

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday 10 May 2006

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. R.K. Sneath)** took the chair at 2.17 p.m. and read prayers.

PAPER TABLED

The following paper was laid on the table:

By the Minister for Environment and Conservation (Hon. G.E. Gago)—

Local Government Superannuation Scheme—Report on the Actuarial Investigation as at 30 June 2005.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The **Hon. J. GAZZOLA**: I bring up the second report of the committee, 2006.

Report received.

GLADSTONE EXPLOSION

The **Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police)**: I table a ministerial statement on the Gladstone explosion made today by the Premier.

QUESTION TIME

ADELAIDE PARKLANDS AUTHORITY

The **Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY**: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Environment and Conservation a question about the Adelaide Parklands Authority.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY**: Last year in this place we passed a piece of legislation to establish the Adelaide Parklands Authority. In the minister's second reading explanation in the House of Assembly he said the responsibility for developing a management strategy will rest with the new Adelaide Parklands Authority, created as a subsidiary of the Adelaide City Council but with nominations shared between the council and the government. This authority has a primary policy and oversight role for the Adelaide Parklands. In the Labor Party's campaign document entitled 'Our Parks—Rann Gets Results', the Labor Party champions the fact that legislation has been introduced to protect the Adelaide Parklands.

In the annual report of the Department for Environment and Heritage it talks about the 2005-06 targets as 'assisting with the progression of the Adelaide Parklands bill'. This bill was passed in 2005 and provides that the minister will oversee the formation of the Adelaide Parklands management strategy. The minister is to appoint five members to this body. It has been nearly six months since it passed, and it is an important part of Labor Party policy, as announced during the election. As yet we have not seen the names of the members of this particular authority published in *The Gazette*. My questions are:

1. Can the minister explain why the Adelaide Parklands Authority has not yet been established?
2. If it has been established, has any budget been prepared?

3. Who are the five members the minister will nominate for the authority?

The **Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Environment and Conservation)**: I thank the honourable member for his question. I understand that the proceedings are waiting on a charter to be written and progressed by the local council. I think we have agreed to do that before proceeding and I have been advised that we are still waiting on that charter. I will need to obtain those other details and bring them back to the council.

The **Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY**: I have a supplementary question. Who are the five members the minister is considering appointing to the authority?

The **Hon. G.E. GAGO**: It is not appropriate to be discussing those matters at this time.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, PRISON FACILITIES

The **Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK**: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Correctional Services a question on the redevelopment of prison facilities.

Leave granted.

The **Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK**: The situation of our prisons, in particular the Adelaide Women's Prison, continues to receive bad press in the media and, out of sheer frustration with the conditions, the inmates actually set fire to the A wing of the women's prison in March 2004, forcing the government to rebuild it. In reply to questions put to him by a journalist, in September 2004 the former minister, the late Terry Roberts, agreed that the replacement of the women's prison was overdue and that 'a major restructure of the prison system would take place in the next 12 months.' It is now some 20 months since that commitment was made. The government has also advised that some \$700 000 has been set aside to 'examine future prison needs in South Australia'; however, I note that there was no mention of this in the ALP election platform. My questions to the minister are:

1. What is the scope of the study into prison needs, and why is this being delayed?
2. Does the new minister agree with the former minister that the replacement of the Adelaide Women's Prison is overdue?

The **Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Correctional Services)**: I thank the honourable member for her question. The department is assessing the infrastructure needs of the state's prison system, and the government recognises that further investment in prison infrastructure is required if we are to meet our future needs. Our prison system is a challenge—it has been in the past and, by its very nature, it always will be. Various options are being explored to establish the most cost-effective means of meeting future demand and rehabilitation needs for custodial facilities. It is important that we do not see piecemeal work but rather look at the most effective means of meeting future demand. The honourable member is correct in that some money was appropriated for the assessment that is currently being undertaken, and that will be taken into account when determining any future investment. When the assessment is completed and presented to me it will then be presented to cabinet.

The **Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK**: I have a supplementary question. Is the minister concerned at the delay in this report

from the government's original commitment of a 12 month time period?

The PRESIDENT: The minister can answer if she wishes, but the question hardly arises out of the answer.

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: In any of these infrastructure developments, it is not unusual to see that particular time lines are not met. As I have said, prisons are a challenge. We will continue to work with the department to ensure that we have the capacity to accommodate our prisoners. I have visited the Adelaide Women's Prison, and the honourable member is correct in saying that there was a fire in 2004, I think she said it was, but obviously that area has been redeveloped. There are some sections that would be classed as being an old-fashioned way of imprisoning people, but there are some sections that are not, and they appear to be working well. I commend the commitment and the passion of the managers of the prison system at the Adelaide Women's Prison.

URANIUM MINING

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Mineral Resources Development questions about uranium mining.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS: Last Wednesday, the federal industry minister, Ian MacFarlane, when speaking to Adelaide media about the significant world demand for uranium, highlighted the considerable amount of uranium deposits here in South Australia. As honourable members would be aware, BHP Billiton is looking to double the capacity of its Olympic Dam mine. Members would understand also that there are countless opportunities for the expansion of the uranium mining industry in South Australia. I read even in *The Australian* that one of our country's largest environmental groups, WWF Australia, has come out and declared that the nation is destined to mine uranium and export it to a growing world market. Mr MacFarlane explained that, provided the mines met the environmental safety and heritage requirements in regard to native title, the federal government is right behind the expansion of uranium mining in South Australia.

Given that the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Mineral Resources Development stand in unison with the federal industry minister in supporting the growth of uranium mining in our state, with the Minister for Mineral Resources Development saying that not to utilise these resources would be akin to 'the Saudi Arabians keeping their oil in the ground,' my questions are:

1. Will the minister assure the council that the outdated ALP 'no new uranium mine' policy is not scaring off would be investors and potentially costing our state the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars?

2. Why do certain sections of the ALP continue to oppose the views of the Premier, the Treasurer and the minister regarding the benefits of uranium mining when these benefits are so abundantly clear?

An honourable member: That's a very good question.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development): That is a very old question, too, from the honourable member. He knows full well the position I, together with the Premier and others, have placed on the record. The future of the uranium policy of the Australian Labor Party will be debated not far away from now—within the next 12 months.

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Well, in fact, a number of people have been taking the lead. However, there are a number of issues, and there a number of people with different views. The honourable member's question referred to why people disagree. Well, we live in a democracy, and people have views on a whole range of issues, including uranium mining.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: People hold their views on that issue for a number of reasons, and some people's views will change over time, given the facts that are available. The only point I have been making is that we now live at a time when one of the most serious problems facing this planet is climate change. I have never suggested that uranium was the panacea to the climate change issue but, nonetheless, it could be—and many people who are strong environmentalists believe that it can make a contribution in that direction.

There is no doubt that there are good reasons why the debate has changed in the community, as well as in the Australian Labor Party, in relation to uranium mining, as I have pointed out in this council on many occasions. The fact that there was originally the 'three mines policy' and 'no new mines policy' was actually economically very good for this state, because it meant that the existing mines at Olympic Dam and Beverley continued. However, in those days, the price of uranium was \$7 a pound; it was actually a buyer's market in the world context. I would argue that it was economically advantageous for this state that, in the establishment of Olympic Dam, there was no competition.

That is just one of the factors that have changed. The Australian Labor Party will review its position on this issue as a party. I have made my view clear, as have the Premier and others, but people will have different views about it. I feel confident that the policy will change, and it will be a very healthy debate to come out in relation to that issue. But, whatever happens, I do welcome the stance that the federal Leader of the Opposition has taken in terms of turning back attention to the issue of non-proliferation.

I have always argued that it really is irrelevant where the uranium comes from—which particular mine—but where it goes is very important. I think it is about time that some attention was paid to those non-proliferation aspects of our uranium sales. I am certainly one who welcomes the debate within the Australian Labor Party, and I trust it will move away from the issue of where uranium comes from and, rather, to where it goes and the conditions under which it is sold, because I believe that that really is the most crucial issue that relates to uranium at the moment. I know the honourable member is trying to use this issue for political reasons.

The other point that I wish to make in relation to the uranium debate in this state is that no other uranium mines are queuing up looking for leases at this time, and I do not expect that there will be for at least several years. Certainly, plenty of exploration is going on at the moment. Indeed, there are some very good prospects for this state, and I personally hope that at some stage in the future this state can benefit from the exploitation of those resources. But, there are no mines in this state that are on the doorstep at the present. Of course, the Honeymoon Mine, as has been pointed out, was given the relevant approvals just prior to the 2002 election; that is, the essential 21-year mining lease, which was the threshold test, was issued prior to the 2002 election. That

mine, as has been made clear, does not come within the Labor Party 'no new mine policy'.

There are not any other mines at this stage; however, I expect that there will be in the future. Members are well aware that a number of exploration companies have been established in this state. If the honourable member wishes, I can give him the list. Perhaps I ought to do that. In fact, I will take that part on notice and give him a list of the number of companies exploring for uranium in this state, because that shows that these companies have confidence in the future mineral prospectivity of this state, as well as in the positive climate that exists in this respect.

The Hon. T.J. Stephens interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I am happy to talk about the subject all day, Mr President. The fact is the uranium policy of the Labor Party will be discussed, although it should not be an issue just for the Australian Labor Party: I think members opposite should also consider all issues in relation to our energy future. I noticed that the Hon. Mark Parnell, in his maiden speech, referred to the importance of climate change issues. He may not believe that uranium is the answer to that but, nonetheless, we must all treat those issues as a very serious challenge facing the world.

We have to look at what is best for us, and we also have to consider the needs of overseas countries that are facing enormous problems. One only needs to consider a country such as China, which is not only choking under the enormous volume of fumes from the coal that is burnt there: approximately 6 000 miners each year lose their lives in coal mines. These are all factors that need to be addressed. We have to look at our role in the world, and the Labor Party will do that. In the meantime, there are companies that will—

The Hon. T.J. Stephens interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: The honourable member is actually well behind the times because—

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member also is out of order.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Yes, he is also out of order, Mr President.

The Hon. T.J. Stephens interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Well, I am happy to stand here all day and talk about this subject.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: We could go back there. The fact is that the Cold War issues have gone. Technology has changed. Economic circumstances have changed. The world faces a new series of challenges, and the Labor Party, as has been its history, will continue to review its policies to make sure that they are relevant and apposite to the conditions of the day.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I have a supplementary question. In the light of any emerging support that the member might have for nuclear power to alleviate climate change problems, will he seek information and provide it to the council about the tonnage of concrete that is required to build a nuclear power station, the amount of greenhouse gases that are emitted in the production of that tonnage and any other greenhouse gas emissions during the construction of a nuclear power station?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: The Hon. Sandra Kanck wants to debate the uranium issue. The points that she raises are all part of the equation that people will look at, but the fact is that on balance—

The PRESIDENT: The fact is that the original question was to do more with policy within the Labor Party and the supplementary question was not related to that at all. The minister can answer it if he wishes.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I am happy to debate this subject for as long as the council wants to do so. However, the fact is that the honourable member has come up with points for debate. These figures are well-known. She can have a look at them. There are all sorts of figures. You can talk about the tonnes of coal, but the fact is that the greatest threat that the world faces at the moment comes from the burning of fossil fuels, in particular low-grade coal, in some of the countries overseas that do not have access to the resources that we do.

We are extremely fortunate in this country that we have access to natural gas and other forms of energy generation that are relatively cheap and clean. Some other countries do not have that access, and they will have to make their own decisions; that is a question for them. We must play our part in this world as far as energy supplies are concerned. As I said, that is the debate we will have in the Labor Party and it is a pity that some of the members opposite, particularly their federal colleagues, do not get a bit more involved in these issues such as non-proliferation.

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL: I have a supplementary question. Regardless of whether or not the Labor Party changes its policy, what guarantee can the minister give to the South Australian people that, if South Australian uranium is sold to China, not one skerrick of it will end up in Chinese nuclear weapons?

The PRESIDENT: That is hardly deriving out of the minister's answer, either.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: This is an arrogant government.

The PRESIDENT: Well, it is important for members to understand that supplementary questions cannot be used as questions that they might think of on the spur of the moment because they did not ask them in their original question. Supplementary questions derive from a minister's answer. The minister can answer it if he wishes.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: You just raised the issue of non-proliferation.

The PRESIDENT: He can answer it if he wants.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Mr President, you are quite correct that this is going way beyond standing orders. The honourable member knows full well—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: You just raised it.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Yes, I raised it, but the point I made was that I wish the federal colleagues of the members opposite would do something.

The PRESIDENT: He raised it in answer to a supplementary question, too.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Because, Mr President, questions of non-proliferation are matters for the federal government and, as has been made clear by the Premier and me, we would expect that those agreements in relation to non-proliferation with any hereto—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: It's an arrogant government that does not even want to answer the question.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: No; it's an arrogant opposition that keeps interrupting and will not listen to any of the answers.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: The fact is that non-proliferation issues are matters for the federal government. We have made it clear that we expect that those safeguards would be adhered to before there are any sales to China.

ONE MILLION TREES PROGRAM

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Environment and Conservation a question about the One Million Trees Program.

Leave granted.

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER: The United Nations Environment Program has published a report on the role of cities in relation to ecosystems and biodiversity. The report states that, although cities occupy just 2 per cent of the earth's surface, their inhabitants use 75 per cent of the planet's natural resources. Cities draw on surrounding ecosystems for goods and services, and their products and emissions can affect regional and even global ecosystems. Healthy ecosystems and biological diversity are vital for cities to function properly, and making sure that our urban environments are not wastelands matters to all of us, not least to the plants, animals and birds that live in them.

It is important that people are not disconnected from their natural environment, and one of the best ways of ensuring that is to bring aspects of the natural environment closer to where the majority of us live. I applaud the government of South Australia for its program of urban tree planting called the One Million Trees Program. Will the minister update the council on the status of this program?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I thank the honourable member for his question and for his ongoing interest in these important policy areas. In response to government policy relating to Adelaide's metropolitan open space system and 'a greener city', the One Million Trees Program was officially launched in 2003 with a target of one million local native plants to be established by 2007. In 2004, the government endorsed an extension of the program to three million trees. This commitment was subsequently incorporated within South Australia's Strategic Plan as an action (T3.10) to decrease the state's ecological footprint.

The program is now officially named the SA Urban Forests—Million Trees Program. Through this program, the state government is making the largest contribution to restoring vegetation cover across metropolitan Adelaide. Plantings, representative of the approximately 21 different naturally occurring vegetation types (most of which have been largely cleared), will have been established over approximately 2 000 hectares of public open space by the end of the program.

Besides creating vital habitat for local native fauna and encouraging improved biodiversity, the activities of the program are also resulting in other environmental benefits, including: reduced greenhouse gases, reduced water consumption, improved water quality, more enjoyable natural spaces, and greater community understanding of sustainability issues. I am pleased to inform the council that the program will plant the one millionth tree during the 2006 winter planting season, one year ahead of the original scheduled date of winter 2007. So, we are well ahead of our target. I am advised that 330 000 native seedlings will be planted in 2006 at 104 project sites. This is the highest number of individual sites undertaken within a single year.

Major projects for 2006 include large habitat restoration sites at: Gawler Buffer West, the Adelaide Parklands, O'Halloran Hill, Onkaparinga Gorge, and across the northern plains (mangroves to mallee). Over 100 schools have been involved in the program, principally through the program's Grow a Great School initiative. The program is working in partnership with 21 local councils (including all metropolitan councils) and 12 state agencies. It is also continuing its work with Conservation Volunteers Australia, Trees for Life, and Greening Australia, and this year it will welcome new teams of Youth Conservation Corps participants. In each of the past two years, between 8 000 and 12 000 people have been actively involved in the program, demonstrating that this is truly a community initiative.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: I ask a supplementary question. What is the survival rate of the trees that are being planted and what is the cost of replanting them?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I am happy to bring back details for the honourable member.

The PRESIDENT: Order! You might have to wait for one to die.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: On a point of order, Mr President, will you explain your comment that 'you might have to wait for one to die'?

The PRESIDENT: To see how long they survive.

STAMP DUTY

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Police, representing the Treasurer, a question concerning stamp duty on the purchase of residential family homes.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: Today's *Advertiser* newspaper reports that the federal Treasurer has predicted that South Australia will receive an extra \$193 million in GST payments in the next financial year. This will take the state's forecast GST revenue to some \$3.54 billion. My questions to the Treasurer are:

1. Will the government introduce additional stamp duty relief for families in the wake of Mr Costello's forecast of an increase of \$193 million in GST revenue for South Australia and, if so, when?

2. If not, where will the Treasurer allocate the expected extra \$193 million in revenue, considering that we have a budget in surplus in South Australia currently?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police): It is my understanding that that figure in *The Advertiser* is nowhere near correct, but I understand that the Treasurer might be making a statement on that. I will seek that information from the Treasurer and bring back a response for the honourable member.

RAIL, NOARLUNGA

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Police, representing the Minister for Transport, a question about the Noarlunga railway line.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: The federal member for Kingston, Kym Richardson, has been campaigning for an extension of the Noarlunga rail line to Aldinga since he was elected. Over 12 months ago the state government committed

to a feasibility study to extend the line to Seaford, only part of the way to Aldinga. My questions are:

1. Will the minister advise the progress on the feasibility study and when the report is to be made public?
2. Will the feasibility study be made available before the government commences the \$51 million tram line extension?
3. If the feasibility study will not be available before the tram line extension commences, does the 12-month delay indicate that the government has already decided that the needs of the south are not a priority for this government?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police): I thank the honourable member for his inaugural question, in relation to the latter part of which I indicated in answer to a question yesterday referring to police that this state government does indeed look after the southern suburbs, and I announced a day or two ago details of the new Aldinga police station that is being constructed in the southern suburbs. In relation to transport needs, obviously, the Noarlunga rail project has been suggested for some time.

If one wants to talk about transport and future transport projects, we could perhaps lament the fact that, in last night's federal budget, of the \$2.3 billion the federal government announced for AusLink, South Australia's share was about \$100 million for the Sturt Highway. While I am sure everyone would welcome money for the Sturt Highway, given that we have 12 per cent of the land mass and 7 or 8 per cent of the population, from the \$2.3 billion our share should certainly be far more than that amount. The fact is that, unfortunately, that money was going for the Hume Highway and Bruce Highway in Northern Queensland.

We are supposed to have all these federal ministers in this state, but what good are they? I hope that at some stage the electorate in South Australia will ask what value we get from senators Minchin and Vanstone, certainly in transport terms. This state continues to be duded as it has been by successive governments for decades in terms of our share for transport funding. Unfortunately, in relation to transport projects this state is always behind the eight-ball because, with about 8 per cent of the population and 12 per cent of the land mass of this country, our share of transport funding in this country varies by around 3 to 5 per cent. In relation to the specifics of the honourable member's question—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Mr Ridgway and the Hon. Mr Gazzola will come to order.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY:—about the Noarlunga line and the study, I will obtain that information from the Minister for Transport.

PETROLEUM EXPLORATION

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Mineral Resources Development a question about petroleum exploration in the Otway Basin.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: I understand that the first prospect scale petroleum exploration block in South Australia's Otway Basin has just been released by Primary Industries and Resources SA. Will the minister provide the council with information about the bidding process for this block in the highly prospective Otway Basin?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development): I thank the honourable member for his important question.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: We have a member from the South-East and I would have thought that he would be very interested in some of the economic activity occurring under this government in relation to the South-East. What could be more important at these times of high oil prices than the question of oil exploration? I inform the council that bidding is about to open for the petroleum exploration release block titled 'OT-2006-A' in the Otway basin in the state's South-East. The acreage release is expected to be gazetted tomorrow for work program bidding. The Otway Basin is classified as highly prospective, and vacant acreage must be gazetted for such bidding. The OT-2006-A release covers 37 000 square kilometres and includes a known oil accumulation.

PIRSA is aiming to attract competitive work program bids to evaluate the Jacaranda Ridge 1 oil discovery and explore seismically defined leads in the release block. It is expected bids will include 3-D seismic and advanced drilling and production technology solutions to develop the oil discovery and test nearby prospects. An oil trend was discovered in 1992 at a location known as Sawpit 1, which was followed by further discoveries at Wynn 1 in 1994 and Killanoola 1 in 1998. All of these discoveries were considered to be sub-economic. Jacaranda Ridge 1 was drilled in the same region in 1999, with oil flowing at the rate of 408 barrels per day during a drill stem test. That increased to 950 barrels a day during a two-week production test.

At the time, the discovery was deemed uneconomic due to low international ore prices. However, as I am sure the council would be aware, the current high world oil prices and strong market for oil prospects make the OT-2006-A block release timely. Explorers interested in the OT-2006-A release will be required to lodge work program bids for the first five years of the petroleum exploration licence. PIRSA will conduct a rigorous assessment process to select the five-year work program most likely to evaluate the prospectivity of the block. The successful applicant is also required to meet standard financial and technical requirements. I am advised that bids for the block will close on 20 July.

BURNSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Emergency Services, representing the Minister for Education and Children's Services, questions about asbestos contamination at the Burnside Primary School.

Leave granted.

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: A report in the 10 May edition of the *Eastern Courier Messenger*, headed 'Asbestos scare' and written by journalist Melanie Reid, states:

Asbestos contaminated fill has been dumped in a primary school just metres from a children's play area. The soil sat in Burnside Primary's old swimming pool for nearly four weeks in February-March. A contractor was paid \$30 000 to fill in the pool for the Education Department in late February. The fill lay alongside a lawned play area until the asbestos was discovered and the soil carted away on 25 March.

The report goes on to quote the school principal, who says:

When the project was finished small asbestos bits and broken glass and things of that nature were discovered.

Further, Ms Reid's story refers to a report being commissioned by the contractors which showed the contamination was 'low level' and 'provided negligible risk'. The media report refers to an Education Department spokeswoman who

said that site inspectors and air monitoring after the fill was carted away had determined there were no traces of asbestos. Further, there has been some handballing here because a spokeswoman for administrative services minister, Michael Wright, refused to comment, saying that it was an operational matter for the Education Department. My questions are:

1. Will the minister order an urgent independent inquiry into the incident, just as there was about asbestos at the Ascot Park Primary School in 2003 and, if not, why not?
2. What action has been taken by the department over the contractor who put the contaminated fill on the school grounds? Is the department pursuing, at the very least, a civil claim against the contractor for the subsequent expenses incurred and, if not, why not?
3. What protocols exist to ensure contaminated substances are not placed in schools and, further, what protocols exist for the removal of contaminated substances, including asbestos, once discovered in schools?
4. When did the department and the school first become aware of the contamination and, following that, what steps were taken and when, including cordoning off and sealing the area and air monitoring?
5. What level of information has been conveyed to the school community following the discovery of the contamination, and when was it conveyed?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Emergency Services): I thank the honourable member for his questions regarding asbestos contamination at the Burnside Primary School. I will refer those questions to the Minister for Education and Children's Services in the other place and bring back a response.

QUEEN'S COUNSEL

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Leader of the Government, representing the Attorney-General, a question on the subject of appointment of Queen's Counsels.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: In South Australia Queen's Counsels are appointed by the executive government upon recommendation of the Chief Justice. The Chief Justice has circulated a proposed protocol for the appointment of senior counsel, and that proposal is that the judges will adopt the practice of appointing senior counsel rather than the executive government. The judges propose that they will consult with the same persons and courts as they consult now and, in particular, that there would be a meeting between the Chief Justice and the presidents of the Law Society and the Bar Association as part of the process. The judges envisage that they will no longer make recommendations to the Governor and executive council, and executive council and the executive government will play no part in the appointments. In addition, as in other states, the appointment will be as senior counsel and not as Queen's Counsel. My questions are:

1. Does the Attorney-General support the proposal to remove the executive government from any role in relation to the appointment of senior counsel?
2. Given the antipathy which this government shows towards the judges, is the Attorney-General satisfied that they can be trusted to make appropriate appointments?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police): In relation to the first question, I will obtain a response from the Attorney-General. In relation to the second question, I deny that this government has antipathy towards the judicial

profession. However, if this government thinks it is necessary to speak out on matters of law and order it will do so, but it will always do so with respect to the judiciary.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition will come to order; he is out of order.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: The Leader of the Opposition, as is his wont, is grossly misrepresenting the Attorney-General on this matter. He knows what the story is. He can go on for as long as he likes, but I will just reinforce the point that this government will continue to take a strong stand on law and order but will do so with respect for the judiciary.

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Emergency Services a question about the recognition of service to the community by volunteer firefighters.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: I understand the minister recently presented Country Fire Service volunteers with national medals and clasps. Will the minister provide the council with some information about that recognition of service?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Emergency Services): I thank the honourable member for his question. I was delighted to present national service medals and clasps to 42 volunteers from region 2 last Friday evening, 5 May. Region 2, as many honourable members would be aware, covers the Lower North, the Upper Mount Lofty Ranges, the Clare Valley and Yorke Peninsula. Around 3 000 volunteers in 83 brigades in the region dedicate themselves to the safety of those communities.

The presentation evening held at Gawler provided an opportunity to recognise the continuous commitment of 42 volunteers in the region. Two members warrant a special mention, namely, William Tapscott and David Kroehn of the Mount Pleasant Brigade. They were each recognised for 35 years of service. Eleven of the 42 presentations were to volunteers receiving their First Clasp, signifying 25 years' service, which is also an outstanding commitment.

The national medal is a commonwealth medal presented to members of organisations that protect life and property at some risk to their members. The medal recognises long and diligent service after 15 years with an organisation. Clasps are added for every additional 10 years' service. This is one of the formal ways in which we acknowledge the dedication of emergency services volunteers. Others include the annual SA Emergency Service medals and my own ministerial commendations, as well as those that are awarded through the Australia Day and Queen's Birthday awards. Of course, we know that volunteers do not put their life on the line to receive an award, but it is nice to know that there is some tangible way in which we can show our appreciation for their efforts. Our thoughts are with them at this time, as they deal with a still volatile situation at Gladstone.

This government, as with previous governments, has a strong commitment to our volunteers, who selflessly protect and come to the aid of their local communities in times of need. We are committed to fostering a modern, well-resourced firefighting service so that it can continue its work safely and efficiently. This government has also committed more than \$40 million to CFS capital works projects.

The Volunteer Management Branch, set up by the Rann government as part of the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM), provides ongoing assistance and support. We also look forward to the enthusiastic participation of volunteers at this year's volunteers summit to be held in Adelaide in June or July. The summit will focus on recruitment of future volunteers, retention, developing future roles for women and youth, and working closely with the local community.

I want to publicly thank the employers of all CFS volunteers, who put the community above their own businesses by allowing the volunteers to take the necessary time out from work. Their contribution also should be placed on the public record. I should acknowledge that the national medal is awarded to members of the Defence Forces, police forces and ambulance services. The national medal was established in 1975, and it is awarded to members of organisations that protect life and property at some risk to their members.

I also acknowledge the efforts of those who assisted in organising the function last Friday evening; these things do not just happen. It was pleasing to note our Emergency Services cadets in attendance that night with their families lending assistance to the smooth running of the presentations. I was pleased also to be joined by the local member for Light, Mr Tony Piccolo MP.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: I have a supplementary question arising from the answer. Will the minister indicate the total number of paid CFS personnel in region 2 who assist the 3 000 volunteers in that region?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I will get that advice and bring it back to the chamber.

EYRE PENINSULA NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Minister for Environment and Conservation a question about the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Board.

Leave granted.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I have been informed that the Eyre Peninsula NRM Board was given only \$1 million to set up, as compared with amounts of \$5 million to \$10 million for boards in other regions. Given the threats to biodiversity on Eyre Peninsula, a number of which I have drawn to the minister's attention in the past week, locals say that this is difficult to understand. Even more difficult to understand is that there is no person on that board representing conservation interests. It is not as if there was a huge number of people nominating for the positions and the former minister became confused. To the contrary, there were only 14 nominations for the nine positions.

I understand that the member who was closest to any definition of having environmental credentials was a man representing Aboriginal interests, and he has since resigned. I have also been informed that, despite the limited government funding, the salary of the general manager of the Eyre Peninsula NRM board is \$50 000 more per annum than the former general manager of the EP catchment water management board received. My questions to the minister are:

1. What government funding has been given to the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Board compared with other boards and, if there is a difference, what is the justification for that?

2. Given the biodiversity threats on Eyre Peninsula, why was a person with environmental credentials overlooked in the make-up of the NRM board?

3. How does the salary of the board's general manager compare with that of NRM boards in other regions? Is it true that board members were told, prior to the election, to keep quiet about this and not rock the boat?

4. When the initial NRM plans take effect, will the government be providing more funding for on-ground works in that region?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I thank the honourable member for her questions. The NRM levy, as honourable members would know, is not new. The funds that are derived by the NRM boards are, in fact, derived from a combination of levies that previously existed. The NRM levy is in fact a new name for contributions that South Australian ratepayers have been making for many years through their catchment levies and/or animal and plant control rate revenue contributions from local government. That is where the boards are deriving their basic incomes from, and I will talk about additional funds in just a moment. Not all the boards have both levies in place. For example, I know that some of them have not previously had a catchment levy in place.

Given that the previous minister for environment and conservation, to ensure stability throughout this transition process, gave a commitment that the funding for the NRM levy would not be increased in any significant way over the first two years, the boards are basically using a combination of those two levies that are in place. If they did not have a catchment levy in place, as some of them did not, they are left with those funds derived from the animal and plant control revenue. That is why there is quite a significant difference between the amount that different boards are actually starting from. And that has always been the case in terms of their catchment and plant control contributions, which have varied across the state in the past.

After the two years of transition, the NRM boards will then be in a position to set their own levies and basically derive the incomes that they determine are needed for their natural resource management plans, which are plans to manage natural resources throughout their regions. They will draft plans and they will consult their local communities in putting those plans together, so local communities will be consulted extensively. Then a fee levy will be derived. The honourable member will know that there is then a rigorous process involved before that amount can be ticked off. One of the processes is that the plans, the proposed levies and any proposed amendments must be submitted to the parliamentary Natural Resources Committee for its endorsement.

So, that is basically the background of the differences that various boards are left with in terms of their levy. In fact, the Rann government has increased support funding to boards. We have provided \$5.5 million over four years from 2004-05, additional to the state budget funds which were previously provided to the old boards and which continue to be paid to NRM boards. In addition, NRM boards receive grant funding through various state and commonwealth programs such as the Natural Heritage Trust. Which of those funds boards have access to depends on the initiatives they have in place. However, again, that is a matter for the board. I understand that the selection process is fairly independent, but I will provide the details to that question and bring back an answer.

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER: I have a supplementary question. Can the minister inform us whether the Crown will pay natural resource management levies to NRM boards on the land that they have resumed as a result of freeholding?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I thank the honourable member for her supplementary question. I am not sure of the purport of the question, and I wonder whether the member is confused about those who are currently on Crown land under a perpetual lease arrangement and the accelerated freeholding arrangements that have been made available to them. I have given information in this chamber in the past about the current arrangements under that scheme.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Leader of the Opposition): I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the minister representing the Treasurer questions about the GST.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Members would be aware that the Labor Party in 2001, and since, has trenchantly opposed the GST deal that was negotiated by the former Liberal state and federal governments. In fact, amongst many comments made, I refer to the statement made by now Premier Rann on 21 November 2003 when, on 5DN, he said:

The GST deal was a total lemon for South Australia. That was supposed to replace existing taxes and give us more taxes: we actually get less.

Indeed, many other similar comments were made but I will not put them on the record at this stage. The federal budget released last evening indicates that, for the four-year forward estimates period from 2006-07 to 2009-10, the net benefit to the state budget of the GST deal is \$1 123 million over the four years, increasing to \$352 million (as it factors up in those four years) and \$352.9 million in the fourth year. Whilst some of that has been included in the state budget papers from May 2005—and I think that will be the point that the Treasurer will seek to make—there is an unexpected bonus in last night's figures of some \$219 million over four years over and above the known benefit in May of last year. For the seven-year period from 2003-04 to 2009-10, the total net benefit to the state's finances is some \$1 500 million. My questions are:

1. Can the Treasurer confirm that the net benefit to the budget for 2006-07 in the forward estimates period to 2009-10 is \$1 123 million? Can he confirm that that is \$219 million higher than the expected benefit included in the state budget papers last May?

2. Can the Treasurer confirm that the net benefit to South Australia from the GST deal over seven years will be over \$1 500 million?

3. Will the Treasurer supply the details of the deal entered into by the current government with the federal government in relation to the phasing out of state-based taxes and duties; in particular, the timing of the removal of various state-based duties which have been required by the federal Treasurer and the federal government?

4. Will the Rann government now concede that its opposition to the GST deal and the statement made by Premier Rann in November 2003 and subsequent statements were wrong and will it now apologise to the people of South Australia in light of the evident benefits to the state budget of the GST deal negotiated by the former state Liberal government?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police): The former treasurer (now Leader of the Opposition) always tries to justify his place in history. That is probably a fair reflection on the current state of his career because, after all those years, just like he did in respect of the sale of the electricity trust, he continually seeks to put the best gloss on his decisions. Soon he will be trying to put a gloss on his election policy to get rid of 4 000 jobs by trying to convince his colleagues that that was not part of the reason for their lack of success.

Regarding what this state gets through the GST, I am aware that a number of questions have been asked of the Treasurer. It is my understanding that the Treasurer in another place has more than adequately addressed those figures. As I indicated earlier to the Hon. Dennis Hood, those figures that were reported in the newspaper—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: My understanding is that, I think, \$193 million was the figure reported in *The Advertiser*, and that that was based on the improvement in GST revenue over the past six years since the introduction of the GST in 2000. I will confirm those figures through the Treasurer's office, but it is my understanding that, if one compares the figures from last night's federal budget with those in the mid-year budget review—the commonwealth supplies the state with the figures used for the mid-year budget review—it will be seen that, not that long ago, the estimated increase was much more modest. I believe about \$8 million was the predicted increase in South Australia's 2005-06 GST receipts compared with the figure predicted in the mid-year review. However, I will make sure that the Treasurer confirms those figures. If they are correct, it will mean that South Australia is actually down on the original budgeted estimate for 2005-06.

When looking at this state's GST receipts and what they really mean in terms of services for the people of South Australia, one needs to take into account the part of the deal (which the former leader signed) which involved the removal of taxes. We should be aware that this state government has made a significant number of tax cuts in relation to mortgage duties and other duties as part of that package. So, whilst the state has received more revenue, it has also had to remove other taxes as part of that deal. The Leader of the Opposition might throw around these big figures, but he has not taken into consideration that fact. As well as that, one has to look at the surplus that is faced by governments. If one looks at the federal government, which has received this massive increase in federal taxes—

An honourable member: Oh, please!

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Oh, please, the honourable member says. The Liberal Party is trying to create the image that somehow or other the state governments are flush with funds. In about \$10 billion there is a surplus of \$25 million. One can consider that the federal surplus that has come in from all this money from income taxes is about \$13 billion. I invite members opposite to work out what South Australia's share of that federal surplus would be if we have a \$13 billion or \$14 billion surplus at the federal level. In fact, it was much bigger than that, but South Australia's share on a population basis of about 7 or 8 per cent is well over \$1 billion.

Can you imagine what this state government could do if we had as our share an extra \$1 billion floating around? We could solve a lot of problems. So, it is about time; if people opposite want to talk about governments being flush with funds they should ask their federal colleagues why this state

is not getting its fair share of money in relation to transport and why we are getting such a low proportion. Why are we not getting our fair share; why is there not money for training and other infrastructure projects? If we are to have a debate in this country about excess funds, let us direct that debate to where it belongs.

ADELAIDE PARKLANDS AUTHORITY

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members on my left will come to order.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Earlier today in question time the Hon. Mr Ridgway asked me about the Adelaide Parklands Authority. In response I replied that we were waiting for a charter from the Adelaide City Council which is necessary for the establishment of the board. My staff have just advised that the charter was received in my office at the end of last week and that it was sent immediately to the department for advice, as is standard administrative practice. I am pleased the charter has now been received and am looking forward to obtaining advice from the department regarding whether we should approve the charter so that we can progress towards establishing this important authority.

MATTERS OF INTEREST

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: I rise today to speak about the automotive manufacturing industry in South Australia. The car industry is, of course, one of the most important industries in our state. We are fortunate to be the home of the Holden and Mitsubishi manufacturing plants, which have been such an important part of our industry base. There are also a number of component manufacturers who make a significant contribution to employment and economic output.

The automotive industry in South Australia faces a challenging future. The worldwide market is very competitive and our local industry must be able to compete in the global marketplace. There is no doubt that our local car manufacturers produce fine automobiles, and I am proud to drive one myself. However, their showcase models, the Holden Commodore and its variants and the Mitsubishi 380, are facing a tough market. The increasing cost of petrol has been a major factor in the slowing of demand for larger cars, such as the Commodore and the 380. The Mitsubishi 380 model was launched in October 2005 and, although I believe sales have picked up in recent times, the early hoped-for sales have not eventuated. This is largely due to the tough market for larger cars due to the cost of petrol, which is again seeing consumers seek lower running costs in new vehicles.

The difficulties faced by Mitsubishi in this global environment unfortunately led to a decision to close the Lonsdale engine plant last year. I am pleased that the site has been able to be utilised by a number of companies and that this will ensure that Lonsdale remains a manufacturing centre

and source of employment in the southern suburbs. These include Fibrelogic, which is constructing a new plant to manufacture reinforced plastic pipes; PVR, a Victorian based company that will manufacture components for Mitsubishi and later for Holden as well; and ResourceCo, a waste recycling company.

It is important that the government assists the manufacturing industry in appropriate ways. The Rann Labor government has been a strong supporter of the local car industry. The government is cooperating in a national strategic task force involving the federal and Victorian governments, as well as the South Australian government and auto manufacturers. This task force is aimed at helping government and industry collaborate to ensure the survival of the Australian automotive industry. The union representing most workers in the automotive industry is the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. Recently that union's secretary, Mr John Camillo, on behalf of the union, made a submission to the inquiry into employment in automotive component manufacturing, an inquiry of the federal parliament's Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Work Force Participation.

In that submission it is noted that the AMWU represents around 10 000 employees across the South Australian motor vehicle and parts manufacturing industry. The AMWU proposes two main items to help the Australian car industry continue to be a strong source of employment. The first of these is an urgent review of the tariff barriers that currently apply. I understand it is planned that there be a further 50 per cent cut in tariff levels in 2010.

It can be argued that, since the tariff phase-outs were put in place many years ago, there has not been sufficient progress in freeing up world trade amongst our competitors to warrant further tariff cuts on Australia's part. This issue needs careful consideration and I am sure will be the subject of a debate within the ALP as we formulate our policies for the next federal election.

The other submission the AMWU makes is that a new car plan be developed to respond to higher petrol prices by putting funds into the research and development of ethanol and hybrid motors. This requires substantial investment and skills development. The union also makes the point that the federal government's new industrial relations legislation and its award rationalisation may threaten the viability of the industries in which its members work, by potentially undercutting the base level of wages and conditions under which those members work. The federal government's reforms in that regard are something of a threat to the manufacturing industry indirectly in this state.

GAWLER RAILWAY STATION

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: I rise today to speak about the valuable work undertaken by the Lions Club of Gawler at the historic Gawler railway station. The concept of this project started in 2000, with negotiations between the club and TransAdelaide's Adopt a Station program. Ideas canvassed included renovation of the stationmaster's cottage and the adjacent garden areas and the relocation of a steam locomotive from another part of Gawler. With this in mind, a business plan was drafted covering: first, the management of the project by the Lions Club of Gawler; secondly, manpower to run the project (Gawler Lions approached Employment Directions regarding the Work for the Dole program, and negotiations proved very fruitful and a contact

was soon in place); and, thirdly, finance to cover costs. The idea for financing the project was to create a Lions Sunday market.

Heritage SA and the Gawler council were the next organisations contacted and both these bodies agreed to look at the project favourably. Plans and a report for council were prepared. This included renovations to the stationmaster's cottage, using the station's northern car park for a Lions Sunday market and moving the locomotive and repositioning it at the station. The Lions Sunday market started in January 2001 in a very small way with five stalls. Today there are 30 to 40 stalls each week, giving the Lions Club an income of \$12 000 to \$15 000 per annum. Employment Directions has been closely involved from the start, supplying the Lions Club with six personnel at any time for two days per week.

From this relationship, Lions and Employment Directions, through the federal government's Work for the Dole scheme, have established gardens with dripper systems, with maintenance of these garden beds ongoing. With the same arrangements, the stationmaster's cottage renovations are also almost complete. This involved preparing walls and ceilings, painting and decorating, tiling in the kitchen area, making trestles for the market and generally keeping the environment clean and tidy.

Moving the loco to its new destination occurred on 15 December 2002. This historic engine was manufactured by James Martin & Co in Gawler during the nineteenth century rail boom which resulted in the town becoming a major industrial centre. It took six hours to move. Scotts Transport supplied a low-loader, Nick Cranes supplied three cranes, Sanders Bros supplied a crane, TransAdelaide supplied and fixed the railway sleepers, the foundation for the canopy was supplied by Harwood & Van Pelt, and the canopy cover was provided by Ahrens Engineering. This amounted to a total sponsorship of around \$50 000. In addition, Gawler council waived all fees on presentation of the plan.

The project is ongoing. The stationmaster's cottage, after refurbishment, has become the Gawler Community Gallery and is proving very popular for artists and the public at large. Work for the Dole participants have started on the renovation and preservation of the old loco, which has so much significance given the history of Gawler's engineering background. The Rotary Club of Gawler has helped in this project by supplying the stone truck which is situated at the rear of the locomotive, and that club has also helped with history and relevant photographs.

I would like to commend the Lions Club of Gawler for its continuing community involvement and leadership. This project is a very good example of the role that that club has played in the Gawler community over many years. I particularly want to acknowledge Mr Pat Mells, a former Lions district governor, who has been the chairman of the station project. I also wish to mention Mr Gary Gailey, the coordinator of the TransAdelaide Adopt a Station program, and Mr Gailey has been invited to a number of events in relation to that. This project is a great example of the three levels of government working together with service groups to benefit the community.

KRANTZ, Mr H.

The Hon. J. GAZZOLA: I wish the council to note the passing of union stalwart Harry Krantz, OAM, on 30 March this year and would like to address the council on his beliefs and achievements and to point out how the path he forged as

a union secretary and individual contrasts with the prevailing federal government's retrogressive attitudes towards workers' rights.

Others have spoken about Harry's many achievements and positions after he retired as a union secretary. It is the man and his vision that I wish to talk about. The warmth of Harry Krantz and his dedication to the rights of the ordinary person, the rights for which Harry Krantz fought for 43 years in his capacity as secretary of the Federated Clerks Union, are reflected in his report of an audience's response to John Curtin, as occasioned during a documentary filming of the then prime minister with a Darwin audience in 1942. As a sergeant in the 2nd AIF, Harry reported on the simple fact of prime minister Curtin accompanying his dog as he walked along the street to his simple home in Cottesloe. At the end of this documentary the audience of troops, nurses and council workers broke out into spontaneous applause.

The audience, as Harry well understood, was spontaneously applauding an unpretentious, modest man who reached out and understood the needs and rights of the ordinary person, a man who built his respect not on wealth and privilege but on championing the cause of the ordinary person. This was the sort of person that Harry Krantz admired and in fact was. These sympathies for the rights of ordinary people were forged in his youth during the Depression when he would listen, on his brother's shoulders, to legendary Labor figures Jack Lang and Jack Beasley as they spoke on the stump in the Botanic Gardens.

After the war Harry was reappointed as secretary of the FCU, which had been ably run by Elizabeth Teasdale-Smith, later Elizabeth Johnson—the first ever woman to be a secretary of a South Australian union and a woman whose efforts in helping to rebuild the FCU are also noted. Harry's elevation to the position of Secretary of the FCU in 1941 (in fact, he was the youngest union secretary in Australian union history) was indeed fortuitous but founded in tragic circumstances. The incumbent FCU secretary, Harry's predecessor, was killed by a dispatch rider when he was knocked from his bicycle. Harry, then 21, took the job very few wanted, given the depredations of the Depression and war had made upon union membership, and that many newly-married men sought the security of more reliable employment.

Harry threw himself into his new position with determination and vigour, and his first 10 months of appointment saw the establishment of the first milestone for the white-collar work force—the awarding of the first South Australia Clerks Award on 3 May 1942 by the South Australian Industrial Commission, with employees gaining their first pay rise in 30 years. The achievement of a minimum pay rate became an industrial vehicle for South Australian workers under state awards with the introduction of annual leave, maternity leave and leave loading—those hard-won conditions that have moved white-collar workers from the slavery (as Harry referred to it) that characterised their life and working conditions under the paternal attitudes of employers, where many were paid less than the basic wage and kept in serfdom.

The vulnerability of lower paid workers may well be witnessed again in the Howard government's continuing attack on workers' rights and conditions, a 'back to the future' industrial reality that did not escape Harry's final observation of the federal government's destruction of 100 years of hard-won legitimate workers' rights.

Harry believed in the IR system and, in taking the FCU from 20 members to 6 000, he was seen as a fair but tough negotiator, respected by unionists, workers and employers.

He may not have always agreed with the decisions of the Industrial Relations Commission at either state or federal level, but he knew the value of a skilled and fair advocacy system for improving the life of ordinary workers. In closing, I offer my condolences to his wife Joan and daughter Joanne and her family. Vale Harry Kranz.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, PRESELECTION

The Hon. S.G. WADE: Over the past two days, both the Hon. Bernard Finnigan and I have delivered our maiden speeches—and I congratulate the Hon. Bernard Finnigan on his excellent speech—and this led to me to reflect on our respective paths to this chamber. Following the 18 March election, there were two casual vacancies in this council, one from the Australian Labor Party (Hon. Terry Roberts) and one from the Liberal Party (Hon. Angus Redford). It was interesting to see how differently the parties set about filling those vacancies.

On 27 March, merely nine days after the election, *The Australian* carried a story that read, in part:

The powerful Labor right faction in South Australia has endorsed shop workers union official Bernard Finnigan to fill the casual vacancy of Minister Terry Roberts, who died in February. The ALP State Executive is expected to preselect Mr Finnigan within weeks. The deal to put forward Mr Finnigan as Mr Roberts' replacement in the upper house was put together yesterday, just 10 days after the hard left faction defected to the right on the eve of the March 18 state election.

In contrast, I reflect on my preselection. Shortly after the election, the party put an advertisement in *The Advertiser*. On 7 April nominations closed, and shortly after that the campaign began. We had 250 delegates considering three candidates. All of those 250 delegates came up through the grassroots bodies of the our party; there were no external appointees. We engaged in letters, telephone calls and interviews with delegates. On 28 April, we had a preselection college, where over 300 delegates and observers came to hear speeches from all candidates and there were open questions to the candidates. I found the difference—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins): Order! The members on my right will come to order. The Hon. Mr Wade has the call.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: In my view, the different paths to preselection highlights the different approaches to the internal democracy in our parties. We managed to complete our preselection in 41 days; Labor could do it in 10 days. We did ours in a public and open way, which was even discussed in the media at times, whereas Labor did it behind closed doors. We have a grassroots process; Labor just left it to the elites. Liberal party democracy is very clear in a number of respects. First, we do not owe our allegiance to any external body; we are not at the political whim of any external organisation. Secondly, we are a grassroots membership-based organisation.

The ALP national membership is a mere quarter of the Liberal and National parties' membership nationally. Secondly, our membership and nomination process is open to the point where, more often than not (in fact, in almost all cases that I can recall), people who are seeking parliamentary candidature, who are not members of the party, have the constitutional membership requirement waived so that we can have the choice of a community-based candidate for our preselections.

Thirdly, none of our preselection bodies have, shall we say, show and tell ballots. All of our ballots are secret. That means that so-called groups have no influence over the ability of individual delegates to vote according to their conscience. In that regard, our constitution specifically forbids delegates at preselection colleges to be directed as to their vote. The fourth aspect of internal democracy in our party is the recent introduction of plebiscites. Later this year, I am very proud to say, my party will introduce plebiscites for, in this case, federal preselections, which will mean that every financial member of the party in a region will have the opportunity to vote in the preselection of the Liberal candidate for their seat. This makes me extremely proud, and I believe it is indicative of the approach to democracy that we find in this place. We have a party that is committed to the internal culture of democracy—

The Hon. J. Gazzola interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Gazzola is out of order.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: The Labor Party is so allergic to democracy that it is finding this place an irritant and wants to abolish it. My party and I will stick with democracy any day.

TRANSPORT, PUBLIC

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL: I rise today to speak about a topic that I know is close to your heart, sir—that of public transport in Adelaide—and I want to reflect on some steps that I believe TransAdelaide could take to encourage more people to use trains and bicycles as part of a dual mode transport option. Before I do so, however, I would like to acknowledge the performance of TransAdelaide staff in respect of an incident that occurred during the WOMAD music festival in Adelaide. On the Friday night of WOMAD someone in TransAdelaide made a mistake in the timetable advice on the TV monitors at Adelaide Railway Station, resulting in the last train to Belair leaving at five minutes to midnight almost empty, while 30 or 40 people waited in the wrong train on the wrong platform.

Understandably, there were some pretty irate passengers when they realised that the last train had departed without them. To their credit, TransAdelaide staff handled the mistake quickly and efficiently with the distribution of taxi vouchers to help people get home. Those of us who had bicycles with us were driven home by a TransAdelaide employee in the TransAdelaide Tarago, and our bicycles were couriered to our houses by taxi track the following morning. Now, it was not ideal. It cost TransAdelaide hundreds of dollars more than we would have liked it to spend, but at least it solved a potential-damaging public relations problem.

The worst time to make a mistake like this is during big events, when many people use public transport, often for the first time as they are encouraged to do so, so it is important to get it right; which brings me to the issue of dual mode transport. As a regular train user and bicycle rider, I often combine the two modes of transport as an alternative to driving a car into the city. The beauty of trains and an advantage that they have over trams and buses is that you can take a bicycle on the train, and you can thereby extend the catchment of the rail network by allowing people to ride to a station, take their bike on the train, and then ride away to their final destination at the other end.

I did this for many years when my office was near South Terrace, whereas the station is, of course, up on North

Terrace. Often, I would leave my bicycle overnight at Adelaide Railway Station, because I live close enough to a suburban station that I do not need the bike at the other end. However, what I have noticed over the years is that facilities for cyclists at Adelaide Railway Station have progressively deteriorated to the extent that I now believe cyclists are being discouraged from dual mode transport. The dedicated bicycle storage rooms at Adelaide Railway Station have now gone, as I understand it, to satisfy the voracious appetite of the casino for more space.

At Adelaide Railway Station now, the bike facilities have been reduced to a handful of racks that have been moved inside the barrier gates. Further, there is a sign near the racks that tells people not to leave their bicycles overnight, and the sign threatens at \$750 fine if you disobey the directive. Whilst TransAdelaide management has privately agreed with me that overnight storage is still allowed, the sign is still there. I raised this issue well over six months ago, and TransAdelaide needs to revise its policy formally and get rid of that sign.

I was offered access to a bicycle locker, but that is not the point. The point is that TransAdelaide does not appear to understand the needs of its customers nor is it adequately, in my mind, playing to its strengths in the way that it is delivering a message that discourages people from using bikes. TransAdelaide should be encouraging people out of their cars and onto environmentally friendly modes of transport such as cycling and public transport. I know that TransAdelaide has been busy installing lockers at various locations, but this is not the solution that most cyclists and train commuters are looking for. They can be good for regular commuters who have expensive bicycles, particularly at the unstaffed suburban stations, but bicycle lockers do not cater for the occasional user who just needs somewhere safe to lock away their bike during the day or overnight.

I say: bring back the bicycle storage room at Adelaide Railway Station, promote it to passengers and remind people that bikes and trains are a natural combination. TransAdelaide should also put in some monitored video cameras to help keep our bicycles safe because I do not want to have to ride home again without a seat on my bicycle; it is an uncomfortable experience. Monitored video cameras would help solve that problem. Honourable members need to remember that every person who is discouraged from using public transport will potentially get in their car instead and vote with their feet, and that adds further to congestion and pollution on our roads.

MAY DAY MARCH

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: I rise to speak about May Day and the recent march commemorating the struggle of the working people of this world. I have been attending the May Day march for probably 30 years now, and I remember many years ago that it was a big occasion around the world. In Adelaide, we used to have thousands of people marching in the streets. They used to make up floats and the like, and it was a very big occasion. However, over recent years, the numbers have dwindled to only a few hundred people, although to my great surprise on the May Day march this year, the crowd number was up on previous years. About a thousand people marched from Victoria Square to Rundle Park and, when we got to Rundle Park, we were joined by about another thousand people for a picnic and speeches. I

recognise the fact that the President of this chamber made a speech, along with the Hon. John Gazzola.

Last week, the Hon. Mr Ridgway tried to establish his working class credentials here. Apart from giving us some amusement on this side, it caused great chuckles in the members' refreshment room. With the enactment of the federal industrial relations legislation, the federal Liberal government has actually declared war on the working people of this country. That industrial relations act has stripped away the rights and conditions for which generations of working people in this country have fought. They talk about tax cuts. The tax cuts given by Costello and the Liberal government yesterday—

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins): Order! The Hon. Mr Wortley should refer to members of other Australian parliaments by their proper title.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: Thank you, Mr Acting President. The tax cuts given by the government in another place do not go anywhere near compensating for removing job security and the continuing attacks on the wages and conditions of working people in this country. Do not take my word for it; the recent election saw three out of four South Australians vote against the Liberal government. One of the reasons for that was the very fact that the Liberals have embarked upon this war against working people, and it only goes to show that the myth about the Liberals being a friend of the working person is just that—a myth. There is an old saying that you can fool some of the people some of the time but you cannot fool all the people all the time. The recent election proved that people have woken up to the fact that the only thing that the Liberals hold for the working people is contempt.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: They do not like hearing that. Whenever we try to explain how working people are suffering—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: —under the industrial relations legislation, all we get are smirks or blank looks.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Mr Wortley has the call.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: I will get back to the history of the May Day march. It was born out of the struggle of the trade union movement in America which fought for the eight-hour day. Members would be aware that, often, workers were worked to death doing 15 or 16 hour days.

There was a rally in Haymarket Square in Chicago on 3 May 1886, and the events of that day guaranteed that May Day would stay in the history of the labour movement. On 4 May 1886, police carried out a wave of attacks against striking workers who had been denied access to the workplace for over two months. Over 200 protesters were injured on that day and several were killed by police fire. Unfortunately, one police officer was killed, and this resulted in the arrest of eight prominent leaders.

Of the eight unionists who were subsequently charged with the murder of the police officer, only two were present at the rally. The trial produced no evidence to prove that any of the eight men were guilty or associated with the death of the police officer, but unfortunately seven of the eight people charged paid the ultimate price and were hanged. The remaining unionist was sentenced to 15 years' gaol. Six years

later, the seven men who were hanged were proven to be innocent due to insufficient evidence.

There are some striking similarities between what happened back in the nineteenth century and what is happening now. I am not saying that we are shooting workers, although I am sure that some members on the opposite side would think that that is a good idea, but under the new legislation you can be fined \$33 000 for asking for—

Time expired.

GAMBLING AWARENESS WEEK

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: I was almost going to give up some of my time to hear the Hon. Mr Wortley continue, but I understand that under the rules that cannot happen. This week is Gambling Awareness Week. Perhaps a better name for it would be Problem Gambling Awareness Week, because we are all aware of how much gambling takes place in the community—how much of it is in our face with, seemingly, poker machines on every street corner and the Casino's aggressive marketing as Adelaide's premier entertainment venue, which of course derives substantial income from gambling. Since the introduction of poker machines we have seen much more aggressive advertising and product placement by the Lotteries Commission and the TAB, which was privatised during the time of the Olsen government.

What we see now is a significant increase in the number of South Australians who have been hurt or damaged (some beyond repair) by gambling addiction. We know from independent research—such as that conducted in 2001 by the University of Adelaide for the Provincial Cities Association—that there are over 23 000 South Australians with a gambling problem because of poker machines; and, according to the Productivity Commission, on average, seven people are impacted upon by each problem gambler. This means that in this state there are about 184 000 South Australians who are in some way worse off because of having an addiction to or a problem with poker machines. This does not include those who have been impacted upon by the TAB and lotteries. That number is less; nonetheless, it can have a deep impact upon families.

Earlier today I attended at the Art Gallery the launch of The Real Deal, launched for the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Service by the Hon. Jay Weatherill, Minister for Families and Communities. What was quite refreshing was that the Hon. Mr Weatherill acknowledged that much more needs to be done. To paraphrase the minister fairly, he acknowledged that there is a real issue in terms of the number of people who are accessing services to get help, and he said that there is a disparity between the number of people who have been hurt in the community by gambling and the relatively small number who access those services.

We know from independent reports and reviews that about 3 000 people a year access help through the gambling helpline and the BreakEven service, and that concerns me greatly. The state government is raking in over \$1 million a day in gambling taxes, most of that from poker machines, yet only a relatively small proportion of people with a gambling problem and a minuscule proportion of those who are impacted on by problem gambling are able to get help.

There is something seriously wrong with the way services are structured, and this is not a reflection on the professionalism, dedication or hard work of those on the front line, the gambling counsellors who work so tirelessly to assist their

gambling clients who have sought help from them. I hope we will begin to see a sea change in the way this state government deals with problem gamblers. I am concerned that, for instance, in respect of today's launch, prisoners cannot get easy access to gambling counsellors. The minister himself acknowledges that, according to a survey carried out a number of years ago, about one-third of those incarcerated have a gambling problem that is material to their incarceration.

The fact that gambling counsellors complain to me that they cannot get access to the prison system for a group of people who may well reoffend unless they are assisted with respect to their gambling problem is to me nothing short of a disgrace. Given that this government rakes in so much in gambling taxes and that there was supposed to be an increase—a doubling—in the funding for gamblers rehabilitation in excess of \$4 million a year, it seems to me that much more needs to be done. I hope members take note of some of the events of Gambling Awareness Week and the impact that gambling has in our community.

Time expired.

FUEL SUPPLY

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: After discussions with the Clerk, I seek leave to move my motion in an amended form.

Leave granted.

The Hon. NICK XENOPHON: I move:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be appointed to inquire into and report on—
 - (a) The structure of the wholesale and retail market in South Australia for petrol, diesel and LPG fuels;
 - (b) The impact of the 2003 closure of the Port Stanvac refinery and fuel storage facilities have had on the reliability and pricing of petrol and diesel for South Australian consumers;
 - (c) (i) The agreement entered into between the government of South Australia and any entity or entities over the closure of the Port Stanvac refinery and fuel storage facilities;
 - (ii) The effect of the closure of Port Stanvac on the price and availability of petrol and diesel in South Australia.
 - (iii) The effect of the agreement on aiding or impeding wholesale competition for petrol and diesel in South Australia;
 - (d) The nature and extent of competition in the wholesale petrol, diesel and LPG market in South Australia and the impact of such on the supply and pricing of these products to South Australian consumers.
 - (e) The practices and conduct of oil companies operating in South Australia (including Mobil, Caltex, Shell and BP), and the impact of such on the supply and pricing of petroleum fuels in South Australia;
 - (f) Whether the South Australian industry, the farming sector, emergency and essential services operators have been affected by any issues relating to the supply of diesel and petrol since 2003, and, if so, whether such matters have been addressed satisfactorily, or need to be so addressed;
 - (g) The potential impact on consumers of the price of petrol and diesel in South Australia of fuel storage facilities not controlled by major oil companies.
 - (h) The potential role of government to facilitate wholesale competition for petrol and diesel in South Australia and any infrastructure issues relating thereto; and
 - (i) The environmental state of the Port Stanvac refinery site and the steps needed to ensure that the site is returned to an acceptable environmental state; and
 - (j) Any other matters;

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 or 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; and

5. That the evidence given to the previous Legislative Council Select Committee on the Pricing, Refinery, Storage and Supply of Fuel in South Australia be tabled and referred to the select committee.

I will speak briefly in relation to this matter. I spoke on this last year in the previous parliament and was grateful for the support of the opposition and cross benches for such an inquiry, which ought to continue for a number of reasons. The motion I have moved in an amended form allows for the evidence of the previous select committee to be referred to this committee, should it be established by the council, and it also refers to the environmental state of the Port Stanvac refinery site and the steps needed to ensure that the site is returned to an acceptable environmental state.

That amendment was moved to my original motion by the Hon. Angus Redford, and I am grateful for the work he did on the select committee and for his interest. I know he was not successful in the seat of Bright at the last state election, but I believe the points he raised about the environmental state of Port Stanvac were valid and legitimate for the local community and it is important to incorporate those environmental concerns to make it a point of reference for this committee.

I will not go over the matters I have previously discussed in this place with respect to the need for this committee, other than to say that the issue of fuel prices in this state and country is a significant concern. It would be foolish not to acknowledge that the most significant driver in the increase of oil prices is what is occurring overseas, and in the onward and upward push in oil prices. I read a report this week in the financial press that we could be looking at oil prices of \$US100 a barrel in the not too distant future. The consequences of that are quite frightening.

Members may have heard reports that Virgin Blue's profits have gone down marginally and it has affected its share price because there has been a 34 per cent increase in jet fuel. That impacts on all of us. It is interesting to note that recently *Today Tonight* ran a story about the difference in fuel prices between this and other states, with a difference between South Australian consumers and consumers in Queensland being upwards of 20¢ a litre. This is an issue because the Queensland government does not tax fuel the same way that it is taxed in other states, which gives it an advantage over other states. However, there is a real issue here about the conduct of oil companies in this state, particularly Exxon Mobil with the way it deals with the wholesale market and the way it controls, with other major oil companies, the wholesale competition in the state.

There is a real issue about the fact that the Port Stanvac facility has been mothballed, particularly in relation to the storage capacity. There is no issue about what the local community wants in relation to the refinery reopening—and I understand that—but independent operators cannot get a foothold in this market for real and robust wholesale competition unless we know what is happening with the Mobil site, which has been left in limbo. Nobody will invest the many millions of dollars needed to compete in the wholesale market

in terms of an alternative storage facility. That matter needs to be addressed and is of legitimate concern. The impact on pricing could be upwards of 4¢ a litre to South Australian consumers—certainly it is 2¢ or 3¢ a litre. I have heard from industry insiders that 4¢ a litre would not be unreasonable in terms of having real wholesale competition in this state so that consumers will get some relief.

The interim report of the select committee, tabled shortly prior to the state election writs being issued, made reference to a number of witnesses who came forward, primarily with environmental concerns at the Port Stanvac site and some disturbing issues about the way Mobil did not appropriately deal with its responsibilities in relation to that site in years gone by. Mobil executives ought to be subject to questioning by this committee. The government's position after the parliament was prorogued was that such select committees did not have an appropriate standing. The advice provided by the Clerk was a contrary view in terms of the basis on which such committees could proceed, but because of that dispute some witnesses were reluctant or unwilling to appear.

It is important, now that the dust has settled from the election, that we reconvene the committee and look at these issues of legitimate public concern in relation to the wholesale fuel market in this state, in relation to whether South Australian consumers can get a better deal and whether consumers are receiving a raw deal as a result of the practices of oil companies and the agreement with respect to the mothballing of Port Stanvac coming into place; and whether we are locked into a situation where Mobil can keep a stranglehold over wholesale competition in this market for many years to come, to the exclusion of independent operators. It would be a very useful exercise for us to hear from those independent operators if the committee is reconvened. It is not about finger pointing but about getting some answers that could well lead to some further moves—if necessary legislative moves—to force Mobil to do the right thing and bring about wholesale competition in this market and the legitimate and pressing concerns about the environmental issues relating to the Port Stanvac site.

It seems that the evidence that has been given so far to the former committee, as set out in its interim report, are disturbing matters about which the local community ought to be alarmed in terms of practices over the years by Mobil, and they ought to be the subject of a further inquiry by a reconvened committee. There is another slight variation with respect to the motion I moved last year, and this is to allow for a five, not six, person committee. I am open to that: that is the way it has been structured in the context of this motion.

At this stage I want to acknowledge the work of committee members, including the Hon. Kate Reynolds when she was on that committee and the role that she played and, in particular, the Hons Angus Redford and Terry Stephens, who took a keen interest in the committee. I understand the government's position in the lead-up to an election and, of course, the late Hon. Terry Roberts simply was not well most of the time the committee convened—and no-one would take any issue with that.

I believe that this is a committee that has work to do, a committee that could well give some very useful answers to the South Australian community, and that would assist in the formulation of some good public policy as to what we do about the security of petrol supplies in this state and, in particular, the issue of wholesale competition and the role of big oil companies in, I believe, choking of that competition to the detriment of consumers.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police): The government will support the motion moved by the Hon. Nick Xenophon to establish this select committee. As he indicated, the previous climate in relation to this committee was somewhat different. I always thought that establishing a committee in the last week or two of the parliamentary session was not conducive to the committee being able to make any worthwhile findings before the election. One could perhaps understand that the Hon. Angus Redford, a former member of this place who happened to be the candidate for Bright, the electorate in which the former Port Stanvac refinery was located, was somewhat more interested in milking it for political benefit than in achieving some objective review—but I guess we are all politicians and we should not criticise other politicians too much for playing politics. However, that was the climate in which the government formerly took its position.

As the honourable member says, there are issues there and the government is happy to support them being considered. Later we will be discussing some other select committees which were formerly established in the previous parliament and which I believe had much less benign reasons for being established than this one. This, at least, is a committee that is genuinely looking at policy issues, and for that reason the government will support its establishment.

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: I can advise that Family First will also support the motion put forward by the Hon. Nick Xenophon. Family First is also very concerned about fuel prices in South Australia, and indeed nationally. I have read reports in various media outlets suggesting oil prices in the region of \$US100 a barrel, which would be potentially crippling for the South Australian economy, and for that reason Family First wholeheartedly supports this inquiry.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY secured the adjournment of the debate.

UPPER SOUTH EAST DRYLAND SALINITY AND FLOOD MANAGEMENT (NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 3 May. Page 66.)

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: I rise on behalf of the opposition to indicate its support for the Hon. Sandra Kanck's amendment bill, which shifts the reporting obligation of the Upper South-East dryland salinity scheme from the Environment, Resources and Development Committee to the Natural Resources Committee.

We agree with the comments the Hon. Sandra Kanck made last week in this place that the ERD Committee deals with a whole range of planning issues and has quite a heavy work load. The Natural Resources Committee, as we are all aware, was initially set up as the River Murray Committee and later changed to the Natural Resources Committee. Of course, the water from the Upper South-East dryland salinity drainage scheme is discharged from that scheme into the Coorong at Salt Creek—and, as we all know, Salt Creek and the Coorong are part of the River Murray, at the mouth of the Murray, so the opposition feels that it is appropriate for the scheme to report to the Natural Resources Committee.

To give members of the Natural Resources Committee an indication of some of the issues that are often raised, I would

like to read from a letter that was just recently sent to the Minister for Environment and Conservation, the Hon. Gail Gago. The letter states, in part:

I wrote to the previous Minister for Environment and Conservation on 21 February 2006 regarding concerns about the Upper South-East drainage scheme and the involvement of the Environmental Management Advisory Group, of which I was a member. I also sought assurance that something would be done to reverse the adverse effects that the scheme has had on wetlands of the region. I have not received a reply other than the standard one acknowledging receipt of my letter.

I understand that was because parliament had been prorogued, so I can understand why the former minister did not respond. The letter was signed by Ms Janice White. I hope that the current minister will respond to Ms White's letter. However, the letter she wrote to the former minister, the Hon. John Hill, is dated 21 February 2006. She raises a number of issues in this letter and, while it does not necessarily support all of the project that has been undertaken, she does make a couple of very important points that the Natural Resources Committee should look at, that is, the possibility of bringing water from the drains further south in the South-East into the scheme. I think that a plan is being formulated in the department and, in her letter, Ms White states:

However, I do applaud the plan to bring the water from Drain M and other 'east-west' drains northwards to the wetlands of the Upper South-East. I have been told the plan includes making adequate fresh water available for the wetlands of the Bakers Range watercourse north of the Petherick Road, especially to the invaluable breeding habitat for the colonial-nesting waterbirds in the Mandina Marshes. A colony, admittedly small, of ibis abandoned their chicks to die due to lack of water this last season. In the light of the fact that there has been widespread failure of breeding ibis in most major breeding habitats for these birds in south-eastern Australia since early 2000... such failures cannot be allowed to continue. I would appreciate your written assurance that these wetlands be included in plans to return fresh water, which currently is wasted by diversion into the ocean, to the northern wetlands of the Bakers Range and the West Avenue watercourses.

During a visit the ERD Committee made to this area, we were given anecdotal evidence that some of the indigenous inhabitants of the region used to talk about the roar of the water entering the Coorong at Salt Creek—that the water was so high and there was such a huge flow going into the Coorong that it would roar and they could hear that roar. We were told also that the water used to have to get close to 11 feet deep somewhere near Millicent before it broke through the sand dunes and into the sea. So, there is an abundance of water that is currently managed and drained out to sea through drain M and all the drains down south.

We have also received anecdotal evidence that 50 years ago there were something like 50 000 breeding black swans on the southern lagoon of the Coorong. Today, they are virtually non-existent. So, in half a century, we have noticed a significant change in the environment in the Coorong. As a resident of the South-East and as someone who has a little understanding of it, I ask the Natural Resources Committee to inquire into the benefits of bringing that water north. With those few words, we support the bill.

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

TAXATION, PROPERTY

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.I. Lucas:

1. That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon all matters relating to the issue of the collection of

property taxes by state and local government, including sewerage charges by SA Water, and in particular:

- (a) concerns about the current level of property taxes and options for moderating their impact and the impact of any future increases;
 - (b) concerns about inequities in the land tax collection system, including the impact on investment and the rental market;
 - (c) concerns about inequities in the current property valuation system and options to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the valuation process;
 - (d) consideration of alternative taxation options to taxes based on property valuations;
 - (e) concerns about the current level of council rates and options for moderating their impact and the impact of any future increases; and
 - (f) any other related matters.
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 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; and
 5. That the evidence given to the previous Legislative Council Select Committee on the Collection of Property Taxes by State and Local Government, including Sewerage Charges by SA Water, be tabled and referred to the select committee.

(Continued from 3 May. Page 67.)

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Police): Last week, the Leader of the Opposition moved to re-establish three select committees that had been set up under the last parliament. In his speech, he addressed all three committees together, and I intend to do likewise in relation to the government's view.

In relation to the first select committee, which was established to look at the collection of property taxes by state and local government, I think there is little doubt that the reason the Leader of the Opposition established that in the lead-up to the last election was to try to gain some political capital from what the opposition saw as an issue on land taxes. I also have no doubt that the Leader of the Opposition was seeking to get some information for the benefit of developing the Liberal Party's election policies at the election. Obviously, he was not particularly successful in that regard. Nonetheless, what I can say about the first committee is that it is at least looking at a legitimate policy question and, if it is the wish of the council to establish such a committee, this government will not oppose it.

What I would say in relation to all select committees that are established by this council is that they reflect the priorities of the Legislative Council in its considerations. Of course, government legislation takes up a significant amount of the time of this council. However, private members' business does reflect the interests of the non-executive members of this parliament. I think that the new members of this council—and we have seven new members in this parliament; almost a third of the Legislative Council is new—need to reflect upon that and bear in mind that, in their choice of select committees, they are really sending a signal to the public of this state about what the priorities of the Legislative Council are.

As I have said, in relation to this first select committee, one could not argue that questions of property taxes are anything other than a significant issue within the community. However, in relation to the next two committees proposed to be established by the Leader of the Opposition, I do not think

that argument could be made. Certainly, from the point of view of the government, we will be opposing the establishment of those two select committees, and there are a number of good reasons why.

When the Leader of the Opposition moved to establish the committees, he pointed out that, generally speaking, when committees had been established by the previous parliament, it was normal for those committees to be re-established if they had not been completed, and I would agree that that has generally been the norm. However, I refer here to the two select committees the Leader of the Opposition wants to establish, namely, into issues relating to the Crown Solicitor's trust account and also into the so-called Ashbourne, Clarke and Atkinson affair.

In relation to those issues, I do not think that anyone could argue that those committees have not thoroughly exhausted their subjects. Let me remind the Legislative Council that, with those two select committees, both of them have been established for at least two years, perhaps even longer, Mr President, as you would know, because you have had the honour (or the dubious honour) of serving on those committees; it must have been at least several years. Really, I do not think that, for either of those two committees—and certainly in relation to the Atkinson, Ashbourne, Clarke affair—any potential witness could possibly be called to give any further evidence in relation to it. Not only were all potential witnesses called but we had a few more. It was quite clear that, in relation to that particular select committee, it was misused as a platform to provide a number of people, who were disaffected members of the Labor Party, with the chance to make allegations under the protection of parliamentary privilege—

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I have a point of order, and I seek your guidance, Mr President. In relation to referring to the proceedings of the select committee, it is banned under the standing orders of the Legislative Council.

The PRESIDENT: I understand that the committee is now seeking to continue. Because this motion is in front of the council, it can be spoken about because of the number of issues, the mention of the witnesses, and various other issues. I think that, if the minister sticks to raising issues that are in the motion moved by the Hon. Mr Lucas, we will be fine.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: The point I was making is that, with that select committee, every potential witness that I can possibly think of has been called. The point that the leader of the opposition is making in supporting the re-establishment of this committee is that there is more work to be done and further consideration to be given. I would suggest that that is not the case, given both the length of the committee and the fact that, with that committee, all evidence was made public. Let us not pretend that this was like select committees in decades gone by when all the evidence was, as was the tradition in those days, kept under wraps until the committee finally reported. That was not the case with these committees. The evidence was released on an ongoing basis; in fact, there was a media scrum.

In relation to the point of order just taken by the Leader of the Opposition, we have this absurd situation where, when the committee was established, although it was widely discussed in the media, the Leader of the Opposition was out there after every meeting with the media, but the matter—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I was responding to you. I had to go out and correct all the misrepresentations of the Leader of the Opposition. We had the situation where there were no issues that I could think of, covered by a select

committee, that had not been so widely canvassed in the public arena. I do not think that anyone could say that it is necessary to re-establish the committee to get out information. This issue was widely canvassed in the media for over two years, and all the evidence was made public. In fact, some of the evidence that was made public included police transcripts of interviews.

I remind members that, in respect of the Ashbourne case, the matter actually went to court. It was a case where Mr Ashbourne was tried before a court and found not guilty. The Leader of the Opposition also said, 'If we do not reconvene this committee, all the work previously undertaken by members and the people who gave evidence in good faith would be wasted.' Some of those who gave evidence, such as Ralph Clarke, made it quite clear that they were there under duress. They were there because the Leader of the Opposition had used the numbers of the committee to summons them to appear.

Notwithstanding the fact that those people did appear, the opposition was severely disappointed, because it did not get anything of political value out of either of those two committees. The point I want to make to the council is: do we really need to continue pursuing an issue which is related to evidence in respect of a matter which happened over three years ago where we had all the evidence, and where we had witnesses called before it that included people like Murray Delaine, Chris Schacht and Edith Pringle? They had no direct knowledge of the matters that were in the terms of reference. If that is not an abuse of the committee system, I do not know what is.

I think members need to ask; should this be a priority of the Legislative Council? Is this the message it wants to give? It is up to the council, because the council has the numbers to do whatever it likes. Do we want to send a signal to the public of this state that the highest priority issue is an event that occurred over 3½ years ago, when Mr Ashbourne was charged, went before the court and was subsequently found not guilty? Do we really want to go over this again? If members opposite want to do that, I am quite happy for them to tell the public of South Australia, 'Look, we think this is a priority for the state.' If they want to tell that to the people of the state, that is fine. I do not think that will worry me at all, but it will probably worry those poor, hapless members on the committee, my colleagues, who might have to serve on it and go through pages of evidence about a metre high. There are hundreds and hundreds of pages of evidence.

If one of the new Independents votes for this, they will have to go on to this committee, and they will have to read all of the evidence and try to come to some conclusion. We know that the opposition has made up its mind. It made up its mind before the committee was even established. We know what the opposition members will say, because they have already said it. They said it when they moved to set up this committee two or three years ago. I am sure that whatever new evidence comes in, whatever else happens, they will come to whatever conclusion they want to regardless of it.

Is this really the priority of the council? As I have said, in relation to the select committee moved by the Hon. Rob Lucas regarding land taxes, one could not disagree that that is an issue of some importance to the state and, if the council wants to set that up, the government has no objection. However, the other two committees are being used almost entirely as a political exercise. It was simply political game playing by the opposition in the hope that it could embarrass

the government. It had some very undesirable effects in that police transcripts were issued.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I think that members should listen to this. On one of those select committees, the transcripts of interviews that police had conducted with over 130 people were made public in their entirety.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: They were tabled.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: What does that mean? The Leader of the Opposition insisted that those documents be tabled. One should reflect on what that means for our democracy. If it means that people interviewed by the police and who assist police with their inquiries—and I mean genuinely help the police to discover what has happened in a case—know that whatever they say to police can come out some time later in parliament and effectively be made public, that will be a very strong deterrent. If this becomes anything other than a once-off aberration and becomes part of the future behaviour of parliamentary committees, people will not cooperate with police. Why would you do it? Why would you go to the police and be interviewed—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: To tell the truth.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: It is not just a matter of telling the truth. It is not the issue of the truth that is the problem. With those transcripts, people were talking about friends, associates and other things that, for very good reason, they may not have wished to be made public. If people know that they could be made public, they simply will not help police with their inquiries. I think that was one of the most regrettable incidents that happened over the course of the past four years. I do not think that there is any other case in parliaments around the world where transcripts of police interviews have been made public, and I think that is the sort of behaviour that we should not encourage. It is up to the Independent members of the parliament; if they wish to send the signal out to the people of South Australia that the priorities of this Legislative Council are to investigate these sorts of events that happened years ago and were the subject of a court case, when there are no more witnesses to be interviewed—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: How do you know?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: The Leader of the Opposition had every person appear that Ralph Clarke ever knew in his life. In these committees, the Leader of the Opposition does not want to look at any of the key witnesses with something to offer. This is the issue for the Independent members of this parliament to determine. If you want to be sucked into the game of the Leader of the Opposition to play his political games—and remember you are looking at the investigation of the events regarding Randall Ashbourne that happened in November 2002 for which he was subsequently charged—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: What have you got to hide?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: There is nothing to hide. As I said, I am happy for you to waste your time, but I think that the future of the Legislative Council is under consideration. If you want to give the message—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: You were going to abolish it.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Yes; to stop this sort of behaviour. If that is what you want to do, that will be one of the arguments for its abolition, if you abuse its powers. There are plenty of things that an upper house, including those of other parliaments in this country and throughout the world, looks at. They look at things of substance. One only has to

look at Senate committees and other committees that have shown that they can play a constructive role.

It is up to this council. We can go on these political witch-hunts where we abuse the power of the parliament or we can investigate issues of substance. Again, I make the point that the government will not oppose the first committee on land taxes; however, in relation to the other two issues, we have seen in the past that these committees have been nothing more than political witch-hunts. They involve the abuse—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: It was an investigation of the Auditor-General's Report.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Again, in relation to that—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: It's the Auditor-General's Report.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: In relation to the Auditor-General's Report, again, we had the situation where it was the Auditor-General's Report, but I remind the Independent members that for more than 12 months opposition members would not bring in the Auditor-General to give evidence; they refused. They put him at the bottom of the list. They wanted everyone else to do it. They wanted to leave the Auditor-General until last, yet we were looking at the Auditor-General's Report. That is how serious they were in an objective investigation. All that information is on the record. Absolutely nothing more can come out of these committees. However, if the opposition, with the support of the Independents, wishes to waste the time of the Legislative Council, then so be it. I suggest that it will reflect badly on this chamber rather than the government.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.
(Continued from 9 May. Page 140.)

The Hon. CAROLINE SCHAEFER: I support the Address in Reply speech made by the Governor and I take this opportunity to thank her for her efforts for all South Australians and also for her decision to extend her term at least for a short time. I also congratulate you, Mr President, on your election as President of this place. I served under your chairmanship on the Statutory Authorities Review Committee and I found you to be fair and even-handed. I assume that you will extend those skills to this place.

I congratulate and welcome all new members of this chamber. Although we come from many diverse backgrounds and have differing points of view and, at times, arguments are destined to become heated, we in the Legislative Council have always prided ourselves on our ability to work through difficult issues with good humour and mutual respect. I sincerely hope that we are able to continue that tradition during the term of this government.

I extend my condolences to the families of former members who died during the last parliament. In particular, I once more offer my sympathies to the families of the Hon. Terry Roberts and the Hon. Jamie Irwin, both of whom I worked with and respected and counted as friends. It is also difficult to say farewell to my colleagues who were defeated or who retired at the last election, but I would like to acknowledge my Liberal Party colleagues: the former member for Finnis (Hon. Dean Brown); the former member for Mawson (Hon. Robert Brokenshire); the former member for Unley (Mr Mark Brindal); the former member for

Newland (Hon. Dorothy Kotz); the former member for Light (Hon. Malcolm Buckby); the former member for Bright (Hon. Wayne Matthew); the former member for Morialta (Hon. Joan Hall); the former opposition whip and member for Goyder (Mr John Meier); former parliamentary secretary and member for Hartley (Mr Joe Scalzi); and former parliamentary secretary, Hon. Julian Stefani; as well as the Hon. Terry Cameron, the Hon. Ron Roberts, and the Hon. Kate Reynolds. I wish them all a happy and fulfilling future.

In particular, I acknowledge the Hon. Angus Redford, who was No. 6 on the Legislative Council ticket in 1993 when, together with the Hon. Robert Lawson, we were elected for the first time. Angus had the great skill of getting under the skin of his combatants, and I know there are many on the other side who are pleased to see his political demise. However, there are few of us who know how much of his time he gave (free of charge) to help people who needed legal advice. I am sure there are also very few who appreciated his skills and his ability to research and, most of all, there are few who realise what a loyal friend he is. I will miss Angus for all his talents and I wish him and Fina well in their new life.

I would like to add my voice to that of members in this place who have raised their concerns about the planned abolition of the upper house by Mr Rann, although, having listened to my colleagues the Hon. Rob Lucas, the Hon. Robert Lawson, the Hon. Dennis Hood and others, I am wondering what there is left to say. In her opening speech, the Governor promised a 'bold four-year plan of reform' but, on reading the speech, the only reform outlined is the decimation of the upper house. The Hon. Rob Lucas has already outlined in great detail that this council passes 98 per cent of all legislation, so it can hardly be argued that we are obstructionist. Rather, this arrogant Premier wants no criticism or opposition whatsoever. This is a blatant and naked grab for total power.

The electors of South Australia graphically illustrated at the last election that they do not want the ALP to have unfettered power, nor do they want only two major parties represented in the parliament. They have clearly demonstrated that they are prepared to support a major party governing in its own right in the lower house, but they have clearly and very deliberately voted quite differently for the upper house. They have plainly shown us that they want this system of checks and balances, but that has not deterred Mr Rann. No, he is going to reform the state whether it wants reform (or his version of it) or not.

What indication is there that the abolition of the Legislative Council is high on the list of priorities—or even on the radar—of the average South Australian voter? What poll has indicated that, up there with voter concern on such issues as health, education, law and order or roads, there has been a plea from Joan and Joe Average, 'Please, Mr Rann, abolish the upper house'? In fact, in spite of the concerted efforts of Mike Rann, Rex Jory, Dean Jaensch and *The Advertiser*, the telephone poll conducted by *The Advertiser* was in favour of the retention of the Legislative Council without change. So why does it rate as such an important matter with this government? It is because this debate will act as a very effective smokescreen to deflect from the fact that we have a government which talks much but does nothing. Mark my words: every time there is something contentious; every time the public gets restless; every time the opposition asks too many embarrassing questions, the Rann band will roll out the same old tune: let us get rid of the Legislative Council—and so deflect criticism from themselves.

It is a fact that governments of all persuasions find the bicameral system a thorn in their side. Some of my colleagues in another place were keen to be rid of us when we were in government, but those very same people were more than happy to have us when we lost government. In fact, I am sure that all of us in government, opposition or as individuals have had members of the lower house come to us and ask us to fix up legislation which has passed the House of Assembly. Many times it is only when legislation has passed one house that interest groups realise the implications of that particular legislation and raise matters with us. Indeed, it is not unusual to see the government amend its own legislation when it reaches the upper house, in spite of it having been passed without comment previously.

I admit that this is a cumbersome system, but it is a system that has stood the test of time and it still works. The old saying is: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Legislative Councillors are required to perform many and varied tasks, including working with a wider constituency in seats not held by their party. The Hon. Bernard Finnigan informed me only yesterday that he would be going to Mount Gambier to live in order to give the ALP a greater presence in regional South Australia. He is a young, single man who does not have to disrupt his family to do this; but the member for West Torrens (Tom Koutsantonis) is also a young single man, and I would be surprised if he were prepared to make a similar sacrifice.

By way of an example, I currently work with Liberals in the electorates of Enfield, Light and Mitchell. The Hon. John Dawkins works in the north-eastern suburbs and the Riverland. Those people and many like them have a right to be heard and represented, and I cannot see any of my lower house colleagues finding the time to do that. In fact, as I see it, that is one of the main functions of an upper house. We are elected by a quota system to represent the whole state, so our job is quite different from that of those who are elected to represent a specific district. Our colleagues in another place will always ask of any legislation, 'How does it affect my patch?' and so they should, but surely someone should ask, 'How does this affect the state?' That, as I see it, is our job. We are policy driven rather than patch driven.

Neither can I see that the mooted cost savings to the taxpayer would be a reality, given that to do what we have to do the House of Assembly would need vastly increased resources, staffing and bureaucrats. My friend the Hon. Angus Redford always jokingly said that it takes half as many of us to pass exactly the same legislation as they do, often with amendments. So, if there is to be one house of parliament, maybe we should scrap the lower house! Seriously, I would not agree with that either, because we each have complementary and different duties to perform. Cumbersome though it may be, democracy is strengthened by the fact that there is a method of scrutinising and amending legislation.

My colleagues have already outlined the fact that without a Legislative Council we would have no mechanism to precipitate select committees unless the government of the day agreed. I will not elaborate any further on that, but I will comment on the proposal to move us to four-year terms. I agree that eight years is a long time to have security of tenure and that the half in, half out rule was introduced when the lower house had three-year terms. But, without that mechanism, in a landslide victory such as we had in 1993 or Labor had this year, there is a real danger that the upper house would become a rubber stamp of the lower house and/or that the quota necessary would become so small as to be nearly unworkable. In either case we would play into the Premier's

hands by losing relevance. I am sure we will debate this matter again and again over the next four years, so I will say no more about it at this time, but I assure my colleagues that I will be joining with them to ensure that the people of South Australia see this for what it is: a naked grab for complete and unfettered power.

As I am sure everyone knows, I am an unashamed advocate for rural South Australia, so I was disturbed to hear the Governor's reference to regional South Australia in her speech, as follows:

Regarding primary industries, work on the deep sea grain terminal will be completed.

I say: thank God for that, given that it was approved under the Olsen government and we have been waiting for it ever since. The speech goes on:

And my government will work closely with producers to help them further contribute to the state's export performance and to deal with the structural challenges the sector will face in the years ahead.

That is the sum total of any reference to rural South Australia. Where are the specifics? What about the grape industry, which is in crisis, or our citrus industry or our egg industry? What about our rural roads, rural health, rural schools, rural communities? Where is there any mention of the fishing industry or the much vaunted fisheries act? After four years the government finally circulated a draft of the fisheries bill just before the last parliament rose, but there is no mention of it in the Governor's speech. Does this then mean that because there has been some criticism of the bill we will wait another four years for any action?

What about the State Food Plan? I understand that the Premier no longer condescends to chair the Premier's Food Council or the Premier's Wine Council. I can assure him that, if he cannot be bothered, very soon industry will not be bothered either. A competitive advantage that South Australia had will be lost, and even more of our food manufacturers will move interstate, where they have governments that care.

We keep hearing about the State Strategic Plan, but what will it achieve, and where are the steps along the way? Where is the research and development, and where is the direction? I am relieved to learn that at least the federal government appears to have listened to rural South Australians and put some real funding where it is needed: into roads and infrastructure and into a specific initiative to allow more farm owners to access the pension, which will allow succession planning and enable them to retire with dignity. It will be interesting to see whether this government is in any way prepared to match funding on such projects as the Sturt Highway, sealing arterial roads or our share of the Murray River.

In spite of the wailing of Treasurer Foley, it was today announced that GST revenue for South Australia is projected to be \$3.54 billion, an additional \$193 million this year, with continual rises through to 2010, so there is no longer any excuse for this government to sit back and whinge that it is someone else's fault. It is time for Mr Foley to put his money where his mouth is and perhaps—just perhaps—for him to remember that South Australia does not start at Gepps Cross and end at the Toll Gate.

Finally, I congratulate all my new colleagues on their maiden speeches. One's first speech in parliament is always a daunting occasion, knowing as we do that it will be quoted back to us throughout our career. I should not single out one person, but I am sure we were all touched by the sincerity of the Hon. Ann Bressington's speech. She brings to this

parliament—albeit accidentally—great passion for her cause and knowledge that fortunately few of us possess. I assure her of my personal support, and I am sure the support of the entire council is with her in her quest for a South Australia capable of coping with, and lessening the use of, illicit drugs. I support the motion.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: On this occasion when we are responding to an address by the Governor of South Australia, who represents a British queen, it is very important for me that I acknowledge that we are meeting on Kurna land, the land which traditionally belonged to the Aboriginal tribe, the Kurna people. There are two main things I want to speak about today: one is about illicit drugs and the other is about the involvement of religion in politics. But I want to begin by making some comments about the parliament. The Governor's speech referred to the desires of the Premier to abolish the upper house, and quite a number of members—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is too much conversation on my right.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: Quite a number of members have referred to that comment in the speech. My message to the Premier in response to it is: 'In your dreams, Mike, in your dreams'. It is the House of Assembly that is the problem, and I will have much more to say on this when we get the bill.

I am delighted that the Hon. Gail Gago is now the environment minister, and I am also very pleased that the Hon. David Ridgway is the shadow environment minister. Along with the Hon. Mark Parnell, I think this chamber will be able to put a lot of light on environmental issues.

The Hon. G.E. Gago: The environment hub.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: That is a great phrase and I will do my best to make it that. I am also pleased that the Hon. Michelle Lensink has become the shadow minister for the status of women. I cannot help but observe that, despite elections and casual vacancies, the number of women in this chamber has not changed. I pass no reflection on the two members who have filled the casual vacancies in this chamber, but surely their parties had talented women amongst them. I find it surprising that, when the opportunities are there to bring more woman into parliament, the major parties do not take them. It is interesting for me to observe that at the time I was elected in 1993 I became, for the whole history of parliament in this state, the eighth woman to be elected to this chamber—almost 100 years after women had been granted the right to stand for parliament.

The Hon. Anne Bressington is the newest female member to this chamber and, 12½ years after I was elected, is only the thirteenth. We still have a lot further to move forward in regard to the equality of women. In relation to the Hon. Anne Bressington, towards the end of last year my former parliamentary colleague, the Hon. Ian Gilfillan, held the last of his well accepted balanced justice seminars, and all MPs received an invitation. The Hon. Nick Xenophon brought along this woman called Ann Bressington, the Director of a group called ADTARP, and she sent me an email afterwards criticising what she had heard at the seminar in relation to recreational drug use. I gave her a limited response at that time and said that I would get back to her about it when I had more time to respond. The next time I saw her was at the declaration of the Legislative Council poll, at which time I said to her that I would now be responding to what she had to say within parliament, and I intend to take that opportunity today. In the

process I will put on record my party's concern about the whole 'tough on drugs' mantra that has been adopted by most of the parties now represented in this parliament.

The two best known and most used recreational drugs are legal ones—alcohol and tobacco. In looking at this debate about drugs we should see what that legality brings. It brings standards so, if you go and buy a bottle of wine and it says on the label that it is 11 per cent alcohol, it has to stand up to that claim. It means that as a drinker you have a fair idea of what you can expect of the impact of that glass of wine or bottle of beer on your metabolism. You can be sure that if the label says it has sulphur dioxide in it that it does. If you are one—and I am—who has a reaction to sulphur dioxide, you can make an informed decision to not buy it because it has a very bad effect on your system. It brings opportunities to extol health warnings, and I think it was just yesterday or the day before that the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse told us about the ads she had the pleasure to launch with the new tobacco packaging. It allows health authorities to confidently make statements about what you can expect.

I pulled two magnets off my fridge this morning which say, 'Know your standards drinks'. It has a bottle of white wine with 12 per cent alcohol by volume and states that a 100ml glass is one standard drink and, if you drink the whole bottle, it will be 7.1 standard drinks. A cask of the same wine will give you 19 standard drinks. With a beer that is 4.9 per cent alcohol, one 285ml glass will give you one standard drink. A 750ml bottle of that same beer will give you 2.9 standard drinks, and a 375ml stubby or can will give you 1.4 drinks. On that basis you then know how much you are drinking and it allows anyone who drinks alcohol and decides to drive to know what is a safe limit for them. Everyone is the beneficiary of that legality. It allows these commodities to be taxed, so there is a financial base for the system to respond to the health disbenefits that arise from the use of those drugs.

We know, as the minister told us yesterday, that many people who smoke end up having their legs amputated. By having knowledge like this, and having the capacity to tax a legal drug, we have money to put into the health system to deal with that, and it allows us to have money for advertising campaigns and to tell people what it is they could be doing to themselves. It allows researchers and academics to check out what it is we are taking. But with illicit drugs we have none of those controls or opportunities. In fact, opportunities are denied for researchers and academics.

I raise the question of the testing of pills at rave parties. I wrote to the then health minister, Lea Stevens, at the beginning of last year about this, seeking her approval for such pill testings to be done at rave parties in South Australia. I suspect that it was a cabinet decision rather than the Hon. Lea Stevens' own decision, but the argument she advanced to me in her response was that the government could not approve pill testing because the pills would be given back after testing. Quite clearly if you do not give pills back to those who offer them for testing there is no chance that they will offer them for testing in the first instance. So the refusal to test is counter-productive if we want to minimise harm.

International experience of pill testing shows that the large majority of potential users, when they are shown the results and find that the pill they have submitted does not contain what they thought they had bought, hand them back. They do not use them but throw them away. Pill testing, therefore, results in a reduction of usage. If we believe in reducing—

The Hon. A.M. Bressington: There is no evidence to support that at all.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: That interjection probably does need to be included on the record, because there is plenty of evidence to show that pill testing does produce that positive result. In fact, I believe that we should have a controlled testing program in South Australia, with the government supervising it, so that we can get our own results and so that the sorts of claims that the Hon. Ms Bressington is making can be shown to be incorrect. If we believe in reducing harm, logic dictates that we should have pill testing at rave parties. The Rann government's 2002 Drug Summit recommended such testing.

The Hon. A.M. Bressington: And that wasn't stacked at all, was it?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Ms Bressington will cease to interject.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I have an interesting little book here called *The Outlaw Antidepressant*, which is about ecstasy and rave culture.

The Hon. A.M. Bressington interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Ms Bressington has had her opportunity and she will cease to interject.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I did not interject when she gave her information. Thank you, Mr President.

The Hon. A.M. Bressington interjecting:

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: Well, it deserved to be interjected on and I am now responding to it. This book was produced by a young woman who wanted to do this as her PhD thesis. Unfortunately, the university she was attending refused to allow her to do it on the basis that it was about illegal drug use. This is obviously a very erudite dissertation, but I will quote what she says, as follows:

Two points must be made here: firstly, this suppression of knowledge and understanding from the university merely supports the theories of Foucault and Bourdieu. Secondly, why is it acceptable to travel outside of one's culture and into another's for the sake of anthropological research and take drugs in the context of various rituals and yet be exempt from a similar bias? It is ethnocentric and one-eyed of Western academia to view drug-taking rituals in native cultures as acceptable for researchers to participate in yet a similar investigation into a Western subculture can't be done.

And herein lies the problem. We cannot get to the truth of so much of this if the research cannot be done. Samantha Lee Kelly went ahead and did this and has published it herself in order to get some of the truth out about ecstasy.

When the Hon. Ann Bressington wrote to me last year (when she did not have the title 'honourable'), she said in her email to me:

When we (parents and other significant adults) tell them that drugs are harmful we expect that professionals will support that statement. What we get are some professionals who are prepared to test these pills that contain dangerous substances.

There is a huge illogicality in that. We cannot know that they contain dangerous substances unless they are tested.

The Hon. A.M. Bressington: MDMA is dangerous on its own.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: This is good; I will get to that in a minute. If testing is permitted and the pills are shown to contain dangerous substances, the health professional can advise the potential user of that fact. With no testing, how can any professional say to that person that what they intend taking is dangerous, as Ann Bressington was asking of me at that stage? If it is an ecstasy tablet, can a health professional, in all honesty, speak the truth if they say it is harmful? The drug 3,4-methylenedioxy-n-methylamphetamine, MDMA, or

as it is more commonly known, ecstasy, was originally used as a psychotherapeutic drug. The US Drug Enforcement—

The Hon. A.M. Bressington interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Ms Bressington will come to order. The Hon. Sandra Kanck has the call, and interjections are out of order.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: She is a bit obstreperous! The US Drug Enforcement Administration put forward a proposal in 1984 to schedule MDMA but, before the hearings commenced, in 1985 the DEA invoked powers to place it on schedule 1 on an interim basis.

The Hon. A.M. Bressington: In 1984?

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: Yes, 1984. Schedule 1—
The Hon. A.M. Bressington interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! I will not tolerate any more interjections from the Hon. Ms Bressington. In this council sometimes people will stand up and disagree with your point of view. That is democracy. You will allow the Hon. Sandra Kanck to continue her speech.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: Thank you, Mr President. This schedule 1 that MDMA was placed on in 1985 is for 'damaging and addictive drugs without medical use'. This scheduling onto the highest rating on the list was done before any hearings on the DEA's request that it be put on its list, and before any tests were done to find out whether it was, in fact, dangerous. In the same year, this listing by the DEA then resulted in the UN recommending that it be placed on schedule 1 of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances—again, without any actual scientific basis. It was like dominos falling; if the US did it, it must be bad and everyone should follow.

A coalition of doctors, scientists and therapists—one of whom is Professor Lester Grinspoon, emeritus professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, so he is no slouch—then initiated legal proceedings in response to the DEA's action. The arguments that were given against MDMA cited studies of MDA on animals and ignored any evidence about MDMA on humans. Despite that intellectual dishonesty by the US government in those hearings, the court decision in 1986 was for MDMA to be placed in schedule 3, which allowed for research and limited usage while the hearings took place—and remember this happened back in 1985.

The judge's decision was then appealed against. That was ultimately overturned, and the emergency scheduling of MDMA was reinstated as schedule 1. This doctors group again appealed, and the Appeals Court ruled that there had been 'improper interpretation of accepted medical use' and recommended reconsideration of the DEA's decision. It was deleted from schedule 1, but a month later, still with no scientific studies and still no hearing, it was reinstated.

We have been told that ecstasy is a dangerous substance. We do not have the evidence; the Australian government has followed down the path of doing this without the evidence. That original 1985 listing of ecstasy, or MDMA, on this schedule 1 is still being contested. So, more than 20 years later, the matter has not been resolved. Yet we are being asked to believe that this is a dangerous substance. We do not have evidence that it is a dangerous substance. In fact, I was saying to people last year, after the bushfires on Eyre Peninsula, with all the trauma that was associated with it, that one of the best things you could probably have done for the people on Eyre Peninsula who had gone through that trauma was to give them MDMA. However, one dare not advocate that, because we are all being tough on drugs, aren't we!

It seems to me that we have not learnt the lessons of alcohol prohibition. What happened when we had alcohol prohibition was that we had the sorts of alcohol that were very dangerous to people; people died as a consequence of drinking alcohol. People die as a consequence of taking drugs for exactly the same reasons—because they are illegal and because they do not know what is in the drugs—and we just keep on putting our head in the sand.

In the letter Ann Bressington sent to me last year, she said:

As a treatment provider of a very successful program in the northern suburbs I can only state that your intentions are absolutely counter-productive to the objectives of what most believe to be our harm minimisation policy.

Underneath that, she has three bold dot points, stating:

- To reduce the harm
- To reduce demand
- To reduce supply.

I wrote back and told her that I think we do need to do that. We need to get a message across to all people that all drugs—licit and illicit—are not the way to go. In her letter to me—and also in her Address in Reply speech—the member has extolled the virtues of the Swedish program. Sweden does have tougher drug laws than neighbouring states, but the consequence appears to be higher mortality rates amongst its drug users and, surprisingly, amongst the addicts undergoing compulsory treatment.

For some time, I have received unsolicited emails from a group called DACA, and I assume that other MPs have received them as well. When one goes a little further into the DACA web site, one comes across a very interesting article that states that Christians should reject injecting rooms. This, of course, raises some other interesting questions for me when we start dealing with issues that are essentially health issues as moral and religious issues. I have printed off about three pages from the section that states that Christians should reject injecting rooms. It says things like, 'All Christian denominations condemn drug taking as evil because of its self-destruction and self-centred lifestyle.' Well, I do not know how many Christian denominations condemn the use of alcohol and tobacco. Having been brought up a Methodist, yes, there was one denomination that definitely did condemn them as evil. However, 95 per cent of drug taking is in the form of alcohol and tobacco, and most churches do not condemn them.

Some of the headings are quite frightening, such as 'Drugs are evil'. Well, is alcohol evil? I do not know how many members in this place would say that alcohol is evil, and I do not know how many members in this place would say that tobacco is evil. Certainly, the Hon. Ann Bressington uses the latter of those two, and I doubt that she would be saying that it is evil.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: No; I'm reading off this, that is, that 'Christians should reject injecting rooms.' It is a very disturbing document, particularly knowing that we as MPs receive this information from DACA in our emails, and it is not clear who this group is—

The Hon. J.M.A. Lensink interjecting:

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: Well, it is always interesting to know your enemy. I find some of the stuff that is in there very disturbing. I remind members who might think that all drugs are evil that Jesus partook of wine. He did not have any silly laws that said, 'This drug is legal, and this one isn't legal.' He drank wine, and when he was asked on one occasion to produce more of it, he did so, on request.

The Hon. D.G.E. Hood: He didn't have ecstasy, though.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: But ecstasy is not a dangerous drug.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member will not respond to interjections, because they are out of order.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: Interjections are definitely out of order; thank you, Mr President. This issue of where Christianity stands on drug taking moves into the next topic that I want to address, and that is the question of the involvement of the church in politics. I have been quite disturbed by an emerging trend of conservatism in politics. After the election, I made a statement in the media that progressive politics was the loser from the election. Somebody asked me, 'What about Nick Xenophon?' and I said, 'Well, he's conservative as well. You only have to look at his voting on my dignity and dying bill a couple of years ago'. Although he did not actually speak against the bill, he told me, before the vote was taken, that I would understand, wouldn't I, that because of his Greek Cypriot background of course he could not support it.

In terms of other examples of conservatism and, in fact, on that same bill, the Hon. Terry Stephens said, back in 2002, that he sought 'the correct moral, legal and spiritual course' in deciding how he would vote, and he said:

I am a Catholic, and I am very proud of my faith. Certainly, the sanctity of life is something I hold dear, but religion alone has not shaped my final position.

I have noticed in the speeches that have been made in both this place and the other a certain level of conservatism. In his Address in Reply speech, the Hon. Dennis Hood rejected Darwin's theory of evolution. He did not quite say what he believed in, but I took it to be, from what he had said, that he believed in creationism, or perhaps the new name that they have for creationism—intelligent design. I also note that in the past the Hon. Andrew Evans has presented a religious view that homosexuality is a choice, and I have argued with him to the contrary—and argued very strongly with him.

The Hon. Ann Bressington, I understand, presented the Festival of Light's position on drugs to a senate inquiry, so she obviously represents a conservative point of view. We know that the right faction of the ALP has taken control of the parliament. Looking at the contributions from some of the right faction, we had the Hon. Mr Finnigan's comment the other day. He told us that he wanted to acknowledge, 'I am a servant of Christ, and subject to His reign in history.' Well, I am glad that that makes him glad, but I hope he is not going to use that in making decisions on abortion, prostitution, voluntary euthanasia, sex education and other issues, but I fear that he will.

In the House of Assembly, new MP Tom Kenyon said in his Address in Reply speech that 'abortion is the killing of a human life'. I suppose I should have shrugged my shoulders and said, 'So, what's new about a man telling a woman what she should do with her own body?', but let us be clear on what we are talking about. Of abortions in South Australia, 60 per cent occur in the first six weeks of gestation. At that point, there is something there that is the size of a pea or, if it is really, really big, the size of a coffee bean. It is mostly blood and tissue and, when you look at it under a microscope, it looks vaguely like a lizard. It is so insignificant that many women have miscarriages and never even know that they were pregnant. The rate of abortion in South Australia is now lower than it was in 1969 when amendments were made to the Criminal Law (Consolidation) Act that allowed an

abortion to be performed without criminal penalty provided that certain rules were followed.

The Weekend Australian Magazine of 29 April reported on the Hillsong Church in Baulkham Hills in Sydney. In particular it quoted the Hillsong Church web site, and the quote they gave stated that 'depression is a supernatural spirit straight from the devil'. The interesting thing about this is that this quote disappeared off the Hillsong web site within 24 hours of *The Weekend Australian Magazine* revealing it. If you go to it now and try to get there, it states that this page does not exist. Fortunately for us, my Senate colleague Andrew Bartlett went looking for it as soon as he saw the article in *The Weekend Australian Magazine* and captured it, and he has it on his blog site. I want to read the entire quote, as follows:

Depression is a supernatural spirit of destruction straight from the devil, and as such, needs to be treated like an enemy. We must take a strong stand against it and deny it any power in our lives. Depression stems from an underlying root of unbelief in God's care, His goodness, His faithfulness, or even His ability to get you out of seemingly 'impossible' situations.

At 19 years of age I was hospitalised, and I had a near-nervous breakdown; it came from a doctor-prescribed drug. To read this, this poisonous stuff, that tells me that that is why that happened when it was a doctor-prescribed drug makes me extraordinarily angry. And what about women who get post-natal depression? To say that that is why they have it is absolutely appalling, and churches that advance things like this should be utterly ashamed of themselves.

I certainly hope that the two Family First MPs in this parliament do not ascribe to such a view. How can we possibly deal with issues of mental health if that is the underlying belief of parliamentarians, that people bring it on themselves through their lack of belief in God? The first step of the Hillsong church counsellors' providing support for someone who has depression is to lay a guilt trip on them. That is a great cure for depression—not. I certainly hope that that group is not receiving taxpayer funding for this.

These sorts of wild statements about depression extend also to what are regarded as mainstream Christian churches. It is not just depression—it is a range of things. I refer to some of Archbishop Pell's comments made recently in order to show some of the stupidity of religious people talking about the decisions that are made in our parliament. This was a speech given by Archbishop Pell to the Legatus Summit in Naples, Florida in the United States. He spoke about the need to increase population and he began with the idea that 'faith ensures a future'. That was his first statement. My view is that futures happen regardless of faith and, if you want to have that proven or not, have a look at rabbits and cockroaches because they do not need faith or a belief system to ensure their future. He said:

As an illustration of the literal truth of this, consider Russia and Yemen. Look also at the different birth rates in the red and blue states in the last presidential election in the USA. In 1950 Russia, which suffered one of the most extreme forms of forced secularisation under the Communists, had about 103 million people. Despite the devastation of wars and revolution the population was still young and growing. Yemen, a Muslim country, had only 4.3 million people. By 2000 fertility was in radical decline in Russia, but because of past momentum the population stood at 145 million. Yemen had maintained a fertility rate of 7.6 over the previous 50 years and now had 18.3 million people.

Presumably, we should cheer at this point because we have more people on the earth who can use up more resources and destroy more of the environment. Archbishop Pell continued:

Median level United Nations forecasts suggest that even with fertility rates increasing by 50 per cent in Russia over the next fifty years, its population will be about 104 million in 2050—a loss of 40 million people. It will also be an elderly population.

Perish the thought! Look at all the elderly people in here. It seems that there is something terrible about being elderly. The speech continued:

The same forecasts suggest that even if Yemen's fertility rate falls 50 per cent to 3.35, by 2050 it will be about the same size as Russia—102 million—and overwhelmingly young.

One wonders how Yemen is going to cope with a population that size, given that it is mostly a desert country. He then goes on to compound his ignorance about the environment as follows:

The situation of the United States and Australia is not as dire as this, although there is no cause for complacency. It is not just a question of having more children, but of rediscovering reasons to trust in the future. Some of the hysterical and extreme claims about global warming are also a symptom of pagan emptiness, of Western fear when confronted by the immense and basically uncontrollable forces of nature. Belief in a benign God who is master of the universe has a steadying psychological effect, although it is no guarantee of Utopia, no guarantee that the continuing climate and geographic changes will be benign.

Now wait for this, because this is really something. It continued:

In the past pagans sacrificed animals and even humans in vain attempts to placate capricious and cruel gods. Today they demand a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.

What does this man, who purports to speak on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church, know about any of this stuff? He is in such a powerful position yet he makes statements like this that basically go unchallenged by his own church and, in many cases, it will be followed by the adherents.

Another of the things that the Roman Catholic Church teaches is that homosexuality is intrinsic evil. It implies that it is a form of mental illness. I wonder how South Australia's new Commissioner for Social Inclusion, Monsignor David Cappel, will deal with that issue as he is charged with reforming our mental health system. After all, in 1986 the Vatican issued a letter to bishops entitled 'The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons'. It forbids any support 'even the semblance of support' for groups that do not clearly oppose homosexual acts. One can only guess at the sort of policy distortions this type of thinking could produce in respect of counselling services for people struggling with their sexuality. I do not object to the church taking a moral stand on issues, and I strongly welcome their principal contribution on Aboriginal reconciliation, native title and asylum seekers as examples, but the problem to me appears to be extremism.

I think it is interesting in the light of contributions that we have heard from some of the members of the opposition in recent days that the Liberal Movement, when it broke away from the LCL, had as its campaign theme 'Leave the extremes'. In that regard, I was heartened yesterday by the comments of the Hon. Stephen Wade in his address in reply. I told him later on in the afternoon that, having heard his CV during the course of the casual vacancy hearing and that his father is a Baptist pastor and that he is a Baptist lay preacher, I thought we were getting another fundamentalist in our midst, but I was reasonably reassured after hearing his contribution.

I do not say that the church should not be involved in politics but, rather, we need a responsible mix of law, religion and politics. My grandfather was a Methodist minister; my 77 year old mother is still a church organist in the Uniting

Church; and my 83 year old father is still a lay preacher in the Uniting Church. So, I have a strong knowledge of religious beliefs and history, and I assure members that, if at any stage we are going to talk religion, I can mix it with the best of them.

In that regard, I want to put on the record a little bit of email correspondence that occurred earlier this week relating to the Address in Reply speech given by the Hon. Ian Hunter. There was an article in *The Advertiser* about that speech, and a somewhat vitriolic email was sent by a member of the public to many members of this place. This person was talking about Sodom and Gomorrah and how homosexuality is a terrible thing. I responded by asking him whether or not the visitation of fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah might have had something to do with the fact that Lot had actually offered the people of Sodom his two teenage daughters to be gang raped.

This man was quite surprised that I had this knowledge, and we have had a little bit of off-list, so to speak, communication since then. I said to him that one of the things that has always interested me about that story is that Sodom and Gomorrah had hellfire and brimstone rained on them but, if you read the story in Genesis, Gomorrah does not get a mention until that point. Sodom is the only town involved, and when the Lord decides to unleash hellfire and brimstone he unleashes it on Gomorrah. Obviously, the poor people of Gomorrah did not know what hit them because of something that someone had done in the town of Sodom.

So, I have this grounding in Christian precepts, and it is very useful. It allows me to respond to all sorts of dilemmas that are presented to me in a way that provides justice to the greatest number of people.

The Hon. A.M. Bressington: How big of you.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: I thank the honourable member for that comment. I think we need to respond to dilemmas in that way to provide justice for the greatest number of people, and I include in that non-humans. When I make a decision, I think that animals who cannot speak for themselves also have a right to be represented.

One of the tasks I have taken on in my remaining four years in this parliament is to turn the spotlight on fundamentalism and extremism and to let the public know what the people they elected really stand for. I am not scared of a public backlash, because I will not stand for re-election. I am quite happy to take a position against the mainstream, but it will always be a well-researched position, as I showed regarding the history of MDMA. Simply because something is mainstream is not a good reason to take a position in support of it.

This government—often joined in beautiful harmony by the opposition—has taken a knee jerk, easy fix, populist, tough on drugs and tough on crime stance. I will stand up to them. I will make a strong stand in support of a woman's right to choose abortion; I will stand up for the little people who get bulldozed by government in their pursuit of economic growth—for example, the residents of East Whyalla; and I will make a strong stand in support of the environment and the survival of the planet. If that means that in the next four years I will have to take on most members of this parliament, I will be pleased to do so. I support the motion.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.35 p.m. the council adjourned until Thursday 11 May at 2.15 p.m.