australia's rental laws in nearly three decades. Over the course of 2023 and 2024, the state government conducted the largest review of the Residential Tenancies Act 1995, the first major review in almost 30 years.

The aim of that review was clear: to modernise the Residential Tenancies Act and strike the right balance between protecting the interests of both tenants and landlords. Following that review, the government implemented major reforms on 1 July 2024, delivering fairer rules around ending tenancies, improving minimum housing standards, strengthening protections for tenants experiencing domestic abuse, and clarifying responsibilities for landlords and tenants alike.

Since those reforms came into effect, the government has listened carefully to feedback from tenants, landlords, agents and the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT). The amendments before us today are largely technical in nature. They fine-tune the system to ensure the

law operates as intended. This bill contains a series of amendments that will make the rental framework more consistent and fair for all parties.

The intent of last year's reforms was to limit rent increases to once in any 12-month period; however, current subsections inadvertently allow for more frequent rent increases for standard residential tenancies where rent could be raised more than once in 12 months. This bill removes the inconsistencies, ensuring rent cannot be increased more than once in a 12-month period, bringing fairness and predictability to tenants and landlords alike.

The bill also introduces a definition of 'receipt' into the Residential Tenancies Act to make it clear that receipts for rent or bond payments can be provided electronically or in hard copy. This better reflects the way people transact today. The bill also provides consistent timeframes in the act applying to both periodic and fixed-term leases. This means landlords who terminate a lease on certain prescribed grounds will face the same restrictions on reletting regardless of the lease type. This ensures that protections for tenants are applied evenly and that landlords operate under clear, consistent rules.

The bill clarifies that section 6 of the Unclaimed Money Act 2021 applies to the Commissioner for Consumer and Business Services. This ensures that any unclaimed bond moneys held in the Residential Tenancies Fund can be properly paid to the Treasurer, improving the administration and accountability of public funds. The bill also makes it clear that the prescribed grounds for the termination of rooming house agreements as set out in the Residential Tenancies Regulations 2025 apply equally to both fixed-term and periodic agreements. This closes a gap in the law and guarantees that rooming house residents, who are often among our most vulnerable, receive fair and consistent treatment under the act.

The bill amends the definition of 'relevant decision' for the purpose of internal reviews of SACAT decisions. Currently, leave for review cannot be granted unless exceptional circumstances exist, but SACAT has identified that certain time-sensitive matters, such as vacant possession orders containing rental payment plans, have been unintentionally caught by this rule. This bill will exclude those orders from the definition, reducing delays and improving efficiency in the tribunal's processes—a practical, commonsense fix that ensures SACAT can focus its time where it is needed the most.

While these amendments are primarily technical, they sit within a much larger context of the government's continued effort to strengthen fairness and stability in South Australia's rental sector. The 2024 reforms modernised the Residential Tenancies Act 1995, the Residential Parks Act 2007 and the Real Property Act 1886. Those reforms introduced prescribed grounds for ending tenancies, minimum housing standards, greater protection for tenants experiencing domestic abuse, fairer rules for pet ownership and improved safeguards for privacy and data protection. They also created a more consistent and transparent framework for rent increases, inspection limits and energy efficiency standards. Together, these reforms brought our rental laws in line with contemporary expectations to be fair, balanced and humane. Today's bill refines those changes, ensuring the law operates smoothly and fairly in practice.

In my own electorate, I have heard from both tenants and landlords about the importance of stability and clarity in rental agreements. Tenants want confidence that they cannot lose their homes without fair reason and landlords want reassurance that they can manage their investments effectively under clear, workable rules. This bill delivers exactly that balance: fair protections for tenants and fair processes for landlords. It makes the system simpler, more consistent and more equitable for everyone involved.

The Residential Tenancies (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025 is a sensible and balanced piece of legislation that strengthens the administration of South Australia's rental framework. It builds on the major reforms of 2024 and continues this government's ongoing commitment to fair, modern and transparent housing laws. This bill will help ensure that all South Australians, whether they rent or provide rental housing, can do so with confidence, clarity and fairness. I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms THOMPSON (Davenport) (16:33):** I rise to speak to the Residential Tenancies (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025. Before the last election, the Malinauskas Labor team laid out a plan for A Better Housing Future: a plan overwhelmingly endorsed by the people of South Australia. Central to that vision was our commitment to improve outcomes for renters and prospective renters

in our state, and, as we have done across the board, we have moved swiftly and decisively to deliver on those promises.

Since coming to government, we have banned rent bidding; aligned bond thresholds with modern rental prices, saving tenants millions; and outlawed unfair, no-cause evictions. We have strengthened protections for tenants with pets, ensuring that wanting a roof over your head does not mean saying goodbye to a beloved family member. Each of these reforms has provided real relief and real fairness for renters at a time when South Australia continues to face record rental demand.

The bill before us today continues that work, modernising, simplifying and clarifying the law to make it fairer, more consistent and easy to navigate for tenants and landlords alike. This bill might not make the front page, but it is another important step in delivering a fair, modern and balanced rental system.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I bring members' attention to the speaker on the floor, so it would be good if we could actually listen to the speaker. Not me, I mean the person speaking.

**Ms THOMPSON:** It makes a series of practical amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 1995, including:

- allowing receipts to be provided in either paper or electronic form, a simple but meaningful change that reflects how people transact today;
- removing outdated provisions around automatic rent increases, bringing it more in line with section 55, which is aimed at limiting rent increases to once in a 12-month period, which also aligns with the national cabinet's A Better Deal for Renters recommendation that called for jurisdictions to move towards a national standard of no more than one rent increase per year;
- aligning language across the act so that sections dealing with possession and termination are clearer and more consistent;
- clarifying how unclaimed money is handled by allowing the commissioner to transfer unclaimed funds to the Treasurer under the Unclaimed Money Act 2021;
- extending key tenant protections in rooming houses so that they apply not only to periodic agreements but also to fixed-term agreements; and
- streamlining internal review processes to ensure decisions are dealt with fairly and efficiently.

Together, these updates strengthen the foundations of our rental laws, closing gaps, removing ambiguity and improving fairness and accessibility across our system. These are the kinds of practical improvements that make a difference. They are small steps that, when added together, make renting fairer, safer and easier to manage.

Our government remains deeply committed to ensuring every South Australian has access to a safe, secure and affordable home. Alongside this bill, we continue to deliver the largest public housing investment in a generation, expand access to the new independent tenancy advocacy service and open the door to new housing opportunities, including exploring the use of additional dwellings, like granny flats, to ease pressure on the market. Each of these initiatives, big or small, forms part of a clear, consistent plan to make housing more affordable, fairer and accessible for all South Australians.

I again thank the renters, landlords and community organisations who have worked with us over the past two years to help shape a fairer rental system. This bill reflects our ongoing commitment to getting the details right, to ensuring the law keeps pace with modern realities and that fairness is at the heart of every change we make. I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms CLANCY (Elder) (16:37):** I rise today in support of the Residential Tenancies (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025. While the amendments before us today are largely technical,

they are an important continuation of the significant reform the Malinauskas Labor government has already undertaken on the Residential Tenancies Act.

When we came to government in 2022, South Australia's rental laws had not kept pace with the realities facing renters or the pressures of the housing market more broadly. In my electorate of Elder in the southern suburbs, almost a third of households are renters, and they had seen their rents increase significantly, including in some cases increases in excess of 60 per cent over the past five years. Renters were living with enormous insecurity. They were fearful of raising concerns about repairs and maintenance, worried about bonds and hidden costs, and deeply anxious that at any moment their tenancy could end for no reason at all.

That is why our reform of the Residential Tenancies Act was so essential to South Australian renters. It finally brought fairness, transparency and protections to a system that had tipped out of balance. One of the most important aspects of our reforms was the ending of no-cause evictions in South Australia, something renters had been calling for over many years.

The law now requires landlords to provide a prescribed reason when ending a periodic tenancy or choosing not to renew a fixed-term lease. The change ensures that renters cannot be removed from their home simply because they asked for a repair or some maintenance or they raised a concern or were just considered inconvenient for their landlord.

We also extended the notice period for termination from 28 days to 60 days, giving South Australians more time to find a new home, organise removals and make arrangements for their families. This change was particularly important in a tight rental market where vacancies are at record lows.

One of our changes that I am most proud of, which I know the member for Davenport is a big fan of as well as a big animal lover—she is not here anymore—is our amendment to allow tenants to keep pets, with reasonable conditions. Pets provide companionship, reduce loneliness and support mental wellbeing. I love coming home from work, and no matter how late in the day that might be, my dog Pepsi will greet me so enthusiastically you would think I had been gone for years, not hours. Renters also deserve the unconditional love, or casual indifference if they have a cat, that comes with having a pet in their home.

Since the full implementation of these reforms last year, we have listened closely to the feedback of tenants, landlords, community organisations, and the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. What we have heard is that while these reforms have been successful, making a tangible impact on supporting renters in our state, several technical adjustments are necessary to ensure the act operates as intended.

The bill before us today delivers those adjustments. This bill seeks to close an unintended loophole that allowed rents to be increased more than once in a 12-month period for tenants and more than once in a six-month period for rooming house residents. Our intention has always been clear: to give renters certainty, stability and predictability when it comes to the cost of keeping a roof over their heads.

This bill restores that intention by ensuring rent increases occur only with the limits originally intended. Further amendments included in this bill improve clarity and consistency by defining 'receipt' to allow both electronic and hard copy receipts to be recognised under the act and standardise timeframes that restrict landlords from reletting a property after terminating a tenancy on certain prescribed grounds. These timeframes will now be consistent across both periodic and fixed-term leases to ensure fairness and prevent the misuse of termination grounds.

This bill before us today may not grab any headlines but it will make an enormous impact on the renters in my community and across our state more broadly. Our targeted and deliberate reform of the Residential Tenancies Act has already made a substantial impact on renters and will continue to make the system fairer, clearer and more consistent.

Landlords who already manage their properties responsibly have welcomed these reforms for bringing clarity and consistency to the system, acknowledging our reform targets poor conduct and power imbalances rather than punishing good landlords for doing the right thing. In closing, I would like to again thank our Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs and everyone in her team for their ongoing commitment to reforming and refining a rental market in the best interests of more South Australians.

To the renters in my community, we hear you. While our reforms have collectively saved renters more than \$11 million in just over 12 months, renting in our state is still expensive, and many families and individuals do continue to struggle to keep up with the cost of living. We still have more work to do, including initiatives discussed in this place just this week, such as supporting the commonwealth's Help to Buy scheme in South Australia. We remain absolutely committed to making renting in South Australia fairer, safer and more secure. I commend this bill to the house.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (16:44):** I also rise to support the Residential Tenancies (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025. I think it has already been pointed out that even though some very reasonable changes are incorporated in this bill, the substantial body of work was in the bill that was introduced into the parliament back in 2023. This is a tidying up of some of the elements through that first amendment bill, which at the time was the first substantial body of work that had been done on the Residential Tenancies Act for many years, and indeed as part of that whole process there was extensive consultation.

I think it is always good to see—and I have said this already today in relation to another bill—our legislation, our bills and then subsequently our acts, are often subject to an iterative process and as time goes on there are additional amendments that might well be needed, and so that act of review is a good direction to go in.

I was looking back at what I said on the 2023 bill and I noticed I spoke for a long time on that particular bill, both on the bill and some of the wider issues when it comes to housing. Some of the other members, because I am the last one to speak, have already gone through some of the technical changes in this bill, and I am always loath to repeat what has already been said by others. I am a great believer in efficiency, so I am not going to repeat what some of the other members have said, even though I have these nice comprehensive notes that I could read verbatim. But given they are already now in *Hansard* in a draft fashion from others, I do not intend to do that.

The original amendments in 2023 and now this bill are one of those attempts to try to find the right balance when it comes to landlords, if that is still the term we use for people who own houses they rent out, and tenants.

When you look at a lot of the social literature about what underpins, in general, a good life, there are three elements. One of those elements is shelter. Another one is purpose, whether that is through work or things you do in the community by having a sense of purpose. The other element is relationships, positive relationships. If you have those three factors in place, you have got a far greater chance of having a more fruitful existence.

But shelter is incredibly important. We know that in Australia at the moment there is what can be fairly called a housing crisis and in this state we are taking a layered approach to that housing crisis. This bill and the subsequent changes to the Residential Tenancies Act is one of those layers addressing some of the needs of tenants. When you look at Australia in general when it comes to tenancies, the sorts of protections that exist in other advanced countries in Europe and elsewhere are, to a large degree, absent in Australia.

It is quite commonplace in overseas countries for people to have long, secure tenancies. There is a far greater degree of instability in Australia when it comes to tenancies. Tenancy rights in Europe and elsewhere are treated in a different way. I believe there are things that we can learn from Europe—and we have to learn, because there has been a fundamental shift in Australia. Once upon a time the assumption was—and it was an accurate assumption—that most people would eventually own their own house. The fact that home ownership was at such a high percentage in Australia influenced to a degree the nature of our social safety net.

So, given that assumption about housing, it no longer stands, and it no longer stands especially for a range of people in our population. For young people there have been some recent surveys and very high percentages indicate that they believe they will never own a house. Then when you add to that the way that rents have gone up in recent years, it is deeply concerning.

There are other vulnerable elements of our population who are also at risk. One of the biggest growing groups is women who were in relationships but who separated. I do not count 50-plus as

old, but for 50-plus there is very insecure housing. There are tragic stories of people having to live in—if you can call it live in—or having to survive in a car or another vehicle.

The issues that we face with the way house prices have escalated, you can track back to the year 2000. That is when the gap started between income and housing. There is a whole range of reasons for that. I have my own particular views about what has happened, strangely enough. Once upon a time people saw housing as a home and as is the wont now—you might want to call it the neoliberal approach—it is the financialisation of everything, and we saw the financialisation of housing. Housing became, for more and more people, an investment.

That introduced some fundamental changes, and that combination of negative gearing and concessional capital gains tax did, contrary to some opposing views, have a profound impact on the housing market. Out of curiosity I have been to a few auctions in Adelaide. House prices are still relatively cheap in Whyalla, so if you want to move to Whyalla and get a job, you will do far better. Going to some of those auctions in Adelaide there were people who already own houses, and sometimes multiple properties, and they are often significantly advantaged in comparison to first-home owners. To say that does not have an impact I think is nonsense.

One of the things that we are trying to do in this state is open up supply, open up landholdings, and a willingness to invest in infrastructure, basic infrastructure, especially water, and that does come at a cost. That does come at a cost and sometimes the whole community bears that cost. Opening up land and addressing some of the planning regulations in order to increase supply is clearly one direction that we can go in as a state. We do not have control over some of the stuff that is happening at the federal level.

I come from a community where, at one time, over 60 per cent of the housing in Whyalla was Housing Trust property. That was part of industry policy. I came out with my family from the UK and within a few weeks of being here we had a Housing Trust house in Whyalla, and both my parents trundled off to work at the steelworks. That was part of industry policy.

When I first started working at the steelworks, I got a Housing Trust house. That meant that I could save up because the rent was capped as a percentage of your wage. I was on a full wage so 25 per cent of that was my rent, and that was fair enough, but it gave you an opportunity to then save and go into the private housing market and buy your first house. I would argue that we need to re-look at that; we need to re-look at some of that policy back then, especially in communities like mine where there is such an overwhelming percentage still of public housing. The idea that all of this housing over a period is going to be category 1 housing—you just end up concentrating social disadvantage, which is not to the advantage of the people living in those areas and it is not to the advantage of the wider community.

I could say a lot more about this. I could go through all the layers of our housing policy, but I will not. I commend this bill to the house. It is a good piece of work, built on that piece of work from 2023. I do commend the bill to the house.

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (16:55):** I am pleased to commend this bill to the house. As speakers who have made contributions to this bill have pointed out, this is obviously part of the larger residential tenancies reforms that we have made. There are a few technical amendments that inevitably you will find once such large reform has been in operation. We did a 12-month review and have made a few technical amendments in this bill.

I thank the member for Heysen for promptly paying attention to this bill in the last 24 hours. I appreciate his work to get us to this point and the opposition's support for this bill. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Bill read a second time.

*Third Reading*

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (16:56):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**UNCLAIMED GOODS (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL***Second Reading*

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (16:58):** I move:

That bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Unclaimed Goods (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2025. The bill makes much-needed updates to the Unclaimed Goods Act 1987, primarily aimed at modernisation and easing the regulatory burden of businesses and others who hold goods on bailment.

When a person comes into possession of goods belonging to another, it is expected that they retain and take responsible care and reasonable care of the goods pending their collection by the owner. The act prescribes a process by which the person in possession of the goods (currently referred to in the act as 'the bailee') may lawfully sell or dispose of goods that are abandoned or have not been collected by their owner (referred to in the act as 'the bailor').

A bailee who disposes of unclaimed goods without the consent of the bailor, and who does not follow the process set out in the act, risks the bailor taking legal action against them. The act may have application in a wide variety of circumstances—for example, where goods are left with a business by a customer for a specific purpose, such as for inspection, storage, cleaning, repair or other treatment, where goods are given to a friend or family member for temporary safekeeping or where goods are abandoned on a premises, such as in a private car park, or are left behind by a former housemate or employee.

A person in possession of goods belonging to another may be considered a bailee under the act, even if they did not agree to the bailment. In certain circumstances there may be other lawful ways for a bailee to dispose of uncollected goods; for example, the Residential Tenancies Act 1995 provides a process for landlords to dispose of property that has been abandoned by a tenant after the landlord regains possession of the premises. The act does not affect a bailee's right to dispose of goods in accordance with any other act.

Since the commencement of the act in 1987, the legislation has remained substantially unchanged; however, over that almost 40-year period there have been significant advancements in electronic communications, as well as changes in the way that businesses and consumers interact.

The government has also received repeated feedback that the waiting periods prescribed in the act, which require unclaimed goods to be retained for lengthy periods of time, place an unreasonable burden on businesses and other bailees and that the notice requirements and prescribed methods for disposing of unclaimed goods are overly cumbersome resulting in undue cost and inconvenience.

If the regulatory burden imposed by the act is too onerous, bailees may be discouraged from acting in accordance with the law, despite any risk of legal action. On the other hand, bailors may have legitimate reasons for failing to collect goods or being uncontactable. It is therefore necessary for the legislation to maintain appropriate levels of protection for bailors of goods.

The bill makes a number of changes to modernise the act and to ensure that the processes prescribed under the act are reasonable, practicable and readily understood. The language in the act is updated in the bill, including replacement of the term 'bailee' with 'recipient' to refer to a person who is left in possession of goods, and replacement of the term 'bailor' with 'provider' to refer to a person who leaves goods in the possession of another. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

**FISHERIES MANAGEMENT (CUTTLEFISH—NORTHERN SPENCER GULF) AMENDMENT BILL***Introduction and First Reading*

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER MATTERS) BILL***Final Stages*

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

No. 1. Clause 15, page 7, line 2 [clause 15(1)]—Delete subclause (1)

No. 2. Clause 15, page 7, after line 2 [clause 15, after subclause (1)]—Insert:

(1a) Section 73—after subsection (3) insert:

(3a) Despite subsection (2)(b), the advice of the Commission is not required for an approval of the Minister under subsection (2)(b) relating to an amendment to a designated instrument in circumstances prescribed by the regulations.

No. 3. Clause 39, page 15, lines 12 and 13 [clause 39, inserted paragraph (e)]—Delete inserted paragraph (e) and substitute:

(e) land intended to be used for the provision of infrastructure within the ambit of paragraph (i) or (j) of the definition of *essential infrastructure* under section 3(1).

No. 4. Clause 40, page 15, after line 14 [clause 40, before subclause (1)]—Insert:

(a1) Section 163(1)—after 'Minister' insert:

or a person or body interested in the provision or delivery of basic infrastructure (*a proponent*)

No. 5. Clause 40, page 15, lines 18 to 20 [clause 40(2) and (3)]—

Delete subclauses (2) and (3) and insert new subclause (2) as follows:

(2) Section 163(3)—after 'proposal' insert 'by the Minister'

No. 6. Clause 40, page 15, after line 20 [clause 40, after subclause (3)]—Insert:

(3a) Section 163(6)—after 'The Minister' insert 'or a proponent'

No. 7. Clause 40, page 15, after line 26 [clause 40, after subclause (7)]—Insert:

(7a) Section 163(6)(h)—after 'as' insert 'the proponent thinks fit, or'

No. 8. Clause 40, page 15, after line 26 [clause 40, after subclause (7)]—Insert:

(7a) Section 163(6)—after paragraph (g) insert:

(ga) provides information regarding the operation and administration of the scheme and the associated costs (to the extent such information is known); and

(gb) identifies further studies or assessments (if any) required to finalise the scheme for adoption; and

No. 9. Clause 40, page 15, line 27 [clause 40(8)]—Delete subclause (8)

No. 10. Clause 40, page 15, after line 27 [clause 40, after subclause (8)]—Insert:

(8a) Section 163(7)—after 'Minister' insert 'or proponent'

(8b) Section 163(9)—after 'Minister' insert:

or proponent (in so far as it is reasonably practicable for the proponent to do so)

(8c) Section 163(9)(b)—after 'Minister' insert 'or proponent'

(8d) Section 163(10)—after 'Minister' wherever occurring insert 'or proponent'

No. 11. Clause 40, page 15, after line 27 [clause 40, after subclause (8)]—Insert:

(8a) Section 163(9)—after paragraph (b) insert:

and

(c) whether the Minister proposes to terminate an agreement or deed under section 167 in connection with the adoption of the scheme.

No. 12. Clause 40, page 15, after line 28 [clause 40, after subclause (9)]—Insert:

(9a) Section 163—after subsection (10) insert:

- (10a) A draft outline prepared by a proponent must be submitted to the Minister for approval, together with—
- (a) a report to the Minister setting out the outcome of the consultation required under subsection (10); and
  - (b) any other information required by the Minister.

No. 13. Clause 40, page 15, line 30 [clause 40(10), inserted subsection (11)]—Delete 'will then cause the draft outline' and substitute 'must cause a draft outline prepared or approved by the Minister'

No. 14. Clause 40, page 15, line 33 [clause 40(11)]—Delete subclause (11)

No. 15. Clause 43, page 16, after line 27 [clause 43, before subclause (1)]—Insert:

- (a1) Section 166(1)(c)—after 'with' insert 'subsection (1a) and'
- (a2) Section 166—after subsection (1) insert:
  - (1a) A scheme coordinator must, in undertaking consultation under subsection (1)(c) on a proposed scheme, identify whether the Minister proposes to terminate an agreement or deed under section 167 in connection with the adoption of the scheme.

No. 16. Clause 48, page 20, lines 30 and 31 [clause 48(1), inserted subsection (2)(d)(i)]—Delete '(not exceeding 12.5% of the area of the land to be divided)'

Consideration in committee.

**The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION:** I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Motion carried.

### *Parliamentary Procedure*

### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery today and welcome Vickie Chapman, the former Deputy Premier of South Australia, and Attorney-General. Great to have you back, Vickie. Simon Birmingham is also here, former Senator for South Australia and senior minister in the federal Liberal government. The Hon. Michelle Lensink is also here from another place. Good to have all three of you here in the House of Assembly for an important speech.

### *Members*

### **VALEDICTORY**

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta) (17:04):** I seek your indulgence, sir.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** I love South Australia, and I love my local community. It has been an honour to serve as its local MP over the last 16 years. There is 35 minutes or so of this, and it is a bad sign that I am starting to get emotional at that. I have endeavoured to keep service at the forefront of my mind during that time. We build almost nothing by ourselves in life or in politics, and for the role I have been privileged to play, I am very grateful to all the people who have supported me along the way.

All of these valedictory speeches already this week, and I am sure next week will be the same, have been very different. To be honest, I have been tying myself in knots over the last couple of weeks trying to work out exactly what to say. What is the purpose of a valedictory? Is it like a graduation? Is it an exit interview? Is it an indulgence? For me, this speech is for my girls. I hope it helps them understand what I have been up to for so much of the first years of their lives.

I am grateful for every day that I get to spend with my beloved wife, Trudi, and our precious girls, Emma and Eleanor. They have laughs that will fill the room, and they have smiles that will light up the dark. Emma is as inquisitive as Marie Curie, as creative as Taylor Swift and as big-hearted as Dolly Parton. Without pause or a second thought, she will give up her new toy to a friend of hers who has hurt herself so that she can have a little bit of comfort. She is curious, she is eager to explore

all the world has to offer, and we have no doubt she will go far—as far as the eye can see—in whatever direction she chooses.

Eleanor is always willing to show compassion to those in need. She is equally as inquisitive and eager to learn. Her creativity knows no limit, and she loves to express herself, whether on a stage or in an ice-cream shop or in our home at 5:30 in the morning, always driven by a joy that fills our hearts. Eleanor, will you succeed? Yes, you will indeed—98¾ per cent guaranteed.

For Trudi and for me, being Emma's and Eleanor's mum and dad is the greatest blessing in our lives, and they bring us happiness in measures beyond our dreams. The adventures we undertake together, the stories we discover together and the life we are building together are central to everything that motivates me. From their birth up until now, I have sought to channel my hopes for their best futures living in our community and living in this state as motivation for my work as an MP, and it has been a privilege to do so.

But there are many ways that we can serve our families without making the compromises that political life requires, and so I am going to do that from now on. Emma and Eleanor have had some suggestions about what that might look like. Their top idea is that I become an ice-cream person, because that would enable me to bring ice cream home from work every day. They are very clever, and that may be the case. Whatever comes next for me professionally, I am just looking forward to the new challenges.

At its best, I have found my time in politics to be an opportunity for service, a chance to advocate for my community and my values. Whether through helping a constituent solve a tricky problem or through undertaking major reform work for the betterment of our state, with the team behind me, we always work to make our state better, and I have loved those aspects of the job.

But politics is also an adversarial contest. It requires wells of patience, resilience and a hunger to fight for your cause. As MPs, we expect to face long and unpredictable hours, disruptions to family life, robust accountability and constructive character assessments from strangers and colleagues alike, but all of this can be very hard for families to endure. Depending on your reserves of patience and endurance, it can be hard for the MPs to endure as well.

To do this job justice sustainably, your heart must be in it, and you ideally need a good level of support as well. So to Trudi, Emma and Eleanor, who have given me so much of that love and support while my heart was in the work, for bearing with me while I have been doing the work, I give my first and most sincere thanks to you.

Thanks next to my mum and my dad, the earliest adopters of the 'John Gardner for Morialta' concept, as well as our broader family for their love and support. Thank you to my godchildren for letting me be a part of your lives. Astrid Whetton and Ava Flett were very little when I was elected, but they are now strong young women, both of them confident in their principled beliefs. They are compassionate sisters, they are loving daughters and they are engaged citizens in our community. Astrid has just been through year 12. She finished a day or two ago and Ava will have that pleasure next year. I cannot wait to see what they achieve. I am looking forward to having more time and opportunity to cheer them on from the sidelines along with their beautiful families.

I was about their age, in fact I had just turned 17, when I joined the Liberal Club and the Young Liberals in O-Week, in my first year at Adelaide Uni. It was Paul Keating's last week as Prime Minister and Dean Brown was our state Premier. I paid my \$5, I picked up my free Cooper's Pale Ale which I was not legally allowed to drink at that time, and five days later I watched the election results come in on the UniBar screens at the O-Ball.

At the time, my friend Michelle Lensink was President of the South Australian Young Liberals. It has been a privilege to serve as her colleague and, in about two years' time, I am very much looking forward to congratulating her when she takes her place as the longest-serving female member of this parliament in its state's history.

I offer my thanks to my former employers, Trish Worth, Vickie Chapman and Christopher Pyne, who all served their state and nation with passion and integrity. They gave me a chance and they taught me an enormous amount about how to get results for our community.

I thank the members of Morialta SEC for choosing me as their candidate, especially the committee members and volunteers who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to, first, help

me win Morialta from the Labor Party and then hold it three more times. Now the SEC, well led by President Cristian Di Iulio and secretary Jake Fedczyszyn, has a new job to do and I wish them well.

Projects such as the upgraded Paradise Interchange and the new Morialta Secondary College will benefit our community for decades to come but there is always more to do. I am pleased our Liberal candidate for Morialta, Scott Kennedy, is now taking up that fight, including his support for the desperately needed upgrades to the dreadful Moules Road, St Bernards Road and Arthur Street intersection. There are fights he is taking for our local community to be heard when it comes to the future of the Magill campus of UniSA. In the north of Morialta, Scott is fighting for a comprehensive effort to stop the spread of giant pine scale in its tracks and rehabilitate affected areas for our local community.

It may be news to the house if they have not been watching my speeches, but Scott Kennedy is a lifelong local whose record of service includes his entire adult life as a volunteer firefighter and it is a pleasure to support him in his campaign. I offer thanks to residents in Morialta who have voted for me since 2010 and I offer thanks to those who have not. I encourage them all alike to now support Scott Kennedy.

I dedicated a whole separate speech last sitting week to naming and thanking my staff who kept me on track along the way and I recognise them here. To my parliamentary colleagues, I thank you all. It would be inappropriate to name a gold class who stand out as those I admire most so instead I will highlight the service of just one, former Premier Steven Marshall.

Steven Marshall led the state through the most difficult time the world has seen in 70 years and we came to the other side in better shape than pretty much anywhere else in the world. His leadership was a blessing and his legacy will endure. He was also an enormous support to me as education minister and many of the achievements in that portfolio that took place during his term as Premier were only possible thanks to that support.

He and I were elected together in 2010. Our local campaign managers were Courtney Morcombe and James Stevens, and we were generously supported by the popular local federal member, Christopher Pyne, and Senator Simon Birmingham. Liberal leader Isobel Redmond was generous with her time and support during the campaign.

At the time I was the youngest in this house at 31, and the second-youngest was Jack Snelling who was 41 and had been the youngest for the previous 13 years. I am 46 now. If I was elected at this age back in 2010, I would have been the eighth youngest person in that chamber. Things have moved on. It was a very different chamber and there are some opportunities, some really positive opportunities, for cultural improvement that I have seen over the last few years that I have been very encouraged by.

As I found my feet in the early years, I used the freedom that comes with not having a portfolio, to explore a few issues that had not gained broader traction with others. I introduced bills to require web streaming of the parliament and to ban the supply of alcohol by adults to minors without parental consent. While neither bill passed, both became reality, although obviously the streaming of parliament would have happened whether I was here or not, but I am proud of the secondary supply bill. It was not a universally popular policy then or now but it was the right thing to do and I am proud that the parliament was able to incorporate it into other laws during the time of the Weatherill government.

Other early efforts included a successful private member's bill to repeal a very odd law which prevented parents of adoptees from publicly identifying themselves as such, and a successful campaign to enable Chinese adoptees to gain Australian birth certificates. As a result of that change, many of those adoptees in question—there are about 300 of them in this state—are now adults, and they have been able to travel internationally on an Australian passport that they would not have otherwise been able to get.

I served on two parliamentary committees during my time. My favourite is the Legislative Review Committee, and, frankly, I think any of you who are still here should be lining up to be on that committee after the election because it does really important work in ensuring good governance of

our departments and, very importantly, of our council by-laws. I thank the diligent staff who have supported the committee during my two separate appointments.

The other was the Joint Parliamentary Service Committee, a body usually deeply resistant to parliamentary reform, with the exception of one during my time. With bipartisan support from all of the three delegates from this chamber, I am pleased to say, and one stray legislative councillor, who must have been persuaded unexpectedly during the debate, we took the bold step of opening the gate outside Old Parliament House, and soon we will celebrate 10 years of unfettered access to the footpath of North Terrace, despite the dire warnings at the time—and, as far as I am aware, no-one has had a serious injury yet.

As a shadow minister, I worked hard to ensure that our policy proposals were relevant, consistent with our values, credible with stakeholders and, frankly, most importantly, likely to improve people's lives. One factor I am glad I kept in mind was whether or not they were actually capable of being done. You would be surprised, sir, or maybe you would not but our guests might be surprised, how many suggestions come to us without having consideration to whether they were legally or ethically or even physically possible.

Having been appointed Minister for Education in March 2018, I worked with some excellent public servants who helped deliver these proposals and I offer them all my thanks. I was fortunate in my chief executive of the education department, Rick Persse. He added value to our work through his own initiative, while remaining faithful to the government's agenda in the best traditions of the Public Service. He ensured that the juice was worth the squeeze, that we were always focused on shifting the dial, and that we always kept in mind, of course, that culture eats strategy for breakfast. I apologise to him for my regular threats to reintroduce Latin as a compulsory subject in the junior secondary curriculum. Much as I would have loved to have done it, and I still think we should, I do recognise that there will be challenges finding the workforce.

It is worth acknowledging that two of our biggest achievements—year 7 to high school and flexible industry pathways for senior secondary students—were originally championed by David Pisoni, my predecessor as the Liberal spokesman for education for eight years. I tried to ensure subsequently that our policy documents were clear in their principles and their purpose and realistic in their assumptions.

In government, the teams led by Caroline Croser-Barlow and Clare Feszczak had flexibility and licence to be creative in helping us deliver these projects. In both cases, Caroline and Clare and their teams added significant value and the delivery exceeded expectations. Year 7 to high school in particular was a massive commitment, the biggest structural change to our public schooling system in a hundred years. We set ourselves a 2022 start date, which, thankfully, turned out to be just enough time, literally by days. We persuaded cabinet to authorise the level of funding for the project that allowed the transition team confidence and flexibility to solve problems creatively. Thanks to that work, the transition went well and year 7 students in South Australia now undertake their specialist high school subjects in specialist high school settings with specialist high school teachers.

My office tells me that I was responsible for the carriage of 18 bills through the house during my time as minister. I had a look at the list earlier today and a couple of the bills jumped out at me. I was trying to work out why I was responsible for ticket scalping legislation and a criminal procedure bill, and then I remembered the glorious week when Vickie Chapman was away and for six days I was our state's first law officer as Acting Attorney-General—a happy time for someone with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in languages and classics. Of all the times I have ever been on the telly, having that screenshot under my name is my favourite.

In education, the most significant reform was undoubtedly the establishment of a new education act, which we discussed yesterday in the context of the member for Port Adelaide's involvement, which will forever contain the key clause underlining how we saved Christmas in our public schools.

Other highlights from the period include TAFE SA's full reaccreditation and the restoration of its reputation after the ASQA audit scandal, the introduction of Clontarf academies to South Australia, along with the Teach for Australia program, and the SWiFT internet program. Telstra delivered fibre-optic connectivity to 900 sites around South Australia, taking us from the slowest internet on the mainland to the fastest internet speeds in the country.

There was a \$1.5 billion works program, including five new schools and more than 100 school upgrades. I thank the now minister, the member for Wright, for his very important work as a member of our team at the time. Everybody working on that project knew that if there was so much as a minor slip, an erroneous email suggesting that things might be late, then the member for Wright would be on morning radio, giving us hell. The fear of that helped motivate many people in our team.

Securing cabinet agreement for our early-learning strategy in the 2021 budget was also a good day, and I am glad at its retention and the expansion of many of its projects by the Malinauskas government.

There was the History Trust's yearlong celebrations of the centenary of the epic flight, culminating in securing funding to move the Vickers Vimy into the new Adelaide Airport terminal. We also assisted in seed funding through the education department for the educational program and funding through the History Trust for the curatorial assistance in the establishment of the Adelaide Holocaust Museum and Andrew Steiner Education Centre.

Finally, one of our youth arts organisations, Windmill Theatre, did extraordinarily well when they took advantage of Victoria's extended COVID lockdown to bring the preparations and rehearsals for the *Bluey's Big Play* world premiere to South Australia. They populated the production with South Australian actors, who were then able to tour the world. On a personal note, this was the first chance that our family got to go to the theatre all together, which was when Eleanor and Emma went to their first stage theatre production, as Her Majesty's Theatre was reopening for live performance. It was fantastic.

Even more significant—hard as it is to imagine anything being more significant than *Bluey's Big Play*—and it is an area of public policy where more remains to be done, is the way in which we teach our children, what we teach our children, and how we can better integrate the science of learning within our schools. Our literacy guarantee policy measures embedded phonics, explicit instruction and an understanding of the learning sciences in the lower primary years around the state.

New resources were provided for schools. We overhauled the assessment methodology of student progress; we replaced running records with DIBELS and so forth; and we put massive new resources into teacher training, professional development and coaching in evidence-based pedagogy. We wanted to ensure that we were aligning our teaching with best practice for all students, but most importantly for students with dyslexia, ADHD and other learning difficulties, who are too often consigned to being considered naughty or uninterested in their schooling because they had never been effectively taught to read.

There is a very positive bipartisan story here, because at the same time that I was doing my research and reading books by clever people like E.D. Hirsch and Daniel Willingham and talking to stakeholders, advocates, educators and academics, the member for Port Adelaide was doing the same. She was talking to a lot of the same people, and she and the government were moving in a similar direction.

The most noticeable feature in our literacy guarantee policy was the new year 1 phonics check. The phonics check was the brainchild of former UK schools minister Nick Gibb, now Sir Nick Gibb. I always want to say Sir Nicholas because—anyway. I commend to you all Sir Nick's book, recently released, called *Reforming Lessons*. It outlines the story of how declining standards in England were turned around over a decade, to the point where, by the time of the last election, English school student results had climbed dramatically to being near the top of the OECD tables in performance.

Dr Jennifer Buckingham, then of The Centre for Independent Studies, had been a very high-profile campaigner, effectively advocating for these programs around Australia—and it was starting to gain traction. The then federal minister, the exceptional Simon Birmingham, was encouraging all states to get on board. Under the member for Port Adelaide's ministerial responsibility, South Australia became the first jurisdiction to put their hand up to conduct a trial, and of course we had also announced our policy in a similar area.

In 2017 the Department for Education secured agreement from London to borrow their check—I think we paid a dollar for it in the previous year—in 50 South Australian schools. That

commitment through the Liberal Party went further than the trial. We committed to mandate it in all public schools, but, in time for the election, the Xenophon party and the Labor Party had matched that promise too.

Bipartisan support for the new approach helped us overcome opposition from the union and reticence from educators, who were very sceptical about the approach. Delivery of the commitment was made much easier by the trial, backed up by expert analysis—commissioned under the former government—by respected researchers at Flinders University, who gave us some excellent advice about how to improve it in the following years.

The most dramatic improvements in our phonics check results have been among our most vulnerable cohorts of students, and now—I think we are seven years on from the first one—there are far more kids in these cohorts through the primary years who are able to read as they progress through those primary years. Between 2017 and 2022 South Australia had the most significant increase in our NAPLAN results of any state. Many of those teachers, educators and principals who were sceptical before have subsequently shifted their views as they have seen improvements in the classrooms.

Non-government schools are getting on board, too. Just last week I was at Rostrevor College in my electorate, the alma mater of both our Liberal leader, Vincent Tarzia, and also our Liberal candidate for Morialta, the lifelong local volunteer firefighter Scott Kennedy. That school's overhaul of their approach to the primary years in line with the science of learning has delivered rapid growth in their phonics check results and their NAPLAN data too. Pretty much everywhere in every state in Australia is somewhere along this path, and New Zealand has gone even further.

The so-called 'reading wars' now seem to be over, but the ground that has been won must be protected vigilantly. That is why I talk about this; that is why I encourage all policymakers to familiarise themselves with these issues and with the international evidence around learning science which continues to develop. I had hoped we would have more than two years to implement further reforms, but we were overtaken by events. In retrospect, I wish we had gone further faster in this space and worked towards a more knowledge-rich curriculum in South Australia.

At the risk of sounding old-fashioned, when it comes to what our students learn we need to ensure that they will be exposed to the great ideas and the texts that have had culturally enduring significance for hundreds and thousands of years. This is perhaps most important of all in our public school system, lest the advantages and opportunities of that cultural capital be consigned only to children who grew up in those homes where the bookshelves are already full.

The final aspect of this time that cannot go unmentioned is the impact of COVID. I spoke about this at length earlier in the week, but in brief I want to reiterate that our children and young people and the communities around them were served extraordinarily well by South Australia's education workforce. When the world was turned upside down, we worked hard to ensure our schools were the most normal places in our society.

From the Premier down, everyone was doing their best with the information we had. For as long as that information suggested that we could keep public schools open with as many students attending as possible, then that was our consistent ambition. I remember Courtney Morcombe calling me up almost every morning, checking that that was still our plan—and it was and we did pretty well.

In addition to the teams within the education department, led by Rick Persse, along with SA Health, I also want to highlight the non-government sector led by Neil McGoran at Catholic Education SA and Carolyn Grantskalns at the Association of Independent Schools of SA at the time. No other jurisdiction in Australia had such close and working relationships between their sectors and their health department, and it contributed to the fact that while we would love to have not had a global pandemic that killed tens of thousands of people around the world and disrupted everything in everyone's lives, at least South Australia's school students had less disruption to their learning and school attendance than pretty much any other jurisdiction in the world.

This week in these valedictories there has been a lot of reflection by members about their core values. We respect conviction and consistency. Constancy is preferable to treachery. Virtue and principle are more appealing than graft and transactionalism. But as somebody who has never wanted the perfect to be the enemy of the good, I want to offer a positive word for pragmatism in our considerations as well.

The pragmatist foregrounds the importance of getting outcomes for the people we serve. It is not about limiting the ambition of what we try to do but rather tempering it with our judgement about what is possible. Compromise does not mean capitulation if it results in better outcomes for the communities we have been elected to serve, certainly compared with what would otherwise be possible.

One of the things that sometimes bothers me about politics is the expectation that MPs have to immediately respond to new events or developments without having had the chance to investigate deeply, discover what all the facts might be or consider the implications of an issue in depth.

In one example, about a week after ChatGPT had been released to the world I was criticised by a journalist for not yet having determined the Liberal Party's position on the use of artificial intelligence in schools. It is an issue on which I now have a lot of views—it is okay, I am not going to go through them today. But the point is, at the time I was asked it would have been negligent, irresponsible and foolish for me to form a position that was then going to tie myself and my colleagues based on a vibe of something that nobody really had any understanding about at the time.

An opinion once stated, especially in this place, can be hard to retract. There is a natural pressure for politicians to stick to opinions long after the evidence should have persuaded them to a different position. While I encourage all members to be true to their values and mindful of their purpose, I also encourage them to reflect that wisdom requires a willingness to change your point of view when the evidence demands it.

In terms of my own political values, I consider myself a pragmatic liberal with both a small 'l' and a big 'L'. In a world where some of the best governments are built on stable coalitions, whether formal or informal, whether within a party or between them, I welcome the fact that the party I represent is home to two great philosophical traditions with enormous sympathy and complementarity. I know a great many loyal Liberals with both liberal and more conservative views who feel the same way.

I consider myself a classical liberal, because I value freedom for the individual to maximise their potential according to their lights and to pursue their best life without unnecessary constraint in any form from the state. By the same token, classical liberal thought has always understood that society needs a strong safety net to catch people as they might fall or help them up if they need it.

I am also happy to be associated with the mainstream conservative tradition that so values the institutions that have protected our liberties from extremism. It asks of us that we offer evidence to justify the benefits of reform as compared to the status quo, rather than just assuming that new is always better, and a reasonable dose of that in any government can be a good thing.

Conservatives and liberals working together in the best interests of our state and nation, in no way reactionary but rejecting the stifling homogeneity of a socialist panacea, is exactly what Menzies had in mind for the Liberal Party, and he said as much. That is how we operate when we are at our best. I am pleased that my Liberal colleagues in this building take that view too, and I hope they all have the opportunity to put that approach into practice once again in government, in service to the people of South Australia.

I started this speech talking about my family, and I return to them now: my parents and Trudi's, Trudi and our girls. I am conscious that I have led a fortunate life. My parents worked through far greater challenges than I have ever had to face. I think all our parental instincts are to work hard for our children so that they have more opportunities than us, and Trudi's and my parents did that for us through their hard work and sacrifices.

I have spoken about my parents in this place a number of times. My parents-in-law, Lynne and Lorenzo Mercurio, also came to this country as children, in their cases from Coventry and San Giorgio La Molara respectively. They have worked hard all their lives and they can now take enormous pride in Trudi's and Mark's achievements.

To Trudi: I love you so much. Our girls and I are very lucky that we get to spend our lives with you. Trudi is a first in family to go to university, with bachelor's degrees from Flinders University and postgraduate qualifications from St Andrews University in Scotland. Her legal career may now be freed from the significant impediments that my job has continually and routinely placed in her way.

She sets an extraordinarily wonderful example for our girls. She offers them her strength, her care and her love every day. For nearly seven years, she did so while I was a minister or deputy opposition leader, out five or six nights a week, missing early mornings and all too often my mind wandering to work issues when I was at home during what should have been dedicated family time. Like many of our partners, she has borne witness to the worst aspects of our jobs.

In signing up as candidates, we implicitly agree to some intrusions on our lives, but our partners do not. Yet she has been steadfast in her love and support for me and the work I have sought to do. She has regularly given me insightful advice. She has been my partner in our engagement with community and she has ensured that while our girls want for nothing they never take anything for granted. Our girls will always be taught that much is expected of those to whom much is given.

Our girls love and appreciate their mum. When I asked Eleanor if there was anything she wanted me to say on her behalf during this speech, she stopped for moment and wrote a little note. She wrote her name, 'Eleanor', she wrote a love heart and she wrote 'Mummy'. She went on to ask me to say the following: 'Mummy likes bananas. Mummy likes to play with me. Mummy is the best person in our family.' Who could argue with that? Emma also had a wise comment to offer: 'Mummy is a kind and generous person. She is lovable and she loves us. She's the best person in the world.'

For many years in this role, I have woken up looking forward to my days and I have gone to sleep confident that I have done my best to do something useful. So why am I now so extraordinarily happy to move on? As I think my friends are all too aware, I have not had a moment's regret since announcing my decision last year, and I have had some opportunities to reflect on this question too.

You are going to have to bear with me at this point. I have spent the last 16 years being told to ensure I relate to people, that I am electable, that I use appropriate pop culture references in speeches. That ends now. More than 2,000 years ago travellers seeking wisdom from the Oracle at Delphi were confronted at the Temple of Apollo with an inscription of its most important lesson. I am not going to do the Greek. It said, in English, 'Know thyself'.

It is a very simple command, but it rings true to me today. To live our best life for ourselves or, even more importantly, for those around us, we need to ensure we have an appreciation of our strengths and our limitations. Unless we can find the courage to admit uncertainty and reflect on our weaknesses, how can we possibly serve others as we should?

Plato wrote in *The Republic* that the punishment for refusing to participate in politics is to be governed by someone worse. Unfortunately, after a while it starts to feel like the punishment for continuing to participate in politics is that it requires continued participation in politics, so I will take my chances and move on. From 22 March next year I plan to follow the advice of the second-century Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius. If you are not sure, think Richard Harris in *Gladiator*. He wrote in his *Meditations*:

When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive—to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love.

He also wrote:

In your actions, don't procrastinate. In your conversations, don't confuse. In your thoughts, don't wander. In your soul, don't be passive or aggressive. In your life, don't be all about business.

I extend my respects to everyone who offers themselves in service to others here or elsewhere, if here, whether for the first time or having served for much longer than I have lasted. Working in this parliament offers an extraordinary opportunity to make a positive difference for our state and the people who live within it. I wish you all the best.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley—Leader of the Opposition) (17:36):** I rise to make a few comments about the outstanding service of the member for Morialta—his service for the people of Morialta, for the Liberal Party and also for our state. John is a man of great intellect, integrity and work ethic. People like John—and people like Simon, people like Vickie—help to build this party. Not only do they help themselves to get elected but they have also helped a number of colleagues here get elected too.

John is a company man. He is a team man. He does what is in the best interests of the team and the party. I still, I think, have some of your A-frames, John. I think I might now give them to the lifelong local CFS volunteer who is the candidate for Morialta.

Much has been said about John's distinguished career. If I just reflect on education, the children of South Australia will be grateful to John for generations for the work he especially did in things like phonics and year 7 into high school. But I look also at a local level: the upgrade at Norwood International High School, the new school of Morialta Secondary College, which might not have happened if there were not a Liberal government. These are generational builds. They will be there for generations to come.

John is generous, he is talented, he is kind and he has been a great support to colleagues and to the community. He has always served with that great kindness and humility. He leaves, certainly, an enduring legacy for us all. On behalf of all of our team, thank you so much.

I also want to pay tribute to John's family: to his extended family but especially to his girls—to Trudi, Eleanor and Emma—for sharing John with us. I am sure you very much look forward to having John back. We wish you all the very best for the years ahead.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier, Minister for Defence and Space Industries) (17:38):** It is a privilege to be able to rise and respond to the member for Morialta's remarks after an exceptionally thoughtful and well-crafted valedictory speech on which I take this opportunity to congratulate him sincerely. I do not know if the member for Morialta recalls this or not, but we first met a long time ago, and to the best of my recollections, that was indeed here. I do not know if your recollection is different to mine—

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** I was thinking the wedding.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Yes, there is that too. I do not remember that as well, which is not a good sign. We were here. The member for Morialta was presumably playing a senior role within the Young Liberals, and I had recently become a lot more active in Young Labor. There was a bit of a dinky-di battle within Young Labor about the really important issue of a mock parliament. We had to duke it out between the right and the left, because in mock parliament the Libs were in opposition on one turn and then we swapped and Labor was in opposition and vice versa.

So we had to work out in Young Labor who was going to be the leader of the party when we were in government and who was going to be the leader of the party in opposition. I was keen on the government role. Anyway, we duked it out internally. That happened, and then we came into the parliament. We were in mock parliament, and the member for Morialta was the Leader of the Opposition and I was the mock parliament Premier.

There was a debate on a piece of legislation. I do not remember what it was, but all I remember was the member for Morialta getting to his feet, speaking first and giving the most eloquent and powerful contribution on whatever the debate was about. I was sitting here filled with nerves and dread that I had to respond to such an extraordinary contribution. I remember being rather anxious about the whole experience and recalling to myself that this individual was clearly going to play some form of significant role in parliamentary politics at some point into the future. Of course, that was to transpire.

It transpired in 2010, when the member for Morialta won a significant election over Lindsey Simmons, who was the member for Morialta at the time. I had the experience of being Lindsey Simmons's campaign manager at the 2006 state election. We worked exceptionally hard to beat or overcome the then formidable parliamentarian in, of course, Joan Hall. That was a significant exercise and we were very happy at the time. Fast-forward four years, having gone through that experience I remember being keen to get the first possible opportunity to congratulate the new member for Morialta on his success. Ever since then, he has made a fine contribution to his local community, indeed.

But the member for Morialta's contribution to the state extends well beyond the community of Morialta, where he has a legacy in and of itself. Indeed, his most profound contribution undoubtedly is in his time as education minister, and he was a very good one indeed. I remember spending time

with the member for Wright in opposition often reflecting on the strength of the performance of the then Minister for Education, the member for Morialta.

I just want to reflect on one thing, and that is the establishment of the Literacy Guarantee Unit. That is a unit within the Department for Education, whose work is ongoing, and I have seen firsthand the profound positive impact that it has had on young kids in our state, but a particularly disproportionately large positive impact upon children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The member for Morialta quite rightly listed other contributions he has made in a policy sense, but that one is enduring and instructive and will continue to play a role for a long time to come.

Indeed, that comes on the back of the phonics check that we referred to, and you generously referred to the member of Port Adelaide's initiative. Indeed, it has led to the Literacy Guarantee effort that we now see being applied in a different context within the department. But your commitment and sincerity and sense of purpose about using the portfolio of education to make a material difference to people's lives, who will not necessarily have much consciousness of the policy decisions that you have made, I think speaks to your earnestness and your determination to use the powers and authorities vested in you to make a difference, and that is to your great credit.

One final reflection I thought I would make is on a personal level. The member for Morialta, in his remarks, quite eloquently reflected on the combative nature of parliamentary politics and the fact that it is adversarial, and that adversarial nature of our system does not always call upon our better angels. In fact, one of the unfortunate features of the system is that it often brings out within us a subconscious assumption to arrive at the worst possible conclusions about our political opponents and what motivates them. That is unfortunate, because the truth is that almost everybody who comes into this place comes in here with the best of intentions to do good work for their communities.

But it has struck me, in my somewhat limited engagement with the member for Morialta, that at every opportunity I have had the chance to engage with him he is not drawn down that path. There is a degree of professionalism. Often when we talk about 'professional politicians' it is a term that is used in a negative or derogatory context. Where we do want to see professionalism amongst politicians is in a degree of not just courteousness but a willingness to be objective and be interested in other points of view.

Every time I have had the opportunity to engage with the member for Morialta, talking about politics or civil society more broadly or the state of the universe, I have always had the sense that there is a powerful force of objectivity that rests within the member for Morialta's thoughtfulness and also his heart, and that is to his great credit. His legacy transcends just the policy difference he has made; it also speaks to his contribution and the way that he has gone about making it in this place over a sustained period of time. That is to his great credit.

On behalf of the parliamentary party in South Australia, I would like to wish him every success in any future endeavour he undertakes; I have no doubt he will do it well. More importantly, I sincerely hope that he does now get the opportunity to spend the time with his beautiful family to whom he is clearly so devoted in the way that he aspires.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (17:46):** If the Premier felt intimidated speaking after the member for Morialta, how do you think I feel? The member for Morialta and I had—I do not know whether it was the misfortune or whether it was a fortunate situation; only he knows that. But after eight years as the shadow minister for education, two years out from the 2018 election Steven Marshall thought that maybe Pisoni needed to do something else and we needed somebody who was able to run an education department if we won the election. It was extraordinary how it took me eight years to learn the things that I learned, yet John went into that campaign after just two years knowing everything he needed to know and more about the education system.

We had a great experience together. With skills and innovation, obviously there was a lot of crossover in the work that we did. There were school-based apprenticeships and entrepreneurial high schools, and the restoration of the function of TAFE was a big project that we worked on together. John was very gracious with that work, with us sharing and experiencing that together and working together and getting our departments to work together. Rather than competing with each other, we worked together to get those outcomes.

I think one of the big tasks that we took on together was when the bureaucrats got it wrong about what Glenunga International High School needed for moving grade 7 into high school. It was already a school at full capacity and was in my electorate at that time. We had several meetings with the governing council and the principal before getting it right and finding that extra funding to get those extra buildings done. Unley High School, during John's time, was the recipient of the first state government-funded capital project in 25 years at that school. It is a magnificent building and offers a whole range of new qualities of education for those who attend Unley High School.

I still remind myself of the fact that John was able to make that transition from grade 7 into high school in just half the time that Queensland and Western Australia did it. I thought, 'You are not telling me that you're going to make this happen just a month or two before we go to an election. There is no room for an error in that situation.' Of course, there was not an error and it was done very well. I know that John was very, very focused on that. With the help of Rick Persse, who managed that beautifully with John, it was a transition that we now wonder why we did not do it earlier.

John, thank you for your friendship and your guidance. You are one of the many people who have kept me focused on where I should be in this role rather than where I might be drifting. If it were not for you, whether I would have lasted four years as a minister I am not quite sure. So thank you very much, John, and congratulations.

*Sitting extended beyond 18:00 on motion of Hon. A. Koutsantonis.*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Mining) (17:50):** I know John likes Roman sayings: 'Let no man curse a capable foe; he is the anvil on which we are forged.' Sitting on our side of the house—whichever side, whether opposition or in government—looking at your political opponents, you never quite know what people think about the ones you rate. It is an interesting dynamic. I have always rated John. I have always thought he is very capable. I always thought he is organised.

John had a sharp political mind. He knew what he wanted to achieve. He knew how he wanted to present himself and how he wanted to present the man he wanted to lead the state, and he went about organising it. He organised it in a very well-disciplined way. It was interesting to watch, and I watched it. I thought that John's value won't be known to a lot of us in this place until he is gone. It is not a criticism of who he is; I think he is an exceptional member of parliament. He is a very good orator, he is very good at what he does and he has been a loyal servant of the Liberal Party, but I do not think you will realise his value until the day after the next state election, then people will realise the real value of John Gardner. He is a very, very capable adversary.

John is one of the good guys of the parliament and he is one of the nice guys of the parliament, but he goes about his business ruthlessly, which is impressive. I do not think I have ever heard him say a bad word about anyone in the parliament. He may have felt it every now and then, but he is one of the genuinely good guys. When you see that one of the genuine good guys is also capable, they do garner a lot of respect. So from our perspective, especially my perspective—and I do not want to speak for your colleagues because I know that they admire you a great deal—you are a capable foe, a very capable foe.

I wish you and your family, and especially your young daughters, all the joy that comes with having their dad around. My daughter turned 15 on the weekend. My wife and I were sitting in bed after this horrific long birthday party we had to organise for her and she was going through Instagram reels. We were sitting there watching them and this bit came on and it said, 'The only person you should envy are those with young children,' and I do envy you, John, because you have got two young daughters. I have two older daughters who are less attentive to me than they used to be, so enjoy the time that you have with them.

John, you have been a loyal servant of your party. You have made them proud and you have given them an exceptionally good career of 16 years. I think you can hold your head up high after you leave this place. You have been a credit to your family and to your party, and congratulations on choosing the timing of your own exit. That is a rare choice for many of us in this place, and you have done it. Well done.

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills, Minister for Police) (17:54):** I rise to make just a short contribution. I know there are others who would like to speak as well, but there are a few words I would like to share about the member for Morialta, having got to know him very well over the last few years. Our getting to know each other started, of course, with me rather unexpectedly becoming the shadow minister for education, following in the footsteps of the member for Port Adelaide. John, of course, by that stage, well and truly had his eye in as the current Minister for Education.

Of course, they are kind of rocky grounds upon which to build any kind of relationship as you are trying to claw your way back to government, and you are trying to make your way in cabinet and COVID is happening at the same time. Despite that, John was always very decent to me at that time, in terms of talking to me about sensitive issues sometimes that we knew should be kept out of the political arena. I think that is a hallmark of the way he has operated, and something that people in this place this afternoon have shared. It is part of his nature, part of his decency to do that. It is a very rare commodity in politics, and I feel sometimes it is one that is dying out.

I want to acknowledge the many, many times that John has—and this is not meant in any way as a criticism—elected to pull a punch because it would have done no good to the people out there, often children, who would have really felt the brunt of that particular issue becoming a politicised one. It was not that John was not capable of throwing a good punch in the political sense.

I had a different life working for Jay Weatherill when he was the Premier of the state. I remember one day standing in the Premier's office after a question time. I do not know what the topic was on that day, but Jay would come in and muse to the staff around what question time was like, and he said to me, 'The most dangerous asker of questions on that side is John Gardner.' I remember very clearly he said to me, 'The most dangerous asker of questions. You have to watch out for him because he knows how to set the question up, and you won't know where he is going with the first few questions. It is a remarkable skill.'

I thought, 'That's interesting,' and I put it out of my mind. It was not until about April 2022 that I was sitting here as the education minister and John was the shadow. I was preparing to potentially get a question from John and these words from Jay came ringing back in my ears that I had, indeed, a very, very sharp political operator on the other side. He was, as the member for Unley said, right across his brief, right across all corners of the education portfolio. He knew all the detail, and he had an exceptional passion for it.

There are just a couple of things I do want to mention that I think are notable contributions that he made in his time as the minister:

- year 7 into high school, although we had differing opinions on doing it, was a huge exercise. I also did not see how it was possible to get it done in time, but you managed to do that, and that is a credit to you;
- flexible industry pathways is something that we have kept that, I am sure, was not without controversy, and not without people saying this is potentially not a good idea to do. We have kept that;
- the Literacy Guarantee Unit we have heard a lot about;
- Clontarf is incredibly important, and we have sought to build on that as well; and
- SWiFT. When I worked for a former education minister and we went out to regional education sites, the part of the department that would often be criticised most was the IT department back then. By the time I came around to do it again, post-SWiFT, as we had that rollout of super-fast internet, it was always the first part of the department that people complimented about the support they get, and a lot of that happened in John's time as the minister.

We had the opportunity to travel overseas together to Lyon and the United Kingdom. It was a very, very enjoyable trip, he was fantastic company, but I will finish just by reiterating what, of course, everyone else in here has noted about his love for his family: Trudi, Emma and Eleanor. On that trip we were catching fast trains, we were in airports, we were driving a car to Barrow-in-Furness from Heathrow. In every spare moment, John had a stuffed toy—I forget its name, but he will probably remind me—

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** Pizza and—

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER:** Pizza and somebody else. It is not the one that is here today, but a video was done back to the kids explaining where he was, saying that he missed them. It was so incredibly genuine. You could not help but understand instantly his own sense of affection, commitment and love for his family. John, I wish you all the best, but I know we will keep in touch.

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (17:58):** I would like to pay tribute to John for his great service to the South Australian parliament, but also the service that he has undertaken to South Australia. As has been stated here, it is a great privilege to be part of a representative group that looks after the state. My friendship has been quite extensive with John.

I did not have any political background before coming into this place, and John has performed a number of roles to support me during my time here. Most of it is to keep me out of trouble; occasionally it works, occasionally it does not. John has shown a vast intellect and, as we heard from John's speech, he has eloquently put everything in place on his journey, during his time here and his love for his family.

There are also the people who have mentored him on his journey, no more so than Vickie Chapman—a friend of mine as well as many in this place. I think Vickie's guidance and wisdom and also being his boss for a long time put him in good stead, as did Simon Birmingham who also has a great intellect for the political landscape. The advice that I have received from all three has been invaluable over that time.

As the member for West Torrens so eloquently put it, we do not agree on a lot but what I do agree with is that John's values, his contribution and his day-to-day guidance will be missed significantly and I know that for sure. I had a brief conversation with John in the lift only a week or so ago and I said to him, 'What the hell are we going to do when you're not here?' I think we will rise and there will be people who will fill those gaps. I think John has been a great sounding-board to me and he has been a great mentor, but, as I said, he has also been a great disciplinarian. Along the way I have had very much a hotline on WhatsApp from John telling me when and when not to keep quiet and shut up and all the rest of it.

Where I learned a lot about John was on one of our overseas trips. We went on a trip to China and we shared a room in Hong Kong and along the way I was designated as the gumbay king. I was always put up front to do the gumbay. While on that trip John came up to me and said, 'I am sick of you. I am going to challenge you to the gumbay.' We exited where we were and we travelled to another part of that province where we proceeded to give it a fair nudge. We did a pretty good job, but I did have to drag John out of the gutter and we had to get home all in one piece. I have great memories along the way.

As has been stated, John has done a piece of everything in this place. He has served the party and the parliament well as an MP, a deputy, a shadow minister and as a minister. I think one of his greatest strengths has been the voice of reason. In the joint party room he always has a settling comment and that voice of reason, giving people a little bit more time just to settle, to think and to be more considered with their view without flying off the handle.

John, I did not have any political friends before I came into this place, but I consider you one. We were elected together in 2010 and it has been a wild ride. It has been a great journey and I have had the privilege to serve as a shadow, as a minister and a team contributor, but no more so than you. I must say that your legacy will live on in not only education but also in this party as a great contributor and as a great person and I thank you for it.

I see the people in the gallery and, of course, Trudi and your two girls, Eleanor and Emma. They have travelled and stayed at my home up in the Riverland. We had a great time. I am sure Trudi and the girls thought, 'What the hell are these people on?' when they came up because it was fast action, I had all of my kids at home and it was a great family atmosphere. It gave me a little bit more time to learn a bit more about the Gardner family and the Gardner girls.

John, I thank you on behalf of the party, on behalf of the parliament and on behalf of my family. You are a good person. Thank you.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee) (18:04):** It gives me some pleasure to place some comments on the record about the member for Morialta and what an outstanding job he has done since he has been a member of parliament.

Some of you might be surprised to know that John and I have known each other since 1983 when we first started at school together. In fact, I think John might have started a little earlier than me in the reception year. I hope I am right in saying this, but John is a year younger than me even though we went through the same year for 12 years at the same school. That is a pretty good indication that John was very bright from day one. He was always very well read, even in those very early years of school, very earnest and very clever with his schoolwork which, of course, was some contrast to me during that same journey. So we have known each other all through school.

Of course, as John reflected in his comments before, he started at the University of Adelaide in 1996, at the same time that I did as well. As young impressionable arts students at that university in the 1990s, I think we are both very glad that that was the era before camera phones were in existence, because we had a lot of good fun up on level 5 of Union House in the UniBar.

However, it actually started a period where John and I spent some time in political collaboration because the Labor groups on campus, much like the Liberal group on campus, were by no means dominant groups. In fact, there was a dominant group on campus. It was this huge, overwhelming, unconquerable faction ironically called the Independents. It was the iteration that had grown out of the late 1980s and early 1990s from its forebear, Natasha Stott Despoja. This was the Democrats faction, and I think both sides of politics can agree that the only thing worse than one another, of course, is Democrats.

John and I spent some years in collaboration between the various Labor factions on campus and the Liberal faction. I think we roped in the overseas students association, the mature age students association, the postgraduate students association—this incredible coalition—any support we could muster just to knock them off. I am so glad that we finally achieved that mission together, John. I have not shared that story with Natasha since, but I am happy to place it on the record here.

Then, of course, our journeys continued to be in sync when in 2002 we both started working for newly elected members of parliament. For me, it was the then member for Enfield, John Rau, and for John it was the newly elected member for Bragg, Vickie Chapman—who we are blessed to have here along with former Senator Simon Birmingham. John and I were finding our feet as young and very inexperienced electorate officers.

I hope I will not embarrass us by telling this story: not long after John had started that role, he rang me, and the newly elected government had changed the rules about how many staff could be employed in electorate offices. It went from one full-time equivalent to 1.6. John rang me and he said, 'Stephen, do you reckon you would be interested in coming and working in Vickie Chapman's electorate office?' I do not know if that offer was made with the consent of the member for Bragg at that time, but you will perhaps be unsurprised to know that I politely declined the offer, even though I very much appreciated the sentiment behind its offering.

John was a lot more capable and experienced in politics, which I think is why he entered parliament in 2010 at such a young age and did it so well. As the Premier remarked, he replaced his predecessor, of course, the previous member for Morialta, Lindsay Simmons. John has been a lot gentler on the local hairdressers, as I understand it, than his predecessor. Of course, he has conducted himself very well as the member ever since. I entered parliament a little bit later on, and we have been colleagues ever since.

All of the reflections that have been placed on the record about John's capability and capacity as a member of parliament are absolutely accurate. Few others have had a handle on the detail of parliamentary procedure and a real understanding of the ebb and flow of the business of the house, how to participate in it, if not seize control of it, for the benefit of whatever the particular issue or debate might be, or whatever the particular interests of the government or the opposition at the time. Whomever John was serving, on which side of the chamber, he was a formidable opponent. It has been a real lesson over the nearly 12 years that I have been in parliament—again, a bit shorter than John—to watch John and understand how well he conducts himself in the chamber.

He is also, as we just saw from his valedictory, quite a talented debater on the floor, very good with legislation, even if it is not something that he is deeply familiar with, very capable of picking

up a topic and arguing it cogently and quite forcefully for the benefit of the argument. As the Minister for Education said, he was very wily and difficult to deal with during the heat of question time as well.

When John announced that he was stepping down from parliament, I thought he was finally sick of me after 42 years and that he just needed to get away from me, but of course he could make the same allegation about me stepping away as well in the inverse. But, I know that in his time in this parliament and also in his time as education minister he leaves a significant legacy.

John and I have both had the benefit of having Rick Persse as a chief executive. Chief executives, not too dissimilar to ministerial drivers, do not really talk about others that they have worked for or with, but Rick has been a bit of an exception about John, saying just how good he was as a minister, how good he was to work with, how collegial the relationship was with the education department and just the sheer volume and pace of change and reform that was able to be delivered in that period, of course, notwithstanding that half of that term was effectively bugged up by a COVID pandemic.

You do leave a considerable legacy, John, both in your role as a member of parliament and also as a minister. I am very sure that, yes, your colleagues will miss you, but so will the House of Assembly, as well as those of us who have had the benefit of knowing you for very long period of time and had the enjoyment of interacting with you. It is obvious to all of us how genuine and heartfelt you are in your reflections about Trudi and Eleanor and Emma, and they will now get the benefit of a much greater share of your time, and as much as they will I hope you enjoy what is next for you. Like many of us, I look forward to keeping in touch.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (18:12):** I rise to share a few words, because the community of Whyalla owes a debt of gratitude to John. I was involved for a long time with various education reviews, going all the way back to not the last Liberal government but the one before that. Our aim was to get one high school. The previous Liberal government just wanted to make cuts and then the series of Labor governments and the education department kept coming up with models for a full-on super school, closing all the primary schools, kindies and high schools and having one. As a parent on these reviews and as a councillor representing the council on these reviews, I thought that was an incredibly bad idea.

A good idea was to amalgamate the high schools. There are three high schools in Whyalla: two junior high schools feeding a senior high school. It was a bad model. In the Weatherill government Susan Close was the education minister at the time and with Treasurer Koutsantonis they surprised me with their willingness to commit to a \$100 million high school. That was in a half year budget review. It was not long before the March election.

The money was locked in, but we lost government. I thought there was absolutely no way this was going to survive Lucas. This was an easy cut to make. There were no political consequences for the Liberal Party. I have a safe Labor seat. I never take it for granted, but it is a reasonably safe Labor seat so I thought, 'It is almost guaranteed that it is going to be an easy saving here' because of where we were in the process. It was John in cabinet who went into bat for Whyalla. You were dobbed in by somebody else. I am not going to name who broke cabinet solidarity and dobbed you in, but you were dobbed in. I am told that you argued passionately for this investment.

The implementation left something to be desired, but I was not going to blame the Liberal government. You went with the advice of the education department. All year 7s from seven primary schools and the three high schools put in at the one time every single year—and during COVID. I did not think that was the best way to start. It should have been incremental. I could have been an arsehole local member and got out there and attacked the Liberal government, but I thought to myself, 'Would we have gone with the same advice from the education department?' We might well have done.

I recognise the fact that you did something incredibly good and that school will stand as a testament to both a Labor legacy and your legacy. To have a high school next to a university campus, next to a TAFE campus, which created a whole education precinct, is something that you should be proud of.

**The SPEAKER (18:16):** I would like to put on the record my thanks for your service in this place, John, and to your portfolio in your time as a shadow minister and minister. We really appreciate it. I want to wish you all the very best in that transition from parliament to life after parliament. I hope it goes very, very well for you. Thank you again for your service.

*Bills*

**NATIONAL ENERGY RETAIL LAW (RETAILER OF LAST RESORT) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Final Stages*

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

At 18:17 the house adjourned until Tuesday 25 November 2025 at 11:00.