

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Monday 13 May 2002

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. R.R. Roberts)** took the chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

WESTPAC CALL CENTRE

The **Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)**: I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the Westpac call centre made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Premier.

CSL YARRA

The **Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation)**: I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the CSL *Yarra* dispute made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Minister for Transport.

TAXIDRIVERS

The **Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation)**: I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to attacks on taxidrivers made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Minister for Transport.

QUESTION TIME

BUDGET CUTS

The **Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Leader of the Opposition)**: My question is directed to the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council. Given that it has been confirmed this morning that Treasury has requested departmental consideration of cuts of between 1.75, 2.5 or 3.25 per cent of all agency budgets, can the leader confirm in relation to his agencies whether the request was in relation to total expenditure of each department or whether it was an aggregate which excluded commonwealth funding and salaried items?

The **Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries)**: I do not think the council will be surprised if I answer that I will not speculate on matters that quite rightly will be revealed in the budget later on this year.

ADELAIDE WOMEN'S PRISON

The **Hon. R.D. LAWSON**: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Correctional Services a question about the Adelaide Women's Prison.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. R.D. LAWSON**: On Wednesday 2 May a fire occurred at the Adelaide Women's Prison at Northfield and it was reported that 15 inmates who were housed in the wing affected by the fire were transferred to the city watch-house because no other accommodation could be found for them. It was further reported that two prison officers and an inmate were taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation.

It was earlier reported this year, on 27 March, that the new 11-bed wing of the Adelaide Women's Prison was to be opened in April. I remind the council that, in the annual report for the year 2000-01 of the Department of Correctional

Services, the chief executive of the department (Mr J.H. Paget) said:

The department continues to experience difficulties with overcrowding at the Adelaide Women's Prison. At times prisoner numbers have exceeded bed numbers, with women being required to sleep on mattresses on the floor in those cells/bedrooms large enough to accommodate dual occupancy.

The chief executive continued:

This is certainly far from ideal and presents a real challenge to the prison and the department.

He mentioned that some additional funding had been secured for use in this current financial year for limited additional accommodation at the Adelaide Women's Prison. My questions are:

1. Can the minister inform the council whether the prison officers and the inmate who suffered injuries as a result of the fire have made a full recovery from those injuries?
2. Can the minister report on the current status of the area of the Adelaide Women's Prison affected by this fire?
3. Are those cells and rooms being currently used?
4. Will the minister indicate whether he will be supporting the department's proposal that a new women's prison be built to provide adequate accommodation for women in our correctional system?

The **Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Correctional Services)**: I thank the honourable member for those important questions in relation to the deplorable situation in which women have found themselves in the prison system in South Australia. The fire certainly exacerbated an already difficult situation and removed any of the permutations that the prison managers could use in managing the current overcrowding. In fact, the fire highlighted—if it needed highlighting—the dire situation in this state. I am informed that the finishing date for the badly needed extensions to the Adelaide Women's Prison has now been moved out to June, and the figure given to me for the assessment of the rebuilding of the damaged area of the prison was about \$70 000. That does not sound a lot of money in current terms, when you consider the cost of extensions to homes nowadays, but the dislocation and disruption of taking any beds out of the women's prison system would exacerbate an already difficult situation.

The honourable member asked about the circumstances facing the prison officers and one of the women prisoners. My understanding is that the prisoner and the prison officers are recovering. I will bring back a reply in relation to full recovery, given that in some cases further diagnosis will be needed over time. I will relay that to the council and to the shadow minister. In relation to funding in the new budget, we are certainly aware of the dire circumstances confronting prisoners not only in the women's prison but also in all prisons generally. We have been left with a situation where no beds of any great note are available within the prison system. The opposition, the Democrats and those who have been following circumstances within the prison system would agree that some capital has to be spent on extensions, renovations or a new prison.

Immediately prior to the change of government the department was directed to investigate the possibility of establishing a partnership with the private sector to construct a new women's prison using PPP, and a business case was prepared which canvassed the procurement options available, including full public and private sector service delivery. This case is still being finalised. This does not necessarily mean that those decisions have been made: it means that all options are being discussed, and it certainly does not mean that it will

be a private prison. It means that private sector partnership will be considered in relation to the building of the prison.

RURAL HEALTH

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, representing the Treasurer, a question about rural health budgets.

Leave granted.

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER: It has come to my notice that a number of small country hospitals have been asked by the department of health to reveal the details and amounts that they hold in their capital accounts. As you would well know, Mr President, most of the capital accounts in small country areas are there as a result of a large number of voluntary hours and fundraising by the people in that community and, in some cases, as a result of bequests from deceased estates. They have traditionally been used for capital works which would otherwise not be affordable in less populous areas. I understand that the department of health is asking for the details of these accounts. My questions are:

1. Is this a sign of predicted cuts to health funding in regional areas?

2. Will local boards be asked to either surrender capital funds to the department or use them for operating costs?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): I will refer that question to my colleague the Minister for Health in another place for her response.

MUSIC INDUSTRY

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, representing the Attorney-General, a question about live music.

Leave granted.

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: Very many people in the community feel passionate about the issue of live music and are keen to see its future protected. What has the government done to balance the interests of musicians and publicans in relation to noise complaints made by residents?

The Hon. A.J. Redford interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I thank the honourable member for the question and realise that the honourable member who made the interjection has a personal interest in it. He put a lot of work into it when he was in government—as well as members on this side of the council—in trying to bring together the people in the industry who had the problem of coming to terms with it. There is a general recognition that the state cannot do without live music as an art form, and certainly as an entertainment form live music, particularly in hotels, is something we all want to see. We have to balance that against the interests of the people who live in particular areas where live music is played and where publicans provide forums for live music, which has to be encouraged.

However, as I said, it has to be weighted against the complaints of local residents and whether those complaints are legitimate; and whether the live music noise levels are such that when complaints can be legitimised whether the noise levels have increased since the building of the premises or since the tenants moved into the area; that is, who came first—the tenants or the music and the noise? All those issues

have to be weighted against each other when dealing with the problem. It is seen that noise complaints by local residents have put at risk the future of live music in some hotels and clubs.

This government recognises the importance and value of the live music industry in South Australia, and without live music in pubs and clubs South Australia certainly would be less popular, less economically viable and less fun. Certainly, the Hon. Nick Xenophon would be able to accuse us of weighting in favour of mini-casinos or poker machines as opposed to the entertainment value of a fully licensed entertaining hotel that supplies live music. The Liquor Licensing Miscellaneous Amendment Bill will be introduced today in another place and it will make significant changes to the Liquor Licensing Act so that the interests of the live music industry are considered in determining noise complaints against pubs and clubs—that will be sweet music for the honourable member's ears.

The previous Liberal government was also involved, but the bill stalled in the last parliamentary session because it was tied to another issue in relation to appeals against licensing decisions. The bill now deals only with the noise complaints issue. Noise complaints and residents' interests have to be balanced against musicians and publicans' interests, and that is what the bill does. The bill improves conciliation processes when noise complaints are made and allows a direct avenue to the commissioner to determine disputes. I congratulate the representatives of the liquor industry, the music industry and Planning SA for their cooperation in developing the bill.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I have a supplementary question. While I welcome the government's move to introduce legislation prepared by the former government on noise complaint issues, the working party addressed a range of other issues and I seek a progress report on the comprehensive package of issues developed by the working party which the previous government had endorsed. They relate to local government, Environment Protection Authority issues, planning and the development of a music fund, to name a few.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I will refer that question to the minister in another place and bring back a reply.

AQUACULTURE

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries a question about aquaculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: Whilst listening to the Governor's speech last week, I noted that the new South Australian state government places high importance on the aquaculture industry. In her speech, the Governor said:

The most significant action in the agriculture, food and fisheries area will be the implementation of the Aquaculture Act in July this year. The introduction of this act is regarded by the government as the most significant reform of aquaculture legislation since the introduction of the Fisheries Act in 1982. It seeks to provide a sound and sustainable basis for the expansion of this potentially valuable industry in our regional areas.

Whilst the act was necessary and welcomed by the Democrats, we moved a substantial number of amendments to the bill, much of which was not supported by the previous parliament. The act, as it stands, will subject the aquaculture industry to a regime in which its regulator is also the person in charge of promoting the industry, that is, the minister.

The act provides a very limited role for the Environment Protection Agency. On the other hand, when it comes to land based development, which is environmentally sensitive, the EPA issues 'authorisations' and licences. The EPA has the power unilaterally to change licence conditions if it perceives there to be a problem. However, for marine aquaculture, it is the minister under the act who will set all licence conditions and, although the EPA can withhold initial approval, it cannot of its own accord act in response to any perceived environmental threats.

There is also no mechanism in the act for civil enforcement. This means that if any member of the public ascertains a breach of the conditions of an aquaculture licence or lease they cannot do anything about it. This provides again a stark contrast with the Development Act under which civil enforcement proceedings may be brought by any person. My questions are:

1. Will the minister amend the Aquaculture Act 2001 to allow a greater role for the EPA?
2. Will the minister amend the Aquaculture Act 2001 to insert a mechanism for civil enforcement?
3. What role will the new Office for Sustainability, which was mentioned in the Governor's speech, have in the regulation of the aquaculture industry?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): I paid tribute to the previous government in relation to the implementation of the Aquaculture Act, which was supported by the then opposition. The gestation of the act took a long time. During the second reading debate—I think it was on the last sitting day of last year that we discussed this matter—I commented that there has probably been more consultation on the Aquaculture Act than any other piece of legislation. I complimented the officer in charge of the aquaculture section of PIRSA, Ian Nightingale, for his efforts in, I think, personally contacting just about every member of parliament during the process. The view that I put on behalf of the opposition then, which I will reiterate as a member of the government, was that, at that time, because of the widespread agreement in relation to this bill we believed that it should proceed and be given a chance to operate. That is exactly what we are going to do.

So, in relation to the first two questions asked by the honourable member, the answer is no; we certainly do not plan to amend the act at this stage. On the contrary, we hope to put in place the regulations necessary for this legislation to operate as soon as possible. There is a very tight time frame because of the change of government and the delay in that happening. This government did not come into office until 6 March. Appointments to the Aquaculture Advisory Committee and the Aquaculture Tenure Allocation Board need to be made, and I hope to announce those shortly. We obviously need to put those committees in place.

The other problem that the government faces in relation to implementation of the Aquaculture Act is that virtually no funding was provided for its operation in the forward estimates of the previous government. This is just another of the problems that this government is facing: no provision has been made. So, quite clearly, if we are to ensure that the aquaculture industry grows—as I hope every member of this council hopes that it does—then clearly that puts yet another budget pressure on the government because, as well as other pressures on the budget, we have to find money which was not provided for in the forward estimates regarding the implementation of this act.

I think the final question that the honourable member asked was in relation to the Office of Sustainability. I would say that under the new Aquaculture Act there is a role for the EPA, and effectively the EPA assesses all applications that have to go through the act: I think its role will be considerable. Indeed, when the bill was being debated in this parliament, a provision that there be a greater role for the EPA was an essential ingredient if the Labor Party was to support the bill. We believe that its role in the act is appropriate. In relation to the exact functions of the Office of Sustainability, I will ask my colleague, the Minister for Environment and Conservation, about that particular matter.

Just to conclude my answer to the question, I would like to point out just how important aquaculture has become to this state. We have now reached the stage where the value of the aquaculture industry in the state actually exceeds the production value of the state's wild fisheries, and that has been the case only in fairly recent times. The value of the industry has grown from a near zero base in 1992 at the genesis of the aquaculture industry to almost \$260 million in the year 2000. The significant growth has been predominantly in tuna and oysters, but other sectors which are now in the process of being developed, and which I believe offer huge potential in the future, include yellowtail kingfish, abalone, blue mussels, yabbies and Atlantic salmon.

A recent survey found that the value of the industry in the year 2003-04 is expected to be approximately \$390 million, with corresponding growth in licences and authorisations from 712 currently to in excess of 900. So, that is why it is important that we give priority to the smooth implementation of the Aquaculture Act so that we can allow the industry to grow and reach that potential. However, I again make the point that that has not been easy because of the lack of provision for it in the forward estimates.

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: I have a supplementary question. Can the minister explain the difference in the role for the EPA in land-based and aquaculture development?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I think that is something that would be better answered by my colleague who is responsible for these matters, the Minister for Environment and Conservation. I think the role of the EPA in relation to aquaculture is set out in the act, but I will see whether my colleague in another place wishes to add to that answer.

GAMBLING

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Correctional Services a question in relation to gamblers' rehabilitation services available within the corrections system.

Leave granted.

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: On 17 October 2001 the South Australian Supreme Court's Chief Justice, John Doyle, in his sentencing remarks for Toni Lee Powell over a \$672 000 embezzlement from her employer that was linked to her poker machine addiction, said, before sentencing Ms Powell to 5½ years imprisonment with a two-year non-parole period:

It is regrettable that treatment aimed specifically at your gambling disorder is not available in prison. I draw to the attention of the prison authorities the desirability of their doing all that they can to facilitate you continuing to receive appropriate treatment, but this cannot reduce your punishment.

I understand that in that particular case there was some difficulty in gambling counsellors gaining access to Ms Powell. Just a few weeks ago I received a letter from an inmate at the Adelaide Remand Centre expressing, in effect, his despair at the lack of assistance for inmates with gambling problems. My questions are:

1. Given the concerns expressed by the Chief Justice, will the minister advise of the extent or lack thereof of rehabilitation and treatment services for problem gamblers within the prison and parole system?

2. What facilities exist within the prison system to screen inmates for problem gambling and the link between problem gambling and the commission of offences?

3. Can the minister assure the council that gambling counsellors and treatment providers will have reasonable access to prisoners for the purpose of treating any gambling disorder?

4. What role will the minister and his department play in relation to the inquiry recently announced by the Minister for Gambling into the link between problem gambling and crime?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Correctional Services): I thank the honourable member for his in-depth question in relation to one category of prisoner inside our institutions, namely the chronic gambler. There are a number of people who, had they been identified and treated outside the prison system, may have been able to recapture their lives before reaching the court system, and perhaps prevent themselves from going down the slippery slope they had embarked upon.

I think that we as a community have to, firstly, do as much as we can to identify those people and put in place prevention programs to prevent their decline. Secondly, once we identify problem gamblers in the community who voluntarily avail themselves of programs, we need to try to make sure that those programs continue to be available. Thirdly, if there are problem gamblers who appear before the courts because of fraudulent conversion, or for any other reason, and are sentenced and incarcerated, we need to have in place those identification screening programs that the honourable member mentioned.

I am not saying that it is a new growth industry in relation to correctional services, but certainly both the numbers of people appearing before the courts and the potential for incarceration will, I suspect, increase as time goes on. So, again, it is a community problem that governments will need to address and apportion resources to, as well as instigating a whole range of other screening programs for people who find their way into the correctional services system.

We have a lot of people with disabilities who should be screened at community level before they find themselves appearing before the courts and confined to incarceration, where the correctional services system then has to set up screening and training programs for dealing with people with mental health problems. They also have to find ways to correct behavioural problems associated with criminal activity or crimes committed. That is the challenge before us.

It is also incumbent on us to try to prevent, as much as we can in the community, drug and alcohol abuse. Also, once people find themselves before the courts for misdemeanours other than drug and alcohol abuse, for instance, where they find themselves incarcerated for breaking and entering and a whole range of other crimes, we have to then take responsibility for treating those people in relation to their drug and alcohol abuse inside the prison system.

I will not go into a whole range of other categories of prisoner, but certainly drug and alcohol affected prisoners now constitute some 70 per cent of all incarcerated prisoners. Add to that those people with identifiably treatable or untreated mental illness, plus those with a gambling addiction and their direct dealings with the correctional services system, and you can see that the correctional services system has to be looked at differently from what it is at the moment.

We look at correctional services as a repository for failed policies in the community, or policies that are not being addressed in the community in a broader sense by government. We now need to view the correctional services system as a way of identifying those people who have been incarcerated for a particular reason so that we can then spend our money on prevention programs outside the correctional services system and so that we are not trying to correct the problem once the problem has manifested itself inside the community in the form of law breaking that the rest of society condemns.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS PROGRAM

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Regional Affairs a question about the Community Builders Program.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: The Community Builders program is a grassroots leadership development program supporting regional residents in better understanding and building their communities. It is a joint initiative of the state and federal governments and the Local Government Association of South Australia and is run by the Office of Regional Development. The federal component is through the Department of Family and Community Services, or FACS.

Community Builders encourages and supports people in regional areas to develop strong leadership skills to benefit regional communities in the future. This action learning program runs for six months, with clusters made up of between six and 10 communities across a region. Previous programs in 2000 were in the Flinders Ranges, Alexandrina, Western Eyre Peninsula and the Mid Murray Regions and, in 2001, Loxton Waikerie, the Mid North, Yorke Peninsula and Kangaroo Island. Currently, the program is running in the northern region, the South-East, Eastern Eyre Peninsula and the Coorong. The current program was advanced in its timing with the support and recommendation of the Regional Development Council. It has been successful in encouraging new thinking of ways to better support and nurture economic and employment development at local and regional levels, whilst stimulating collaboration between communities.

My question to the minister is: given the strong ongoing interest shown by regions across the state in participating in Community Builders, will he indicate whether the government has discussed the continuation of the program beyond its initial three-year phase with its funding partners, the federal government and the Local Government Association?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Regional Affairs): I thank the honourable member for his important question in relation to Community Builders. As he has pointed out, he took full responsibility for its setting up under the previous government, and for the role that he played as an individual—he was a bit bashful about that—I think he needs to be commended by the government on this side of the council. Community Builders sets out a range of programs within regional communities to build leadership and to build

on the enthusiasm within communities to take advantage of the human resources available. To match that with the commonwealth, state and local government funding is a big challenge within regional communities. As a state, one of the challenges set by each department and each minister is to try to attract as much federal government funding as we can into this state through joint facilitation.

The latest information I have is that there has been an application for development and pilot funding for workshops, and those are continuing. There is a round of programming that will take place in the near future in the Riverland, I understand, and in the South-East with regard to Community Builders, and it will be operated out of the Office of Regional Development. I would hope that the good work that was commenced under the previous government continues under the current government.

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PLANT FUNCTIONAL GENOMICS

The Hon. R.K. SNEATH: Can the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries advise the council of the likely impact on South Australian industry of the new Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics, and will he say how the new centre will address concerns over genetically modified crops?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): I thank the honourable member for his important question because, I am sure like most South Australians, I was absolutely delighted last Friday to hear the news that South Australia had been successful in its bid to host the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics. Of course, as part of that particular winning bid, the state government will invest \$12 million over five years, whilst the federal government will invest \$10 million, and the Grains Research and Development Corporation will invest a further \$10 million.

I believe that this is a very exciting development for this state. I think that those people who have visited SARDI's centre at the Waite—along with the other centres located there—would realise that this is really one of the hidden jewels of South Australia. In fact, I suggest that it is already one of the top agriculture research centres of its type in the world and, following last Friday's announcement, I believe that it can only get better. This is a significant achievement for the state as it not only helps us to keep our world-class representation in the field of plant research (we are already, as I said, near the top) but also it allows us to expand our research base and further develop the new technologies that will assist agriculture in this state.

While our farmers have enjoyed relatively good times—particularly our grain farmers—over the past two years as a result of the very favourable seasons, I think experience shows us that this may not last forever. It is through research, such as plant genomics and also the wheat breeding program (which the government also was pleased to announce earlier this year: the Waite is one of three centres that have been set up for wheat breeding in this country, and that will bring a further \$1 million a year into this state in that area), that our farmers may be able to grow—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY:—strains of crops which have not only a better resistance to drought but which are also resistant to disease and salinity. The former minister comments about the previous government. Unfortunately, what

the previous government did not do was to leave any money within its forward estimates. We know what an absolute shambles it was. What the government has had to do in funding initiatives such as this is to find money at a very considerable cost to the budget—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY:—of the government. Quite clearly, before the last election the previous government was promising money it did not have—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY:—and we know how valuable the then government's forward estimates were: they were full of holes. There was no money for all sorts of issues. I look forward to the debate on the Treasurer's motion when we come to that in future so that I can put on record some details about some of the holes that the previous government has left in its forward estimates. It has been very difficult for the government to find—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: It was not. What the previous government did was to promise money that it did not have. As the Treasurer has indicated, there are huge holes in the forward estimates—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY:—of this budget over the next four years, and that has made the position of the new government very difficult. Nonetheless, this government will get its priorities right and, notwithstanding the very difficult decisions that we will have to make in government in relation to the budget, we will work through issues such as this important development. Through the establishment of this research centre and the founding of the Wheat Breeding Corporation, South Australia will continue to be the home of Australia's efforts in this area, and our farmers will continue to benefit.

The second part of the honourable member's question refers to the issue of community concerns about GMOs and how the centre will address those concerns. There is an ongoing debate with respect to the issue of GMOs in agriculture, which I am sure will continue for some time. I am glad to say that the new Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics will be implementing an active community outreach program, which I hope will not only allow the community to become more informed about the centre's research but also for it to be guided by the community's expectation regarding its work.

My colleague in another place, the Hon. Jane Lomax-Smith, has issued a ministerial statement which contains more details about the work that will be undertaken by this important centre and I table that statement.

TEACHERS' SHORTAGES

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Agriculture, representing the Minister for Education, a question about teacher shortages.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: I have raised the issue of teacher supply in this place for several years now. Early last year the Australian Council of Deans of Education found that

for primary education in South Australia, teacher supply will be close to demand around the year 2005. In other words, when the students currently undertaking teacher studies graduate, supply and demand will be fairly close to even. After that, it is projected that they will reach only 75 per cent of demand, which is a shortfall of 158 primary teachers. I note that that does not take into account the government's promise to actually increase the number of teachers, particularly in the early primary years, although it seems to have put that off until early next year at this stage.

Further, for secondary education from this year, shortfalls are projected to increase markedly so that, by the year 2005, supply will be only 56 per cent of demand, in other words, a shortfall of 235 secondary teachers. I might note again that even now, while there is not strictly speaking a shortage, a number of teachers are teaching outside their area of qualification, which is the precursor of a demand where you just cannot put bodies in front of classes.

In light of such evidence, the previous government was forced to acknowledge a looming teacher shortage. However, rather than tackling issues around teaching conditions and salaries etc., it appeared to be more interested in teacher registration requirements and in actually passing the buck over to schools in terms of who would go in front of classes.

The new government is now faced with not only a looming teacher shortage but greater competition to keep teachers in South Australia. Just a quick flick through the careers section of the *Advertiser* shows a growing number of attractive offers luring our teachers both overseas and interstate. It is, then, with some concern that I see that the Rann government has rejected a pay claim from the teachers union that would have put South Australian teachers on a par with the rest of the nation.

This decision will put South Australian public school teachers' top salaries around \$500 below the national pay average by the end of this year, and around \$1 500 below by the start of April next year, and that is not allowing for any further rises they may win in other states. My questions are:

1. Does the minister agree that it will be difficult to attract and keep teachers in South Australia when we offer among the worst teacher salaries in the nation?
2. If the minister does not intend to introduce nationally and internationally competitive teacher salaries and conditions, how does the minister plan to address the looming teacher shortage in South Australia?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): I can understand the concerns that the honourable member has in relation to a shortage of teachers. As a person who is married to a teacher in the public system, I am well aware that the average age of teachers is growing and that it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit teachers to the system. But I will refer the specifics of that matter to my colleague in another place, the Minister for Education and Children's Services, and seek her response.

DRUGS SUMMIT

The Hon. A.L. EVANS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, representing the Attorney-General, a question concerning the up-and-coming drugs summit.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A.L. EVANS: The drugs summit is to be held from 24-28 June. We applaud the drugs summit as an initiative to explore innovative ways of dealing with the

serious drug issues facing our state. A number of community meetings will be held across the state in May purporting to hear from individuals and organisations within the community. Premier Mike Rann has stated that the summit will have a particular emphasis on the growing incidence of amphetamine and designer drug use and abuse.

In a notification placed in the *Advertiser* of 20 April, it was stated that the summit will consider current policy and practice aimed at preventing the uptake of drugs and reducing the harmful consequences of use, and recommend future directions for the government's consideration. The Department of Premier and Cabinet has distributed an information page on the summit which states that the community forums are being organised by local drug action teams. Members of the community have raised queries in relation to the nature of the summit and the process of community consultation. My questions are:

1. What are the names of the local drug action teams that are organising the community forums?
2. Given that the process of community consultation has not yet been completed, on what basis has the government already determined that the emphasis of the summit will be on amphetamine use?
3. Will consideration be given at the summit to the impact on the community of decriminalising the growth and use of marijuana in our state?
4. Who will be invited to speak at the summit?
5. Will the summit address the current policy of harm minimisation?
6. If so, will the government consider the apparent ineffectiveness of the policy in reducing the incidence of drug use?
7. If the government will not consider the policy of harm minimisation at the summit, why not?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I thank the honourable member for asking his first question in this council—and it is an important one. I will relay that question to the Premier in another place and bring back a reply.

BARTON ROAD

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, representing the Attorney-General, a question about the opening of Barton Road.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.F. STEFANI: The Attorney-General has been a passionate campaigner for the opening of Barton Road over many years. I confess that I have been a supporter of his campaign, because Barton Road is a logical roadway connection to the Calvary Hospital, North Adelaide schools and churches as well as the Australian Red Cross office and a prominent nearby retirement village. An article published in the city *Messenger* dated 8 May 2002 reported that the Attorney-General had met with the Minister for Local Government to discuss the matter. I am also aware that the Attorney-General is keen to prepare a cabinet submission to endorse the opening of Barton Road. My questions are:

1. Will the minister advise the council whether the government is preparing a position paper for public comment on the opening of Barton Road?
2. Will the minister indicate whether the government is required to consult with the Adelaide City Council and the

Barton Terrace residents before making a decision to open the roadway?

3. What is the time frame in which the promised opening of Barton Road is expected to be achieved by the government?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I thank the honourable member for his very interesting questions. Although the Attorney-General took keen interest in the principle of the future of Barton Road, the question should probably be directed to the Minister for Local Government. I will relay those questions to the Minister for Local Government and bring back a reply.

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation a question about Aboriginal heritage sites in South Australia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: Under the previous government the system of assessing sites of Aboriginal significance and specifically the system of including such sites in the Register of Aboriginal Sites and Objects had fallen by the wayside. In fact, in a period of eight years not a single new item made it onto the register. There exists a strong possibility that under the previous minister we lost a heritage site that was capable of illuminating the activity of Aboriginal people in this state during the early pleistocene period. A section of the quaternary dune system was bulldozed to make way for the Port Augusta aerodrome. There is evidence that this might have been an archaeological site of world importance. My questions to the minister are:

1. Has an assessment of the heritage value of the rest of the quaternary dune system been carried out to determine whether important archaeological material exists there?

2. Under the new government, will the Register of Aboriginal Sites and Objects once again be used to protect significant locations in South Australia?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I thank the honourable member for her important question. I note that the Hon. Sandra Kanck and I asked questions of the previous government in relation to heritage protection. I am trying to encourage a situation with the new government's policy where identification, registration and protection are a part of the protection of cultural heritage. This is for a number of reasons: firstly, to identify the areas of heritage that are important to Aboriginal people for reasons of protection, identification and isolation for traditional reasons; and, secondly, protection of those sites that can be used for identification and consideration for educating the broader community in those aspects of Aboriginal culture that can be passed on to the broader community.

The challenge for the new government is to put together a whole program of site registration and central archiving; and to be able to assist, on the ground where possible, those people, who, at all levels, are involved in site identification. Putting the identification process in place can be used for the advancement of communities in regional and isolated areas in particular, and the metropolitan area as well. Activities surrounding cultural heritage and protection can lead to employment opportunities for young Aboriginal people and for the elders who are a part of that identification process. However, in broadening the identification programs, we can

also educate the broader community so that it assists in the reconciliation program.

The difficulty that I have now—and I am working my way through it—is that I do not think there has been any further registration of heritage sites since 1993. I will have to work my way through the agencies that have been collecting the site data to enable me to come to grips with the difficulties that we will have now in central archiving, and to work out a basis for cultural protection or display. I have spoken to some community groups in relation to those issues. I will be assisted by community groups, where they exist, and by departmental officers where community groups do not exist. I have been made aware of other breaches of potential sites in isolated areas. In particular, my attention has been drawn to the possibilities of linking a lot of the dreaming trails, particularly through the Nullarbor, the northern regions in the areas around the Flinders Ranges and the southern metropolitan area in the Kurna lands, and drawing linkages between the heritage sites and the potential for programs for education, training and exposure or protection for cultural reasons from the broader society.

The Hon. M.J. ELLIOTT: I have a supplementary question. Will the minister give this chamber any further information in relation to the apparent destruction of an Aboriginal site at Port Augusta airport?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I did receive a briefing from people who were involved in an archaeological dig in Port Augusta—it was not an official briefing from departmental officers. However, I am told that, throughout the whole area in and around Port Augusta—at all points north—in fact almost throughout the whole of the state, there are points of heritage of minor interest, major interest and of exceptional value to Aboriginal people.

It is a matter of working through those dreaming trails and significant sites and integrating them through the process that I mentioned earlier. In many cases, when sites have been desecrated—for want of a better term—by development before proper archival registration or identification, it is difficult to bring them back to sites of any significance that mean anything to contemporary Aboriginal—

The Hon. M.J. Elliott: What was known before destruction?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I will have to take that interjection on notice but, for all the reasons that I have expounded, this is an area of interest of which I will certainly make myself aware. It is a matter of linking all the community-based Aboriginal organisations that exist to assist them in providing what I see as great opportunities for the advancement of regional tourism and protecting cultural heritage sites so that there are sites available for people, particularly international tourists and Australian tourists, who wish to draw links between geography and the spiritual aspects of Aboriginal life in order to achieve a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture.

I think we would be remiss if we did not draw those aspects of Aboriginal life into our own broader culture in Australia. If we do not, we will miss out on an opportunity to present a unique people who have developed this country over many thousands of years and link their culture with our own culture so that we can mature as a nation with those linkages and bonds connecting us.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Affairs. Given the recent Telstra proposal to increase line rental for all consumers and the minister's passion for rural and regional South Australia, what is the minister doing to ensure that regional and rural South Australia receives a telecommunications service which is comparable to that of the metropolitan area?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Regional Affairs): I share the honourable member's concerns in relation to any disparity of costs within major infrastructure, whether it be communications or any other infrastructure linkage on which country people rely. Communications are a commonwealth responsibility. As the Minister for Regional Affairs, I am prepared to work with members of the opposition who would like to put forward—

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw: So, you're not doing anything; is that what you're saying?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: No. I am prepared to work with the honourable member who raised the issue to put together through my office a letter of concern to the federal government in relation to how this situation is impacting on South Australia. I throw that invitation open.

RURAL YOUTH

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Minister for Regional Affairs a question about supporting young people in country areas.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: One of the greatest concerns for country people is the fact that so many of our young people leave home to find work in the city. This has the potential to drain country communities of new ideas and the enthusiasm needed to regenerate the local economy. It also means that the pressure on families is greater both in terms of costs and the emotional burden that distance creates. I am sure that, yesterday, many mothers in country areas would have been waiting by the telephone to hear from their son or daughter who has had to leave home to find opportunities for themselves. There is also a great fear that if the number of young families keeps falling in some areas of the state there will not be a next generation at all. In light of these very real concerns for the economic and social wellbeing of our country towns and provincial cities, can the minister outline the government's commitment to keeping young people in regional South Australia?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Regional Affairs): I thank the member for that very important question: it carries on from some of the questions that members on the other side of the council have raised in relation to the importance of regional development for the state.

Recent figures drawn together for population predictions show that regional South Australia will suffer a downturn in the next decade in relation to being able to capture and hold people within our regional areas. Those members who live and work in regional areas and understand how regional economies operate know that if you get below a certain level of population—and there seems to be a critical level—the relationship between regional centres and country centres starts to break down. That is when governments have to start to intervene with policies designed to try to pump prime those economies to hold those services together.

Unfortunately, with the pressures that are coming, particularly on health, holding health professionals in regional areas is becoming more and more difficult. As the commonwealth is starting to realise, and I suspect there may be something in the commonwealth budget that perhaps deals with it, the blow-out in health servicing is contributing a lot to the regionalisation and the reorganisation of health services.

What we have to do in South Australia is to try to hold our young people in their communities and also to attract people from other states. It may be difficult to attract migrants. Even though everyone is calling out for an increase in migration, and I am one who supports that, migrants tend not to gravitate to regional areas. They tend to gravitate to the eastern states and to major growth centres where professional jobs and employment opportunities prevail.

So, the commitment that we have has to be built on retaining our young people in particular areas to give the regions the enthusiasm and energy that is required to come to terms with the challenges that regional areas face. But, we also have to look at a whole range of other packages for intervention and we have to work a lot harder to maintain those services.

We have to provide better health and educational services: education is going to be a key for the revival and maintenance of regional areas. We have to give more young people the option to stay in their hometowns and to avail themselves of those educational opportunities, and we have to provide infrastructure so that the towns compete with the cities or regional centres, encouraging the young people to stay.

The Premier's commitment to social inclusion through the establishment of the Social Inclusion Unit will look after the wellbeing of all South Australians no matter where they live. It recognises that the ability of communities to set their own agenda for their development will come from fully assessing the skills, ideas and potential of all their citizens, including younger people. Indeed, I also take this opportunity to plug the Building Positive Rural Futures program, which will have the key theme of youth development and the role of schools in community and economic development. The 2002 study tours at the end of this month should provide some exciting feedback about the role of young people in successful communities, and those communities can be analysed and a lot of those programs can be moved into areas that are struggling to come to terms with their future.

I will be promoting these experiences within government and the broader community. We will be including young people in debate and discussion within government about economic and community development, and I can assure the honourable member that I will discuss issues with students, young people in business and young leaders directly. So all of those issues will be taken up through the regional affairs office. The challenge is to make ourselves attractive as a state with the attributes that we have which, in the case of South Australia, are under population and under development. In a lot of places outside the metropolitan area we have, unspoilt, what a lot of people from overseas and other states would, if they came to South Australia to experience it, consider to be assets and quality of life.

We do not want Queensland-style developments. We do not want Queensland-style urbanised living. We need exposure across the board in those remote regional areas. We need, in some cases, to build on those successful areas to

attract citizens for a wide range of reasons using the energies of young people to identify those areas of attraction.

TAXIS, SAFETY

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: I seek leave to make a personal explanation arising from a radio interview today on ABC radio 891. I take particular exception to comments made by Mr Bill Gonis, operations manager of Adelaide Independent Taxis, in an interview with Mr David Bevan.

Leave granted.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW: David Bevan, the interviewer in question, in relation to the horrible violence against taxidrivers in the past week and the former government's implementation of a taxi levy, said:

I think there was a lot of suspicion that many drivers... simply would have put that extra levy in their pocket.

Mr Gonis replied:

If you look at 1 per cent, at the time the former Liberal government gave it to us... our registration costs... went up by \$1 000 in one year and it was fine for the then Minister for Transport, Diana Laidlaw, saying, 'Well, the 1 per cent should be okay to cover the cameras.' When... your costs have gone up... what are you going to first pay—your registration costs which is \$2 300...

What he is essentially saying is that, while the government introduced a safety levy of 1 per cent and registration costs for the industry increased by \$1000, I was prepared to condone the safety levy being used for that purpose.

I can say that those comments are completely outrageous. I have always expected the taxi industry safety levy to be applied for that purpose. Accordingly, I have always rejected repeated representations from the industry for others—state government or taxpayers generally—to pay for the taxi industry surveillance cameras.

I also indicate that taxi owners and operators have collected over \$4000 from customers to install safety equipment since the government introduced the 1 per cent levy in 1999. Mr Gonis said today that the cost of cameras had increased over that four-year period from \$1000 to between \$2500 and \$2300 and so, by his own admission, today taxi owners and drivers are well ahead financially in terms of the levy collected and the outlay required to purchase the cameras. Yet Mr Gonis today sought to justify owners and drivers using the taxi safety levy not for the purpose for which it was intended but for registration costs.

He knows, however, because he sits on the committee that recommends taxi fares, that registration costs are already taken into account in the fees that are recommended each year for the taxi industry for the forthcoming year. So, the taxi industry has had its registration costs covered by increases in taxi fares over the past four years. It has, in the meantime, reaped a 1 per cent levy for video surveillance cameras and has not pursued that issue aggressively. It now complains that others should pay the industry costs in terms of safety.

I highlight, too, my regret that this government fell for the taxi industry politics and extended the moratorium until February next year. Rather than now obliging the taxi industry, I would urge this government strongly to reconsider the extension of the levy and bring it forward to the middle of this year, not February.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: That's a ministerial statement.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The ability for members to make personal statements or personal explanations is a very

important part of the procedures of the council. The honourable member did proceed to debate the issue. I would ask her to pay particular attention to that in future, and I ask all other members to understand that personal explanations or personal statements should be that: they should not be another debate.

AGRICULTURAL AND VETERINARY CHEMICALS (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) (ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (South Australia) Act 1994. Read a first time.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

This Bill is part of a legislative response to the decision of the High Court in *The Queen v Hughes* (2000) 171 ALR 155 and other related matters, which includes the *Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Act 2001* and the *Commonwealth Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Act 2001*.

The legislative response will—

- (a) validate things done or omitted to be done by certain Commonwealth authorities or officers in pursuance of the National Registration Scheme (NRS) for agricultural and veterinary chemicals that are potentially invalid following the decision of the High Court in *Hughes*; and
- (b) validate things done or omitted to be done by certain Commonwealth authorities or officers that are potentially invalid due to certain gaps in the NRS legislative scheme that have arisen independently of the decision in *Hughes*; and
- (c) ensure that things done or omitted in the future by Commonwealth authorities or officers in pursuance of the NRS have a constitutionally sound basis.

The decision of the High Court in *Hughes* has cast doubt on the ability of Commonwealth authorities and officers to exercise powers and perform functions under State laws in relation to several inter-governmental legislative schemes. In *Hughes*, the High Court indicated that, where a State gave a Commonwealth authority or officer a power to undertake a function under State law together with a duty to exercise the function, there must be a clear nexus between the exercise of the function and one or more of the legislative heads of power of the Commonwealth Parliament set out in the Commonwealth Constitution. *Hughes* also highlighted the need for the Commonwealth Parliament to authorise the conferral of duties, powers of functions by a State on Commonwealth authorities or officers.

The decision in *Hughes* affects the NRS by casting doubts on the validity of the exercise of powers in relation to the NRS by the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals, the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions, the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal and Commonwealth inspectors and analysts.

The proposed Act (which amends the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (South Australia) Act 1994*) makes changes to the NRS to place it on a more secure constitutional footing and closes certain gaps in the conferral of duties, functions and powers on Commonwealth authorities and officers relating to the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal and inspectors and analysts appointed under Commonwealth law.

The proposed Act complements the *Co-operative Schemes (Administrative Actions) Act 2001*. That Bill validates past actions of Commonwealth authorities and officers that were not linked to a head of power under the Commonwealth Constitution, and ensures that no duty, function or power is conferred on a Commonwealth authority or officer that is beyond the legislative power of the State.

The proposed Act is supported by the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Act 2001* of the Commonwealth. That Bill proposes to clarify the powers, functions and duties

of Commonwealth authorities and officers within the NRS, and also addresses the gaps in the NRS legislative scheme arising independently of the decision in *Hughes*. The Commonwealth Bill was introduced into the Senate on 3 April 2001.

Explanation of clauses

Clause 1: Short title

Clause 2: Commencement

These clauses are formal.

Clause 3: Amendment of s. 3—Definitions

This clause inserts definitions of "confer" and "function" into the principal Act.

Clause 4: Substitution of Part 5

This clause repeals and remakes Part 5 of the principal Act, which contains provisions that apply certain Commonwealth administrative laws as laws of the State. The effect is to re-apply those laws and to re-confer functions and powers on Commonwealth authorities and officers.

There is doubt about the efficacy of the previous purported conferral of functions and powers by Part 5, since the Commonwealth has not expressly authorised the conferral of those powers and functions by the States and the Northern Territory.

The substitution of Part 5 complements provisions in the *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Act 2001* of the Commonwealth that proposes to authorise the conferral of those functions and powers on Commonwealth authorities and officers.

Clause 5: Insertion of ss. 28A and 28B

This clause inserts new sections 28A and 28B into the principal Act. Proposed section 28A confers functions and powers on Commonwealth inspectors and analysts and thereby closes a gap in the NRS. The principal Act as it stands does not purport to confer functions and powers on Commonwealth inspectors and analysts.

Proposed section 28B will validate things done or omitted to be done by inspectors and analysts before the commencement of proposed section 28A.

Clause 6: Insertion of s. 33A

This clause inserts a transitional provision to provide that the re-made Part 5 applies to matters arising and things done or omitted to be done before, on and after the repeal and re-making of Part 5.

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER secured the adjournment of the debate.

SEEDS ACT REPEAL BILL

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to repeal the Seeds Act 1979. Read a first time.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Bill has one purpose—to repeal the Seeds Act 1979. The principal function of the Seeds Act 1979 is to provide a regulatory framework in the marketplace for the labelling of seeds for sowing and to prevent the spread of noxious weed seeds, both being consumer protection measures. A secondary function of the act is to provide for an official government seed testing laboratory and facilitate the charging of fees for services performed by that laboratory. The passing of the commonwealth Mutual Recognition Act in 1992 sought to eliminate regulatory impediments to national markets in goods and services and to expedite the development of national standards.

As a consequence, it is no longer possible for the South Australian government to consistently enforce its current labelling laws because the Mutual Recognition Act applies to virtually all provisions of the South Australian Seeds Act. To facilitate the continuance of labelling of seed for sowing as a consumer protection measure, states have assisted national peak industry bodies in the seed industry to formulate and put into practice alternative measures in the form of an industry code of practice. This code of practice became

operational in August 1999 and it was agreed by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Resource Management that it was an appropriate alternative regulatory framework and that states could repeal their seeds legislation when the code was effectively in place.

Cabinet approved the drafting of a bill to repeal the South Australian Seeds Act 1979 on 29 October 2001. Measures for the control of movement of noxious weed seeds in South Australia have been reviewed and responsibility for all important agricultural weeds has been shifted to the Animal and Plant Control Act 1986. Other weeds of concern to the industry can be brought under the provisions of this act, provided a risk assessment and management plans providing some probability of eradication of those weed species are presented.

The government consultation process that led to the recommended outcome was initially undertaken through the working group on which all states and the commonwealth government and peak industry bodies of the seed industry were represented. At the state level, consultation has taken place between Primary Industries and Resources SA (PIRSA) and state affiliates of the national peak industry bodies, particularly the Seed Section of the South Australian Farmers Federation. All parties, both national and state, have agreed to the recommended outcome. An ongoing issue of concern to the seeds industry is the issue of farmer to farmer trade of unlabelled seed.

On repeal of the act the issue would be subject to the Trade Practices section under the Fair Trading Act. The rules under this act apply to labelling behaviour for farmer sale of seeds. Under the code of practice, grower seed sales of participating members would be subject to the same standards as labelled seed, including the provision of test results. For greater certainty of seed quality it is important for seed buyers to demand certificates of analysis at the point of sale of seed. A national education program has been developed to explain in more detail how the code of practice will operate without the labelling legislation.

An agreement by the industry to proceed with the establishment of an Australian seeds authority will go some way to providing an industry watchdog on all seeds issues. Through Seed Services, PIRSA carries out a seed certification service for genetic quality control and a seed testing service for germination and physical purity. The newly appointed Seed Services Board will recommend to the minister fee charges for these services and ensure that they meet cost-reflective pricing principles. The objective is to remove any net competitive advantage available to government-owned business activities. Prices for seed testing and certification will continue to require ministerial approval following the Seed Services Board recommendation. I commend this bill to the council and I seek leave to have the explanation of the clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Explanation of clauses

Clause 1: Short title

This clause is formal.

Clause 2: Repeal

This clause repeals the *Seeds Act 1979*.

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from 9 May. Page 76.)

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: First, may I thank and congratulate Her Excellency the Governor for her speech. One often hears in the community how much she is appreciated and respected by everyone for both her dignity and the approachability she brings to the position. I had the opportunity to hear her address at the UNIFEM breakfast on International Women's Day in March. I admire her strength and courage, as well as her fabulous sense of humour. I also note the passing of Her Majesty The Queen Mother who was, obviously, someone who was respected by so many people whose lives she touched. She was fortunate to have a long life and saw changes that spanned over a century.

As a member of the royal family she served her country with strength and dignity. I also add my condolences to those former members of parliament, state and federal, who have passed away since we last sat. I would like to say a few words about the passing of Ralph Jacobi. I was fortunate to know Ralph Jacobi. I met him in the 1970s at the time when all federal members of parliament were located in the AMP building. I can still see his infectious smile and cheeky grin that preceded an often fabulous but not politically correct greeting whenever I met him. I have to admit that I did not mind at all because it was never meant with any malice.

My colleague the Hon. Paul Holloway had the good fortune to work with Ralph and knew him well. He has already paid tribute to Ralph but I would like to add that Ralph was someone whom I respected greatly as a competent and hard-working individual. At the same time he managed to remain fiercely independent within our party structure. He certainly managed to do it his way. I offer my condolences to his wife and family.

At another time I have already offered my best wishes to those members of parliament who retired at the last election. However, I would like to say a few words about a former colleague of mine in the other place, Annette Hurley, who was not successful in being elected to the seat for which she stood. Annette Hurley was a former deputy leader. She decided, after the redistribution that we compulsorily have after every state election in South Australia, to stand for the seat of Light. It was a courageous decision on Annette's part. The new seat of Light takes in a significant part of the former electorate of Napier, namely, Munno Para, Smithfield Plains and parts of Davoren Park, as well as the rural and semi-rural areas around Gawler. I attended Annette's declaration of the poll. It was a tough but fair campaign. I remember the Hon. Malcolm Buckby saying that it was a shame that he and Annette were standing for the same seat because, of course, only one could win.

I certainly appreciated his words because it showed his respect for her not only as a former colleague but also as a candidate. Annette was gracious in defeat and made the comment that her decision to stand for Light had not been a difficult one because, as mentioned previously, the seat takes in a great part of the former electorate of Napier and it was one of the seats that would have given us a majority government. A great deal has been said about her decision but I would like to place on record my thanks and respect for her contribution to parliament, both as the former member for Napier and as deputy leader of the party.

I have known Annette for very many years and always describe her as my best friend in politics. I certainly miss the fact that she is no longer in parliament. However, she will continue to be a tremendous mentor for women at all levels

of politics in the Labor movement. I know she will continue to make a significant contribution to the Labor Party and I offer her my very best wishes in her new employment.

The delay in the Rann government's taking office has certainly been regrettable, particularly as the election was already overdue by some four months. On election night the government won three more seats than the Liberal opposition, obviously needing only the support of another member to form government. Given the clearly demonstrated support of not one but two elected Independents, the very many tactics used by the Liberal opposition to stall, feed the media and various other continuing tactics to discredit one of those Independents only serves to demonstrate an arrogance which apparently goes with a born to rule mentality.

Minority governments are hardly new on the political scene, including for a considerable time the previous Olsen and Kerin governments. The delay may have provided the trappings of office for an additional period, but did make us look ridiculous in the eyes of other states and overseas. It certainly was not of any benefit to the community and the state's economy. I hope that the opposition can now move on quickly and provide an effective opposition.

The priorities of this government have been clearly outlined by the Governor, but it is important for me to reiterate some of them. As to be expected, the government's commitment to the River Murray is a most significant one, both economically and socially. The compact signed with Victoria at Mannum last month will see a new historic deal for the River Murray. Premiers Rann and Bracks announced a new River Murray Environmental Flows Fund.

The new fund will deliver up to an extra 30 gegalitres of annual water flow down the river, which I understand is over and above up to 70 gegalitres negotiated by the former Olsen government. The new deal with Victoria should assist to improve water flow and will allow the states to work together to improve the salinity and water quality of the river. The River Murray is, of course, vital to many primary industries, South Australia's success stories, and to South Australia's economic future.

The wine industry in particular is doing brilliantly. Wine exports continue to grow to now \$1.8 billion. I am of course aware of the problems that many of the smaller growers are experiencing in the Riverland, in particular those affected by the collapse of Norman Wines and the belief by some that the wine industry could be heading for a downturn given the continuation of tax incentive driven plantings. Nonetheless, in 2001 we in South Australia produced about half of Australia's wine, including about 70 per cent of exports by volume. We have some tremendous advantages with our wine industry compared with some of the older wine producing countries in the world. However, it will always be necessary to keep one step ahead and be innovative with both our varieties and marketing to not only maintain but increase our share of the world market.

As well as the wine industry, in the last few years primary industries—such as our grain, meat and agriculture industries—have all contributed to record export dollars. In its pre-election policy, the government committed itself to capitalise on research and development. My colleague, the Leader of the Government in this place, has already announced the amalgamation of South Australia's grains research facilities into a new unit. The South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) and the University of Adelaide are forming a new company with a grains research and develop-

ment corporation to ensure world leading research is not lost to our state's grain growers.

There has been massive expansion in our primary sector in recent years, as well as diversification—for example, aquaculture and olive plantings. I noted the Hon. Paul Holloway's contribution in question time in relation to aquaculture and the enormous expansion economically. South Australia has also become the onion and potato growing state of Australia. This revival naturally flows from the farm sectors to regional centres, with country South Australia enjoying its lowest rate of unemployment for many years, which is good news.

The booming conditions have contributed to South Australia's best export growth, up \$2 billion on last year. Our grain harvest has been a good one, and naturally we have seen strong growth in the export of grains. What we need now, of course, is some good rains for the planting of new crops—and sooner rather than later. The government is committed to monthly community cabinet meetings, and has already commenced this undertaking in country South Australia.

I was pleased to hear in the Governor's speech the confirmation of a new Health and Community Services Ombudsman who will have the special powers to hear and resolve complaints against public or private health or community service providers. For so many years concerns have been expressed for the need for wider coverage in investigations in the health and allied areas. This legislation will see the ombudsman having extensive jurisdiction covering health and community services in the government, non-government and private sectors. All health and community services, including public and private hospitals and nursing homes, will be covered.

I do congratulate the Premier and Deputy Premier for their fast action in bringing together people with talent to see that South Australia takes full advantage of opportunities to see a smart economy and to be well-placed for investment and increased exports. One of the most important of these initiatives, the Economic Development Board, has been particularly well-received by the community.

We have seen the long-term future of Mitsubishi being secured with the cooperation of the federal government. The federal-state package to invest nearly \$1 billion into building the next generation of Mitsubishi cars beyond 2005 was announced late last month, and it is certainly an important initiative in underpinning the South Australian economy. The 3 200-odd workers have worked hard to see this outcome and are to be congratulated.

The Premier has also released details of a new international research facility for road safety and development to be built next to Mitsubishi's Tonsley car plant at Science Park. The centre will incorporate the world-recognised Road Accident Research Unit run by Professor Jack McLean, and is to be renamed the Centre for Automotive Safety Research.

Very many issues have occupied public debate since we last sat, but one in particular is raised with me on a very regular basis, and certainly continues to remain at the forefront of political debate. It does not take long to get some lively debate going on the issue of that of the plight of asylum seekers to this country. Of course, in terms of jurisdiction, immigration, refugees, unauthorised arrivals and asylum seekers are not those of state government but, of course, it is an issue that affects the whole community and all states. With the Woomera detention centre in South Australia and all the controversy that has emerged from the use of that centre, it is an issue that will not disappear off the face of our news-

papers or from the minds of many members of our community.

In previous employment as a political staffer, I was very much involved in assisting migrants to this state, and I have great empathy in seeing such outcomes. I also believe that Australia can and should increase its intake of migrants, in particular, in South Australia. The federal government's announcement of the last few days is welcome, although it really is only a very modest increase in the general intake. Keeping the refugee intake at the same level is not so welcome. I do not for one minute believe that we should have open borders. No country in the world has that policy, and it would not receive general support in our community.

Mandatory detention does have bipartisan support in federal parliament, and I think it is important that I acknowledge that. Regardless of which government is in Canberra, we will always have a migration policy and various criteria of accepting migrants to this country. The real issue is how we then treat people who have made it to our shores, the nature and duration of their detention.

Several years ago now, when the issue was not so emotional and controversial, I addressed a citizenship ceremony at the City of Campbelltown. I remember saying at that time that it was important for us to welcome for processing people who made it to our shores, that to do otherwise flew in the face of our then respected reputation as a humanitarian western nation. I believed that my comments were well received and people were pleased that the issue was being addressed publicly, and certainly no adverse comments were made to me at all: quite the contrary. I have no reason now to change my mind.

The movement of people throughout the world has changed in the last 20 years or so, mainly due to displacement from wars or persecution from totalitarian regimes. Our yearly refugee intake as defined by the United Nations conventions and protocols could be filled within a few days from just one of the many existing transit camps throughout the world, mostly in South-East Asia. Very many people who make it to our shores—in particular, women—will not fit the UN criteria. For example, women, often along with their children, are at risk simply because of their sex and vulnerability. In Australia we owe a person protection obligations if the essential significant reason for their attempting to come here for asylum is a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political reason, or if the persecution involves serious harm to the person. The number of places reserved for humanitarian grounds is modest, at around 12 000 per year. I cannot remember with certainty the exact number, but I am pretty sure that in the 1980s the number might well have been at least double that number.

Woomera has not been a success. The reasons are various. I have spoken to several people who have visited the detention centre. I will quote a few words from one in particular, Father Chris Middleton, SJ, the Deputy Headmaster of St Ignatius College, as follows:

Whatever our views about the wider issue of policy towards asylum seekers, if we are going to hold people seeking asylum as refugees in detention centres, it demands of us, I believe, that the process be fair and expeditious, and that in the meantime people are treated with respect and accorded dignity. Clearly from what I saw this is not the case.

Father Middleton goes on to describe some of his experiences and the cases of some of the people he met. He suggests helping create a climate of compassion and understanding

towards those in Woomera and, he adds, towards politicians who face difficult decisions in this area. Father Middleton is clearly a compassionate man, when he even thinks of politicians.

Accepting that there is nothing to fear from people who have a different religion and look different is probably challenging. I am certain that boatloads of white, unauthorised South Africans arriving here seeking asylum would not have resulted in some of the wedge politics we have seen by the Howard government. I am not necessarily suggesting that the final application outcomes would have been different—not under our legislation, perhaps—but I believe that we would not have seen the cynical use of unauthorised arrivals for election gains.

We should spare a thought for many of the European nations such as Italy and the United Kingdom. I understand that in the UK alone some 100 000 are arriving every year. I am pleased to see that the federal Labor Party has announced a review of our policies, including the nature and duration of detention. Federal caucus has also endorsed some significant measures, including that the government be put back in control of the detention centres, with Australian Protection Service replacing the ACM protection firm. Woomera should be mothballed, as recommended by the government's own independent Detention Centre Advisory Group (DAG), and detainees moved to other existing facilities.

Last year the board of management of Diversity Directions, of which I am a member, wrote to minister Ruddock seeking assurances about the safety of minors in detention. The response certainly gave no reason for concern, and I will read some of the letter into *Hansard*, as follows:

The Australian government is committed to meeting its obligations and responsibilities under the UNCROC [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child] and does its utmost to ensure that children are treated in accordance with the provisions of the convention and receive appropriate care. This commitment is evident in the attention that is focused on the health, welfare and safety of children in detention.

Immigration detention standards have been developed which outline the quality of care and quality of life expected in immigration detention facilities, taking into consideration the gender, culture and age specific needs of the detainees.

Specifically, the immigration detention standard for children requires the contractor Australasian Correctional Management Pty Ltd (ACM) to provide social and educational programs appropriate to the child's age and abilities to all children in detention. Although not compulsory, children are encouraged to participate in the educational programs available through the detention facilities. In some facilities children attend local schools, in others, a school curriculum based program is provided. The program focuses on English as a second language and takes into account the individual needs of the children. Social and recreational activities are also organised. The programs are run by appropriately qualified staff.

Another immigration detention standard requires that detainees in need of psychiatric or psychological treatment have access to the services they need. Counsellors are available on site in detention facilities and, where required, detainees may be referred to external organisations or psychologists with specialist skills.

The detention facilities are designed to be sensitive to the special needs of children and families. Suitable accommodation for family units and children are made available where possible and recreational facilities including playgrounds, toys and games are provided.

This is certainly not quite the same as the stories we hear coming out of Woomera from very many sources now. When one takes into account the recent recommendations made by a group of child protection officers who visited the Woomera Detention Centre last month, one certainly has reason to be concerned. Experts believe that the nutritional and developmental needs of young children are being compromised as a

result of their detention, and children do not have access to a proper education.

We also learn that, while there is a school in the centre, the curriculum and school hours are limited. I hope that we will see these issues addressed soon. The federal government is obviously determined to open the Baxter Detention Centre. There has been a certain amount of disagreement and confusion over jurisdictional issues, particularly regarding the use of state police. We have also learnt in the past few days that our state government will not be reimbursed for any expenses that are not deemed necessary for people who are here unauthorised, regardless of how long they are detained.

The events of 11 September have been described as a massive affront to our sense of the progress we had made on the cold/nuclear war front. They have brought about a real sense of insecurity. The world has become a much riskier place, and it is easier to retreat to mistrust but, because political decisions have moral implications that we all have to live with, I think there is nothing wrong with reviewing changing situations. It would probably not be a bad idea to keep things in perspective. Compared with the 10 000-odd unauthorised arrivals since the end of 1989, there are about 53 000 people here illegally overstaying their visa—and, yes, we did indeed determine that they could come to Australia.

Another issue that is the topic of legitimate public concern as told to me is that of public liability insurance. I was pleased to see a meeting of the relevant ministers with responsibility in this field to try to find a solution. We saw a shared determination to tackle the problems of rising premiums and the reduced availability of public liability insurance. The meeting of commonwealth, state and territory ministers and the President of the Australian Local Government Association on 27 March agreed on a 12-point plan to address the continuing national crisis of skyrocketing public liability insurance premiums. In my community travels I am reminded that it affects not only government agencies, businesses and the professions but also voluntary organisations and other vulnerable sections of the community. The outcome of the ministerial meeting was that the federal government would introduce reforms to the parliament in the winter session to encourage as a key step the use of structured settlement in personal injury claims.

It was considered that the ongoing income provided by structured settlements gives injured people greater security about their future income and particularly their capacity to meet ongoing medical expenses. Structured settlements can assist in reducing costs by more closely aligning the damages awarded with a person's actual needs. Beside structured settlements, the states agreed to examine various other initiatives ranging from the facilitation of group insurance for not for profit organisations, tort law reform and development of risk management guidelines. Group buying was also to be encouraged, and so on. The ministers agree that many of the issues are complex and cross jurisdictional and require collective action from governments and industry in the immediate and long term. The point was made that problems being confronted in the public liability area are not unique and are also evident in other insurance classes—builders' warranty insurance, medical indemnity to name just a few. I am certain that we have all seen very many reports in the media in the last few weeks.

The legislative program outlined by Her Excellency the Governor is in keeping with the commitment given before the election that this government's term will be one of honesty and accountability, as well as responding to the important

social and economic concerns that it committed itself to addressing in its election campaign. The extra funding of \$1 million per annum over four years for problem gambling is timely and needed. Whilst we have a minority of people who are problem gamblers, their actions often affect very many other people in our community, ranging from their families to their employers: there are so very many victims with problem gambling.

Given the former Liberal government's decisions, one of the biggest challenges facing government now is to ensure that our power prices, in particular for small businesses and domestic consumers, are fair and delivered at reasonable prices. We have already committed to facilitating the SNI connector and an announcement has been made that meters will be profiled as opposed to expecting consumers to buy new meters. The announcement of an Essential Services Commission is a welcome one. The commission will protect the long-term interests of South Australian consumers with regard to price, quality and reliability of electricity. It will also be able to oversee important issues relating to gas, water and ports; and it will have powers to investigate market participants to ensure no participant exploits its market position and that there are no flaws in the market.

I again welcome new members, and I am certain the next four years will be very productive and interesting ones.

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: I rise to support the motion, and in doing so congratulate Her Excellency the Governor on the speech she delivered in opening this session of parliament. I also extend my condolences to her and through her to the royal family on the death of the Queen Mother.

At this stage I would like to welcome the new members to this place: the Hons Gail Gago, John Gazzola, Andrew Evans, Terry Stephens and David Ridgway. I appreciated their contribution to the Address in Reply and felt that it augured well for contribution to debate and intellectual capacity to analyse the issues that come before us. We may not always agree, but I am sure we will have interesting discussions.

Sadly, Mr Acting President, I cannot, except through you, congratulate the new holder of the full office, the new President (Hon. Ron Roberts), but I am sure he will scan *Hansard* in his spare moments and realise that I congratulate him on his appointment to that position and look forward to his adequate chairing and deliberation on issues that come before him with great advice from the table. It is interesting to note that there seems to be something contagious in the seat that he held prior to his elevation to high office.

The current incumbent seems to be following in the great tradition of the Hon. R. Roberts in frequent and vociferous interjection. We must watch through the ensuing years whether that particular tradition sticks to the seat or to the individual. Of course, that individual's not being here has spared me being interjected on at this stage. However, I look forward to that happening in due course. The most important issue that I wanted to cover in my Address in Reply—and I do have several, some of them are of a relatively minor nature but it is a good opportunity to canvass them in this place—is the view that South Australia is languishing because we have a higher proportion of older citizens. It is being thrown up as being the recipe for disaster in competition with other states.

It is my view that, rather than seeing it as detrimental, we should see it as an advantage that we have a pool of experienced people who make extraordinarily good citizens. There

is absolutely no reason to expect that older people should not be able to contribute as valuably and on a much more constructive basis than people who have had no experience and which are coming into the work force for the first time. This does not mean, of course, that we do not welcome and encourage and benefit from the initiatives of younger people and the energy of younger people: it is not that aspect on which I am focusing. What I am focusing on is that it is time we had a change in mindset: instead of apologising for being a state with a higher proportion of older people, we should look to harvesting and using that asset.

As I am convinced of that, it was very timely to find in the *Advertiser* of Friday 10 May an article entitled, 'World forum insists on viewing age as an asset.' I will refer to some paragraphs from that article. The article states:

The world needs a completely new vision of ageing and its consequences; it needs to break free of the traditional perspective of older people being a burden and needing support.

That was the basis of discussions among 580 of the world's leading experts in ageing research, education and age care at the Valencia Forum which preceded April's second United Nations World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid.

Convenor of the Valencia Forum, Professor Gary Andrews—whom I will identify as being a South Australian and well-known in this state—

said the new view should encompass the ageing of the world's populations as a positive achievement with older people considered as a substantial asset.

'There is a need to not only change our thinking but to restructure our institutions, government, private and non-government, and to rethink education, labor force and retirement policies, the provision of social services, housing and health systems,' he said.

The article further states:

'We need a new generation of people who make provision for old age much earlier than previously.'

More study into the determinance of healthy ageing.

'There is still an enormous amount of ignorance in the community, largely about the fact that what we do in early life can have very substantial impact on how well we age,' Professor Andrews said.

Investing in research and the basic biological mechanisms of ageing associated with disease.

'We should not accept that dementia, diabetes 2, arthritis and cardiovascular disease are inevitable and we need more research to find effective interventions,' he said.

Need to research in more detail what quality of life is in ageing in diverse cultural, economic and environmental circumstances.

'The important question is what the follow-up action will be,' Professor Andrews said.

On the same page of the *Advertiser* is an article headed, 'Thousands branded Lost Generation'. Welcome, Mr Genuine President, I congratulated you on your appointment earlier in my remarks, I will not repeat those. The article emphasises what I believe is an important issue, which is that we have been trained to lament in an almost knee-jerk way the fact that we have a higher percentage of older people in South Australia, and that they have a detrimental effect on the community, which may have largely sprung up from the fact that thousands of older people, post 45, post 50, have found it impossible to get employment, although their skills and the capacity to fulfil the jobs that they had been doing are equally as competent as they were when they were employed. People who fill that capacity but are denied employment will obviously suffer emotional, psychological and, in many cases, health problems, and it can create the impression that older people are a burden on the community.

I refer to an article headed 'Thousands branded lost generation', which states:

Thousands of the state's older unemployed have been branded as a lost generation of jobseekers. University of SA researcher, Bob Ranzijn, reporting the findings of an Adelaide study into mature age unemployment, 'On the scrap heap at 45', said the problem was likely to disappear in the next 10-15 years as a feared shortage of workers in all industries developed.

He said the shortage would result from the retirement of a large number of baby boomers likely to kick in within five years and the low number of people entering the job market because of reduced fertility in previous generations.

'People in their mid-40s in the year 2015 will probably have no problem finding work,' Mr Ranzijn said. But current 45-plus jobseekers, stranded by restructuring and downsizing, would have permanently exited the work force by the time labour was short.

Mr Ranzijn said the main barrier to mature employment seemed to be lack of awareness of the real value of older workers, ineffective training programs and the peg-down phenomenon—skills decay with prolonged lack of use and an employer tendency to equate length of unemployment with lack of ability.

He said that while casual employment suited older workers who were financially secure, it was not suitable for people still raising children or paying off mortgages. . . He said it was essential to assist the Lost Generation to find secure work for their own quality of life as well as to save a huge financial burden on working taxpayers. Mr Ranzijn said incentive schemes for employers seemed to have failed.

I make no apology for dwelling on this, because I feel that we are sitting on a potential asset which is being denigrated as a liability. The sooner that members of this place and the community at large realise this the quicker we can act to harvest the benefits of this higher proportion of older and experienced but underutilised people in the community.

Ian Yates, the Director of COTA (SA), also in an article in this edition of the *Advertiser* in the special entitled 'Looking forward', said:

The final area which should be highlighted is the need for the Federal Government to tackle mature-age unemployment. We have had some good policy statements and the launch of a National Strategy for an Ageing Australia. But the day-to-day experience of the tens of thousands of long-term older unemployed, and the insecurity of hundreds of thousands of mature-age workers continues. Let's see some real action in this budget.

Well, we do not have long to wait, but I feel that it is more than just a budgetary measure that is needed. This is really a mindset. We must all look for an opportunity to correct this impression (which has become almost like a sentence) of deterioration in older people, particularly those who have been put off work and who have found not being able to get work a depressing, morale destructive exercise because, as I indicated earlier, then they do become a drain on the community.

On the same page as this article the issue of encouraging older people to find friends is discussed, and various activities organised by the Seniors Information Service in which they can engage are listed. Members of this place are unlikely to suffer from a lack of activities (either recreational or occupational) to fill our time, but this does become a blight on older people—and younger people, of course.

I want to emphasise this fact. I am not advocating older people at the expense of, or in contrast to, younger members of our community. We are all members of the community, whatever our age and circumstances, and we are entitled to this constructive detailed analysis. I emphasise this because we hear over and over again that this is an impending disaster, that it is to our detriment as a state that we have this higher proportion of older people. As indicated in an earlier article, if there is going to be a labour shortage, a lot of those older people will be the very ingredients of the community to fill in those labour or employment shortages to make sure that we take advantage of the opportunities that are available

to us as a state. I refer to yet another article in the *Advertiser*. The *Advertiser* had a run of good articles—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: It was worth noting that it did. On 27 April, an article entitled 'Coming of age', states:

Global leaders are planning a world where nobody 'retires' as the young battle to support booming numbers of elderly. Aged Care Housing Group Chief Executive Dr Mike Rungie was one of eight Australian delegates to the United Nations World Assembly on Ageing—charged with developing a plan to meet the challenge . . . The decreasing younger work force simply can't afford to support long years of lower productivity and higher disability for up to 25 per cent of the population. Contributions of older people, for example as volunteers and grandparents, are legendary. But this is limited by society's and older people's attitudes, discrimination, opportunities, imagination, skills, health and incentives.

With reference to the capacities of older people, the article states further:

This 'capacity building' is about being fit and skilled for work and contribution rather than living as a consumer of services. The plan focuses on people as they age, not old age itself. As another example, nothing is surer than that compulsory retirement ages will go. In fact, the international plan specifically says the word 'retirement' should go.

Instead, older people will put together a variety of roles, including part-time work (possibly several kinds), contracts, valued voluntary roles, recreation and learning. Later retirement won't be more of the same job but retraining for different work. This will be more flexible and involve fewer hours. For example, a former stockbroker might become a bookkeeper at tax return time, while also working throughout the year as a part-time accountant.

People are likely to form skill networks to tender for contracts for specific projects. This might be to run a school canteen, which parents are no longer available to operate.

Older people will have to take charge of managing this significant change for themselves. However, health, education, work and networks will all change to support this. This, along with medical advances, will support good health in at least the 'third age', the period of healthy old age which is the time that will dramatically increase. The 'fourth age', very old age, is associated with some loss of function and typically some time of disability. The good news is that this will be for a shorter time and supported by more individualised and flexible aged care.

I summarise my observations on this issue by saying that the actual contribution and the mindset of older South Australians will be very much reflective of how they are viewed by other South Australians (both employers and fellow citizens) wherever they are. The actual health consequences of making sure that many older South Australians are involved in voluntary or paid activities, if that is the main criterion, will be of significant economic benefit to South Australia. People will benefit from employment, but we also need to be more proactive in making sure that some of our services, which may well involve a lot of voluntary participation, actually go towards ensuring that there are no people isolated or locked away and that there are contacts to bring them in to other activities and friendship. It is not just the do-gooder, bleeding heart approach to dealing with people who are older in our society: it really does have, and it has been proven worldwide to have, dramatic consequences on reducing the onset of the debilitating factors which people are associating with old age and identifying as costs to our community.

There are a couple of other, lesser matters—certainly in my view and in time of contribution—so I will deal with them not necessarily in order of priority but in order as they are on my list of extracts. As a rural dweller and having previously been involved in banking in Kingscote on Kangaroo Island, I have at first-hand realised how the banking service to residents, particularly in rural and regional South Australia—but it applies, of course, to metropolitan

Adelaide as well—has deteriorated. It has lost any semblance it had of a human to human contact with the social interaction and has become very mechanistic—cold-bloodedly mechanistic. Kangaroo Island was ruthlessly dealt with in one of the previous economic downturns when many of the soldier settler farmers were virtually tortured off their farms by bank officers, so I speak with some feeling and some background.

It appears to me that, where private enterprise takes on the implementation of a role which is regarded as a valuable part of our community structure—whatever it be, whether it be health, education, or transport, and I include banking—the provision of adequate banking services to our community is a basic requirement. I cannot understand how we have accepted, both in the parliamentary sense and in the community sense, that, where we offer the opportunity to private enterprise to run these businesses and to make a profit, there is not a legal requirement of community service obligation. There should be a mandatory provision of facilities and services which are part and parcel of the privilege of having a licence to run a banking business.

To argue, as has a colleague of mine—and I intend to read a letter from Senator John Cherry from Queensland regarding a regional bank—that we can institute a competitor who should then put the heat on the other banking companies is wishful thinking. Although it is unlikely to be an issue that we address in this arena—it is more than likely a matter for federal parliamentary consideration—that does not mean that we should not be analysing what could be done to make sure that we do put a pressure of requirement, if it is not going to be conscience, on the banking industry to provide the facilities, the staff and the will to enable the proper banking service which is the right every Australian—and, in my case, I am arguing, every South Australian.

Senator Cherry wrote to the *Innisfail Advocate*, and I assume there would not be many regular readers of the *Innisfail Advocate* here, so you might not have picked up this letter. It was published on 11 April this year. Entitled 'Regional Bank', it states:

Sir,

The recent announcement of the impending closure of the Cardwell and Babinda branches of the National Australia Bank highlights the need for the federal government to move to establish a regional development bank. These closures will bring to more than 500 the number of non-metropolitan bank branches closed since the Howard government took office in 1996, with the number of branches falling from 2629 to around 2100. It is not enough for the banks to say that Australia Post will provide over-the-counter services. The loss of a bank branch means the withdrawal of lending and investment services. The Democrats believe that this hole in the market needs to be filled by government intervention by backing the establishment of a regional development bank.

The Regional Development Bank would ensure that a reasonably-priced line of credit continued to be available to Australia's farmers and rural communities despite the withdrawal of the big banks to larger, more lucrative markets. The federal government has been impotent to stop rural bank branch closures over the past six years. Instead of feigned anger, the Democrats want to see the federal government become proactive about developing better financial arrangements for the bush.

That is signed John Cherry, Senator for Queensland, Australian Democrats Spokesperson on Regional Services.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts interjecting:

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: Well, I made the point that I do not believe that stopping the gap by a government-sponsored entity should either absolve the current practitioners from what I regard as their community service obligations. I think anyone who runs business, and particularly businesses which are of a vital service, should maintain that

automatically, and if it is not going to be maintained on an automatic and voluntary basis then it may well have to be one of the legal requirements that a company practising banking in Australia has certain schedules to meet as far as provision of services in areas where it wants to trade is concerned.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts interjecting:

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: I just read you the letter. If you want to pick up the Regional Development Bank, go for it. You are more than welcome. I don't hold any patent on brilliant ideas that come from the Democrats. I would like to now discuss briefly education and research. Some of these things link but I make no apology if they don't ostensibly have a link. They are just matters that I want to raise in this particular Address in Reply.

Education is very much to the fore in the media and in discussion these days. Quite clearly there are debates about allocation of resources if we are going to raise the leaving age of students at school. But, on a broader concept, I am concerned that education is being more and more cast in the mould of preparation for employment—as if that is the only justification for education. It certainly carries the sort of comfortable, warm and fuzzy feeling that if a child or person is being educated it is a step towards that person having some form of employment.

Quite clearly that is part of an educational ambit, but I believe that is restrictive and it tends to diminish the significance of education in such things as a wide knowledge of art, drama and music, apart from interests in geography and history, which at the end of the educational period may have absolutely no influence on that individual's capacity to get employment. But in my view it will very much have a contributing factor to their ability to enjoy life and participate and lead a fuller life. Although the dream that by keeping young people for another year in school is going to offer something of unquestioned value, it does depend on the mindset of those people who are being required to stay for that other year.

But I think it is appropriate to constantly revise the purposes of education, and because there is this harassing of young people that they have to apply for jobs—where are they going to get jobs, what training have they had for jobs—we are brainwashed into virtually interpreting education in that the purpose of schools is to turn out people who are preordained for a particular type of occupation and have acquired some of the necessary skills and knowledge to slot into that. I think that is an unfortunate emphasis and one that should be reversed. I think it is going to be shown as years go by and as technology does in fact give us more so-called leisure time that there will be scope for very rewarding parts of our lives to be spent in activities which are not directly related to employment or making money.

On the tack of education, I am increasingly concerned that in relation to our research in academic institutions, and other areas where there is government-funded research undertaken—CSIRO, the Waite research, part of the Adelaide University—that the tradition that the large body of research would be independent of financial or economic pressures and persuasions, and that basic research would be a large part of an ongoing academic activity in Australian universities, is shrinking because of the constant squeezing of funding, by successive governments, and because of their dependence on private investment, money which often encourages targeted research, some of which, if it proves not to have the desired result for the promoting funding body, will be frozen and will be held as the property of the company funding the research.

It is not only me making these observations. I have had conversations with people who are engaged in research—recognised and successful researchers in universities—who emphasise this over and over again. Many will not speak publicly for various reasons, one of which is that the bloodline of funds, if they are coming from outside financial institutions, will dry up if there is a risk that bad publicity will come from that activity, and the institutions themselves frown on it because they are not able to obtain funds from elsewhere. The Australian Research Council is the Australian body that allocates money widely for research, and it is on limited—and increasingly limited—funds.

I feel it is a subject of great concern for us because most of the enriching results of research have come from basic research, free-flowing research, where scientists of great skill and genius have been able to follow their innate curiosity to discover; and, of course, a proportion of those discoveries become very successful, commercially successful, ingredients in our day to day life, but a considerable amount remains as purely knowledge.

One can say that increasing knowledge about native flora and fauna in Australia is an academic exercise, but most of us appreciate how that has enriched our lives. We can always say there will be a spin-off. Some of the native flora stand well to produce products which will be marketable and medicines which may be ‘semi-miraculous healers’.

I have one example to share with the council, and that is the exciting research that was conducted by Dr Sandra Orgeig from Adelaide University. An article, entitled *The Doctor Who Could Help Us Breathe Easier*, was published in the *Advertiser* of 30 April. The problem is working out how cholesterol aids lung function, and the medal that she won is a major science award for her discoveries. The article states:

For the past 10 years, this University of Adelaide researcher has been studying cholesterol in the lungs of animals. Her discoveries could lead to new treatments of respiratory disease and improved preservation of donor lungs for transplant. The Australian Academy of Science has awarded her the Fenner Medal, which recognises distinguished research in plants and non-mammalian animals by Australian scientists under the age of 40.

It is a very significant discovery and one which had been sought worldwide. The article continues:

Researchers around the world are trying to develop the perfect artificial surfactant.

I will not go into the detail of where the cholesterol comes in, but cholesterol in its natural state is shown to have remarkable effects in the lungs.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: Are you quoting the *Advertiser* again?

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: Yes. It is the *Advertiser*'s day today.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: I can feel a press release coming on for the Democrats.

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: I will read it diligently.

The Hon. Caroline Schaefer: It takes five minutes every morning.

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: And drinking coffee at the same time. I emphasise that because it caught my eye in so far as that research is not funded. That is purely basic research being conducted, as I regard it, in the proper spirit of research at a highly reputable academic institution. I have no guarantee that there will be adequate funding for basic research to fulfil the potential of this research. It may well be picked up and exploited elsewhere. I am not in a position to make any comment about that, I just do not know. I wanted

to make the point in my Address in Reply that I feel that it is a very dangerous track for us to limit the areas in which our research is done to only those in which financial institutions can see themselves making a quick dollar, and that is their point: they need to make a quick dollar to put in the money, and I think that distorts and corrupts the proper approach to research.

I would like to make a couple of observations about voluntary voting. I know that it is an issue that has been raised frequently and many people have set positions on it. I think, however, that the apathy of voluntary voting populations has been emphasised by several speakers analysing both the French election and the pending Dutch and German elections, where it is indicated that the public, for whatever reasons, are tending to vote in fewer numbers. I consider that that is likely to be a dangerous measure as far as democracy continuing in those countries is concerned, and I have felt at risk at any time we have seriously debated removing compulsory voting in South Australia.

I want to remind the council that, in fact, we do have voluntary voting. It is not a legal requirement to fill in the ballot form and that was the result of an amendment I successfully moved in 1985. I want historically to go back to 1985 and remind this place that we had an amendment, which stated:

An elector who leaves the ballot paper unmarked but who otherwise observes the formalities of voting is not in breach of the duty imposed by subsection (1).

A previous incumbent of high office in this place, the Hon. Chris Sumner, as Attorney-General, drove a pretty hard bargain in 1985. He said, ‘We will support that amendment on condition that it is an offence to publicise it,’ which was a pretty cute trick. It has meant that 99.9 per cent of the population of South Australia—it might even be 99.999 per cent of the population—do not know that, in fact, there is no legal obligation for them to fill in a ballot sheet.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: Are you publicising it now?

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: I have parliamentary privilege, mate; I am not sacrificing that, either. I sought to move the following amendment:

The following statement should be printed at the top of every ballot paper so as to be clearly legible by the voter:

‘You may leave the ballot paper unmarked if you do not wish to register a vote in this election.’

What could be more sensible than that? It is a logical answer to those who say, ‘Why should people be forced to vote?’ First, I remind members that people are not forced to vote. One can legally take one’s piece of paper, which is the ballot sheet, and put it into whatever box or do whatever one wants to do with it. It is unfortunate that we are not able to let that be known. I think that the real danger is where it is voluntary to attend the polling booth and acknowledge the fact that you respect the system because we will have the whim of who does and does not go to vote determined by the weather, the ease with which those people can attend the polling booth or the issue of the day.

The political assassination in the Netherlands really highlights the sort of circumstance in which voluntary voting could reflect an incredibly distorted view of what the general population feels. I thought it was important to remind the council that earlier generations had actually achieved something quite significant. It is not compulsory voting in South Australia: it is voluntary voting, but it is compulsory or an obligation to attend the polling booth. It may be that the new government sees fit to correct the imposition of the

earlier Labor Attorney-General and allow it to be legal for this information to be distributed to the public at large.

While we are talking about voting, 'conscience vote' is a phrase that is bandied about and, either to its credit or discredit, depending on how you want to view it, the ALP does not pretend to have a conscience vote except on particular issues where the party chooses to do so. However, the Liberals do indicate that they are a free party in which members can vote as their conscience leads them to do so. I have taken that, sometimes, with a pinch of salt, virtually at face value. I was therefore interested to read—from a different paper this time—in the *Australian* of 4 April this year an article headed 'Cabinet to decide on IVF conscience vote for MPs'. In the first paragraph, the article states:

Cabinet will today decide whether Howard government members should be allowed a conscience vote on legislation to allow single women and lesbians to be barred from IVF programs.

Further, the article states:

Allowing a conscience vote by government members is seen as pressuring Labor to do likewise in the hope of splitting the opposition on the issue. Health minister Kay Patterson yesterday endorsed a conscience vote for government MPs.

I mark that as being an example, in part, of how the Liberals in the federal scene exercise conscience votes. The next day an article appeared in the same newspaper (the *Australian*), which was headed, 'No conscience vote on IVF' and which stated:

Coalition MPs will be expected to line up to deny single women and lesbians access to in-vitro fertilisation treatment after federal cabinet ruled out a conscience vote on the issue. Health minister Kay Patterson argued IVF access was a moral issue worthy of a conscience vote and John Howard indicated he would consider allowing government MPs a free vote when legislation was introduced into parliament later this year. But cabinet yesterday decided to apply strict party discipline and demand all MPs and senators to vote to enable states to make and enforce laws to deny lesbians and single women IVF access.

I find the credibility of the Liberals claiming to be a party in which one can vote on the strength of one's conscience a little hard to swallow. I would have thought that the issue itself, if one is looking at issues upon which a conscience vote could be argued, if it is to be argued (and I make the point that the Democrats have a conscience vote on all issues), would surely have been one which would have justified it.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: Is that a collective conscience as opposed to an independent one?

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: You are a bit aware of how the climate is, of what people think, and I will explain that to the honourable member later over a cup of coffee. I think that the honourable member, coming from his political background, finds a real conscience vote hard to understand.

I find it unbelievable that a state, which is currently focusing enormous attention on our problems of water, should continue with, as far as I know, no cries of protest about (in the public facilities at least) diluting a sterile liquid, urine, with a proportion—quite often something like 30 or 40 times its volume—of first-class, world-class potable water to send down our sewerage systems.

I cannot understand why we have not made firm determinations on the proportions of water used under these circumstances. It borders on being a criminal waste of water. Members may be interested to know that Penneshaw, my home town, is dependent on desalinated water. My contribution was slushed down the public urinal there with such vigour, with so much water, that it saturated the bottom of my pants. I was not wearing shorts but it was still quite dramatic.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts interjecting:

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: I do not intend to acknowledge that particular interjection. My other point is not related in any way at all. Members who are driving through the streets of Adelaide, I am sure, would have noted what I would regard as almost obscene diameter exhausts, which are quite often attached to relatively small cars. I would lay a wager that the volume of noise that is emitted from these exhausts exceeds our noise control limits. I am amazed that they have been accepted as legal tender for exhaust systems for motor vehicles. It heightens what is the trend to treat Adelaide's roads as racetracks.

I would like to think that measures may be taken at some stage through the government in whatever way seems appropriate to revisit this situation. It is not necessary to have this width of aperture and free flow of gas to make any significant difference to the efficiency of operation of the motor. It is purely a display. As a display, people do not happen to just have them on their vehicles—they use them. It is making quite an impact on not only the noise level of fellow motorists but even more importantly on the neighbourhoods, pedestrians and people in the streets of Adelaide.

The last subject I want to discuss really can cover a lot of time. Another of my particular concerns was the original decision to build submarines at Osborne. I never felt easy that the decision to build submarines as compared with surface craft was sensible for Australia at large virtually from any point of view. I still hold that view. In looking for information to make my point in this Address in Reply debate, the library extracted for me a quantity of material relating to the history of the Collins class submarine. It is probably of dubious interest to all members of this place. On looking at the clock, I am wondering whether I should summarise my attitude and findings rather than go through all the information I obtained.

Suffice to say that the estimated cost of the submarines will finish up at \$6.1 billion. There is not a lot of lateral value to Australia for the accumulated skills of making state-of-the-art diesel battery submarines. I am convinced that half of that amount of money invested in making sure that we built more of the more advanced types of surface craft would have established the blend and the skills which would have provided us with not only the capacity to make very good surface craft but also to enable us to be a sophisticated commercial and fishing vessel maker. There is evidence of it.

The Navy did acquire one of the Tasmanian catamarans for use in Timor, but it has since been decommissioned. There is a study which can be read which outlines its attitude with respect to using that particular craft. However, it seems to me that we will require more and more rapid moving competent surface craft to prevent Australia from being the victim of the incursion of exotic diseases which will be far more detrimental and dangerous to Australia than any group of seaborne refugees.

Fishing surveillance involves ongoing and very extensive tasks for which we should have been using the development of our naval expertise to provide us with the background and interchangeable skills and facilities to produce these needed surface vessels. Mr President, I have made an executive decision. I will not go through all the material. I will just wave it to members who will now realise how generous I am!

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw interjecting:

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: No, I think it is a little difficult to table it. As a treat for later on, I might take out the

summaries and put it into a MOI or something, so you do not feel deprived. These are documents and research papers dealing with the Navy's defence situation, and how money can be wasted, and the imposition of the United States' will on the decisions that were taken over the submarine. There are analytical comments stating how this is a detrimental sign if we are looking to get the best and the best value for the dollar, and that there is some doubt as to how we can sustain the skills and capabilities built up by the submarine project into the years ahead.

I argue that, had we been investing in surface craft, there would have been no such problem. Even if the skills and craft had moved into private enterprise, that would have been greatly to Australia's advantage, but there is not much demand for commercial submarines, even if they are very quiet and can go very deep. I indicate my support for the motion and look forward to a successful and enjoyable session of parliament.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: I thank the Governor for her speech with which she opened the 50th parliament last week. I particularly thank Her Excellency for attending the annual church service which marked the opening of the parliamentary year. This service was held last Wednesday at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in the city and was attended by a number of members of both houses, including you, Mr President. It was organised by the Heads of Christian Churches Special Events Committee and the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship, which I am privileged to chair. I join the Governor in expressing regret on the recent death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

I particularly noted the section in Her Excellency's speech relating to regional affairs. In that light, I thought I would take the opportunity of the Address in Reply debate to reflect on the achievements of the Regional Development Task Force. The South Australian Regional Development Task Force was established by the then state government in August 1998 to review aspects of regional development policy and strategy and to address specific terms of reference. That establishment followed particular representations to the government by the Provincial Cities Association.

The task force was required to conduct its investigations in consultation with appropriate stakeholders and to report within existing budgetary constraints. The task force submitted an interim report to the then premier at the end of February 1999 and its final report in April of that year. In October 1999 the state government released a formal response to the final report of the task force recognising the depth and detail of its recommendations. The recommendations were wide-ranging and challenging, reflecting the diversity and complexity of the issues that needed to be addressed in regional South Australia.

Following the release of the task force report in April 1999, the former state government gave an ongoing commitment to the comprehensive issues raised by the task force, with significant achievement being made against all of the 72 recommendations. I will endeavour to comment on the outcomes that have been achieved for regional development by implementing the task force recommendations. In addition, I will outline some of the current initiatives that will further address the underlying concerns of regional communities in South Australia.

The former government responded quickly to the report of the Regional Development Task Force. A renewed, strengthened and visible commitment to regional develop-

ment by the Liberal government made a solid contribution to the significant and real transformation of rural and regional South Australia. As a state we are the outstanding performer at present due to our rural based exports, value of production and growth in regional tourism. Mr President, I am sure you would agree that the transformation of rural and regional South Australia has been driven by record grain and grape harvests, high livestock prices, an improved wool market, rapidly growing aquaculture and wine industries, increased fruit and vegetable production and growth in regional visitation. The windfall is flowing through to regional communities, with prosperity and employment in many country towns at levels not experienced for many years. In many country towns the problems of unemployment and low incomes are being replaced by work force accommodation shortages, a lack of skilled labour and an unprecedented demand on infrastructure.

The former government provided leadership, set the vision and strengthened its commitment to overcoming the underlying regional development issues. A focused and whole of government approach has in my view helped make a difference in such a relatively short period of time. This commitment to regional development can be measured by reference to the former government's priorities, policies and strategies, with significant achievements being made against all 72 of the recommendations. I will proceed by commenting on some of the outcomes against the task force recommendations. I certainly will not endeavour to cover all of them, but some significant items are worthy of comment in this place. First, I will comment on the response to the recommendations related to governance arrangements for regional South Australia. One of the first mentions was the recommendation that regional development have a voice within cabinet. I must say that the Minister for Regional Development in the last government was initially the Deputy Premier and more latterly the Premier.

There was a recommendation about leadership for regional development through a dedicated office. The former government established the Office of Regional Development, which encouraged a whole of government approach to the development and implementation of policies and services affecting rural and regional communities in South Australia. The office achieved this by advising the minister on strategic issues related to regional development, advocating for the regions at an inter-agency level, and improving regional development outcomes by facilitating effective relationships and identifying opportunities for partnerships among governments, communities and business. The office gained respect and recognition for its leadership and coordination across agencies on strategic regional issues such as work force accommodation, infrastructure, access to grants and business development funding, community capacity building, planning approvals, regional staffing and intergovernmental relations. In addition, the office played an instrumental role in supporting and integrating the components of the regional development system.

The task force also recommended the involvement of regions through a consultative forum with access to key ministers with regional development responsibilities. The former government responded to this by establishing the Regional Development Council and also by holding regular community cabinets in the regions. The Regional Development Council operated for more than two years, and in my view it was effective in the following areas: maintaining a strong overall vision for developing the state's regions and

giving impetus to its implementation, providing advice to government on the strategic development of regional South Australia and identifying issues and concerns common to regions. Examples included work force accommodation, infrastructure development, education and skills retention and planning approvals. It also provided a vehicle through its working groups to bring together a range of key local and state government agencies and community and private sector entities to develop practical solutions. It also provided advice on the impact of commonwealth government policies and programs on regional development.

Since its inception in December 1999 the council met quarterly in regional locations. Members of the Regional Development Council were appointed by the Minister for Regional Development and drawn from a wide range of rural and regional interests. While members were not appointed to represent any organisation or constituency, the then minister ensured selection of members from the following areas: a subset of chairs or staff of regional development boards; the Chairman of Regional Development South Australia, which is the peak body of regional development boards; a subset of mayors of non-metropolitan councils; representatives of regional interests in social, cultural and environmental issues; the Chairman of the Regional Development Issues Group and Director of the Office of Regional Development; and also representatives of most regions of South Australia.

A review of the role, function and membership of the council was under way at the time of the state election. I thank all members of the Regional Development Council for their time and commitment to the regions of South Australia through that forum. As I said earlier, the former government also held community cabinet meetings every three to four weeks throughout the year in both regional and metropolitan areas. The meetings gave members of the community the opportunity to meet with the Premier and ministers and chief executives of departments and to raise issues of concern.

The task force also made a recommendation in relation to the facilitation of integrated state government programs and services. The Regional Development Issues Group was formed to facilitate improved cross-government cooperation in dealing with a range of issues impacting on regional South Australia. Membership comprised senior state government officers from each of the key portfolio agencies as well as a representative from Regional Development South Australia and the Local Government Association of South Australia. The issues group met monthly and on occasion also had meetings in regional locations. As well as meeting monthly, issues group members were invited to attend meetings of the Regional Development Council. I was pleased to chair the issues group and I thank all members of that body for their commitment to regional development. The issues group developed into a team which was prepared to be proactive in working together. While a primary focus of the group was to monitor progress in regard to the implementation of recommendations of the task force, it also raised other initiatives that have been of benefit to regional areas. These include work force accommodation, community leadership development, regional coordination of government services, passenger transport and regional community forums.

I will go into some of the recommendations in the policy and strategy area and the response to those recommendations. First, the release of *Directions for Regional South Australia* in January 2001 was seen as an important expression of the state government's commitment to the regions. It was the state's first regional development strategy. This strategy

established the priorities to guide the pursuit of the economic growth and social wellbeing of regional areas and recognised the importance of the regions to the prosperity of the state. This framework was developed under the auspices and direction of the Regional Development Council and built on the excellent work of the Regional Development Task Force.

A draft planning strategy for the development of regional South Australia based on an upgraded country planning strategy was prepared and then underwent consultation with regional communities and government agencies. The planning strategy for the development of regional South Australia was based on the key economic, social and environmental imperatives facing regional areas. As part of the review, an upgrading of the planning strategy as a separate infrastructure section was included, and this reflected the priority to which the Regional Development Council gave this issue.

The planning strategy was informed by not only government agencies and public consultation but also by the results of an independent study of the impact of economic development initiatives on regional populations, prepared by Collins Anderson Management in December 2001. The purpose of the planning strategy was to provide a sound and clear basis for the development of the state.

A further area of recommendation by the Regional Development Task Force talked about improving regional competitiveness and encouraging private investment. In this area I particularly would like to talk about infrastructure and investment. The provision and maintenance of world class infrastructure is a critical factor in promoting regional development. The former government recognised that improving regional infrastructure, such as electricity and water headworks, rail and road linkages, airports and ports and telecommunications, would encourage investment in regional areas and stimulate economic development and employment opportunities.

The then government provided infrastructure development funds targeting areas where infrastructure requirements were impeding regional development. These included a \$15.5 million regional development infrastructure fund to accelerate high priority infrastructure development in regional South Australia, in addition to the normal capital works spending on infrastructure in regional areas. This fund went a long way to providing essential funding to get key projects and developments up and running, particularly in growth industries such as horticulture, aquaculture and tourism. As at November 2001, 46 projects had been approved under the fund totalling \$7.3 million and an estimated 2 611 jobs were created or retained through that funding. In addition, there was a total project investment leveraged from this assistance totalling \$497 million.

The infrastructure fund provided the former state government with the capacity to initiate identified infrastructure priorities within an area and facilitate the introduction of strategic infrastructure to promote new industry development growth opportunities. Good examples were seen in the development of an aquaculture park at Streaky Bay to accommodate the organised development of shellfish producers and the introduction of three-phase power to the lower South-East. The fund helped with the development of infrastructure across the board not just in particular industry segments but also across most regions.

In addition, a tourism infrastructure development fund encouraged and assisted the development of capital assets that would enhance the visitor experience and contribute to an

increased value of tourism in South Australia. Obviously, much of the state's tourism assets are in regional areas and the fund supports projects that enhance regional employment opportunities both during construction and ongoing operations. An infrastructure group was established within the Department of Industry and Trade (Infrastructure SA). The purpose of this group was to develop and coordinate a more strategic approach to infrastructure building for the state.

Infrastructure SA conducted supply and demand audits on all sectors of infrastructure. In addition, Infrastructure SA and some regional development boards undertook detailed regional infrastructure studies. The former government also endorsed a recommendation by the Regional Development Council in September 2001, proposing that a regional infrastructure study be developed for prioritising infrastructure needs within and between regions. This strategy was developed using existing strategic planning processes. The regional infrastructure strategy seeks to coordinate, integrate and reconcile existing bottom up and top down information gathering and planning processes. The strategy was initially designed to concentrate on water, energy and transport.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: How often did they meet?

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: Are you talking about the working group?

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: Yes.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: They met reasonably regularly. I think it depended on the availability of people coming from across the state, but, in some cases, I think that particular working group met at least twice and sometimes three times between meetings of the Regional Development Council. It would not surprise too many members in this chamber, especially members familiar with regional areas, that the regional development council raised as a priority the issue of access to electricity infrastructure as an impediment to regional development; and through the issues group the council negotiated a pathway for regional development boards to work with ETSA to identify practical and effective solutions to the strategic demands in the various regions.

I was pleased to play a role in that, and I think that it did set up some communication networks that had not previously been there. Certainly some specific concerns in relation to the standard of power have been addressed in many of the regions, including the Riverland. Another area of recommendation from the task force was the promotion of best practice in regional development. One of the former government's regional development policy initiatives was to build economic strength through building strong regional communities. In 2001-02, the then government allocated \$500 000 to initiate a major new program, 'Building a Stronger Regional South Australia'. The aim of the program was to enhance the capacity of regional communities to plan for and manage their own futures.

Building a Stronger Regional South Australia comprised a number of initiatives which were developed by the Regional Development Council. The initiative focused on assisting communities to utilise their capabilities and assets to maintain and enhance local development opportunities. The key priority of the regional development council was the promotion of best practice in regional development. The former government actively promoted learning and best practice by implementing a series of interstate and international study tours with the objective of attracting broad participation. In summary, the study tours performed highly in terms of building community capacity and there was strong demand for further tours.

Following an evaluation of recent study tours, the regional development council considered that there was an information gap for promoting and disseminating South Australian examples of best practice in regional development. A growing number of success stories are unfolding through community based initiatives in regional South Australia which could be showcased to encourage cooperative learning by communities. The council recommended encouragement of ongoing innovation in community economic development by promoting learning in local examples of best practice that give practical application to a broad audience in this state. On this basis, the then government proposed a 12 month integrated program, 'Positive Rural Futures'.

I am pleased to note that this program has been approved by the new minister and will commence at the end of this month. Positive rural futures will offer regional South Australians study tours supported by practical issue based learning forums and a rural revitalisation tool kit. This tool kit will highlight the best practice tools and resources for community driven renewal. The prime purpose of this initiative is to strengthen regional communities and to develop their capacity to find local solutions to local concerns. It was proposed to structure the 2002 program of positive rural futures as a series of three staged learning events, each combining a study tour with practical workshops.

The Regional Development Council more recently raised concerns about the increasing supply/demand gap for skilled tradespeople in regional areas, particularly electricians and plumbers. The Department of Industry and Trade was requested to investigate the demands and gaps in trade areas for apprentices or trainees and, in conjunction with the Department of Education, Training and Employment, to develop an appropriate action plan.

Another area which I would like to address following on from the task force, something for which I have a particular passion, is that described as 'building social and human capital', but I would go closer to the mark by describing it as 'leadership development'. The importance of leadership development is fundamental to the long-term sustainable development of rural and regional communities. Research and experience has shown that building leadership capacity underpins economic development.

The former government recognised the importance of leadership development and, through PIRSA's sponsorship of the South Australian Rural Leadership program and Shaping the Future (the South Australian Rural Women's Developing Leaders Course), it acknowledged that there is a role for government in building the capacity of regional leaders.

The Liberal government investigated the range of existing leadership development programs and perceived needs in this state. As part of this process, the Office of Regional Development organised in August 2000 a National Conference on Rural Community Leadership in the Barossa Valley. This conference brought together guest speakers and participants from around Australia to learn about recent experiences in leadership development, to explore options for improving the provision and uptake of leadership programs in regional communities, and also to consider how best to develop a community driven delivery of leadership development and renewal.

The former government established the Community Builders program to stimulate and encourage grassroots leadership to help regional communities to positively

influence and direct their own future. This program concentrates on identifying energy and focus for community economic development within local communities. Community Builders has been operating as a pilot program in regional South Australia since early 2000 under a partnership across the three spheres of government with the community. The partnership was formed by the Local Government Association of South Australia, the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services and the Office of Regional Development.

As a number of members will realise, Community Builders is based on a cluster of communities working together and learning to understand their common interests and aspirations and how to share their successes. There is a strong action learning methodology which encourages participants to understand that people are the most significant resource. Funding for the pilot program has enabled three rounds to be conducted involving 327 participants across 100 communities.

The pilot has performed extremely highly in terms of the extent to which the program fosters a strategic approach to the development and implementation of directions for the future viability of the community, assists in the development of individuals in community leadership skills, knowledge and action, and prepares and engages people in goal directed community activity.

Following the success of the Community Builders pilot, there is strong demand for further programs throughout the state. The Regional Development Council cited the need for a community leadership training program which is flexible and which provides a mechanism for a region or community to readily assess its leadership capacity. It should also provide a mechanism to identify any shortcomings and address identified gaps from the inside out. The concept proposal was prepared for consideration by a high-level group of portfolio representatives to develop and pilot a rural community leadership program in South Australia.

The former government also allocated \$6 million in 2001-02 to fund a management development program to assist sport and recreation organisations to provide leadership, direction and competition support. Many of the projects will lead to improved sport and recreation services for regional South Australia and develop leadership capacity through an action learning process. I think there are probably a number of members in this chamber who cut their teeth on chairing meetings and leading bodies through the sporting sector.

I would like to make a few remarks in relation to rural community foundations. A community foundation is an independent charitable organisation. It is formed to seek, manage and distribute gifts from philanthropic donors to address local needs. Community foundations are a vehicle for individuals, families or businesses that wish to donate funds or real property to provide a lasting benefit to their community. The Liberal government, through its Building a Stronger Regional South Australia program, raised awareness of the benefits and was supportive of the formation of rural community foundations in South Australia. It encouraged interested communities and/or regions to undertake a feasibility analysis to ensure that adequate community support exists and also to determine such matters as priority needs, geographic scope and models for the establishment of a foundation.

I understand that this process is currently under way in many South Australian regions including the Barossa, the

Loxton Waikerie council area, the South-East and, in particular, part of the upper South-East at Keith. In response to the growing interest in community foundations and the potential establishment of a number of these in regional South Australia, the former government planned to develop training models and workshops in fund development techniques, fundraising, and new tools and approaches in developing a fundraising strategy for implementation in regional locations.

The task force also made some recommendations in relation to the development of strategic partnerships and alliances. The task force recommended that the government develop strategic partnerships and alliances between agencies, governments, business and the community for the benefit of regional South Australia. In particular, the task force recommended that a joint state and local government agenda for functional reform be accelerated with priority given to the regions of this state.

In order to accelerate the agenda for functional reform, a partnerships forum was established with its membership including two members of the Regional Development Council. Following a scoping study, a detailed action plan focusing on the following 12 months of the partnership program was developed and endorsed by the forum. A memorandum of understanding and a statement of intent were signed respectively between the state government and the South-East Local Government Association and the Murray and Mallee Local Government Association. These documents underlined the commitment of both sectors of government to the development of partnership project opportunities and outcomes to provide improved service delivery to the South Australian community.

As part of implementing the action plan, a \$100 000 grant from the Commonwealth Local Government Incentive Program was secured and allocated to three projects: first, the development of a roads information database; secondly, a regional work force accommodation solution study based on the Murraylands and the South-East; and, thirdly, a contribution to a project which aims to support councils with their promotional activities at election time through the production of material targeted at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

I move on now to the section of the task force report which dealt with the regional development boards that exist in this state. The Regional Development Task Force was asked to review the existing system of regional development boards including their role and functions, membership, funding, reporting and accountability, so they could play a more practical, autonomous role in regional economic development. The task force noted that the regional development boards vary in how they function and, to a lesser extent, in how they are resourced. The task force also noted that these variations illustrated the flexibility of the current system to develop local solutions for local needs. A strengthened system of strategically oriented regional development boards was recommended over time to facilitate regional economic strategy, planning and development within the state's integrated regional development system.

The former government recognised the value and benefit of supporting the existing structure of regional development boards established in this state. The roles and functions of the boards, as currently constituted and resourced, encourage partnerships among business, local, state and federal governments, and local communities. The former government supported a concept of developing stronger and more strategically oriented regional development organisations.

The Liberal government provided increased funding across a regional development board framework over the past two years. Core funding to eight regional development boards was increased by \$15 000 per annum and, for the six more expansive regions, by \$45 000 per annum. Local government contributions to core funding also increased proportionately. In addition, each regional development board received additional funding of \$15 000 per annum and support of each board's business adviser position. Each regional development board now receives \$50 000 per annum by way of discretionary funding for use in local strategic initiatives. This amount is consistent with the recommendations of the task force. In addition, in 2001-02, each board received a one-off discretionary funding grant of \$24 000 as impetus for local projects. Regional development boards also continue to have access to special board project funding through the Department of Industry and Trade. In 2001-02, each board's support grant component for delivery of the regional employment strategy was raised from \$37 500 to \$50 000 per annum.

Financial incentives remained available to those regional development boards contemplating an amalgamation or merger with another board. However, voluntary change in the number of regional development boards has not occurred to date. Although there has been no restructuring of boards, they continue to work for their regions' collective benefits. Some examples of cross-regional collaboration formed in response to particular needs and opportunities are as follows: firstly, the Food Regional Export Extension Scheme involving the Onkaparinga council, the Adelaide Hills Regional Development Board, the Fleurieu Regional Development Corporation and the Kangaroo Island Regional Development Board; secondly, the telecommunications and transport freight projects which were established between the Murraylands Regional Development Board and the Riverland Development Corporation; thirdly, a boating industry plan between the Murraylands Regional Development Board and the Fleurieu Regional Development Corporation; and, fourthly, a fruit processing plant involving the Yorke Regional Development Board and the Mid North Regional Development Board.

It is appropriate, in relation to the regional development boards, to talk about Regional Development SA. The former government recognised Regional Development SA as the peak coordinating forum for shared interests and advice for regional economic development through the mechanism of the boards. Regional Development SA has undergone a review of its role and structure to better reflect its operations as the peak body for regional development boards. It is also an active participant on various key government committees and panels including the Regional Development Issues Group, the Regional Development Council and its associated working groups.

The Regional Development Task Force also identified a series of concerns in relation to community access to information on grants. These included a lack awareness of the range of grants available, the number of grant programs and difficulty experienced in accessing information in relation to them, and the overlap between the tiers of government.

To address these concerns, the Office of Regional Development, in conjunction with the Local Government Association of South Australia, jointly developed an on-line grants database, including grants from local, state and commonwealth and also non-government grant schemes. The regional funding and grants register website has received over 13 000 hits to the homepage—that was the information I had

earlier this year. There are over 500 different types of grants and funding solutions searchable on the database, and there are more than 263 organisations and individuals registered to receive regular weekly updates. The site also includes the names of 31 organisations and individuals in regional South Australia who assist with the preparation of funding submissions, and I think that is very important because it is all very well to have access to the grants but sometimes people need to have some guidance and assistance in putting together a good submission.

The task force report also recommended that the state government consider a more flexible and tailor-made approach to deposits for regional housing. The former government ensured that regional housing deposits under the HomeStart scheme were subject to regular review. By example, the deposits for 17 towns were reduced by 5 percent and products tailor-made for new developments as they were required. There is clear evidence of private rental failure in some parts of regional South Australia. Despite accommodation shortages over a number of years, markets have not responded by increasing supply.

It has therefore been necessary for the government to act to facilitate solutions and to stimulate the market to enable South Australia to fully exploit the potential growth of regional industry. The Office of Regional Development in partnership with commonwealth, state and local government and regional organisations funded a project to document regional work force accommodation shortages and develop workable solutions. Shortages have been confirmed of low-cost temporary accommodation for seasonal workers, rental accommodation for year-long seasonal workers and quality dwellings for professionals and public sector employees.

A number of strategies have emerged as possible solutions, including expanding caravan park and workers' hostel accommodation for transient workers, additional community housing projects, reviews of development plans, accelerated depreciation for taxation purposes, head-lease arrangements and also residential property trusts.

The work that was done by the Office of Regional Development was recognised by the inter-governmental conferences on regional affairs as leading the nation in trying to address the problems of accommodation shortages in regional areas. The former government also established a cross-agency work force accommodation implementation group to develop stage 1 of an implementation plan for consideration by cabinet.

This afternoon I have mentioned only a number of the initiatives that were brought to fruition by the previous government as a result of the Regional Development Task Force. But it is important to note that a lot of work has been done in the regions. I appreciate the interest that the new minister has in supporting regional development, and not only that but rural communities as a whole. I thank the Office of Regional Development, and in particular the director, Wayne Morgan, for their support.

There is also a range of people I have worked with in the past several years—and I look forward to continuing to work with them—who share my strong interest in regional development and rural communities across the state. I am pleased to support the motion.

The Hon. DIANA LAIDLAW secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.40 p.m. the council adjourned until Tuesday 14 May
at 2.15 p.m.