

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday 31 March 2004

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

CITY OF ONKAPARINGA REPORT

The PRESIDENT: I lay on the table the report of the City of Onkaparinga 2002-03 pursuant to section 131(6) of the Local Government Act 1999.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Hon. J. GAZZOLA: I bring up the 17th report of the committee.

Report received and ordered to be read.

The Hon. J. GAZZOLA: I bring up the 18th report of the committee.

Report received.

VISITORS TO PARLIAMENT

The PRESIDENT: I draw honourable members' attention to the presence in the gallery today of some very important young South Australians. They are students from the year 10 and 11 classes at St Paul's and they are with their teacher, Mr Hong Wang. They are sponsored today by Mrs Robyn Geraghty from another place.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (Hon. T.G. Roberts)—

South Australian Council on Reproductive Technology—
Report, 2003.

Report—

Ministerial Response to the Inquiry of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee into the South Australian Housing Trust—35th Report of the Statutory Authorities Review committee, 10 November 2003.

STATE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development): I lay on the table a ministerial statement on the State Strategic Plan made by the Premier today.

POPULATION POLICY

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development): I lay on the table a ministerial statement on population policy made by the Deputy Premier.

QUESTION TIME

ANANGU PITJANTJATJARA LANDS

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: I seek leave to ask the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation a question on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: On 15 March the Deputy Premier issued a media release entitled 'Government sends in top level task force to Aboriginal lands'. The statement said:

Deputy Premier and Police Minister Kevin Foley says he is deeply concerned about developments on the APY Lands in the past fortnight, the vast majority of which appears to be related to petrol sniffing.

I will repeat those last words: 'the vast majority of which appears to be related to petrol sniffing'. On the 26th of this month the Nganampa Health Council issued a press release. Nganampa Health Council is a state government funded health agency that conducts 12 clinics on the AP lands and is responsible for the delivery of health services. It stated:

'Nganampa Health Council is concerned at the continued misreporting regarding the cause of recent deaths on the APY Lands. There were five deaths which are being continually referred to... as suicides related to chronic petrol sniffing and violence. This is incorrect,' said Mr John Singer, Director of Nganampa Health Council.

The first death occurred in a young man with a long history of depression who was receiving psychiatric medication and care for depression. His suicide was a reflection of this disease. He was not known to be a petrol sniffer... Two young people subsequently committed suicide at Fregon. These two individuals were known to each other and it appears that the suicides may be linked in some way. Neither of these two individuals were chronic petrol sniffers and again they were not recorded as petrol sniffing in our previous... audits.

The fourth death occurred in circumstances in which there was nothing to suggest suicide. In fact, an autopsy has confirmed that this man, despite his young age, died from a heart attack and extensive heart disease. Premature heart disease is a serious and common problem in indigenous populations in developed countries all around the world.

The fifth and most recent death, while it occurred in a community on the APY lands, involved a man who comes from a community in Western Australia. Since earlier this year he has spent a considerable period of time in gaol in South Australia and psychiatric illness was diagnosed during his time in gaol and he was then taken to a forensic psychiatry institution. He had only arrived in the APY community the evening before his suicide.

My questions are:

1. In light of the statements of the Nganampa Health Council, has the minister asked the Treasurer to withdraw his statement 'the vast majority of which appears to be related to petrol sniffing'?

2. Has the minister directed to the Treasurer information indicating that the Treasurer's statement was wrong?

3. Did the minister approve the news release which was issued by the Deputy Premier on 15 March?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): The answer to all three questions is no. I will be awaiting the Coroner's reports, if there are to be coronial inquiries into the deaths. I suspect there will be, but I will keep the council posted if there is to be a coronial inquiry. I think the best way in which to deal with it is to await the outcomes.

The Hon. R.D. Lawson interjecting:

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: Certainly, there are some questions around some of the deaths, as the honourable member has indicated. At least two deaths of which I am aware may or may not have been caused by petrol sniffing. Certainly, the young people died in different circumstances from the others. I think it is best for me as minister not to get into speculation about these deaths but to await the coronial inquiry and bring back a report.

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: I have a supplementary question. Will the minister request the Deputy Premier to

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Of course the Leader of the Opposition, in his own inimitable way—there is no-one like him who can do that—brings the sleaze in. He is an expert at that. I guess that we should be disappointed but not surprised by that. In relation to that particular loan agreement, my advice is that there are provisions in there that would require the company to repay the aggregate of all advances paid plus interest if it shifted operations. I obviously was not involved in the negotiations for that deal so I will provide the full details to the honourable member in writing in relation to that matter. At this stage, let me add that I think that any speculation about the future of Mitsubishi is not very helpful to one of the major employers in this state.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I have a supplementary question. Is the minister indicating that there are employment clawback provisions within the \$50 million corporate assistance package signed by his government?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I indicated to the honourable member that I would seek to get the details of that information, but what the actual details of it are I am not certain because I was obviously not party to those particular details.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: You are a member of the cabinet.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Perhaps we should test the Leader of the Opposition's knowledge and ask him at some stage, to go through every single detail ever signed by the Olsen government—whether he was aware of every single detail even if it was not his portfolio. Of course he would not be able to do that. No-one would pretend otherwise, so I will ignore the fatuous comments from the Leader of the Opposition. Obviously the details of those negotiations would have been handled by the particular minister. He is asking a question about the complex details in that package. I have given him the one-line advice that I have, but I will get more detailed information and give him a response in writing.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development questions about regional development boards.

Leave granted.

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER: In his answer to my question yesterday, the minister indicated that, as a result of the recommendations of the Economic Development Board some 12 months ago, there is, to paraphrase his reply, some sort of review taking place. We all know that the recommendation was to reduce the number of regional development boards down to six, and coincidentally (or perhaps not coincidentally) this government has set in place six regional facilitation groups. This has left the regional development boards in some degree of disarray and, certainly, they are uncertain of their future. However, the only review of which I am aware is an internal review commissioned by Regional Development SA itself. My questions are:

1. Will the minister indicate what government review is taking place?
2. When did it start?
3. What are its terms of reference?
4. When is it likely to report?
5. When will the minister indicate what structure regional development boards will have under his leadership?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development): I think the honourable

member has answered her own question. There is a review under Regional Development SA that is looking into the future of that, and it corresponds with the suggestion by the Economic Development Board.

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER: I have a supplementary question. If that is the only review that is taking place, will the minister commit to agreeing to the recommendations at the end of that review?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I think it would be amazing indeed if any minister agreed to commit to a recommendation before a review were complete. The answer is no. However, at the same time let me make it clear that, lest this opposition misrepresents the answer (as it is wont to do), having discussed with Jeff Mincham what is being undertaken I have every confidence that the review being undertaken by Regional Development South Australia will reach a satisfactory conclusion.

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER: I have a further supplementary question. Given that the minister will not commit to the recommendations of an internal review by Regional Development SA, and given that the government, by his own admission, has no review taking place, when can we expect this government to announce the future of the regional development boards and what their structure is likely to be into the future?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Obviously I will wait until I get the review from Regional Development South Australia. Until that time, I am quite happy for the boards to operate in the way they do.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: I have a supplementary question. Will the government contribute funding to this review, as requested by the South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I am sure that my department will assist, where necessary, in any reasonable requests from Regional Development SA. I will obtain the details for the honourable member. As I said, the decision to undertake this review preceded my time as minister.

OTWAY BASIN

The Hon. R.K. SNEATH: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Mineral Resources Development A question about the Otway Basin.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.K. SNEATH: Over the past few months, the minister has provided information to the council about significant activity in the Otway Basin. My question is: have there been any further developments in this important area?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development): Yes. The other day I was pleased to talk about some developments in relation to exploration in the onshore part of the Otway Basin which, of course, is in the South-East. It is a very important part of the state and one with which my colleague, the Hon. Bob Sneath, is very familiar. However, members opposite may not be quite so familiar with it. I am pleased to say that the current level of offshore prospective petroleum exploration areas under licence in South Australia is at an all-time high. Today I announced the awarding of a new offshore Otway Basin permit.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: The opposition can grizzle all it likes, but the fact is that the runs are on the board—the runs that it could not make. I just hope that, with the parliamentary cricket match coming up, some of the opposition members will be able to score more highly against the media than they did in government.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Yes. And a few wickets. Perhaps they trod on a few wickets so it was self-inflicted. Today I announced the awarding of a new offshore Otway Basin permit (EPP 34), covering 4 817 square kilometres off the South Australian coast near Beachport in the South-East. The new permit area lies in commonwealth waters, jointly administered with the South Australian government. Water depths across the permit area vary from 100 metres to 2 000 metres. The EPP 34 permit holders are a consortium owned by United Oil and Gas Pty Ltd, with National Energy Pty Ltd and Otway Oil and Gas Pty Ltd as partners.

The partners have agreed to undertake exploration worth about \$2 million to search for oil and gas over the first three years of the permit term. The company's secondary exploration program over the next six years represents a total investment of about \$17 million. Granting of the latest permit follows closely on the recent awarding of an adjoining exploration permit in the Otway (EPP 33) to subsidiaries of the major US explorer Kerr-McGee Corporation.

More than \$121 million is now expected to be spent exploring offshore basins including the drilling of up to five wells from 2004 to 2009. The South Australian offshore Otway Basin is a frontier exploration province which is attracting new interest as a result of five major petroleum discoveries in Victorian and Tasmanian waters since 1994 in a similar geological setting. These interstate discoveries have focused attention on the potential of the offshore Otway Basin which remains underexplored. United Oil and Gas Pty Ltd's commitment to this region will assist in finding the potentially large petroleum resources existing in the basin. That part of EPP 34 that lies on the marine shelf is on trend with proven gas accumulations. The deeper water part of EEP 34 that coincides with the marine site is prospective for potential large oil accumulations as established in pre-competitive studies conducted by PIRSA's petroleum group.

Applications for the area were invited under the Petroleum Submerged Lands Act 1967 and initially closed on 10 April 2003. Following the absence of a successful bid, the area was rereleased and made available again for bidding until 25 September 2003. Under the work program bidding system, applicants are required to nominate a guaranteed minimum dry hole exploration program for each of the first three years of the permit term and a secondary program for the remaining three years. Each component of the program must be completed in the designated year or earlier. Permits are awarded for an initial term of six years.

Petroleum exploration and development activity in these areas will benefit from the application of the profits related petroleum resource rent tax. Royalty and crude oil excise will not apply. The EEP 34 permit holders have proposed a guaranteed program for the first three years of data collection, reprocessing of existing seismic data and acquisitions of 600 kilometres of new 2D seismic at an estimated cost of \$1.9 million. The consortium also proposes a secondary program of geological and geophysical studies and the drilling of one well at an estimated cost of \$15.45 million. The permit was awarded on 25 March 2004.

The potential for giant haul accumulations in the sub-surface below the marine slope offshore South Australia is based on the characteristics of recognised exploration targets being similar to those in prolific gas oil provinces elsewhere in the world where gas finds dominate trends close to shore and oil dominates in deeper water off the continental shelf. I am very pleased to announce another extension to the petroleum exploration program in the state that brings the areas under licence in South Australia to an all-time high.

STATE POPULATION

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development, representing the Premier, a question about the projected population growth in South Australia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: The front page of today's *Advertiser* carries a story announcing that the state government has set a population target of 2 million people for South Australia by the year 2050. The Premier states:

Population growth holds the key to our state's future prosperity and sustainability.

The article then goes on to outline some of the measures the state government will introduce to increase South Australia's population. Nowhere does the Premier indicate what plans he has developed to address the environmental and social damage of such a dramatic increase in South Australia's population, nor did the Premier's ministerial statement on infrastructure made last Monday contain plans on how to cope with a 25 per cent increase in South Australia's population in less than 50 years. My questions to the Premier are:

1. What is the estimate for additional water demand as a result of a 25 per cent increase in South Australia's population? From where does the state government plan to draw the additional water requirements?

2. Given the urban growth boundaries imposed upon Adelaide, where does the Premier envisage an additional 500 000 Australians will live? Will the newly arrived migrants be forced to live outside of Adelaide?

3. Why did the Premier's ministerial statement on infrastructure development fail to include plans for the development of Adelaide's public transport infrastructure, and how many additional cars will be on Adelaide's roads as a result of a 25 per cent increase in South Australia's population?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development): It is obvious that the Australian Democrats believe that we should not increase our population. That is their right.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: That is right. They would probably prefer that we were still living in caves. But, in relation to the population policy announced by the government today, I think it needs to be pointed out that, under current South Australian Bureau of Statistics projections, South Australia will go into population decline within 25 years due to declining fertility rates, continuing net losses in interstate migration, an ageing population and a low share of overseas migrants. We have the lowest population growth in the country. I would have thought that a declining population within 25 years—and a very aged population, at that—would present far more serious challenges to this state than

will come from a properly determined population policy over the next 45 years; because, of course, the target is to increase the population to 2 million by 2050.

In relation to water use and so on, I think those issues are addressed. The state's strategic plan also was announced today and, quite clearly, water use efficiency is one of the important targets in relation to sustainability. There is a chapter in the state strategic plan on sustainability and sustaining the population. In fact, this population policy has been properly integrated with all the other objectives of the state, and I suggest the honourable member reads that policy and she will be enlightened by the information contained in it and how this will be achieved.

The Hon. A.J. REDFORD: I have a supplementary question. Will the government acknowledge that in the release of its policy today it plagiarised the population policy released by Business SA some two weeks ago?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Business SA's population target is 2 million by 2013, which the government believes would put on significant pressure. This government has a much more modest target of reaching that figure by 2050. But, nonetheless, I compliment Business SA on contributing to the debate in relation to this area and I look forward to its contribution at the economic growth summit over the weekend. This government is keen to achieve the ambitious targets it has set itself, but it can achieve those targets only with the cooperation of South Australians and, in particular, South Australian industry. So, if we are to achieve those ambitious targets such as the export growth target, clearly, business will have to take the lead role. As Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development, I have always had a good relationship with Business SA, and I will ensure that that relationship continues.

SEX EDUCATION

The Hon. A.L. EVANS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, representing the Minister for Education and Children's Services, a question about sex education programs currently being piloted in a number of high schools. Leave granted.

The Hon. A.L. EVANS: As a result of discussions with the former Minister for Education and Children's Services late last year and then with a senior officer of the Department of Education and Children's Services, I was advised that part of 'Teach it like it is' (the relationships and sexual health curriculum resource material) would be rewritten. At the time I raised a number of concerns regarding the manual such as material in some sections of the document being too explicit as well as age inappropriate. I also raised a number of inaccuracies concerning religious history. My questions are:

1. Will the minister advise when a copy of the revised manual is to be provided with changes that take into account the concerns that were raised with the department?

2. Given that the next school holiday period commences 8 April and concludes 26 April, will the minister advise when it is likely that the revised manual will be distributed to schools currently participating in the trial?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I will refer those important questions to the minister in another place and bring back a reply.

HENLEY HIGH SCHOOL

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development, representing the Minister for Education and Children's Services, a question about Henley High School.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: I last asked a question about Henley High School on 13 November 2003. I received an answer from the former education minister that was highly unsatisfactory because it did not provide any real detail. Part of the answer read:

My department has met a delegation of representatives from Henley High School's Governing Council on 25 November and has also conducted a site visit and an assessment of the immediate building needs. . . The assessment that has been made recognises the contemporary building needs of the school and has placed the Henley High School as a high priority.

My questions are:

1. Has the new minister visited or is she planning to visit this important western suburbs school, located in the Labor-held seat of Colton, to familiarise herself with the issues at Henley High School?

2. Will the minister please define with a time figure what the words 'high priority' mean?

3. When will the minister give a public commitment to funding this important building works at Henley High School?

The Hon. P. Holloway: Do you have some personal interest in this school?

The Hon. A.J. REDFORD: I rise on a point of order. The interjection was that the honourable member has an undisclosed personal interest, and I would ask the minister to withdraw that.

The PRESIDENT: Interjections are out of order and I did not hear it.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: If my asking the honourable member whether he has a personal interest in the school offends him, I will withdraw it, but I would not have thought it a particularly offensive interjection.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I will take that very important question, with or without a personal interest by the honourable member, to the minister in another place and bring back a reply.

STURT HIGHWAY

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development, representing the Minister for Transport, a question about the Sturt Highway connector.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: Yesterday's *Advertiser* included an article entitled 'Deep harbour in \$300 million plan', which refers to a major infrastructure proposal for Port Adelaide. Part of the article refers to 'investigating with the federal government a 22 kilometre long freeway between the Sturt Highway at Gawler and the Port River Expressway, which includes widening Port Wakefield road'. I presume that this section of the article relates to the planning study for a new northern road gateway to Adelaide, which has received funding in each of the last three federal budgets. This funding has totalled approximately \$1 million. The gateway is

envisaged as incorporating significant sections of Angle Vale and Heaslip roads, with a bypass around the Angle Vale township. My questions are:

1. Will the minister confirm the work done on this proposal by the federal government, and earlier by the previous state government, envisaged only a two-lane alignment rather than a freeway, as described in *The Advertiser* article?

2. Is the minister aware that any significant widening of the corridor for this route would need to account for the positioning of the SEA Gas underground pipeline and the RAAF Edinburgh Air Base, adjacent to much of the Heaslip Road section of the proposal?

3. Given that such a gateway route—if it eventuates—is some years away, what action will the minister take to alleviate the severe and often unsafe levels of traffic congestion which currently occurs at both ends of Heaslip Road in Angle Vale and at the junction with Waterloo Corner Road?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development): I will refer that question to the Minister for Transport and bring back a reply.

SCHOOLS HERITAGE COMPETITION

The Hon. J. GAZZOLA: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister Assisting the Minister for Environment and Conservation a question about involvement of schools with our built heritage.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J. GAZZOLA: I am aware that there is an annual schools heritage competition run in South Australian schools. I understand that this year's theme is 'Mapping Community Heritage'. Will the minister outline this important program and give details of this year's challenge?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister Assisting the Minister for Environment and Conservation): I can report that the honourable member, as usual, is correct in his assumption and that South Australian schools, once again, are being invited to enter the annual schools heritage competition. The theme of this year's competition is 'Mapping Community Heritage'. The competition, which was run for the first time last year, aims to promote the significance and diversity of state and local built heritage places; and encourage teachers and students to connect with heritage of their community. This year's competition has been expanded to include categories for all student age groups from reception to year 12—five category divisions in total.

The 2004 theme is mapping community heritage. Students are encouraged to map an aspect of their community's built heritage. This theme encourages students to engage with their local heritage places. The challenge is to use the community map to deliver a heritage message to a target audience, such as students, senior citizens or local council. The message may be as simple as, 'This is our heritage', but it might also promote discussion, change, the perception of an area, challenge accepted practice and/or influence decision makers.

Port Pirie probably would be a very good example. The local school children could do their mapping of their community heritage, as Port Pirie contains a lot of old heritage buildings. In fact, the whole city could be declared a heritage area and could take advantage of the benefits it brings with interstate tourism. All entries in this project must be developed using information communication technologies format. However, the choices of style and software are open

and could include GIS layering, PowerPoint, web site, multimedia or desktop publishing.

In its inaugural year in 2003 the competition attracted over 70 entries from years 3 to 7 students across the state. I congratulate all those involved in the project and wish all the best for those entering. I encourage all members of this council and the other place to encourage their schools to participate.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Hon. KATE REYNOLDS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, representing the Minister for Health, a question about the memorandum of understanding in relation to health services for asylum seekers.

Leave granted.

The Hon. KATE REYNOLDS: I understand that the government is currently in negotiations with the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to develop an MOU relating to the provision of health care for asylum seekers currently detained at Baxter Detention Centre. Australia is a signatory to various international agreements, which means that already we should be providing the highest possible standard of health services and access to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.

Mr President, you would be aware from previous questions I have asked in this place, and from previous speeches, that the provision of timely health care by state government services, acting on the advice of officials from Baxter and Canberra, has been the subject of considerable criticism and concern. From first-hand experience, I know it is extremely difficult, if not impossible in some instances, for asylum seekers to access services requested by specialists, including psychiatrists.

I am told that many of these referrals occur when the asylum seeker is in extremely dire circumstances and in need of urgent specialist medical attention that is not available either inside the detention centre or in Port Augusta. I understand that the MOU currently being negotiated would specify what health services would be provided by the state government and under what circumstances. In recent weeks I have been approached by constituents expressing concerns about what appears to be intentional delays, they say, in the provision of mental health services to acutely ill detainees. I have been asked whether this is a result of the current negotiations between the state government and DIMIA. My questions to the minister are:

1. Will the MOU ensure that the delivery of health services to asylum seekers is consistent with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

2. Will the MOU bind both parties to providing the highest possible standard of health service and access to facilities for the treatment of illness and the rehabilitation of health?

3. Will the minister reassure the Australian Democrats that the MOU is intended to facilitate the timely provision of health care, and will it contain mechanisms to address non-compliance?

4. Will the MOU detail the rights of detainees and the pathways of care necessary to protect those rights under international law and in accordance with the Australian standards of the various medical professions?

5. Once it has been signed, will the minister table the MOU in the parliament?

6. Have senior state government medical specialists with direct experience of the health requirements of detainees been formally consulted through the negotiation process and, if so, have their recommendations been followed?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I will refer all those important questions to the minister in another place and bring back a reply.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, GAMBLERS' REHABILITATION

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: Will the Minister for Correctional Services advise, first, what progress has been made to provide gamblers rehabilitation services in the correctional services system, particularly for incarcerated prisoners with a gambling problem? Secondly, will he advise whether the government has yet to undertake a survey on the number of inmates who have been incarcerated as a result of a gambling-related offence, given the findings of the Australian Institute of Criminology last year that gambling is the second largest cause of fraud and embezzlement in the country and, if not, why not? Thirdly, are there any screening mechanisms in place for newly admitted inmates to ascertain particular major problems from which they may be suffering, including drug, alcohol and gambling addictions, similar to screening programs that exist in New Zealand, and, if not, why not? Fourthly, are any such screening mechanisms planned? Fifthly, does the government have any programs in place to assist prisoners in the pre-release phase with respect to gamblers' rehabilitation for those prisoners who have had gambling problems before their release into the general community?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Correctional Services): I do not have the detail in relation to specific programs relating to—

An honourable member: That's not like you.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: No, it is not like me: I agree with that interjection from the honourable member. I do have information regarding the rehabilitation programs for sex offenders, violent offenders and courses being run for Aboriginal people. I will make inquiries of my departmental officers and bring back a reply to the honourable member as soon as I can.

SELF-FUNDED RETIREES

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, representing the Minister for Ageing, a question about concessions for self-funded retirees.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: Last Monday, 29 March, the commonwealth made an offer to the states of \$75 million to extend pensioner concessions to self-funded retirees. The offer to South Australia is \$4.6 million, which is 60 per cent of the cost of providing the concessions, and the state is being asked to contribute the other 40 per cent. The total potential benefit for a South Australian self-funded retiree for concessions on their council rates, water and sewerage, energy and motor vehicle registration is \$574. In the Auditor-General's 2002-03 report several concerns were expressed about the

state government's administration of the existing scheme for pensioners, as follows:

The audit of concessions payments for a number of years has highlighted that the department has not implemented appropriate documented agreements with the parties providing concessions which detail the respective roles, responsibilities and terms of arrangements.

It is Audit's view that an effective control environment requires the establishment of formal agreements between the government and service providers. Audit Review found that the department continued work in establishing formal agreements, however, at the time of the audit the formal agreements had yet to be executed. . . Audit reviewed proposed changed arrangements for processing benefit claims and established that it is proposed that beneficiaries' entitlement to concessions are to be assessed and approved over the phone. This process does not provide for verification of entitlement before the concession is provided. Audit considers this creates a risk that concessions will be provided to claimants who are not entitled to the concession. The department advised that while this could create a risk there are procedural checks to mitigate the potential for fraud.

It goes on to talk about data matching and legal issues relating to a contract with Centrelink which would assist with the elimination of fraud. My questions to the minister are:

1. Will the government accept the commonwealth's offer to extend concessions to self-funded retirees?
2. Has the commonwealth raised concerns with the state government regarding its administration of the scheme?
3. Has the government fully addressed the Auditor-General's concerns with the administration of the existing scheme?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I will refer those important questions to the minister in another place and bring back a reply.

DNA TESTING

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development, representing the Attorney-General, a question relating to the use of DNA samples.

Leave granted.

The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN: This question relates to DNA samples being matched to prisoners for previous crimes. With recent events in DNA testing, it has come to my attention that DNA matching can result in what is described as 'false positive' identifications; that is, circumstances where two or more people share the same set of DNA markers leading to a person being accused of a crime they did not commit. No doubt members are aware that identical twins share identical DNA and therefore share identical sets of DNA markers that are used for DNA identification. Members may not be aware that people may also share DNA markers even though they are not closely related. In his ministerial statement of 14 February this year entitled 'Outcome of DNA testing of the state's prison population', the Attorney-General stated:

Of those 10 matches, four are for offences for which the person has been previously arrested and the crime cleared up.

Forensic Science South Australia has now provided about 300 match reports for processing and investigation.

My questions to the Attorney-General, through the Leader of the Government, are:

1. Where the four matches identified in the ministerial statement are for offences already cleared up, was the person arrested the same person who has now provided a DNA sample?

2. Will the Attorney-General disclose all incidents as they occur or where they have occurred where the DNA matching process has resulted in a 'false positive' result; that is, where it can be shown that the offender who provided the DNA sample could not have committed the offence revealed by the matching process? I make the observation that this does not require the identification of the persons involved.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development): I will refer those questions to the Attorney-General and bring back a reply.

SOUTHERN SUBURBS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Correctional Services, representing the Minister for the Southern Suburbs, a question about public transport in the southern suburbs.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS: As members would be aware, many of our senior citizens can risk isolation through an inability to drive or a general lack of mobility. In the 2002 election policy document under the title of 'Roads and Transport', the manifesto claims that a Labor government would ensure the provision of fair treatment for public transport users. The disappointing frequency of public transport services in the south is constantly raised with me and my office. My question to the minister is: can the minister advise what action he has taken to provide for fair treatment of public transport users in the southern suburbs?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I will refer those important questions to the minister in another place and bring back a reply.

GREEN PHONE

The Hon. A.J. REDFORD: I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Minister for Industry, Trade, and Regional Development, representing the Attorney-General, a question about Green Phone.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A.J. REDFORD: Last Monday, I asked questions about Green phone Inc., an incorporated body under the South Australian Associations Incorporation Act. The company went into voluntary administration just over 12 months after it commenced business. Members might recall that Green Phone was in the business of providing a phone service to residents of the South-East of South Australia and Western Victoria. I informed this place that there had been a lengthy delay in the provision of a liquidator's report, and I asked whether the Attorney-General could make inquiries as to when the liquidator would release the report.

Following my question, I received information that in fact the liquidator had provided a report and submitted it to the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs and that he did so some time ago. Mr Macks is the liquidator. In today's *Border Watch*, he is reported as stating that the report is not a public document. He is also reported as stating:

It is just a statutory report talking about what offences were made and if any have been committed.

Mr Mack also said:

There were offences, yes. It is up to the Corporate Affairs Commission to consider whether it prosecutes or takes those offences further. I'm not going to take any action. It is up to them now.

Based on that advice, I assume that the responsibility for ensuring that the offenders in relation to the Green Phone fiasco, if they exist, are prosecuted or brought to justice is now in the hands of officers of or a department responsible to the Attorney-General. I also note that the article has drawn considerable reaction from the public in the South-East, particularly the disclosure that the government has had the liquidator's report for some time and that it discloses the commission of offences. In the light of that, my questions are:

1. When did the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs receive the report?

2. Has the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs briefed or advised the Attorney-General in relation to matters contained within this report?

3. Will the Attorney-General release the report; if not, why not?

4. If, as stated by Mr Macks, the report discloses the commission of offences, what steps has the Attorney-General, or his department, taken to ensure that those who committed the offences are prosecuted or brought before the law?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development): I will refer those questions to the Attorney-General in another place and bring back a reply.

EXPORTS

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Leader of the Opposition): I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development a question about an export strategy.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: In February this year, I directed questions to the former minister for industry and trade in relation to the issue of the state government export strategy. In that explanation, I referred to the fact that over the December-new year period there had been a public debate about export figures between the former minister and the opposition. The opposition had highlighted worrying figures in relation to declines in export performance in South Australia when compared with other states and nationally. The former minister sought to defend his position and that of Premier Rann on the issue of exports.

In that reply the minister indicated that the Rann government has developed the first export strategy that the state has had and that it is being industry led. On 30 March this year I received a further response via minister Holloway which indicated that the statement that had been made by the former minister was, in fact, incorrect. Minister Holloway indicated the following:

The newly formed Export Council is currently developing an export strategy to be completed within the next few months. The recommended strategy will then be subject to cabinet approval.

In recent days, the opposition has been further advised from sources within the Department for Business, Manufacturing and Trade—soon to be known, I think from April Fools Day onwards, as DTED (Department for Trade and Economic Development)—that, indeed, no state government export strategy has been developed. I ask the new minister whether he can confirm that the statements that former minister McEwen made in relation to the government having an export strategy were wrong, and that such a proposal is still being developed by the Export Council and has not yet been considered by the cabinet.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development): The Export Council has had several meetings. As a matter of fact, it had one yesterday. The Export Council has, of course, been charged with the development of an export strategy. There are, obviously, some elements of what will form the export strategy already in place for a number of other industries. Others will take significant time to develop. The export strategy is in—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Well, of course the government has policies towards export strategy. We have every idea about it. There are elements that have been around for many years in relation to some of those particular component industries. Ultimately, the export strategy produced by the Export Council will contain a number of industries. I gather my colleague was indicating that that work has already begun. The Export Council was established and that work will be underway. What is specifically called the export strategy will be produced.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: This government does have a strategy for exports.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Well, what I would like the Leader of the Opposition to do is give us an apology for wrecking the electricity industry in the state. If there is one element that is most deterrent to exports in South Australia, it is what he did to electricity. We have the highest electricity prices in Australia. When is your apology coming?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I think that we can conclude from the arrogance of the Leader of the Opposition's comments that we will not get the apology. The actions of the previous government have caused—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Yes, they are in opposition, as they deserve to be, and will be for a long time because of the wreckage they have inflicted. The fact that we have the highest electricity prices in Australia is a direct consequence of the very person who asked the question, but he is undeterred. We need an export strategy to overcome that sort of damage. We have components of that strategy in place and they have been for some time in relation to various industry sectors. That work will be ongoing, and, indeed, the task of the Export Council is to update export strategies in specific industries over that period of time. We know that the Economic Summit is coming up this week and we know that members opposite are trying to damage it. I think it is sad that the Liberal Party in this state is so irrelevant, it is doing so badly in the public opinion polls, that it is now resorting to the lowest level of all to try to damage the state's economy to make themselves relevant. Well, it is not going to work.

REPLY TO QUESTION

REGIONAL FACILITATION GROUPS

In reply to **Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS** (17 September 2003).

The Hon P HOLLOWAY: The Minister for Industrial Relations has provided the following information:

1. The coordination of the Regional Facilitation Groups has transferred to the Chief Executive of DAIS, who established the program on behalf of the Senior Management Council in his previous role as Commissioner for Public Employment. The role of Regional Facilitation Groups is to facilitate public sector interagency

communication, coordination and cooperation. The interagency focus of the Groups is primarily on improving the efficiency of public sector service delivery, optimising resource allocation, reducing replication or overlap between agencies and facilitating training and development initiatives between agencies. The Groups are able to seek the views and input of other regional bodies as required. The accountability for public sector service delivery still rests with the appropriate agency and the responsibility for broader regional development remains unchanged. It has been agreed that Regional Facilitation Groups will invite representatives of Regional Development Boards, Local Government and other interest groups (such as the Outback Development Trust) to attend Group meetings from time to time to provide input into Regional Facilitation Group planning.

2. Regional Facilitation Groups meet at least quarterly, or as otherwise determined by the members of the particular group. For instance the Spencer group at Port Augusta has currently determined to meet on an eight-week cycle.

MATTERS OF INTEREST

HEALTH INSURANCE

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I rise today to speak about the private health insurance rebate and a report that was recently released by University of Canberra health economist, Ian McAuley. The federal Liberal government has consistently claimed that the way to relieve the burden on the public health system is to push people into private health insurance, and it believes that this will result in more people utilising the private health sector. It claims to be able to do this by providing a rebate to those who take out private health insurance. Ian McAuley's report concludes that, since the introduction of the rebate, private hospitals have picked up only a small rise in activity. However, the rebate, 'has gone largely to those who are already using private hospitals with or without insurance'.

I am not sure whether many of my colleagues in the chamber remember when the private health insurance rebate was being introduced. Many who supported it linked the rebate to preventing the collapse of the private hospital system, and that is certainly and obviously a very important thing because approximately one-third of Australian registered beds are in the private system. Clearly, they play a very important role in the delivery of hospital services. However, the McAuley report found that the private health rebate was a particularly expensive way to support private hospitals. The report states:

Much of the growth in private health insurance outlays, encouraged by the fear campaigns, subsidies and tax penalties, has gone to areas other than hospitals.

The report further states:

Because of leakages to administration, ancillaries and gap payments, support for private insurance has been a high cost way to support private hospitals.

The figures reported show a \$700 million growth in private hospital outlays supported by a \$2 billion subsidy. That is a \$700 million growth for \$2 billion. It is incredibly hard to believe. Mr McAuley argues that there is a case to support private hospitals, but not via high cost financial intermediaries. He supports the direct funding of private hospitals which he claims result 'in a fairer and more efficient alloca-

tion of scarce health care resources'. It is a very interesting argument.

While the introduction of the health rebate coincided with an increase in the uptake of private health insurance, if it was actually the health insurance rebate that encouraged people into private health insurance it is unlikely that there would be a fall in the number of those with private health insurance cover—yet, fall it did, only a short time after the rebate was introduced. From 2000 to 2003 there has been a decrease in private cover of 2.3 per cent. John Deeble in his 2003 report 'The Private Health Insurance Rebate' attributes almost all the increase in uptake in private health insurance to the lifetime cover 'Run for Cover' scare campaign—an incredibly callous manipulation, I think, of people's concerns over their health care needs. What is more, the report found that the private health insurance rebate has done very little to alleviate the pressure on the public health system, and it states, 'but their capacity to respond to that pressure has been diminished'.

It was interesting to note that a leaked report of the Chief Executive Officer, Russell Schneider, of the Australian Health Insurance Association to their annual general meeting laid bare just how much private health insurance companies benefit from the relationship they have with the Howard government and to what lengths they will go to protect it. It showed how cosy the industry is with the Howard government. The Howard government approved—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Well, just listen to this. The Howard government approved a 7 per cent increase in private health insurance premiums in 2002 and has just approved another 7.6 per cent increase (on average, of course). In fact, consumers have been forced to pay 22 per cent more this year than they did only three years ago for exactly the same level of cover—a 22 per cent increase. Talk about looking after your mates! The Howard government supports private health insurance companies and this report shows—

Time expired.

SCHOOLS, FUNDING

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS: I rise to discuss the issue of state school funding and the role of the federal government in providing that funding. As members would be aware, the Howard government recently announced a record funding boost of some \$31 billion, or approximately 25 per cent over the previous funding arrangements. It provides for all schools, both independent and public. It introduces a raft of standardised testing so that parents can compare apples with apples when deciding to which school they wish to send their children. It also allows the government to identify which schools are underperforming and take remedial action.

Predictably, the Labor opposition has attacked this record funding agreement, saying, amongst other things, that state schools do not receive as much as independent schools. The fact is that there is a very good reason for that. State education is the responsibility of state government and, as usual, Labor state governments have been shirking their responsibilities, the Rann government included. The hard facts are these: 68 per cent of all students attend state schools and receive 76 per cent of the taxpayer funding assigned to education. Conversely, the 32 per cent of students who attend independent schools receive only 24 per cent of the funding. The Howard government believes that, having paid their taxes, people should be able to expect some level of public

assistance. That is why the Howard government has provided for schools across all sectors with a funding arrangement of record levels.

What is sometimes overlooked in this debate is the role of state governments. In particular, I want to discuss the Rann government's dereliction of duty when it comes to education funding. Under the constitution, state governments are primarily responsible for the funding of state schools. They totally own and manage them and provide most of the funding, but not all. Since 1985, under the Labor Party, the federal government has had primary responsibility for independent and Catholic school funding, a duty I believe the current federal government is discharging extremely well. The Howard government has increased its funding to state schools by 5.3 per cent in the 2003 budget. The state government has increased its funding by only 4.9 per cent. If the Rann government matched the federal increase there would be an extra \$5 million this year for public schools. Let me reiterate that: if the state government increased its funding to the same level as the federal government's, an extra \$5 million would be available. This effectively means that the state government has been underfunding education in this state by \$5 million—all this from a guy who wanted to be known as the 'education Premier'.

Members may also be aware that the Australian Education Union (with which the member for Giles is affiliated) and the minister for conservation was formerly affiliated) has attacked the federal government over school funding. Earlier this year it launched television commercials and received some media for myths the unions were peddling. The fact that the unions have taken money from teachers' pockets to form a political war chest of over \$1 million demonstrates how ideological and misguided the union movement has become. And the Labor Party wants to give these dinosaurs more powers and more influence!

I happen to know a number of school teachers and they are incensed about this stance that the union movement has taken. I would have thought that teachers would prefer that money to go to something constructive instead of being the political war chest for a union official on an ego trip, possibly staking out a claim for a seat on the Labor front bench, which is already brimming with union officials.

I call on the state government to congratulate the commonwealth's record funding deal and to wholly embrace the concept of standardised testing. I also call on the 'education Premier' to prevail upon his Treasurer and instruct him to match the commonwealth's rate of funding so that South Australia does not miss out. It is my belief that the commonwealth's announcement will be welcomed by many parents of schoolchildren and also by the teachers in the classroom, rather than those at Trades Hall who will gladly accept new standards in return for access to the \$30 billion that the Howard government has made available.

ALTERNATIVE CARE

The Hon. KATE REYNOLDS: Each year, the growing number of children and young people under the guardianship of the minister are placed in what is called alternative care. In February 2003 the Minister for Social Justice announced that alternative care services would be subject to open tender. In essence, the state and community agencies that have needed to work together to make the most of the meagre resources (the most meagre, according to the Productivity

Commission, of anywhere in Australia) were forced into a situation of competing with each other.

However, if this decision to tender future service provision was not bad enough, the government has further blundered with the administration of the tender arrangements themselves. Despite making the announcement in February 2003, it took until the middle of last year before the tender was released. Throughout this period the government failed to consult with any non-government agencies, including those who have been involved in the front line in providing care for families and children in South Australia for nearly a decade, about the type of service arrangements that would best meet the needs of children and families. Not surprisingly, the end result was an ill-conceived tender that was inequitable in the way it proposed to distribute resources, and it failed to meet some of the glaring inadequacies in the current funding of alternative care in this state.

As a result of representations made by a number of non-government agencies, the government was forced to instigate an independent review of the service model being subjected to tender. Apparently the reviewer believed it would have been better to scrap the process and undertake a proper consultation with all stakeholders to establish a fairer and better model of alternative care. This has been a ham-fisted and ill-conceived exercise that has perpetuated many of the ongoing problems with the protection of children in this state. It has created job insecurity and, as of this week, job loss for those working on the front line in service delivery agencies, and uncertainty for the many dedicated foster carers who underpin our fragile system of alternative care in this state, to say nothing of delaying improvements for children and young people in care.

The shame is that none of this pain and confusion was necessary had the process been managed responsibly and sensitively and if the expertise of those with experience in this area had been considered. I have raised in this place before that the minister's own advisory committee on alternative care was not even consulted in the development of the tender material. The Australian Democrats are calling on the government, again, to lift funding of child protection services in South Australia to, at the very least, bring us up to the national per capita funding level. The Democrats are calling on the government also to immediately restore funds for intensive placement prevention programs which were inexplicably withdrawn as part of the alternative care tender. As a matter of urgency, the government must commit to a real increase in foster care subsidies to bring them into line with the recommendations of the Cost of Caring report released more than 12 months ago.

On a brighter note, following intense lobbying from around the country, the federal Minister for Children and Youth Affairs has flagged his intention to develop a national plan for children and young people in foster care and their carers. The plan would focus on areas where authorities and agencies could work together to establish national standards for care and share information on good practice, and we hope that it will also develop standards and plans for recruitment, training and accreditation of foster carers. The plan was discussed by state ministers late last year and will soon be presented to them for final approval.

Given the perilous state of foster care in South Australia, we are calling on the Rann Labor government to commit to working with the federal government and other state governments because it is glaringly obvious that our foster care system needs urgent help. We are not capable of tackling all

the issues, nor are we capable of developing all the solutions that are needed on our own. In this state we suffer from an over-reliance on foster carers who have been, to put it mildly, under supported and under acknowledged. Our foster care system is in a state of crisis because successive governments have denied foster carers the respect and help they have needed, resulting in an attrition rate of carers of nearly 50 per cent in the last few years. It is in the best interests of neglected or abused children and young people for South Australia to take up the opportunity to be part of a national strategy because, for their sake, we cannot afford not to.

TEA TREE GULLY COMMUNITY

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: I was pleased to be one of five Liberal members of the Legislative Council who participated in a familiarisation visit to the City of Tea Tree Gully on Thursday 12 February. My colleagues who took part in the visit were the Hon. Rob Lucas, the Hon. David Ridgway, the Hon. Michelle Lensink and the Hon. Terry Stephens. Accompanying the group was the Hon. Dorothy Kotz, the member for Newland in another place. The group met at Homestead Homes, Modbury with the board of Gully Corp TTG Incorporated and was informed about this community association's charter to undertake economic, social and community development activities for the benefit of the citizens of Tea Tree Gully.

Gully Corp was formed in 2001 arising from the amalgamation of the Tea Tree Gully Development Board and the Avago Employment Program. Both these organisations had a long history of community service in the local area prior to the merger. The MLCs learned of the work of the Tea Tree Gully Business Enterprise Centre, which operates as a division of Gully Corp. In addition, they were advised of Gully Corp's initiative towards the development of an industry based skills centre at Tolley Road, St Agnes to be known as Tea Tree College. It is hoped this facility will be open two years from now.

This meeting was followed by further discussions with Gully Corp Chairman, Bob Day AO, about housing and development issues. Mr Day, in his role as Managing Director of Homestead Homes, also outlined the extent of this Modbury-based firm which has a strong foothold in the housing industry in every mainland state. MLCs were also informed of the work of the Homestead Homes community projects department.

The group then embarked on a bus tour of the city, accompanied by Mayor Lesley Purdom AM, Chief Executive Officer Greg Perkin, and a number of elected members and staff. This was followed by a briefing and light lunch. The tour and briefing highlighted a range of transport, environmental, planning, recreation and community development issues. The group then visited the Surrey Downs Community Centre, where it met with coordinator Chris Czeglik and witnessed the wide range of activities conducted there. MLCs were fortunate to speak to the volunteers who help to run the centre as well as those who benefit from its programs.

During the visit the Hon. Rob Lucas said it was important for members of the Legislative Council to understand first-hand the problems and issues being confronted by important communities such as the City of Tea Tree Gully. He congratulated Mayor Purdom and her council for the impressive work being undertaken for the Tea Tree Gully community. Mayor Purdom responded as follows:

We were delighted to host this visit and we would like to thank the MLCs for making the time to meet with members of our community. It is important that state politicians are kept informed of local issues and activities. We are proud of what has been achieved in this area and we are keen to work with all levels of government to continue to grow and enrich the City of Tea Tree Gully.

In addition to those mentioned earlier, I thank Bill Chandler, General Manager City Future for the City of Tea Tree Gully, Gordon Warren, General Manager of Gully Corp TTG, and Mike Hawkins, Manager of Tea Tree Gully Business Enterprise Centre for their assistance in organising this visit.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The Hon. R.K. SNEATH: I would like to speak about the increasing number of written instructions given to employees that are not part of an enterprise agreement or an attachment to an enterprise agreement. These instructions seem to be on the increase and they are nearly always instructions that have been put together by the employer without any consultation with the employees. I have a couple of examples to place in *Hansard*. One recently came from the Naracoorte Caves cafe. The house rules state:

Lateness will not be tolerated. If the time on the roster says 9 a.m. you must have your:

- Apron on
- Hair tied back
- Hands washed
- Knowledge of what's hot and what's not today. . .
- READY FOR WORK

If this process takes you 10 minutes, then you must be at work 10 minutes before your start time. I will take 15 minutes off your time sheet if you are between 5 and 15 minutes late.

1. I always move with a sense of urgency. Just because there are few or no customers, and you are just cleaning does not mean I am paying you any less. You are paid to work. Dawdle in your own time. If you see someone going half pace, point it out to them. They may not realise.

2. Sick notice—at least eight hours before you start your shift. Remember that during really busy times it will be hard to replace you on short notice. You each have a list of current employees. If you are sick, you must ring me, and then it is up to you to find a replacement from the list.

3. Any staff disputes must be brought to my attention immediately so I can resolve it fairly. If you're unhappy it will rub off on other staff. I will not tolerate any behaviour which reduces staff morale. If you are not happy, talk to me.

4. Do not bring your personal problems to work. If they are too hard to deal with, please call me and we will work out a change of shift until you are ready to come back to work, clear headed. This personal consideration will not be taken advantage of.

5. No hangovers. If you do have a hangover and cannot work, you will have to find another staff member to do the job for you. It will not be a swap, you will lose a day's work and therefore pay. By coming to work with a hangover you are putting your health, and the safety of others at risk. Ultimately, my WorkCover premium will go up, my blood pressure will go up and your rostered hours down. It is also not good for morale as other staff will have to 'carry you'.

6. Have fun in your work. The customers appreciate a happy work force. If you are efficient and good at what you do, you will be happier and the customers will notice this.

Uniform.

Blue shirt/black, full length pants/leather shoes with full toe and heel.

Hair tied back.

NO:

Sneakers—no soft shoes or even slight heels.

Lip, eyebrow, tongue or chin studs.

Visible and tasteless tattoos.

That is one example. Another example was published in an article in *The Australian* of 30 March 2004. The article is headed 'T-shirt not fit uniform for Sarah', and it states:

'No T-shirt equals NO work,' came the fiery directive from the management of Westco Jeans last week. In a memo to all retail staff,

senior manager Andrew Hart made it clear the company would not tolerate dissent. The new staff uniform—available only in skimpy sizes and emblazoned with the phrase "Stop pretending you don't want me"—would be embraced by all employees. 'Any team member that does not dress correctly for work will be sent home,' the memo said. 'The company at great expense has provided these T-shirts and they should be worn with great pride.'

Fortunately, one young lady jacked up and took her rights to the union and also to a group called Jobwatch. I think the company has seen the error of its ways and withdrawn those sexist T-shirts, on which they were making cheap advertisements at the expense of staff.

The other thing I would like to talk about is the success of the Adelaide Fringe Festival. It was a magnificent success and one play, in particular, *The Creatures from the Black Saloon*, had a rave review in *The Advertiser*.

The Hon. A.J. Redford: Rage or rave?

The Hon. R.K. SNEATH: A rave review in the *Advertiser*—and a rage one from me! I must say that my PA, Narrah Luks, was the star of the show and was mentioned quite fondly in reviews.

Time expired.

STATE POPULATION

The Hon. A.J. REDFORD: Last Friday week, Business SA issued its population policy. In its release Business SA acknowledged that population is a key issue, impacting on our economic vibrancy. It made 11 recommendations, including:

1. establishing a population target;
2. granting of special conditional visas for South Australia;
3. establishing South Australia as a zone of special significance, similar to the European regional development fund which had great success in Ireland;
4. showcasing SA as a family friendly state;
5. developing systems that support women and men to combine the raising of children with having a career;
6. enhancing the bringing them back home program;
7. developing an integrated immigration policy for attracting immigrants with particular skills and attributes;
8. establishing a business led welcome service for business migrants;
9. promoting Adelaide as Australia's university, research and commercialisation city;
10. emphasising linkages between the state's economic development and employment opportunities; and
11. government, in concert with business, should develop a comprehensive approach to innovation.

The policy, while general, is constructive, and it is ambitious. It is achievable albeit with hard work and commitment. It has vision—dare I say it—and, finally—dare I say it—it is bold in that outcomes are sought by the year 2013.

Today, the Rann government issued its policy. It is timid and cautious in that it seeks to achieve what Business SA wants over 10 years in a period of nearly 47 years. The government, unusually, described its plan as 'bold'. The government, though, is to be congratulated for at least endeavouring to establish certain objectives, including an ambitious target to double the intake of independent skilled migrants by 2008 and achieve a fivefold increase in business migrants and a net outflow of interstate migrants to zero in

that same time. The government is to be congratulated for setting that target.

It also refers to the potential of two new regional visa classes to encourage more skilled migrants into regional areas before they give them permanent residency. Further, it states that the government will consider practical strategies to attract migrants and retain the local population with workshops involving local residents. I note that the government does not seem to have any confidence in state members of parliament, and I would urge the government to involve all state members of parliament in its regional and other workshops to promote migration.

Finally, in the press release the Deputy Premier says that without positive action by the state government South Australia's population may peak at 1.6 million people and go into a decline within 25 years. He said:

Worse still, as the baby boomers go into retirement, South Australia's working population will decline within a decade.

I can only endorse what the Deputy Premier said in that press release. At the risk of sounding somewhat negative, I do have one particular concern. My concern relates to the state and territory nominated scheme, which is a particular class of visa encouraged by the commonwealth and which applies in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania. This is a policy to divert immigrants to places such as South Australia. The scheme works where each state government can nominate occupations or skills in short supply. However, our Victorian neighbours have maximised their opportunities, identifying 95 occupational categories in short supply in a detailed list that runs over 10 pages.

On the other hand, South Australia has a one page list that names only 52 occupations. South Australia has named only two building occupations, namely, electricians and plasterers, whereas Victoria named these plus bricklayers, roof slaters, tilers, carpenters, joiners and plumbers. Mr President, try getting a bricklayer, carpenter or plumber at present! Victoria identified a broader range of nursing specialties, listing 18 categories to South Australia's four. Migration is important, and I urge the Premier and the government to seriously consider looking at that list and expanding the list so we can expand our opportunities.

Time expired.

ADELAIDE TO DARWIN RAILWAY

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I place on the record the conclusion of one of our greatest achievements as a nation, that is, the completion of the south-north Adelaide to Darwin rail link. The project has been used fondly by many, politicians included, as a means of either derision or vision for as long as I can remember. No doubt, we all are pleased that those of vision won through. In 1995, then leader of the opposition and now Premier Rann pledged bipartisan support to ensure that the Alice Springs to Darwin rail link would become a reality. A Darwin committee had been formed by the federal and Northern Territory governments to help foster the development of Darwin and northern Australia as a gateway to Asia. The then Labor opposition supported the former government, especially when it came to this state's contribution of \$176.4 million for its construction. In my travels as Convener of the Premier's Food Council, I have had the opportunity to come across former trade minister Tim Fischer on a number of occasions. I have to say that the project could not have a more enthusiastic ambassador. His passion for rail freight and travel is evident for all to witness.

There are many benefits in rail as a mode of transport in that it is safe, reliable, fuel efficient, environmentally friendly and helps to ease maintenance costs on our highways associated with the high volume of heavy freight transport. Hopefully, we will also see a reduction in road crashes. It will take some time to see the full economic benefits of this transport system. It was good to hear the public endorsement of the value of rail freight from South Australia's trucking magnate Alan Scott. Freight contracts already have been signed to carry 350 000 tonnes a year on the track, with an expectation to more than double that capacity in the first five years to about 800 000 tonnes a year.

I was pleased to receive an invitation to Regency Park on Thursday 15 January, when the very first FreightLink train from Adelaide to Darwin departed on the AustralAsia railway. The freight train measured 1.3 kilometres in length as it left on its historic 3 000 kilometre journey north to Darwin. The inaugural train journey marked the beginning of five freight train services a week between Adelaide and Darwin.

I was especially pleased that, along with other goods, some food products were also included. I know that the food industry is watching closely to assess the competitiveness of the new link. The potential is there to see a great deal of agricultural produce transported to Darwin and then overseas via the railway, and produce such as wine, fruit, fish and vegetables are the items of produce most likely to be suitable for transport. It very much fits in with the state's need to improve the competitiveness of our existing exporters to Asia and encourage new exports as well as improving job opportunities, especially in the Upper Spencer Gulf area. South Australian companies won \$442 million worth of work on the project, with 50 per cent going to companies in the Upper Spencer Gulf. As the Premier has said, it is about unlocking the opportunities that this new \$1.3 billion rail line offers our economy.

We also saw the excitement and the publicity (which money cannot buy) when the first Ghan passenger service left for Darwin on 1 February. Even before the first train left, ticket sales had outstripped all predictions, with more than \$10 million worth of tickets sold. Train buffs the world over believe it to be one of the great train journeys of the world (it is the longest unbroken south-north railway on any continent in the world) and they were happy to savour the experience. The rail link is an act of nation building for the future that will help exporters across the country as well as our tourism industry. Many people have worked hard to see its success, and I know that I am joined by all honourable members in congratulating all those people across all political parties and the public and private sectors.

FOSTER PARENTS

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: I move:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be appointed to investigate the care of children under the guardianship of the minister and, in particular—
 - (a) whether the state government, and in particular, Family and Youth Services (FAYS) provides sufficient and appropriate support to foster parents;
 - (b) identify problems being confronted by foster parents;
 - (c) examine the tendering process by the Department of Human Services for new contracts to support foster carers and children, and whether these contracts will provide the required support;
 - (d) examine alternative care being provided to children under guardianship;

- (e) whether the children are at risk of abuse due to the lack of resources within FAYS; and
 - (f) any other related matters.
2. That the select committee consist of six members and that the quorum of members necessary to be present at all meetings of the committee be fixed at four members and that standing order 389 be so far suspended as to enable the chairperson of the committee to have a deliberative vote only.
 3. That this council permits the select committee to authorise the disclosure or publication, as it sees fit, of any evidence or documents presented to the committee prior to such evidence being reported to the council.
 4. That standing order 396 be suspended to enable strangers to be admitted when the select committee is examining witnesses unless the committee otherwise resolves, but they shall be excluded when the committee is deliberating.

I seek the support of honourable members for this select committee. These are important—indeed, vital—issues. The government has recognised the significance of child protection in commissioning from Robyn Layton QC a report on child protection in this state. That report is dated March 2003. It was, in fact, delivered to the government some time before that, and it is a matter of notoriety as well as grave concern in the community that the government has not yet provided a comprehensive response to the 206 recommendations made in the report.

Some of the issues that ought be agitated in the select committee, investigated and, hopefully, resolved were raised by my colleague the Hon. Kate Reynolds in the matter of interest debate earlier today. She has, in a number of earlier speeches to this council and in public statements, highlighted, first, the need for urgent action and, secondly, deprecated the lack of action on the part of this government in relation to these matters. The information that I have suggests that what is now widely recognised as the crisis in foster care in this state has been deepening over the past year and is almost beyond crisis point. I think all members will have received letters from people who have been affected by our foster care system. They are distressing letters. They suggest, in many cases, a breakdown of the systems that are supposed to support children and also those into whose care children are placed.

The government has been full of rhetoric on the subject of child protection, yet it has delivered little, notwithstanding the avalanche of concern which is reflected in the Layton report and which is also reflected in other statements made by people within the sector. For example, in December 2003 (about one year after the government had received the Layton report), Parents Want Reform, an organisation for which Mr John Ternezis is a spokesperson, wrote to the then minister for social justice (Hon. Stefani Key), reminding her of the want of action on the part of the government and highlighting the matters raised in this chamber by the Hon. Kate Reynolds and demanding immediate action. It appears from Mr Ternezis' letter that no satisfactory response was received to his communication, and there are many in a similar situation.

The Liberal Party spokesperson on this issue, the deputy leader of the party (Hon. Dean Brown), has also publicly demanded action by minister Key—who, of course, as is now known, has been relieved of that portfolio. It was no surprise that the minister was relieved of the portfolio, because, in the year in which she had the Layton report, she did not address the issues within it. It is worth placing on the record some of the recommendations, though not all, that specifically relate to the issue of foster care, because they highlight the need for sensitivity, resources, training and support. Recommendation

14 relates to the flexible care options that should be developed. Layton states:

Currently South Australia's alternative care system relies predominantly on home based foster care with the majority of children and young people living in a family based placement. There needs to be greater variety and flexibility as to the types of alternative care placements available. Placement types must be matched with the assessed needs of the child or young person. Specialist placement options such as small residential centres, cottage homes, and individual professional carers are recommended.

It presents challenges which this government is apparently not prepared to respond to. Recommendation 18 states:

Respite Care/Emergency Care Services are currently available for families who are clients of FAYS or foster carers, families with children who have disabilities and families who require short term care (up to a week) in an emergency situation. The Review has heard about families, particularly single parent families and families with children who have disabilities who require or could benefit from access to planned respite services or greater access to emergency care services. Families who are at risk would also benefit from planned respite care, which can be viewed as a preventative measure, to enable parents to have a break, and for their children to have an opportunity to meet other children and families.

This is an important recommendation, but it has not been responded to. The need for respite for our foster carers is manifest in the many communications which we have received and I am sure that most members of this chamber will have received, not only from lobbyists and advocates for foster carers but also from foster carers themselves who are in desperate need of respite and other support.

The Layton report refers, at paragraph 11.2, to the appointment of Des Semple and Associates and the release of that firm's report: 'A Review of Alternative Care in South Australia'. That was completed in March 2002. Semple had been commissioned by the previous government and a discussion paper had been released in November 2001. Layton records that many of the themes reflected in the Semple report were reflected in the submissions received and consultations conducted by Ms Layton. Paragraph 11.3 states:

- Foster carers do a 'heroic job' but they do not receive sufficient support and training.

That is from a submission by UnitingCare, Port Pirie Central Mission and from the Infant Mental Health Association of South Australia. It continues:

- There are insufficient placements available for all the out-of-home care needs such as respite, emergency, short- and long-term care.
- Many children who are the most vulnerable in the community have suffered 'system abuse' as a result of multiple placements, inappropriate placements and lack of adequate financial support.
- There is a need for professional status for foster carers recognising that historical reliance on volunteers is inadequate to deal with complex and significant needs of children requiring care.

We, as a community, should be providing support through our government to those within the community who are prepared to undertake the onerous duties of foster carers. The notion of mere voluntarism in relation to this important task is no longer sustainable. In a section of paragraph 11 of the Layton report, under the heading 'The state as parent', there is reference to research undertaken by the University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre entitled 'The costs of caring'. That study found that the low levels of subsidy paid by states to foster carers were not meeting the costs of children in care.

The concerns of carers surveyed range across a wide spectrum of issues including inadequacy of standard subsidies to meet even basic care costs; difficulties in accessing, arranging and obtaining additional funding for services; high

levels of stress experienced by both carers and agencies in attempting to meet the needs of children; high turnover of people caring for children with substantial numbers of carers entering and also leaving fostering care over a 12-month period; the nature of foster care being not only arduous but also at times hazardous for both carers and their families; and a lack of acknowledgment, respect and support for carers. The survey also noted difficulties in rural and regional areas in accessing and arranging additional services.

These are all issues that we, as members of this council, should familiarise ourselves with, and the select committee will provide an ideal opportunity to do that. The Layton report quoted a submission received from Ms Nina Weston, a well-known advocate in this field, who stated:

There is an urgent and critical need for realistic funding to be made available as to ensure children, young people and their families are provided with an effective team of skilled and knowledgeable foster carers and social workers when family based care placements are required. Currently, funding to service providers, Family and Youth Services, and the advocacy bodies (including CREATE, SAFECARE and the Carers' Advocate) are under resourced which has a direct impact on the quality of care received by children and young people. Further, the amount allocated carers and specialist services when they care for individuals is far under the actual cost of care.

A submission from the UnitingCare Port Pirie Central Mission states:

Increase the pool of foster carers to eradicate the current practice where children are moved from one temporary foster home to another for an extended period. . .

The same submission contains this valid point:

All too often the community sees foster children as being outside the 'norm'. The children carry a social stigma that causes the community to condemn them without hearing in situations ranging from school performances to sporting achievements. . .

Foster carers are variously seen as frustrated people who are unable to find worthwhile employment and justify their existence by interfering in the lives of normal families, which indicates that the important work that foster carers are undertaking is being undervalued in our community, and strategies to redress and reverse that situation must be identified and pursued.

Layton continues:

The needs of children who are unable to live at home have become more complex in our society. Many are already in a traumatised state by the time of placement and have significant behavioural problems. It is too simplistic to think that these difficulties can be managed without training and support. The preparedness to take on the custody of a foster child should be treated as conducting a professional service and be appropriately reimbursed.

In an analysis of the system undertaken by Ms. J. Barber, entitled 'The slow demise of foster care in South Australia', published in 2001, she says:

The State is not the only party withdrawing from care, so too is the community at large. The supply of volunteer carers, which is already critical, will shrink still further as this generation of carers enters old age. It is an irony of the purchaser-provider model, with all its talk of quasi-markets and commercial contracts, that its application of out-of-home care ultimately relies on volunteer labour.

As the supply of this labour shrinks, the State has only a limited range of options before it. Either it provides more support services and higher levels of remuneration for potential carers, it reverses the decline in residential care, or it reduces the number of children accepted into care.

And so the catalogue of issues, of problems and of solutions that are required to be addressed goes on in the Layton report. It is a matter of great concern that this government has not to date adequately addressed the problem. It is not only being raised at a political level, because one can see it in the advertisements published by Anglicare and to which I think the Hon. Kate Reynolds referred. In February 2004, Angli-

care, over the hand of Glenis Morrison, the Manager of Alternative Care Services in the Central 2 region, issued the following:

Anglicare SA is the major provider of foster care services in metropolitan Adelaide and we are finding it becoming increasingly difficult to recruit foster carers. On any one night we have around 600 children in foster care in situations of emergency, respite, short-term and long-term care. We place on average 50-60 children a week. Currently we have around 200 available carers to cope with this. These families are becoming increasingly stretched to meet the demands. We urgently need more foster carers.

At present there is a shortage of foster carers in your area, and we would really appreciate you displaying the attached flyer on your notice board or in the community and including the information in any newsletters etc., that are distributed.

Here is one of the principal agencies in this state that provides alternative care (at least, it has been until now) demonstrating the desperate situation out there in the field. When one reads the letters of constituents, foster carers and others associated with the system, one can see their desperation and their plight. We in this council owe it to them to give them the opportunity to present to the parliament evidence of solutions.

I do not see that a select committee will in any way replicate the work of Layton. We can build upon that work, come up with solutions and keep the heat on the government to ensure that the solutions it does come up with—when eventually it does—are the appropriate solutions and, more importantly, that they are funded appropriately. I seek leave to conclude my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

GOVERNMENT FUNDED NATIONAL BROADCASTING

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. Nick Xenophon:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be established to inquire into and make recommendations on the role and adequacy of government funded national broadcasting and to examine the impact of these broadcasters on the South Australian economy and community, and, in particular, to examine:

- the current and long-term distribution of government funded national broadcasting resources and the effect of this distribution on South Australia;
- the effects on industry, including broadcasting, film and video production and multimedia;
- the effects on the arts, sporting and cultural life in South Australia, including whether government funded national broadcasters adequately service South Australia;
- whether government funded national broadcasters adequately service South Australia in respect of South Australian current affairs and sports coverage; and
- the programming mix available from government funded national broadcasters and how programming decisions are made and whether the programming which is delivered is geographically balanced.

2. That standing order 389 be so far suspended as to enable the chairperson of the committee to have a deliberative vote only.

3. That this council permits the select committee to authorise the disclosure or publication, as it sees fit, of any evidence of documents presented to the committee prior to such evidence being presented to the council.

4. That standing order 396 be suspended to enable strangers to be admitted when the select committee is examining witnesses unless the committee otherwise resolves, but they shall be excluded when the committee is deliberating.

(Continued from 24 March. Page 1229.)

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Leader of the Opposition): I rise on behalf of Liberal members to indicate that the Liberal Party room has agreed that, given that this motion has the support of the majority of members of the Legislative Council to pass and to ensure that the select committee is instituted,

Liberal members and the Liberal Party do not oppose the it. I acknowledge that almost exactly the same motion was moved some two years ago and, on that occasion, the Liberal Party, via the Hon. Diana Laidlaw, opposed the establishment of a select committee. On that occasion, I think the Australian Democrats indicated that they, too, opposed the establishment of a select committee.

I understand from the Hon. Mr Xenophon that the Australian Democrats and, indeed, other Independent members and the government, support the motion on this occasion, so clearly Liberal Party members are not in a position to prevent the establishment of the select committee. As I said, we will not stand on our hind legs and vote against its establishment.

I will summarise the Hon. Diana Laidlaw's contribution when she addressed this issue in 2001. Broadly, she stated that the reasons for the opposition at that time were that we in South Australia really have no capacity to make decisions in relation to the ABC. Virtually all other select committees established in the South Australian parliament are for issues where the parliament has the capacity to make decisions, or to provide advice to the state government, in relation to an issue which is within the control and responsibility of the state government.

The Hon. Diana Laidlaw made the point that, in relation to the ABC, there is no decision-making process for the state government or, indeed, the state parliament in relation to these issues. She moved an amendment on that occasion which expressed the concern of the South Australian Legislative Council about some of the decisions that the ABC had taken and conveyed those concerns to people who do have the responsibility, potentially, to make decisions, namely, the federal Minister for Communications at the time and also federal members of parliament who, again, have the capacity to make decisions that influence the ABC, albeit perhaps through their party rooms or through the lobbying of their own ministers or shadow ministers.

The Liberal party accepts the majority view that wants to express a particular concern in relation to these areas. In the establishment of the select committee, one of the other issues that we will have to eventually address in the Legislative Council is the fact that, with the two select committees on the *Notice Paper* that look like being established, we will end up with eight select committees of the Legislative Council, in addition to the number of standing committees upon which members already sit.

Whilst I am sure all members share the concern about some of the ABC's decisions, in terms of priorities it is my personal view that issues like electricity, family and youth services and those issues which are within the purview of the state government ought to take greater priority in terms of the time and workload of South Australian members of parliament. We could establish a range of select committees in a range of areas which do not directly impact on decisions to be taken by the South Australian parliament and the government on which we would probably all agree. Ultimately, it is a question of priorities and timing. That is an issue that all parties and all members of the council will have to address in terms of the priorities for select and standing committee work.

In addressing the issues raised by the Hon. Mr Xenophon, I would like to make a number of comments. In the first instance, I personally have greater concern with the decisions taken by the ABC in relation to things like the removal of the state based *7.30 Report*. Those decisions were taken many

years ago and there were many protests at the time which accounted for nought, as we still do not have state based *7.30 reports*. We have *Stateline* on Friday nights—

The Hon. Nick Xenophon: It was clawed back.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: The Hon. Nick Xenophon says that it was clawed back. From my viewpoint I do not see it as a claw back. I see the *7.30 Report* as a state based institution that was destroyed and removed. I do not see *Stateline* as a claw back from the issues. That is something where local current affairs lost a ready avenue of political and community debate on a variety of issues, including, occasionally, sport. I think that the issues canvassed in some speeches and in public comment about *Behind the News* are slightly different. As a former minister and shadow minister of education, I thought it was a very worthwhile, nationally produced program which, certainly, was not a state based program highlighting different state based issues. My understanding is that it was nationally produced in South Australia. I see that as being a different issue. It was a decision that I opposed and about which I expressed concerns. In relation to a Sydney-centric national broadcast, which the Hon. Mr Xenophon talked about, I think that the removal of the *7.30 Report* is a better example than *Behind the News* of Sydney-centric broadcasting and the removal of regional issues such as the old *7.30 Report*.

In relation to the issue that has prompted all of this, the sporting content of the ABC News, I indicate that I believe that I am probably as interested in sporting matters as most other members of state parliament; I take an ongoing interest in these issues. I would not like to compare myself to the Hon. Nick Xenophon in relation to this matter as I suspect my interest in sporting pursuits is probably marginally ahead of his. Part of this public debate is the notion that the old format of the ABC News was a wonderful format in relation to sporting presentation. Let me acknowledge that there were some sports that the ABC, in my experience, covered to a greater extent than some of the commercial stations.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts interjecting:

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I can assure the Hon. Terry Roberts that you did not see much of West Adelaide under ABC television's old arrangements. I certainly express the view that on a number of occasions the sporting component of the ABC half-hour news was a very modest number of minutes and a very modest contribution in terms of sporting content for a half-hour news bulletin. On those particular nights that I did watch the comparable commercial news bulletins, on a number of occasions it was less than, in terms of the length of the sporting content, the commercial news bulletin.

Not watching every news bulletin every night, I am not in a position to indicate that that is necessarily indicative of every night of the week for every week of the year. Nevertheless, my experience on a number of occasions has been that there have been some very modest ABC sports bulletins. On some nights I have seen pretty good coverage of local AFL teams on commercial television and no coverage at all on the ABC, particularly in the pre-season and during the off-season when there are occasional stories of reasonable significance on some commercial bulletins. I have seen none of that on the ABC News coverage.

The first point I make is that I do not think that the assumption that everybody is making that what existed before was the Rolls-Royce of sporting news coverage in South Australia. From my viewpoint it was far from the Rolls-Royce of sporting news coverage. Secondly, to balance the

debate which publicly almost universally condemns what is being contemplated by the ABC, I would like to put on the record some alternative views. I would like to read some quotes from Geoff Roach from the Saturday 20 March edition of *The Advertiser*. Geoff Roach is widely acknowledged as one of the leading sporting commentators in South Australia. He is certainly much more knowledgeable than the Hon. Mr Xenophon or the Hon. Rob Lucas about sporting journalism and coverage in South Australia. Geoff Roach's assessment was entitled 'Give new ABC format an initial go.' He writes:

Sorry, but I just can't summons sufficient passion or reason to embrace the handwringing hoo-ha which has accompanied ABC television's decision to instigate a centralised nightly sports bulletin. Not yet anyway. Not until I've sampled at least another week's tasting of the new menu. And certainly not until I've concluded whether the rabid reaction within the organisation itself is just another power ploy by a posse of notoriously precious, militant ABC staffers. Or whether the sporting world as we know it is somehow under genuine threat. Clearly, there are several aspects of the innovation which appear to pose valid grounds for objection. The first, and most damning, is that the national format appears to have been devised not by the desire to build a better bulletin for viewers but solely to enable the ABC to retain the services of the Sydney-based presenter Peter Wilkins.

Mr Roach then goes on to talk a little bit about Mr Wilkins and a variety of other issues. Further on, Geoff Roach continues:

All that aside, however, I can't for the life of me yet fathom how things would be any different—other than the fact that Wilkins will now be seen nationally on screen instead of the gaggle of regional presenters who have instead been freed to enrich the bulletin with local stories which they have themselves developed. On the evidence of this week only 2½ minutes of each night's bulletin will be allocated to the Wilko segment. Which should leave at least a thumping five more for whatever sport stories regional producers wish to present. It's not as though we are presently accustomed to a feast of local sports cover on ABC bulletins anyway. We're not.

I interpose to say that the last comment from Mr Roach mirrors the earlier comment that I made, that this notion that we had a Rolls Royce ABC sports bulletin I think is certainly illusory.

The Hon. A.J. Redford: If you want sport you turn to Channel 10.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: The Hon. Mr Redford says that, if you want sports, you turn on *Sports Tonight* for a good half hour bulletin and, also, you have approximately 10 to 12 minutes in their hourly bulletin between about 20 to six and seven or eight minutes to six, and I agree with the Hon. Mr Redford in relation to the length of the sports service.

The Hon. T.G. Roberts: If you are in the country you can't get it.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I accept that. Finally, Mr Roach says:

If, after a reasonable time, I then find it doesn't deliver, I'll have no problem saying so.

I think that is a fair response from Geoff Roach, who says, 'Let's have a look at it, rather than automatically accept the knee-jerk response from everyone in the first instance.'

In *The Sunday Mail* of 21 March the state editor for ABC South Australia, Tom O'Byrne, made a number of comments, and I will not read all of them but place on the record the following (and, in this, he explains how he sees the process operating):

When that production team meets at ABC Collinswood every morning, it'll know that the national and/or international sports material will be taken care of, so an assignment editor can better use our local reporters to add a package or interview or investigative piece to that night's program.

Not only will that item be run locally but it will go into the mix of dozens of items on offer for any other newsroom to select and run on their 7 p.m. news. In all the fuss over this sports development, we need to remember this will increase local content, not diminish it. In my book, sitting in a studio presenting various introductions to sports packages produced elsewhere is not local content.

Rather, local content is about real people talking on real issues or developments on anything from the price of fruit to The King's hammy. In effect, we are applying the same news values to sport that we apply during the rest of the bulletin. Nothing more, nothing less.

In *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 21 March the head of ABC news, Marco Bass, in a story defending the decision to deliver sports coverage from Sydney, stated:

I think it's worth restating what we promised we would do and what we have delivered this past week. We promised there would be no reduction of the amount or quality of local sports stories in the bulletin. We have delivered on this with first-rate coverage of the allegations of rape against two St Kilda players, Victoria's cricket cup win, various AFL news items, including coverage of the annual report and the wash-up of the AFL pre-season final.

For the most part, these stories have sat either side of the Peter Wilkins wrap and have complemented it. We promised that we would not impose a 'Sydney' sports agenda on Victorian viewers, and we have kept that promise. Peter Wilkins has had many elements in his wraps, including Test cricket from Sri Lanka, athletics, cycling, NBL, Troy Bayliss and his new superbike, the new Formula One Grand Prix track in Dubai and the readiness of Athens to hold the Olympic Games.

As promised, these stories were of national and international significance. They are sporting events that would be seen the same way through the eyes of any good sporting journalist wherever they happened to live.

Finally, on the other side, I want to mention one of the stories which I thought highlighted the absurdity of some of the criticism which was in *The Advertiser* of 16 March which went under the heading 'Only one mention in three minutes', a story by Warren Partland. It reported:

ABC TV last night turned its back on Adelaide viewers with its weeknight news sports bulletin neglecting South Australia. Launching its new centralised sports package hosted by Sydney's Peter Wilkins, there was just one mention of Adelaide in a three-minute New South Wales-dominated bulletin.

Without going through the rest of the story, it detailed the stories that were in the bulletin. The reason that was the case was, of course, that local journalists in South Australia had gone on strike and refused to provide local sporting content and, at the last moment, the whole of the ABC news service for that 30-minute period was directed from Sydney in New South Wales, with the Sydney news reader and with the Sydney news content. It was in no way a trialing or a testing of the proposed new sporting package.

So, I have highlighted those quotes and, as I said, two of those are from the ABC, and you would expect those heads of news to defend the decision they had taken. I think Geoff Roach's approach is a reasonable example of an independent person who has basically said, 'Let's wait and see. Let's at least reserve judgment.' I think that is my position, personally—that is, we should wait and see what impact it has. If this committee is to be established, as it appears it will be, I assume that the local ABC in South Australia and Victoria will be able to produce details of the extent of local sporting coverage after the decision and before the decision.

I was interested to see in one of the eastern states' papers a Tim Lane interview with one of the ABC people and, evidently, the notion of local sporting presenters (according to Tim Lane) was really only a notion in South Australia and in Victoria. Whether or not that is true I do not know, but certainly the Tim Lane article that I saw said that most other states did not have this notion of the local equivalent of a Neil

Cross or an Angela Pippas from Victoria presenting the local sporting news. Essentially, I think that is a matter of choice. The commercial stations in South Australia have their sporting commentator or news reader but, if I am watching a news bulletin and there is an overseas-sourced report on Australia's cricket match in Sri Lanka, frankly, Neil Cross or Angela Pippas reading it as opposed to Peter Wilkins makes no difference to the sporting content of that story. They add nothing in terms of sporting content to what is an internationally-sourced story.

When we come to nationally-sourced stories, I think the issue has been strongly felt in Victoria, in particular against Peter Wilkins as someone who has a rugby background and evidently has said some unflattering things in the past about the AFL. I am not here to defend Peter Wilkins and do not intend to: I am really only interested in the essential issue of whether or not local sporting coverage will or will not be affected on ABC television news as a result of the decisions. Whilst I think almost everyone publicly has assumed that it will be affected, I have used those quotes to indicate that there is a small number of people who are at least saying, 'Let's have a look and make a balanced judgment before we make any conclusions.'

If the select committee takes evidence and comes back and says, 'There used to be seven minutes of local sporting news on ABC TV in South Australia prior to the changes and that has now declined to five minutes', then we can say that the concerns that have been expressed prior to the change have now been proved to be fact. We cannot do anything about it, of course, as a result of the select committee's report. We will still be able to do the same things, and that is express concern to the ABC board that what it said would not happen has happened and then perhaps urge it to reflect on that and make changes to ensure that the average sporting content of its news returns to whatever the previous figure might have been.

I wish the members of the committee well. The Hon. Nick Xenophon whispered into my shell-like ear that he sees the committee meeting only one, two, three or four times. I seem to recall another select committee that the Hon. Nick Xenophon assured me would not meet for an excessively long period, and that was the interactive gambling committee which I think was established about five years ago (or maybe only four years ago), and still has not reported.

Looking at the terms of reference that have been established by the Hon. Mr Xenophon, because they are so broad, if the committee is to discharge its responsibilities properly, it will take more than a few meetings. The terms of reference go much beyond the current issue, which is the sporting content on ABC News. One reference deals with the current and long-term distribution of government funded national broadcasting resources, and that would require going through the budgeting of the ABC nationally, how it is distributed between the states and the regions—not just sport but right across the board with respect to its priorities. The second reference is to the effects on industry including broadcasting, film and video production and multimedia, which is an enormously broad topic just by itself.

Paragraph (d) is concerned with the effects on the arts, sporting and cultural life, including whether government-funded national broadcasters adequately service South Australia. If the committee is to discharge its responsibilities, it will have to look at services right across regional South Australia, and I would have thought it important to give the opportunity to regional South Australians to put a point of

view to the committee. It ought not to be an Adelaide-centric select committee. People in regional areas should be given the opportunity to put a point of view, and the point made by the Hon. Terry Roberts is that people in the country do not get Channel 10 and some of the other commercial bulletins. If the ABC is much more important, the committee and the Hon. Mr Xenophon will have to ensure that the committee takes evidence in regional communities on the West Coast, in the north, in the South-East and in the Mallee to allow regional communities to put a point of view to the committee about the very broad terms of reference that have been drafted by the Hon. Mr Xenophon.

Paragraph (d) also touches on regional coverage, seeking to discover whether government funded national broadcasters adequately service South Australia in respect of South Australian current affairs and sports coverage. The final term of reference (paragraph (e)) concerns the programming mix available from government funded national broadcasters, how programming decisions are made and whether the programming that is delivered is geographically balanced. That is extremely broad. It is not just about the sports content of ABC News.

The council is about to agree to enormously broad terms of reference and, as I indicated to the Hon. Mr Xenophon, I do not see this being concluded in a small number of meetings. If that were the case, some might believe that this select committee was more a stunt than a genuine body of work. I think it is much more than two or three meetings. It is something that will require a good amount of work from the Hon. Mr Xenophon and his colleagues on the committee and, as I said, particularly with respect to the opportunity for regional South Australians to put a strong point of view to committee members in relation to their ABC. With that, I indicate that Liberal members will not be opposing the motion.

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: I thank members for their contributions. I also thank those members who gave an indication of support and those members who indicated that they will not oppose this motion. I agree with the Hon. Mr Lucas that this involves a number of important issues and maybe three or four meetings will not be enough, but I think that a number of the matters raised here can be dealt with by way of written submissions from ABC management, the unions involved and other interested parties. It is important that we fulfil faithfully the terms of reference with respect to looking at all these issues.

In a sense, the latest decision about the sports bulletin made by the management of the ABC in Sydney, without any real consultation with management in Adelaide or in Victoria, as I understand it, indicates a further decline in the editorial independence of local newsrooms and of local management, and that is disturbing. The Hon. Mr Lucas made the point about the *7.30 Report*, and it was a very bitter blow in this state when we lost the locally based *7.30 Report*. I believe there has been a clawing back to a degree by having *Stateline* once a week but I know that it operates on a shoestring budget. At least we have that local content on Friday nights, but my preference and I dare say that say of the Hon. Mr Lucas and others would be to have a well-resourced, locally based *7.30 Report* so we can get behind the news on a whole range of issues that are important to South Australians in a direct sense.

One of the problems with the most recent decision of the ABC management in Sydney in relation to the sports bulletin,

and what I found quite disturbing, is that it was not done because of budgetary constraints, unlike the *7.30 Report* decision, and it is another matter as to whether that was a reasonable decision to make. As I understand it, Mr John Cameron from the ABC indicated that this was a qualitative decision; in other words, it was not about money, it was about improving the quality of the bulletin. Those judgments are very subjective. They were not taken in consultation with, or with the agreement of, the ABC newsroom in Adelaide, and it concerns me that, if ABC management says that it has made this decision to have a national wrap based on quality, which is very subjective in many respects, what other decisions will be made? Will ABC News, which has a very important role in regional communities in this state, go down the path of the Ten Network, which only has a national, Sydney-based bulletin on weekends? I am concerned about the manner in which decisions are made.

The Hon. Mr Lucas is quite right to say that this parliament does not have any direct control over the ABC, but widespread concern has been expressed on both sides of the political fence. I know from the brief discussions I have had with the Hon. Mr Kerin and with Mr Martin Hamilton-Smith, the member for Waite and shadow spokesperson on this issue, that they expressed their concerns. I understand that the Hon. Mr Kerin sent a letter of protest about this or endorsed such remarks. I note also that in Victoria the Liberal opposition leader, Mr Doyle, expressed his concerns.

I would like to think that, if this committee does its job well and thoroughly, as I expect it will, it will advance debate in terms of the impact of states such as ours as to what sort of deal we get from our national broadcaster, and only good can come out of that. If that forms the basis of further debate and further comment at the national level, only good can come from it, and I know that the Hon. Peter Costello has expressed his concerns about the impact of the decision on ABC sports coverage in Melbourne. That is something that should be borne in mind.

We do have other committees that are dealing with other important issues, but this is important as well because it is about how our national broadcaster treats South Australia in this context. I would like to finish by quoting something I read the other day which could be just as apt in this debate: 'If you think you are too small to make a difference, just spend a night in a dark room with a mosquito.' That sums up what this debate is about. Whilst we do not have any direct control of the ABC, this committee could play a very positive role, and I am sure that every member on this committee will do their bit to ensure that we fulfil the terms of reference faithfully.

Motion carried.

The council appointed a select committee consisting of the Hons J.S.L. Dawkins, G.E. Gago, T.J. Stephens, N. Xenophon and C. Zollo; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place; the committee to report on Wednesday 7 July 2004.

ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: WIND FARMS

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. G.E. Gago:

That the 51st report of the committee, on an inquiry into wind farms, be noted.

(Continued from 24 March. Page 1230.)

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: The inquiry into wind farms was referred to the ERD committee on 14 May 2003 by the House of Assembly. The purpose of the inquiry was to look at the environmental, fiscal and social impacts of wind farms in South Australia. During peak times, South Australia faces power shortages. The challenge facing South Australia and other states at the moment is how to create forms of electricity that do not adversely affect the environment, in particular forms that do not produce greenhouse gases. Currently, Australia has a target of limiting greenhouse gas emissions to 108 per cent of its 1990 level over the period 2008 to 2012. Owing to the fact that electricity production accounted for 33 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia in 2001, solutions to help curb this are needed immediately.

Wind generated electricity does not produce any greenhouse gases and it is a cleaner way to produce energy, in comparison with fossil fuels which contribute to global warming. Global warming is a problem that probably will not greatly affect our generation but, rather, those to come. In addition, fossil fuel stocks are depleting rapidly and other avenues of energy production need to be investigated. I was a member of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee when we visited the Starfish Hill wind farm. The turbines were 100 metres tall and there were a total of 23 at this particular wind farm; and, currently, the government of South Australia purchases some of the energy produced at Starfish Hill.

Wind energy is expensive to produce, particularly compared with energy derived from fossil fuels. The development of Starfish Hill wind farm, and others like it, is made possible with the federal government's mandatory renewable energy targets (MRETs) and renewable energy certificates. The committee recognises the need to develop other methods of generating energy but is also mindful of the cost of so doing. There is an anticipated decline in investment due to the fact that most renewable energy projects require high levels of upfront capital investment and a minimum payback period of 15 years. It is recommended that the MRETs scheme be continued beyond 2020 in order to prevent projects (begun after 2007) from losing their value.

The development of Starfish Hill wind farm raised several issues with regard to the development of wind power. One of the most pertinent was how to store the excess energy produced on windy days and to use this later; and whether or not to use interconnectors to divert this energy to other states. Also discussed by the committee was the need to build wind turbines in remote, windy coastal areas, such as Eyre Peninsula. The committee recommended that the government should investigate the feasibility of infrastructure spending on a case by case basis in order to properly assess the economic and social requirements of the communities involved.

The committee believes that wind energy should be encouraged in this state to help with the greenhouse effect, as well as preventing possible carbon taxes and trade embargos. In order to support this, more research is needed into wind forecasting, and especially energy storage. When we are able develop a battery system that can store the energy in a form with which we may not yet be familiar, the better for the industry. Additional energy would be a boom to South Australia, as it would assist growth in many of our industries—manufacturing and aquaculture are just two that would benefit from extra power.

The development assessment was a large part of the committee's research into wind farms. The committee believes that a uniform methodology is needed to assess possible wind farm developments. Planning policies need to be more accessible to the public so that they are able to understand why certain decisions are made. The committee also recommends that Planning SA develop a policy paper that discusses where wind farms are allowed to be built, as they can have a negative visual impact on the surrounding land, for example, blade flicker can cause interruptions to the natural light and may disturb many animals and humans. Another environmental impact discussed by the committee was the impact on bird life. The committee strongly recommends that there is one initial contact point for all people interested in wind farm development.

The committee believes that policy development is needed in the areas of sustainable energy and greenhouse gas management. The committee heard from 33 witnesses during the report and took 43 submissions. Due to the inquiry, the committee made 25 recommendations and looks forward to the government's implementing them. One particular recommendation of the committee in which I am particularly interested is the need for a state energy plan. Due to the problems in South Australia's supply of energy, there is a need to set out a plan to ensure we have the resources to provide a constant, affordable flow of energy for all South Australians.

The last power station built in South Australia was Pelican Point, which was built in 2000 by the former Liberal government. I believe that before this the last power station built was the Playford B power station, which the Liberal government upgraded in 1999. I stress that, due to the 20-plus years of neglect by Labor governments, this energy system had very much fallen into disrepair. I stress the need for this government to adopt the committee's recommendation of an energy plan in order to ensure constancy and prevent kneejerk announcements, such as that by the Minister for Energy last Sunday when he announced \$64 million of taxpayers' money will be given to gas companies in an effort to reduce prices.

I thank all those who contributed to the inquiry, prepared submissions and provided evidence to the committee. I extend my sincere thanks to the current and former members of the committee—the Presiding Member (Ms Lyn Breuer), the Hons Malcolm Buckby, John Gazzola and Sandra Kanck and Mr Tom Koutsantonis. I also thank the staff members Mr Phil Frensham and Ms Heather Hill for their hard work.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: This reference was moved in the house of Assembly by the member for Schubert, Ivan Venning. The construction of the terms of reference shows that he had quite an understanding of the issue, which is impressive. I think that it has been a very valuable exercise for the committee to receive the submissions, hear all the evidence and learn in the process. I particularly thank our researcher, Heather Hill, for putting together such an excellent report and our secretary, Phil Frensham.

Wind farms are planned in a number of locations in the state. These include the Mid North, Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula, Fleurieu Peninsula and the South-East. However, a disproportionate number of the submissions that we received came from people living on Fleurieu Peninsula, and many of them were opposed to wind farms. This contrasts, for instance, with Eyre Peninsula, whose residents seemed to have a very gung-ho response to wind power. I would like to

quote from a submission from the District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula, as follows:

This council is fortunate to have a coastline where significant potential exists for wind energy farming.

The submission further states:

This council has been requested by Greg Rowberry from the Department of Environment and Heritage to investigate the potential for wind energy harvesting and make appropriate changes to its development plan to facilitate such a development and to particularly address the noise and visual impacts.

It is very interesting to hear that there is some government involvement with respect to development plans, albeit pushing from the side. The Elliston council in its submission to us lamented the fact that it was not receiving enough support from the state government. I must say that I have reservations about some of those locations on Eyre Peninsula, having visited there about 12 months ago for a local government conference. We were taken by bus to the Locks Well area, where we stood on the cliff top, looked out over the ocean and drank some wine and ate some seafood.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: As one does, yes. When I looked at those cliffs and saw their beauty, the thought of wind turbines being on that site quite horrified me. That brings me to the concerns of many of those who oppose wind farms. They raised issues of visual amenity, bird strike, noise, blade glint and shadow. Although most of those submissions were in relation to Fleurieu Peninsula, they are of such concern that I think they could equally apply to any other area, and they were issues that the committee had to address seriously. The submissions from Fleurieu Peninsula residents show that there is a diverse range of opinions—for instance, I know that Friends of Willunga Basin (of which I am a member) has strongly supported the Starfish Hill wind farm.

The question that arises is: are wind farms a visual blight? Certainly, some of the people on Fleurieu Peninsula regard them as such. Architecturally, some people (and I am amongst them) see them as quite a magnificent sight. They are very purpose built and do what they do—and do it well—with such a very simple design. As well as that simplicity of design, for me, they are a powerful symbol that something positive is happening to meet some of this country's international obligations in regard to minimising greenhouse gas emissions and using non-renewable fuels in a responsible way.

I visited Fleurieu Peninsula prior to the committee's beginning this reference and met with one of the local residents, Serge Doublet. One of the issues he raised with me (and he took me out in his car along the main road to show this to me) was a concern about the increased risk of road crashes as turbines suddenly come into view as the driver is halfway around a bend. Although the turbines at that stage were not constructed, I can certainly see that there is the potential for road crashes, and it will be interesting to see how things pan out in that regard.

There is no doubt that visual impact is an issue, particularly in areas of high scenic value. Some would argue that Fleurieu Peninsula is not of high scenic value because the hills are already bare and are being used for agricultural purposes, and have been used in that way for more than a century. But many also see those rolling hills as being particularly beautiful. The South Australian Tourism Commission made a submission to the committee, as follows:

Nature-based tourism, coastal tourism and the self-drive market are strong themes in current South Australian tourism strategies.

Previous and current tourism strategies have emphasised South Australia's competitive advantage of having relatively unspoilt natural experiences.

The submission also stated:

No development should be sited in approximation of a national park without substantial physical and visual buffer zones protective of the park and its values.

One of the issues that came up time and again in the submissions that we received was about the need for no-go zones. The committee has recommended (recommendation No. 14) that Planning SA develop a policy paper for no-go zones for wind farms. In the previous year, 2003, the committee had dealt with the government's plan amendment report on wind farms. We have also recommended (in fact, it was the very first recommendation of this committee) that the plan amendment report on wind farms be reviewed in the light of the recommendations made in this report.

It is interesting to look at that plan amendment report. It talks about objectives, principles, policies and guidelines but there does not appear to be anything that is really enforceable, and I think that is one of the criticisms. The committee receives plan amendment reports on a very regular basis; where there has been a public consultation we receive what is called a Public Consultation Submission Summary.

I wish to refer to some of the things that were said by different people in 2003 about that plan amendment report. In response to someone saying that there should be no-go areas, the department responded by saying:

While not specifically defining no-go areas, the PAR policies assist [and I emphasise the word 'assist'] in determining whether sites are appropriate or not. Councils can if they wish [and again I stress 'if they wish'] undertake further, more detailed local investigations for their areas to provide additional locational detail in their development plans using the bulletin as a guide [and, again, I stress 'guide'].

The National Trust said, as a criticism of that plan amendment report, 'There is no articulation of no-go areas', and it strongly urged the government to work to identify significant landscapes, whatever they are. Again, the government's response (the department's response) is PAR policies can themselves be used to determine no-go areas. Local government can consider additional detail using the bulletin directions as a guide. The need for specific no-go areas is still being considered as they are largely dependant on the quality of the information available to support their introduction.

The Conservation Council recommends that national parks and conservation parks be specifically excluded from consideration for wind farms. The department's response was that no specific PAR action is required. The existing plan amendment report—which is the guide for anybody who is attempting to put up a wind farm or anyone who wants to oppose it—is really very wide open to interpretation. The Grant Council, in its submission to the committee, said:

The utmost care should be taken to avoid siting in environmentally sensitive areas. Much of South Australia's tourism industry and indeed much of our residents' day-to-day enjoyment of our lifestyle is based on access to areas where there has been little or no human intervention. These areas need to be protected from development of any kind where practical.

The Friends of Parks in its submission said:

The protection of areas of high scenic amenity and conservation value is paramount. Without guidelines for planning authorities in the form of, at the very least, a State Plan Amendment Report stating categorically where wind farms should not be located, no protection is afforded to natural scenic areas along our coastlines and vegetated landscapes and ridges. Once they have been erected they will never

be removed and areas of high ecotourism and conservation value should not be spoiled.

When I suggested to members of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee that we, as a committee, should recommend a blanket 'no' to wind farms in our national and conservation parks, I must admit that I was very surprised and disappointed to find that I did not receive backing for this proposal. I would have thought that members of the committee would not want to be seen to be leaving a back door open for a wind farm to be built in one of South Australia's parks. Anyway, rather than specifically suggesting what could or should be considered as inappropriate locations, the committee has recommended and said that the government should prepare a policy paper on no-go zones.

Nevertheless, as the report observes, Victoria's wind energy guidelines do not permit wind energy developments on any land reserved under their national parks act. The Democrats believe we should follow Victoria's example. I hope that, if the government does observe the committee's advice and develops a policy on no-go zones, it will protect our parks. One of the 15 proposals that is under consideration at the moment for wind farms around this state is by Wind Farm Developments Pty Ltd, which would be located above the cliffs at Waitpinga. The area is a coastal reserve in front of the conservation park. The Friends of Newland Head are very upset about this proposal, and I want to read from a newsletter from the Friends of Newland Head. It states:

The consultation will take place to ensure that the decision is made with all objections having been made known. It does not mean that they have to take notice of the objections, it means that they have been taken account of or dismissed in the process of making the decision. To date, wind farm decisions have been dismissive of all objections, regardless of scenic, amenity, environment or reliability arguments. No doubt the trend will continue due, in no small way, to a federal commitment to reach certain clean air targets in a relatively short period of time. To do this, it is unlikely they would wish to dissuade any potential developer regardless of objection. On top of this are the statements emanating from our state Premier that he wants South Australia to be the wind farm state. It does appear that they are preparing to place them anywhere. My question would have to be: where are they planning not to put them if they put them on the Waitpinga cliff line?

I have no hesitation in indicating that there will be implications for our group if the current proposal is approved. There will be a number who will not feel that they wish to continue to physically put effort into enhancing a beautiful and significant section of our coast after it is compromised to such a degree by commercial development. Let us hope that planning is also common sense and does not spoil the fringe beauty of this town for the sake of impatience and a developer's profitability. There are other places just as windy, much more out of the way and much more out of sight where they will not blight our most visible coastline and near town natural environment but still close enough to relate to our community.

I stress that I spoke to one of the members of that group the other night on the phone and they are not saying no to wind farms; they are simply saying that they do not want it on the Waitpinga cliffs. The Friends of Newland Head are concerned about the white-breasted sea eagles that are nesting on the Waitpinga cliffs. That pair is the only pair on southern Fleurieu Peninsula and it is possible that the next closest pair are located on Eyre Peninsula. The proponents for that particular wind farm proposal have claimed that sea eagles are itinerant, but that particular pair of sea eagles at Newland Head have been nesting there for seven to eight years. Given the knowledge that two eagles have already been killed by flying into turbine blades at Starfish Hill, it appears to me that it would be stupidity to locate a wind farm where sea eagles are nesting. If we had proper guidelines in place about wind farms, and if we had no-go zones, I am sure that this particu-

lar proposal would not ever get up but, because things are so rubbery as far as policies, principles and guidelines go, it could just happen.

I turn to the issue of the need for a level playing field as far as planning is concerned. Opponents express their concerns about transmission lines—that they ought to be underground. Yet, transmission lines in general around the state are transmitting power that has been generated using fossil fuel. I wonder why transmission lines associated with wind power should have to face an extra cost compared to transmission lines that are feeding fossil fuel generated electricity to consumers. The committee was told that the cost for electricity, if transmission lines had to be placed underground, would be five-fold. I query whether the community would be willing to pay that much for electricity. My conclusion would be that they would not be prepared to pay five-fold the cost for their electricity and, under those circumstances, it would put wind energy out of consideration.

Other opponents suggested that wind farms should be located off-shore so that they are less visible, but the evidence received by the committee was that at minimum this would double the price for that wind energy. If wind turbines are forced to be located off-shore or the transmission lines leading away from those wind farms are forced to be placed underground, it would guarantee that we would be forced to continue to rely on traditional fossil fuel powered plants, and all that goes with it, including greenhouse gas emissions. We surely do not want that. The opponents of wind farms argue for tougher scrutiny of applications, but I ask why wind generated energy should have to face tougher scrutiny than fossil fuelled power stations. AGL's gas turbines near Hallett were constructed after a simple public notification in the local paper.

I add that, after that was done and all the approvals had gone ahead, the government put exemptions in the *Government Gazette* to allow emissions from those turbines above the standards set by the EPA. Some residents are prepared to single out and foist such impositions and costs on wind energy. I see those people as being nothing but spoilers with no environmental consciousness at all. It should be a level playing field for wind energy, and I assure members that the Democrats will do whatever we can to prevent disadvantage to renewable energy.

The committee was asked whether or not local councils have the knowledge and the wherewithal to make an informed decision, whether they could withstand the vigorous lobbying against a proposal and whether it would be better for the Development Assessment Commission to do it. Our recommendations 1 and 2 stated that the existing wind farm plan amendment report be made clearer and more prescriptive. If the powers stay with local government to accept or reject wind farms, having a development plan that spells out more clearly and more prescriptively what can and cannot be done would clearly be of great assistance, both to the proponents and to the opponents of wind farms.

Cost is a factor for the proponents of wind farms which in many cases acts against their being able to mix it with the big boys of traditional fossil fuel power. It was rather a surprise to hear that, when the company Wind Prospects appeared before the committee, the planning application fee that it had to pay to Wakefield Regional Council simply for consideration of the Barunga wind farm was \$100 000. The reason for that sum is that the council sets that price, and it is a maximum. The council could ask less, but apparently the argument is that, if it rejected a wind farm application and it

went through the environment court, the council would use that money to pay for the legal costs.

However, there is no obligation, for example, to hand that money back to the wind farm proponents if all goes smoothly. I wonder whether in fact there should be an obligation for the local government entity to spend that money in ways that would assist the wind farm proponents, such as the construction of suitable roads to the site, or whether it should be a deposit rather than a fee so that, if there is no legal action, the proponents get most of it back. Certainly, it is a very costly process, because Mr Vauzer of Wind Prospects said that, having had to pay the \$100 000 fee to Wakefield Regional Council, it will have to pay yet another \$100 000 in another council area in which they are also proposing a wind farm. So, some of the local councils are getting fairly rich without having to give much in return.

I turn now to the question of what role government should play. Although a number of submissions argued strongly for greater direct government involvement, particularly recommending that there could be improvements in infrastructure in which government could be involved, the committee was loath to adopt a blanket recommendation to that effect. Instead, it recommended three things. Recommendation 6 was that one government department coordinate the dissemination of information on wind farms in South Australia and provide the initial contact for all people interested in wind farm development. That recommendation occurred because wind farm proponents told us that they did not know where to go, because they need to talk to so many different departments. If that recommendation is taken up, it will assist us in South Australia, but Victoria already has the jump on us in having the point of contact where all initial requests can be made.

The committee recommended that the government consider investment in infrastructure on a case-by-case basis, based on economic and social need. Recommendation 12 is that the government be involved in the coordination and staged development of the wind resources of the state. Mr Hugh Alfred was quoted by the Electricity Supply Industry Planning Council in its submission, as follows:

It would be desirable to coordinate and stage the development of the wind resources of the Eyre Peninsula. As much as 500 megawatts of wind farm would be required to fully network capture economies of this scale. This would appear to require the formation of a joint venture between wind farm developers to share the cost and benefits which might be facilitated by government guidance.

Clearly, the Electricity Supply Industry Planning Council is advocating a role for government at that point. Mr Mackie from Hydro Tasmania said:

We recommend that the government investigates the apportionment of costs between beneficiaries. We believe that, for example, some wind farm developments on the Eyre Peninsula would benefit South Australia as a whole. The government could be the convener of investors in a transmission out to the Eyre Peninsula.

So, there is a clear role that the government could play in bringing developers together to form joint ventures. Certainly, as is suggested here, if all South Australia benefits, there could be a role for the government to be involved in the construction of transmission lines or substations, and this would be a clear indicator to energy producers of the government's energy priorities.

The committee heard that the mandated renewable energy target of the federal government (or MRETs as we came to refer to them) tends to drive the construction of larger installations. Wind farms would not have been contemplated

without the introduction of the MRET scheme, and some of those opposing wind farms saw this as proof that the industry should be all but nonexistent. The glee with which opponents of wind farms fell on this information ignores the fact that privately owned fossil fuel generators now operating in the national electricity market have had a free ride, as the Conservation Council put it to the committee, with transmission networks having been paid, historically, by the taxpayer.

A number of submissions and evidence to the committee pointed out that there have been heavy subsidies for fossil fuels in our energy sector. I turn to the submission from the District Council of Elliston which states:

The main issue with the present state government appears to be the requirement for the proposed wind farms to be economically viable in their own right—that is, the wind farms must fund their own interconnector. It also raises the issue of how viable the present-day coal and gas fired electrical generators would be if they were required to fund the infrastructure requirements—rail, pipelines etc.—linking the mineral resources to the generation capacity.

And I understand that was funded using commonwealth and state resources.

I know that a decade or so ago there was a federal government entity. I am not entirely certain of its name, but I think it was something like the National Energy Research Development Corporation, which was known by the acronym NERDC. For people who support sustainable energy, this entity came to be known as the 'NERDS' because so much of the money that this body gave was directed to research into fossil fuels. Certainly, sustainable energy, as in ecologically renewable energy, was very much a Cinderella in terms of the grants that were given. Although that body no longer exists, we have seen that pattern continue. Twelve months ago the federal Liberal government completely ceased the funding of the Cooperative Research Centre for Renewable Energy and redirected that money in favour of research for coal.

Because all of South Australia's electricity industry has been privatised, it was difficult, I found, to convince other members of my committee that any recommendation could be made for any sort of government involvement. I have already suggested that the committee would not consider a recommendation that the government should, for instance, construct transmission lines. The Democrats would strongly support the implementation of a climate change levy as a further measure to ensure that we move to properly sustainable energy. I must commend the state government for its submission to the MRET review last year, with the government having called for the target to be increased to 4.5 per cent.

Another observation made to the committee by numerous submissions and presentations was that South Australia does not have a greenhouse strategy. One of the government departments that gave a presentation said that a greenhouse strategy would be development, and that is very welcome information. From the Democrats point of view that cannot come too soon. The opponents of wind energy fail to recognise the amount of greenhouse gas that wind energy prevents from going into the system. I would like to read all of the short speech that Mr Torben Bjerre-Madsen from NEG Micon made at the opening of the Starfish Hill Wind farm on 4 October 2003. He said:

It is almost 500 days ago we turned the first sod here at Starfish Hill. Since then, more than 8 000 megawatts of wind energy capacity has been installed in the world. Of that we at NEG Micon have installed approximately 15 per cent and included in this amount is South Australia's first wind farm of 34.5 megawatts. We started to work on the site late May last year and on 30 April the first WTG

was connected to the grid. Building a wind farm like Starfish Hill requires energy. We estimate that to produce the 23 WTGs (including all components like blades, towers, gearboxes, etc.) energy corresponding to 17m kWh hours was used. Included in that figure is the energy needed to maintain and service the wind farm for the next 20 years.

I might interpose here and say that I wish most energy producers looked that far into the future with their responsibilities. He continues:

To transport the blades, nacelles, towers, foundations, etc. to the site 670 000 litres of diesel oil were required. Most of that was used by the good ship *Aleksandrov* that took the hubs and nacelles from Denmark and the blades from England all the way to Adelaide late last year. 670 000 litres of diesel oil correspond to approximately 6.7m kWh. This means that in total 23.7m kWh of energy has been used. As of yesterday Starfish Hill Wind Farm has produced 33.4m kWh of clean energy which means that the energy balance is positive with 9.7m kWh. The Starfish Hill Wind Farm has thus paid back the energy within three to four months and will continue to produce clean energy with zero fuel costs in the remainder of its lifetime.

During the peak of installations we employed 42 people, workers on the site and the project generated other jobs at a number of sub-suppliers delivering towers, reinforced steel, and concrete. We know that more wind farms will be installed in South Australia, and we look forward to being a part of that exciting future development that is contributing to the local business environment with direct and indirect jobs, and creating clean energy at zero fuel costs.

When the conservation Council appeared before the committee, I asked it about the use of solar power. It was not a particular part of our reference but, given the amount of opposition there is to wind farms and the number of people who do see them as a blight on the landscape, it certainly appears that the most logical thing that you could do is to install solar power.

When we have the highest demands on our electricity system (when the temperature is at its maximum), the output that comes from solar cells is also at its maximum. It produces electricity at the time when we really need it, whereas, with wind power you cannot always guarantee that. The response that I got in my questioning of the Conservation Council, was from Mr Andrew Nance of the Cool Communities (one of the projects of the Conservation Council), who said:

It would certainly be far more acceptable. Solar power is static because it just sits there: there are no moving parts and everything happens in its presence. That would certainly alleviate a lot of the issues with noise, bird strikes and so on. The potential is there, and I guess part of developing this comprehensive strategy is identifying these opportunities, and the best potential of solar power at this stage appears to be—to us, at least—at a householder to small level, distributed and scattered throughout the network. There are barriers to that, and the Essential Services Commission has undertaken an inquiry to look at some of those regulatory barriers out there to see where we maybe should put more attention. . . We need to be looking at this strategically. . . there is no one winner. There is room for solar power, there is room for wind power, there is room for biomass power, and there is probably room for power generated from hot dry rocks. There is room for all different things but we need to be strategic about it. As I stated, given the impact that our energy systems have on our society, we cannot just stand back and let the market decide which products will be developed, where they will be developed, and when. It will not lead to the outcomes that we want.

To which I asked, 'So you are suggesting at the moment that a lot of our planning is not strategic?' Mr Nance said, 'I do not believe it is strategic at all.' It seems to the Democrats that we need a sustainable energy policy, and the committee has recommended that. It is clear that wind cannot solve all of South Australia's energy needs. That in itself is not a reason to argue against wind power.

We need a government plan that spells out how much energy the South Australian government wants produced

sustainably, using which technologies and the time frame in which it aims for this to happen. Then, it needs to spell out how they are going to make it happen. It can do this by incentives, subsidies, joint ventures and by no interest or low interest loans. I observe that, although we have Starfish Hill as the first wind farm in this state, the state government put nothing financially into the construction of that particular wind farm. The plan that it has at the moment to put solar panels on Parliament House and in schools does not use state money: it is using only federal money. So, I think the government has a long way to go in developing some sort of reasonable plan.

In 25 years the electricity industry is unlikely to have the same appearance or structures that we currently see. Large power plants located long distances from consumers, such as the Leigh Creek coal deposit and the Playford Power Station, may well be history. Amory Lovins, who is well known as a commentator on energy in the United States, talks about the size of the generating plants and he states:

You notice that, as the plants get bigger, the fraction of time they are inoperable also gets bigger; it goes up from about 10 per cent to 35 per cent, for very good technical reasons which are not going to go away. In fact, it is even worse than that, because if one of these 1 000-megawatt stations dies on you, it is embarrassing. It is rather like having an elephant die in the drawing room, and you have to have your 1 000-megawatt stand-by elephant ready to haul the carcass away. That reserve margin ordinarily just sits there and eats interest. Suppose that instead of building this giant station you built several smaller ones of a few hundred megawatts each. . . Because there are several of them, they would probably not all fail at the same time and so you would not need so great a reserve margin. Just that change in unit size, for that reason, would let you provide the same level and reliability of service with about a third less new capacity. Congratulations! You have just saved about £150 million—

he was talking to an English audience—

In fact, if you built, say, 10-megawatt units at the substation, you could do the same job with about a third as much new capacity.

So, we cannot keep making decisions about electricity generation based on the past. The committee had to weigh up considerations about visual amenity for the current generation in a particular locality compared to the impact of greenhouse gases for future generations in an Australian and a worldwide context. Overall, the committee has come down in favour of future generations, which I believe is the responsible thing to do. I think that the committee has grasped the issues and has come up with recommendations—in some cases, not as far as I would have liked it to go, but I think that this report is a very positive step forward and I hope that the government acts on the recommendations.

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I thanked all the staff when I spoke to this particular report. However, I thank all honourable members for their valuable contributions to this report and look forward to the government's response to this important topic.

Motion carried.

ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. G.E Gago:

That the 2002-03 report of the committee be noted.

(Continued from 26 November. Page 696.)

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Again, I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate on this very

important report and look forward to the committee's continuing activity.

Motion carried.

DRY ZONE

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. K.J. Reynolds:

That the regulations under the Liquor Licensing Act 1997 concerning long-term dry areas—Adelaide and North Adelaide—made on 30 October 2003 and laid on the table of this council on 12 November 2003 be disallowed.

(Continued from 26 November. Page 697.)

The Hon. J. GAZZOLA: The government opposes the Hon. Ms Kate Reynolds' motion to disallow the regulations made on 30 October 2003 under the Liquor Licensing Act 1997 to extend the City of Adelaide dry area for a further 12 months until 29 October 2004. The government's decision to support the Adelaide City Council's application for a continuation of the dry area was not taken lightly. The government recognised that it would need a solid evidence base to inform its deliberations about the future of the dry area trial. That is why, in early 2003, the government engaged an independent evaluator to carry out a thorough assessment of the effects of the dry area on people working and living in the City of Adelaide.

The evaluation was done by Plexus Strategic Solutions which reported to the government in October 2003. The evaluation examined an extensive range of quantitative and qualitative data to investigate the effects of the dry area declaration. Plexus found that the dry area had resulted in a reduction in public drinking in the designated dry area locations, particularly Victoria Square and the other city squares and North Terrace. Feedback from members of the public, service providers, residents and business operators was that, since the introduction of the dry area, there had been a reduction in anti-social and criminal behaviour in designated dry area locations.

These key informants said they had observed a decline in public drunkenness, begging, fighting and disruptive behaviour generally. These comments were supported by SAPOL crime statistics data. Plexus also found that the dry area had increased people's feeling of public safety in the city. This increase was especially marked in relation to Victoria Square. In fact, 40 per cent of respondents said that prior to the introduction of the dry area they had felt unsafe in Victoria Square but since its introduction no respondents said they felt unsafe there.

These comments were endorsed in interviews with business operators in the Victoria Square precinct who reported that since the introduction of the dry area their customers felt safer, public drunkenness had largely ceased and there was a much lower incidence of fighting, harassment and other threatening behaviours. The evaluators were told the area had become much more family-friendly. Importantly, the evaluation found there was significant support for a continuation of the dry area because of the improvements in public safety and amenity.

The Hon. Ms Kate Reynolds says that the dry area is a deliberately racist policy and that it was put in place to remove indigenous people from the public eye. Let me say, in the strongest terms, that it was never this government's intention in agreeing to extend the dry area to remove indigenous people from the city. The government wants indigenous people (like all members of South Australia's

diverse, multicultural community) to freely use the city's public spaces. We particularly recognise the significance of Victoria Square as a meeting place for indigenous people and acknowledge that one of the unfortunate consequences of the dry area has been a reduction in the number of indigenous people who now meet there.

This government is committed to encouraging greater use of city public spaces, including Victoria Square, by indigenous people and indeed all South Australians. To tackle this, we are developing a program to make the use of public space more inclusive. I will describe that program later but first I want to mention the other initiatives which the government has implemented and which it is working on to address the issues that led to the trial declaration and which it has subsequently highlighted.

In a motion to disallow the City of Adelaide dry area regulations, the Hon. Ms Kate Reynolds says that the government needs to concentrate on service responses to dry area related issues. The government agrees and it has been doing so and it continues to do so. This is borne out by the Plexus evaluation which found that the dry area had focused attention on the delivery of services for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the inner city, and that in doing so it had been an important catalyst for the establishment of services and programs.

For example, Plexus noted that the last 12 months had seen the establishment of a stabilisation facility in Whitmore Square for homeless adults in the inner city with alcohol and drug abuse problems; provision of a mobile legal service so that homeless and itinerant indigenous people would have improved access to legal assistance; improvement of pedestrian safety on West Terrace through the installation of additional lighting, changes to traffic light sequences and the agreement by the Adelaide City Council to construct an additional pedestrian crossing; appointment of an Aboriginal community constable to work with the indigenous community in the City of Adelaide; increased police patrolling of the parklands to address safety concerns amongst people congregating in these areas; and the provision of housing and intensive case management for people in the inner city with multiple, complex needs. That is just a brief summary of what has been done.

In agreeing to extend the dry area, the government has committed to continuing work to implement support services to address issues associated with the dry area. Work is proceeding to establish an indigenous detoxification and family centre. This will provide detoxification from alcohol and poly drug use as well as assessment, counselling, rehabilitation programs and exit links to services that will support indigenous people when they leave the facility. The indigenous community has long been calling for this type of facility and I understand it was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

The government has provided funding of \$100 000 to develop a business case. Following a public tendering process, a contract was let at the end of 2003 and the business case is due to be completed in May 2004. The sobering-up facilities currently operating in Adelaide, which are run by the non-government sector, will not admit or detain intoxicated people against their will. They also have 'ban lists' of people whom they will not accept because they have violent and disruptive behaviours. As a result, intoxicated people are frequently and inappropriately detained in the City Watchhouse. To address this, work is occurring to establish a facility proclaimed under the Public Intoxication Act for the

safe detention and care of people who are under the influence of alcohol. The establishment of this facility was also recommended by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

The dry area has focused attention on the issue of people sleeping in the parklands, which is a matter of particular concern to the Adelaide City Council. The Aboriginal Housing Authority is leading a process to set up transitional accommodation near the inner city for homeless and itinerant people, especially indigenous people. It is envisaged that people will live there temporarily until they are transitioned into more permanent accommodation. Service models are being developed. However, it is intended that residents would be actively case managed and linked into support services to work through the issues that lead to their sleeping out.

The dry area has highlighted that existing health services are not always meeting the needs of homeless and itinerant people in the inner city, which is exacerbating their already poor health status. Work is proceeding to establish a visiting health service to improve the delivery of health services to vulnerable and at-risk groups. Service gaps are being identified and strategies are being developed to increase the capacity of existing health services, as well as to provide new services. It is anticipated that this will include increased nursing and general practitioner services, including outreach to key inner city locations and the provision of specialist outpatient clinics at inner city locations frequented by homeless people.

There are approximately 13 itinerant men with intellectual, mental health, behavioural and alcohol abuse problems who frequent the inner city and who are regularly and inappropriately detained in the City Watchhouse. Work is occurring to establish supported accommodation that will provide 24/7 intensive supervision and case management of these men.

As mentioned, the government wants indigenous people to come to the City of Adelaide and to use its public spaces. We are not, as the Hon. Ms Kate Reynolds claims, trying to get Aboriginal people out of public eye. The government recognises that one of the consequences of the dry area has been a reduction in the use of the city by indigenous people. That is why the minister has established a project to increase the inclusiveness of public space, public events and public places such as the Art Gallery, Museum, State Library and parks. The project will not only encourage greater use of these places by indigenous people but also by other currently under-represented groups—people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, people with disabilities and unemployed people.

As part of this project, discussions are occurring with key stakeholders about how to make existing public events in the city more inclusive and how to develop new events. This initiative has particular benefits for indigenous people. It is anticipated that increasing indigenous participation in public space and events will foster greater contact between indigenous and non-indigenous people and provide opportunities for reducing negative stereotypes. In turn, it is hoped that this will help to boost indigenous people's self-esteem and reduce their feelings of alienation from the broader South Australian community. Work on these projects is progressing well, but it needs to be recognised that they are tackling very complex issues. Therefore they are long-term initiatives and they will not happen overnight, but they will happen.

Contrary to the view put by the Hon. Ms Reynolds, the government does not believe that it is acceptable for people to go to hotels and licensed clubs in the city and get inebriat-

ed. That is why the government instructed SAPOL to institute measures to reduce crime in and around licensed premises. These have included:

- Operation City Safe and Operation Confidence to address the incidence of serious assault, serious robbery and public disorder;
- the establishment of a uniform tactical team whose duties include providing a policing presence outside and within licensed premises on Friday and Saturday evenings;
- increased police numbers in the central business district entertainment precincts on Friday and Saturday evenings;
- meetings with licensees and nightclub operators to encourage more responsible management of licensed premises;
- formally advising licensees when criminal offences occur within their premises or when an intoxicated person has to be removed by police; and
- regularly speaking to licensees to enforce their responsibilities under the Liquor Licensing Act, particularly in relation to the sale of alcohol to intoxicated persons and licensees' promotion of inexpensive bulk takeaway alcohol.

The Adelaide local service area of SAPOL also has a dedicated licensing intelligence and enforcement officer who works with the City of Adelaide, the Metropolitan Fire Service and the Office of the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner to address public safety issues associated with the operation of licensed premises.

The government acknowledges the criticisms from some quarters of the community about continuing the City of Adelaide dry area for a further 12 months. However, as I said earlier, the recent evaluation of the dry area by Plexus strategic solutions found that the dry area declaration had reduced the incidence of public drinking in designated dry area locations, had reduced the incidence of antisocial and criminal behaviour, had improved public safety and there was broad public support for its continuation. The evaluation also found that it had been a critical driver for the establishment of programs and services in the inner city for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to tackle dry area related problems.

Much has been achieved over the past 12 months but more still needs to be done. That is why the government is continuing to work hard to put services in place, services such as an indigenous detoxification and family centre, a facility for the safe custody and care of people under the influence of alcohol, improved health services and transitional accommodation. We are also working to make the City of Adelaide more inclusive so that greater numbers of indigenous people in other disadvantaged groups use its public places and spaces.

These are complex issues and the solutions cannot be delivered overnight, but we aim to provide the services and supports that will assist vulnerable people who have been affected by the dry area. I therefore oppose the Hon. Ms Kate Reynolds' motion to disallow the regulations made on 30 October 2003 under the Liquor Licensing Act 1997 to extend the City of Adelaide dry area for a further 12 months until 29 October.

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS secured the adjournment of the debate.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. G.E. Gago:

That the report of the committee on an inquiry into supported accommodation be noted.

(Continued from 26 November. Page 699.)

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I rise to support this motion. The supported accommodation inquiry commenced before I became a member of that committee. I did join after much of the evidence had been heard, but I was assisted in some of my understanding through past work. I draw to the attention of the chamber the reference on page 1 of the report, which acknowledges that there has been new funding for disability services but that supported accommodation has not been the highest priority in that funding. The report states:

Funding for accommodation support under the Commonwealth State and Territories Disability Agreement (CSTDA) increased by 23.3 per cent from 1998 to 2002. However, supported accommodation funding increases have not matched rising demand in this state. Furthermore, mental health expenditure in South Australia is heavily concentrated in inpatient services and per capita spending on community residential services is very low, equating to 0.3 per cent of total mental health services expenditure compared to a national average of 6.7 per cent.

That sets the tone for much the report. I think it is probably a situation that, when funds are tight, there is a tendency for the agency to implement what can be kindly called 'rationing mechanisms', which take the effect of shrinking their client base so they feel they are adequately able to service it and not be overwhelmed by additional clients. That leads to some of the more complex and needy clients being difficult to place as they fall through the cracks and become orphans of all agencies. Some of the people that this report was looking at have very complex needs and can be very vulnerable. A combination of services cross over from mental health, corrections, disabilities, and drug and alcohol services. There can also be significant family issues, although I acknowledge the fact that in many cases families provide significant support. Homelessness is also an issue.

Providing additional supported accommodation has often been a problem in securing the necessary recurrent funding to provide the support staff. However, I think into the future, and perhaps in the current situation, low levels of home ownership affordability, generally, will affect the capital costs of finding suitable housing in the first place. I acknowledge that this government has provided additional recurrent funding in 2003-04 for particular programs, which will assist supported accommodation, including \$11 million for supported residential facilities, funding which is aimed to slow down or avoid closures and provide alternatives for those people who are displaced by closures; \$20 million per annum through CSTDA; and \$7.4 million in HACC funds. The latter two involve significant commonwealth investment.

The previous government also obtained significant funds in difficult circumstances for what has generally been called the 'unmet needs' program. The 'unmet needs' funding went towards respite, accommodation and day programs. The then minister (Hon. Robert Lawson) was the first to accept the commonwealth's offer, which led to additional recurrent funding of \$8.09 million. In his term as minister for the ageing, he always ensured that South Australia accepted the commonwealth HACC offer to maximise funds for these important programs in this state.

The Hon. R.D. Lawson interjecting:

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: Indeed. The Hon. Robert Lawson says, 'More than this mob'. Country clients have particular difficulties because of the tyranny of distance. In order to find suitable accommodation, country people with disabilities are often away from their family familiarity and their community. It is a similar situation for supported accommodation, as we witnessed some years ago with the commonwealth aged-care hostels and nursing homes, where some people were placed at some distance from home, which was quite distressing.

This report also highlights that in the country there are no rural institutional places for people with psychiatric disabilities, which is perhaps a reflection of underfunding in mental health. Page 79 of the report shows two pie charts, which starkly and graphically represent that, while 26.9 per cent of South Australia's population lives outside the metropolitan area, only 8.7 per cent of all DHS-funded supported accommodation and supported residential facility beds are outside the metropolitan area.

Of all the people on the urgent needs list for supported accommodation, about 20 per cent live in rural areas. The lack of places leads to more people with disabilities living in aged-care accommodation, which is not considered a particularly appropriate place for them, because commonwealth funding often does not provide for their additional needs; and staff can be inexperienced in dealing with some of their particular difficulties. This is a problem, in particular, for younger Aboriginal people with disabilities for whom proximity to home is very important. Therefore, they are over-represented in those numbers.

In relation to the issue of family carers, I did not hear much of the evidence on this topic, but I am aware of some of the desperate needs of families of people with disabilities. While day options may assist in the provision of some form of respite, in the long term many families need the peace of mind that there will be a long-term solution; the role of continuous care and support will be shared by the rest of the community when family members eventually run out of energy and can no longer provide that support. Cynthia Betterman, the Executive Officer of Parent Advocacy, said:

We normally do not think of people in their 50s as being aged—
Heaven forbid! Many members in this chamber are in that bracket—

but when you have been caring for a son or daughter with high support needs for 20 or 30 years, by the time you are in your 50s you are totally exhausted.

The Carers Association of Australia, which conducts a health and wellbeing survey, mentions a number of the issues that particularly affect carers, including that 58 per cent of carers have worse physical health than people who are not carers; a third of all carers have been physically injured; and over 70 per cent felt they had less energy.

Supported residential facilities probably have had a lot of publicity in the past few months and since this report was tabled. It is an industry that itself acknowledges it often does not provide appropriate support. A number of people are inappropriately placed because they have nowhere else to go. At the time of the report, some 14 sites had closed and six were under threat which, I understand, works out to something like 450 people. A number of these facilities are in older properties, old mansions perhaps, and in areas where the capital value has increased. The value of the property certainly outweighs the income that can be derived, so the

commercial decision that lots of proprietors would obviously make is whether it is worth it.

I also note that a number of providers do their utmost, but they are being squeezed so tight that they consider that it is no longer viable. Of the \$11 million the government has allocated for supported residential facilities, \$5 million is for the board and care subsidy. Problems with the previous administration of this particular subsidy were highlighted in the 2002-03 report of the South Australian Ombudsman, as follows:

... the board and care subsidy, as it was currently paid, discriminated against the vast majority of SRFs which housed people with a mental illness. More importantly, it discriminated against the vast majority of people with a mental illness who had extra needs because they could only access the subsidy if they lived in one of the SRFs around metropolitan and country South Australia.

So, additional funds have been provided. Some \$2 062 will be provided for every resident in every facility in addition to some additional supports for residents with the most complex needs, and that is to be commended. However, in comparison with the model that was presented in the Financial Analysis of Supported Residential Facilities Report 2003, the figure for that model was in the order of \$7 500 per resident. I question whether that will be enough to keep the facilities running.

Regarding the extension of the subsidy to all residents in facilities, I understand that there have been some complications in its administration. Funds cannot be provided directly to clients to purchase services as there is no guarantee that the subsidy would be spent on care. There is also some difficulty with funding facilities directly because, under the rules, the board and care subsidy will mean that facilities have to cap client fees and, additionally, some facilities do not provide care. There is also another \$6 million that is for contingencies in case facilities close.

I have been informed that no existing provider will be entitled to accept clients from facilities that have closed, the rationale for which I do not understand. Perhaps this is the extension of a philosophy that I have previously come across in government: that the private sector is an inappropriate provider of care services and perhaps should not be in partnership with government. Again, that is something I do not understand, particularly in the aged care sector, where we have recently seen that the non-profit provider the Salvation Army has had to admit that it is no longer able to be in the business of running nursing homes, while a number of private sector operators continue to thrive.

In the previous minister's grievance on 12 November 2003, the day after the announcement of the subsidy, some comments were made in relation to the viability of the industry, which I would like to quote. With respect to the model that was seeking \$7 500 per resident, the then minister stated:

What the model did not do was ensure that the subsidy contributed to the quality of care for residents.

So, that would have been an additional cost on top of that. She went on to say:

In effect, the model was proposing the subsidy to guarantee the profitability of proprietors. This government has provided a suitable response—

and I emphasise these words—

but it is not in the business of guaranteeing profits regardless of care standards or business efficiency or making sure that the residents are looked after.

In light of the \$64 million that recently has been announced in relation to gas, I find that statement astounding. Perhaps

cabinet would like to have some sort of consistency with respect to where it stands with these sorts of issues. I also wonder what the government's attitude would be in light of those comments by the previous minister if supported residential facilities continue to close. Where would those residents go? There are some 1 400 residents in supported residential facilities. That would be quite a specific problem for them to deal with. I also understand that, in relation to the \$6 million contingency, DHS has been inviting expressions of interest from interstate not for profit providers, and I urge the government to ensure that these funds will be genuinely expended on client support and not chewed up in some allocation process.

I think the committee recognises that there is some considerable anxiety in the community in relation to the issue of deinstitutionalisation, which is probably based on past bad experiences of people moving out of institutions without having appropriate supports in place. I commend two of our large residential institutions for people with disabilities—the Intellectual Disability Services Council and the Julia Farr Centre—for developing a range of community services for their current residents. To be successful, deinstitutionalisation requires proper planning and coordination. As was stated in the House of Assembly in support of the tabling of this report, deinstitutionalisation is not a cheap option to save money, and transitional funds are required.

One of the key recommendations of our committee's report was to continue a process of deinstitutionalisation which would be in line with national standards, but to ensure that we would have a proper plan which would ensure that the process occurred as it ought to rather than perhaps as has been the experience in the past, where people are left to their own devices without any help. I would also like to state for the record that this is a government that, while in opposition, promised to do everything to provide services for people with health care or support needs. I point out that the bill for mental health has been estimated at some \$6 million per annum, and there is a desperate need for community-based services.

Whilst the state government has accepted the CSDA offer from the commonwealth, which will provide a total of \$129 million in this financial year, it was dragged kicking and screaming to match the commonwealth growth offer on HACC and it grandstanded on the Australian Health Care

Agreement. I remind it that joint commonwealth-state funding offers are a bit of a no-brainer, because you get so much more bang for your buck. I would have thought that, given its base philosophy, it also would not hesitate in taking those funds and applying them appropriately.

I would like to commend our chair, Gail Gago, my colleague from the Legislative Council, the Hon. Terry Cameron, and our three House of Assembly colleagues, the Hon. Hartley, Joe Scalzi, the member for Playford, Jack Snelling, and Frances Bedford. I also thank our researcher, Susie Dunlop, for her very comprehensive work and our secretaries Robyn Schutte and Kristina Willis-Arnold. I believe that this report provides a sound foundation for the future direction of supported accommodation and a call to provide services for the many people who are missing out and who are among the most vulnerable in this state. I support the tabling of this report.

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I would like to thank all honourable members in this and the other place for their contribution to this very important report. The original terms of reference were initiated, if I recall correctly, by the Hon. Sandra Kanck and I thank her for her concern in raising the matter. The report was very lengthy, indeed, and dealt with a wide range of highly complex issues. I found it to be very challenging and rewarding, as did, I believe, other members. Many recommendations have come out of the report, and I look forward to the government's response to those recommendations.

Motion carried.

EDUCATION ACT REGULATIONS

Order of the Day, Private Business, No. 25: Hon. J.M. Gazzola to move:

That the regulations under the Education Act 1972 concerning school community care, made on 18 September 2003 and laid on the table of this council on 18 September 2003, be disallowed.

The Hon. J. GAZZOLA: I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.25 p.m. the council adjourned until Thursday 1 April at 2.15 p.m.