

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 24 July 2008

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. R.K. Sneath)** took the chair at 11:05 and read prayers.

LEGAL PROFESSION BILL

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (11:05): I seek leave to move a motion without notice concerning the conference on the bill.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I move:

That the sitting of the council be not suspended during the continuation of the conference on the bill.

Motion carried.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

The PRESIDENT: I lay on the table the minutes of the assembly of members of both houses held today to fill a vacancy in the Legislative Council caused by the resignation of the Hon. Andrew Evans.

Ordered to be published.

MEMBER, SWEARING IN

The President produced a commission from His Excellency the Governor authorising him to administer the oath of allegiance to members of the Legislative Council.

The President produced a letter from the Clerk of the assembly of members informing that the assembly of members of both houses of parliament had elected Mr Robert Lawrence Brokenshire to fill the vacancy in the Legislative Council caused by the resignation of the Hon. Andrew Evans.

The Hon. Robert Lawrence Brokenshire, to whom the oath of allegiance was administered by the President, took his seat in the Legislative Council.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (11:09): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable petitions, the tabling of papers, and question time to be postponed until 2:15pm today.

Motion carried.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (BUDGET 2008) BILL

In committee.

Clause 1.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I thank the minister. In the early hours of this morning, the minister placed on the record some responses to questions that I raised in relation to the cost of payroll tax changes. There really is just one issue that I want to clarify in terms of the minister's response, based on the advice that he will have from his adviser. Last night, one of the questions I put was: what would be the cost of increasing the payroll tax threshold to \$800,000, as is being advocated by Business SA and other lobby groups? The minister's response based on advice was:

I can inform him—

that's me—

that the cost of that is estimated at \$46 million in 2008-09.

I also asked about the budget costs of increasing the threshold ultimately to \$600,000, as is proposed in this bill, and the minister referred me to Budget Paper 3, page 3.2. If I look at 2009-10 rather than 2008-09, the budget indicates that the cost of increasing the threshold from \$504,000 to

\$600,000 for the financial year 2009-10 is an aggregate of \$10.8 million and \$9.4 million, which is \$20.2 million.

My question to the minister is: given that that is proposed, to take that from \$600,000 then to \$800,000 as Business SA is advocating, am I right in assuming that the cost of that additional increment will be the difference between \$46 million and \$20 million, which is about \$26 million (albeit that it is one year later than the \$46 million estimated for 2008-09, and there may well be a 3 per cent inflator or something like that which might need to go on the figure, but we can just disregard the inflator for the moment)? Am I right in assuming that essentially what the Treasury is saying is that the cost of going from \$600,000 to \$800,000 from 2009-10 or any year onwards will be approximately \$46 million (or whatever that inflated figure will be) less the \$20 million or the inflated figures we see for 2010-11 or 2011-12 in those particular years?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: My advice is that, if we are increasing it from a threshold of \$552,000, the cost to \$800,000 would be \$45.8 million. So that is the increment, from \$552,000 to \$800,000. If it were to go from \$600,000 to \$800,000, that would have a cost of \$37.7 million.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: And for which financial year is that estimate: 2008-09 or 2009-10?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: The sum of \$45.8 million would be the cost in 2008-09. The \$37.7 million would be the cost in 2009-10.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I think I have clarified that, so if I can just repeat it and ask for the minister's confirmation: that, in essence, looking at the financial year 2009-10, if this government were to increase the \$600,000 threshold to \$800,000, then the cost to Treasury in the budget would be \$37.7 million. Is my understanding of that cost of \$37.7 million in that particular year therefore correct?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Yes, that would be the 2009-10 cost. You would be at the \$600,000 threshold then, so if you were to increase it in 2009-10, it would cost an additional \$37.7 million.

Clause passed.

Clause 2.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I am not sure what particular clause this would be under, because I have only just become aware in the past 20 minutes (having read the *Hansard* report of the taxation administration bill which has just been introduced in our chamber) that, at very late notice yesterday, the Treasurer introduced an amendment without any discussion with the opposition indicating that there was something which should have been done in this particular bill in relation to the payroll tax monthly changes.

As I said, I have only read this because by happenstance I stumbled across the *Hansard* debate yesterday in the House of Assembly on the Statutes Amendment and Repeal (Taxation Administration) Bill and the shadow minister said he had not been advised of this. The Treasurer just dumped an amendment in the house and said, 'Whoops! We should have done this earlier.' I ask the minister: whatever the government is now doing in the administration bill, why was that not included in this bill, and exactly what is the government up to in the taxation administration bill?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: My advice is that the administration bill, which only just came to this council yesterday, was introduced before the budget, and as the budget bill is now likely to be passed first (because we are unlikely, obviously, to get to the taxation bill before we resume in September), the original bill does need some adjustment. I am advised that it is a technical amendment in relation to the threshold.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Yes, but my understanding is that the taxation administration bill was introduced, as the minister has indicated, prior to the budget, but this bill was introduced with the budget. My quick reading of the taxation administration amendment is that it seems to include the monthly equivalent of the thresholds, that is, the threshold divided by 12 in a series of amendments. Why was the amendment that is now proposed to the taxation administration bill not included in this bill?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: My advice is that it was really just a timing issue. It was easier to deal with; because the budget was likely to go through first it was easier to put the budget lists through as they were and then, when the Statutes Amendment and Repeal (Taxation Administration) Act goes through—

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: The administration bill was introduced before the budget.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Yes, it was, but it has obviously taken longer to get through the House of Assembly; therefore there will not be time to get it through both houses before the break, but we hope this bill and the budget bill will be. It was just a timing issue. It could have been done either way but, because of those timing issues, it was decided to do it in the order in which it is being done. We can deal with the new taxation administration bill when we come back in September.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I will just clarify that: the government's position is that the administration bill, and therefore this particular amendment, do not need to be considered until September?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Yes; that is my advice.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (3 to 10), schedule and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

Bill read a third time and passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 23 July 2008. Page 3648.)

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (11:26): I must say that, after hearing the budget speech of the Hon. David Ridgway yesterday, I wonder whether the speech I am going to give refers to the same budget. I am very proud to rise today to support the intention and the terms of the state budget recently handed down by the Treasurer.

This is the seventh Rann government budget, and it is undoubtedly a true Labor budget. This budget is about providing the elements that form the foundation for an inclusive society; a society that allows people to achieve their best in an environment of growth and prosperity; a society that protects its vulnerable members; and a society that recognises the enormous opportunities—and the challenges, too—that await it as it moves with confidence through to the 21st century.

This budget epitomises the government's commitment to taking action now for the future, to keeping faith with those who elected it. Investment in a skilled and educated workforce, first class infrastructure, public health and public security and an energetic and competitive environment for business is the key to Labor's plans for our state moving forward. Let us not forget that, in moving forward, it is only a few short years since the Rann government took up the task of alleviating the damage done by the previous Liberal government—damage done over the years by under-investment, disinvestment and the profligate sale of our state's assets; years of decline in our rural and regional areas; and years of neglect in health, education, transport and many other vital areas. This is a legacy that Labor has addressed and this is the damage the Rann government has worked so hard to repair.

As *The Advertiser* Editorial of 6 June last so accurately pointed out, this budget tackles the areas of long-term neglect—Adelaide's public transport network, metropolitan rural roads, the health system, the guarantee of reliable domestic and industrial water supply, the upgrading of the courts system, and the protection of at-risk children. Now that South Australia is on the brink of an unprecedented period of growth and development, Labor will deliver the infrastructure and the front line services to support that growth and the coming prosperity. Labor will achieve this within the context of a seventh consecutive surplus and while retaining its AAA rating with ratings agency Standard & Poor's.

We need to only consider a few brief statistics. This budget will spend 69 per cent more on health units than when those opposite were last in office. This budget will spend 62 per cent more on police than when those opposite were last in office. This budget will spend 52 per cent more on education spending on each student than when those opposite were last in office, and this budget will provide tax relief for business which, when fully implemented at 1 July 2012, will bring our total tax cuts to almost \$3 billion. This is a budget of which South Australians can be justly proud.

I want to now discuss some of the broad themes of the government's expenditure program. The government is committed to investing \$2 billion in public transport over the next 10 years. Once complete, this plan will see the electrification of the major rail lines; the purchase of 50 new electric trains; the conversion of the majority of present stock from diesel to electricity, with provision for its refurbishment; the extension of the train service, initially to Hindmarsh to serve the Entertainment Centre, and later to Semaphore, Port Adelaide and the AAMI Stadium; provision of extra trams for the future network; the purchase of 80 new buses to augment the existing fleet; and the new ticketing system. For the sake of the Hon. Mr Stephens, 'augment' means to make larger or increase. It is a word that can only be used in a Labor budget because, for the Liberals, the words would be 'decrease, slash and burn'.

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

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: I hear the State Bank mentioned over there. A large part of the population was not even born at that time. How far do we go back to blame you for your incompetence while you were in government?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: How far do we go back? The next four years will see an injection of nearly \$650 million into the first stage of the rebuilding program. Work on the extension of the tram service to Hindmarsh is starting immediately. More than \$700 million will be spent on our roads over the next four years. The added federal funding means a total of \$1.6 billion for roads over that period, with major projects at Oaklands Park, Warradale, the intersection of the Victor Harbor and Main South Roads, and the continuation of major works on the Northern Expressway and South Road. An allocation of \$125 million has been made for roadworks in the AusLink network, with a further \$28.6 million to be spent on improving efficiencies on our freight routes.

Transport infrastructure is not the only area in which the Rann government is revitalising our city and our state. As all members present may be aware, planning is well under way for the new Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital. The Lyell McEwin Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Flinders Medical Centre are already benefiting from major and continuing redevelopment works to the tune of more than \$95 million, with an additional \$16.2 million for the Lyell McEwin Hospital's \$202 million stage 3.

Indeed, this budget signals a record level of investment in health, specifically \$3.246 billion for health units in 2008-09. That is around \$1.3 billion more than was spent in the last year of the Liberals' time in office. As the Treasurer has noted in another place, this additional funding allows more patients to be treated and the employment of more doctors and nurses. Between June 2002 and June 2007, an extra 2,406 nurses and 699 doctors have been employed to work in our health system. Those figures are staggering by anyone's standards.

An allocation of more than \$357 million will ensure the availability of even more services for South Australia where they are needed most—and that is in the regional areas. I must say that this has been one of the most disgraceful, misleading and deceitful campaigns the opposition has ever engaged in—going out and scaremongering in regional areas about the benefits of the new health plan. The problem is that the opposition is so desperate to seem relevant to country people that it is prepared to go out there and scaremonger in small country towns saying that we are out there to rape and pillage their health system. That is an absolute lie.

The Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: One can understand why they are desperate. After the next election the only country representative in this chamber will be the Hon. Mr Finnigan. He will be the only person representing the country. The Hon. Mr Dawkins seems to think that he represents the country but I think he lives at Gawler. He ought to look out his front door and see how the suburbs are moving into his area. If you look at the meaning of 'country' (and I have it here), it is 'rural districts, including farmland, parkland and other sparsely populated areas, as opposed to cities and towns'. He cannot claim to be a country representative. After the next election the only person to represent the country will be the Hon. Mr Finnigan.

The Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: The Hon. Mr Dawkins calls me a fool. One only had to read the *Border Watch* after the recent preselections to see the dismay that it outlined about the fact that you no longer represent the country, and how you had an opportunity (in the last preselections) to put in people from the country but, instead, you chose latte-slurping, middle-class people living in

the leafy eastern suburbs. You will end up suffering the consequences, because Labor is the party that looks after rural Australia. That is proven by our health plan.

I received phone calls from a number of people in Port Augusta who said that they had heard this Liberal scaremongering campaign and they wanted to know what was going on. I sent out a newsletter to 5,700 people in Port Augusta explaining the outcome of the government's health plan, and I also put a questionnaire with it asking them to respond to the key initiatives of our health plan. I have some results here of that: 100 per cent of those who responded were supportive of the major initiatives of our health plan.

The only negative response in Port Augusta was that 37 per cent did not support the increase in health services for Aboriginal people to help close the gap. Some of the comments that came back were that Aboriginals get more concessions now than non-Aboriginals and that there should be increased services not just for Aboriginals but for all South Australian citizens. That is the only aspect of the health plan with which people in Port Augusta had problems. I think that members opposite should hang their heads in shame at the most deceitful, dishonest campaign that the opposition is waging in small country towns in this state. It is embarrassing. It is so immoral to frighten poor people in small country towns—

The Hon. C.V. Schaefer interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: I am looking at the fools here. They are the ones in opposition. They are the ones who were rejected and annihilated at the last election, not members on this side. Anyway, Mr President, enough of this disgraceful, deceitful campaign being waged by the Liberals with respect to our Country Health Care Plan.

Berri hospital in the Riverland area, which is so important to me, will be rebuilt. In other regional initiatives, Whyalla hospital will be redeveloped, as will Ceduna hospital. Funding to the South Australian Ambulance Service will be augmented by an additional \$26.6 million over the next four years.

Emergency services have not been neglected in our projections. Additional funding of \$19.6 million over four years has been allocated to the CFS, including provision for aerial firefighting and its attendant staffing, management and infrastructure. These initiatives represent an important commitment to rebuilding our health sector and to keeping our people safe. Labor is also delivering to our communities in education. I have already mentioned the 52 per cent increase in spending per student since the government took office. This year, our investment in each student will be increased to \$11,568. Some 10 schools will be upgraded this year, at a cost of nearly \$35 million. This includes major works at Woodville and Willunga high schools. More than another \$35 million will be invested in new school buildings across the state.

South Australians will also reap the benefit of the establishment of six new super schools to be built across the metropolitan area as a public-private partnership project. Intended for students from kindergarten right through to year 12, the schools will be leased to the government by private sector builders, who will also maintain them. School retention programs will continue, as will further development of trade schools. The government is committed to an ongoing program of reform in education, including an increased early childhood focus, a higher compulsory education age, the new SACE and the capital works agenda.

Mr President, as you would well know, the Labor government will never abandon vulnerable members of our community. This budget allocates more than \$190 million for the needs of children in care. All members of this place are aware of the recent cases of children in very great need, and we are dedicated to the provision of high quality front-line services directly to families and carers. Additional funds will also be made available for those members of our community who are disabled and for their families and carers.

South Australia has secured commonwealth funding of \$72.9 million to match our own commitments over this and the last budget. The total will provide new services over the next four years. New group homes for people with disabilities are to be constructed and more supported accommodation provided. Meanwhile, disability compliance in our public transport network will be enhanced by an allocation of \$8 million. And those who are homeless will find increased accommodation availability at Port Adelaide and Port Augusta, which are both areas of considerable need.

I now move to take a brief look at the security of our community. In the past, I have spoken to a number of bills to do with the government's commitment to a strategic program of law reform in

relation to firearms, organised crime and outlaw motorcycle gangs. This bill augments those measures (there is that word again, 'augment'; it means to increase and be made bigger—it is a word that can be used only in a Labor budget speech), with the intention of building on the decrease in reported crime since this government took office.

Once again, record funding has been allocated to South Australia Police. Its operational budget will increase by 11 per cent this year to nearly \$630 million. Efficiencies in service delivery will also result from SAPOL's move to purpose-built state-of-the-art premises in the central business district.

New courtrooms are to be provided. Forensic and legal aid services will receive additional funding, and significant funds have been allocated to provide for the growth in prisoner numbers. This is in stark contrast to the wild west days under the Liberal government, when police numbers were at an all-time low. The government does not resile from its commitment to law and order. As I said in this place earlier this year, it must be made abundantly clear that the government is determined to deal with those who demonstrate, through their own actions, that they would willingly participate in criminal enterprises.

None of these measures would be possible without continued strategic support for the economy and the economic development of our state. Among others, the defence sector and the mining industry have made great strides in recent years, and these must be carefully managed for optimum success.

The government is once again taking action now for the future and encouraging further exploration and development. Whilst looking towards the provision of skills training—so fatally neglected, particularly under the previous federal government—the government is also committing increased funds to its program of attracting and retaining skilled migrants. This is one of the many strategies by which Labor is fostering a rejuvenation of the South Australian economy. However, it is common ground that such rejuvenation cannot happen without appropriate resource management. The government has taken action now for a sustainable future.

No-one can be oblivious to the clear and very present danger of climate change. Among other measures, we are committing \$7.7 million from 2010-11 for the purchase of carbon offsets and green power. Most immediately, the government is acting now, in cooperation with the federal government, to secure water supply for our state. We have entered into a historic agreement for the management of the River Murray and are committed to the delivery of improved outcomes to all those South Australians who rely on its continued flow.

To secure water supply into the future, Labor will this year spend \$97 million on planning and groundwork for the desalination plant to be constructed at Port Stanvac. That construction will commence in 2009-10. Over the next four years, \$426 million of water-related projects will be completed. These include upgraded and expanded wastewater plants and water recycling infrastructure; upgraded water quality plants at Myponga, Mount Pleasant and in the Riverland; and the continuation of the rebate package to encourage water use efficiency by our community.

In the arts, as in sport, South Australia is renowned as the home of innovation of excellence and creativity. Its calendar of cultural sporting events is second to none. This budget includes significant new support for these sectors which not only tell us so much about ourselves but which also contribute to the success of our unique tourism industry.

An amount of \$43 million has been allocated to the construction of a film and screen hub at the Glenside Cultural Precinct. Theatre and music and our world renowned festivals have been provided with continued support. Special provision has been made for upgrades to our zoo, which will soon be the sole southern hemisphere zoo to house two giant pandas. As well, the Tour Down Under will receive a further \$14.6 million over the next four years to ensure its continued status and presence in a state so naturally suited to its operation.

I must mention tax relief. Further payroll tax reductions will come into effect in South Australia from 1 July 2009. In addition, there will be a two-stage increase in the threshold. These reforms will stimulate employment and business investment. Moreover, the first home buyers bonus grant has already been warmly welcomed. A \$4,000 grant for purchases up to \$400,000 will be offered in addition to the existing \$7,000 first home owners grant. It is estimated that more than 9,000 home buyers will receive the grant this financial year, and that relief of \$130 million will be provided over the next four years. I again quote from *The Advertiser's* editorial of 6 June, as follows:

This is a budget that ensures the Rann Labor government, now in the second half of its second term, will be remembered for its work in health, hospitals, education, public transport, child protection, industrial development, justice and law enforcement. It is a budget which begins the process of converting promises into material outcomes. Perhaps, more importantly, it is a budget which overlays broad policy with tangible results.

I could not agree more. I need not remind those present that we live in very interesting times. On the positive side, we have seen a change in the federal government, an event that furnishes an unprecedented opportunity for enhanced commonwealth/state cooperation. On the negative side, global markets have experienced considerable instability over the past several months.

Inflation, the insidious legacy of a previous federal government that played fast and loose with mining revenues instead of providing for the future, has risen. Interest rates are up, as are fuel prices around the world. The population is ageing and there will be increasing demand for services in health, aged care, disability, community services and transport. Some of these variables are within our grasp; others, patently, are not.

This is the environment in which the Rann government has produced a responsible budget, a budget that identifies savings and will generate surpluses while ensuring growth in the years ahead. It is a budget that is economically sound and which at the same time provides a boost to social improvement and infrastructure which is unprecedented in South Australia's history.

The people of South Australia have made their expectations clear. They expect industry growth, high employment, forward-thinking economic policy and progressive, compassionate social policy. Those expectations prompted them to re-elect the Rann Labor government at the last election; and those expectations are being met.

Let us look at a few of the present economic signifiers. Forecasts indicate that GDP (that is gross domestic product for our friend the Hon. Mr Stephens) will increase by 2.25 per cent in 2008-09 and employment by 1.5 per cent. Our population is growing, reversing a sad trend of former years. Investment, mineral exploration and the housing construction sector are burgeoning. Would not those opposite have crowed had they been able to produce these sorts of statistics?

I would like to make a comparison of what the Liberals did during their time in government and what this budget is delivering. Labor is delivering in education the most significant investment in school infrastructure in a generation. What did the Liberals do? In 1994 and 1995 the Liberal government cut 522 teachers and 287 school service officers. Between 1994 and 1997 the Liberals closed more than 40 schools, many against expert advice—and this is only the previous government—and the wishes of our community. Having promised in November 1993 that (then) current class sizes would be maintained, the Liberals announced in August 1994 that all primary and junior primary class sizes would be increased. Another blatant lie.

What is Labor delivering in justice, law and order? The operational budget for SAPOL will increase by 11 per cent to nearly \$630 million. SAPOL is moving to new state-of-the-art premises in the CBD. New courtrooms have been made available, forensic and legal aid services are to receive additional funds, and the increase in prisoner numbers has been anticipated and will be met. What did the Liberals do? Despite their promise to increase numbers, recruiting for SAPOL reached dangerously low levels under the Liberals. There were only 28 Fort Largs Police Academy graduates in 1998.

What is Labor delivering in health? This budget signals a record level of investment in health: \$3.246 billion for health units in 2008-09. This is about \$1.3 billion more than was spent in the Liberal's last year in office. The Berri hospital will be rebuilt, and the Whyalla and Ceduna hospitals are to be redeveloped. In the five years to June 2007, Labor has employed an extra 2,406 nurses and 699 doctors. What did the Liberals do? Despite promising increased funding and short waiting lists, the Liberals cut the health budget from 1994-95 to 1997-98 by more than \$234 million in real terms.

The Hon. J.M. Gazzola: Shame!

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: Absolutely; absolutely shameful. The Liberals left the department of human services with a debt of \$21 million for unfunded work in hospitals.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: That is the problem with members opposite: they cannot handle the truth and they have to walk out. The Liberals left an impoverished health system.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: You are the last country representative and you are going to walk out. That is outrageous. Although I suppose it puts you in training for after the election. The Liberals left an impoverished health system in a state of complete chaos.

What is Labor doing with transport? Labor will invest \$2 billion in public transport over the next 10 years. It will rebuild our rail and light-rail infrastructure, electrify the Noarlunga and Outer Harbor rail lines, extend the tramline to Hindmarsh, increase public transport capacity and replace more than 130 of the current bus fleet. What did the Liberals do?

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: I do not even know whether we are talking about the same budget. The Liberals allowed vital public transport and freight infrastructure to run down to a shocking extent during its time in office. I believe that the Liberals were borrowing to pay wages in their last days. This indicates the extent to which they had ripped funds out of the system.

So, there is a stark contrast between what this government is delivering for the people of South Australia to what the Liberal Party did in its almost decade of government. During the Liberal Party's term of office, it sold off the family jewels. It basically almost gave away our public assets. I will read out what it actually did: despite saying that ETSA was safe, it sold off ETSA, and it gave away the TAB, if I remember rightly, the Ports Corporation, SGIC, the *Island Seaway*, Fleet SA, State Print and the Modbury Hospital. They still could not generate a surplus, such is the incompetence.

The Hon. J.M. Gazzola interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: He is not here—he is too ashamed. He is probably hanging his head on the backbench. It gives me great honour to stand here today reading out this budget speech. It is the seventh budget Labor has delivered and there will be many more. It is all part of achieving what is set out in our Strategic Plan. It is up to Labor to do the hard yards, to repair the years of neglect and to take on the future and plan for the expectations of South Australians, for themselves and for their children. I commend this budget: as a proud South Australian I commend it wholeheartedly.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (11:53): I rarely comment on contributions of other members in this place. However, I will make a brief exception and trust you will indulge me briefly before talking about supporting this bill. The Hon. Mr Wortley just read out in his speech a definition of the word 'country', and then proceeded to demonstrate to all of us here that he does not have the first clue about the people who live anywhere outside the metropolitan area of Adelaide. He demonstrated as he went through his speech that all he can do is stand up here and read out the stuff printed in front of him. The day he starts preparing his own speeches and questions, it will be a great improvement. I will continue.

In supporting the passage of this bill I recognise its importance in providing finance to the various programs incorporated in the 2008-09 budget. It is my intention to focus on some particular areas that relate to my responsibilities for the opposition as they relate to the budget presented early last month. The first area I wanted to pick up relates to infrastructure. I recall in last year's appropriation bill speech I asked questions about the Northern Expressway and understood that the normal procedure was that they would be responded to at some stage or another, but I am still waiting.

In relation to the Northern Expressway, I expressed some concerns about the fact that the contracts were being let out to large interstate operators and that a lot of smaller companies had been ignored in getting contracts for that project. Many were concerned that the interstate companies would come over here and poach their experienced personnel. There is ongoing concern that, while those interstate companies may well have attracted valued personnel from other earthmoving and associated companies, they have set up large work camps around the place which in some areas are causing a few social problems. It would have been much better if the government had focused on giving the work on the Northern Expressway to the many companies who have expertise in dealing with South Australian conditions and who have done work in that part of the Adelaide Plains before.

Another matter I raised last year related to the River Murray ferries. I talked about one of the targets, the completion of the second replacement ferry along the River Murray. Since then we have had significant concern about the number of ferry crossings in this state that are no longer able to take vehicles of more than 12 tonnes in weight. The government has received advice that

for a relatively small amount of money, about \$500,000, it could alter most of those ferry crossings so that larger vehicles could again be transported across on the ferries. The former minister for emergency services told us in this place that there was a strategy for getting CFS and SES trucks across the River Murray because, if you were at Swan Reach and there was a fire on the other side of the river, trucks have to go up and around via the Blanchetown bridge or down to Murray Bridge and back up again. We know what would happen, if a house was a fire on the other side of the river, while the truck was going up to Blanchetown and down to Murray Bridge. Of course the Hon. Mr Wortley would not understand that.

The Hon. R.P. Wortley interjecting:

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: That is your strategy, is it? Those ferries are an important part of the state road network in this state. They have been neglected, and the government refuses to do any work to fix them up. There are so many communities along the river and Swan Reach is one, along with Walker Flat, Purnong and a number right down through to the Lower Lakes, and at the moment those ferries are not able to take the large trucks that are part of our CFS network or SES vehicles in many cases.

I turn to some areas of the budget relating to regional development. Most issues were taken up in the estimates process but, as one of my colleagues reminded us yesterday, you can have questions asked and asked well by lower house colleagues, but the fact that you do not get the opportunity as an opposition spokesperson to go on to the floor of estimates and ask questions means it is sometimes better to put them on the record in this debate.

Certainly, I remain frustrated by the now former minister for regional development's lack of understanding of the impact that the delay in funding certainty for the regional development boards had on those bodies and their staff. The minister and her officers seem to think, 'Oh, yeah; we always said we were going to fund them, but the fact that we actually didn't tell them how much we were going to fund them or about the different facets of that funding until early May has no impact at all.' That is just rubbish, and I am sorry that the former minister and the Office of Regional Affairs have that view, because it is not shared by many others in the regional development sector.

The situation was repeated with the business enterprise centres that do such a good job in metropolitan Adelaide—and I will refer to them again shortly. While I am dealing with the area of regional development, I should also put on the record that in the life of this government we have now had a fifth—

The Hon. R.P. Wortley interjecting:

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: If you got your hair out of your ears you might be better off!

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: Before I was rudely interrupted, I was trying to inform the council that during the life of this government there have been five different appointments to the position of minister for regional development. The Liberal government, when it was in power, was the first to appoint a minister for regional development, and it happened to be the then deputy premier—and, for a period, premier. That gave some impetus and importance to the position of regional development within the government.

However, I think probably the best minister for regional development this government had was the late Hon. Terry Roberts. They gave him the job for 10 months and then took it away from him and gave it to the Hon. Rory McEwen, who had it for a while. It then went to the Hon. Paul Holloway, in this chamber, and then for a couple of years it was undertaken by the Hon. Karlene Maywald. What has happened now? It has gone back to the Hon. Rory McEwen, the recycled minister, who did not understand the sector in the first place. I hope to work with him in the future, but we really need to get some consistency there and some impetus for regional development.

I return to the point I was about to make before the Hon. Mr Wortley interjected. The other point raised in the estimates committees was, as I said, that when the funding increase was finally determined—about seven weeks before the end of the financial year and before the end of all the resource agreements—the regional development boards were given an indexation figure of 2.5 per cent. My colleague in another place, the member for Goyder, asked a very good question as to why the figure of 2.5 per cent was determined as indexation for the resource agreement funding, given that there had not been an increase in regional development resource funding for 10 years. The

member wanted minister Maywald to clarify why 2.5 per cent was chosen for this year, and she replied, 'Treasury said 2.5 per cent.' The member for Goyder then said, 'So, no scientific magic formula, just a declaration', and the minister responded, 'That was the indexation figure across the whole of government.' To my mind 2.5 per cent for those boards, after they have had no increase for 10 years, is ludicrous.

Another matter I took up was one that had been of concern to me for some time in relation to both regional development boards and business enterprise centres. While regional development boards are required to employ a small business adviser, the total funding provided for these advisers has not been increased beyond \$65,000 per annum. That is not just a salary: it is also for the provision of a motor car and a mobile phone, etc. I think most of us here in this chamber would know that if you have only \$65,000 in total to employ an experienced, competent business adviser in a regional area you will have to find other money to top that up. Unfortunately, the boards are having to do that; they are somehow having to find money out of other pots—and they do not have pots of money to try to get adequate experience to assist the businesses in their area. The former minister's response to that is, 'Well, they can get money from other parts of their budget.' She just does not seem to realise that there is very limited capacity to find that money.

Another area that has been highlighted by both the member for Goyder, in the estimates process, and myself is that, due to the fact that the commonwealth-run area consultative committee business development positions ceased on 30 June under changes made by the new federal government, there will now be a sharp increase in the workload of small business advisers out of the regional development boards. In fact, one former business adviser from an area consultative committee, who was to become redundant the next day, said, 'I've just handed over 70 clients to the small business adviser from the regional development board. How he's going to cope with them, I don't know.'

The anomaly that causes is that the new federal government has decided to place all of its funding for business development positions with business enterprise centres. That is good news for our business enterprise centres in this state, but we are rather unique in Australia, in that I think we are the only state where we do not have BECs in the country. We have a very good network of regional development boards that do the work that in many other parts of Australia business enterprise centres operate, so we have lost out.

In response to the member for Goyder, the minister indicated that they were taking up with minister Emerson from the federal government that South Australia has been disadvantaged in the regions as a consequence of not having a BEC network, and I think she meant in the country. I just urge the new minister, the Hon. Rory McEwen, to make sure that this happens. I will take that up with the new Minister for Small Business, the Leader of the Government in this place, in relation to that matter as well, seeing that he has some responsibility for business enterprise centres.

Yesterday in this place I asked a question about the details of the regional development infrastructure fund and in relation to the individual projects that were funded in the last budget period. I am certainly keen to know what projects will be funded in the next 12 months through the annual \$3 million allocation to that fund. Certainly I am on record, as are many others, saying that that should at least be returned to the level of funding that the Liberal government gave it when it was commenced, which was \$4.5 million a year, but I think we would advocate now that it should be much more than that.

There is no doubt, as I highlighted yesterday in this place and as the former minister said, that the leverage that this state has received out of that small seed funding, if you allow me to call it that, just demonstrates that we should put significantly more sums into assisting projects to get off the ground with that funding.

There are a number of other areas that I will not go into in quite as much detail, but I just want to cover some other areas that I think we need to follow up in relation to regional development in this state. As I have said many times, that sector is very important in developing new industries for areas and highlighting new opportunities, but they also do a terrific job in working to the strengths of their regions and allowing economic development to build on top of those strengths.

I am still keen to get some information from the Department of Trade and Economic Development via the minister in relation to the achievements and cost benefit of the six regional managers who have been employed by DTED and who, in most cases, are based in country areas. Most of these officers are physically situated within a regional development board, but the manner

in which they work in relation to the boards, other rural groups and local government etc. is one that I think many people within the sector still do not understand.

One matter that came out of the estimates process followed a question from the member for Goyder about the fact that the Director of the Office of Regional Affairs has now taken over the position of the Director of the Office of Small Business, but it seems that he is doing the job without any extra pay. How long he is going to do that is something that I have yet to be advised. I think it was suggested that this would be seamless, because the minister responsible for both offices was the same person. That is no longer the case. The Office of Regional Affairs is under the Hon. Rory McEwen and the Office of Small Business will be under the Leader of the Government in this place, so I would welcome some further information about that.

It is interesting that, in relation to the regional impact assessment statements which are mentioned quite strongly in the budget papers and the regional statement in particular, there seemed until very late in the piece that there was no regional impact assessment statements regarding the South Australian country health care plan. It is quite a curious thing that something like that would not have automatically gone to a regional impact assessment.

Another area in which I am very interested is the regional facilitation groups, which have now been renamed the regional coordination networks, which is almost the same as they were called by the previous government. I am not sure they know that; there would be some who would not be very keen on going back to what they were called under the previous government. Certainly, at this time last year there were five boards that were outside the regional facilitation groups, or regional coordination network. The former minister assured the estimates committee that all boards are now involved in a coordination network, and I would appreciate some information in relation to the makeup of all those boards and those in which local government has been invited to participate.

Also, during the estimates committees process, the minister indicated to the member for Goyder that none of these regional coordination networks includes any federal agencies. My understanding is that that information is wrong, because the network that operates in the Port Augusta area certainly does include federal agencies, and I think that is something that probably could be done in other areas.

During the estimates committees, the opposition was advised that the rural coordination networks are to play a role in the process of regionalising the South Australian Strategic Plan. Certainly, I think they could play a very important role in alerting people to the fact that there is a Strategic Plan because, as has been reported in the media recently, there are very few people in the community who even know the Strategic Plan exists—and, when most of the major infrastructure announcements by this government in recent years have not even been sighted in the South Australian Strategic Plan or Infrastructure Plan, you would not wonder why that is the case.

I will now return to a couple of areas that have interested me in relation to my infrastructure responsibilities. They have also been the subject of some questions and limited answers in the last two estimate committee processes. First, there is the proposal that has been put forward by Primary Industries Resources SA, the Yorke Regional Development Board and the Wakefield Regional Council, among others, for an extension of a water main through Balaclava and the Northern Adelaide Plains area. A very strong bid was put in by these various groups for the 2007-08 budget, given the enormous potential for intensive agriculture development in that Adelaide Plains area, which is close to Adelaide and is deemed to be very suitable for that very necessary production. It is also an area that interstate producers favour. However, that significant potential for development of those intensive agriculture operations will not go ahead without more water capacity in that area.

That bid was successful for last year's budget, and during the estimates committees the minister said that this would be pursued by her office and that more work would be done on getting this greater capacity. I am unhappy to say that there has been no further advancement in that area. As I have said, it is certainly something that is vital for the further development of the intensive agricultural pursuits that are planned for that region, and I urge the new Minister for Regional Development to actively pursue that proposal. As I have said, PIRSA has done an enormous amount of work on this, along with the regional development board and local government.

Another area involves the lack of piped natural gas for a number of significant residential and industrial communities in the country areas of South Australia. During the estimates

committees in 2007, this issue was raised in relation to towns such as Renmark, Loxton, Tanunda, Port Wakefield and, while it is not a significant town, the area of Bpwmans, which is in that Northern Adelaide Plains area I have just referred to and is becoming quite an industrial and transport hub, particularly for the export of hay.

Twelve months ago, during the estimates committees process, the minister indicated that the commercial provider of gas in that form (Investra) would need some assistance from government if it was to provide piped gas to those communities.

It would seem that, in the intervening 12 months, the Minister for Regional Development and her officers have done nothing to try to advance the cause of those communities in the provision of gas. The former minister indicated to the estimates this year that it is up to the individual regional development boards to determine possible assistance for such a project. I would have thought that the Office of Regional Affairs and the Department of Trade and Economic Development would do a considerable amount of work to see how much additional funding needed to be provided to assist Investra to make sure that those significant communities had access to piped natural gas. I talked about the provision of water in the Wakefield Plains or Northern Adelaide Plains area and, similarly, the ability to access gas in that form is vital for the further development of industry in those centres.

I am grateful for the opportunity that this debate has given me to highlight some of the areas that I think are deficient, particularly in the rural infrastructure and regional development area. The debate provides all of us with an opportunity to note the funds appropriated in the budget to various agencies and to raise particular issues (as I have done) and to point out the areas in which we on the opposition benches are prepared to make suggestions about what government can do to assist various groups to enhance the development of their areas. Having said that, I commend the bill to the council.

The Hon. M. PARNELL (12:25): If one wants to get a proper indication of the government's priorities, rather than looking at the legislative agenda it is far more informative to look at the budget. The Greens' assessment of this most recent budget is that we described it as little more than 'bread and circuses'. In fact, the 'circuses' analogy is pretty clear to members, I would think. We have massive funding for elite sports stadiums, such as the expansion of the AAMI Stadium, but we also have things like \$1.5 million for a big TV screen at Hindmarsh Stadium. To put that into context, it is 30 times more than the budget provided for spending on cultural programs for at-risk Aboriginal youth. So, there is a neat little summary of the government's priorities.

We could not find very many references to 'bread' but I understand that we will soon be getting a bill in this place that does enable bakeries to give away their excess bread to the poor, so perhaps 'bread and circuses' really is the correct analogy.

The government, through this budget, has failed on crime prevention. It has particularly failed in working with young people and putting in place proper measures to help them keep out of crime. It appears that the government's only solution is to build more gaols to 'rack them, pack them and stack them' and to support that strategy with more and more 'tough on crime' legislation.

I recently had the pleasure of spending a few days in Tasmania, including down at Macquarie Harbour and visiting the Sarah Island penal settlement. If one wants to see an example of where the 'tough on crime' approach does not work and how, in fact, it simply degrades humanity, you can go no further than Sarah Island. Anyone listening to Radio National this morning would have heard a review of a new book about convict Pearce who ate his fellow convicts in his attempt to escape from the hellhole of Sarah Island.

Also, in reflecting on the government's 'rack them, pack them and stack them' approach, I recall that the very first university essay I ever wrote, as a young student in 1978, was looking at whether 'tough on crime' approaches worked, in the context of British legal history. The clear evidence was that they did not. In those days they made yet more and more offences capital and then were surprised to find that, if the penalty for robbing someone was the same as killing them, then you might as well kill them as well as rob them. We have seen a very similar approach just this week in this chamber in relation to drugs policy.

One of the things I was encouraged to see in the budget was some recognition, finally, for public transport. However, of course, it does follow decades of neglect and it does come from a very low base. As large as the expenditure may seem, it is still nowhere near enough when we look at the effect that that expenditure will have on the genuine provision of new services. In fact, we have only some 10 kilometres of new track. Really, the budget announcements in relation to

transport were ad hoc announcements and they did not follow any comprehensive transport plan for Adelaide.

Building a Park'n'Ride centre at the Entertainment Centre at Hindmarsh is not a transport plan for Adelaide. The government really needs to go back to the drawing board and put these initiatives (many of which the Greens wholeheartedly support) within the context of a proper plan for transport.

South Australia is not alone in its ad hoc approach to public transport planning. Just in the past day or two the New South Wales government has announced some cuts to public transport fares, but it has missed the point that the fares are not the major inhibiting factor for people using public transport: it is the frequency of the service, the convenience and the accessibility of public transport. Re-sleeping our lines in South Australia, as worthwhile as that is, does not take any more services to people's doors. So, we really need to do much better than the very mild announcements in this budget.

When we are planning for the future of Adelaide and for South Australia, we have to make sure that we do not continue the mistakes of the past. A classic example is the Buckland Park development, and the idea that we can dump 15,000 people on the outskirts of the metropolitan area with no commitment to providing services or to public transport. When I asked the Minister for Planning and Urban Development about that this week in parliament, he seemed to imply that it is a matter of choice and that people will choose to live in new dormitory suburbs that do not have public transport.

I do not know anyone who chooses to do that. People will certainly choose affordable housing, cheap land and cheap houses, but they will not choose to be car dependent—most families will need two or more cars—and they will not choose the isolation that will come from the inevitable rises in petrol prices and the stresses that that will put on family budgets.

The rail network needs to be extended. The Onkaparinga council is pushing very hard to make sure that the Noarlunga line is extended down to the growth suburbs in the south, and the government has made the right noises, at least, in relation to transit-oriented development. That is a concept that is widely supported in planning circles. However, where the government has missed the point is that it seems to think that that only applies to the existing built urban area and that it has no application to new urban areas. That is why it will be an absolute crime if something like Buckland Park goes ahead, with no public transport infrastructure, because transit-oriented development is not just about a couple of existing suburban railway stations and a few flats in the local vicinity.

The other thing that is disappointing is that the time frame for these expansions of public transport is 10 years, which will take us to well beyond the time that the international panel on climate change says that we as a planet must have peaked our emissions and started to reduce them. The government has made the right noises, it has started to invest funds, but it needs to be more and it needs to be faster.

We have no excuse any more to pretend that we do not know what is happening to the climate and the planet's oil supplies. However, we continue to take baby steps rather than the transformational change that is needed if we are to face the challenges of climate change and peak oil into the next century. We have to start getting more serious about these issues.

The Greens believe that, of all the challenges, the one that has been least addressed is probably peak oil. I am flabbergasted by the continual claims of bureaucrats, planners, governments and economists that, somehow, they were taken by surprise by these recent large increases in petrol prices. I think that we are done no service at all by some of the motoring organisations, which continue to peddle the myth that it is a short-term problem and that prices will go down. I believe the NRMA today said, 'It will be back down to \$1.20 very soon. Don't worry.' I think the RAA here said, 'Maybe it will get back down to \$1.40. We don't need to worry.'

If we allow ourselves to be lulled into a false sense of security that the world's declining oil supplies, increasing demand and inevitable increase in price is somehow just a bad dream that will go away, we will find ourselves with a major social problem in years to come, and we will not be well prepared to deal with it. That is why the Greens for many years have been trying to get decision makers to listen to the calls of experts that we get serious about peak oil. In fact, the Greens' response to the 2006 federal budget, which was one of the first where we saw big surpluses, was, 'Let's use that surplus to oil-proof Australia.' That same call can be made in relation to the state government and to state spending priorities.

The good thing about peak oil and climate change is that the solutions to those problems are the same. We can kill two birds with one stone. The solutions to climate change and peak oil will lead to a better quality of life in our cities, better air quality, a healthier population and more connected communities.

The starting point will be the redesign of our cities, and we will see more walkways, bicycle paths and a lot more localism as we move towards urban villages that are linked by rapid mass transit, and as we encourage businesses to take their jobs to where people are, rather than simply trying to move people to where the jobs might be. So, there is a chance to get off the treadmill of unsustainable urban development, but we have to be serious about doing that.

I will mention briefly the tram overpass that we discussed yesterday. I do not want to revisit that whole debate, but just to make—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: Hear, hear!

The Hon. M. PARNELL: Although I can. In relation to the budget and public spending, we should not have to be fighting individual battles to make sure each individual piece of public infrastructure incorporates all of our needs into the future. It should just be a basic part of all planning. If we are serious about peak oil and climate change, there should be no piece of transport infrastructure that does not provide for alternative modes of transport.

In connection with the debate that we had yesterday about cycling, and cycling generally in the context of the budget, I would point out how much money we can save by promoting cycling as an alternative form of transport. Members might have seen the article headed 'On your bike to save health' in *The Australian* dated 4 June. It states:

Pedal-power saves the national health system \$227 million a year by cutting sedentary lifestyle diseases, according to a study that puts a dollar value on cycling for the first time. But health and safety reasons—including the fear of injury from crashes—are still being cited as the main reason would-be cyclists are putting off making two-wheeled commutes. Elliot Fishman, policy adviser with the Cycling Promotion Fund and editor of the government-funded study report, said the research proved the value of cycling as an antidote to the inactivity that contributes to diabetes, heart disease and obesity. More people were acknowledging the benefits, with the cycling population up 29 per cent between 2001 and 2006. While most of cycling's economic value came from health savings, it also cut traffic congestion costs by \$64 million and other costs by \$9 million.

The article concludes by stating:

Environment minister Peter Garrett is expected to announce a \$45,000 grant for a cycling training scheme at the national cycling awards in Canberra today.

I think the reason Siobhain Ryan concluded her article with that quote is to highlight the disparity between what we spend, as governments, with the benefits that we actually gain from cycling—in that case a measly \$45,000 commonwealth grant; and in the context of South Australia, a bare \$2 million going into the cycling budget—when we know the benefits are huge.

I also mention the state government's insistence on growing South Australia's population, and its continued indifference to the impact that that policy will have on other aspects of the environment and society.

As members would know, our state population is growing at the fastest rate in 25 years. Clearly this has massive implications for water, our urban form, transport and other services. As a state we have to come to grips with the fact that, if this growing population is to continue, we have to be smarter than just opening up new greenfield sites. Affordable housing and appropriate housing for the community is not dumping 15,000 people out at Buckland Park or similar locations.

I mention briefly the Country Health Plan, which other members have referred to in the debate. I start by acknowledging that the Greens did support the government's Health Care Bill.

Honourable members: Shame!

The Hon. M. PARNELL: That does not mean we support the current ham-fisted process being followed by the government. The Greens believe every South Australian deserves decent access to quality health services. We acknowledge that for a country town to lose its hospital or GPs is devastating, and that people are scared of having to drive huge distances in an emergency as more local services are lost. It is too early to say what the final impact will be of the government's Country Health Plan, but communities are deeply concerned whether the health and well-being of their children and elderly will be put at risk and whether communities will be able to attract and retain good quality health professionals and services.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M. PARNELL: I am trying to avoid responding to the out-of-order interjections of the Liberal Party, but I make this point, which I am sure they are well aware of: there is nothing in the Health Care Bill that closes a country hospital and nothing that reduces services. There is a very big difference between putting in place sensible administrative structures and the government's current ham-fisted approach and ignoring of local people's concerns about their health needs. Country people have a right to have a decent say in the future of their communities, but so far the government's consultation processes have been very poor. The Greens are calling for the government to slow down, go back to the drawing board and start genuine consultation with country people.

I will mention briefly some of the impacts of the budget, especially on the environment. I note that the Conservation Council's press release on the budget is entitled 'Environment budget: trains win, species lose'. The Conservation Council notes that the budget fails to adequately recognise climate change, but it is particularly concerned about the threat of climate change on South Australia's unique plant and animal life and points out that the budget of the Department for Environment and Heritage has been cut yet again, this time by \$18 million.

The Conservation Council says that it has serious concerns that the vital NatureLinks and marine parks programs simply will not be able to be delivered adequately and that threatened species, both terrestrial and marine, will be pushed to extinction. I note that apparently we do not have any threatened marine species because the National Parks and Wildlife Act does not acknowledge marine life and does not list fish or other marine species in the tables of rare, threatened and endangered species.

The Conservation Council's response to the budget goes on to say that the government's approach to water security is inadequate, and it states:

While we have seen the fast tracking of the desalination plant at Port Stanvac come hell or high water, what should have been the state's first resort measure for water security has been all but ignored. Harvesting all that stormwater that currently goes out to sea barely rated a mention, despite the CSIRO study showing that we can use wetlands and aquifers to purify and store potable water at half the cost of desalinated water.

'Instead of prioritising this solution, a meagre \$3 million has been set aside for floodplain mapping, management plans and priority stormwater infrastructure works,' Mr Danenberg, from the Conservation Council, said.

We also know that the budget has not addressed some of the other shortcomings in the environment field, such as allowing our conservation agencies to adequately respond to the mining boom. We know there is only one full-time environmental officer responsible for assessing the impact of mining in our reserves, under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, which comprise some 21 per cent of the state. A consequence of that neglect is that we end up with situations such as Arkaroola, where the cowboy mining company operators get away with damaging geological monuments and with dumping hundreds, if not thousands, of bags of waste in shallow graves; and it is up to members of the community to actually discover that and draw the situation to the attention of the authorities. Clearly, we are failing the environment by not putting sufficient resources into our environment departments to adequately monitor the mining boom.

As the Conservation Council said, the budget does fail in relation to water and stormwater, and in relation to the potential we have to reuse that stormwater rather than the option of trying to manufacture fresh water from the sea, which is the most expensive and energy-intensive way we know. That is why, in relation to the Port Stanvac desalination plant, the Greens have taken the position that we cannot support that sort of project unless it meets some important criteria. The first of these is that we must power any such plant with 100 per cent new, renewable energy, because to do otherwise invokes a terribly tragic irony: the reason we have a water crisis is, most likely, due in large part to climate change, and the reason we have climate change is that, as a planet and as a society, we have burnt too many fossil fuels. So, what do we do? We fix the water crisis by burning more fossil fuels to desalinate sea water—a tragic, circular irony.

The Greens have also said that projects such as desalination must have, as a precondition, that there is no harm to the marine environment. We also believe that such important public infrastructure should be owned and controlled by the public sector rather than being privatised and, in relation to the government's design, build, operate, maintain (DBOM) model, it is still uncertain how much control the public will have.

Clearly, with its focus on projects such as desalination, the budget focuses far too much on supply-side solutions and ignores demand-side solutions. So, whilst the government's rhetoric is big on long-term strategies, the reality is that it goes for piecemeal options. We need to look for genuine transformation of the way our cities work and the way we provide services such as energy and water. If all we do is tinker around the edges of business-as-usual, then we will not meet the challenges of the future.

The water pricing issue has received a great deal of attention lately and, without going into the question of who knew what and when, for me one of the big tragedies of the debacle has been an erosion of the trust that exists between governments and people. Clearly, SA Water is a monopoly: we cannot have an alternative when it comes to the supply of water to our homes. It is not a mobile phone company, or even an energy company, where you can simply move if you do not like the service you are being provided.

We are stuck with this public monopoly and, as a result, the contract between that public monopoly and us as citizens needs to be a contract that involves trust and good faith. When people find that they have been overcharged and there is no commitment that they will be repaid in a timely manner, then that trust dissipates. That is a real tragedy because, on the whole, most people are ready to pay more for water. Most people do recognise that water has been underpriced, and yet, when the government gets it as wrong as it has in this last week, the trust that the community has in our government and in our statutory authorities is eroded.

I want to conclude with two other quick points. One is to mention the failure of the budget in relation to education and, in particular, public education. The Greens were very pleased to support the teachers' campaign for decent conditions, not just for themselves but for our children in whose care we put them for most of the day during the week.

It was great to see not just all those teachers on North Terrace outside Parliament House but also parents and students as well, because this is not just a selfish grab for more money by teachers: it is actually the action of a motivated body of people who have at heart the best interests of our children. When we see that public spending per student does not even keep up with the rate of inflation, we know that the government has missed the point in relation to public education.

I want to finish up with WorkCover, because I know members are keen to hear the Greens' views on WorkCover. There is much more that could have been said when we were debating that legislation but, in the context of the budget, what of course is completely missing is any recognition of the fact that there will be pieces to pick up. There will be people who lose their homes. There will be people who are forced onto income security and other parts of social security.

That will be a direct consequence of the cuts that come from the WorkCover changes, and yet the budget fails to recognise that, as a state, we have some responsibility. I do not think it is appropriate just to say that we can transfer those costs to the commonwealth and let Centrelink pick up the pieces. We need to make sure that we have programs at the state level that recognise the harm that these changes will cause.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK (12:52): I want to take the opportunity to speak about Aboriginal issues in this state in response to this particular bill. I am concerned about developments related to Aboriginal people. It is a number of years since the Rann government took apart the freestanding Aboriginal affairs portfolio and amalgamated some of its functions into the Premier's department, and I think there have probably been some consequences to that. On Sunday, I attended the launch of the latest reprint of the book *Survival in Our Own Land*, which is a book about the Aboriginal history of South Australia.

During a barbecue lunch, I talked with many people there and it was very interesting to hear the negative comments being made by these people who are activists on Aboriginal issues in regard to the Rann government. I simply was not expecting to hear these comments from people whom many would regard as being on the left of politics, and quite a number of them expressed disappointment in the current Aboriginal affairs minister. If there was a common catchcry, it was that he must be getting very bad advice from his department, and I wonder whether that has to do with influence from the Premier's department.

As I said, I was at the launch of the reprint of *Survival in Our Own Land*. That book has a history in regard to ALP governments, anyhow, because it was one of three books that were chosen to be printed with state government support for the sesquicentenary in 1986. Three books were chosen. The first was a production from Flinders University about South Australia's history; the second was about the South Australian police, and the third one was the Aboriginal perspective

of the invasion and all that had happened since then, and there was quite a saga about that, with public meetings and stories in the *Adelaide Advertiser* and the *Adelaide Review*. There was a great deal of angst over it for assorted reasons. In the end, because of a government decision about the books having to be printed in South Australia, only two of the books were printed, and they were the white people's versions of South Australian history.

Survival in Our Own Land was eventually printed in 1988, and the government effectively double crossed on that, and the original group of people who had put that together had to fight to get back control of the rights of the book. Right at the last minute, the government turned around and said, 'Yes, you can have control of it, but only after the first print run has sold out,' and it then announced that it would double the numbers of the print run. Fortunately, there was great support for the book, and the first print run sold out within six weeks and the rights went back to the Aboriginal people. It is interesting, having gone to the launch of a reprint, to see that it was actually the fifth reprint and the second edition. Ironically, the other two books to which the Bannan government gave priority for printing back in 1986 have had no demand for reprint; there has only been the one.

It is a matter of record that, in May 1991, the Hon. Mike Rann, as the then Aboriginal affairs minister, announced that two new police stations would be built at Ernabella (known these days as Pukatja) and Amata. Seventeen years is an awfully long time to wait for a promise to be kept, particularly as that former Aboriginal affairs minister has been the Premier of this state for more than six years. It is now more than four years since the then AP coordinator, Bob Collins, identified the lack of police stations as needing urgent attention. He recommended an immediate upgrade of the two short-term holding facilities at Amata and Pukatja, and these were the same townships that were in Mike Rann's 1991 promise. I wonder what 'immediate' means to the Rann government. The government responded to Bob Collins' recommendations and said that money was allocated in—

The Hon. R.D. Lawson: What Bob wants, Bob gets.

The Hon. SANDRA KANCK: What Bob wants, Bob gets. Well, he didn't get it, because we are still waiting for those two police facilities to be built at Amata and Pukatja. One has to ask: how long does the APY have to wait to get anything done? The Mullighan inquiry recommended that fully operational stations with adequate staffing be established in six APY communities. Commissioner Mullighan's recommendation 39 proposes:

That fully operational police stations with an adequate number of personnel be established at all of the main communities on the lands, namely, Pipalyatjara or Kalka, Amata, Pukatja (Ernabella), Kaltjiti (Fregon), Mimili and Iwantja (Indulkana). In the alternative, that police stations be established at Amata, Pukatja and either Mimili or Iwantja. That the police stations be established as a matter of urgency.

I think maybe commissioner Mullighan made a mistake in giving a fallback position in that recommendation, because that is what the government has now said that it will have, that is, the fallback position. Again, I wonder how many more years the Anangu will have to wait.

The other issue of concern about Aboriginal people relates to the resource centre that we have in this state. South Australia has one of only two libraries in this nation that are dedicated to Aboriginal people and their history. This very special place is the Aboriginal Education Resource Centre at Enfield. It has been in existence for 30 years and it has increased in stature over that time. It is known to the Aboriginal community and used by them. It is not just a library; it is a place of culture and the cultural material that is held there is highly valued.

The centre gets internet requests from around the world. It is a place of safety and community for Aboriginal people and it is somewhere for them to sit down and have a cuppa and a chat. Aboriginal people come in to do family research. They bring their children or their grandchildren with them and there are puzzles and games to keep them occupied. They have even established a grandmas club for older women who are now bringing up their grandchildren. They are learning the skills necessary to do that in the 21st century. They are having to learn literacy and numeracy so that they can help their children with homework. These grandmas are even learning to use the internet.

What do you do when you have a special place like this? You downgrade it by amalgamating it with a language and multicultural affairs centre. The school campus in which the resource centre is located needs the space and, similarly, the school campus that currently hosts the language and multicultural centre at Newton wants their space. So, someone has come up with the harebrained idea of putting the two together at Croydon. Apart from convincing the Aboriginal

people that they should make the trip to Croydon, we are going to abuse years of trust that have been built up.

There will be one librarian shared amongst these competing interests. The linguistics centre is aimed at teachers and student teachers and is certainly not a place of community. This is not about reconciliation; this is going back to the old policies of assimilation. Why is the government not consulting with the Aboriginal people who use the resource centre at Enfield and asking them what they think? The Aboriginal cultural material needs to be a discrete collection and it must not be mixed up with multicultural material.

I invite members to listen to that word—Aboriginal. The South Australian government is effectively telling the original people of South Australia that they are on a par with recent immigrants to this state. Although responsibility for this comes under the education portfolio, I am still left wondering whether the culture of the premier's department, in relation to Aboriginal issues, and the inadequate advice I was told about on Sunday, is the cause of the downgrading of such an important place. It is disappointing that a government which invokes the name of Don Dunstan still fails to consult with and understand the needs of Aboriginal people.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.M. Gazzola.

[Sitting suspended from 13:03 to 14:18]

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (APPLICATION OF TRUTH IN SENTENCING) AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, assented to the bill.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Mineral Resources Development (Hon. P. Holloway)—

Determination and Report of the Remuneration Tribunal—No. 4 of 2008—Communication Allowance

Determination and Report of the Remuneration Tribunal—No. 5 of 2008—Conveyance Allowance

By the Minister for Correctional Services (Hon. C. Zollo)—

Inquiry into the South Australian Certificate of Education by the Social Development Committee—Response to the Report

ABORIGINAL LANDS PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:20): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable me to move a motion without notice concerning the appointment of a member to the standing committee.

Motion carried.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I move:

That, pursuant to section 10 of the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee Act 2003, the Hon. R.L. Brokenshire be appointed to the standing committee in place of the Hon. A.L. Evans (resigned).

Motion carried.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON FAMILIES SA

The Hon. C.V. SCHAEFER (14:21): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable me to move for the substitution by motion of a member of the select committee.

Motion carried.

The Hon. C.V. SCHAEFER: I move:

That the Hon. R.L. Brokenshire be substituted on the select committee in place of the Hon. A.L. Evans (resigned).

Motion carried.

TRUSTPOWER

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:21): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement on TrustPower.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: On Tuesday I was asked the following supplementary question by the Hon. David Ridgway:

Has the minister or any of his colleagues, at fundraising luncheons in relation to SA Progressive Business, met with anybody from a company by the name of TrustPower?

I understand that TrustPower is a New Zealand-based electricity retailer and generator, which sought major project status in 2002 for a proposal to erect 20 wind turbines at Myponga/Sellicks Hill to connect to the national electricity grid. This proposal was declared a major development in August 2002.

Following a thorough consultative and assessment process that included the setting down of guidelines by the independent Development Assessment Commission, the state government approved this proposal in November 2003. After checking through my records, I can confirm I met once with representatives from TrustPower in my office in October 2007, at which time the company gave an update on the progress of the project. The meeting was attended by the business development manager and a director of TrustPower Australia. To the best of my knowledge, I have not met with any representative of TrustPower outside of that October meeting in my office.

APY LANDS INQUIRY

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Road Safety, Minister for Gambling, Minister Assisting the Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:23): I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the Children on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands Commission of Inquiry, a report into sexual abuse, made in another place by my colleague the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation.

QUESTION TIME

MYPONGA/SELICKS HILL WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): I seek leave to make a brief explanation, fortuitously, before asking the Minister for Urban Development and Planning a question about the Myponga/Sellicks Hill wind farm development.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: As the minister just said in his ministerial statement, this project was declared a major development in 2002. I think it was in November 2003 that development approval was granted by the then minister for urban development and planning, the Hon. Jay Weatherill. The development approval was granted, despite a draft environmental assessment finding that the wind farm would have a detrimental effect on the amenity for many people in the community and accordingly recommending that the development not proceed.

TrustPower originally applied for a six-year construction time frame, but only two years was granted for that development approval by the Hon. Jay Weatherill. TrustPower applied to the Development Assessment Commission for a time extension on 5 May 2005—I think the minister opposite would have been the minister for urban development and planning (maybe not quite)—and an extension was granted on 5 May 2005. That was the first extension.

TrustPower applied to the Development Assessment Commission for another time extension on 6 July 2006, and another 12 months was approved. TrustPower applied for a third extension, with two years requested, in September last year. This is supposedly still under consideration by the minister, the Hon. Paul Holloway. It is interesting that Planning SA has informed the opposition that two time extensions are usually the limit, and a third extension is almost unheard of.

It is also interesting to note that one of the residents of the area said, 'One of our neighbours has been previously contacted by Mr Nick Alexandrides of the Premier's office, and

informed he will face legal action if he continues with his course of action regarding the wind farm.' My questions to the minister are:

1. As TrustPower has already been granted two extensions, how many more will this Labor government give it to build the Myponga/Sellicks Hill wind farm?
2. Is it true that 11 generous variations to the approval have already been bestowed on the developers?
3. Is it true that the wind turbine size has already been given a wink and a nod increase as TrustPower's 2008 annual report lists the generating capacity of the wind farm now at 42 megawatts and not the original 40 megawatts for which development approval was granted?
4. Is it true that the Premier's brother, Mr Chris Rann, has involvement with the project and that the Premier's sister-in-law was employed by the wind farm developers?
5. Why has the Premier's Chief of Staff, Mr Nick Alexandrides, been consulting residents within the area?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:27): TrustPower, as I indicated in my ministerial statement, is the New Zealand company that applied some years ago—long before I became Minister for Urban Development and Planning—to build a wind farm. In this day and age of concerns about climate change, one would have thought that the opposition might support the development of wind power in this state. One wonders, after its performance last night in opposing a number of other matters in relation to heritage, what the Liberal Party does support, or whether it supports anything. One wonders with great concern what our society might be like if we had the misfortune of having these people in government.

TrustPower came to see me back in 2007 because I requested a meeting with it to justify why there should be any further extension in relation to that proposal. Given that we have now decided to have a desalination plant erected at Port Stanvac in the southern area of Adelaide, I am keen that any opportunity to have wind power in that area not be lost, because I think everyone here would appreciate that if we are to have a desalination plant it would be preferable if that plant's power is substantially supplied by wind farms. Obviously the most effective way—the least greenhouse gas emitting way—is if that is sourced by power as close as possible.

TrustPower, I understand, has had a number of issues in relation to proceeding. It is unusual that there will be an extension but, given the issues relating to the need to have some greenhouse gas friendly power generation within the region, particularly with desalination, I have given this matter careful consideration. It also needs to be considered that, in relation to wind power, originally this project was given major project status because it was at a time when there was no general development policy in relation to wind power. It is my understanding that it was predated. However, I have been advised that the reason this matter went through major project status (which perhaps would not be the case nowadays with wind power) was that there was no broad development plan policy in relation to wind power. Had there been a more general development plan policy in place, that may not have been necessary.

In relation to the latter parts of the question, there are of course the usual allegations made by the opposition; we get some every week and nine out of 10 of them tend to be incorrect. We all know that the Premier's brother is a consultant for a number of companies, and I would have thought he is quite entitled to do that business. Whether he is involved with this company, I have no idea.

MYPONGA/SELICKS HILL WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:31): I have a supplementary question. Has the minister granted the third, almost unheard of, extension for this development?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:32): It is a matter I am currently considering.

MYPONGA/SELICKS HILL WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS (14:32): I also have a supplementary question. Can the minister answer the question with regard to Nick Alexandrides and say why he was involved?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:33): I would have thought that the Hon. Terry Stephens, after making a succession of allegations in this place and getting them all wrong, would be a little careful. I do not know whether or not Mr Alexandrides contacted the person concerned but I do know that, since most of his past allegations have been wrong, I would be very suspicious that that were the case.

SOLAR ENERGY REBATE SCHEME

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:33): My question is to the Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy. What representations has the government made to the commonwealth in relation to its decision to means test the solar rebate scheme, and what analysis has been done on the impact of the take-up in South Australia?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy) (14:34): It is with great pleasure that I take my first question in relation to this portfolio responsibility. However, I will need to refer this to the minister in another place and bring back adequate detail.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

The Hon. S.G. WADE (14:34): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for State/Local Government Relations a question about local government.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: During the past week Lord Mayor Michael Harbison has been reported as suggesting the creation of three super councils across Adelaide. Mr Harbison labelled the existing system of 19 separate metropolitan municipalities as a hindrance to South Australia's progress. My questions are:

1. Does the minister agree that the current regime of 19 separate metropolitan municipalities is a hindrance to South Australia's progress?
2. If so, will the government encourage council amalgamations, and does the minister consider that the state government has a proactive role in facilitating council amalgamations?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy) (14:34): Again, I appreciate my first question in relation to this particular portfolio responsibility. I have not yet had the opportunity to be briefed on the respective portfolio areas—

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway: Have a crack!

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Don't worry, sit back and relax; I will. Nevertheless, I will attempt to address the detail on which I have been advised. For instance, I know that, as recently reported in the local media, the Lord Mayor of the City of Adelaide and the Mayor of the City of West Torrens have had private discussions about the possible merger of those two particular councils. It has also been reported that neither mayor has necessarily raised the idea with his respective council—or, for that matter, with the state government.

There have also been press reports regarding a Salisbury councillor who intends to raise the idea of a possible merger between the Salisbury and Tea Tree Gully councils, although I am advised that the Tea Tree Gully mayor is reported as saying that councils should be looking at sharing services rather than amalgamating.

The mayor of Salisbury said that an amalgamation was not in the council's immediate future. I have been advised that the Port Adelaide Enfield mayor wished to hold informal merger discussions with neighbouring councils, particularly, I understand, Charles Sturt. The mayor indicated that, as there has been increasing speculation of a new round of council amalgamations, the Port Adelaide Enfield Council risked becoming a backwater if it were left out.

It is not the state government's intention, I understand, to pursue the forced amalgamation of councils. Rather, I believe, particularly at this time, it is better to favour the development of joint initiatives between councils that in fact promote economic development and the region in a more strategic and effective way. Forging partnerships and sharing resources, etc. would seem to me to be the initial way to proceed.

I have been advised that the government will support the voluntary amalgamation of councils where it can be clearly demonstrated that local communities will benefit from such an initiative and, in light of the government's Strategic Plan population target and regional boundaries initiatives, there is a convergence of local government service delivery interests at the regional level and governance-related planning and coordination issues.

A number of councils across the state have initiated moves to explore the benefits of cooperation and collaboration in order to promote economic development in their region, and I commend them for that. The initiatives are indeed supported by the state government, and we are working with these councils to ensure that local government will be well placed to respond to future growth in the key regional areas.

That is the issue: these regions do not stand still. We need to meet current needs, but we also need to have plans to meet future developments and directions, and I think it is a good thing that councils are entering into discussions and negotiations to consider better ways to work cooperatively, forge partnerships and work collaboratively with other councils to be more efficient and effective in the delivery of their services.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMALGAMATIONS

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (14:37): As a supplementary question, does the minister believe that we have too many councils?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy) (14:38): At present, I believe that the direction that we are proceeding in—and that is to consider better efficiencies through better partnerships and collaborations—is the preferred way to go. As I said, I have been a minister in this position now for 4½ hours. I have yet to be briefed and to have a full and detailed understanding of the portfolio and its full implications but, at this very early time in my ministerial responsibilities for this portfolio, I would have thought that that is the preferred direction.

HOUSING POLICY

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (14:38): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Urban Development and Planning a question regarding the demand for housing in Adelaide's North.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: The state is currently undergoing an exploration boom with several mining projects in the pipeline. The defence industry in this state, especially around the Techport and Edinburgh air base, is also helping to generate economic growth in South Australia. I understand that the economic expansion and the new jobs that it is helping to create, together with the government's forecast for population growth of 2 million by 2035, are putting enormous pressures on the availability of land for new housing.

I also understand that the recently completed planning review has made some suggestions on how to ease some of this pressure. Can the minister please provide the details on the government's response to this challenge? How is this state preparing for the expected increase in population and the growing demand for new land for housing?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:39): I thank the member for his question. As the member pointed out, South Australia has been experiencing a welcome economic resurgence and that, in turn, has put enormous pressure on the availability of land both for new industries and also for housing.

Recently, this government took the decision to adjust the urban growth boundary to include additional land suitable for residential purposes, particularly in the northern fringes of the outer metropolitan area. As a consequence of that decision, the state government now intends to rezone land at Gawler East to allow the construction of new housing to meet the growing demand in Adelaide's fast developing north. This rezoning will be considered through a ministerial development plan amendment. While most of the land in question is in the town of Gawler, a small corner of the area to be considered by the ministerial development plan amendment is situated in the Barossa council area. Most of the land to be considered for rezoning was brought into the

urban growth boundary in December, but the DPA process will also take in adjoining land at Gawler East previously within the urban growth boundary and currently zoned 'deferred urban'.

As part of this ministerial development plan amendment process for Gawler East, a 219-hectare parcel of land (about half the size of Mawson Lakes Estate) will form a new residential development proposed by Delfin Lend Lease. Delfin Lend Lease plans to work with both the town of Gawler and Barossa council to develop this portion of the land on the outskirts of this historic township. This proposed residential development also allows the disused Calton Road quarry, currently owned by Cemex Australia, to be rehabilitated and included in the new housing estate. The rezoning of this land acknowledges the continued strong demand for new homes to Adelaide's north and will help to generate jobs growth in South Australia's building industry. The multi-million dollar investment by Delfin Lend Lease in Adelaide's north reflects the region's resurgence, led by projects such as Edinburgh Parks and the pending arrival of the 7th Army Battalion.

The rezoning of Gawler East is consistent with the recommendation of the recently published planning review that the government ensure a 25-year rolling supply of residential land, with 15 years' supply zoned at any one time. The development will also include at least 15 per cent affordable housing and incorporate environmentally sensitive design, particularly in relation to water reuse.

I am well aware of community concerns about the pressure that new land releases will put on existing public infrastructure. The Mayor of Gawler, Brian Sambell, estimates that an additional 2,500 new homes will be added to the size of Gawler from the Delfin development alone. It is therefore understandable that some members of the local community will be concerned about the potential pressure the growth will exert on public transport, schools and, a particular Gawler issue, traffic through Murray Street. That is why this government will be conducting a thorough community consultation process as part of the rezoning, so that nearby residents in Gawler, Playford council, and the Barossa Valley, as well as other interested parties, can have their say.

The Rann Labor government is also committed to detailed structure planning for new areas such as Gawler East to ensure that developers and local councils work together to achieve well-planned and well-serviced suburbs and communities. Through this cooperative approach, the government can ensure that these new housing estates are based on a blueprint that delivers open space for public use, transport routes, community infrastructure and convenient shopping precincts.

HOUSING POLICY

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:43): I have a supplementary question. The minister spoke about the water-sensitive design of this development and water re-use. Given that the government will not support the opposition's bill in the other chamber for third party access to the sewers, why has Delfin been given access to the sewerage in that area?

The PRESIDENT: Before the minister answers, I explain to the newest member of the Legislative Council that it is not normal to ask a supplementary question with an explanation, as the Hon. Mr Ridgway has just done.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:44): Indeed, Mr President, it is not really relevant to the original question.

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Well, the honourable member is asking about support for a bill in another house, which is entirely out of order. The Hon. Robert Brokenshire will soon understand that the opposition really does not care very much about the rules. In relation to this new development in Gawler East by Delfin Lend Lease, one has only to look at what is happening with water re-use at Mawson Lakes to see how effective that has been. Delfin Lend Lease has been actively providing housing in this state for about 30 years, going back to the West Lakes development.

One can look at the sort of water re-use that was pioneered in Mawson Lakes, which I think was the first subdivision to re-use wastewater and to have the dual-pipe system. However, what we have said here, in relation to the new development, is that there will be a water-sensitive design. It is important, because the development will be on the hills above the South Para River, that it should not add to any flooding problem with additional run-off, and that is why stormwater will be retained on that site. That is what I was referring to in my question.

HOUSING POLICY

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (14:45): I have a supplementary question. Will the minister detail for the council any consideration being given by the government to developing an extension of the suburban rail line east of the current Gawler Central station to provide ready access for commuters from this new subdivision area?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:46): When I announced the urban growth boundary decision last December there were two areas: one is generally referred to as the Concordia area, which is north-east of Gawler, and the other area, which is referred to as Gawler East, is south of the main road into the Barossa Valley. That is what this government is rezoning first.

As I have indicated on a number of occasions, the existence of the train to that area provides a long-term option in terms of providing good public transport services to the people of the north. Of course, that is why this government is taking action to electrify the railway, because that is a necessary step.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: One can understand the interjections of members opposite, given that their transport policy was so barren. In eight years all they ever did was sell the buses.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: That is pretty rich.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: That is pretty rich when members opposite opposed the extension of the tramline, and they opposed the new trams. What they wanted were heritage 1929 trams ending in Victoria Square. As I have indicated before, the only consequence of Liberal policy would have been the closure of the Glenelg tramline. That is the only logical conclusion. It would have been the inevitable conclusion.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: 'A load of rubbish,' the deputy leader says. Perhaps the deputy leader should give her great experience to the transport engineers and tell them how to keep patching up 1929 trams and keep them going forever into the future. That is nonsense. That sort of comment by the deputy totally reveals the shallowness of members opposite. They really do not know what they are on about. They will oppose anything and everything, but they will not come up with any good ideas at all—even if they do, they will not cost them.

What this government has done through its planning review and through the budget announcements is to provide the basis on which public transport can be extended into the Gawler East region. Unless hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on resleepering the rail system of this state, unless hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on electrification, it will not be possible; the system will not have the capacity to be able to extend out.

Of course, that is what members opposite do not understand. They were part of a government that invested absolutely nothing over its eight-year time in government, in terms of new investment in public transport infrastructure. It has been under-funded for many years and it needs hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars (as this government has committed in the budget), to be spent on it. Once we have that situation, once we have the electrification to Gawler, it then becomes a very easy possibility, from that point, to provide (at a stage in the future when the government's plans have been rolled out) the capacity to do those things. Unless we do the preliminary work first, we will not be able to do that.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

HOUSING POLICY

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (14:49): As a further supplementary arising from the minister's answer to my supplementary question, will the minister confirm that he just indicated that the

government will not consider extending the suburban rail line east of the Gawler Central station until the electrification process has been completed?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:50): The ministerial development amendment plan process will be put into place in relation to Gawler East, and remember: this project will have anything up to 2,500 homes. It will happen probably over a decade or so; those houses will not be built overnight.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: But Western Australia actually has \$2 billion of mining revenue. This government has been working on that too. We have been building up the mining industry, but it all takes time; we started from a very low base. This development will take place over a decade or so and, by the time the development is nearing completion—if this government continues in office—the electrification of this city will continue to be rolled out.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Perhaps putting some wheels on some rusty old boat sheds is the answer.

GIANT CUTTLEFISH

The Hon. M. PARNELL (14:51): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Mineral Resources Development a question about development on the Point Lowly peninsula.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. PARNELL: On 5 May the Premier called for expressions of interest in developing land near Point Lowly as an industrial precinct. These plans included a deep sea port and processing facility for the bulk export of minerals, including the export of copper concentrate, a new desalination plant to service BHP Billiton's mining expansion and at least one and possibly two refineries. It is fair to say that many in the Whyalla community are extremely concerned about the government's plans. Not only is the Point Lowly peninsula an important recreational resource for the Whyalla community; it is also the home to the rare and magnificent giant cuttlefish. The importance of the aggregation of this extraordinary creature is increasingly recognised as film crews, scientists and divers come from all over the world to see the phenomenon.

The idea of copper concentrate being loaded into container ships on a new jetty at Point Lowly is especially concerning, as cuttlefish are at particular risk from elevated copper levels, not to mention other heavy metals. As Adelaide University Associate Professor Bronwyn Gillanders said on ABC Radio in May:

There's the possibility that it could work out okay for the cuttlefish but you can't afford to make one mistake with this population. I mean, it's so unique in Australia and the world that essentially you're...wiping out a unique species if you're not careful, at least from that local area.

Responding to this concern and the lack of consultation with local people, Deputy Mayor of Whyalla Council, Eddie Hughes, on 7 July proposed an alternative. He said:

Industrial proposals currently on the table will fundamentally alter the nature of the Point Lowly Peninsula and seriously degrade its environmental and recreational assets. I fully support industrial development in our backyard but it should occur in that part of the yard that is already industrialised. There is an abundance of underused land on OneSteel's indenture land and the state's largest industrial estate across the road from OneSteel. All of the land potentially available is in close proximity to OneSteel's port, a port that could be expanded at the expense of a third party to accommodate a range of users. Everybody would be a winner.

My office has been contacted by a number of people in Whyalla who all say the same thing; that is, the OneSteel harbour could be expanded to accommodate other users. As Mr Hughes says, 'We need to work together as a community to protect the Point Lowly peninsula and get the players in the corporate sector and the state government to cooperate and expand the OneSteel harbour.' My questions are:

1. Has the government spoken to OneSteel about allowing access to its harbour and adjacent land for other users?
2. Why is this seemingly quicker and cheaper option being ignored at the expense of converting non-industrial land right next door to such a precious and iconic marine population?

3. Why did the Premier state in his press release announcing the industrial precinct on 5 May that 'the existing port facilities in the Upper Spencer Gulf are committed to capacity' when the Deputy Mayor of Whyalla and others say that room is clearly available at the OneSteel harbour site?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (14:54): I wrote to the Chief Executive Officer of OneSteel late last year, I think, about using any spare capacity that OneSteel may have had in its barging and deep sea loading facilities in relation to steel. However, OneSteel has indicated (and it is now public knowledge; it was in *The Advertiser* just a week or so ago) that it is looking at ramping up its exports to use all the additional capacity that would be available in relation to its barges and the bulk loader that is anchored out in the middle of Spencer Gulf.

The reason why OneSteel barges iron ore out to the gulf rather than bring ships in is that most ores now are carried in large bulk carriers that need at least 20 metres or so. The cape size vessels need 20 metres, or thereabouts, minimum draft. Of course, the harbour in Whyalla, on my understanding, is about half that. So, there would have to be extensive dredging before one could use the port of Whyalla, and I imagine that that would have a far greater effect on any cuttlefish than would building a port at Point Lowly. The current Santos wharf, as I understand it, goes out into 20 metres of water to take large vessels. So, obviously, the depth of the water is one important issue.

It is also an important issue in relation to any desalination plant because, obviously, if you are to get the adequate dilution of waste water from a desalination plant you need the deepest possible water and the greatest flow to ensure that the brine that is expelled adequately mixes. Of course, that is subject to an environmental impact statement and, obviously, any future development that were to take place at Point Lowly would be subject to similar environmental impact studies and, of course, this government is well aware of the importance of the cuttlefish within that region. However, I think it is rather trite to suggest that, somehow or other, the much shallower port at Whyalla represents a realistic option to a deep water port that might be established at Point Lowly.

A number of activities will need to be studied. The government has sought expressions of interest. Until that process is completed, we cannot move to the next stage of looking into those options in more detail. Certainly, the government is well aware of the issues in this area. I know that the honourable member from the Greens no doubt strongly opposes any expansion of uranium mining, and he would strongly oppose the expansion of Olympic Dam. Therefore, I suppose he would support anything that could prevent that from happening, and I guess that is the context in which his question has been asked.

ASPEN GROUP

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (14:58): I seek leave to make an explanation before asking the Leader of the Government a question about the Aspen Group development.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Reported on 12 July this year was the following statement in respect of the minister:

Minister for Urban Development and Planning Paul Holloway today described as intolerable the Adelaide City Council's rejection of the Aspen Group's proposed office tower in Franklin Street. Mr Holloway says he is urgently formulating a response to take to Cabinet next week to ensure that the development assessment process in the Adelaide CBD is no longer blatantly politicised. 'The position adopted by the Adelaide City Council's Development Assessment Panel flies in the face of the planning reforms initiated by this government,' Mr Holloway says.

Just two days after that, on the Monday, but reported on the Tuesday in *The Advertiser* of 15 July, was this statement:

Adelaide City Council has been stripped of planning powers for projects costing more than \$10 million, unlocking an expected surge of city development.

A press statement dated 14 July under the heading of Mike Rann, entitled 'Government restores independence to city planning', which was actually a press statement by infrastructure minister Patrick Conlon, stated:

Infrastructure minister Patrick Conlon today announced any application for a development project within the Adelaide City Council area that exceeds \$10 million will now be assessed by the independent Development Assessment Commission.

Further on in his statement minister Conlon said:

State cabinet's decision this morning, which is to be achieved through a regulatory change to be gazetted this week, is entirely consistent with the recommendations on State Significant Development made by the recently published Planning Review.

When doing media interviews, minister Conlon, who was handling this issue at that stage, said:

However, Mr Conlon said the council's decision had not influenced yesterday's announcement—

that is, the announcement made by cabinet—

This proposal has been around for a long time, although you have to think about what has happened in recent times.

I contrast Mr Conlon, claiming on the Monday that cabinet's decision had not been influenced at all by the city council's rejection of the Aspen Group's development, with minister Holloway stating on Friday that it was intolerable and he was going to take a submission to cabinet on the Monday to sort this particular issue out. My questions are:

1. Did minister Holloway receive any legal advice or planning advice that warned him against indicating that cabinet was going to change policy in this area to impact on a specific development, that is, the Aspen development?

2. Why did minister Conlon announce the cabinet decision on the Monday, rather than minister Holloway, who has responsibility in the area and who had indicated that he was going to take the submission to cabinet?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (15:01): In relation to the second question, it is quite simple. I took the submission to cabinet but I left at about lunch time that day to go over to the ministerial council, which was a follow-up meeting. As the Minister for Police, I was South Australia's representative in relation to alcohol abuse. Minister Conlon was familiar with the development—as I have indicated earlier in relation to a virtually identical question that the former leader asked me several days ago—because the Office of Infrastructure was responsible for the early promotion, if I can use that word, of the particular redevelopment proposal for the post office square. Minister Conlon provided the answer: simply because I was not available to do it, as I was on a plane. Relating to the first part of the question, I am not really sure what the answer is. Certainly, I have not sought any specific legal advice in relation to—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: No; generally.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: In relation to what? The Hon. Rob Lucas asks all these questions about specifics; they are a sort of entanglement—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: Because I know what is happening.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Well, he does not know what happened; he is fishing. If the Hon. Rob Lucas wishes to ask me a specific question I will answer it, but I am not going to respond to this sort of innuendo. I know what he is like. I have been in this place long enough to know the sorts of questions that the Hon. Rob Lucas asks. If he asked me a straightforward question, he would get a straightforward answer.

ASPEN GROUP

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (15:03): I have a supplementary question. The straightforward question is: did the minister receive any legal or planning advice? I did not ask about specifics; I said any legal advice or planning advice warning the minister in relation to this issue.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (15:03): I obviously sought planning advice on what the options were relating to this matter. I took the cabinet submission, as has been publicly indicated, relating to the proposal to change the schedule of the Development Act to include taking this off. I did not need to seek legal advice relating to that matter.

LEVEL CROSSINGS

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (15:04): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Road Safety a question about the newly announced level crossing black spot partnership.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: I understand that the state government and the Local Government Association have announced a jointly funded level crossing improvement program. Will the Minister for Road Safety explain how the program will work and indicate what type of improvements will be undertaken?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Road Safety, Minister for Gambling, Minister Assisting the Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (15:05): We all know that road safety is everyone's responsibility, and that is why it is so pleasing to announce the partnership between state and local government in regard to tackling road safety at level crossings. This program involves a 50-50 funding split between state and local government for improvements on local roads, with the state government putting up to \$500,000 into the program each year for the next four years. With matching funding from local government, the program will deliver a significant boost to level crossing safety over the next four years for council nominated improvements. The Rann government is committed to reducing crashes at level crossings, and this funding will provide a welcome incentive for councils to improve level crossing safety in their area.

It is anticipated that most of the funding will go to smaller scale projects, such as improved advanced warning signage, the line of sight clearance, the addition of lighting and traffic calming schemes, and the closure of a crossing or a minor road alignment to improve the approach angle. A panel of representatives from the LGA and the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure will assess the nominations in October.

This partnership is one of a number of initiatives recommended by the state Level Crossing Advisory Committee. I am sure I have advised the chamber previously that the committee is made up of representatives from the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, the Australian Rail Track Corporation, Great Southern Rail, the Local Government Association, Pacific National, Rail Australia, the Rail, Tram and Bus Industry Union, the RAA, SAPOL and TransAdelaide.

I have also previously advised the chamber that we have 1,140 level crossings in South Australia, with about 80 per cent being on local roads, and this program is therefore vital in improving crossing safety throughout our state. Early this month I announced the level crossing safety program, which involves three components: education, enforcement and engineering. The state government and local government partnership will further enhance this government's ongoing commitment to improving safety at level crossings. The state government is very pleased to work with the LGA, and I thank the LGA President, Mayor Joy Baluch, for her ongoing support and cooperation in helping launch this important initiative.

LEVEL CROSSINGS

The Hon. S.G. WADE (15:08): By way of supplementary question, in the minister's statement she said that they would be council nominated improvements. Does that mean that the local government program will be council driven and the state government program will be ALCAM risk management driven?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Road Safety, Minister for Gambling, Minister Assisting the Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (15:08): This is in addition to what we are providing under the level crossing program. We will have a committee and the various parties I have mentioned will get together in October to look at extra initiatives within their own local area on local roads.

PAYDAY LENDING

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (15:09): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Consumer Affairs a question regarding payday lending.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE: On 21 October 2007, in a press release entitled 'Days are numbered for payday lending rogues', the former minister announced:

The state government this week decided to develop legislation designed to crack down on unscrupulous operators in the payday lending industry.

The release goes on:

Minister for Consumer Affairs, the Hon. Jennifer Rankine, said the intention of the new laws was to provide a range of protection for vulnerable people seeking short-term credit, including improving a maximum interest rate cap that encompasses fees and charges.

One month later, on 20 November 2007, the member for Mawson in another place tabled a petition signed by 4,562 residents of South Australia 'requesting the house to urge the government to abandon the proposal to cap interest rates, inclusive of fees and charges, so South Australians can continue to have choice in the marketplace for financial solutions'. No further action up to this month had occurred, despite the former minister advising parliament in October 2006 that there was a problem and circulating a discussion paper and the opposition introducing a private member's bill in 2006 for a 48 per cent cap on interest rates. A week later, in November, the former minister set up a working party and in February 2007 advised that a report was due to be handed up. One year later, in February 2008, the member for West Torrens, as Chair of the Economic and Finance Committee, said in the other place:

The slow pace at which urgent reform is conducted on this process means that in many cases individuals are suffering significant loss right now, while the laws that may assist them are still being negotiated in other places.

At the last COAG meeting in Sydney on 3 July, COAG resolved that it would 'develop a plan to present to COAG before the end of 2008 on how this major agreement will be implemented'. To me, that is political spin for doing little. My questions to the minister are:

1. Is it Labor policy to cap interest rates, as the former minister previously stated in October 2007?
2. Is the member for Mawson out of step with Labor Party policy?
3. What confidence does the minister have that COAG will achieve an urgent reform in payday lending, as called for by the member for West Torrens five months ago?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister Assisting the Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Energy) (15:11): I thank the honourable member for his important question and congratulate him on his first question in this place.

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway interjecting:

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Just relax, it's coming; sit back. Cabinet has approved three consumer credit reforms, including the licensing of credit providers, changes to the jurisdictions of the courts, and a cap on interest rates. Since cabinet approved these reforms I have been advised that there has been a push for the commonwealth government to take over responsibility for the regulation of consumer credit. Obviously I have not had the opportunity to participate in those commonwealth forums as yet, but I certainly look forward to that.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Indeed, I do look forward to the new and exciting challenges before me. I have been informed that this matter is now under review, and I have also been advised that the most recent commonwealth developments on this front are:

- the Productivity Commission has recommended that the commonwealth government take over the regulation of consumer credit;
- the Council of Australian Governments is looking at ways to give effect to the recommendations of the Productivity Commission;
- the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs has given in-principle support to a commonwealth takeover;
- the commonwealth government has released a green paper that looks at who should be responsible for the regulation of credit; and

- the implementation task force, made up of working-level officials from the Australian government and the states and territories, has been set up to discuss a way forward.

In terms of the licensing of credit providers, I have been advised that it is likely that the commonwealth government will bring credit providers within the existing financial services framework. As to the interest rate cap, I have been advised that it is not clear whether the commonwealth government would cap interest rates if it took over responsibility for the regulation of credit. I understand that an interim interest rate cap would provide some protection for vulnerable consumers.

The released commonwealth green paper about regulation of consumer credit is, as members know, about the push for the commonwealth government to take over responsibility for the regulation of consumer credit, and I have outlined each of those factors. I believe I have answered all those questions, but if I have not, on reflection, I am happy to take those parts of the question for which I have not provided detail on notice and bring back a response.

WORKCOVER REHABILITATION PROVIDERS

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (15:15): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Mineral Resources Development, representing the Minister for Industrial Relations, a question in relation to WorkCover rehabilitation providers.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY: On 16 July 2000, the *Advertiser* published an article regarding Ms Sandra De Poi, and allegations of a conflict of interest. Ms De Poi, a member of the WorkCover Board, is also the managing director of De Poi Consultancy Services, which is an Adelaide-based workplace injury management and occupational rehabilitation provider.

The article states that De Poi Consultancy Services has received over \$6.2 million in contracts from WorkCover referrals since the 2004-05 financial year. Last financial year, all rehabilitation providers were allocated work on a rotational basis. I am advised that case managers were able to override this process at their discretion and allocate work to any rehabilitation provider. I am further advised that De Poi Consultancy Services was exempt from this rotational referral process.

This financial year, work has been allocated to rehabilitation providers, based on their performance which is determined by the CAPO system. This system uses certain variables such as cost and return-to-work statistics to establish the performance of each registered rehabilitation provider against other registered rehabilitation providers. I am advised that the only rehabilitation providers who are excluded from this referral process are those smaller rehabilitation providers who did not receive enough referrals in the past to have a large enough sample size. My questions are:

1. Can the minister confirm whether De Poi Consultancy Services was exempt from the rotational referral system used in previous years?
2. If so, can the minister provide an explanation as to why this was the case?
3. Are De Poi Consultancy Services current referrals from WorkCover based on the CAPO system?
4. Does De Poi Consultancy Services meet or exceed industry benchmarks standards in its return-to-work outcomes?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Minister for Urban Development and Planning, Minister for Small Business) (15:17): I will refer that question to my colleague in another place and bring back a reply.

APY LANDS

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON (15:17): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Correctional Services a question on the subject of correctional facilities on the APY lands.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: The government has this day admitted that it has rejected the recommendations of the Mullighan commission in relation to the establishment of a remand facility

on the APY lands. This is a deeply disappointing rejection by the government of its obligations to the people on the Pit Lands. This matter has a long history. Members will recall that, in September 2002, the South Australian coroner published extensive reasons in relation to an inquest into the death of some young Aboriginal men as a result of petrol sniffing, and the coroner on that occasion laid out a blueprint for developing facilities to avoid a recurrence of those events. That was in September 2002. Notwithstanding the appointment of Bob Collins, Lowitja O'Donoghue and Tim Costello and sundry other committees, this government has been paying lip service to—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: Celebrity advisers!

The Hon. P. Holloway: We're still waiting for your apology.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: Since September 2002, during the entire term of this government, no action has been taken about those recommendations in relation to correctional facilities. It is worth quoting what the Mullighan report says about correctional facilities on the lands, as follows:

The report of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in November 2007 states that a feasibility study has been undertaken into the development of a low-level security correctional facility on the lands.

Then Mullighan goes on, and I ask members to take particular notice of this:

Investigation by [Mullighan] established that the feasibility study...was completed in September 2005—

two years before. The Premier's department said it was undertaking a feasibility study; it had in fact been completed, but there had been no government decision in relation to it. The Mullighan report continues:

...there is a need to establish a short-term facility for holding prisoners on the lands once the new police stations are established...Once prisoners are received in cells at a police station, there must be close supervision of them at all times to ensure their safety, which will require the attention of resident police officers. If the prisoner is to be kept in custody, usually on remand, it is an onerous burden on the police to maintain the required degree of supervision...

Mullighan continues:

The care of prisoners for longer than a brief period, such as overnight or during a day, requires the expertise of the Department of Corrections. A facility should be established on the lands adjacent to an all-weather airfield to which prisoners can be delivered by police and at which they can be adequately cared for by corrections officers...

So, as I have said, it is deeply disappointing that the government has chosen to reject those recommendations and to make the specious comment that the funds so saved will be used for child protection. My questions are:

1. What was the recommendation of the feasibility study delivered to the government in September 2005 and referred to in the report of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in 2007?
2. What was the cost of a correctional facility of the kind recommended by Mullighan?
3. What are the reasons for not implementing those recommendations?
4. Does the minister agree that it is more appropriate to send remand prisoners from the lands more than 600 kilometres south to Port Augusta than to have, as has been recommended time and again, a facility on the lands?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Road Safety, Minister for Gambling, Minister Assisting the Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (15:23): I place on the record in this chamber that this government, more than any other government, has been committed—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: —and demonstrated its commitment—which is more than you did—to the APY lands. The honourable member has asked this question before in relation to a low-level security facility on the lands, and I have responded. Clearly, commissioner Mullighan was referring to a remand centre, and the government has decided, given the other priorities, that we will not be accepting that recommendation. I have also placed on the record of this chamber that the Department for Correctional Services will be constructing in the next few months prisoner beds

for Aboriginal prisoners at Port Augusta, and we believe that this is a smarter way of dealing with the priorities. Also, in relation to the removal of prisoners from the lands and their return for court appearances, in a discussion I have had with the Chief Executive of Corrections, he said he believes that should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. As I have said, I have previously responded to this question, and today the government has formally responded to the recommendation.

The PRESIDENT: The time has expired for question time. However, before we go on, I remind members that there have been only 10 questions because of long-winded explanations and the number of supplementary questions asked by the opposition.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The President has a right, and interjections are wrong.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

(Continued from page 3684.)

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:25): I rise to briefly speak on behalf of Family First on the Appropriation Bill. I note that the Hon. Robert Brokenshire will make his contribution early next week, to which I am looking forward, of course.

As with all budgets there are good and negative aspects. Family First is in favour of a number of the measures that the government has adopted in this bill but, of course, we are not so impressed with some other measures. I do not have a long speech today, but I have prepared some key measures, if you like, that I would like to highlight that we are quite pleased with, and also some of the ones we are not happy with at all.

In saying that, a recent survey found that 77 per cent of Australians believe that the government's prime objective (and when I say 'the government' I mean not necessarily this state government but any government's prime objective) should be to achieve the greatest happiness of the people and not necessarily the greatest wealth. Budgets, unfortunately, focus on things which can be given a dollar figure. The more intangible aspects of our lives, like happiness, family and respect for the law and institutions, are made irrelevant if only because they cannot be easily quantified.

Family First, as a party, is perhaps most interested in those intangible things—not that we are not interested in budget matters, which are very important. However, as I mentioned, we believe that less tangible matters are as important and, indeed, in many cases, more important. These are things like defending traditional family values; promoting the value of every human life; supporting marriage and family in general; preventing reckless drug behaviour; pursuing justice for the poor and marginalised; supporting education and the benefits thereof; supporting victims and preventing crime; curbing South Australia's appalling addiction to gambling; looking after our environment without becoming extreme in that regard; and ensuring high-quality health care for the city and, indeed, for the country.

Strong families make life worth living. At times, important things do come down to money, and that is when Family First will take a close interest in budget matters—when they affect the family. I will start by doing something somewhat unusual as a cross-bencher, and that is to applaud the government for several measures. As I said, there are good aspects to this budget and there are things that Family First does not like at all.

First, the government has provided (to its credit) \$190.6 million in this budget to protect children from harm and neglect. Some \$15 million is provided for early intervention and home visiting centres to support children at risk of abuse. At a time when reports of child abuse have doubled in the past six years, these measures are more than appropriate and most welcome. Australia now has some 266,745 reports of child abuse each and every year—a figure which demands urgent attention and, I think, to anyone's mind, it is absolutely appalling. Indeed, last year we had an appalling 20 per cent more babies born with drug withdrawal symptoms in our hospitals than the year before. Clearly, that also needs urgent attention. Therefore, I take the rare step (some would say) of congratulating the government in approving these budget measures. This is, indeed, a step in the right direction.

Family First also agrees with a primary focus in another area of the budget, and that is what the Treasurer himself described as a public transport revolution. He backed that up by

explaining that it was the most ever spent on rail. We do quibble with that to some extent because, in fact, William Webb (in the 1920s) probably spent more when one looks at the actual spending in real dollar terms. However, in doing so, he almost bankrupted the state—something we certainly would not applaud. This budget, as far as we can tell in real terms, has spent the second-highest amount on public transport to date in our history, and that is to be applauded.

There is little to be gained politically in budgeting for the expensive electrification and standardisation of the rail network, but it is something that is necessary for the long-term benefit of this state and, again, we do applaud the government on this initiative. We also wonder whether the commonwealth was approached to fund the electrification, given that Perth's electrification was federally funded some years ago. I ask the question: did the government miss an opportunity to seek funding from them; if not, what are the details of the funding and what is the arrangement with the federal government?

Family First disagrees with certain aspects of the plan, however. Whilst the broad brush of increasing the spending on public transport is to be applauded, we disagree with the specific ways in which that will be spent. It is primarily a plan to bring commuters to entertainment venues rather than a genuine mass transit initiative. While we need rail access to AAMI Stadium and the Entertainment Centre, for example—to venues that are highlighted in the budget—we most urgently need ways to bring commuters to work and ordinary destinations such as their homes, shopping venues and other places at a time when South Australians are reeling under astronomical petrol prices.

In 1882, shortly after foundation, this state completed construction of the enormous Sleeps Hill viaducts and tunnels on the Belair railway line, the longest tunnel being some 377 metres in length through solid rock. It is concerning that over 120 years and with all our modern machinery we will not even contemplate doing anything on that scale, and certainly that has not been envisaged in present times.

Family First proposes that we extend the Tonsley rail line not only to the Flinders Medical Centre but also up the hills to meet with the defunct but still relatively complete Willunga rail corridor and provide rail access to Sheidow Park, Reynella, Woodcroft, Morphett Vale, Hackham and Huntfield Heights. Suburbs in the forgotten and neglected south are crying out for infrastructure. The beauty of this plan is that we do not then need to build a \$51.7 million bridge over the Onkaparinga River from the Noarlunga rail line and will re-use the existing Willunga line bridge to reach Seaford and Aldinga.

If we were able to achieve such bold infrastructure improvements in the 1880s, why can we not do the same today? Let us look at the Barossa Valley as an example. Why should not the residents and the tourist destinations of the Barossa Valley have their rail corridor back? Instead of leasing it to GWA for an incredible \$1 a year for the initial period for hauling limestone, let tourists finally take the train to the Barossa again. Let the 3,500 commuters who drop off their car at Gawler to take the train to work take it from the Barossa instead. Indeed, I have spoken to many people who would desperately like to see that be the case once again. The line is there; the infrastructure is there; this is imminently doable.

Why not look at rebuilding the Northfield line to Pooraka, cover the new Northfield subdevelopments of Walkely Heights and Valley View, with Park'n'Ride stations for Port Wakefield and Main North Roads? Again, the corridor is already there; it is just growing weeds at the moment, sadly. Meanwhile, if we are standardising the TransAdelaide network, does the government realise that trains can now go all the way to the Mount Barker junction again? Why focus on only one or two extra stops costing over \$1 billion when we can run trains again through the Adelaide Hills at almost zero or very low new infrastructure cost?

For what they achieve, these need not be expensive projects. Perth's comparative 1991 northern suburbs line was achieved at an indexed cost of \$341 million for some 33 kilometres of track and with a comparative 774 metre twin tunnel. I stress again that those costs are indexed for today. The 77 kilometres of their Southern Railway to Mandurah track built during 2004 to 2007 was done at a cost of \$431 million, somewhere between \$6 million and \$10 million per kilometre, it is estimated. It is frankly wasteful that we are budgeting \$162 million for a tiny stretch of track from North Terrace to the Entertainment Centre when Family First proposes we do far more with the same amount of money, as I have just outlined and which will benefit many more people. Outlying suburbs and regional South Australia are crying out for a resumption of passenger rail as other states have introduced. Petrol prices and environmental concerns demand significant and bold

action, and South Australians want more than simply more convenient transport to their entertainment venues.

We also have the confusing double message in this budget of a touted so-called 'transport revolution' and at the same time a significant hike in ticket prices. Adelaide is now one of the most expensive public transport cities in the world, and it sends absolutely the wrong message. On 1 July the price of a single Metro ticket rose to \$4.20 for a single trip. This ticket of course can be used for a period of up to two hours.

I will compare that with the cost in other cities of the world (and I have converted them to Australian dollars to provide a fair comparison). In Adelaide, the cost is \$4.20; in Paris, on average, \$1.97; in New York, \$2.20; in Amsterdam, \$2.20; in Tokyo, \$3.10; in Lisbon, \$1.37; in Athens, \$1.75; in Berlin, \$2.90; in Madrid, \$1.38; in Rome, \$1.38; and in Moscow, an incredible 40 cents. Yet we charge \$4.20 for inferior services while calling it a transport revolution. This budget should also have expanded the fuel subsidy scheme to give some relief at the bowser, reducing the cost of petrol by 8¢ to 9¢ per litre.

So, the fuel subsidy scheme is to be introduced for an 8¢ to 9¢ subsidy. This is, indeed, a significant point, when one considers the incredibly high price of oil at the moment, which is now well over \$US125 a barrel. If the Premier had outlined that the oil find in November, which is mentioned in the media, was worth about \$1 billion at \$US81 a barrel and it is now worth an extra \$540 million to this state, surely this additional unexpected revenue would be enough to provide some fuel subsidy relief similar to that which Queensland experiences and about which I have previously spoken publicly.

Just prior to the state budget, Family First called for an introduction of a fuel subsidy, as I have said, to relieve families at the petrol bowser. It is timely that I speak today, when just yesterday in this place the report of the Select Committee on Pricing, Refining, Storage and Supply of Fuel in South Australia, which has attracted media attention overnight, called for some fuel subsidies, particularly for families in regional areas.

Family First has for years at state and federal levels been lobbying consistently to seek relief for families increasingly crushed by the rising cost of petrol. In the face of federal inaction, we believe that the state government has to tap into the windfall of the South Australian resources boom for the sake of South Australian families.

The Queensland scheme, upon which our proposal is modelled, runs at about \$541 million per annum, based on the 2007-08 Queensland budget, but consistently delivers lower petrol prices in the order of 8¢ to 9¢ a litre below its interstate counterparts, including South Australia, of course. This results in cheaper prices for groceries and other essential items due to the reduced transport costs as well as reduced diesel costs for running farm machinery. In any event, are not South Australian families entitled the some direct dividend for oil exploration in the state's north, to which I have just referred? Indeed, the simple truth is that, if we have cheaper transport costs, we have cheaper almost everything.

The claim that cheaper petrol prices leads to inflation is absolute rubbish. The reality is that petrol is one of the components measured in the inflation basket. If petrol reduces in price, inflation goes down, not to mention the impact on all other items that I have just outlined—groceries, for example. As petrol gets cheaper, almost everything gets cheaper and, therefore, inflation goes down.

I return to the point I was making before about the Premier's claims. On 2 October last year, the Premier used the term 'the land of the giants' and announced that a significant oil find had been made by Innamincka Resources, a find which, based on the then crude oil price of \$81 a barrel, was estimated conservatively in the media to be worth some \$1 billion and headlined as a 'billion dollar oilfield'.

The question has to be asked: if that is the case, and given the extra revenue that is expected to flow into the state, why cannot some of that be handed back to families in the form of a petrol subsidy, just as they do in Queensland? South Australia's constant production of oil, according to the last figures we could obtain from 2004-05, was at some 577,084 kilolitres per annum at Port Bonython, and it will surely increase significantly when the Innamincka find comes on stream. No doubt it generates a healthy stream of royalty revenue to the state government. Surely this would be enough to provide some fuel subsidy relief similar to that in Queensland. Indeed, not only is there a benefit in the reduced fuel prices but also there are inflationary benefits, as I have just outlined.

Turning to another topic, Family First is disappointed that in this budget we continue to pour money into SHine SA and the AIDS Council, which have systematically and continually shown levels of disorganisation and open misuse of funds.

The AIDS Council has used government money to produce pro-drug use magazines, when its mantra is to do exactly the opposite. On its own admission, it refers its disabled clients to prostitutes; it demands that its workers have prostitution and drug use experience; and it misuses funds in other extraordinary ways—this is with public money. Instead of funding being cut and other service providers being sought out, it is actually provided with more money in this budget.

I said I would outline a few areas of concern. The Hon. Mr Brokenshire will pick up on a number of other issues. I wanted to highlight the initial response under the heading of appropriation, if you like, and I have done that. There are some key areas that I am pleased with, in the instance of the increased expenditure, which I have outlined, in terms of child protection and the focus on public transport. I have also outlined some of the areas that I am particularly concerned with, and the Hon. Mr Brokenshire will carry that on next Tuesday.

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON (15:45): I had been waiting for the Hon. Bernard Finnigan to make his presentation on the Appropriation Bill, but on reflection I doubt that anything the honourable member will say will alter what I propose to say on this year's budget. Any government's budget provides a prism through which its true priorities can be discerned. The question one must ask is: has the government allocated the available resources to those in greatest need? To put the question a little more bluntly: have the allocations been made on the basis of the real needs of the community, or have they been made to meet the electoral objectives of a political party? The fact is that this budget is transparently a budget designed to improve the electoral prospects of the Rann Labor government and its priorities are clearly wrong.

Media focus on the budget has vastly increased in recent years. In my lifetime there was always media focus on the federal budget, which is understandable as people want to know what changes in taxation will be made—what will be the cost of a schooner of beer and how much will the price of smokes rise by, and so on—and whether pensioners will benefit. So there is great interest in the federal budget. Traditionally the state budget has not attracted as much media attention because in the past it has appeared that they do not directly affect individuals. But the media now quite properly gives blanket coverage to the state budget as well as the federal budget.

Unfortunately, the media focus and the pressure cooker lock-up is on what is in the budget: tell us all the goodies. The Treasurer goes into the lock-up, humours the journalists and spins the new measures and describes all the wonderful things he proposes to do. So, those who are there frequently overlook what is not in the budget. It is interesting to know what is not in this budget and what this government has overlooked, because that is as important in showing its priorities as is what it has decided to fund.

As has been the case in the past, this is a purely political budget. It is important that people look not at what a government says, because what it says is wonderful self-congratulation, but at what it actually does. So the budget provides a prism through which you can actually discern the priorities of this government. Here are the priorities of this government, including \$100 million for a football stadium, \$100 million for a professional organisation that even last week could not fill its stadium when there was a showdown in Adelaide under the existing facilities, a facility which in most terms is new. The temporary school buildings at the Rose Park Primary School which I attended more than 50 years ago are still there. The education department is still dealing with facilities half a century or a century old, as are many of the courts in our state, but here the government is deciding not to refurbish or do up those things and provide those services but, in a bread and circuses arrangement, to provide \$100 million of taxpayers' funds to improve a facility that is privately owned on private land, albeit used by many members of the public.

Members opposite may be cat calling about the Liberal proposal in relation to stadia: our proposal is that the private sector ought to be encouraged to develop facilities of this kind, as it has in other places. With this government \$100 million goes towards improving AAMI Stadium. Another \$50 million goes to the Adelaide Entertainment Centre so that it can build new reception rooms and conduct business in competition with the private sector. Those things perfectly illustrate what this government regards as appropriate expenditure of public money.

The Chief Justice of South Australia is very highly esteemed throughout this country (as has recently been reported), and we all hope he will be appointed to the High Court some day—in fact, the government has been promoting his case. However, when it comes to his making the

perfectly reasonable request that the Supreme Court building in Victoria Square, which is over 100 years old, be brought up to some modern standards with the provision of new toilets and the like, there is nothing at all given in this budget for that program. All that happens is that the judges get a mouthful of cheek from the Premier and the Attorney-General, saying that they are interested in a Taj Mahal.

Speaking of Taj Mahals, would you believe there is \$1.6 million to actually refurbish the Attorney-General's office at 45 Pirie Street? That is not much, but he can find the money to do that, whereas he cannot find money in the budget to enable the courts to be refurbished—and not, as is being implied, for the benefit of the judges but for the benefit of litigants, witnesses and victims who have to go to those courts and who presently do not have access to those facilities.

Regarding expenditure and disability services, once again this government has been remiss in not providing funds to assist those seeking additional resources for members of the community who have disabilities, their families and supporters. There have been some announcements about equipment and the like, but when you see that \$100 million can be found for a football stadium and \$50 million can be found for an entertainment centre but that practically nothing can be found for those with disabilities, it shows that the priorities of this government are clearly wrong.

We find in the Mullighan inquiry report on children on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands a serious and valid recommendation for a remand facility to be established on the lands to meet certain requirements. Today the government announced its response to that inquiry, and we find that there are no funds to enable that to be done. This government has been shilly-shallying about developments on the lands for years but it was not until the Howard federal government's recent intervention, when serious dollars were put into Aboriginal programs, that it finally got moving on the building of police stations and other facilities.

However, it was not a priority of this government to implement the recommendations of the Mulligan inquiry. That is too difficult; there are no votes in that. They believe there may be some votes in football stadia and entertainment facilities and the like, but when it comes to serious decisions about improving facilities the government is missing in action. As we have come to learn, many of the good news stories that come out of the budget—which are swallowed hook, line and sinker by certain sections of the media—are not for programs which will show any beneficial result in the immediate future; they are over the horizon of the next election.

The mirage of the wonderful developments that are to occur in the future simply disguise the fact that nothing is being done at the present or, rather, what is being done at the present is to spend money on entertainment centres and the like. The proposed much-vaunted Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital—of which wonderful pictures appear in the papers from time to time—is not within the current horizon of this budget, and in any event is off budget as the government hopes to obtain a public-private partnership in relation to it. However, with the changing world financial markets, the capacity of the state of South Australia to undertake it or be attractive to investors is diminishing.

Similarly, with the correctional facility at Mobilong, there is \$3 million, I think, in the budget this year for further feasibility studies, consultants, engagement, design and the like, but actually not one brick has been laid on that facility, which is just like the Marjorie Jackson Nelson hospital—an announcement without substance and without consultation. I think it is a perfect example with the new Mobilong prison where prison officers were not consulted; the psychological and other services that are essential to the effective running of a correctional institution were not consulted; and the convenience of the people who have spent their lives developing careers in this area were not considered. They are told that they can get on the non-existent bus and catch it on a daily basis to Murray Bridge. It is a further illustration of this government's knee-jerk response to serious policy.

The much-vaunted investment in public transport is also well over the horizon. What do we have in terms of a real development in the near future? It is an extension of the tramline from the casino to the Entertainment Centre without, on the one hand, any feasibility study, without any analysis of exactly where the tramline will go, of its effect upon the busiest thoroughfares and the busiest intersections in metropolitan Adelaide, of the real need for it, of the interrelationship between expanding the entertainment facility to have more daytime events and, on the other hand, the suggestion that there will be a Park'n'Ride facility that will enable vast numbers of people in the western suburbs to access this new line.

Once again, it is a project without substance, a project which will be attractive, which people can talk about on talkback radio but which, in substance, does not meet the real needs of the South Australian community. There is nothing of any substance in the budget for the transport needs of those people who live in the outlying suburbs of Adelaide who are not being adequately served.

This is not only a budget of missed opportunities. It is a budget that disguises the fact that this government's priorities are not the provision of services, not health, welfare and law and order as it proclaims but a budget for the re-election of a Labor government. It is deplorable, and I do hope that the community will soon come to learn how empty is the rhetoric of the Rann government.

Finally, on what is seen by many as the most significant problem facing the state and undoubtedly a problem of enormous dimensions—namely, the continued and expanded supply of fresh water for critical human needs in towns and cities in South Australia but also for food production—there is precious little being allocated in this state budget to resolve that issue. We constantly hear the government saying that it will be able to negotiate some additional funds that have already been allocated to South Australia through the federal government's initiatives, but there is clearly no financial planning of water policy evident in this budget.

The only thing we see here is the inclusion in this budget of an anticipated injection of funds from South Australian water users, on the false premise that the funds they are paying would be flowing into government coffers only after 1 July, whereas, the government, in fact, has now had to make the grovelling admission that it has cheated South Australian taxpayers by charging them for water used prior to 1 July. However, the important thing is that there is really no plan, no real budget provision, for solving this state's water problems. This budget is an abject failure.

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (16:01): I commence my contribution today by apologising to honourable members for the brief delay before the Hon. Mr Lawson's speech. It appears that the former treasurer and the former attorney-general on the opposite side felt unable to make a contribution to the Appropriation Bill until they had heard my contribution. I thank them for the compliment they pay me when they have to wait to hear my learned contribution before they are able to make a contribution of their own.

This budget continues the responsible fiscal management, investment in the future and framework for continuing economic growth in our state that the Rann government has built on over the last number of budgets. This budget is focused on action now for the future. It includes a huge investment—the biggest investment we have seen in decades—in public transport, which will lay down the foundations for electrification of the rail lines, north and south; an extension of the tram network; new buses; and other improvements in public transport.

We have seen that this budget includes funding to fix up court facilities and more money for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to prosecute crimes. This budget again shows, as we have in the past with the increased numbers of police officers and funding for police, this government's commitment to providing adequate public safety.

This budget comes on top of our previous budgets, which also focused on action now for the future. The super schools program will ensure that we have the right schools infrastructure into the future and, of course, we have seen a massive investment in the health system of our state, including the commitment to build the state-of-the-art Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital, which will be a world-leading hospital here in our city. We have continued our record of having an all-time high number of police, nurses and doctors being funded from the state budget, unlike the situation with members opposite, who went to the last election promising to get rid of 4,000 public servants to pay for their promises.

This budget is committed to building economic growth, which will be the bedrock of our future, as it always is, and this includes payroll tax cuts and the first home buyer's bonus, to ensure that we remain competitive with other states. The government has put in place the infrastructure and plans necessary to ensure our water security into the future, which we all agree is fundamental, and this includes the building of a desalination plant. I am particularly proud that the Premier and the government have led the way in developing a national, independent Murray-Darling Commission to protect our great river.

I want to address the Country Health Care Plan, which has been the subject of some discussion by members opposite and in the other place. With the opposition's response to the Country Health Care Plan, we have seen one of the worst examples of Liberal fear-mongering in

the community that we have seen for many years. We know that this is an old sport for the Liberal Party. What you do is you go from your comfortable home in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide, hop into your air-conditioned or chauffeur-driven car and you go out into the country and say, 'Those people in Adelaide, those Labor people, they don't care about you. They're going to close your hospital. They're going to punish your community. They don't care about you because you live in Liberal seats, but we'll look after you.' That is what the Liberals do time and again, and that is certainly what they are doing now.

We know that there are concerns in parts of the community in the country about the Country Health Care Plan, but a lot of it is based on the inaccurate information and the fearmongering that has been undertaken by members of the opposition. We know that the facts of the Country Health Care Plan are these: no hospital will close; every hospital will maintain emergency services; there will be more services in the country, meaning that fewer people need to travel to the city for treatment; and country health funding is up 55 per cent since the Liberals were last in power. They are the facts.

When people in the country are aware of the facts and are aware that they may have been receiving misrepresentations about closing hospitals and downgrading services, they will realise that there is nothing to be fearful of and that the Liberal Party was trying to misrepresent the Country Health Care Plan to them.

I understand that there are genuine concerns in country communities about the future of their health facilities, especially the presence of general practitioners and, indeed, about the survival of some of the smaller communities. That is a problem in the country; there is no doubt about that, and that has been the case for many years. You only have to visit most smaller country towns to see boarded-up shops and old service stations which are no longer used and so on to know that there has been a threat to country communities (particularly the smaller ones) over a long period.

I understand that people have genuine concerns. The Country Health Care Plan is designed to address those concerns and to put in place a plan and the infrastructure for the future to ensure that people in the country are offered the best standards of health care. I will certainly not go out to people in the country and say, 'Because you don't live in Adelaide you have to accept a substandard level of care and, therefore, you can have a local facility which will offer you substandard care rather than going to Adelaide or to a major country hospital for treatment.'

The issue of people in the country having to travel for treatment has always been a problem. As I was growing up, just about everyone in my family, at some time, had to come to Adelaide. That has always been a reality, as I am sure you would know, Mr President. That does cause a lot of pain, expense and inconvenience for a lot of people. However, at the end of the day, we have to remember that our aim should always be to offer country people the same level of health care that people in the city receive. We cannot say to those people, 'You live in the country; you're just going to have to accept second best.' I will not be part of a government that sends that message to country people—a message that says, 'You have to accept substandard care because you live in the country.' What we are doing instead is ensuring the survival of the future of country health care by providing major country hospitals, as well as metropolitan hospitals and other hospitals, and the other services that will continue to be provided to ensure that people are able to get the best level of care.

The same thing happens to people who live in metropolitan Adelaide. I am sure that there are people who live at Elizabeth who have to travel to Flinders Medical Centre for treatment, and vice versa. The reality is that, to get the best standard of care and the appropriate treatment, sometimes travel is required, whether you are in the city or the country—sometimes even interstate travel. That is the reality, particularly given the advances we have had in medical care.

I do not think that anyone can pretend to offer the same level of care in every single health facility in the state. That is simply not right. No-one can suggest that one is able to provide, in every single health facility, all of the same services, the same operations, the same specialists, the same programs of treatment. This is because many of them nowadays are very complex, very specialised and very expensive and they involve particular equipment that is only available in one or two locations.

Country people should not have to suffer substandard care whereby we just give them a nice place where they can suffer and die, rather than giving them the treatment they need, wherever that treatment will be—whether it is in the city or in a major country hospital—and

wherever that treatment is required that is the treatment they will get. That is the basis of the Country Health Care Plan. That is what the government is committed to, and that is what I will certainly defend.

We know that the Liberals, despite all their protestations, have a genuine contempt for country communities. We have just seen the Hon. Mr Lawson talking about Mobilong and how dreadful it is that we are building a new prison at Mobilong. People who live in Burnside and North Adelaide might have to travel to Mobilong, and how awful that would be!

Now we see the Liberal Party organising a meeting to protest the Country Health Care Plan, and where is the meeting being held? In Norwood; the heart of the country! They are having a meeting in Norwood to talk about the Country Health Care Plan. Presumably, since they all live in the eastern suburbs of Adelaide or the Adelaide Hills—apart from the Hon. Mrs Schaefer—they did not want to travel very far for this meeting, so they are having it in Norwood.

We can contrast the government's program with what the Liberal Party is offering. Like many people, I take an interest in US politics, as I am sure we all do, because we know that what happens there will have an impact on all of us. As I am sure many of you would know, Senator Barack Obama is running on the slogan 'Yes, We Can'. The Liberals' new prescription is 'No, We Can't'. They have borrowed it from the Greens and Democrats; their answer to everything is 'No, we can't'. Marble Hill: can we redevelop a ruin that has been sitting there for 50 years and invest in that facility for the future of this state? No, we can't. Can we redevelop Glenside Hospital to make it a world-class new mental health facility and provide facilities for our arts community there, as well as housing and drug and alcohol facilities? No, we can't; we should leave it as it is. Can we extend the tramline a few metres up the road? No, we can't. Can we build a new, state-of-the-art, world class hospital on North Terrace? No, we can't. Can we redevelop Port Adelaide? Can we knock down some rusty iron sheds to ensure a world-class development? No, we can't.

Mr Kingsley Haskett has come along to the Statutory Authorities Review Committee; he is a very admirable man and clearly a fine craftsman. I certainly feel a nostalgia for the boat yards on Jenkins Street; it is very nice to go there and visit, but at the end of the day they are old sheds and they are not representative of what is now happening in Port Adelaide and what Port Adelaide now is. Here is another example where all the Liberals can say is, 'No, we can't'.

Can we have a mining boom in South Australia? No, we can't, as far as the Liberal opposition is concerned. The Liberals are always out there, talking it down, saying there will not be a mining boom and we should not rely on hoping and planning for future mining in this state. We have seen with the planning review that the Liberal Party is simultaneously claiming credit for the changes the government has made in the planning area, particularly in city development, yet it criticises every approval and development that comes along.

In every question time we have the Hon. Mr Lucas in particular and other members of the opposition throwing back their sleeves and saying the government is in the pocket of developers. The Hon. Mr Lawson last night withdrew after saying the planning minister was in the pocket of developers. There are constant accusations of sleaze, and constant attacks on every approval, every development and every plan that come along, and at the same time Mr Ridgway is trying to say the Liberal Party is responsible for our changes to planning.

Can we have a lock-out after 3am in city venues to combat anti-social behaviour? No, we can't as far as the opposition is concerned. It is clear that the Liberal members of the Legislative Council are out of control. We know there is a lot of tension between the Liberal members of the upper and lower houses, and who can be surprised? We see staffers and members of the lower house opposition coming up here keeping an eye on the Legislative Council members.

We have seen them having to backtrack on Marble Hill and WorkCover, because they know they are not following Liberal policy, so someone has to pull them into line. The other day we saw the absolutely extraordinary prospect of the Liberal opposition almost derailing urgent legislation to address truth in sentencing to ensure that vicious criminals will stay behind bars without doubt to cater for the contingency of a court case. The Liberal opposition tried to delay it and then complained about the process and said we should not have been doing that: that keeping to what they see as the traditions of the Legislative Council in the way things have been done here for the past 100 years was more important than a bill that would prevent murderers going free. That is what we have seen.

We just saw the Hon. Mr Lawson attack the spending on AAMI Stadium, yet his leader—the Leader of the Opposition in the other place—wants to spend \$1 billion or so on a new stadium

in the city. Liberal Party members in this place constantly attack development and everything the government is doing. They say, 'We don't want spending on football stadiums or public transport. We want to give stamp duty cuts; we want to do all this stuff.' It is no wonder that the Liberal opposition in the lower house is despairing of their Legislative Council team, because they are out of control; they will not follow Liberal Party policy. It is a longstanding tradition. They used to have their own party room meetings. They consider themselves above the day-to-day fray of lower house politics. It is no wonder that the opposition leader, Mr Hamilton-Smith, is despairing of his team here.

We have heard the alternative government—the opposition—talk about building a city stadium, undergrounding powerlines and providing tax cuts; they are just some examples. Where will the money come from? We know the answer, because the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Ms Lensink, gave it to us last night during the Marble Hill debate, when she said that it is hypothetical. When she was asked what the Liberal opposition would do, in terms of spending public money on the facility if the legislation that the Liberal opposition is sponsoring in this council were to pass this council and result in the project's falling over, the answer was: 'It's hypothetical.' That is the Liberal Party's budgetary position: 'It's hypothetical.' Let us hope that a Liberal government in this state is hypothetical, for the sake of South Australia's finances and for the sake of the people of this state.

It is no wonder that the Hon. Mr Hamilton-Smith has not updated the Newspoll on his website to reflect the last three months. He still has the results from the first three months of the year on it. The results have been out for about a month, but he has not updated it. The first time the Newspoll came out it showed a bit of an improvement in the Liberal position, where it had gone from annihilation to massive defeat. It was straight up there on the website and he was boasting about it. However, now that the last two polls have shown steady support for the government and for our plan of action for the future and our responsible fiscal management, Martin Hamilton-Smith does not want to know about it. He has not put those results up on his website, because he does not want people to know that his leadership and his plan for the state have ground to a halt.

I commend the Appropriation Bill to members. It continues the Rann government's responsible economic management. As I said, for the sake of our state finances, with respect to Liberal Party policy, when it comes to, 'Where are you going to get the money? It's all hypothetical,' let us hope that it is the Liberal Party's ascension to government that is hypothetical. I commend the bill to members.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (16:18): I am delighted to be able to speak at this hour of the afternoon, and I am pleased to be following the contribution of the Hon. Mr Finnigan. It is not because of anything sensible or useful that he has added to the debate. As I suspected, he managed to cover a range of subjects under the broad convention of the Appropriation Bill.

The Hon. C.V. Schaefer interjecting:

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Well, indeed. He was able to traverse the subject of the Liberal Party leader's website and market research results. He was able to talk about US elections, sentencing laws and the approach of Independent members in relation to the WorkCover legislation under the broad ambit of the Appropriation Bill. I welcome the flexibility and the conventions we now have to be able to traverse a range of issues under the auspices of the Appropriation Bill. It is for that reason that we are indebted to the Hon. Mr Finnigan and his contribution—as I said, not for anything sensible or rational that he added to the Appropriation Bill debate but for the much needed flexibility that I am sure members this afternoon and my colleagues on Tuesday next week will be able to avail themselves of in addressing the Appropriation Bill debate.

The first matter that I want to address in relation to the Appropriation Bill is the issue of deficits and surpluses in budgets. Dishonest claims have been made by the Rann government, its ministers and its wholly owned subsidiaries sitting on back benches in another place and also in this place. They continue to make claims in relation to the magnificence of the current Treasurer in producing surplus budgets and the absolute abomination of former Liberal treasurers Baker and Lucas in producing deficit budgets during that particular time. I want to look at the facts and place on the record for new members, in particular, the facts in relation to some of those claims. I seek leave to have inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it a purely statistical table taken from Budget Statement, Budget Paper 3.

Leave granted.

		2008-09 Budget	2009-10 Estimate	2010-11 Estimate	2011-12 Estimate
Budget Balances					
Net Operating Balance	\$m	160	356	434	424
Net Lending	\$m	-548	-589	-611	-460
Cash Surplus	\$m	-530	-545	-527	-363

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: This is a subsection of a table from that budget document, which looks at the budget results for the current year and for the forward estimates period through to 2011-12. It looks at the three measures of whether a budget is in balance or in deficit: the cash surplus, the net lending position and the net operating balance position. Let me first address the issue of the cash surplus, because that was the way in which, up until the late 1990s and the early 2000s, budgets were essentially reported in South Australia, and it is also the way in which the federal government still reports its federal budget result. When one sees the result of the \$20 billion surplus, that is not an accrual measure, such as net lending or net operating balance: that is a cash result, because federal governments, Labor and Liberal, have not moved into this world of accrual accounting in relation to reporting of budget results.

When one looks at the cash position in this budget, one will see that we are looking at a deficit of half a billion dollars this year and for each of the next two years, and a budget deficit of \$363 million in 2011-12. The figures are \$530 million, \$545 million, \$527 million and \$363 million. We are talking about budget deficits of just on \$2 billion, in cash terms, brought down in this particular budget.

The next measure of the health of the budget is an accrual accounting measure and it is known as net lending. This was the one true measure of the health of the budget, or otherwise, announced by Treasurer Foley when he came to government in 2002. He said, 'Look, we have moved beyond cash, and the one real measure of whether or not a budget is in deficit or surplus is this measure of net lending, and I, the self-proclaimed all powerful and magnificent Treasurer, will produce net lending surpluses henceforth', that is, from 2002-03 onwards.

That worked for a couple of years and then all of a sudden the Treasurer started getting advice from Treasury that there was no way, on the current spending patterns, that he was going to be able to maintain the promise he made in 2002. What happened is that at about the time of the last election the Treasurer jettisoned that particular measure because it was going to become a deficit and stay a deficit, and he adopted a new measure, which I will talk about in a moment.

Let us look at this net lending measure. Under this particular measure this year the budget is in deficit by \$548 million, next year \$589 million, the following year \$611 million and in 2011-12 \$460 million—a \$2.2 billion deficit over the coming four years. So, on the cash measure, there is a \$2 billion deficit over the coming four years; and, on the net lending measure, that is the one true measure that Treasurer Foley said in 2002 would have to be used—\$2.2 billion in deficits over the next four years.

The only measure remaining, where this budget could be said to be in surplus, is another accrual accounting measure, and it is known as the net operating balance. On that measure we have a modest surplus of \$160 million out of a budget of \$13 billion or \$14 billion this year, and the Treasurer estimates that that will increase to \$300 million or \$400 million over the forward estimates period.

On the measure that the federal government uses we have \$2 billion in deficits over the next four years. On the measure that in 2002 Treasurer Foley said is the only real measure in terms of the health of a budget, we have \$2.2 billion worth of deficits over the forward estimates period. That is why in 2006 Treasurer Foley said, 'Well, I know what I said in 2002 but, because it is now in deficit and I want to be able to say that the budget is in surplus, I had better go to a new measure, which is the measure called net operating balance, and that is the only measure where I am able to say that this budget happens to be in surplus.' They are the facts in relation to the position of whether or not this budget is in surplus or deficit.

I now turn to the dishonest claims that have been made by the Rann government, its ministers and some of its wholly owned subsidiaries. It relates to—and it rolls off the tongue—I am magnificent', says Treasurer Foley, 'I produce surplus budgets. You Libs were hopeless and incompetent. All you ever produced was eight deficit budgets.' I seek leave to have a purely statistical table on this issue inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

Underlying non-commercial sector cash result surplus/(deficit)								
1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
(200)	(239)	(101)	(57)	48	(55)	(25)	21	22

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: This table, which is headed 'Underlying non-commercial sector cash result: surplus/(deficit)', is for the period from 1993-94 through to the end of the Liberal government's eight-year term in 2001-02. Now that this table has been inserted in *Hansard* I can indicate that the first seven years' figures were calculated by Treasury prior to my leaving office as treasurer in 2002, and the numbers for 2000-01 and 2001-02 have been taken by me from the actual results for the financial years 2000-01 and 2001-02.

Throughout that period the former Liberal government was essentially producing budget figures on a measure that the public sector called the non-commercial sector. I will turn to some differences between that and what is known as the general government sector in a moment but, as a result of the Commission of Audit in 1993 after the State Bank crash, the commission stated, 'You need to have a better measure of what the public sector is about.' As a result of that the non-commercial sector definition was established, and throughout the period of the Liberal government (eight years) the non-commercial sector was the pre-eminent sector that the budget papers were produced on.

A smaller subset sector called the general government sector was also reported on, because of national agreements, but the budget documents were produced for the non-commercial sector and on a cash basis. They were the results that were being produced during that period. During that period, the government in 1993-94, in the first budget that we inherited straight after the State Bank, had a cash deficit of \$200 million, and the next one, still straight after the State Bank debacle, was a deficit of \$239 million. Then there is a gradual and strong reduction in the level of the deficit over that period through to (in the latter years of the Liberal government) modest surpluses in the last two years of \$21 million and \$22 million. In the previous year (1999-2000) there was a deficit of just \$25 million.

When you are talking about a budget of \$7 billion or so, whether it is a surplus or a deficit of \$20 million, it is less than half of 1 per cent of total revenue. So, to all intents and purposes, budgets were being balanced over the last six years of the previous Liberal government. Some were very small deficits; some were very small surpluses. If you take the last six years, from about 1997 onwards, it is almost balanced in terms of the small number of deficits and surpluses.

In the end, if you want to talk technically about what the government inherited, the non-commercial sector cash result position being reported was surpluses in the past two years of \$21 million and \$22 million. The claims being made by the current government, in particular the Treasurer, that the former government never balanced a budget, only ever produced a string of deficits, is based on falsehoods. I turn now to how the government has reconstructed its figures to demonstrate that, because it produces a table and graph which, in graphic form, shows purported deficits under the former government and surpluses under the current government.

How has the government managed to achieve this result? I will turn to this in a moment. Whilst at the same time as trying to reduce the level of budget deficit we inherited—and the first estimate of the budget deficit was not the \$200 million eventually reported: \$300 million to \$350 million was the analysis done by the Commission of Audit in 1994—and trying to bring the budget into balance, we were reducing state debt from \$11.6 billion down to \$3.2 billion over that time frame, and I will comment on that later.

I turn now to how the Treasurer and government manage to turn a position of repairing the state's finances and producing surpluses into its claim that the former government only ever produced deficits. It does two things, because the facts are as I have just outlined them. It just changed what you measure in two ways. First, instead of the non-commercial sector being the measuring stick as to what is going on in the state and budget, the government took the narrower definition of the general government sector.

What does that mean for practical purposes? It means that, whilst the former government reported on a non-commercial sector, this government takes out of that measure bodies such as: the Adelaide Convention Centre, the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, the Land Management Corporation, the Lotteries Commission, the Public Trustee, the South

Australian Forestry Corporation, The South Australian Housing Trust, the South Australian Employees Residential Properties Body, the South Australian Motorsport Board, SA Water, TransAdelaide, the West Beach Trust, the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority, and various electricity authorities.

Whereas the former government was reporting on the non-commercial sector and included all those bodies and agencies I just mentioned, the government has now said that it will no longer report the budget in terms of its health by that measuring stick, that it will take out all these bodies—and bodies like the Housing Trust, SA Water and TransAdelaide are very significant bodies in terms of their impact on the budget. They are all removed in terms of the government's measure, which is now the general government sector. So the impact of whether or not they are making profits or whether there are losses in those bodies are not included in the government's definition of whether or not the budget sector, the general government sector, is in surplus or deficit.

Secondly, it changed the measure: that is, instead of reporting on cash grounds it said it would only report on accrual accounting grounds. It then said to Treasury, 'Okay, Treasury, you go back now to the Liberal government years and redefine what they did by changing the measure from cash to accrual and by changing the measuring parameters from the non-commercial sector to the general government sector, and we want you to construct a new set of figures as to whether their budget was in balance or in deficit.' So, retrospectively, it has got Treasury to go back and say, 'Okay, new measuring stick (the general government sector), new measuring stick (accrual accounting), and were those budgets in deficit or surplus?' Through that device they have been able to construct a set of accounts which purportedly show deficits under the Liberal government and surpluses under the Labor government.

They also engaged in a number of rorts and fiddles, but I will mention just one of those. In 2001-02—bearing in mind that the election was held in February 2002 and the new government took over two-thirds of the way through the financial year and therefore was in a position to rule off the accounts at the end of the year—at the end of the year a budget line had been approved for a transfer of \$300 million from SAFA and the South Australian Asset Management Corporation to go into the accounts. It was a revenue item, and in this budget we are still seeing revenue items from SAFA and the South Australian Asset Management Corporation.

It had been a longstanding revenue treatment for budgets and continues to be taken into account for the government currently. In that period after March and before 30 June when it ruled off the accounts, it reversed that decision. What does that mean? It means that the last Liberal budget, 2001-02, suddenly lost a \$300 million income line and the first Labor budget in 2002-03 had a bonus of a \$300 million income line because it could transfer the money that year. That fiddle is not just a claim from me as the former Treasurer and from the opposition. The former Auditor-General in New South Wales, Tony Harris (who had commenced writing for the Australian *Financial Review*), and other *Financial Review* journalists reported on that budget and on the Treasurer's fiddle, that is, taking \$300 million out of the last Liberal budget and putting it into first Labor budget and, through that device, pretending the new government had inherited a massive deficit.

If you actually look at the figures, if you even accept that the first two changes the government made—that is, to have a new general government sector and to use accrual accounting measures—before this particular fiddle, the last Liberal budget would have shown a deficit of \$124 million on accrual measures for the general government sector. In the first year of the Labor administration there was to be a surplus of \$312 million—that is by including the \$300 million fiddle in relation to SAFA and the South Australian Asset Management Corporation dividends.

If those figures had been as originally included in the budget by the former Liberal government, the last accrual accounting measure for the general government sector would actually have been a surplus of up to \$200 million, and the Labor government's first budget would have been a surplus of about \$100 million. So, even with the new measures that the Labor government was implementing, the budget it inherited had a surplus, in accrual accounting terms, of up to \$200 million, giving the lie to the claims that were made by the Treasurer and others at the time, and that continue to be made, that the former government had left a massive black hole and a budget in deficit.

I turn to the second issue in relation to overall aggregates, and I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it a purely statistical table on debt.

Leave granted.

As at 30 June	Net debt ^(a)	Unfunded ^(b) Superannuation	Net Financial liabilities	Net financial worth	Net worth
1988	4 397				
1989	4 197				
1990	4 457				
1991	5 418				
1992	8 142				
1993	11 610				
1994	10 550				
1995	8 844				
1996	8 432				
1997	8 170				
1998	7 927				
1999	7,658	3 909	13 099	-12 258	10 622
2000	4 355	3 543	9 914	-8 986	12 445
2001	3 223	3 249	8 152	-7 109	14 816
2002	3 317	3 998	8 973	-7 902	14 721
2003	2 696	4 445	9 096	-8 811	15 288
2004	2 285	5 668	10 031	-9 550	15 760
2005	2 126	7 227	11 511	-11 004	16 359
2006	1 786	6 146	10 451	-9 889	19 703
2007 ^(c)	1 989	5 075	9 518	-8 795	22 128
2008 ^{(d)(e)}	2 029	6 910	10 902	-11 169	21 682
2009	2 776	6 992	11 761	-11 969	22 425
2010	3 804	7 062	12 934	-13 096	23 361
2011	4 849	7 120	14 185	-14 374	24 320
2012	5 230	7 164	14 739	-14 900	25 427

- (a) Net debt data for the years up to and including 1998 are sourced from the *Australian Bureau of Statistics, Government Financial Estimates 2003-04* (catalogue number 5501).
- (b) There is a structural break in the methodology used to calculate superannuation liabilities between June 2003 and June 2004. This accounting change, which involved the adoption of the Commonwealth Government bond rate for valuation purposes in line with the accounting standard on employee benefits, resulted in a significant increase in superannuation liabilities.
- (c) There is a structural break in 2007 reflecting the amalgamation of SAFA and SAICORP on 1 July 2006. The transfer of SAICORP'S assets and liabilities from the general government sector to the public financial corporations sector resulted in an increase in non-financial public sector net debt of \$99 million at 1 July 2006 and an increase in net financial liabilities of \$90 million at 1 July 2006.
- (d) There is a structural break in 2008 reflecting the amalgamation of the South Australian Community Housing Authority (PFC) with the South Australian Housing Trust (PNFC). This results in an increase in net debt and net financial liabilities and a decrease in net financial worth of \$98 million in 2007-08, with no impact on net worth.
- (e) There is a structural break in 2008 reflecting the first time recognition on the general government balance sheet of South Australia's share of the net assets of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission. This has no impact on net debt, however results in a reduction in net financial liabilities of \$615 million in 2007-08, and increases in net financial worth and net worth of \$615 million.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: This table is from Budget Statement 3, page B8, and is headed 'Non-Financial Public Sector Key Balance Sheet Aggregates'. It looks at net debt but also looks at unfunded superannuation, net financial liabilities, net financial worth, and net worth. I draw members' attention to the table because it shows that, all through the period from 1993 to 2002, the Liberal government significantly reduced the State Bank and other financial incompetence debt—

which peaked at \$11.6 billion in 1993—that it had inherited from the former Labor government. The Liberal government reduced that to \$3.2 billion by 30 June 2001, and on 30 June 2002 (the first period of the new government) it was still at \$3.3 billion.

It is informative to look at what has happened to net debt since then because, in an approach that had support from the opposition over the past six years, the level of net debt was further reduced from the \$3.2 billion that was inherited down to just on \$2 billion as at 30 June 2007. So there had been modest improvements; it had significantly dropped from \$11.6 billion to \$3.2 billion under the Liberal government, and that reduced from \$3.2 billion down to \$2 billion under the Labor government.

This budget sees a very significant increase in the level of net debt over the forward estimates period, because that \$2 billion net debt figure is to increase to \$5.2 billion by 30 June 2012. So we are seeing a \$3 billion increase in net debt off a base of \$2 billion, an increase of 150 per cent in terms of the total level of net debt in South Australia. The point, as the Liberal leader in another place has highlighted on a number of occasions, is that we are seeing a significant reversal of the hard work undertaken first by the Liberal government and, to a much lesser degree, by the Labor government in the past five or six years, so it is a very significant increase in the level of net debt.

At the same time it is also informative to look at what has happened to unfunded superannuation since this government was elected. When the government was elected the last figure, as at 30 June 2001, was \$3.2 billion; to be fair, as at 30 June 2002 (which was just after it was elected), it was \$3.9 billion. That number has jumped from \$3.2 billion on 30 June 2001, and is now estimated to have more than doubled to \$7.1 billion—an almost \$4 billion increase in the level of unfunded superannuation since the election of this government through to 2012. So, we are seeing massive increases in the net financial liabilities of the state of South Australia; we are seeing the net financial liabilities jump very significantly from the 2007 measure of \$9.5 billion through to \$14.7 billion in 2012—an increase of \$5.2 billion in terms of net financial liabilities to be confronted by South Australians.

Other than for economists, treasurers, accountants and those business people who follow these issues, what are the particular concerns regarding that? Well, the obvious ones are that this government will have to continue to plunder the families of South Australia through ever-increasing rates of taxation, charges, levies and duties to fund the ever-increasing debt and ever-increasing waste. I am sure members who sit on the Budget and Finance Committee will be staggered, every two weeks or so, when they are confronted with further examples of incompetence, negligence or mismanagement by some ministers, government departments and agencies.

That is the sort of waste that taxes and charges and ever-increasing rates are going to have to fund. The other warning sign, not just coming from the opposition, is from ratings agencies like Standard and Poor's. In the interests of expediting another matter, I seek leave to conclude my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

CHILD SEX OFFENDERS REGISTRATION (REGISTRATION OF INTERNET ACTIVITIES) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

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

New clause, page 16, after line 18—After clause 18 insert—

18A—Amendment of section 103N—Special management areas

Section 103N(1)(a)—delete 'proclamation' wherever occurring and substitute in each case:
notice

Consideration in committee.

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: I move:

That the House of Assembly's amendment be agreed to.

This is a simple technical amendment which seeks to delete 'proclamation' wherever occurring and substitute in each case 'notice'.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: Having only just been advised of this, I will take the government at its word which I have not always done—a bit reckless perhaps. It seems reasonable and sensible that this is a substitution of the word 'proclamation' for 'notice' in section 103N—Special management areas. It appears that it is a minor amendment, and the opposition will support it.

The Hon. R.D. LAWSON: Can the minister indicate why this amendment was necessary? What is the difference between, in this particular context, a proclamation and a notice?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY: Section 103N—Special management areas, provides:

- (1) If the authority has reason to believe that site contamination of a particular kind exists in a wide area, or in numerous areas, as a result of the same activity or proximate or related activities, the Authority may by notice in the *Gazette*—
 - (a) declare that the area or areas described in the proclamation may be affected by site contamination described in the proclamation; and
 - (b) declare the area or areas to be a special management area or special management areas for the purpose of this section.

So, whereas the first part of subsection (1) refers to a notice in the *Gazette*, the subsequent subparagraphs refer to 'proclamation'. That is obviously a typographical error, and that is simply all that is being sought to be corrected here.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

(Continued from page 3711.)

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (16:52): When I was last speaking on the bill, I was warning about the importance of monitoring our net financial liabilities, in particular our net debt and our unfunded superannuation. I think I was dealing with not the warnings of opposition politicians but the warnings of credit rating agencies, such as Standard & Poor's.

At the time of the state budget this year (5 June), Standard & Poor's issued a statement that was generally supportive of the maintenance of a AAA credit rating and a stable outlook for South Australia. That is a credit to our state's financial position, and I acknowledge that. However, in amongst the words is a cautionary note from the rating agency, as follows:

However, it will become more difficult for the state to retain the current rating if it exceeds its debt level forecasts.

What that rating agency warning is saying is, 'Hey, the former government had very significantly reduced the net debt in South Australia, and for the first time we are now seeing a very significant increase in the level of net debt in South Australia.' As I have said, there has been a 150 per cent increase in just four years, from a base of \$2 billion, and an increase of \$3 billion on top of that to \$5 billion in terms of net debt.

Standard & Poor's is saying that that is about the limit and, if this government and this Treasurer were to continue in that way, that may well jeopardise the state's AAA credit rating. That is a very strong warning sign in rating agency speak, if I can put it that way, to the Treasurer and to the government in relation to the management of the state's finances. As I have said, whilst they do not report on it, hopefully, they, too, would have done the same analysis to indicate that the net lending position in this budget has a \$2.2 billion deficit over four years and the cash position is in deficit by \$2 billion over four years, and the only measure where there is any modest surplus is using the net operating balance.

They will be mindful also of some of the warnings that are being made that some of the savings programs by the government are proving to be illusory. Again, I will not go into all the detail this afternoon, but the work of the Budget and Finance Committee has demonstrated that, for example, the claimed savings from the much vaunted shared services savings initiative or the Future ICT program are, in significant part, illusory. We have been warning for some time that the shared services initiative was not going to achieve the savings that were claimed, and we are certainly seeing evidence of that at the moment. A number of agencies have already said that they

have already made those savings that are now being attributed to the shared savings initiative and that the Under Treasurer has allowed them to keep those as their own particular savings required by Treasury, as opposed to a centrally controlled shared savings initiative.

The Future ICT has been a complete farce. We took evidence again only this week from the Police Commissioner, who again confirmed the evidence we have had from a number of departments that there was no saving for SAPOL in relation to Future ICT. These departments had an attributed or notional cut; that is, Treasury said, 'You are going to save money from Future ICT, and your budget is cut.' They said to Treasury, 'Well, I'm sorry, but we actually haven't seen those savings. We're going to have to therefore cut our budget in other areas,' and that is what they have had to do. We took some evidence of the replacement policy for assets being delayed by a year, and all sorts of measures like that having to be implemented within the police force to meet some of those cuts that have been imposed upon it by Treasury.

Earlier today, some members made reference (as occurred in another place) to the proposition that at the last election the Liberal opposition had openly and transparently indicated that it would fund its spending programs through a reduction, but with no sackings at all, of some 4,000 public servants in South Australia. A number of members have said how terrible that was and also used other sorts of adjectives. I remind those members that this government is in the process of implementing cuts of almost 3,000 full-time equivalent public servants from government departments and agencies.

In the budget two years ago, the government announced cuts of 1,600 full-time equivalents over the forward estimates period. That was straight after it had already implemented cuts of some 200 to 300, so about 2,000 was announced in the budget two years ago. In this budget it announced further reductions in funding to government departments and agencies.

For example, we spoke to the Police Commissioner this week and he told us that a particular night shift service for records management, which essentially was being provided to country areas but also to other areas, had been cut, and I think three or four staff members had been removed from that particular administrative area.

Right across the board in this budget the government has announced two departments and agencies which have to reduce expenditure. As the Police Commissioner indicated, 80 per cent of his expenditure was salaries related. The only way in which these departments and agencies can reduce expenditure significantly is to reduce full-time equivalent Public Service numbers.

The fact that there has been a blow-out of more than 12,000 full-time equivalents above that which the government has estimated in the past six years does indicate that there is probably some flexibility in terms of reining in the total number of administrative public servants within departments and agencies.

Let us not accept the nonsense of wholly-owned subsidiaries of Labor factions and ministers and backbenchers in this place and another place, and, indeed, I think the Leader of the Government in the past week, when they have trumpeted, 'You wanted to cut 4,000 public servants, what a terrible thing!' His own government—and he has been a member of cabinet over the past two budgets—has been implementing cuts of 2,500 to 3,000 full-time equivalent public servants (on my estimation) throughout the public sector.

The Liberal government was going to channel moneys into other priorities, which would have led to further employment of police and nurses and provided other front-line services, so the total numbers would not have been impacted by the 4,000 number. So, too, this government can indicate that, while it is cutting back on administrative full-time equivalent public servants, it will add additional police and other public servants in other high priority areas, as well.

The third area to which I refer is the latest calamity to befall this government—and there are many that one could address that have had, and will have, an impact on the budget—in relation to the government's handling of the SA Water fiasco in the past week, or so.

I want to turn to a quick analysis of what was said. I refer to *The Advertiser* of 19 July. Obviously, a statement was given the night before, exclusively to Michael Owen from *The Advertiser*. Kevin Foley came out, all guns blazing, indicating that he would sort out this mess and turn the blowtorch on Anne Howe, Chief Executive, and other officers within SA Water. The article states:

Treasurer Kevin Foley has apologised to householders and business owners deliberately overcharged by SA Water...he would 'sort this mess out'...On Monday, SA Water chief executive Anne Howe will be summoned to Mr Foley's office to face a 'please explain'.

Further, it states:

SA Water knew exactly what the government's intentions were and in a classic case of *Yes, Minister* we have been wrong-footed. I am not happy. Blind Freddy could see that people would be angry and upset if after having said these charges would apply from July 1, they were actually backdated to December. You don't have to be a rocket scientist—

And I certainly indicate that the Treasurer is not a rocket scientist. It continues:

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand that is not what the government committed to.

The fearsome Treasurer is quoted as saying:

SA Water will know exactly how I feel when I meet with them on Monday morning.

The Treasurer in ominous tones said to *The Advertiser* on Friday: 'SA Water will know exactly how I feel when I meet with them on Monday morning.' Of course, that continued throughout the weekend. There were threats and intimidation to take on Anne Howe and SA Water.

However, little known to the Treasurer is that Anne Howe actually had a paper trail. Anne Howe actually had documents. Anne Howe actually had records of advice that had been provided to her minister (Hon. Karlene Maywald) and the Treasurer. Anne Howe actually had a paper trail of documents from officers within SA Water. Anne Howe also had a paper trail of documents from officers from Treasury. She may well—and, of course, I am not in a position to know all this information—also have had copies of emails and notes of discussions that indicated that what Treasurer Foley was saying (that is, 'I know nothing', the Sergeant Schultz defence) on Friday evening to *The Advertiser* was untrue, was not correct.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter: I think you said 'may'.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Well, let us look, for the benefit of the Hon. Mr Hunter, at the language on Friday when the Treasurer was saying, 'SA Water will know exactly how I feel when I meet with them on Monday morning. I am not happy. They will be required to please explain on Monday.' What happens on Monday morning when suddenly the temperature is turned up a few degrees by the Treasurer? What happens on the Monday? Suddenly, on the Monday, Treasurer Foley is back-peddalling with five gears. He is in overdrive in reverse. He is apologising: 'This is a stuff-up. This is a breakdown in communications. We are very sorry. Mea culpa. It should not have happened.' The intimidatory language of Friday night and Saturday morning had changed markedly. Why had it changed markedly, Mr President?

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps you will tell me.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Thank you, Mr President, I will tell you. The reason it changed, Mr President, is that suddenly Anne Howe said to her minister, to the Treasurer and to the advisers, 'Okay; you have a look at this stuff. You have a look at this. Have a look at these documents. Have a look at what I told you. Have a look at what was in the cabinet submission. Have a look at this particular acknowledgment from Treasury officers.' Suddenly, Treasurer Foley thought, 'Whoops! I've turned the wick up Friday night and Saturday morning, and there is going to be a please explain. They're going to know I'm not happy.' Suddenly from, 'They're going to know I'm not happy', it is 'I'm very sorry. Mea culpa. There has been a breakdown in communications.' All in the space of 48 hours we see this major change going on in the approach of the Treasurer.

It is clear that what we were being told as South Australians in relation to the government's knowledge of all this was not correct. As a result of Anne Howe plonking on the table, in a figurative sense, all the documents and saying, 'Well, there you go'—and I'm not sure, but certainly I would have thought that, if they had the opportunity, a number of parliamentary committees ought to be bringing Anne Howe and her senior officers before them and directing that copies of all those documents be produced with the power and authority of the parliament, of the Legislative Council, and saying, 'Okay; let's have a look at all these documents.'

I think that Kevin Foley, the Treasurer, realises that that is what potentially will happen, because he is now starting to concede, 'Well, there were references in various documents. There were references in various submissions that went to cabinet. There were references.' The arrogance of this government! It has not taken minister Maywald long to pick up the fleas from her fellow travellers, if I can use a colloquial expression that you, Mr President, would understand very

well. It has not taken her very long at all. The arrogance of this minister shows almost no bounds. This morning was the first time her regalness deigned to give an extended interview on the issue of the monumental stuff-up, as described by Treasurer Foley.

This issue having been identified almost a week ago, minister Maywald was prepared to give her first extended interview on the Matthew Abraham and David Bevan show on ABC Radio this morning. There were a few fleeting grabs here and there. She certainly went into hiding for the first few days and refused to answer any questions. She was flushed out a bit for a little grab or two here and there, but that was the first extended interview, where she was probed (in the political sense, I might say) by Mr Abraham and Mr Bevan in relation to her knowledge and responsibility.

I must say that her definition of ministerial accountability now is certainly much different from that which she held when she was in opposition. I will not extend my contribution in the Appropriation Bill debate by looking at that. However, I will refer to the arrogance of this government. As I said, it has not taken long for this minister to take on the arrogant nature which was first demonstrated by the Premier and the Treasurer on so many issues and which is now being demonstrated by this minister on the issue of who ultimately accepts responsibility.

I think the interesting thing is that now, when the question is put to minister Maywald and the Treasurer, 'Whose head will roll over this? Does Anne Howe's head roll?' the answer from the minister is, 'No, no, no.' I can tell members why she is saying that: because Anne Howe has all those documents. She has the cabinet submissions; the notes of the meetings with officers; the emails, if they were to exist (I am talking about the emails now). She has all of that material, and it would be very embarrassing if this government were to take action against Anne Howe and then, through one form or another, all of that very embarrassing material was to become available by way of a parliamentary inquiry or some other mechanism.

Given that we will be debating and hearing the minister's replies next Tuesday, I now want to turn to a series of questions that I want to put on notice for the minister to reply to. I turn to the budget paper that looks at the portfolio statement for Treasury and Finance, in particular. On page 3.27 there is a reference to a significant change in inventory levels held by the Department of Treasury and Finance. In 2006-07, the inventory levels actual were \$43.7 million. In 2007-08, it was budgeted to be \$2.3 million but the estimated result was back to \$43.7 million, and this year it is again budgeted to be \$43.7 million. Can the Treasurer indicate what the budget reduction in inventories was to have been last financial year and why that did not occur, and what the change of policy decision was that might have resulted in that?

On page 3.39 there is a reference to past service superannuation payments of about \$200 to \$300 million per year for the periods that are covered. Given that the government's position remains (as was the former government's) to repay the unfunded superannuation by the year 2034, I ask the Treasurer to provide a copy of the repayment schedule from this year, 2008, through to 2034, with the estimated amounts of repayment in each of the financial years from 2008 to 2034. This budget estimates, I think, that the level of the unfunded superannuation will now peak in about 2014 and decline from then onwards.

I hasten to say, having been a former treasurer, that that particular document to which I am referring is not something that will have to be prepared: it already exists. As treasurer, Treasury provided me at varying stages with copies of the schedule of repayments and also a graph which summarises that.

On the same page (3.39) are the references to the three contingency provision lines. First, I want to refer to contingency provisions for employee entitlements. In 2007-08, the budget paper indicated there was \$15.8 million in contingency provisions for employee entitlements, yet the budget is reporting that the estimated result for that year is that the contingency provisions were actually \$75.9 million. Logically, when you look at what a contingency provision is, it is headroom in the budget—it is money that can be used for employee entitlements. The budget indicated that \$15.8 million was there. I am asking the Treasurer to explain how, in the end, you report a result of \$75.9 million in terms of an estimated result.

I can only assume that it means that the Treasurer has transferred into that line funding from another line. Some of it might have come from contingency provisions for supplies and services but also it would have had to come from some other line as well, because it is an increase of almost \$60 million. I am seeking an explanation as to what it actually means and from what line funding was transferred. This is last year now, so it does not indicate anything about where contingencies will go this year. This is reporting on the past, so how did that actually occur?

I also ask a question about the contingency provisions supplies and services line, because the budget had \$82 million in the contingency provisions line, and then at the end it has the estimated result at \$34 million. What does that mean? At the start of the year \$82 million was in there for unforeseen supplies and services contingencies; then at the end of the year it has the estimated result at \$34 million. Is Treasury indicating that \$34 million of that was spent or that \$82 million was there and then they transferred some of that money (just under \$50 million) into another line, which is the employee entitlements line? I am seeking an explanation from the Treasurer in terms of what exactly the budget document is telling us.

I highlight, in order to assist matters on Tuesday, that if the written reply is not clear this is an issue I want to explore with the Leader of the Government and his Treasury adviser who will be here during the committee stage of the debate, because I think it is important for members of the committee to understand how the contingency provision lines are being used by this government in the lead-up to the election.

The reason for that is that there is a massive increase in the contingency lines in this budget. We have a total of \$334 million in those three contingency lines in this year's budget, whereas just two years ago the contingencies were only approximately \$85 million, so they have jumped from \$85 million two years ago to \$334 million. The Treasurer may well argue that that is because we are about to settle deals with doctors, nurses and teachers, and I can understand that; however, it is interesting that the biggest contingency is held in the supplies and services line and the employee entitlements line, which is the wages and salaries, is only \$69.7 million.

It is clear that the Treasurer has been moving funds from supplies and services into the employee entitlements line to help fund some of these wage settlements. I acknowledge that some of the wage settlements such as in teaching may well include supplies and services. I think the example that Treasury used in the estimates committees was that increased teacher numbers, for example, might be part of a settlement rather than a wage increase. I am not sure that increased teacher numbers was actually a supply and service, and would not preferably be in employee entitlement, but again I give forewarning to the Leader of the Government that I want to explore this issue with him and his Treasury adviser during the committee stage next week.

On page 3.40, the Industry Financial Assistance Fund, last year, was meant to spend \$15.9 million and spent \$23.7 million. I seek an explanation as to the reason for that increase. I note that the next line, Land Management Corporation—and this is in the cash flow statement under 'grants, subsidies and transfers'—has declined over the last two years from \$15.8 million. Last year it was meant to be \$20.7 million but it was actually only \$6.1 million, and then this year it is only \$1.1 million. I seek an explanation from the minister as to the reason for that reduction in terms of the estimated payments in that particular line.

I seek an explanation to the line referring to long service leave costs. What does that \$30 million transfer in the cash flow statement for 2008-09 refer to, because there is no equivalent payment for long service leave costs in the past two financial years on that page? What is the explanation for that \$30 million line? On page 3.42, under the Country Price Equalisation Scheme, there is a reference to an actual payment, in 2006-07, of \$740,000. I seek an explanation from the Treasurer as to what that refers to.

On page 3.43, in last year's estimated result, there is a receipt of \$442,000 under the heading of 'Support services to parliamentarians'. There was nothing budgeted, but there was a receipt of \$442,000, and this year there is a receipt of \$455,000. I seek an explanation from the Treasurer as to what is that receipt line, support services to parliamentarians. It is included in the administered items for the Department of Treasury and Finance.

On the same page, the Country Price Equalisation Scheme, under 'supplies and services', there is \$99,000 in the budget line for 2007-08. What does that refer to? The Independent Gambling Authority, under 'supplies and services', last year saw an increase in the budget from \$697,000 to \$974,000. What is the reason for the increase? Same page, South Australian Motor Sport Board, last year's budget was \$20.6 million in terms of supplies and services, yet the actual expenditure was \$31.6 million. What is the reason for that?

I turn to page 3.44, the Industry Financial Assistance Deposit Account, under 'Intra-government transfers'. Last year the budget was for a transfer of only \$1.5 million, yet there was actually a transfer of \$35 million: \$33.5 million above budget. Will the Treasurer explain what that significant increase in intra-government transfers refers to? That is all in relation to the Portfolio Statement.

In Estimates Committee A of 25 June 2008, on page 73 of *Hansard*, there is a reference to some questions that were being asked about PPPs. The Treasurer was talking about the cost of capital to government as compared to the private sector. He stated:

...I might add. It could be a couple of hundred basis points or, hopefully, less than that so we are not talking a big variation but it is a higher number.

I would seek advice from the Treasurer, because I am assuming that that is a slip of the tongue; he could not possibly be talking about a differential of a couple of hundred basis points. If he is, I am mightily concerned. I am asking the question as to whether or not that was a slip of the tongue from the Treasurer, his reference to a couple of hundred basis points.

I must admit that I was listening to the committee at that particular stage and I heard him say that, so it is an accurate reflection of what the Treasurer said to the estimates committee in June of this year. I do seek clarification as to whether that was a slip of the tongue.

The Hon. R.D. Lawson: That assumes he knows what he's talking about. That is a big assumption.

The PRESIDENT: It is a wonder that the shadow treasurer did not say something.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I leave that to the minister whether he can indicate whether that is, indeed, a mistake and that the level of differential would be significantly less than a couple of hundred basis points.

On page 73 of the estimates committee of 25 June the Treasurer, in relation to some very perceptive questions from the shadow treasurer about this particular issue, indicated:

I do have in the forward estimates expected payments for schools and prisons.

Then he goes on to say, 'But I'm not going to tell you what they actually are.' We can debate that on another occasion, but, whilst I understand that the government is saying that they are not going to indicate exactly what the numbers are at this stage, can the minister indicate which particular budget lines they have been incorporated in or included in currently? That is, are they being held within budget lines within education and within corrections or justice, as they relate to PPP payments, or are they being held within Treasury contingency lines? If they are being held within Treasury contingency lines, are they held within those three Treasury contingency lines to which I referred earlier when I asked a series of questions, or are they being held in some other contingency line which is not expressly listed in the budget papers?

I have one other issue to mention in relation to SA Water. Much was being made evidently in another place, obviously not that I was there or followed it with too much detail, but my colleagues have raised with me the issue of evidently a press statement that I issued on 6 December 2001 in relation to water prices for 2002-03. My memory was reasonably clear, but I have nevertheless checked the record. For the record I indicate that two days prior to that, on 4 December, I had the great honour of being appointed the minister for government enterprises evidently. On recollection, that was because Michael Armitage did not continue in the ministry under the new premier, Rob Kerin at that particular time.

Two days prior to my issuing the release on the 6th, which was the Thursday, I was appointed the minister for government enterprises. The cabinet submission and all of the water pricing submissions were taken through the cabinet process and the SA Water process by my former colleague the Hon. Mr Armitage. One of the joys of having been appointed as the minister for government enterprises was that two days later I had to go out and explain the government's decision in relation to water price increases.

I also note that that was on 6 December 2001. The election was held in March 2002. We went into election mode in late January/early February 2002. During that six to eight week period, on my understanding, very few, if any, SA Water accounts would have gone out. Most of the accounts, as I understand it, were probably going out in the period March, April, May, June and, of course, that would have been under the Labor government. Certainly at that stage I was no longer minister for government enterprises. For the sake of the historical record I thought I would place on the record when I took over responsibility for government enterprises and announced the water rate increase for 2001-02. With those comments, I indicate my support for the second reading of the bill.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. I.K. Hunter.

VIETNAMESE VETERANS' ASSOCIATION

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (17:31): I move:

That this council acknowledges the important contribution the Vietnamese Veterans' Association of South Australia makes in commemorating and remembering significant dates in the history of the former Republic of South Vietnam.

Members will recall that earlier this year I was appointed shadow minister assisting the shadow minister for multicultural affairs, the member for Waite and Leader of the Opposition in the House of Assembly. I assist him in a number of areas and I have enjoyed that role, particularly with regard to the Vietnamese Veterans' Association of South Australia. Since being appointed I have forged quite a close working relationship with members of this association, in particular the President, Mr Tay Van Nguyen. We have got on extremely well and developed a close relationship.

Those in the association have great passion for their country, and many fought gallantly to serve and protect it and it is a great honour to be part of their commemorations. The Vietnamese Veterans' Association takes a huge amount of pride in the history of its members, and rightly so. It was at a recent commemoration for the Fall of Saigon that I was able to witness and take part in the association's remembrance of their fallen comrades who sacrificed their lives in the fight for freedom. This event marked the end of the Vietnam War and end of the Republic of South Vietnam, as well as the end of a 21-year struggle against Communist forces.

We can now see, as I am sure many members if not all have seen, the major memorial at the Torrens Parade Ground to the Vietnam conflict. The statue of an Australian and a Vietnamese soldier alongside one another is a constant reminder to the Vietnamese community of the proud manner in which their nation fought and the comradeship between the Vietnamese and Australian people and the soldiers who fought side by side. This comradeship has carried on as South Australians embraced the accomplishments and individual contribution of the Vietnamese community to South Australia. The association represents a greater community of Vietnamese people who have transformed extreme hardship into great opportunities within the democratic society of South Australia, a feat that all South Australians must commend, as we are all very proud of their contribution.

I further commend the Vietnamese Veterans' Association on involving the South Australian community in commemorating the important significant events in their country's history. Involvement in these events, such as mine in the Vietnamese New Year celebration and the Fall of Saigon commemoration, is vitally important in developing an appreciation and awareness of the origins and values of our multicultural community. In advocating a multicultural policy, which promotes a greater unity and understanding, it is very important for our state's leaders to remain involved in these types of events. The association demonstrates a great commitment to Australia, while maintaining pride in its national heritage. I thank the Vietnamese Veterans' Association for honouring me with this ongoing involvement in events that are so significant to their heritage, and I look forward to developing the relationship over the years to come.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.M. Gazzola.

At 17:35 the council adjourned until Tuesday 29 July 2008 at 14:15.