

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday 6 April 2011

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. R.K. Sneath)** took the chair at 14:20 and read prayers.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (14:21): I bring up the 21st report of the committee.

Report received and read.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: I bring up the 22nd report of the committee.

Report received.

CHIEF SCIENTIST

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for Gambling) (14:21): I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement regarding the appointment of a new chief scientist for South Australia made today by the Premier.

QUESTION TIME

PARLIAMENTARY INTERNET FILTER

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS (14:23): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and Minister for Gambling a question about internet censorship in Parliament House.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS: Adelaide Casino is answerable to this parliament by virtue of the Adelaide Casino Act 1997 and the need for its casino duty agreement to be tabled for public scrutiny. It is also answerable to the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner, who is answerable to the gambling minister and this parliament through the Liquor Licensing Act 1997. Adelaide Casino is an entertainment tourist precinct that attracts over 2.5 million visitors each year. It is one of the largest purchasers of live music in South Australia and contributes to the economy by not only paying gambling taxes of about \$20 million but also by offering employment to over 1,000 South Australians, paying an annual wage bill of about \$55 million.

It also contributes a substantial amount of sponsorship to local events and community organisations by way of sponsorship, such as the Adelaide Cup. For many years members of parliament and their staff have had access to the casino's website: www.adelaidecasino.com.au. This website lists news items and links to the annual report and other important information about the venue. Despite not being able to gamble from this website, it has recently been blocked by the Parliament House internet server. My questions are:

1. Did the minister know, authorise and instigate the censorship of the Adelaide Casino website following his ministerial statement in this chamber about the Casino on 10 March 2011?

2. Is the minister aware that, notwithstanding the relationship this parliament has with the Adelaide Casino, websites of well-known Las Vegas casinos such as The Bellagio, Caesars Palace and The Venetian have not been blocked?

3. Is the minister aware that, although you cannot gamble from the Adelaide Casino website, you can gamble from websites like www.ozbet.com.au and www.betezy.com.au, which are still accessible to MPs and staff here in the parliament?

4. Does the minister agree with this level of censorship?

5. Will the minister now seek an audit of the parliamentary internet filter and that of other South Australian government departments, and either make it a level playing field or put an end to this nanny state nonsense?

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for Gambling) (14:25): It is good to see the Hon. Mr Stephens maintaining his much vaunted independence from the gambling sector. The answer to all of those

questions is no. It may be news to the honourable member, but parliament is not, in fact, an arm of the executive. Indeed, I think most parliamentarians are rather fiercely protective of the independence and sovereignty of parliament, and so why he would assume that I would have responsibility for the internet system in this house is rather beyond me.

PARLIAMENTARY INTERNET FILTER

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (14:26): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and Minister for Gambling a question about internet censorship in Parliament House.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P. Holloway interjecting:

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: Did you want a go, Paul? Feeling a bit left out, are you? The Hospital Research Foundation (formerly known as The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Research Foundation) was established in 1965. Since then, the foundation has donated nearly \$25 million for research at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Basil Hetzel Institute, allowing researchers to conduct their valuable work in areas such as stroke, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, asthma, renal disease and other serious conditions.

The foundation also supports medical research through major program grants, research grants, the purchase of laboratory equipment, and financial assistance and scholarships to postgraduate and honours students. One of the principal ways the foundation has raised money has been through its successful home and lifestyle lottery, which is comprehensively reviewed by the Office of the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner before being approved.

Recently, the website publicised to support this worthy cause (www.homelottery.com.au) was blocked by the Parliament House internet server (which is actually administered by a government department, not the Joint Parliamentary Service Committee) because it was classified as gambling. My questions are:

1. Does the minister classify support for this charity in this manner as gambling?
2. Does the minister support censorship of this charity by government internet networks?
3. Is the minister aware that, whilst members of parliament cannot support this worthy South Australian charity, they can still access the home lotteries currently being run by the Endeavour Foundation and the RSL Art Union in Queensland?
4. Will the minister now seek an audit of the parliamentary internet filter and that of other South Australian government departments, and either make it a level playing field or put an end to this nanny state nonsense?

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for Gambling) (14:28): Obviously, following the story in *The Advertiser*, we are seeing a bit of auditioning going on for the shadow ministry, and it is no wonder that the Hon. Mr Ridgway and the Hon. Ms Lensink are comfortable to let the people on the backbench take questions when this is the best they can come up with: asking me questions that have nothing to do with my ministerial responsibilities at all. I am not responsible for the parliamentary internet system.

While, of course, the consolidated revenue funds the activities of the parliament, including the Parliamentary Network Support Group, I am not sure of what governance arrangements are in place. I do believe the Parliamentary Network Support Group is not directly controlled by the same people who control the rest of the government's IT infrastructure, as far as I am aware, because I know there have been issues and complaints about that in the past from some people saying that one or the other is superior or not.

In any event, it is not a matter for me and not a question for which I have any responsibility. I remind honourable members, since they seem to be misunderstanding a few basic principles of the Westminster system, that the purpose of question time is to hold ministers to account for their ministerial responsibilities. As Minister for Gambling, I have no responsibility for the parliamentary internet system, and I do not believe that has or ever would come within my ministerial responsibilities as Minister for Gambling.

If the honourable member wishes to buy tickets, I would strongly encourage him to buy tickets in the lottery. If he is not able to access it from his internet site, he can try at home or he can ring up. I am sure they would be happy to sell tickets to him, whatever way they do that. I have no responsibility for the parliamentary internet. I have found it frustrating in the past when certain sites have been blocked. It is not something for which I have any responsibility, nor ever will. It just shows what an extraordinarily incompetent opposition we have. The only reason—

The Hon. T.J. Stephens interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. T.J. Stephens interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member should withdraw that remark. I think the honourable member knows which remark.

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS: I withdraw.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you. The Hon. Mr Finnigan.

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: Thank you, Mr President. Honourable members opposite do not even know what—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: Sorry?

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: I wasn't talking to you.

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: Honourable members opposite do not even know what ministerial responsibilities I or any other member have. They are asking about something for which—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: —I have no responsibility. Whether or not parliamentary members are able to access particular sites is not something for which I have any responsibility. In fact, I would have thought that the appropriate people to take up matters relating to the use of parliamentary entitlements or access to facilities would be you, Mr President, or the Speaker.

ROYAL ADELAIDE HOSPITAL

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:32): My questions are to the Leader of the Government. My questions are:

1. Has the leader, as the third most senior member of the government, cabinet and caucus, received any formal or informal advice that cost of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital has blown out by somewhere around \$1 billion and is now expected to cost \$2.73 billion?

2. If the minister has not been informed, is that because he is so far out of the loop that his advice is neither sought nor warranted for influence, or is it because no-one in Mike Rann's office any longer trusts anybody outside Mike Rann's office?

The PRESIDENT: The minister should not bother answering parts of those questions; they are totally out of order.

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for Gambling) (14:33): I thank the leader for his question. It is good to see that they have at least moved on from knocking over tin sheds to talking about something more substantial, the cost of the new state-of-art Royal Adelaide Hospital. Of course, no contractual arrangement has been entered into at this time for the new Royal Adelaide Hospital. When that happens, I am sure honourable members will be made well aware of it. Any financial matters in relation to the Royal Adelaide Hospital will be published in the budget.

ADVANTAGE SA

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (14:34): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Regional Development a question about the Advantage SA Awards launch.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: It is the South Australian way of life to take a weekend off and go up to the shack and, be it ever so humble, it is a great way in which to have a break and recharge the batteries. Getting in touch with life in the regions and the close-knit communities outside the metropolitan area is refreshing. Those communities are very special and they make South Australia a great place. My question is: how does the state government ensure that a contribution to life in the regions is recognised?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (14:34): In the several weeks that I have had the pleasure of being Minister for Regional Development, it has been quite remarkable; the enthusiasm and talent that I have seen so far in the regions is quite fantastic. Members will recall that I was able to visit the Riverland recently to look at some projects and issues facing the community. It was very refreshing that, despite the very hard times and knocks that this community in particular has been through and has suffered, there was a tremendous optimism and resilience—a quite remarkable bounce back. I was most impressed indeed with the attitude of that community.

This particular visit has strengthened my confidence that we can use the current funding arrangements for regional development to the benefit of our regions and I am particularly referring, of course, to the significant interest of the federal government, the interest demonstrated by the approximately \$1 billion in the regional development fund, which it has made available—and it is now seeking applications—and our contribution to the \$20 million Riverland Sustainable Futures Fund, which can be a leverage to help build up this region using our strategic vision to create a sustainable region.

Of course, the state government already supports regional South Australia in a range of areas—take health, for instance. Minister Hill recently told us that, compared with the last year of the previous Liberal government, spending on country public health services has increased by \$333 million or 88 per cent.

The Hon. S.G. Wade: Tell us about inflation.

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Talking about inflation, an 88 per cent increase in funding—

The Hon. S.G. Wade: What is it in real terms?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: In real terms that is \$334 million, which is much greater spending than the former Liberal government in any way, shape or form. The government believes that it is important to recognise the unsung heroes of regional areas who make it happen. Indeed, on Friday 1 April I was very pleased to be able to launch the Advantage SA 2011 regional awards. The Advantage SA's regional awards program is now in its 13th year and has celebrated some truly inspirational stories from our regions. This organisation celebrates the best of South Australia and acknowledges those who have made a significant contribution to the state. Advantage SA wields a mighty spotlight and it directs it onto those who have shone in their own special ways in their own communities.

The South Australian government is extremely pleased to again be partnering with Advantage SA in presenting these awards. The awards showcase and reward the achievements of those who have made a significant contribution towards regional South Australia and demonstrated outstanding leadership in their field. The South Australian government recognises their contributions to building a prosperous economy and is committed to supporting the regions in establishing and sustaining work and jobs, diverse industries and strong communities.

Advantage SA has done great work to reward some of the people who would not ordinarily seek any recognition—often they are our quiet achievers—and who work so hard for the benefit of their community. I know that there are some frequent flyers, so to speak, in the award recipients too, and these are recognised in the Telstra Hall of Fame for those who have won three or more regional awards on different occasions since its inception in 2000, irrespective of the year or category. For example, Banrock Station Wine and Wetland Centre, which I also visited recently, is amongst those.

I am advised that 2010 was a record-breaking year for Advantage SA regional awards, with a staggering total of 653 entries received from across seven South Australian regions, the highest number of overall entries received in the award's history. The 2010 awards received fantastic support from the government-funded Regional Development Australia offices and from local councils in promoting and encouraging nominations, and also the tremendous amount of positive media coverage generated across Advantage SA's metropolitan and regional media partner network.

I was particularly pleased to launch these awards for 2011 and also seek nominations, because I believe that by publicising the good work that people in regions do the community is strengthened, and people become inspired to take that extra step to contribute to their communities. It is a remarkable social glue.

I encourage nominations of individuals, groups and businesses—in fact, individuals can nominate themselves—who have demonstrated excellence and leadership contributing towards success in regional South Australia. It is important that our state's regional high achievers receive the recognition they so rightly deserve, and I urge people to put their nominations in quickly, as they close on Friday 3 June.

STRATHMONT CENTRE

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (14:41): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the minister representing the Minister for Disability questions regarding the Strathmont Centre.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT: On Sunday 3 April this year the *Sunday Mail* reported that the Minister for Disability admitted she was unaware of the inappropriate living conditions at Strathmont, one of the government's only institutions for people with intellectual disability. In the same *Sunday Mail* report the minister said that she was unaware that people were being locked in their rooms at night, was also unaware that some rooms did not even have light switches and was unaware that people did not have appropriate toilet facilities. These comments were in stark contrast to those made by the minister less than a week earlier on radio 891 ABC, when she spoke about the high staff ratios at Strathmont and said that Strathmont had not been run down.

It is indeed a sorry state of affairs when we have a minister who is simply unaware of what is happening in her own institutions. It is not acceptable that the minister, who is responsible for the care and support of these people, had not, until last week, so much as visited the centre and, frankly, cannot keep a handle on her own institutions. If she cannot do this I am loath to think about what else is happening out there in the community.

In Victoria there exists a community visitor scheme, where community visitors are able to visit any premises where disability service providers are providing a residential service. These community visitors act as a watchdog of sorts, and report on the quality and standard of care and support that is being provided to residents with disabilities. My questions to the minister are:

1. How could the minister possibly believe that she is fulfilling her duties as Minister for Disability when she is unaware of the conditions in her own facilities?
2. If the minister concedes that she is not fulfilling her responsibilities, which she must, will she step down as Minister for Disability?
3. Does the minister acknowledge that a community visitor scheme could possibly have brought these issues to light in a much more expedient and acceptable manner? If so, will the minister then support my private member's bill to establish a community visitor scheme which is soon to be introduced into this parliament?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (14:43): I thank the honourable member for her important questions, and will refer those to the Minister for Disability in another place and bring back a response. However, I have received some advice from the agency in relation to Strathmont. I have been advised that Strathmont is institutionalised care, a model which was accepted in its day but which is now considered an inappropriate model of care. The government acknowledges that for some a different model of care will be needed, and that is not in dispute.

I am advised that as this matter progresses the Department for Families and Communities will work closely with families to deliver the best outcome for each individual. I have also been

advised that the Department for Families and Communities is developing a business case to work out the most effective approach for accommodating the remaining residents in appropriate accommodation. I am advised that significant work has already been undertaken in assessing the support needs of the residents, compatibility, support infrastructure and housing solutions to develop capital and recurrent financial options. I am further advised that these options are being considered as part of the department's master planning process.

In terms of what has been done, I have been advised that in 2005 the Rann government commenced stage 1 of the Strathmont Centre Redevelopment and Community Living Project and it has relocated residents to purpose-built group homes in the community and also provided sustainment work on three of the five remaining villas. In addition, \$6.7 million in recurrent funds and more than \$20 million in capital funds was made available to assist people to move from Strathmont back into the community. I am advised that, so far, 146 residents have moved to purpose-built houses throughout Adelaide since the beginning of the project—that is, 146 residents. Thanks to these efforts, 66 people remain at Strathmont. As I said, in terms of detailed answers to the questions, I will refer those to the Minister for Disabilities in another place and bring back a response.

STRATHMONT CENTRE

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (14:46): I have a supplementary question. Is the minister able to inform us as to any action being taken (if any) to ensure an upgrade of the standard of care in the interim, while this move out of Strathmont is being completed?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (14:46): I am happy to refer the supplementary question to the Minister for Disabilities in another place and bring back a response.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (14:47): My question is to the Minister for State/Local Government Relations. Will he inform the chamber whether elected councillors have the right to speak in public and to the media in opposition to council decisions and policies?

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for Gambling) (14:47): I thank the Hon. Mrs Zollo for her question. The matter that the honourable member refers to was brought to my attention last month by a journalist from *The Murray Valley Standard*. The journalist informed my offices of a code of conduct complaint against councillor Clem Schubert which the newspaper claimed was heard by the Rural City of Murray Bridge in confidence on 21 February.

The journalist contacted councillor Schubert for comment and also another councillor who was believed to have made the complaint. Both councillors declined to comment, citing a confidentiality provision in the council's code of conduct. The journalist also claimed that council had decided that the mayor was the only spokesperson for all council-related comments. The issue put to me was that councillors were under the impression that they could not express their personal opinions on council resolutions.

This is an issue that arises from time to time, largely because councils have different codes of conduct and different interpretations of those codes. The matter at heart here is whether elected members of councils have the right to speak to the media—and, of course, they do. Section 58 of the Local Government Act 1999 states that it is the role of the principal member (the mayor or chairperson) to act as the principal spokesperson of the council, unless the council has appointed another member to act as its principal spokesperson. This refers to the role of making statements for or on behalf of the council.

An individual councillor has a role, as someone elected to the council, of representing the interests of residents and ratepayers, providing community leadership and guidance and facilitating communication between the community and the council. As such, council members, as elected representatives, are free to express their views in the media when they are not speaking on behalf of the council but, rather, expressing their own view.

The question also arises as to whether elected members have the right to say publicly that they disagree with council resolutions or policies—and, of course, again, they do. Legitimate and public comment and criticism on council processes or policies by an elected member is part of our democratic process. Whether this is considered a breach of a council's code of conduct will depend

on the circumstances of each case. If in the process of outlining some views of disagreement, the member (councillor) makes statements that are, for example, misleading or derogatory of others, then that would be contrary to standards contained in council codes.

The Murray Valley Standard asked if councils have the ability to pass resolutions or adopt codes of conduct to prevent elected members speaking to the media. They do not, certainly not as a general or blanket prohibition. While councillors may be under a duty to keep certain matters related to such things as tenders or contracts, employment of staff or legal matters confidential, no council is able to effectively gag a councillor from speaking at all.

The review of public integrity that the government has conducted recommends the creation of a single code of conduct for councils across the state as being the minimum standard required. Of course, submissions to the review have closed, and the Attorney-General and the government will be reviewing those.

In my view, a single code of conduct that sets out the minimum standard required will give greater clarity to councils and the community regarding the role and responsibilities of elected members, as well as their rights. I am pleased to note that, at a recent council meeting, The Rural City of Murray Bridge endorsed the recommendation relating to the code of conduct, and others, as proposed by the public integrity review.

CELLAR DOOR SUBSIDIES

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (14:51): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the minister representing the Treasurer a question with regard to cellar door subsidies.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY: In 1997, following a High Court decision which invalidated state liquor licensing fees, the government introduced a liquor subsidy scheme to help offset the federal government's 15 per cent wholesale sales tax surcharge on liquor. This subsidy was to help promote and grow the South Australian wine industry. In 1998, this subsidy was capped at a rate of \$450,000, indexed upwards annually by 5 per cent for three years.

The current rate for the subsidy is \$521,000 per producer; however, I understand that as of 1 July this year the cap will be cut to \$50,000. I understand that South Australia's wine industry, which is internationally respected and one of the state's largest tourism drawcards, was developed as a direct result of this subsidy being available.

Much of the attraction of the South Australian wine industry is for people to visit the many small wineries and take part in cellar door sales in regions such as the Barossa and McLaren Vale. The subsidy enables small wineries to hire staff and grow their cellar door sales. I have been told that the largest dollar impact of this measure will be felt by the Barossa Valley which, as I previously mentioned, is a significant tourism region that has world recognition.

The decrease in the subsidy cap is especially detrimental to smaller producers, some of whom, I am told, will have to close their cellar door sales and dismiss staff. My questions to the Treasurer are:

1. Why was the decision to cut the subsidy cap made?
2. Was there any thought to gradually reducing the subsidy cap over a number of years rather than cutting it so dramatically?
3. Was there any consultation with the wine industry to discuss the implications of reducing the subsidy cap?
4. Have any provisions been made to minimise the impact of the reduction in the subsidy cap?

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for Gambling) (14:53): I will refer those questions to the Treasurer in another place and bring back a response. Indeed, there was a budget measure relating to cellar door subsidies and, as all members are aware and as we have outlined many times, the budget is under pressure given the fall in projected revenue and the number of difficult decisions that were taken as part of that budget process.

The wine industry is, indeed, very much an important part of the economy of the state. The state and federal governments do quite a bit in a general sense to support the wine industry and

ensure that it remains a competitive and important source of employment. In relation to the particular impact of the cellar door subsidy question, I will refer that to the Treasurer.

LIQUOR LICENSING

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:54): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Consumer Affairs a question on liquor licensing.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: There have been recent calls from industry for a new special type of licence to cover smaller end hospitality venues like wine bars. It has been put that this is a particularly popular venue for young business people, but they are unfortunately frustrated with the regulatory regime that exists in South Australia in that they are required to apply for an entertainment licence, a hotel licence or a special circumstances licence, which exceeds the requirements that are needed for the venue they are seeking to set up. Indeed, I note that the government's state strategic plan target T1.5 'Exceed Australia's ratio of business investment as a percentage of economy by 2014' was rated as 'negative movement' and 'unlikely' to be achieved in the 2010 progress report. My questions are:

1. What discussions, if any, has the minister had with stakeholders about the establishment of such a special licence?
2. Will the minister undertake a broader review of the liquor licensing structure to support such business investment in South Australia?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (14:56): I thank the honourable member for her most important question. Indeed, the ability for us to develop a diversity of different types of activities and venues across our CBD, but also our other entertainment areas, is critical to the vibrancy and also the safety of our city. We know that, if we have a diversity of different activities, then we are attracting a range of different types of clientele and also, if we have venues that operate at different times, they provide movement of people onto our streets and around our streets. We know that where there are crowds it can make our streets a much safer place to be in some respects. So we certainly look to attempting to promote different types of venues, and certainly small bars are part of that.

South Australia does not currently have a special licence class specifically for small bars; however, I am advised by the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner that a venue trading like a small bar can be covered by either, as the honourable member said, an entertainment venue licence, a hotel licence or a special circumstances licence depending on the sort of services that they intend to provide.

Hotel and entertainment licences are generally subject to certain provisions requiring things like either food or entertainment to be provided at times when alcohol is being served. The special circumstances licences do not have those types of restrictions and, instead, authorise the licensee to sell liquor for consumption in accordance with the terms and conditions of their licence, so there is a reasonable degree of flexibility around that type of licence.

While there is a process that must be followed when applying for any licence class—and these must be lodged with the Office of the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner—I am advised that it is a relatively straightforward and not necessarily onerous process on applicants. The process involves some set requirements and time frames and ensures that the integrity of the liquor licensing system is maintained. It also allows for other interested stakeholders. For instance, those people who may have residences nearby have an opportunity for input, the police have an opportunity for input, so other relevant stakeholders have an opportunity to have their say in what impact that licence might have on either their business or their amenity, and I think that is a very important type of natural justice process that should occur. But that is not necessarily a particularly onerous process.

The Liquor and Gambling Commissioner is committed to working collaboratively with applicants, licensees, local councils, South Australia Police and obviously members of the community in licensing and regulating licensed premises in the state and ensuring that harm associated with liquor consumption is contained. In terms of looking at those issues, I have met with Tim Horton, the Commissioner for Integrated Design, and we have had discussions around the importance of making sure that, if there are any barriers or impediments to our regulatory framework, we look at them to try to stimulate activity in our city centres, particularly with a mind to

the diversification of the types of activities we conduct in our centres. I have certainly had discussions with him. My memory might fail me, but I believe that it is Renew SA—

The Hon. T.A. Franks: Renew Adelaide.

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Renew Adelaide—thank you very much. I have met with them and had discussions about some of their ideas for streamlining processes. They have some absolutely marvellous initiatives and are certainly to be congratulated on the work they do. I have had very fruitful discussions with them; that information has been fed back to the agency, and I have asked them to consider those matters and to report back to me with any other proposals or suggestions they might have.

So, we are looking at these issues. We are very keen to make sure that our cities are vibrant and dynamic and have a range of entertainment for all different tastes and age groups. It is good for our cities, good for our economy and good for tourism. It is important that we keep looking at any possible impediments or barriers or any ways we might be able to improve and streamline processes to make the application processes for these venues simple and as easy as possible without forsaking adequate scrutiny and protections that are in place.

LIQUOR LICENSING

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:03): By way of a supplementary question, I am heartened to hear the minister has talked to Renew Adelaide, and I would hope that in her conversations about licences—

The PRESIDENT: Without explanation.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: —she would be looking at the laneway sector. Can the minister tell us if the arts and the laneway sector should have to actually meet the same requirements as the Festival Centre to run a very small scale operation?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (15:03): Currently, the requirements are not exactly the same for a small and a large venue. Although the broad framework is similar, the considerations are very different. The level of scrutiny and the level of conditions that might be placed on a venue that might be looking at crowds of hundreds of people, compared with an activity that might be involving 50 people—those applications are dealt with in a very different way. Although the framework is similar, the level of scrutiny and the conditions that are likely to be put in place are very different. It is much simpler and easier for those applications for smaller events, smaller venues, to be processed than for something large and complicated.

If we look at things like the Schützenfest—that is a very good example. We have a large event that goes over a couple of days and involves large crowds. With the level of amenities required, the level of security, and so on, conditions around events like that are very stringent and are reviewed after every single event, whereas an event such as Renew Adelaide opened up a gallery recently in North Terrace. If it was a small event involving a small number of people, it would require a much simpler process.

In terms of our laneways, Renew Adelaide discussed these, so I have discussed that also with Tim. Again, I can only reiterate the comment that I have already made, and that is, the diversification of the types of facilities, businesses, events and activities throughout our city centre is very important to the vibrancy and safety of our city centre.

WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA (15:05): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for the Status of Women a question about the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA: Thank you, sir.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA: We know how much you hate unions.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA: The local branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was formed in the YWCA rooms in Adelaide on an April afternoon 125 years ago. While the Women's Christian Temperance Union has taken an interest in a number of social reforms, its early days had a particular focus on suffrage. Minister, will you provide the council with a little history of the WCTU and, in particular, its important contribution to suffrage?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (15:06): I thank the honourable member for his most important question, and his deep interest in the policy area of temperance, as well as unions. On Monday, I was very pleased to host an event recognising the 125th anniversary of the Women's Christian Temperance Union with my colleagues the Hon. Stephanie Key and Ms Frances Bedford MP, and it was also great to see my colleagues the Hon. Carmel Zollo and the Hon. Michelle Lensink there.

One of the distinguished guests present was Sarah Ward, the WCTU's World President, and it was a real privilege to hear her speak of some of the history of the organisation. I had the pleasure to address the audience as well, and it was interesting to think of the South Australia of 125 years ago, which was obviously a culture that was dominated by men. However, the work of some amazing South Australian women meant that that condition was not to stay in place forever.

Women such as Catherine Helen Spence, Mary Lee and Augusta Zadow all made major contributions in the development of women. However, I took the opportunity to focus on the work of Elizabeth Webb Nicholls, born in Rundle Street in 1850. Elizabeth was a very energetic social reformer, the first state president of the WCTU of South Australia and the first Australian president of the national WCTU.

The WCTU sent me an amazing pamphlet. I did not really know much about them before that, and I read their book and was just astounded. It was quite inspiring, and I was interested to learn that, as a founding member of the Women's Suffrage League, Elizabeth Webb Nicholls campaigned for the right of women to vote. Indeed, the WCTU considers Elizabeth Webb Nicholls to be one of the most important leaders in the successful campaigns which made South Australia the first Australian colony to grant women the right to vote in 1894. She continued her work by lobbying for the right to vote in federal elections and, in 1921, she helped to found the Australian Federation of Women Voters.

As a member of the Women's Non-Party Political Association, Elizabeth was committed to advocating for women jurors, justices of the peace and particularly the rights of women and children. She sought to protect the interests of women and children through campaigning for equal federal marriage and divorce laws, as well as equal pay for equal work, and she did a great deal of campaigning around lifting the status, if you like, of women working in domestic situations. So, as I said, some of the work she did was truly remarkable.

The WCTU has sought to have public acknowledgement of the work of Elizabeth Webb Nicholls in Adelaide. I was delighted to be able to support its goal when I wrote last year to the Lord Mayor, Stephen Yarwood, suggesting the erection of a plaque, or something like that, in the Women's Memorial Garden. I thought that might be a fitting tribute to this amazing woman. I understand that the WCTU has had some discussions with the Adelaide City Council, and I look forward to some form of public recognition being put in place.

As the Minister for the Status of Women, I am obviously committed to acknowledging the work of women such as the suffragettes. These women fought for the rights of women to participate more fully in society, and it is important that each generation remembers and recognises their achievements. If it were not for women such as these, I and my other female colleagues in the chamber today would probably not be elected members. I am very grateful for the work of my forebears. I am very sure that members would agree that 125 years of activism for any particular organisation is a fantastic achievement, and I congratulate members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union on their anniversary.

PHOSPHATE-FREE LAUNDRY DETERGENTS

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:11): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Consumer Affairs a question about phosphate-free laundry detergents.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Phosphates are one of major active ingredients in laundry detergents in Australia. They are also a major contributor to blue-green algal blooms in Australian

waterways. Other sources, of course, include run-off from agricultural lands and human waste. Laundry detergents, while not the only source of phosphates, are one of the easiest sources on which to take action.

It is scientifically accepted now that excessive phosphates cause algal blooms, and they are a significant problem that has serious consequences environmentally. These include killing fish and other riverine and marine species, killing livestock, devastating tourism and, of course, potentially lethally impacting human health as well. In 1991, nearly 1,000 kilometres of the Barwon-Darling River was affected by a huge algal bloom.

In the late 1960s, over 10,000 lakes were affected in the USA by excessive nutrient enrichment. The resultant public awareness there and consumer pressure led to over 16 states banning phosphates from laundry detergent. Seeing the writing on the wall, US detergent companies agreed to voluntarily phase out phosphates from their laundry detergent. Now over 300 million Americans use phosphate-free laundry detergents, and their clothes have never been cleaner. Elsewhere in the world, Germany, Italy, Austria, the Czech Republic and other Europeans have already acted to ban or limit phosphates, and an EU-wide ban is set to come into force from 1 January 2013. My questions are:

1. Does the minister acknowledge that the problems caused by laundry detergents containing phosphates are serious and contribute significantly towards eutrophication of our waterways?

2. Is the minister aware of the move by Eastern States' supermarket chain Aldi to voluntarily phase out by 2013 phosphate detergents it sells? Also, is the minister aware of the calls from the environmental group Do something! (founded by Planet Ark's Jon Dee) for other major chains to follow suit?

3. Given that Aldi has no presence here in SA, so we will not see the benefits of that decision, what actions does the SA government have in mind to ensure that South Australian consumers can get information about the most eco-friendly options to get their clothes clean without contributing to polluting our waterways and our natural environment?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (15:14): I thank the honourable member for her most important questions. In relation to the issue the honourable member has raised in terms of the impact of phosphate on our environment, it is the responsibility of the Minister for Environment and Conservation to manage or regulate products that are harmful to the environment: it does not come under the purview of consumer affairs. I have responsibility for the area of product safety. I have powers to recall unsafe products that are noncompliant with product safety legislation, but this would not capture a product such as this, where the main impact is on the environment.

In terms of the safety issues, my responsibility relates to unsafe consumer products where consumers may suffer serious injury from a product and, where they do, the supplier can then be liable. They could suffer injury and then the manufacturer could be liable under the product safety liability provisions of the Australian Consumer Law. There is a range of provisions that can require products to be recalled or they can be voluntarily recalled but, as I said, that ACL legislation would not capture products such as this. I imagine that it would be a matter really for consideration by the EPA in particular and the Minister for Environment generally. So, I am happy to refer those questions to the Minister for Environment and Conservation in another place and bring back a response.

MOTOR VEHICLE STAMP DUTY

The Hon. J.S. LEE (15:16): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Consumer Affairs a question about motor vehicle stamp duty.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: Reported in the official magazine of the Motor Trade Association March/April edition, the executive director, Mr John Chapman, stated that they will pursue the issue of stamp duty disparity between the states. Our rates on vehicles are among the highest in the nation. When a consumer buys a new car in South Australia they will be paying more stamp duty than anywhere else in the country. This could result in people holding on to cars for longer periods or buying used cars.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics motor vehicle census data has shown that vehicle sales trends in South Australia have dropped by 2.9 per cent in the last 12 months, falling faster than the national average of 1.5 per cent. The ABS also highlighted that South Australia's growth in fleet size between 31 March 2005 and 31 March 2010 of 11.5 per cent was the smallest in the nation. Additionally, South Australia is the worst mainland state, having the oldest fleet, with an average age of 11.1 years. My questions are:

1. How will the government address the issue of stamp duty disparity raised by the MTA to ensure the South Australian motor retail trade remains nationally competitive?
2. With South Australia being the worst mainland state, having the oldest fleet and a continuing slump in motor vehicle sales, when will the government implement tax reform and less red tape to take pressure off consumers and businesses?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (15:18): The matter of stamp duties and tax reform is obviously the responsibility of the Treasurer, so I am happy to refer those questions to that relevant minister and bring back a response. In relation, however, to just some general questions about our motor vehicle pool and the age of cars here in South Australia, I am very much aware of some of the pressures that have been on motor vehicle sales of late. They particularly relate to the fact that we are coming out of a global economic crisis, and that has certainly slowed down spending on motor vehicles.

That has had an impact and we are probably still seeing the tail end of that and, of course, the price of petrol has also had a fairly significant impact on the purchase of vehicles. In terms of the age of vehicles, we see that some other states have certain legislative requirements around vehicles and the timing and the frequency of roadworthy certificates. In South Australia, we have wrestled with the tensions associated with considering policy around this for many years. We know that where we put increased regulatory and licensing burdens in place it results in increased costs in relation to motor vehicles and, generally, an increase in the cost of living.

We know that it is often families on low incomes who have second-hand vehicles that are quite old, and we know that if we shift our efforts and increase the burden that would mean a percentage of those people would not be able to afford motor vehicles and would have to do without them. That affects people's quality of life, as well as their ability to participate in employment, schooling and a whole range of other activities. It could have a significant impact on the life of families.

These are matters that we have considered. As I said, I realise that there are tensions between looking at the regulatory burden to increase how modern vehicles might be versus the age of vehicles and safety around that, as well as cost of living and lifestyle tensions. We believe we have got it right. They are vexed issues, but we believe we have got the balance right in terms of trying to ensure that as many families as possible have access to motor vehicles when they need them, yet also ensuring they are safe in terms of the standard of their vehicle.

WORKCOVER CORPORATION

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (15:22): My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Will he advise members of WorkCover SA's financial performance and the progress of the review into the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Scheme Review Amendment Act 2008?

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for Gambling) (15:22): I thank the Hon. Mr Hunter for his question. The Chairman of the WorkCover board, Mr Philip Bentley, released WorkCover's midyear results on 24 March, and I am pleased to advise the house that WorkCover has reported profits of \$117 million for the six months to 31 December 2010, which has resulted in a significant reduction in the scheme's unfunded liability.

WorkCover has delivered a claims result that was better than projected, and this influenced results by \$73 million. This is the main factor under its control that affects WorkCover's results. Additionally, strong investment returns and changes in economic assumptions have contributed positively to the results. It should be noted that this is the sixth consecutive half-year period in which a positive improvement in claims management liability has been achieved. These are good indications that the scheme is consolidating its improved financial performance. The unfunded

liability now sits at \$865 million compared with \$982 million at 30 June 2010, with the scheme funding ratio increasing from 61.5 per cent to 65.9 per cent.

The WorkCover board takes into account a range of factors in setting the levy rate, and it decided that it was prudent to keep the rate steady at 2.75 per cent for 2011-12 for the average levy rate. The chairman of the WorkCover board has said that, while the financial performance of the scheme is improving, it is still early days, and until WorkCover can consolidate a continued long-term improvement it is best to keep the average levy rate as is. Supporting injured workers to stay at or return to work remains the fundamental guiding principle of the scheme. WorkCover will continue to work with injured workers and their employers to improve return-to-work rates.

I was also asked about the independent WorkCover review. As I advised the house on a previous occasion, the government has appointed Mr Bill Cossey AM and Mr Chris Latham to conduct a review, as required by the 2008 amending act. It is worth noting again that the terms of reference for that review are in relation to the amendments made in 2008, not an overall review of the scheme.

I have been advised that the review has received 34 submissions from various parties, employer groups, unions and others, and the independent reviewers are currently reviewing the submissions. I am advised that they expect to be able to provide their final report to me by 24 May which will, of course, subsequently be tabled in parliament. I look forward to updating the chamber about the review and its conclusions in due course.

MATTERS OF INTEREST

ANZAC DAY

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:25): I rise today to speak about ANZAC Day. The story of the ANZAC campaign is well known to all. It is a story that is a part of us. ANZAC Day has a unique part in the Australian psyche. There have been many learned analyses of the events at what has become known as Anzac Cove and what they mean for our democracy. It has been part of our national story that Australia came of age in World War I in the Turkish campaigns, and in France, Germany and the Middle East. However, ANZAC Day now has a broader significance.

In 2011, we will honour those who fought in the Sudan and Boer wars, in World War I and World War II, in Korea, Malaya, Borneo, Vietnam and Iraq, and those who fought and continue to fight in Afghanistan. We will honour those who served in the Persian Gulf, Rwanda and Somalia. We will honour those who help to keep the peace today in East Timor and the Solomon Islands. On ANZAC Day, we will remember that during the course of these conflicts more than 1,500,000 Australian men and women have served and that of these over 100,000 have died.

ANZAC Day is for many a day of solemn commemoration and for many a day of national pride—for many, those feelings are intertwined. We have all seen the day change with the change in our community. I remember the ANZAC marches I saw as a child, the few women and the sombre-faced men with their medals, the sadness and the tension in the air. What happened after the service was private to those men who, on every other day of the year, kept what they had seen to themselves.

Now it seems that ANZAC Day has a different character, a changed dynamic. This springs perhaps from the opening up of the Returned Soldiers' League in the 1980s and 1990s to service people who had not served overseas, which of course included most servicewomen, and those who had served in the so-called minor wars. This new spirit of inclusiveness was echoed by state and federal governments, which mounted public education and community campaigns, including the Welcome Home March in 1987.

Fifteen years after Australian service people left Vietnam, returning home to indifference or worse, around 25,000 veterans were led through Sydney by the next-of-kin of those who had not returned. Each carried an Australian flag, and the parade was watched by many hundreds of thousands of people along the route. New campaigns marked the 75th anniversary of ANZAC in 1990 and the 90th anniversary in 2005. The resurgence of interest in ANZAC Day has continued to the present.

Increasingly, young Australians are embracing the ANZAC spirit, and attendance at the dawn service at the ANZAC commemorative site has become part of the pilgrimage of our young. Dawn services here in Adelaide, South Australia, around the country and, of course, in New Zealand are increasingly well attended. It seems that ANZAC Day has become not only a day of

commemoration but a day to demonstrate our support for the men and women who continue to serve our country here and overseas, increasingly in humanitarian and peacekeeping roles.

It is a welcome development, as is the gradual change from predominantly Anglo-Saxon male participation to events more representative of the wide variety of communities that now make up our 21st century multicultural Australia. On 20 March, the National Commission on the Commemoration of ANZAC Centenary released its report on the way of marking the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Great War in 2014 and of ANZAC in 2015.

The commission made a number of recommendations around six broad themes: public awareness and education so that understanding of war and peace can be passed down the generations; refurbishment of our memorials and other commemorative monuments; public recognition of a century of service; major commemorative services at Gallipoli and here at home; education about Australia's military legacy, including local wartime experiences; and international engagement and collaboration. The ANZAC Centenary Advisory Board will now continue the work of the commission, providing advice on the planning and implementation of the events. Believe me, the time will be here before we know it.

However we think about war and about the wars in which Australia has been and is engaged, ANZAC Day continues to touch us, even though its nature has changed, and will continue to do so. As we approach the centenary of the battle that has come, somehow, to define our national character, it is important that we look beyond the commemorative events that will mark the anniversary to the lessons that we and future generations can learn from 100 years of war and conflict and 100 years of peace and peace-keeping. The ode we recall every ANZAC Day comes from *For the Fallen* by English poet, Laurence Binyon. It was first published in *The Winnowing Fan: Poems on the Great War* (1914).

Time expired.

PRETTY, MR G.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (15:30): I rise to talk about a matter of life and death. Greg Pretty (which rhymes with Betty) was a superstar of Australian motor sport. Thirty years ago he was the hottest thing in Australian road racing. As motorcycle journalist and author Don Cox put it, the sight of him sliding both wheels in the speedbowl section of the Adelaide International Raceway was one of the classic images of the era.

He won production races at Bathurst in 1970, the South Australian round of the national championships and, during the 1979 season, the chirpy 24 year old with the Zapata moustache won the Australian Unlimited Road-Racing Championship, the Swann Insurance International Series, the Indonesian GP and the Sugo Big Road Race in Japan. He won the Adelaide Three-Hour and the Perth Four-Hour, finished second in the Castrol Six-Hour and did credibly in the Isle of Man TT. In 1979, Pretty was a Duke of Edinburgh Award winner. As Cox said, Greg honed his riding skills in the Hills most Sundays in the Phoenix Motorcycle Club's run from Eagle On The Hill to Lobethal.

In mid-January last year, Greg Pretty died in a head-on crash with another motorcyclist near Macclesfield. The other rider, 50 year old Mostyn Walker, also died at the scene. Pretty was riding with a group of friends. Walker was on his own. The next day, perhaps relying on the testimony of Pretty's friends, the media reported that the fatal crash had been the other rider's fault.

Police told journalists that the other rider had crossed to the wrong side of the road when he hit Pretty coming in the opposite direction. Senior Sergeant Brenton Rowney of the Major Crash Investigation Unit said Walker had made a very grave error that had cost two lives. 'The Honda—Pretty's bike—was heading south on the correct side of the road,' Sergeant Rowney told reporters. 'The Kawasaki veered on to the incorrect side of the road for whatever reason and killed both of them,' he said. Imagine how Mr Walker's close and immediate family, his friends and others who knew him felt when they read that. The sergeant went on:

Clearly this accident today or this collision today is as a result of someone driving outside their skill level. If people continue to do that, no matter what the police do or what members of the public do, the road toll will continue to climb.

Naturally, Australia's large and active motorcycling community was shocked and outraged that a well liked and respected racer should meet his death not on the racetracks which had made him famous, but on the roads, and because of someone else's stupidity and recklessness. On internet forums the other rider was castigated.

Last month came the official findings of the coroners inquest. It found that Greg Pretty, not Mostyn Walker, had been on the wrong side of the road. Pretty had caused the fatal crash. He had killed Walker, not the other way around. I will quote from the findings of the official inquest:

The Advertiser and *Sunday Mail* referred in positive terms to Mr Pretty's undoubted abilities as a rider but said nothing of the kind in relation to the other deceased motorcyclist. The quoted remarks of the police spokesman disparaged the other motorcyclist. It will be seen that the comments attributed to the spokesman must have been offered to the media on the day of the collision and before any proper investigation.

The uncorrected account of the accident as described by the police spokesman was, if anything, the antithesis of the manner in which the accident occurred. This inquest would have been largely unnecessary had the police refrained from making any public statement about this accident before the facts were established. The assertions attributed to the police spokesman have not been publicly corrected since they appeared in the media in January 2010.

I would like South Australia Police to take heed of the Coroner's warning and not make presumptions before the facts are known. I counsel reporters not to report speculation as fact, particularly when blaming the wrong rider can have such awful consequences for an innocent man's memory. I wish to pass on my sincere condolences to the families and friends of both Greg Pretty and Mostyn Walker.

FOSTER CARE

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:35): I rise today to give a pat on the back, if you like, which is not often what we do in this chamber. I think, quite rightly, we have a situation in this chamber—indeed, in this parliament—where governments are held to account very sternly, and I think that is appropriate. We have a situation where the opposition holds the government to account, the crossbenchers do the same and, one day when the opposition is in government, I am sure they will have no beef with being held to the same level of account. That is what makes a great democracy, and I think we can rightfully say that we have that here in South Australia. I think we can be justifiably proud of that.

This is an exception to that rule. I rise today to give a pat on the back to the government and, in particular, one minister. Although I have disagreed with her on a number of occasions, she has done an excellent job on this particular issue that I will outline. I am talking about minister Rankine who has improved a number of aspects of Families SA, particular aspects that I will outline in a moment, particularly in linking children at risk of abuse and neglect with their wider family.

As I said, it is usual for us on the crossbenches and for members of the opposition to be critical of the government, but it is also right to give credit where credit is due. I recall speaking to the member for Wright shortly after she became Minister for Families and Communities and I told her that perhaps that she had taken on some of the most controversial and difficult portfolios in government—not one but four of what might be called the poisoned chalice portfolios of families and communities, housing, disability, and ageing.

I have regularly disagreed strongly with the minister regarding issues in this department that I have wanted addressed from time to time. Indeed, I have been strongly critical of Housing SA and Families SA, in particular, on countless occasions in the media and in this place on many occasions as well. These agencies, in my opinion, need a thorough working over to ensure that they meet basic acceptable standards. However, it would be disingenuous of me if I did not give credit where credit is due.

Late last year I asked a question of the minister regarding foster care placements. It is a fact that we have something like 1,017 children currently in foster care in this state. Family First has been very vocal on the proposition that, if children needed to be taken from their parents, they should be placed with members of their wider family wherever that is possible rather than with complete strangers. No matter how wonderful a particular foster care family may be, there are certainly benefits in children being put with their extended family in many cases, whether either related to those people or whether they have a prior connection with those individuals.

In particular, I want to place on record the work of Denise and John Langton of Grandparents for Grandchildren SA in this regard. Members may also note the bill from my colleague the Hon. Robert Brokenshire that seeks to formally amend the act to require the department to consider wider family care before other options are considered.

Going back to the question I asked of the minister, I recently received a response to my questions of the minister—and it was a welcome one, I must say. The response noted that, back in 2001, 20.7 per cent of the children in alternative care were placed with relatives or kin, but by mid-

2010 that number had increased to 38.7 per cent. This is a near doubling of children at risk of abuse or neglect been placed with relatives or people they are associated with in one way or another rather than being put in the wider foster care system.

It is not always possible to find a suitable family member who can care for children at risk but, where available, they should be approached, in our opinion, and put with those people where possible. I certainly commend the government and particularly the minister in this regard for the significant improvement on this measure.

Also worthy of commendation from Family First's perspective is the commitment by the minister, subject to community consultation, of setting a target to provide that 50 per cent of alternative care placements should be with relatives and kin. This will be a hard ask, but it is good to see that the minister has thought it worthy to set such a target.

Certainly more needs to be done, and we cannot rest on our laurels in this regard. In New South Wales, for example, 47.1 per cent of placements are placed with relatives and kin at this stage, and we are now at 38.7 per cent, so we have got a way to travel. However, the increase in recent years is encouraging and the ambitious target proposed by the government is certainly one we would support fully.

Family First believes in giving credit where it is due and, on this issue, I think one would have to say that this is a good outcome and the minister does deserve credit for that. As I said, we hold people to account in this chamber, we do it ferociously at times, but I think to be fair we need to give credit where credit is due on occasions.

LABOR PARTY INFIGHTING

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (15:40): I wish to talk about Labor division and disunity, and what we are seeing at the moment is a Labor Party and a Labor government frankly at war with themselves. The degree of hatred within the Labor Party for each other is best shown, I think, in a statement made by Mike Smithson on radio yesterday when he said, with regard to Kevin Foley's recent circumstances:

There are plenty of people from his faction, and certainly from the left faction, in fact, I saw one of them in town yesterday, that's the opposing faction to the one he's in, he thought it was quite amusing. Had a good laugh about, what's Kevin done this time?

That was the statement from Mike Smithson in relation to a representative of the left faction in relation to Kevin Foley's current circumstances. What we have seen in the last 24 hours, as they turn on each other, forgetting about what they have been elected to do, is, on the front page of *The Advertiser* today, Greg Kelton quoting a senior Labor MP briefing and backgrounding against Kevin Foley saying that he said yesterday that 'Mr Foley's position was untenable and not a good look for us.' Again today Greg Kelton interviewed said:

...there's a lot of MPs who keep ringing me up saying yeah, look, Kevin's got to go and I say, well, do you want to say it, oh, no, no, no, I can't say that publicly no I wouldn't do that.

Greg Kelton is making it quite clear that Labor MPs are leaking and backgrounding against Kevin Foley all over the place to senior journalists.

Also coming on the back of the recent cabinet realignment, in which we saw the appointment of Jack Snelling, Bernard Finnigan and Tom Kenyon, the anti-forces within the Labor Party started backgrounding against those members and describing them as the Christian Taliban and attributing to them views that they did not believe in evolution and that some of them happened to attend the Latin Mass out at St Peter's church—leaks and backgrounding from within the Labor left against these prominent members of the right.

Then we have also seen the fight between minister O'Brien and minister Foley, who publicly argued in relation to forests and privatisation policy and other related issues, both in the house and publicly as well. Then we saw the unprecedented release of information from former treasurer Foley's office, which damaged the left candidate, minister Weatherill and which revealed that he had caused a \$130 million black hole in the budget by his policy on not telling people about the cashing out of long service leave. That document was unprecedented to get it back within the 28 days, particularly when it damaged severely the credibility and financial integrity of minister Weatherill.

Then we saw the anti-Rau leaks from a meeting of government spin doctors in relation to statements he made, evidently, about our Aboriginal visitors in the parklands and where he thought

they ought to go or ought to be. Then we saw the anti-Koutsantonis leak from within cabinet in relation to the explosives factory—the unprecedented leak of a cabinet document within 24 hours of minister Koutsantonis briefing *The Advertiser* for a positive story. An anti-Koutsantonis force leaked the whole cabinet submission to *The Australian* newspaper and other media outlets, trying to damage minister Koutsantonis in relation to that particular cabinet submission.

We have seen the public disagreement started, first, by minister Koutsantonis and then supported by minister Foley against the Premier's own position of opposing uranium enrichment in South Australia. That has now leaked down to the staffing levels. A war is being waged within the Premier's own spin doctors' office. Ms Bottrall has been dumped from her position, and we now see a war between Lachlan Parker and Rick Morris in relation to their respective positions within the spin doctoring hierarchy within the Premier's own considerable spin doctor resources.

The sad facts are that this Labor Party and this Labor government and sad ex-ministers like minister Holloway are only interested in their own jobs and their own futures and are not interested in the jobs and futures of South Australian families, as they were elected to do and as they should be. It is a disgrace.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable member's time having been wasted, the Hon. Ms Vincent.

DISABILITY SERVICES ACT

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (15:44): I would like to take this opportunity to look across the border to Victoria, which has some pretty good legislation which was enacted to reaffirm and strengthen the rights and responsibilities with regard to people with disabilities. I feel that it is timely to discuss this legislation in view of our own government's somewhat belated review of our Disability Services Act, as I believe that we can learn a lot from the Victorians in this regard.

It seems to me that there is only a chosen few who are able to have any input into the review and I felt that it was my duty as the Dignity for Disability MP to put the views of my constituents on the record. I have only a short time to speak today and will therefore focus on a couple of principles on which the act is based and the institutions or initiatives which I believe help realise these principles and, in turn, the human rights of people with disabilities.

The Victorian act provides that people with disabilities should be free from abuse and neglect, and also provides 18 principles which apply to disability services—simple, yet poignant principles—which include the principle that disability services should be of a high quality and provided by skilled and experienced staff. They should also be flexible and responsive, and advance inclusion and participation in the community for people with disabilities. Now, these principles should a given, but they seem to mean so much more when enshrined in an act of parliament.

So you may ask: how does the Victorian legislation help to realise this principles in relation to disability services? Well, one only need consider the Community Visitors Scheme established under the act, whose function is to allow community visitors to visit premises where disability services are being provided. It is the role of community visitors to consider the standards of accommodation at this facility, the adequacy of opportunity for inclusion and participation for the residents, any suspected case of abuse or neglect, the use of restrictive practices and whether or not the residential facilities are being provided in accordance with the act's overarching principles. In view of recent events at Strathmont—and, indeed, other horror stories—I consider that a Community Visitors Scheme is necessary in our state and will soon introduce a bill to establish such a scheme.

The Victorian act also recognises the principle that any restrictions on the rights of people with disabilities should be the least restrictive. So, how does the act help to enliven this principle? Simple—it has a whole part which relates to restrictive practices. This part provides that any disability service provider who wishes to use restrictive practices (such as chemical restraint, mechanical restraint or seclusion) must be approved to do so, and must only do so where the person in danger of harming themselves or others. This part then goes on to specify the very limited circumstances under which restrictive practices may be used.

Now, this makes perfect sense. We have all heard of the horror stories in the past where people were tied to beds or sedated for indefinite periods. While we hope that these practices no longer occur, the sad reality is that they do. We need strong laws to protect people with disability to

ensure that any restrictive practice is used as a last resort in very controlled circumstances. I will soon be introducing a bill which mirrors the Victorian act's section regarding restrictive practices.

The senior practitioner is established under the Victorian act and further strengthens the rights of people with disabilities when it comes to restrictive practices and compulsory treatment. The functions of the senior practitioner are to develop guidelines, undertake research, provide education and advice, and to evaluate and monitor the use of restrictive practices. In addition, the senior practitioner may give direction to disability service providers in relation to restrictive practices and compulsory treatment. I consider that a senior practitioner is much needed in South Australia and will soon be introducing a bill which creates this position.

I also intend to introduce a bill which deals with compulsory treatment and the establishment of residential treatment facilities similar to that provided in Victoria's act. As we all know, prisons are not the place for people with intellectual disability, especially when they are not guilty or are unfit for trial on account of mental incapacity, but that is a story for another day.

MEDIA, MISREPORTING

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (15:49): Could I firstly just make some comments about the diatribe we heard just a few minutes ago from the Hon. Mr Lucas who, of course, is celebrating his 29th year in parliament, I believe it is—21 of those in opposition; no wonder he is frustrated. But the reality is, of course, that the disunity is not within the government ranks, but within the opposition. Of course, opposition leader Isobel Redmond is desperate to avoid a reshuffle, because she does not want to offend members of her own party, because she will have to get rid of some of the nonperformers, and we know what occurs when that happens. To put some perspective on his diatribe, it is really disunity in the Liberal Party that he is seeking to cover at the moment.

I want to talk more generally about some of the trends in our society. A healthy democracy is crucially dependent on the availability of information. The better informed the public, the better decision-making will be. As recently as 10 years ago, there is no doubt that governments held a key advantage in the control of information. Indeed, the greater use of parliamentary committees and freedom of information laws developed over the past few decades were in response to what was perceived as this imbalance in the control of information.

What I believe has happened in recent times is that the internet and the rise of social networking has totally shifted this equation. In past eras, when journalists jealously guarded their integrity, newspapers purported to cover events accurately, and they were the main source of information for the public. Stories were checked for fact and, when errors did occur, they were corrected.

Talkback radio, of course, has always been somewhat less concerned with ethics or facts, but there was in past times at least a token recognition that both sides to an issue should be aired. I know that when I was elected a minister back in 2002, misreporting of events then was rare enough to make it worthwhile to respond to such errors, with a letter to the editor, for example. In 2011, misreporting—in many cases, unfortunately, deliberate misreporting—has become so prevalent that it would require an army to correct.

As I discovered a few months ago, when a minister writes to the Editor of *The Advertiser* to correct a gross error in a letter from a correspondent to the editor—indeed, it was an outright lie—the correction may not be printed. To add insult to injury, in that case *The Advertiser* then allowed the lie to be repeated in a further letter, with the comment that the original claim must have been true because it was not corrected by me. This decline in newspaper ethics is, of course, partly driven by competition for readership from online media.

I commend to members the recent book *Man Bites Murdoch*, which was written by a former editor of the *Sunday Age* and the *Herald Sun*, Bruce Guthrie, and to anyone who has an interest in how the Murdoch press operates and what the perception of its proprietor is of ethics. However, fewer people are reading newspapers and still fewer believe what they read, and it is becoming obvious, I think, that newspapers will be obsolete in as little as five years' time.

The alternative source of information, which is online information, presents a much greater challenge to a healthy democracy and an even greater challenge, I believe, to civility in politics. Do-it-yourself journalism, freed from the need to check facts, to obtain alternative views, to obey the laws of libel or to uphold even the most basic standards of fairness and decency, is now becoming the dominant means of disseminating information. Hatred and abuse are increasingly replacing argument in political debate.

Sadly, I believe there are examples where the present opposition, both state and federal, are fanning this trend. If one looks overseas, one can see that violence against politicians is an inevitable consequence of this trend, and I am particularly referring to the United States. The key question for any government now is how you engage with the public on difficult and complex issues. We regularly hear the mantra that we need more consultation on government policies, but what these people really mean by consultation is, 'My telling you what I want and then you doing it.'

Online networking has opened many new opportunities for public engagement, but it has also greatly magnified the capacity for disseminating false, misleading and inflammatory information. We need a much better informed public for big issues of the day, such as marine protection, future population growth, etc.

Time expired.

PUPPY FACTORIES

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:54): I rise to speak about puppy factories, which are also known as puppy farms. They are the hidden industry behind the pet shop window of commercial dog breeding facilities that mass produce puppies for profit. They can have between 200 and 300 female dogs and approximately 50 male dogs in them, although some puppy factories have over 1,000 dogs on site. Others may indeed be small backyard operations.

Behind your local friendly pet shop, the rolling hills on the breeder's website, or the newspaper or online ad, there can lie a puppy factory. Puppy factories exist to fuel the commercial pet industry with constant supplies of puppies. They sell to pet shops, through the internet, through print media, through classifieds and through markets, and they also export puppies overseas. Even if that puppy in the pet shop window or on a breeder's website looks happy and healthy, there is no guarantee that it has not come from a mother imprisoned on a puppy factory thousands of miles away, where dogs can be trapped in tiny wire cages, in wooden kennels, or in dirt floor pens in a small cage, 24 hours a day, in cramped, filthy and overcrowded conditions.

Those unfortunate puppy farm dogs are sometimes fed only two to three times a week, receiving only the bare minimum amount of food and water to keep them alive. They are also afforded little to no veterinary treatment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins): Order! Ms Franks is competing with a number of conversations in the chamber and she has the call.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: They are afforded little to no veterinary treatment and are frequently living, sleeping and eating in their own faeces and urine. Puppy factory breeding dogs often live a life completely devoid of human contact. They are not walked, they are not cuddled, they are not loved. The mother dogs come into their first season at approximately four to six months of age, and this is when they can be bred for their first litter, while they are just puppies themselves. Used purely as breeding machines, they will be kept in an almost continual state of pregnancy, having two to three litters a year, nursing and giving birth in unhygienic and squalid conditions.

As a mother dog's body is worn out from producing litter after litter of puppies, her fertility wanes and she is spent by the time she is only five to seven years old. She is then left to die, either abandoned or, in fact, killed. The father dogs similarly spend their whole lives locked in pens and cages and exist only to perpetuate the mothers' breeding cycles. The fathers, like the mothers, will probably never leave the puppy factory. Endlessly exploited to produce family pets, these dogs have no hope of ever joining a loving family.

The puppies produced by these unfortunate creatures are taken from their mothers between four and five weeks of age and packed into crates for transport. Frightened and confused, puppies that are shipped from the puppy factory to the puppy broker, the pet store or unsuspecting buyer can have travelled thousands of miles in the back of utes or trucks or on aeroplanes, where they suffer long periods of time in transit without adequate food, water or shelter.

Puppy factory puppies will typically spend all the early vital moments of their life in a cage. The constant confinement, lack of veterinary care and complete lack of socialisation results in unhealthy puppies, usually plagued with physiological, behavioural and psychological problems not visible from the pet shop window. As puppy factory dogs are bred for quantity, not quality, hereditary defects are also common, often leaving owners with no recourse other than expensive vet bills or euthanasia as the only options. Many puppies are abandoned within weeks or months of their adoption by their new owners, who are faced with the dilemma of adding to the companion

animal overpopulation crisis. In fact, in this country we see one dog killed in a puppy shelter every single four minutes. This is not acceptable.

South Australian dog lovers can actually take action and do our bit to eliminate the scourge of puppy factories. We can choose never to buy an animal from a pet shop. When I first heard that, I thought that was quite a controversial thing, but the more I have looked into it the more I have seen that if we choose to buy an animal from a pet shop, a classified ad, over the internet or give somebody a puppy as a present from any of these sources, we are potentially contributing to the promotion of puppy factories. Puppy lovers should adopt from an animal shelter. They should not shop; they should adopt. Every dog bought or bred means that a shelter dog is dead—as I say, one every four minutes.

If members would like more information, I refer them to the RSPCA's authoritative website, which echoes the points I have made today: www.closepuppyfactories.org. I would also like to acknowledge that many organisations across the country are raising this issue, including Animal Liberation, and, of course, the RSPCA. The Lush chain of toiletry stores is to be commended for their recent promotion in store.

CONTAMINATION NOTIFICATION PROTOCOLS

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. J.M.A. Lensink:

That the Statutory Authorities Review Committee inquire into and report on the operations of the Environment Protection Authority, particularly regarding public notification protocols of contamination.

(Continued from 23 March 2011.)

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (16:00): I indicate that the government does not support this motion, for the following reasons:

- the motion appears to be informed by inaccurate media reports that do not reflect the high standard of site contamination legislation and regulation in South Australia;
- the government believes there is no need for an inquiry by the Statutory Authorities Review Committee in addition to the current review by the Auditor-General into the implementation of the site contamination legislation;
- the motion makes assumptions about the roles and responsibilities of the EPA and councils in relation to site contamination that are incorrect and inconsistent with site contamination legislation; and
- the motion implies links between contamination incidents in different geographic areas which do not exist.

It is noted that the Hon. Ms Lensink has relied heavily upon the daily newspaper to inform her motion, and I take this opportunity to correct a number of points she raised.

First, let me remind members that, in July 2009, it was this government that introduced legislation to manage site contamination, legislation that includes a mandatory duty to report harm to groundwater. South Australians are far more protected against the risks posed by groundwater contamination as a result of this government than they ever would be under a government led by the Liberals.

The Minister for Environment and Conservation is advised that the EPA has not known about risk to Edwardstown residents for 18 months, as has been repeatedly claimed by the opposition spokesperson, who is obviously not one to let the facts get in the way of a good story. The Minister for Environment and Conservation is advised that, in August 2009, the EPA, as the regulator, was notified of contamination to groundwater in accordance with the Environment Protection Act 1993 by Colonial First State consultants. The minister is advised that the groundwater assessment at that time was limited to the Hills site.

At the request of the EPA, further work was undertaken by the company involved. Specifically, a series of groundwater investigation wells were drilled and installed in an attempt to delineate the contaminant plumes over several stages. Analysis of samples collected from these wells progressively identified further off-site groundwater contamination. The risk assessments at this time showed no risk to human health.

Due to the increasing number of data gaps, the Minister for Environment and Conservation is advised that the EPA requested the company involved to ensure that the contaminant plume be

fully delineated and a scientifically rigorous risk assessment report prepared. As a result of this additional work, the EPA was notified of a substantial groundwater plume extending well off site on 14 February 2011 in an area where there were registered bores. On 14 February 2011, the EPA was also presented with a risk assessment report that concluded that the concentration of the PCE had the potential to result in a risk to human health. The report recommended an assessment of indoor air quality.

It is grossly misleading to suggest that the government was aware of any health risk for 18 months—a bold-faced fabrication, I would have to say, by the opposition, which is more than happy to put fear, anxiety and concern in the community for what appears to be cheap political purposes.

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

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: I am glad that the honourable member has acknowledged that it is terrible. The Minister for Environment and Conservation is advised that, once the EPA was in receipt of information that referred to the potential for risk to human health, it sought expert advice from the Department of Health. Health confirmed the potential for a risk to human health and the EPA responded by advising persons living within a defined area to cease drawing water for any purpose. The minister is advised that the EPA has been in consistent communication with households in the identified area, with three letters being sent to them since February this year.

The EPA has received positive feedback from those in the area, and those with specific concerns have had them addressed through direct discussions with EPA staff. I note the honourable member's comments relating to SA Health's advice that all South Australians should not use bore water until their bore is tested, and her statement that it is a butt-covering exercise. This is not a butt-covering exercise: it is advice provided to all people in all areas of South Australia in urbanised and non-urbanised areas, and it is not necessarily related to assessing groundwater due to industrial activity.

Groundwater in non-urbanised areas can contain substances that are not fit for certain uses. This may be due to naturally occurring chemicals such as arsenic or selenium or the salinity of the water drawn from the aquifer. It is the responsibility of the individual who wishes to use bore water to determine if that water is fit to use. If someone is new to an area it is still his or her responsibility. Secondly, to address the matters raised by the member in relation to Clovelly Park, the Minister for Environment and Conservation is advised that the EPA conducted extensive soil vapour and indoor air quality assessment in early 2009, as a result of which one apartment block was vacated.

The Department of Health provided advice that, based on the results of testing done, there was no human health concern to other tenanted properties in the neighbourhood. There is no basis upon which to claim that there was a failure to advise residents of any risk. Thirdly, there is no basis for concern regarding the spread of contamination from the former Hills site to Clarence Gardens and Melrose Park. As advised to Mitcham council on 21 February 2011, the groundwater flow direction is known to go from east to west.

Any contamination from the former Hills site will move in the direction of the groundwater flow. Therefore, further assessment upstream of the former Hills site is not considered necessary at this time. I would have to say that it is yet another example of unfounded fearmongering by the opposition. It is important to note that the EPA's role as the regulator is to oversee a system which creates an obligation on the polluter or the owner of a known polluted site to advise authorities, that is, ensure the responsible party does a risk assessment and, if risks are identified, manages the risks, including communicating with the affected community.

The new site contamination provisions were fully commenced in 2009 as part of a legislative reform package that not only amended the Environment Protection Act and its regulations but also made significant changes to the Land and Business (Sale and Conveyancing) Regulations to ensure that purchasers of land are made aware of potential site contamination. The government also foreshadowed changes to development legislation to ensure that contamination issues are considered appropriately as part of the development assessment process.

These reforms are on par with the best in Australia and the world. The legislation clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities in relation to site contamination, including liability for contamination and responsibility for notification to the regulator. The member asked: at what point should people be notified about potential hazards to their health? The EPA has developed a

risk-based framework for the assessment and remediation of groundwater contamination to ensure the protection of human health and the environment.

The assessment component incorporates a risk assessment process. Where the risk assessment process identifies a risk to human health and/or the environment, remediation may need to be carried out and appropriate communication to affected persons undertaken. Putting it simply, the answer is that the EPA provides notification once it is aware that there is a potential for harm.

The Minister for Environment and Conservation is advised that how this communication occurs is decided on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes the EPA will take the lead, particularly if it has made a decision to advise restricted bore access; on other occasions the responsible company will undertake the communication. Some current examples include Monroe contacting residents in the Clovelly Park area to inform them of further monitoring that is going to take place soon; Origin having an open day in Port Pirie—this would have already occurred—to discuss next steps with the local community; and Colonial First writing to neighbouring residents informing them of the remediation that was taking place at the former Hills site very recently. Indeed, I assume that this has also taken place.

As outlined when referring to the EPA's actions in relation to the contamination at the former Hills site, the EPA works closely with the Department of Health, underpinned by a memorandum of agreement, to ensure that it has the correct expert health advice from which to determine next steps. It is important to remember that groundwater contamination does not automatically create a hazard to health. There needs to be actual or potential harm to a receptor (that is, people and/or the environment) before a health hazard is considered likely. With groundwater contamination there are many aspects to consider: the depth of the aquifer, whether the water from the aquifer is accessed in any way, the likelihood of vaporisation and other such variations.

The legislation minimises the risk of community exposure to contaminants by requiring notification of potential contamination in specified circumstances and by providing appropriate powers to the EPA to make sure contamination is appropriately managed by responsible parties when identified. This does not guarantee that all risks are identified, because there are limits to knowledge about historic contamination. To identify and assess all contaminated land parcels is cost-prohibitive and not practical. Members of the community retain some responsibility to protect themselves; for example, by not assuming groundwater is fit for use unless appropriately tested.

As the Minister for Environment and Conservation has stated, it is the government's expectation that the EPA continually review all of its practices to ensure their efficacy and appropriateness, and the promulgation of information to the public concerning contamination falls within this. There is no evidence before the parliament to suggest that the current practices of the EPA, which involve advising residents once it is established by advice from the Department of Health that a risk exists, are deficient.

As I have mentioned, the government does not support a motion to require the Statutory Authorities Review Committee of this parliament to review a matter on the basis of what is, at best, misinformation.

The Hon. M. PARNELL (16:14): Public notification of pollution or land contamination is not a new issue, but it has come to a head recently over a number of groundwater contamination issues, and, in particular, the recent incident at Edwardstown. There were earlier incidents at Beverley in the western suburbs and at Port Pirie, and many others. In fact, it has been estimated that, given the propensity of underground fuel tanks to leak, most former petrol station sites in Adelaide are, in fact, contaminated sites.

Questions that are often asked when these issues come to light include: when did the authorities know there was a problem, and how long did they wait until they notified residents or others? We have just had remarkable response from the government trying to put a positive spin on everything that has gone on and trying to convince us that it was all under control. The reality is that, once pollution goes into groundwater, we know that it is going to spread.

The Hon. Carmel Zollo referred to some amendments that were made to the law. We also had amendments made over 10 years ago to the Environment Protection Act in relation to groundwater pollution, precisely because we know it does not stay put. It moves. The previous incident was again at Edwardstown—it was the Bridgestone leak—and, in that case, no-one notified the EPA because they did not have to. Until it was proved that it had left their site, there

was no legal obligation to notify. We changed the law to make it a legal obligation to notify the EPA of pollution incidents precisely because groundwater pollution moves around, so I do not accept the semantic argument that the Hon. Carmel Zollo has put forward. My recollection is that it was the Hon. David Wotton who changed the law back in about 1997.

If this reference is successful, there are some key questions that need to be answered—not just the two that I raised: when did they realise there was a problem, and why did they wait so long before notifying people? Some of the other questions that need to be addressed are:

- What is the process that the EPA goes through in deciding whether or not to notify residents?
- What is the EPA's risk assessment framework?
- How confident does the EPA need to be before it gives notification to residents of a possible problem?
- How does the EPA use the precautionary principle?

As members would know, the precautionary principle is enshrined in the EPA's charter, as it were. It is in the objects section of the Environment Protection Act (section 10). One of their obligations is 'to apply a precautionary approach to the assessment of risk of environmental harm...' If you look at any of the literature on the meaning of the precautionary principle, you will find that a common element of all definitions is that lack of scientific certainty is no excuse for not taking action. You do not have to have every t crossed and every i dotted before you take action and, in this case, the action we are talking about is the notification of residents of a potential problem.

The precautionary principle is why we should be taking action on climate change; it is why residents of various parts of Japan are being warned not to go certain places, not to eat certain foods, not to drink certain water. It is the precautionary principle. One of the questions that I think the EPA needs to be asked in this inquiry is: how do they balance the right of people to know about potential pollution problems that might affect them or that exist in their neighbourhood with the EPA's natural desire not to unnecessarily alarm people?

I expect that the EPA will relish the opportunity to come into parliament and explain how it operates, how it works and what its position is on these matters. They will relish the opportunity to put this on the public record. So I do not accept the Hon. Carmel Zollo's implication that, because this is an opposition motion, it must of necessity be a witch-hunt. This is a genuine inquiry into how pollution events are notified.

I should also note that this reference to the Statutory Authorities Review Committee nicely complements the bill that I introduced recently in relation to the EPA's public register. I just mention in passing that the EPA have notified me that they do not want to discuss my public register bill; they prefer me to deal with the environment minister. That is fine; that is a position they can take. I look forward to a robust questioning of the Environment Protection Authority when they do come before the Statutory Authorities Review Committee.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The Hon. M. PARNELL: I also make the point that—the Hon. Rob Lucas asked for questions; I am doing my best to assist the committee. I have put a number of questions on the record. But I also make the point that much of the information that people have been critical of the EPA for not releasing was in fact legally and technically available, if only we knew to ask for it. That is the nature of the public register. A lot of these contamination documents were technically publicly available on the register, if only you knew to ask.

I note that the EPA has now put up a website devoted to the Edwardstown contamination issue. The latest addition to this web page (I checked it just before coming into the chamber) is a copy of a letter that the EPA sent to residents last week updating them on the progress in relation to the testing of groundwater, the testing of the air quality and also the ongoing clean up of the former Hills site.

The EPA's current level of engagement with the community and with the general public through this website, I would suggest, is a direct result of the media's attention that has been paid to this issue. It is a welcome improvement. The problem is that in other cases you do not know what you do not know, and if you do not know what to ask for you will never get the information.

I think all honourable members would agree that it is unacceptable for members of the public to have to routinely contact the EPA with the question: have you added anything to the public register this week that impacts on my neighbourhood? It is a ridiculous situation. The EPA should routinely publish environmental information. It should do it promptly, it should do it on its website and should make it freely available, and that is what my bill provides for.

Publication and notification are different but related matters. You cannot use publication as an excuse for not directly notifying those who have a right to be told what is happening in their neighbourhood. The people of Edwardstown did have a right to be told much earlier than they were that there was a problem (or a potential problem) with the groundwater beneath their homes, and this information would have been of most use to those with groundwater bores who could then have made up their own mind about whether or not to keep using this water.

In conclusion, I welcome this reference to the Statutory Authorities Review Committee. I look forward to hearing the evidence the committee receives and look forward to reviewing any recommendations the committee comes up with, including any minority reports. The Greens will be supporting the motion.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (16:22): I rise to speak briefly in support of the motion. As a member of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee I think it is probably important to give a perspective of someone who may well receive the reference and how perhaps it ought to be responded to by the Statutory Authorities Review Committee. I bow to the superior knowledge of my colleagues the Hon. Michelle Lensink and the Hon. Mark Parnell in relation to the specific issues of public notification protocols of contamination.

I point out to the committee that this motion, if passed, is that the Statutory Authorities Review Committee inquire into and report on the operations of the Environment Protection Authority, that is, all the operations of the Environment Protection Authority. The motion does note particularly regarding public notification protocols of contamination. The reason for my and my party's support is that, whilst the public notification of contamination protocols will be a focus, the review by the Statutory Authorities Review Committee is of all of the operations of the Environment Protection Authority.

It has, as its most recent report indicates, a considerable sum of money at its disposal—some \$43 million worth of expenditure in 2009-10—and there will be important questions for the committee to see whether we are getting bang for our buck in relation to the money that is going into the Environment Protection Authority. Are the priorities that are being established by that authority the appropriate priorities?

Whilst there will be a particular focus on contamination, inevitably there will be questions of resources in terms of what the EPA can and cannot do, and that is why it will be important for the Statutory Authorities Review Committee to look at all the other things that the EPA says it is doing to see whether or not the priorities are being properly established by that authority in terms of its expenditure of \$43 million. As a member of the committee that will certainly be a focus for me in terms of the evidence we take.

In speaking this afternoon, there are some specific aspects. In quickly looking at the annual report, I note, for example, that the retained earnings by the EPA last year in its accounts almost doubled from \$3.1 million to \$6.3 million. So, at a time when I am sure my friends in the Greens and others would be arguing that the EPA needs to do more in terms of the work it is tasked to do, it was actually accumulating or doubling its retained earnings within its accounts during that financial year.

We need to get behind not just that issue but, indeed, many other aspects of their publicly produced accounts to see, as I said, what it is they are doing with their \$43 million, whether they have established appropriate priorities and, once those priorities have been established, whether they are being appropriately prosecuted in the public interest, in the interest of taxpayers, and in the interest, obviously, of protecting our environment.

The Hon. Mr Parnell referred to a number of examples, as did the Hon. Michelle Lensink, in relation to examples of contamination. One of the areas of interest to me is the extent of contamination at the site of the proposed Royal Adelaide Hospital. This has been an ongoing issue of some public interest, in terms of the extent of contamination on that site. Whilst I acknowledge a number of other areas of possible contamination have been mentioned during this debate, there are a number of others.

In relation to the Clipsal site, for example, in terms of a future major development of that particular site, the extent of contamination and the advice that the EPA has had and has publicised—the Hon. Mark Parnell again indicated (and this was news to me) that a lot of this information is already available if you just know where to ask—are issues we need to pursue with the committee. If there is information about the extent of contamination in relation to the North Terrace site of the hospital, or the Clipsal site, let's find out where it is at the moment and how we can make it more accessible and more readily available.

Let's get the questions answered in relation to the extent of contamination, particularly in relation to the Royal Adelaide Hospital site. Who will be picking up the responsibilities in relation to any identified costs for cleaning up the contamination? We have always been told that that was going to be a cost for the bidders for that site. We will certainly need to take evidence on the extent of the contamination and then, obviously, subsidiary questions can be asked as to who is going to meet the cost of the cleanup of any contamination on that particular site.

As I said, in speaking briefly to the committee, I conclude by saying that members, and those who observe this debate, ought to be aware that, whilst the motion does talk about public notification protocols of contamination, if the motion is passed it is to be an inquiry into and report on the operations of the EPA, and that encompasses everything the EPA does and every dollar it spends on any particular priority. As I said, if the motion is passed, that will be the task ahead of the Statutory Authorities Review Committee. I support the motion.

Motion carried.

MARINE PARKS

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. D.G.E. Hood:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be appointed to inquire into and report upon marine parks in South Australia and, in particular—
 - (a) claims by Professor Bob Kearney that the evidence used by the government in support of marine parks reflected a 'biased misuse of the available science';
 - (b) detrimental effects to recreational fishers and the commercial fishing industry through the imposition of marine parks;
 - (c) detrimental effects to property values through the imposition of marine parks;
 - (d) complaints by local communities and fishing groups regarding the consultation process associated with the implementation of marine parks;
 - (e) interstate and international moves to limit the extent of sanctuary zones; and
 - (f) the correct balance of general marine park areas to no-take sanctuary zone areas.
2. That standing order No. 389 be so far suspended as to enable the chairperson of the committee to have a deliberative vote only.
3. That this council permits the select committee to authorise the disclosure or publication, as it sees fit, of any evidence or documents presented to the committee prior to such evidence being presented to the council.
4. That standing order No. 396 be suspended to enable strangers to be admitted when the select committee is examining witnesses unless the committee otherwise resolves, but they shall be excluded when the committee is deliberating.

(Continued from 23 March 2011.)

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (16:28): I rise to indicate that the Liberal Party will be supporting this motion; however, I will be seeking to amend particularly paragraph (a) to add another point, that is, to identify how the management of marine parks is to be paid for. The amendment to paragraph (a) removes a reference to Professor Bob Kearney given that, in my view, I think the committee should not stand or fall on whether or not people agree with Professor Bob Kearney.

I would just like to talk about the scientific data because I think it has been the key point upon which some of the current debate is taking place. In particular, I think we need to do some form of review of the science which supports the environmental improvement that will arise from marine parks.

My reading of a lot of the scientific information is that there is almost a professional interest disagreement between certain sectors which take a professional in this area in that there is what

might be described as a traditional fisheries management approach to the seas and then there is more of a growing conservation approach to it as well, which is why we support marine parks. A lot of the current debate is about whether or not fishing will be excluded, yet marine parks are not supposed to be directly related to fishing.

We have had several briefings in parliament in relation to marine parks. The first one was provided by the department of fisheries. What they said to us was that Australia and South Australia has a good record in terms of fisheries management. They told us that there has been a decade of ecological sustainable development principles applied to South Australia's fisheries, that we have aquatic reserves, which have been designed specifically to protect spawning grounds and so forth, and that they take a precautionary approach; that is, in the absence of information, they take a conservative approach by implementing things such as season limits.

PIRSA Fisheries knows a great deal about the biomass of specific species in our seas. I was quite bemused when we had a subsequent briefing, which was related to the sanctuary zones. I have heard the minister on radio as well continually asking the commercial fishing sector for their data. I would have thought that, if the departments were talking to each other, that information would have been able to be provided directly from PIRSA. The minister said at that meeting that he would be able to get it from PIRSA, but I am curious as to why that data has not been provided earlier.

I think the consensus on some of the approaches to marine parks and so forth is that it is really an issue of horses for courses. Overall, I think they agree that marine parks and sanctuary zones (or no-take areas, as people often call them) are good for the environment but that each park needs to have clear objectives. The effectiveness of each park varies, depending on the size and location.

A joint report, which I think is a 2010 report, was done in Western Australia by the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Fisheries. They said that most of the evidence about benefits to fisheries is based on what they describe as severely over-exploited tropical reef systems in developing countries. Their conclusion is that traditional fisheries tools need to be used in conjunction with marine parks. It is quite an interesting read. It is entitled 'Report on the scientific basis for and the role of marine sanctuaries in marine planning', and it is by the Marine Scientific Panel, Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Fisheries. In the section entitled 'General overview', it states:

The area of marine protected areas has been growing at a rate of 4.6%...since 1984, mainly in coastal waters. 20-40% of the global area is within small and isolated areas, which may not be effective in conserving marine populations, or may not contribute to a wider network.

Under the section entitled 'Conservation of marine biodiversity' it states that the evidence for the use of marine sanctuaries for biodiversity conservation is now substantial and can have a positive effect on conserving marine biodiversity. The next point states:

Ecological responses to marine sanctuaries may vary greatly from one area to another, and depend on many factors.

I think that goes to the crux of what we are talking about. I also note that we had a briefing from Professor Hugh Possingham yesterday, who talked about the background to setting up his Marxan spatial mapping tool, which I found quite interesting, despite the fact that we were interrupted several times by divisions. It was quite clear from what he said that the program relies on the data input.

That is the key point, because everybody has been complaining that nobody has seen the data, and that includes the marine park local advisory groups. It includes people who provided information through the SAMPIT process, and so that is one of the key points. The question that everybody keeps asking is: why have these particular sanctuary zones been chosen? I think that needs to be a transparent process. People deserve to know why. I would urge people, if they are interested in looking at this report, to google it, which is how I found it.

Obviously, we had a very angry meeting last night at the Burnside Town Hall. As far as the numbers are concerned, one of the guys who was locked outside because he could not get in was pretty sure that there were 1,000 people outside the meeting, as well. I think people deserve a rational explanation as to why these particular sanctuary zones have been chosen. It is not that anybody is against sanctuary zones. It is not that people are against marine parks, but they want to know why, and the MPLAG process has kept people in the—

The Hon. P. Holloway: So it is rational to have no no-take zones, is it, as your leader promised? How about some credibility? You are the shadow environment spokesperson: what is your position? No no-take zones?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: No, I do support no-take zones. At no point have I ever said that. I would not say that.

The Hon. P. Holloway: So there won't be any? Okay, that's fine.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: We want to know why those zones have been chosen. That is the critical point in all of this argument, and I think would people say, 'If you can demonstrate that—

The Hon. P. Holloway: It is a bit irrelevant, isn't it? What are you going to have—shooting in national parks? You know, you might as well.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: The former minister is just making a goose of himself, because he clearly does not understand the issue. People deserve an explanation as to why these zones have been chosen, and if it can be demonstrated that they are causing some harm, then they would be prepared to accept it. I would just like to read what the then minister for the environment (Hon. Gail Gago) said during the passage of the debate on the Marine Parks Bill in 2007. She said:

The Government is committed to a transparent marine park process, based on sound scientific advice and thorough community and stakeholder engagement to ensure, as far as possible, all cultural, social, economic and environmental issues are adequately considered. This approach has been embraced to ensure that South Australia establishes a world-class system of marine parks, while fostering community ownership and minimising impacts on existing marine activities and uses.

I do not know too many people who would agree that that particular commitment is being achieved. The way that this process has unfolded is actually undermining the conservation cause, because people become so cynical about whether the government is interested in their concerns.

The other aspect I should have mentioned in referring to Professor Possingham's research is that the datasets that need to be included need to be quite thorough, they need to be well researched, and they need to include the social, environmental and economic datasets so that all of those can be taken into consideration, as I understand it. People are questioning where some environmental datasets have come from and whether they have been peer reviewed, and certainly the social and economic data have not been factored into it at all.

I think the government has strategically made quite a blunder in coming out with these particular sanctuary zones, because it has made everybody very, very angry because it has not provided a rationale for why those particular zones have been chosen. I note that the minister did have a crack at me yesterday. I think he is under a fair bit of pressure, so he has flicked the switch to 'nasty', and he made some reference to the fact that I was half an hour late to the sanctuary zone marine park briefing.

Well that was on a day when it took me, I think, an hour and a half to get to Parliament House when it usually takes 45 minutes, and I deliberately apologised when I walked into the meeting. As if I would avoid coming to a briefing like that! If the minister wants to reside in the gutter he can stay there with all his friends, but I will not be drawn into such petty and childish politics. With those remarks, I indicate that I will support this motion. I will seek to amend it and note that Family First has offered that we can co-sponsor the motion; I will be delighted to take up that offer.

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

FORESTRYSA

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.L. Brokenshire:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be appointed to inquire into and report upon the state government's proposal to forward sell harvesting rights in ForestrySA plantation estates, and any other related matters.
2. That standing order No. 389 be so far suspended as to enable the chairperson of the committee to have a deliberative vote only.
3. That this council permits the select committee to authorise the disclosure or publication, as it sees fit, of any evidence or documents presented to the committee prior to such evidence being presented to the council.

4. That standing order No. 396 be suspended to enable strangers to be admitted when the select committee is examining witnesses unless the committee otherwise resolves, but they shall be excluded when the committee is deliberating.

(Continued from 23 March 2011.)

The Hon. M. PARNELL (16:42): The Greens will support this motion to establish a select committee to inquire into and report on the state government's proposal to forward sell harvesting rights in ForestrySA plantation estates. The Greens have long supported the campaign, which has been ably led by local government and community groups in the South-East, to stop the privatisation of our South-East forests. As I said around the time of the protests that were being held here at Parliament House, selling off the family farm is the wrong way to manage the state's finances. The Greens have always opposed privatisation and this is, plain and simple, privatisation.

I do not propose to speak at any length on this motion, but I do want to acknowledge some of the correspondence I have received. In particular, I note the leadership of the District Council of Grant in writing to me and other MPs urging support not just for this motion but for the broader campaign. I note that the www.dontprivatisesaforests.com.au campaign also has the support of the City of Mount Gambier as well as of Don Pegler, the local member and also the Wattle Range Council.

I think this is one of those issues where the government may seek to minimise the harm by walking away from this misguided policy before the select committee has had the chance to do much work, in which case it may well be that the committee is a short, sharp and shiny one. The Greens' position on select committees is that where they seek to inquire into matters of genuine public concern we will generally support them. We do not support every select committee that comes along; there have been a number in the past that I have thought were just witch-hunts, and we have not supported them.

This is not; this is a matter of the utmost importance to the people of the South East. It is a matter of importance to the economy of the state, and it has implications for the extent to which we are prepared to export jobs overseas, which is what would happen if you forward sold these plantation rotations. With those brief words, the Greens will support the establishment of the select committee, and I urge other honourable members to do likewise.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (16:44): I rise on behalf of the Liberal opposition to indicate that we will be supporting this motion for a select committee put by the Hon. Mr Brokenshire. In the Mid-Year Budget Review of December 2008, then treasurer Foley first raised a proposal to forward sell up the three rotations of timber (potentially 111 years of growth) in order to reduce state debt and maintain its credit rating. The proposal has provoked a massive outcry from the entire South-East population. These very public protests have drawn many others around the city and state into the debate and onside against the sale.

I think all of us have noted the two very public rallies when many hundreds of people have come from Mount Gambier and the South-East to protest against this sale on the steps of this building and the footpath, and, of course, in the form of many large trucks that have driven past. The point was made to me that, if there was an issue in Adelaide and people were asked to go to protest in Mount Gambier, how many people from Adelaide would make the trip to Mount Gambier? I think you have to pay testament to the commitment to the region by local South-East residents who came here to display that and for travelling that significant distance at their own expense.

The timber industry is by far the biggest single economic generator in the South-East. A March 2011 community impact statement into the forward sale of ForestrySA plantations by economist and timber industry specialist Dr Bob Smith, stated that the industry contributes between 18 and 20 per cent of the gross regional product and directly supports about 3,600 jobs. Industry employees' wages of \$240 million per annum represent about 18 per cent of the region's entire pay packet.

The belief is that selling the harvesting rights will relinquish control over secondary processing, leaving local industries without the raw material and threaten other downstream industries like building and construction that depend on a ready supply of quality processed timber. Dr Smith's report suggests up to 3,000 jobs could be lost in the region as a result of the forward sale. In the summary he recommends that the government invest in the industry rather than divest its key asset. This supports the line that the Liberal Party has taken in relation to this matter.

The government has commissioned a regional impact statement (and we have heard about that in this place and in the other place from minister Finnigan and minister Snelling) and we

understand that that statement is due for completion soon. I might say that, when the officers who were undertaking that statement went to Mount Gambier to take evidence, they gave the local community about two days' notice, which I think just shows the disdain this government holds for almost all our regional areas.

Treasurer Snelling stated on radio on 11 March that, while he would be happy to look at the community impact statement, he would give preference to the government's own regional impact statement which, as I say, was done in a very hasty fashion at the last minute. There have been conflicting reports from various ministers as to whether the government would drop the plan in the event of an adverse finding in the regional impact statement. Of course, there have been some very public squabbles between the former treasurer (Hon. Mr Foley) and the current Minister for Forests (Hon. Mr O'Brien), and we know there is division in the government regarding this.

Ultimately, no unequivocal assurance has been given that they will not proceed with the sale regardless. The government's decision may be more about whether to sell one or more rotations, or when to sell them, rather than to sell or not to sell.

I do not wish to hold the chamber for too long, but I think a number of us would remember the recent response in this council by the now Leader of the Government to a question from the Hon. Mr Wade, I think. It certainly was a question from this side of the council in relation to the impact on the South-East, and particularly in Mount Gambier, by the forward sale of the forestry.

I would like to quote some excerpts from a column in *The Border Watch* on 18 March by Mr Graham Greenwood, who is a former editor of *The Border Watch*. He is also well-known in the provincial media. He is a regular judge at the Country Press SA Awards and is well regarded in the rural journalism industry. I quote Mr Greenwood:

There is an old trick in politics that has been used many times—when backed into a corner, play the man and not the ball. This week, upper house member of parliament Bernie Finnigan did just that when he suggested the forestry forward sell-off debate was being politically hijacked, perhaps promoted by people with political aspirations. Of course it suits Mr Finnigan and other politicians to trot out the line that this issue is politically motivated, but they are wrong. Locally born, Mr Finnigan has made a mess of this issue and has little or no support in Mount Gambier following his lack of support for the future of this district.

In parliament last week in response to questioning from the Liberal opposition, Mr Finnigan said, 'We all know very well that a lot of this is about who becomes the next Liberal candidates for MacKillop and Mount Gambier at the next election and that is the prism through which a lot of the activity in relation to this campaign has to be judged.' In relation to this comment, it is assumed Mr Finnigan is speaking about Wattle Range mayor Peter Gandolfi and Mount Gambier mayor Steve Perryman.

I will not continue quoting, but Mr Greenwood goes on to indicate that Mr Perryman sought election as the member for Mount Gambier but did not achieve that; however, he did achieve being re-elected unopposed as mayor of the City of Mount Gambier. He also goes on to speculate about the former Labor candidate, great union man and solid Labor supporter, Mr Brad Coates, and his involvement in this campaign against the forward sale, and whether Mr Finnigan thinks that that is politically motivated. I will, however, quote the last section of Mr Greenwood's column:

Mount Gambier was once a Labor town—it used to be a safe Labor seat but not any more. Labor has destroyed its credibility and may never win the seat again. For some time Mount Gambier has been crying out for leadership from its politicians and civic leaders. In this forest forward sell-off the city's leaders have really stepped forward and won universal community praise. As a local, Mr Finnigan should take time to listen to what the community is saying. The only politically motivated actions in this saga are coming from people like Mr Finnigan.

A wise editor once said it was the duty of a newspaper to criticise the mayor when warranted. But if the mayor received unfair criticism from an outside source, the newspaper or community should defend him with great passion. Mr Finnigan stepped over the line.

As has been alluded to by the Hon. Mr Parnell, members of parliament have been informed of the very strong support for this motion from local government in the Lower South-East and from other members of the community across that region. I strongly suggest that, on its formation, the select committee should go to Mount Gambier and meet there to show the community of the South-East that the committee will travel there, given that so many people from Mount Gambier have travelled to Adelaide on two occasions to demonstrate their unhappiness with this move.

I also suggest—and it will be up to the select committee, obviously—that one of the witnesses who should be called would be the former member for Mount Gambier and former minister for forests the Hon. Rory McEwen who, as far as I know, was in the chair as minister for forests when this proposal was first brought forward. I think that, as the person who represented

that city for some 12 years, he ought to be asked about his role in the development of this unwise policy. With those words, I indicate—

The Hon. P. Holloway interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: Paul, you have a few little worries over there, haven't you? You don't have enough to do, obviously.

The Hon. P. Holloway interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: No, he can sit here and be bored like me.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: Having made those remarks, I reiterate the support of the Liberal opposition for the select committee, which has been proposed by the Hon. Mr Brokenshire.

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (16:57): On behalf of the government, I speak in opposition of this motion. The government has outlined previously in the wake of the unfolding global financial crisis its decision to investigate the sale of the forward rotations as part of the 2008-09 Mid-Year Budget Review measures in order to reduce government debt to meet the increased demand in our core public services like doctors, nurses, police and teachers.

We are still in that process, having recently commissioned ACIL Tasman, an independent specialist economics consultancy firm, to develop a regional impact statement (RIS). The RIS will identify any potential impacts on the South-East region and its economy. It is expected that the government will receive the RIS soon and the Treasurer, as the minister responsible for this matter, will discuss the findings of the RIS with his cabinet colleagues. I understand that the consultants on the RIS have begun speaking with a wide range of key stakeholders in the South-East.

As we have said time and time again, we have not made a final decision on this matter. When we do, we will base our decision on evidence, not emotion. We want to ensure that we have considered the matter from a number of perspectives, but it is also important to make sure that we are dealing with facts. There has been, quite frankly, a large amount of misinformation spread about this proposal, particularly from some members opposite who have made some quite outrageous public comments in order to gain public support against a possible divestment.

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

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO: Well, I am certainly not playing any man; I do not work that way. The government does not believe in scaring people with unsubstantiated claims about employment losses. We do not believe in that. It is irresponsible to scare people with unfounded claims about the collapse of the economy of the South-East region, yet this is what some community leaders in the South-East have been doing. We have repeatedly said that we have not made a final decision on this matter. We will look closely at the regional economic impacts. We will consider the impact on employment and we will consider the impact on the social fabric of the South-East before a final decision is made.

The new Treasurer, in response to a question from the independent member from Mount Gambier, Mr Don Pegler MP, told the lower house on 23 February this year that no final decision has been made by cabinet on this proposal and that no final decision will be made until the consultation process and the RIS is completed. We have also said that, if we do not think that the sale of forward rotations is going to provide value for the state, then we will not proceed. This is why we have commissioned an external independent consultant to look at the facts through the RIS process. We will need to be convinced that any sale will not have an adverse impact on the South-East before we enter into any discussions about the sale process.

The Premier is already on the record, on 24 November last year, as saying that if the potential is no longer economically viable then the government will not proceed with the sale. We have said this over and over again, yet we still have community leaders from the South-East spreading myths and misinformation about its demise. Recent speculation of job losses in ForestrySA by some of these leaders is pure political opportunism. I respectfully ask these community leaders to listen to our announcements about the future of ForestrySA and stop waging the scare campaign.

The government believes in the ongoing sustainability of this resource, and that is why we will continue to replant forests after clear-fell and ensure that our forests are there for future generations. This is why we have established bodies like the Forest Industry Development Board—to look at ways to grow the industry. We are committed to the forest industry in the state now and into the future. This is why we will be retaining ForestrySA in state ownership.

The government is committed to getting the right decision about the proposed sale of forward rotations and to ensuring that we consult and grow this important industry sector into the future. It is not in the public interest to be wasting resources by establishing yet another select committee when a decision about this matter has not even been made. Accordingly, the government does not support the motion.

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN (Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for Gambling) (17:03): I acknowledge that there is a lot of concern in the community in the South-East and across the state about the proposed forward sale of the forest industry. What is important about this is that, first, this was announced some time ago. We have been very up-front with people about the fact that this was on the agenda. We have put in place a process, as my honourable colleague has outlined, to study carefully the economic and social impacts of any proposed sale, and that will be considered by the government before any decision is made.

But what we have seen from the Liberal Party is complete hypocrisy on this issue. This is the party which, when in government, sold a lot of the mills, which is where most of the employment is and where a lot of the fear has been generated about the processing of timber—precisely because they have seen what happens when a government hangs them out to dry, as the former Liberal government did. One of the main reasons people in the area are concerned about this is that they saw what happened across the border under the Jeff Kennett Liberal government, where everything was sold, including the land—lock, stock and barrel.

What the government is proposing and investigating is the option of forward selling harvesting rights. ForestrySA would remain in public ownership, as would the land. There is no suggestion that the government is going to privatise this asset, or sell it off lock, stock and barrel, which is what the Liberals have done in other places. For them to get on their high horse now and weep crocodile tears about this proposal is just their usual hypocrisy.

I would ask: what is the Liberal plan for the forests in the South-East? I believe it is acknowledged across the board that we cannot just sit back and hope for the best when it comes to the future of the forest industry. We know there is strong global competition, and that is a challenging environment that the forest industry will face into the future. Indeed, some of the local people and community leaders are saying there that ForestrySA needs to borrow money to invest, to buy up more and to expand the estate, rather than go down this track. Others would take the view that someone who has bought the harvesting rights may choose to make a greater investment in the industry.

What is needed is a secure future for the industry to ensure those jobs are protected and that the industry remains an important economic source, and employment source, in the South-East and elsewhere. So, what is the Liberal policy in regard to this? Is their policy just to sit at the sidelines and lob grenades and say, 'We have no plan. We have no plan for the future of forestry. We're just going to sit back and hope for the best and, one day, if somebody in global markets decides it's cheaper for them to buy their timber from Indonesia, China or somewhere else, well that will just be bad luck.'

Rather than that, this government is being proactive, and we are looking at this industry and saying, 'What is going to be the best future for this industry?' We are going forward into the future to ensure that its economic vitality and its jobs base is protected, because I think it is widely acknowledged that doing nothing is not an option when it comes to the forestry industry in the South-East.

The Hon. Mr Dawkins read out some quotes from an article in *The Border Watch* and, indeed, I was referring to the Mayor of Wattle Range, Mr Gandolfi, and the Mayor of Mount Gambier, Mr Perryman, who have both stood as Liberal candidates for Mount Gambier in the last two elections. I have no doubt that a major part of this campaign has been motivated by political interests and, particularly, by people trying to line themselves up for future tilts at MacKillop or Mount Gambier, whether that be as Liberal candidates or as Independents, if they find they

cannot knock off Mitch for preselection. There is no doubt that there is politics in this and, certainly, if Mr Gandolfi and Mr Perryman wish to rule out standing for the next—

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

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: If Mr Gandolfi and Mr Perryman want to rule out standing in future state elections as candidates, then I will apologise to them.

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

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: Let me say that again: if Mr Perryman and Mr Gandolfi want to publicly pledge that they will not be candidates at a future state election, then I will apologise that I said they were politically motivated, because it is quite clear that there are political interests involved here. I believe—

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

The Hon. B.V. FINNIGAN: The Hon. Mr Dawkins is trying to shout me down precisely because he knows that there is political motivation in what is going on in some elements of the campaign being run there. I think ratepayers have a right to ask how much of their money has been put from local governments into this campaign in order to boost the political careers of individuals.

A good example of that is the community impact statement that was launched with some fanfare and was reported as suggesting that 3,000 jobs would go. Well, here is the community impact statement, which is available on the campaign website, and I am assuming that local government made some contribution, either to this campaign or to the production of this document.

So, here is their great community impact statement, which was reported as proving that the whole thing was going to be a disaster and cost thousands of jobs. Here are all 10 pages of the glory of the community impact statement: Page 1, title page; Page 2, contents page; and then there are eight pages, including a nice graph at the back. It has no-one's name on it; it does not say where it is from or who wrote it—none of that anywhere—and yet it was reported as saying that there were definitely 3,000 jobs which will go, because 3,000 jobs is the total industry employment estimated.

If you actually read what this supposed community impact statement does say, it basically says that it is very difficult to judge what the effects might be of a forestry sale in an unconstrained way without knowing exactly what the parameters are, and that is why the government has commissioned its own study. We are looking at it carefully. We are not going to just accept this notion that it is going to be a fire sale and that the whole thing will be sold off lock, stock and barrel, including the land and the corporation, because the government has said that that will not happen.

So, if you look carefully at what this report says, it makes very clear that an unconstrained, unrestricted fire sale of the forestry assets in the South-East would be damaging to the region, and that undoubtedly is true, which is why the government is not engaging in an unconstrained, no-holds-barred fire sale of the assets, including the land and the company. We are not doing that in the South-East. Indeed, as we have indicated again and again, no decision has even been made as to what is going to be outcome. We have put in place the regional impact statement process and, once we have that, we will look at it carefully and make a decision from there.

While no decision has been made, it would seem particularly premature to set up a select committee to inquire into something. Like many of the select committees that are set up in this place, it has a predetermined outcome. We have heard all honourable members getting up and saying how they think this is a bad idea. So, what is the point of having a select committee? What is for? Is it going to come back and say, 'Well, we had a look at it, and now we think it is great.'

They have already decided that they oppose this policy. They oppose this idea because of their narrow political interests. When they were in government, they were happy to sell off everything—they were happy to sell off ETSA and they were happy to sell off the TAB for less than \$50 million. They know that now they are acting out of a narrow political interest, trying to get their men up in future elections. So, they are simply playing political games, and the select committee is undoubtedly a part of that.

If you make a speech to propose a select committee and say, 'This is a terrible idea and it is going to ruin the community,' what is the point of having the committee? You have already written the report; you have already decided what it is going to find. So, let's just save everybody's time and money and why don't you table the report right now? It is an absurd process when it is very clear that there is no way on God's green earth that this committee is going to come back and

say, 'Well, having thought about it and having had a look at it now, we've decided that, yes, it's a good idea. We're right behind you now.'

This committee is not about finding out what is in the best interests of the South-East. This committee is about political grandstanding and members, hopefully, having an opportunity to get themselves on television and stir up more angst, more anger and more fear in the minds of residents in the South-East about a proposed sale that has not even been decided on, and that is reckless and irresponsible of the opposition. It is acting purely out of political interest and not having the true interests of the people in the South-East at heart.

Well, I, as I am sure you do, Mr President, have the interests of the people of the people of the South-East at heart. I am not going to be part of a government that just stands by and slowly waits for the forest industry to decline or slowly waits for global competition to overwhelm them. I will be part of a government that will make sure that the forestry industry has a future for its economic growth and for its jobs, and what that future will be will depend on the evidence and what is going to be the best for the people of the South-East and for that industry, and that decision has not been made. That decision will be made on the evidence, not on the basis of some narrow, self-concerned political campaign from the opposition and from certain individuals who are worried about their own political future.

I am particularly concerned that, by constantly talking down the South-East and constantly saying that the community will be ruined if this goes ahead and everyone will lose their jobs, the opposition is talking down the area and the industry and threatening the very people it claims to be protecting. The opposition is threatening the very people whose interests it claims to be protecting. It is talking down the industry and the area. It is saying that the South-East will be ruined, property values will plummet and 3,000 people will be unemployed overnight. It is trying to make the South-East a political football and it is threatening the livelihood of the very people it is claiming to protect, and it is outrageous.

Every time they get up there and say the South-East is going to be ruined, the South-East has no future, Mount Gambier is going to close and 3,000 people will be out of work, they are deliberately talking down that area, which does have a very bright future, not only within the forest industry but in many other industries as well. I do not think there is any doubt in my mind, or in the mind of any serious economist either, that the South-East and Mount Gambier have a very bright economic future for all sorts of reasons to do with climate and location and a whole range of things.

Instead, what the opposition are doing is trying to make it sound as if 3,000 people will be out of work overnight and that property values will collapse and that the town will be ruined. They are trying to cast doubt and fear into the community and make those people in the South-East and around this state believe the South-East has no future. That is grossly irresponsible; it is reckless; it is just political gamesmanship; it is playing political football with people's lives, and I am appalled that that is the game the opposition have been playing.

As I say, I acknowledge that people are concerned about this policy. They are legitimate concerns. People are entitled to put their concerns forward. I have been happy to listen to what people have had to say. I do not doubt anybody's right to put forward their point of view. I do not doubt their right to protest outside here at Parliament House, but what I do have an issue with, what I do have a problem with, is the scaremongering and the fear campaign, the talking down the area, threatening people's jobs, threatening people's livelihoods, threatening the future of the area for a few political points, for a few lines in *The Border Watch*, for a few snippets on the TV news. It is grossly irresponsible, it is reckless and it ought to be condemned.

This select committee is a sham. It is another part of their campaign. It is another part of their trying to talk down the future of the area, trying to threaten the livelihood of the South-East into the future. The government has been very clear: we have put in place a process to examine the potential possible forward sale of forestry harvesting. We are in the middle of that process. The regional impact statement is being prepared. When that is, the government will consider it carefully and a decision will be made.

That decision will be made in the best interests of the people of the South-East and of the state and in the best interests of the workers there as well, because we do know that whatever happens it is very important that forestry has a future and that the forestry industry is invested in so that there will be the economic and jobs base of the future. This government is not interested in political grandstanding. We are not interested in the big football. We are not interested in playing around with people's lives in the South-East in order to score a few political points. We will take a

principled, objective, balanced decision, based on the evidence, that will be in the best interests of the state and in the best interests of the residents of the South-East.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (17:18): I had not intended to speak until I heard I think probably two of the more appalling contributions to any debate that I have heard in quite some time in this chamber, from the leader of the government, the Hon. Mr Finnegan, and the Hon. Ms Zollo, trying to defend the government's indefensible position on this. It is sad; it is demeaning of both members that they should have made those contributions in the fashion that they have done.

What we have just seen is a vicious attack on community leaders and people who happen to take a particular view which is different to this government's view. We saw, as I said, firstly from the Hon. Ms Zollo and then supported by the Hon. Mr Finnigan, a vicious, premeditated attack on community leaders, council leaders, union leaders, worker representatives, forestry workers and others by the representatives of this delusional and out-of-touch government.

What they are saying—and they will not be prepared to say it outside, I am sure—is that the opposition to this position by these community leaders is not a genuinely held view; it is a view being held by some because they just want to win future political office. That is what the Labor Party representatives are saying in this chamber. They do not really believe this. They do not really believe what they are saying. They are only doing it to get a financial benefit or a future benefit for themselves by running for political office. That is what the government is saying about these political leaders, these community leaders, these union leaders, these forestry leaders, these business leaders and other representatives in the South-East.

I am proud to say that I spent almost the first 20 years of my life calling Mount Gambier home. My family are still in Mount Gambier, and members of my family and friends of mine are active participants in the forestry and forestry-related industries. Unlike the Hon. Mr Finnigan, I do not intend to turn my back on or spit in the face of former friends, acquaintances and family in Mount Gambier and the South-East and abuse them under parliamentary privilege in this chamber because they happen to have a view that is different from the government's on this issue. That is how far this debate has descended, from the government's viewpoint.

It is not just the mayors of the councils down there; we have received letters unanimously endorsed by whole councils. So, what is the Hon. Mr Finnigan and the Hon. Mrs Zollo saying—that all those members of the councils are deluded by the leadership of their mayors and do not really believe what they are supporting in terms of these resolutions? This attack is not on just the mayors but on every council member who supported those particular motions. It is on every one of those people who have signed petitions, it is an attack on every one of the protesters who came to Adelaide, who gave up their time and money to come here to try to put a point of view to this government on this issue.

People like the Hon. Mr Finnigan, who pretends to be representative of the country, who pretends to be a representative of Mount Gambier, have turned their back on them. It was not just that he did not agree, because on many occasions when you are in government you make decisions with which you do not agree; but you do not then launch premeditated, vicious assaults on the individuals who have taken a view that is different from yours.

The Hon. Mr Finnigan wants to put challenges out to people, but I put a challenge out to the Hon. Mr Finnigan: go outside of parliamentary privilege and parliament and say exactly those things—that the only reason these people are running these particular campaigns is that they want political office. That is what he is saying. If he wants to issue challenges, I issue a challenge to the Hon. Mr Finnigan: go outside and make those same statements in the community.

I bet he will not have the courage to do so, he will not have the courage to go outside this place and make all those statements in relation to attributing attitudes to those community leaders, that they do not believe the views they have been putting, that they are just making up those views because they want a financial or personal benefit by being elected to political office at some time in the future.

The *Hansard* record will not show it, but government members are squealing like stuck pigs over this issue at the moment. Let me put on the public record that, whilst the record will not show it, the government members—the Hon. Mr Holloway and the Hon. Mr Finnigan—are squealing like stuck pigs at the moment because they are embarrassed about the position being put by their representatives in this debate.

Let me address three or four of the issues that have been raised in supposed defence from the government. The first claim, which is unadulterated tripe, is that no decision has been taken. We had the Hon. Mr Finnigan standing up, 'No decision has been taken.' The Hon. Mrs Zollo says that no decision has been taken in relation to this issue.

Let me tell you, Mr President, having been a treasurer, nothing gets put into the forward estimates by Treasury unless there is a decision of the government to base it on. It is as simple as that. Nothing will go into the forward estimates of the budget—and the forward estimates are this year's budget and the next three years—unless there is a decision of the government. On a number of occasions, Treasury would have said to me when I was treasurer, 'Treasurer, we put this into the forward estimates because there is a decision of the cabinet to back that particular inclusion in the forward estimates.'

This is not a minor amount of money of \$100,000 here or there or even \$1 million here or there. This is approximately \$500 million in the forward estimates which had been included by Treasury on the basis of a government decision having been announced and taken 2½ years ago at the time of the 2008-09 Mid-Year Budget Review.

It may well be, because of the strength of the community opposition and some opposition within the Labor caucus and the cabinet, as well, that the government is now reconsidering its position. That may well be the case and, if it is the case, the only reason it is the case is because of the strength of the opposition from community leaders, supported by members of parliament like the Liberal Party, the Greens and others. That would be the only reason why the decision may well be back in the melting pot.

It is a bit like the decision on the Parks Community Centre. That decision was made, included in the forward estimates as a result, but because of the community opposition to that decision, they backflipped, they backed down and they had to take it out of the forward estimates. That might be the set of circumstances that is occurring at the moment; that is, because of the strength of the opposition (which they underestimated), they thought that if the Hon. Mr Finnigan rolled over on his tummy and accepted the decision, that everyone else would roll over on their collective tummies and accept the decision, as well.

Well, that is not going to happen with the South-East. One thing I can say about the South-East is that the people pride themselves on their independence, their ability to fight for their causes and their capacity to take up the battle on behalf of their community with whatever government—Liberal or Labor—happens to take a decision contrary to their best interests.

Let's not hear this nonsense, this unadulterated tripe from government members that no decision has been taken. They might be rethinking it, they might reconsider it, but you do not get \$500 million slipped into the budget forward estimates unless there is a decision of the government and of the cabinet to justify it. It is as simple as that and I can put it no more clearly than that.

The other point that the Hon. Mr Finnigan was making was that there was a predetermined outcome from a possible select committee. The benefit of a select committee is clearly to take evidence from community leaders—and not just community leaders but other representatives—and to give them a chance to put their point of view. I hope the Hon. Mr Finnigan, who says he is a representative of Mount Gambier, will have the courage to sit on the select committee. I hope he will not be a political coward and not sit on the select committee.

Let's not hear any nonsense that ministers do not sit on select committees, because I and other ministers in the former government sat on a number of select committees. Given the fact that he has virtually little to do, anyway, in his portfolios (they are so junior) he should have plenty of time to sit on a select committee and listen to the evidence. I do not know but I hope that he will not be a political coward and that he will be prepared to sit on this committee and listen to the evidence from the community, bureaucrats and others who should be called before that committee. If he does not, he will be guilty of political cowardice that has never been seen before in this chamber.

The committee will also be able to take evidence from government bureaucrats. Let us find out why Treasury put it into the forward estimates. Let us find out whether in their view a decision had been taken in relation to this particular issue. Let us find out why the regional impact statements from the bureaucrats and others have only just commenced in the last whatever the period is.

This decision, as the Hon. Mr Holloway likes to bleat, was announced back in the 2008-09 Mid-Year Budget Review. Why didn't a regional impact statement, or anything, commence at that

particular time? Again, the only reason we are seeing any of these regional impact statements and other things is because of the massive uprising, the protests, and the concern being expressed in the South-East community about this particular proposition from the government.

A number of those witnesses have not given evidence to any committee. There is no information available publicly as to the reasons why we have moved down this particular path. No reasons have been given publicly, for example, as to why the government has chosen three rotations as opposed to two, or whatever it is. What is the information available in relation to whether they will allow the shortening of rotations under private sector ownership, for example?

A number of questions need to be put to important public servants in a number of government departments, such as Treasury, possibly primary industries, certainly ForestrySA, and a range of other departments and agencies. They would need to give evidence to this particular committee. So it is not just a vehicle to listen to the community concerns, as important as that is; it is to throw some facts, some light and some evidence on the basis for the policy that the government has in mind, and what the potential implications and ramifications of that policy might be.

As I said, I did not intend to speak until I heard the vicious attacks from the Hon. Mrs Zollo and the Hon. Mr Finnigan on community leaders who are not able to represent themselves in this particular chamber and also the unadulterated tripe of some of the claims that no decisions have been taken, and that there was no point in having a select committee because we would know everything anyway in terms of the public record.

I strongly support the motion for the establishment of the select committee. I hope it is passed. I will conclude by saying again that I hope that the Hon. Mr Finnigan does not turn his back again on the people of Mount Gambier and that he has the courage and is prepared to sit on this committee and listen to the evidence first-hand.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (17:33): First and foremost, I thank honourable colleagues for their contribution. I have certainly appreciated those important contributions. In wrapping up, I just want to acknowledge quite a few people outside of the chamber who have actually put a big effort into expressing concerns about the proposed forward sale of our forests.

On other occasions, when there has been a significant sell-off of state government assets, they have had to come through both houses of parliament in a democratic process to be passed. The advice to me is that, on this occasion, the forward sale of our forestry actually does not have to come through the parliament, and that in itself must ring an enormous alarm bell with all of us who represent our South Australian community.

Whilst I will say at the outset that the government's decision will most seriously impact the South-East, it will also impact a range of other areas of the state: Kuitpo, Williamstown, the Mid North, and other areas. The impact will be felt by all South Australians—city and country. It will not only impact existing South Australians; the impact of this is so potentially serious that it could impact generations way out, because we are talking about a potential sale—privatisation—of forestry assets to any buyer. It could be an overseas buyer, and probably will be if it is sold. It is going to see a situation where our great-grandchildren will be impacted by this decision.

Let's talk for a moment about the impacts and how broad they are. The impacts to the building industry: one of the reasons that successive governments have supported the development of ForestrySA and the government ownership of our forests has been because—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE: Thank you for your protection, Mr President. From an environmental point of view, it was paramount that we initially had to start up these forests to stop the devastation of our native timber across the state and, from there, there has been a lot of environmental research decade after decade on the benefits of sustainable and renewable forestry. We have enormous concern already being raised at what could happen with the sustainability of our building industry. On that, I want to say that already we are seeing how difficult it is for first home buyers in this state. Imagine what would happen if we do not have a sustainable, managed and controlled-by-government timber supply to our building industry. That in itself is a most alarming concern. I want to—

The Hon. P. Holloway interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Mr Holloway shouldn't remind the honourable member that he sold the sawmills.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: —acknowledge a number of people that have done an incredible job from the South-East in raising their issues and concerns. I put on the public record my appreciation of the City of Mount Gambier, the District Council of Grant and the Wattle Range Council. I also put on the record that the South East Local Government Association has done a lot of work in this. Individual businesses have done a lot of work in raising the concern. We saw mums, dads and kids out here on two occasions at probably two of the most significant rallies we have seen for some time where the people had to travel enormous distances at a huge cost because they were so concerned about this decision and the potential risk for the future for the South-East as a region and also for the state of South Australia.

We need to remind colleagues in here that one of the leaders of this charge was the CFMEU. The CFMEU have actually put in and endorsed very many members of parliament here, and I am sure that the CFMEU are wondering about their investment into those government members of parliament when they are not seeing any fight or support for the very workers that the CFMEU still support (and will continue to support), but we do not see that support from members on the government side that have been assisted into the parliament by them.

I want to raise a couple of points. First and foremost, colleagues may or may not know that there was information that we were able to get hold of from Dr Jerry Leech. He is a forestry scientist and he has warned that the state's forests could be sold off at \$1 billion below their true value. This is a credible person—Dr Jerry Leech. He is a former and very prominent scientist for ForestrySA, who was one of the people charged over many years with the development of our forestry industry, and he is saying that: 'the sell-off could "short change" the state by more than \$1b'.

The former principal scientist to what is now ForestrySA, who has also worked as a forestry consultant to the United Nations, drew from precedents of both Queensland and Victorian privatisation of forests. Dr Leech, who has undertaken considerable analysis on the value of the asset, estimates that the estate would sell (so, if they sold all these forests off) for no more than \$600 million for three rotations—well below its value outlined in ForestrySA's annual report. The government wants to sell this off at a lower price potentially than that of the annual report. He goes on: 'I see no sense whatsoever in selling ForestrySA.'

On that point, when we did finally get one report on this, hidden in part of that report was some information from PIRSA. As well as agriculture and fishing, PIRSA is actually responsible for forestry. PIRSA as a department strongly recommended against the sale, yet the government, in defiance of the very department that has the control, management, knowledge and skills, just swept it to one side.

This is about the future of South Australia. I was slightly offended, not for myself, because as politicians we have to take the hustle and bustle in the chamber, but for the people of the South-East, and not only for those people. I am sure my colleagues, even just in general conversation when you go to the shopping centre or into your local town, have had people say, 'What on earth is going on with the government wanting to privatise our forests?' These people have genuine and legitimate reasons for protesting about these concerns. That is what they have, and the parliament is the only opportunity these people have to get some transparency, honesty and real input into this issue.

I am not sure who has actually been driving this—I have no idea—but if this select committee gets up it will be interesting to see who were the drivers behind it, what was the net cost benefit analysis, what they project will be the forward sale values of these forests, and a range of other questions. What guarantees and assurances did they consider with respect to jobs and the potential loss of jobs? Did they look at what other opportunities could be valued on and grown if it were to stay in government ownership? There are so many unanswered questions.

With a couple more points I will reiterate two or three things. First and foremost, this regional impact statement was never going to be considered by the government. It was only after enormous pressure from a very large cross section of people that it started to develop the terms of reference for regional impact statements. On that very point, I have had very sensible people raise with me the terms of reference, and they say that they do not go far enough. I do not know what the terms of reference are. I have not been privy, as a member of parliament, to those terms of reference, but would you not have thought that you would have done a regional impact statement

before actually putting in a cabinet submission? I would have thought so, particularly on this, because this is an enormous amount of money we are talking here.

It particularly concerns me that it is in the forward estimates. We need to know what are the facts, figures and the truth of this whole thing. I am open minded from the point of view of getting a cross-section and broad evidence but, when you see the government making very quick decisions (after a visit from someone in the eastern states) to spend \$530 million or \$540 million on the Adelaide Oval; when you see very late decisions on projects that I am delighted are occurring, like the doubling of the Southern Expressway, but made very late, you wonder whether that money from the forests, if they are to sell it, is just to get them out of trouble so that they can deliver these projects with no clear thinking about the long-term future of the state. That is simply why I propose this particular select committee.

My final point is that I am offended by one comment from a government member who said that it was a waste of resources and money for us as a Legislative Council to have a select committee into this. The amount of money we will spend on this select committee is a drop in the bucket compared with decisions the government makes every day. What if it did cost \$50,000 to have this select committee? If we happen to find this is a very bad decision for this state's future we could be saving hundreds of millions of dollars. I do not accept the argument. It is an offensive argument to say that we should not be spending money on a select committee until we wait and see what the government decides to do.

I say to the government that it would be a government in defiance of the basic democracy of this state if it makes a decision to sell these assets before the select committee, if it gets up, reports to the parliament. It would be an absolute defiance of democracy. It would be far more than the arrogant government that we know: it would be an absolute defiance of democracy. Now, as my colleague the Hon. Mark Parnell said, the government may turn around and make a decision in the next few weeks, as the fire really starts to build, and say, 'No, that's it, we're not going to sell it.'

I would suggest to the house that it may still be worthwhile continuing the select committee: first, to get to the truth of it; and, secondly, to ensure that, if this is ever put up again, there is public evidence about the pros and cons of this issue. As the Hon. Mark Parnell said—and other colleagues have spoken to me about it also—this is privatisation. This is selling off an asset, and it is one of the biggest assets that the state still owns. With those words, I again thank my colleagues and everybody who has contributed both inside and outside this parliament.

Motion carried.

The council appointed a select committee consisting of the Hons D.W. Ridgway, J.S. Lee, P. Holloway, R.P. Wortley and R.L. Brokenshire; the committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place; the committee to report on 27 July 2011.

MILK PRICING

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.L. Brokenshire:

That this council:

1. Notes with concern the impact on the dairy industry of the Coles milk pricing strategy and that—
 - (a) dairy farmers around the country are today seriously questioning their future having suffered through one of the worst decades in memory, including droughts, floods, price cuts and rising costs of input such as energy and feed; and
 - (b) unsustainable retail milk prices will, over time, compel processors to renegotiate contracts with dairy farmers and the prospect that these contracts will be below the cost of production may force many to leave the industry; and
 - (c) the fact that supermarkets are now selling milk cheaper than many varieties of bottled water will be the straw that finally breaks the camel's back for many dairy farmers; and
 - (d) the risk of other potential impacts include—
 - i. decreased competition as name brands are forced from the shelves; and
 - ii. the possible loss of fresh milk supplies to some parts of the country as local fresh milk industries become unviable.
2. Calls upon the federal government to—
 - (a) ask the ACCC to immediately undertake an investigation into the big supermarkets and milk wholesalers after recent price cuts to ensure they do not have too much market power and are not uncompetitive in their behaviour; and

- (b) support the new Senate inquiry into the ongoing milk price war between the country's major supermarket chains.

(Continued from 9 March 2011.)

The Hon. M. PARNELL (17:47): The Greens support this motion, and I will very briefly set out what I think most members in this place appreciate. It is quite simple: the duopoly of ownership of the bulk of our grocery market in the hands of two major players is bad for consumers, growers and producers (in relation to this motion, we are talking about milk producers) and it needs to be addressed, not just at a South Australian level—there is only so much we can do—but certainly at a federal level.

I note that this motion refers to the ACCC, which is the appropriate authority for looking at anti-competitive behaviour, and it also refers to the new Senate inquiry into the ongoing milk price war between the country's major supermarket chains. My information is that that inquiry is now well advanced, and so at one level, whilst we are voting on this today—whilst it might seem redundant to be supporting something that is already well advanced—I still think that it is important that the Legislative Council, representing all the people of South Australia, puts on the record its support for a vibrant economy, which includes support for farmers, growers and, also in the long run, consumers as well. The Greens will be supporting the motion.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (17:49): I rise on behalf of the Liberal members to indicate that we will be supporting this motion. While the general public might be enjoying some temporary benefit from cheap milk, industry commentators repeatedly warn that excessive price discounting will lead to higher prices, less choice and quality and, ultimately, harm the Australian primary production industry. The battle between the two major retailers, with anxious farmers Australia-wide also weighing in to the argument, has had a constant place in the media since late January and is likely to remain a hot topic until it is resolved.

I would like to refer particularly to the clauses in the honourable member's motion. In respect of 1(a), (b) and (c), I make the following comments. Dairy farmers are reconsidering their vocational futures. The rise in home-brand milk sales has been offset by a fall in branded milk lines. We have seen, I think, an impact on the dairy industry and the outlets in South Australia and also in south-western Victoria and Tasmania very recently.

I note the story in the media the other day about the Fleurieu milk company, where some dairy farmers who were unhappy with the price they were getting have gone into producing their own brand. Not every dairy farmer has the opportunity to do what those in the Fleurieu milk company have done, and many do not have that capacity, but I commend those producers for doing so and for providing the choice in the community.

The rise in supermarket sales that followed on from the \$1 a litre move has been offset by an across-the-board fall in convenience store sales. The major milk processors have no choice but to compete, and they can only do so by dropping prices. With dairy contracts due for renewal in July, dairy farmers face an inevitable and potentially unwinnable battle to retain profitability. This has already happened in Queensland, where Parmalat has reduced the bulk price paid to farmers by 14¢ per litre on 20 per cent of the milk supplied, which it says reflects its share of different market segments. This equates to an almost 5 per cent cut. Farmers' margins could never be described as being excessive, so that really does hurt.

Many farmers will opt out and sell their herds to bigger producers, who can better manage price cuts through economies of scale. While this does mean overall volumes may remain static, it also means that smaller family-owned dairy herds will be sold and relocated and with that goes a lot of the expertise those family operations have developed, including their knowledge of the land on which they operate and their stewardship of the environment in which they farm.

The farmer, in many cases, will be left a choice of going into a different agricultural or horticultural field or subdividing, if that is possible, and sell. The latter obviously will be more attractive to many, and that could see more prime productive land dropping out of production, as hobby farmers and lifestylers move into that area. I think we have already seen that in a number of prominent dairying areas of South Australia.

In response to 1(d) of the Hon. Mr Brokenshire's motion, the loss of choice of name brands inevitably leads to a lack of true competition and a subsequent increase in price. International demand for milk will stay high and grow, but it is a very volatile marketplace, with many players. The domestic premium market, while smaller, is much more stable and forms a firm base for milk

producers. Damaging that domestic premium market will increase the volatility and risk of dairy farming in South Australia.

In conclusion, I would like to make some comments in relation to part 2 of the honourable member's motion. Firstly, in relation to 2(a), the market share war between Coles and Woolworths and its potential effect on producers became very public last year with the sow stalls issue. The attempt by Coles to gain market advantage threatened pork producers Australia wide. Public and political pressure forced them to back down. The war has since spread from the milk price battle dominating the daily news. Eggs, meat and bread are to receive the same treatment, with Coles claiming that it is doing it all for the customer's benefit. An investigation into the competitiveness of the market in relation to the extraordinary domination of two major retailers will undoubtedly save other producer groups from repeat performances of the same costly dilemma.

In relation to 2(b), I make these comments. A Senate inquiry into the milk price war can only improve the general understanding of the causes and effects of price discounting on producers large and small, long-term prices, product choice and, less obviously, the viability of thousands of smaller retailers that form part of the social fabric of Australian life. With those words, the Liberal Party supports the motion.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (17:56): Firstly, I would like to congratulate the honourable member for putting this motion before the council. His continued passion for an industry he knows very well is to be applauded. Let me begin by giving members a brief overview of the dairy industry in this state. The South Australian dairy industry contributed 800—

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway: This is too much.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: Is there something funny?

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway: Too much.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: Is this the sort of contempt—

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: It is not giving him a lecture; I am sure he knows more than most of us put together. I think it is typical of the arrogance of the opposition members. There is an important motion here, the government is supporting it, and all we get is mocked by the opposition bench. You are a joke, you are a rabble, and may you spend many, many decades right where you are.

The South Australian dairy industry contributed \$821 million in gross food revenue in 2009-10. Currently, there are approximately 300 dairy businesses milking more than 90,000 cows and producing about 600 million litres of milk. It is estimated that the industry directly employs 2,000 people, the majority of whom are involved in family businesses. Dairy farmers supply their milk to a number of major dairy processors including National Foods, Murray Goulburn, Warrnambool Cheese and Butter, Bega Cheese Limited, B.-d. Farm Paris Creek and Fonterra. South Australia is also home to more than 40 accredited manufacturers. Again, estimates suggest that up to 800 people are employed in this sector, and I would imagine that many members of this council have indulged in some of South Australia's finest product.

The SA Food ScoreCard estimates that just under half of this production is processed in South Australia for the fresh milk market or manufactured into dairy products. The remainder of the milk is processed interstate, primarily for either the domestic manufacturing markets or exports. As the member has noted, the South Australian dairy farmers and processors have experienced a number of difficult years, including drought, access and availability of water, and a reduction in global demand and subsequently farmgate price.

Another more recent issue that may have had a medium term impact on the industry in South Australia is the announcement by National Foods, which currently contracts around 40 to 50 per cent of South Australia's milk production, that it is negotiating the sale of its Murray Bridge and Jervois facilities and the closure of two plants in Victoria, which farmers in the Limestone Coast region are likely to supply.

In summary, farmers and processors alike are doing it tough. On 26 January 2011, as part of its Down Under campaign, Coles announced it was cutting the price of Coles brand fresh milk to \$2 for two litres for both full cream and reduced fat milk, which usually commands a premium on

full cream milk. In South Australia this represents a reduction of about 20 per cent. Soon after, other supermarkets also reduced their generic milk prices. Coles also reduced the price of its Coles brand butter and cream. In its press releases, Coles suggested that it is absorbing the cost and the move would not impact on milk processors or dairy farmers.

The milk price discount is yet another concern amongst dairy farmers, as well as processors in South Australia, particularly as both sectors enter into the next round of price negotiations. Dairy farmer sentiment is aligned with that of the national body; that is, they are concerned about the longer term impact on the milk price, the devaluing of their product and the impact on the farm gate price. Manufacturers of milk products have also noticed a marked reduction in sales of their branded products, indicating that consumers are price sensitive and are shifting their purchasing behaviour towards cheaper product.

In relation to the motion put forward, I offer the following. It is true that a significant number of dairy farmers in South Australia will be considering their long-term future in the industry. Many have suffered from the impacts of drought, including rising costs of production that, in many cases, are higher than the price being received. The 2010 Dairy Situation and Outlook report suggests that 30 to 40 per cent of farmers surveyed were generally negative about the future of their industry. The recent announcement by National Foods may also cause significant concerns for some farmers.

Sustained low retail prices and the associated flow-on impacts to the non-grocery sector will place increasing pressures on domestic processing margins and may well flow back to the farmer. This is particularly true of those processors who have only a limited export capability. We must remember, though, that the Australian industry, including parts of South Australia, is a major contributor to world trade and international prices and will also have a significant influence on prices.

It is true that in some cases the current cost of home brand milk is less than many other drink categories. As previously described, if this low price translates to a low on-farm price for those supplying the domestic processors it may lead to dairy farmers leaving the industry, as they may not be able to cover the cost of production.

Industry has already recorded a decrease in the sales of their branded milk products, in some cases up to 20 to 30 per cent. This is hurting not only the majors but also our smaller local processors. Further pressure is being applied to processors from the non-grocery sector—for instance, food services—to match the prices of the retail home brand category. It is therefore possible that as brands become less profitable companies will reassess their value.

Industry data suggests that consumers prefer fresh milk and that UHT long-life milk is not a preferred substitute. Given the perishable nature of milk, it is likely that importing fresh milk is not cost-effective. Therefore, as long as consumers are demanding fresh milk and recognise its value at the point of sale, it is likely that the supply chain would adjust, thus ensuring access to fresh milk. It is possible that the current supply networks will not be the same in the future as they are now as a result of price discounts. The government supports this motion.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (18:03): I thank all honourable members for their contribution. This is an important matter, and I trust it will assist the federal government to assess the ACCC aspects of predatory pricing and the like, and I trust that it will encourage the Senate to come up with good deliberations and recommendations for the commonwealth parliament to consider in the near future. I thank members for their contribution.

Motion carried.

[Sitting suspended from 18:03 to 19:45]

LIVESTOCK ACT

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.L. Brokenshire:

That the regulations under the Livestock Act 1997 concerning Property Identification Code, made on 16 December 2010 and laid on the table of this council on 10 February 2011, be disallowed.

(Continued from 23 February 2011.)

The Hon. M. PARNELL (19:49): The regulations that we are being asked to disallow today do two things: first, they introduce a mandatory property identification code; and, secondly, they introduce a biosecurity levy to pay for the new scheme or part of it at least. My understanding is that about three-quarters of the cost of the property identification code scheme is to be paid for by a levy to be charged to those who keep certain animals, primarily animals used in primary production.

It is worth saying at the outset that absolutely nobody who has contacted me has any objection to the first part of the regulations—namely, the mandatory property identification code—and I understand that, similarly, the mover of the motion has no objection to the property identification code. Everyone supports it, including the South Australian Farmers Federation and the various animal bodies that have written to me and other members.

What is opposed by many in the community is the fee. This is a cost-recovery measure in the regulations that effectively ensures that the scheme is mostly paid for by those who keep animals on their properties rather than being paid for by the general population through general taxes. The amount involved is a fee of \$76 for two years, which equates to \$38 a year, and it is a fee that can be levied on a pro rata basis. The amount is not paid per animal but per property where animals are kept.

The first thing that needs to be noted is that the cattle baron pays the same amount as the person with a single goat, a calf or a lamb. The amounts, I think it needs to be said, are not huge but they are inequitable. They do not reflect capacity to pay and they do not reflect whether or not the animals are kept for profit or for enjoyment. From a cost-recovery perspective (if we accept that as the basis on which the levy is to be charged), it probably does not matter because it would cost the same to register the cattle baron's estate on the register as it would the child's backyard, where the lamb was kept. However, that does not make it a fair system.

The amounts are not huge. It will be a drop in the bucket for the cattle baron, but it will be a more significant impost for the owner of a single goat. The fees, I guess, are roughly equivalent—perhaps a little bit higher than the amount most people pay to register a dog—so I do not think the debate is so much about the economic burden as it is about the fairness of the system. What has really annoyed a lot of people in the community—or the ones who have written to me—is that they say the government has failed to consult them in a respectful way in the construction of this scheme and the levy.

I think there are also arguments about the merits of a user-pays system and whether or not the benefits of the system apply to individual animal owners or whether they apply to the community as a whole. The answer, of course, is both; we all benefit from a disease-free animal population and we all benefit from the rapid identification and treatment of animal diseases, but I guess you could also say that we all benefit from the council dog-catcher rounding up strays, whether they are ours or not. So, we can only take that argument so far.

In relation to the disallowance motion that is before the council, the big dilemma, of course, is that the regulation cannot be split. We cannot just disallow the bits that we do not like; we have to disallow the whole lot. I note that the Hon. Rob Brokenshire is well aware of this. He mentioned it in moving this motion and he also has on the *Notice Paper* for a vote later tonight a bill that would allow us to split regulations when it comes to disallowance motions. I will just say by way of passing now that the Greens will be supporting that bill as we supported it two years ago when it was introduced by the Hon. Robert Lawson.

The dilemma for us today is that it is all or nothing in relation to these regulations. What the Greens have had to consider is how we would feel if we were faced with a situation where on our vote the Department of Primary Industries did not have the tools or the information it needed to deal with an animal disease outbreak that got out of hand.

Therefore, with some reluctance, we will not be supporting the disallowance motion but, if the motion succeeds, as I suspect it might, we would urge the government to rethink the question of fees so that they are fairer, particularly for those who own only one or two animals. If the motion does pass tonight, I would urge the government to reintroduce regulations quickly, because we do not want to lose the property identification code system which, as I said, is universally supported.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (19:54): I rise on behalf of the Liberal opposition to indicate that we will not be supporting the disallowance motion. I have listened closely to the majority of what the Hon. Mr Parnell has said, and a similar dilemma has come to our attention. While there is a lot of unhappiness about the fee associated with the PIC (as it is known)—and I will not say that

everyone is unhappy with the fee—if we disallow this regulation, we toss out the PIC itself, which is supported demonstrably across a lot of the industries. I will indicate some of those industries that support the PIC as part of the national agenda, something that is generally well regarded. It was something we considered at some length in our party room, but ultimately we have decided to not support the honourable member's disallowance motion.

Included in the various industry groups that have indicated that they support a PIC and support our position in relation to that are: the South Australian Cattle Advisory Group, the South Australian Goat Advisory Group, the South Australian Pig Advisory Group, the alpaca industry, the Sheep Advisory Group, Equestrian SA, the South Australian Dairy Farmers Association, and the South Australian Farmers Federation. Some of them—probably a greater number—say that they are in favour of the PIC but against the fee; others are happy to be in favour of both. That probably comes from the various positions or backgrounds those groups come from within South Australian agriculture.

I recognise that honourable members wish to bring a resolution to this issue. We do not see that this motion will do what we think is in the best interests of industry overall, and that is backed up by the indications I have from those bodies I just mentioned. I have them all here. I could read them out, but I will not, and most people will be grateful for that. With those few words, I indicate that we will oppose the motion.

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (19:58): I rise to support the motion for disallowance. From correspondence between my office and stakeholders, I understand that industry has no issue with mandatory property identification codes but rather the associated fee. I, too, take issue with the fee as not only do I understand that similar systems have been set up interstate with a lower fee imposed, but I believe a system already exists that essentially provides (or at least has the potential to provide) Biosecurity SA with the information it requires.

Biosecurity SA has provided me with a briefing and explained that a mandatory PIC is necessary because in cases of disease it is vital that Biosecurity SA is aware of what livestock is kept and where it is situated so that owners may be informed of the potential threat to their animals. However, in 1968 a system was established that uniquely identified all properties in South Australia. The system was and still is maintained by the Valuer-General, and the unique property numbers are used for water and sewer rates, land tax, local government rates and other related property matters.

During the development of this system, the department of agriculture, the department of planning and the Australian Bureau of Statistics were all consulted to ensure that one system would satisfy all agencies. In particular, the department of agriculture expressed concerns about its ability to identify properties in the event of an outbreak of exotic disease.

In addition to this multipurpose identifier, a coding system was implemented to identify the actual use of land, including which, if any, stock is on the property. The system has the capacity to identify various items of stock, including cattle, pigs, horses, goats and sheep. Further to this, the system has the capacity to provide specific details regarding the type of stock on the property; for example, there is a differentiation between dairy cattle and beef cattle.

This system is still in operation today and is updated weekly, with all changes of ownership, subdivision and amalgamation of properties. Given the information collected and maintained, I believe the system has the capacity to identify any properties that may be affected in the event of an outbreak of an exotic disease.

During a briefing on this subject, I alerted the Executive Director of Biosecurity SA to the existence of this system. I am under the impression that he was ignorant of the existence of the system and was not particularly interested in exploring its capabilities, even though it could be beneficial to Biosecurity SA. However, the minister's office did show an interest in contacting the Valuer-General to have this information provided, and I hope this has been followed up. This system could potentially reduce the maintenance costs significantly and demonstrate the benefit of a whole-of-government approach to problem solving.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (20:01): I rise to briefly indicate my support for the honourable member's motion to disallow the livestock regulations concerning Property Identification Code fees. As the honourable member outlined when introducing the motion, hobby farmers, those who simply have a sheep or an alpaca to mow the lawn, or a couple of horses or a single pony for the kids for recreational purposes, will be required to register their property and be liable for the Property Identification Code fee of \$76 every second year.

This is part of PIRSA's march towards total cost recovery, that is, cost neutrality to government, something that has often been spoken against in this place but nevertheless begrudgingly accepted. However, I believe this is different. Whereas previously, cost recovery initiatives were directed at those deriving an income from their property or licence, this expands the requirement to pay to those who own small numbers of livestock for no monetary gain. To quote the current sa.gov.au webpage entitled 'Livestock property registration':

Some fees are paid directly from funds collected on behalf of the respective industry. Others are payable by producers.

Clearly, this page is yet to be updated. However, it does highlight the shift represented as we move from industry and producers being required to register their property, to all owners of livestock, including those for recreational purposes, self-sufficiency, or simply just a pet.

This is not to say that I do not support the Property Identification Code regime, and I can see the benefits of knowing the location of livestock if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease that may threaten industry, but I believe it to be a step too far in PIRSA's cost recovery to be charging recreational and hobby farmers. While I understand that there would necessarily be some cost offset, it would seem to me to be more appropriate to have free mandatory registration for recreational and hobby farmers, with the fee paid by those deriving income from their property.

I am unsure of whether the option of linking the requirement to pay the fee to whether a property owner has an Australian Business Number for the purposes has been explored, but I would have thought this would be possible. Regardless, I do not support the current fee structure and, for this reason, I support this motion.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (20:04): Mandatory registration of livestock and horse properties and allocation of Property Identification Codes (PICs) commenced on 1 January 2011. Each property with one or more livestock or horses is now required to register for a PIC. The registration fee is \$76 for two years (\$38 a year). The fee covers 75 per cent of the estimated cost to Biosecurity SA in providing and managing the PIC database, administering the registration system, compliance and communication with the livestock industry and horse community.

The government is currently contributing 25 per cent of the cost of the PIC system. This 75/25 split is based on the pre-existing agreement with the South Australian livestock industry for funding the National Livestock Identification System. The PIC fee has been established under the PIRSA cost recovery policy, which follows the national approach recommended by the Productivity Commission, in requiring cost sharing contributions from beneficiaries

Existing cost-recovery examples in PIRSA include commercial fisheries, aquaculture, food safety and plant health regulation programs. Biosecurity SA estimates that over 20,000 South Australian properties will be part of the mandatory PIC system. There are currently about 17,000 properties registered, mainly commercial cattle, sheep and pig farms.

In late 2010, Biosecurity SA held four stakeholder meetings to discuss mandatory PICs with the chairs of the livestock industry advisory groups covering sheep, cattle, deer, goats, pigs, horses and alpacas, plus a representative from the South Australian Farmers Federation. Later meetings included a representative from the South Australian Dairy Farmers Association. It is very important to note that these meetings reaffirmed the industries previously expressed strong support for a mandatory PIC system.

During these meetings, there was either support or no expression of outright opposition to the PIC fee. The horse community did indicate that the fee was higher than expected from discussions about a possible fee that had occurred in previous years. The representatives from the beef, cattle and sheep industries, which are the sectors most affected by the fee, fully support both the PIC system and the PIC fee.

During these meetings, there was discussion about potentially having a split fee for properties with smaller numbers of animals but, overall, there was broad support for a flat fee paid by all livestock properties. This is consistent with the cost to Biosecurity SA of allocating a PIC being the same for each application, regardless of the number of animals on the property, and that all owners of livestock either benefit from biosecurity protection or are potential creators of risk to the others.

The PIC system is a nationally-agreed system for recording the location of livestock. It supports a more effective and faster response to animal health disease emergencies by enabling quicker finding and checking of animals, getting messages to owners or managers and

understanding how disease might spread through mapping. It also enables activities to be carried out with communities and industries to reduce the risk of an animal health disease emergency occurring in the first place; for example, by delivering biosecurity information to people recorded on the PIC database.

The role of Biosecurity SA in bushfires and floods, under the Emergency Management Act, is to assist state emergency services in their planning and response by providing data on stock locations and numbers from the PIC system. Biosecurity SA will also enter affected areas, after approval from the emergency services, to assess and provide advice on injuries and stock management, especially regarding burns, and recommend appropriate actions. The PIC system enables officers to locate properties with livestock and have contact details of the key person or persons.

The importance of being able to identify where livestock are cannot be understated. Exotic animal diseases that are of particular concern include diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease and equine influenza. The Productivity Commission found a major foot-and-mouth disease outbreak could cost Australia more than \$9 billion in lost export earnings and reduce Australia's gross domestic product by between \$8 billion and \$13 billion.

Contrary to the claims of some, the PIC fee does not contribute to payment for an exotic disease outbreak response. The PIC fee is entirely separate from the national Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement levies. These levies result from agreement between all Australian governments and individual animal industries to share the cost of an emergency response to disease outbreaks. The recently agreed horse levy under the EADRA is a zero levy, which means that it will be activated only if an emergency response is required. So, to suggest that the PIC fee is somehow doubling up on this is pure nonsense. You did not suggest that, did you?

The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: However, the PIC system is part of a suite of measures that Biosecurity SA undertakes to be ready to respond to an emergency. It is the government's understanding that there is general and strong support for all livestock and horse properties having a PIC in South Australia. It is also our understanding that the opposition to these regulations is about the quantum of the PIC registration fee, which is currently \$38 per year. Some industries, like the horse industry, would like to pay nothing, but the majority of livestock property owners understand that a modest fee is reasonable for an enhanced program that supports and protects their industries, their animals, their lifestyle and their communities.

The extension of the PIC system to all properties involves additional cost to government, and in the current economic climate the government is unable to allocate additional resources without a contribution from those who benefit from the enhanced system. In addition, with the progressive extension of cost recovery through PIRSA, all those who benefit from the existing services will also be expected to contribute to ensure that these services remain at an optimal operating level and are not reduced.

The government is prepared to discuss options for alteration of the fee to minimise impacts on very small livestock owners, while retaining the overall aim of all livestock properties having a PIC. The government is not prepared to mandate PICs for all properties without a contribution from those benefiting from the enhanced program. The government is also prepared to consult further with the horse and farming industries and communities about how the PIC system should operate and how the fees can be set to enable an equitable contribution to the additional costs to government in extending the PIC system to cover horses and smaller livestock owners. Therefore, in consideration of the above, we will be opposing the motion.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (20:10): I thank all members for their contribution. I will spend a few moments wrapping up this debate, because it is an important debate, and it is not only about the issue of the PIC fee, but it is about a precedent that is now evolving regularly about so-called 'full cost recovery' versus what traditionally Treasury would have funded for departments' wages, etc., by virtue of the general revenue paid to government.

I think it is important that we get very clear for the public record that all members of parliament support a PIC fee, a property identification code fee. It is important that we get this very, very clear so that no-one comes and says that we are opposed to PIC fees. Of course we support PIC fees, because we have to look at our biosecurity. At this point I also say to the house that not only are people going to be subjected to a PIC fee, but very soon this house will be having a look at a biosecurity levy as well; so there is another levy coming in.

I do not know about government members and whether they get proper briefings from the government or not, but I certainly know that most of us, and I would hope government members as well, are out in the community enough to know that people are hurting out there. It does not matter what business you are in or how your household budget is set, it is getting tighter, not easier. Here now we have this so-called new strategy of government which is called 'full cost recovery'.

With respect to the horse industry in this state, horses are very important therapy for a lot of families and communities. If you look at Riding for the Disabled as an example, if you look at a lot of other issues around people with health matters, horses have an incredible impact on healing and giving those people opportunities and enjoyment. I know lots of mums and dads who work really hard to have a pony for their child at home. To then hit them with a \$76 biennial fee and expect them to be able to keep that pony for their child is just—

An honourable member: I pay that for my dog.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Well, you may pay that for your dog, but the fact of the matter is that we already have a PIC fee, and I as a farmer have been supportive of that PIC fee and have reported and registered whatever would we have had to for the PIC fee, but all of a sudden, because the government cannot manage its budget—and this is what this is about; this is about lack of management of a budget—it comes up and says, 'Well, how do we get money? We will hit everybody.'

In the Adelaide Hills a lot of people work hard to have a small acreage, and they may run half a dozen sheep to keep the fire hazard down. I ask the government what it is going to do if those people decide that it is all too hard: 'I've got to get these sheep shorn. I've got to manage these sheep. I've got to manage the flies in the summer time and now they want to hit me with \$76. I'll remove the sheep and the government can manage the fire risk.' You are hitting the little people; you are also hitting the farmers. It is interesting that, as we debate this today, we have had an announcement from the government that we are doing really well with our exports. We are well above last year, and—surprise, surprise—it is primarily agriculture, particularly grain exports, that is doing that.

Do you know why we have this PIC fee? Because the government is cutting the guts out of PIRSA, that's why. I say to Will Zacharin, as CEO, 'Stop taking people for granted,' when you put papers across to your minister saying, 'We will further rip the community off because you, minister, have not been successful in the cabinet in getting a reasonable amount of money for us to run our department.' That is what this is all about.

If you reckon the PIC fee is the start, wait until you see what the biosecurity levy will be. Where was the consultation? We have the Hon. Russell Wortley—and he is the messenger, so I am not going to have a go at him—on behalf of the government, coming in here tonight saying, 'We are not going to support this disallowance, but we have heard what you are saying and we are now going to start to consult with people on the impact and impost of another fee.'

There are so many fees and levies. We are the highest taxed, highest charged state in Australia in terms of general taxation and other levies and fees. It has to stop. You cannot keep impacting on families and communities simply because the government mismanaged its budget. If I mismanage my budget, I have to recut the cloth, and that is what this government has to start to do, not hit this state's community every time. It has to cut the cloth and start to manage.

The Hon. R.P. Wortley interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. I.K. Hunter): Order! We do not want be here all night.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: I want to say a couple of other things about this. PIC fees are not charged by several other states in Australia. Why? Because they can see the merit of PIC but they are able to manage their budget so that they do not hit people again. On top of that, of the states that do charge a PIC fee, this regulation makes us the highest PIC fee charged state in Australia.

I understand the convention between the two major parties, and that is why I will not divide tonight. The convention is that the Liberal Party will not oppose budgetary imposts on communities, and when it gets back into government the convention will be that the Labor Party will support the budget of the day rather than argue against it. So I understand where the two major parties are coming from, but I want to thank my colleagues on the crossbench who were prepared to support this. I trust, in the interests of proper democracy and fairness, that after the second reading debate tonight on the subordinate legislation, where I have amendments regarding disallowance being

dissected, we will, in the future, be able to disallow part of a regulation without having to throw the whole lot out. I thank the Hons Mark Parnell, Ann Bressington, John Dawkins, Russell Wortley and John Darley for their comments.

We do need to change this subordinate legislation. The Hon. Rob Lawson QC was right when he put that bill up a few years ago. I for one do not want to throw out the PIC as such, but unfortunately it is all bundled up together, so I can understand what members are saying here tonight. However, let me reiterate that the community is sick and tired of full cost recovery. In just nine years this state's budget has gone from approximately \$8 billion to \$15 billion. It has nearly doubled the income. Put your hand up if you would not have loved to have had your income doubled within the last eight to 10 years—of course, we would all have loved that. This government has had its income doubled in just 10 years, yet we are now going down the track of full cost recovery on everything.

I say to my colleagues, at some point in time, as representatives of the South Australian community, this is the only house that can stop the rot. Otherwise, the next thing you know, you will be charged through a smart IT card on your car for the times you travel through traffic lights, because they want full cost recovery to run that section of transport. That is where we are headed at the moment—and I am not joking; just wait a few more years.

The final point I want to say is that, yes, it is \$76 now for two years. You might say that is not much but just wait: in 10 years' time the \$76 will be \$110 or \$120, and then you add the \$120 to the other \$50 here and the \$100 there and the \$1,000 there and all of a sudden, if you are a farmer you have to milk three or five dairy cows or produce five vealers just to pay all these additional imposts. It is counterproductive, it is unfair and the community deserves better. I thank everyone for their input tonight and appreciate it. I say to the government and particularly to Mr Zacharin who is in charge of Biosecurity SA, that when the biosecurity levies come in I am confident that a number of us in this house will be watching closely, and we may use a different strategy to address that impost.

Motion negatived.

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins:

That this Council notes—

1. the Senate's Community Affairs References Committee Report titled 'The Hidden Toll: Suicide in Australia';
2. that this Committee recommended a suicide prevention and awareness campaign for high risk groups, such as people in rural and remote areas;
3. that this Committee also recommended that additional "gatekeeper" suicide awareness and risk assessment training be directed to people living in regional, rural and remote areas;
4. that both the World Health Organisation and the International Association for Suicide Prevention have advocated a multi-faceted approach to suicide prevention, including recognising the important role that community based organisations can play in preventing suicide;

and

5. congratulates the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association and the Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice for seizing the initiative and providing funding to establish its own Community Response to Eliminating Suicide program on the Eyre Peninsula; and
6. urges the Rann Government to place greater emphasis on community based organisations such as the Community Response to Eliminating Suicide program and acknowledges their importance, particularly in preventing suicide in regional South Australia—

(Continued from 23 February 2011.)

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (20:21): The Greens rise to support this motion this evening, put before us by the Hon. John Dawkins. We are particularly attracted to it as it highlights both the scourge of suicide in our regions and also the role that community and non-government organisations have to play in addressing this very serious issue. Members would be aware that suicide is, in fact, the leading cause of death for men and women under the age of 34 years.

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that non-heterosexual people (same-sex attracted people) particularly experience greater levels of anxiety and depression than their heterosexual peers and they are, indeed, at greater risk of suicide and self-harm. The Greens

highlight that, particularly in rural areas, homosexual people suffer the stigma and discrimination that can lead to such high statistics, which should be of concern to us all and which show that, in fact, gay youth face extreme physical and verbal abuse, rejection and isolation from family and peers.

They often feel totally alone and socially withdrawn out of fear of adverse consequences. As a result of these pressures that they are more vulnerable than other youth to psychosocial problems including substance abuse, chronic depression, school failure, early relationship conflicts, being forced to leave their families and, of course, their towns, and having to survive on their own prematurely. Each of these problems, in fact, presents a risk factor for suicidal feelings and, indeed, suicide, particularly among gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual youth.

I would like to highlight that part of the jigsaw puzzle that we should be very mindful of when looking at issues of suicide in our regions. I would hope that this committee will pay some heed to that. Having worked for a mental health organisation that represented non-government organisations, I am a firm advocate that mental health is an issue for all of us. We all have mental health and some of us will experience mental illness.

It is estimated that approximately one in five of us every year will have some sort of mental illness or an episode. Almost half of us in our lifetime will have some experience of it. There is no doubt, I think, that all of us will know of somebody (if not ourselves we will know somebody who is family, a friend or a loved one) who has had some sort of mental illness issues. It has been long held to be the Cinderella of health issues. Mental health has not been out in the open for a very long time.

We are only coming to terms with, in fact, the language and descriptions for mental illness and the understanding of mental illness, and getting rid of some of the stigma is a vital piece of the puzzle. As I say, the Greens will be supporting this committee. We commend the Hon. John Dawkins for putting it before us, and we look forward to the debate and, I understand, a proposed amendment from the government which we are happy to address when it comes up.

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER: I move:

Paragraph 6—Leave out this paragraph and insert new paragraph 6 as follows:

6. That the government notes that effective suicide prevention awareness is best delivered through collaborative partnerships, including through local communities, non-government organisations, public health services and primary care health practitioners.

At the outset, I apologise to honourable members for the lateness of the delivery of the amendment. There is no explanation for it being late. I cannot offer up any excuse, and I apologise on behalf of government members.

The reason for the amendment is that evidence suggests that effective suicide prevention is dependent on more than one program and must be delivered as a collaboration between local communities, non-government organisations, public mental health services and primary care health practitioners.

The South Australian suicide prevention strategy currently in development will evaluate existing suicide programs and services across Australia and make recommendations for their inclusion to the South Australian model. The amendment is a minor one. It replaces 'urge' with 'notes' and instead of focusing on just community solutions, it talks about the collaboration of community, public organisations, NGOs, etc. It is not a major amendment; we will not die in a ditch over it, as the Hon. Mr Dawkins knows, but we think it makes the motion a little more accurate.

The Senate Community References Committee Report, *The Hidden Toll: Suicide in Australia*, highlights the significant personal, social and economic costs of suicide in our community. The report also specifically highlights the importance of suicide prevention initiatives, particularly those targeted at high risk groups, and emphasises the need for increased coordination and funding of suicide prevention programs in Australia.

People in rural and remote communities are at an increased risk of suicide. The rate of suicide in rural areas is 20 to 30 per cent higher than in the metropolitan area. The reasons for this appear to be complex, but there is understood to be a significant relationship between the higher rate of suicide and factors such as: geographic isolation, current economic challenges, the pressures associated with drought and other environmental conditions, difficulties in accessing mental health care, a traditional reluctance to talk about mental health problems or to seek help, and increased access to means of suicide, such as pesticides and firearms, amongst other factors.

There is also the issue of homophobia, which in rural and regional areas of the state creates significant social isolation and discrimination for gay and lesbian youth. The effects of suicide in all communities are profound and far-reaching, and we recognise the importance of encouraging suicide prevention initiatives in our country communities.

The government of South Australia notes that effective suicide prevention and postvention awareness, training and services are delivered through collaborative partnerships between local communities, public mental health services, non-government organisations, primary health care services and private practitioners.

Community-based initiatives play an important role in suicide prevention, raising awareness and providing the knowledge, skills and training needed to support people at risk of suicide. We are particularly pleased to note that the honourable member has included a reference to the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association and the Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice. They are to be commended for their efforts in supporting suicide prevention in their local communities.

SA Health currently supports a range of suicide prevention programs across South Australia. These include SQUARE (Suicide QUestions, Answers and RESources), Mental Health First Aid, ASCEND (Centacare's suicide prevention program for young people), beyondblue and partnerships with the commonwealth and non-government organisations for statewide postvention services, health promotion for Aboriginal men and suicide awareness of the elderly.

The SQUARE program incorporates all of the elements of the CORES (Community Responses to Eliminating Suicide) program with several additional ones. CORES focuses on education to local communities, while SQUARE is a broader educational and practice resource for primary care, specialist and community settings, with specific resources for settings including: community, forensic, in-patient, emergency department, community mental health, mental health in-patient, and primary care and general practice.

SA Health will be reviewing the effectiveness of all current prevention strategies, including those in country South Australia, as part of the development of the South Australian prevention framework this year. We commend the Hon. Mr Dawkins for introducing this motion.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (20:29): On behalf of Family First, I rise to support this important motion by the Hon. John Dawkins and put on the public record our congratulations on his being bold enough to put this motion forward. I should also acknowledge at this point Ian Henschke and his team at the ABC. John and I—and I am sure others—have been on the ABC in recent weeks talking about the issues around suicide. That is groundbreaking, because this is a tough area to talk on. In the 15 or 16 years I have been here, traditionally MPs and media do not talk about it and it is just kept quiet, but clearly, with what we are experiencing now, this is a time not to be quiet but a time to be proactive in the interests of the prevention of suicide.

The Senate's Community Affairs References Committee report made a number of important recommendations. Rural and regional communities have been hard hit by drought. Old and young, some of them just through absolute desperation, have had their character and strength of character tested to the limit. Sadly, we see not only in the city but, I believe on the information we have, a very large and strong increase in suicide in rural and regional communities.

As part of the work we were doing on this, I did an FOI to the health department. Since then in my own area on the Fleurieu Peninsula there have been reports of multiple tragic suicides, particularly by young people. I do not want to go into the details for obvious reasons, but one in particular in recent weeks was very close to two of my own children. It is gut-wrenching when this occurs, but unfortunately—and it worries me—there is no tracking, mapping or intergovernmental relationships between departments to try to get a better handle on what is happening.

Not in my own area in which I live, but in another rural area a constituent said to me that they were concerned about what they were hearing anecdotally and what they knew as absolute in their own area, and they asked whether I could find out what the health department was doing regarding tracking of the issues around suicide. I have real concern that when I did the FOI to the health department it came back saying, 'No documentation available.' That was not because it was in cabinet or anything like that but, as I understand it, because—believe it or not—the largest portfolio area in the state, the health department, did not map and track incidents of suicide across the state.

I acknowledge that the report from the Senate committee in chapter 3 says, on reporting on statistics, that it is difficult to collect such statistics. I am not blaming the government for this, but I am seeking an update on what the government—and state and territory governments generally—are doing in relation to recommendations 2 to 7 of the report that is subject to this motion of the Hon. John Dawkins.

In one of the few references in the Senate report to activity in South Australia, Coroner Mark Johns is quoted. The Coroner, Mark Johns, actually came onto Ian Henschke's program and was very passionate, straightforward and honest about his concerns with respect to issues around suicide in this state. He was asked to estimate what may be occurring with respect to annual suicides in this state, and he related it to a comparison with fatalities on the roads, that is how big it is—it is enormous.

He went on to say that there has been a concerted effort and benefit to the state with what we have done with our road toll, but he was trying to imply that he believed, as Coroner, that much more effort should be going into focussing on suicide. Coroner Johns said, 'No way in South Australia we are accurately recording all the suicides that occur.' I know we are all concerned about the copycat argument, and I have said that we should keep confidential the hardcore statistics, but surely SAPOL, health, mental health and those agencies should know what is going on and should talk and work with each other to prevent these enormous tragedies.

I ask the government to advise what it is going to do about working on data collection—in fact, its response to the whole report and not just select parts—so that those things that may not on the face of it affect rural and regional communities can be drilled into with much more detail. I call upon the government today to adopt a six-monthly, self-reporting process on state aspects of this Senate report. It has done it with the Mullighan report, and I think it would be very helpful to the parliament and the community if we were to see a six-monthly reporting process. Even though there have been some problems with the Mullighan progress reporting, at least it does give us a chance as a parliament to raise issues around the Mullighan report.

I have said it already, but I do acknowledge that the South Australian government, the State Coroner Mark Johns and the South Australia Police made submissions to the inquiry and, furthermore, the South Australian government did appear at the May 2010 hearings in Adelaide through the former health chief executive officer Dr Tony Sherbon and Dr Margaret Honeyman, Director, Mental Health Policy and the Chief Advisor in Psychiatry, Mental Health Unit. I give credit that the South Australian government and the National Suicide Prevention program (a program implemented by Relationships SA and the SA Division of General Practice) have jointly funded a toolkit for doctors and other primary care clinicians to identify suicidal situations, and to have a Q&A and resource program. This is something I found out through the Senate report and not through the government's own statements about the program. In fact, that was the only South Australian matter the Senate committee deemed noteworthy, other than Coroner Mark Johns' statement, to include in the report overall.

I want to be brief. I do not want to politicise this. I want to see this as multi-partisanship—and I am sure that it is—but when some of us asked questions of the minister representing the Minister for Health in this chamber—and the minister is not in this chamber at the moment—I was quite sad about a point the minister made, and I just want to put this in context. It was petty point made by the minister representing the Minister for Health during question time, when I gave credit to the Hon. John Dawkins for his advocacy on suicide issues.

There is nothing wrong with giving credit to individual members of parliament who have a genuine commitment and passion for anything. I mean, it is a healthy thing to do, but unfortunately—and I was not being political at all—the minister claimed that I was not giving credit to the government for its efforts. The first thing I did to recall what the government is doing was to think back on what it has said in this place. I cannot to be expected to trawl through the government's websites and media releases, or to monitor Twitter, but my staff and I did look through *Hansard* since the start of 2010. We are now in April 2011, so that is 16 months. I did not go back any further, but I can reveal to the chamber that, since 2010, not one person representing the government has said anything on suicide either in this place or in the other place.

There have been ministerial statements on a host of matters that some of us might consider of lesser importance than the issue of suicide and I would have thought that, if the government had a major concern about suicide, then it would be informing this place and the other place in a multipartisan, non-political way by advising us what it is doing about it. There are concerns raised by almost everyone from the crossbenches and some from the opposition. I stand

to be corrected if the government can show me where it has spoken about suicide in the last 15 months, and I will apologise.

A search of government media releases reveals nothing has been issued in the form of statements about suicide since former minister Lomax-Smith in October 2009 marked the honouring of a lady for her sensitive pieces in a particular media release and she was given the Margaret Tobin award for work in her local community. Nothing has been said since. I acknowledge that reporting and working on suicide in the public area and media is difficult, as I said earlier, but in the best interest of our community we need to support the Hon. John Dawkins, the government and anybody and everybody who is prepared to show some leadership on what I have discovered is of great concern to the public.

Once this started to come out in the media, I had responses from people saying, 'Thank goodness that someone is now starting to raise these issues publicly'—not me, but Ian Henschke, John Dawkins and others—'because there is a silent cry for help from a lot of people in the community.' I welcome a change of approach. As I said in my question, it would be good to see regular updates from the government and the health department to MPs on suicide prevention and postvention, which is another area of concern to me. Members of parliament, I believe, have an important role as advocates for people who are sometimes desperate. As representatives of local communities, the maximum resources and information to communities ought to be distributed in a nonpartisan way.

I ask that the government, at some time in the future, calls a briefing for members of parliament to talk about what strategies it has already implemented and what it is considering implementing. I will finish with this point, because I know there is an amendment in relation to it. The Hon. John Dawkins, in his motion, talks about CORES (Community Response to Eliminating Suicide). I did not even know this until we started to debate it. So, this shows that I have not been responsible enough in my own office in talking about this in detail, but my adviser has actually done the CORES program, and he told me that it was extremely beneficial to him, because he deals with a lot of the community.

I have to confess that I am concerned and worried about how I can try identify where there may be tell-tale signs, if there are any at all, although I know that it is not always easy. From what I have heard, read and been briefed on, I think that CORES is a program we should be looking at here. Just because a department did not come up with it does not mean that it is not good.

I said to someone earlier today that, when I was a government member, I had enormous frustration because there was a program called Keep Safe, Stay Cool, and that program is now finally in schools. Keep Safe, Stay Cool was a mentor program where particularly young men but also young women went into schools and worked through bullying and harassment issues. I watched one of the programs and I was briefed on it.

I knew some of the people who volunteered their time but, guess what? The department did not like the program. The only reason I could see why the department did not like it was that it was not its program. I give credit to the former premier, Dean Brown, because when I explained it all to him, he drove the project and overrode the department, and I understand that program is still going today.

So, let's look at good ideas from wherever they come from. With those words, I conclude my remarks by saying that this is a very important issue. Yes, it is sensitive and it is sad and tragic. All of us have touched by it one way or another, I would suggest, and I am pretty confident in saying that. Let's make a concerted effort to ensure that we improve this tragic situation in the future. I commend very strongly the Hon. John Dawkins for his motion.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (20:43): I wish to speak in support of the Hon. Mr Dawkins' motion also. I am someone who is acutely aware of the lack of adequate campaigning around mental illness and suicide, both for personal and, obviously, professional reasons. As it is the job of this parliament to work toward addressing important issues which are core to the fabric and functioning of this society, it makes perfect sense to me to inquire into the best way to keep our people safe from suicide.

There are, of course, numerous factors which can lead a person to develop suicidal tendencies, whether they are lifestyle factors or physiological. Either way, I am greatly astounded and confused as to why mental illness, particularly as it is now largely recognised as a disability, is still such a taboo subject. As the Hon. Ms Franks pointed out, one in five Australians will

experience some kind of mental illness or depression in their lifetime, yet we still continue to treat this as something foreign or untoward.

As the Hon. Mr Brokenshire said, in an ideal world, we would not have to deal with a motion such as this, but we do not live in an ideal world, so we need to address the issue. As a friend of mine once said to me, 'If you have a heart condition, you take your medication. You seek treatment from a doctor, and there is no shame in that. So, why is seeking treatment for mental illness so different?'—and why should it be?

As the old saying goes, 'The first step toward addressing a problem is admitting that we have one,' and, clearly, if we are losing six Australians per day to suicide, we have a problem. Just like we cannot treat a tumour by ignoring it, we cannot address mental illness by keeping it locked up and hidden away. Therefore, I support the Hon. Mr Dawkins' push for increased campaigning to increase acknowledgement and acceptance of the prevalence of mental illness and suicide in our community.

Of course, this is not going to happen quickly nor easily, particularly because it seems to me that mental illness is currently under fire, so to speak, from two sides: those who experience mental illness and are ashamed or fearful of it, and those who have not experienced it yet and are judgemental and dismissive of it. Unless we address the issue from both these sides, campaigning is likely to be limited in effectiveness.

I think that there can be little denying that at least part of the shame which people may feel about their own mental illness might be related to the social environment in which a person lives. For this reason, I commend the Hon. Mr Dawkins for placing particular focus for this motion on the issue of suicide in regional areas. After watching several episodes of the ABC program *Landline*, which talked about the small regional community of Sheffield which lost at least 10 of its residents to suicide in only three years, I was reminded that mental illness really is more prevalent and more widespread than we perhaps like to believe. As one person interviewed in the program stated: 'It wasn't just young people, it was old people—people from all walks of life.'

Unfortunately, we may never know what caused these people to make the tragic decision they did in ending their lives. One can speculate and say that it could have been boredom arising out of living in regional areas with limited access to entertainment and leisure activities, limited access to employment opportunities, drought, etc. However, what really became clear to me while watching the *Landline* series was that, despite the close-knit nature of relationships residents of small towns like Sheffield experience, people in regional areas, particularly men, generally speaking do seem to be less likely than average to acknowledge and discuss their depression or suicidal thoughts.

As I said, mental illness is now largely regarded under the disability umbrella, so to speak, as being a part of that, and it is, of course, for that reason a big part of my work in this parliament. I see a high incidence of what we in the community and perhaps elsewhere refer to as 'dual disability', that is, a person perhaps with a physical or intellectual disability, for instance, who also experiences mental illness.

The isolation felt by people in regional areas is also no stranger to me in my work. My office often hears—too often, in fact—from parents and carers of children with disabilities for instance, particularly autism spectrum disorders, living in regional areas. More often than not, the special services which their child requires to live a happy life and to reach their full potential are simply not available in their area, leading to frustration and added pressure on the family, which can be greatly exacerbated when the family is forced to uproot their entire life and move to a city like Adelaide in search of support for their child, only to find that even the services available here are limited. This is a frustration and a pain that I imagine cannot be truly understood by people who are not living it themselves, which may lead the struggling person or family to become even further introverted and shut themselves out from the world around them.

This is why I, like the Hon. Mr Dawkins, acknowledge and commend the work of organisations like CORES, which aim to address mental illness and suicide by arming participants with the tools to talk about mental illness openly, free from judgement or fear of reprimand. By arming more people with this knowledge and by addressing the environmental and/or social contributors to suicide, such as a lack of support services, we can and must bring mental illness out of the dark ages. This is, after all, a long overdue debt which we as a society owe to those living with mental illness and to ourselves, as it is vital to our development as an open, humanitarian and

equal society. With these few words, Mr President, I strongly commend the Hon. Mr Dawkins' motion to the house.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (20:49): I will just speak briefly on this. I realise I was not on the paper to speak and I really have not prepared anything, but I want to commend the Hon. John Dawkins for being persistent with his promotion of the program CORES and what that has to offer in educating people about the signs and symptoms and how to deal with people who have suicidal tendencies. We have heard from every member in here about the prevalence of suicide and the different groups that are more likely to fall into the heap of depression and suicidal tendencies. It seems that it is spread across our society, and it knows no bounds.

I want to make the point that it is not just the person who dies who is affected by this; families simply do not recover from a suicide in the family. As a psychologist once told me, suicide is seen by family members as the ultimate rejection by the person who has killed themselves, in that that person did not have enough faith and trust in their family members to share the emotional state they were in and the thoughts they were having. This disables close members of the family, as well, for years and years afterwards, and families are simply never the same again.

I do believe, as the Hon. Robert Brokenshire said, that governments have to accept that there are programs out there that have been used, have been tried and proven and have got results that have not been the brainstorm of a government department. I bring up my own experience with DrugBeat. We have proven for 12 years now that we have a good program with a 98 per cent success rate, yet this government refuses to acknowledge the successes in the reports that we continually put in. I imagine that CORES is pushing the same wagon uphill as well.

As the Hon. Robert Brokenshire said, it was the Hon. Dean Brown who pushed the Keep Safe Stay Cool program. It was also the Hon. Dean Brown who pushed the DrugBeat program and got funding for that; he came out and personally took an interest in that, and spoke to clients. I do not want to politicise this, but it seems that under this Labor government there is a mental or social block to community-based programs and organisations being adequately funded and supported to deliver the vital services they do.

I cannot, for the life of me, understand that. If you have programs that work, why not support them? In the long term the costs have to be minimal compared to ignoring these problems and letting them escalate the way they do. I would also like to say that I thank the Hon. John Dawkins for his persistence on this particular issue. Since I have been in here I think I can recall probably five or six times that this has been raised, either as questions or motions or whatever, and it is time that every member of parliament took an interest in this.

Just to reiterate how bad this is, not only do we have a lack of awareness of the signs and symptoms of people who are contemplating suicide, but out in the community there is almost a desensitisation to people's emotional pain and suffering. This was brought to my attention this week by a very sad case of a 41-year-old man posting his cry for help on Facebook, self-mutilating and screaming out for help, saying, 'No job, no girl, no home, no hope'. He was crying out to people on Facebook to help him, because he did not know where to go to get the sort of help he needed.

The final picture was him with a noose around his neck, and one of the comments on that Facebook page was, 'A new fashion accessory.' So, do we need education about this? Absolutely. Do we need to resensitise the community about the pain and suffering that people are experiencing out there? Absolutely we do. Do we need to make sure that people in this situation know that they can reach out and be treated with the respect and the knowledge that they deserve to pull them out of that black hole and help them through? People can be pulled out of it, they can be helped, and they can move on with their life.

The high statistics regarding men are also a pretty good indication that the old saying, 'Go to Bunnings, buy some wood, build a bridge and get over it,' is an outdated statement that we use in our society so flippantly when we tell somebody that we have no idea. 'Build a bridge and get over it' means be resilient and stand up strong, but perhaps that social attitude also needs to change. Men need to know that it is not weakness, that it is okay to seek the help that they need and that nobody will think any the less of them. I congratulate the Hon. John Dawkins again on bringing this motion to the attention of the chamber. I support it wholeheartedly.

As for the amendment, I will say now that I will not be supporting it. I am not going to shoot the messenger because I know (or suspect) that the Hon. Ian Hunter was put in a very difficult position in having to move the amendment. Perhaps out of this particular situation we can hope that staff members will learn that if they come and speak to members in this chamber about

amendments that are going to be moved and why, and try to reason with us, they might get a little bit more cooperation from us in the future. With that, I commend this motion to the house.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (20:56): I commence by sincerely thanking the Hon. Tammy Franks, the Hon. Ian Hunter, the Hon. Robert Brokenshire, the Hon. Kelly Vincent and the Hon. Ann Bressington for their heartfelt and sincere contributions. I would also like to thank the other members of this house and, might I say, of the other house who have indicated their support not only for this motion but also for the work I have been doing in the suicide prevention area for a number of years.

When I first started raising these issues more than four years ago in my party room and in the parliament there were some who were uncomfortable with the subject. I think the Hon. Mr Brokenshire referred to the sort of community feeling that we have had for a long time—that it is better not to talk about suicide. I feel that resistance dropping away, and it drops away more and more when people actually have a personal experience or they know someone in that situation. I appreciate the support that I have had, and I hope that the government takes note of this motion if it is accepted tonight.

I will not be accepting the amendment, and in doing so I make no criticism of the Hon. Mr Hunter. The Hon. Mr Hunter is someone who I know has a very good knowledge of the issues around suicide and many other social matters in this state, so I do accept the sincerity of his contribution tonight. I only received the amendment from the minister's office at 10.30 this morning. That was 48 hours after I was advised by the government that there would be an amendment and three weeks after I called for a vote on this day. The fact that the government could only provide me with the wording today at 10.30 I think is pretty ordinary. I do not think that the amendment was provided to any other members of this house, other than myself.

I will make a few comments in relation to the government's response to my motion and its amendment. I think in the speech on behalf of the government the Hon. Mr Hunter referred to my focusing on the CORES program, and he came up with a number of other programs that are operating. I must say that there are many very good programs that deal with mental health and suicide prevention. Recently, I was in Mount Gambier with some people who are proponents of the ReachOut program, which is a very good program on the net for young people aged 14 to 25 with mental health issues. That is a very good program for those people.

I think both the Hon. Ms Vincent and the Hon. Ms Franks—and even the Hon. Ann Bressington, I must say—have raised particular sectors of our community that are very prone to suicide, and I really thank them for that. Having said that, the Hon. Mr Brokenshire obviously comes from a rural background and knows the pressures in the farming sector. So, I think all of the speakers tonight have actually brought a very valuable aspect to the debate.

My motion does not only talk about CORES: it talks about a greater emphasis on community-based organisations, such as CORES. So, I am certainly not specific, and I hope that the government realises that I was not totally specific about CORES. The amendment talks about a collaborative approach. When I read that I thought that if they actually look at the first five clauses of the motion, surely that indicates a collaborative approach. I then noted that in the speech on behalf of the government, the Hon. Mr Hunter actually highlighted the collaborative approach between the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association and the Eyre Peninsula Division of General Practice in delivering the CORES program to Eyre Peninsula.

Last year, when I was in North Queensland, in sugarcane country, where the CORES program is working very well, they were actually astounded that a division of general practice, being the doctors of the region, would actually work with a group of people like CORES from all walks of life. I think it is a tribute to Eyre Peninsula that they have done that, but it is also a wonderful example of what is a collaborative approach.

The other thing I will always remember in the work I have done on this issue and in dealing with three ministers for mental health—and I might say two of them have promised a review, although I have not seen any results of those reviews at this point; we have had another review promised tonight—is that, in a meeting in a minister's office, a very senior health professional told me, 'You amateurs should keep out of it.' Now, I am an amateur. I am not a professional in mental health. I have not been to university and I have not studied in the area, but I have lived life and I have lived in communities where we see these issues all the time and we see people in need of support. We need to arm people in the community to be able to provide that support and to then point people in the direction of the professionals.

The CORES scheme started in the town of Sheffield, in Tasmania, as mentioned by the Hon. Kelly Vincent. When I went there about four years ago to look at the program, there were only two CORES programs running in the whole country, and both of them were in northern Tasmania. I am very pleased to say that there are now, I think, more than 10 in Tasmania. There are about 20 across the country, and that is a terrific achievement in a very short period of time, with very little government money and largely philanthropic and commercial sector money. One thing I am very pleased to report to this chamber is that in Tasmania now all medical students going through the University of Tasmania are required to do the CORES training, and that is a wonderful thing. It just brings the doctors a bit closer to the community and to those who are dealing with these issues in their locality.

I conclude by saying that only this week I have had two people come to me with varying experiences about severe mental illness and also about suicide. In fact, a staff member within this building came to me with the issue the Hon. Ann Bressington has put on the record tonight. To say it is unpleasant is a great understatement. To see the images I saw and to see on Facebook some of the very flippant reactions to a person's final moments really shocked me. I think my staff realised that I was a bit shocked by that because we were due to have a staff meeting and I was a bit lost for words after that. It does bring home very closely the need for more to be done in this area and more to be done without relying just on professionals.

The focus of this motion has been on rural and regional areas. However, the incident the Hon. Ann Bressington talked about was a suburban one. There are so many people in suburban Adelaide and other large urban areas who have the same issues. Some might say that they do not suffer from isolation. I do a lot of work in the northern suburbs and in my home town of Gawler and other places close to Adelaide, but these people still feel isolated. You can be isolated anywhere if you do not have people in touch with you. So, we should look at suburban areas as well.

The comments by Coroner Mark Johns on ABC radio were mentioned by the Hon. Mr Brokenshire. In my speech in moving this motion on 23 February this year I read out what Mr Johns said, and I would like to do that again as a very good statement in conclusion of this motion, as follows:

The road toll is subject of enormous scrutiny in the media, and so it should be. But the suicide rate in this state is probably double the road toll, and yet as a subject it is not given anything like the same attention...If the suicide toll in this state were reported in the same way as the road toll (and this may not be possible for a number of reasons), people might be inclined to consider their friends and loved ones and work colleagues in a different way: Has something changed in their behaviour lately that might indicate that they are so deeply unhappy that they might be thinking of self harm?

Finally, I wish to relate an experience I had in Gawler in the last year or so. I went to speak to a community group and largely I was asked to speak about what I do as a member of parliament, specifically an upper house member of parliament. In doing so, I talked about a couple of the issues and causes that I advanced as a member of parliament, and I started to speak about my work on suicide prevention in relation to CORES. About 30 seconds or a minute into my presentation, I saw a lady in the audience—and there were a lot of people in the audience whom I knew—whose husband had taken his life some 25 years earlier.

You know, you can briefly pause, and I thought, 'Should I continue here?' but I did. I continued, and I spoke about the work of CORES and suicide prevention and intervention generally. At the end of my speech, when we were having supper, a couple of good friends of mine in Gawler came up to me and said, 'Look, we were really worried that you spoke about that in front of this lady,' and I said, 'Yes, I thought about that, but I decided that we need to talk, and we need to go on.'

Very soon after that, the lady concerned came up to me and said, 'I wish you were around when my husband took his life. I wish you were around before, and I wish you were around after he took his life.' She was thrilled that I am doing this work and that others support me, because she has been through it. She said that if her husband had had some support outside the close family, outside a doctor or a bank manager or whatever; if he had had someone like that to talk to, he might still be alive today. That keeps me going, and I will keep going on this for as long as it takes to make sure that we get more community input into suicide prevention in this state. I commend the motion to the house.

Amendment negatived; motion carried.

REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Adjourned debate on motion of the Hon. J.M.A. Lensink:

That the Social Development Committee inquire into and report on the current provision and plans for future delivery of Health Services in Regional South Australia, with particular reference to—

1. Health Advisory Councils replacing local Hospital Boards, significantly reducing their decision making power and effective contribution to local operations;
2. The consequent decline in local community fundraising due to local communities not having a voice in health spending in their area;
3. How funds previously raised by local communities are now spent;
4. The removal of funding to the Keith, Moonta and Ardrossan Hospitals;
5. Country hospitals failing to receive final 2010-2011 operational budgets so that they are forced to work on indicative budgets and the impact on their ability to make decisions;
6. Property titles of hospitals being transferred inconsistently or inappropriately;
7. The impacts of a State-wide freeze on the hiring of staff for any new positions;
8. Transfer of St. Johns Ambulance to South Australian Ambulance Service and consequent outcomes including—
 - (a) removal of the ability of local volunteers to decide which community events they attend;
 - (b) “fees” for attendance at local community events set by and paid to Country Health SA instead of the traditional system of donations being provided directly to local ambulance stations; and
 - (c) reduced incentive for new volunteers to participate;
9. The reduction of admission rights for country general practitioners and the consequences for the provision of accident and emergency services across CHSA and community hospitals;
10. The centralisation of purchasing by country hospitals and the consequent impact upon local communities’ businesses;
11. Bullying and understaffing at the Port Augusta Hospital;
12. The impact of deeming Country Health as “local network” for all of regional South Australia within the Federal health system so that different regions within the State have no different identity within the Federal programmes and funding; and
13. All other relevant matters.

(Continued from 23 February 2011.)

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (21:13): I rise to indicate that the Greens are supportive of this motion put before us from the Hon. Michelle Lensink, and we believe that the Social Development Committee should, quite rightly, inquire into and report on the current provisions and plans for the future delivery of health services in regional South Australia.

I would note that the Greens support a strong health sector, no matter where you live in this state, and we would be concerned if the takeover by health advisory councils were, indeed, to have significant negative impacts on local country hospitals, so we welcome that investigation. We support local communities having a strong voice in their local affairs; in fact, a strong belief in participatory democracy is one of the Greens' four pillars.

In recognition of that, I was very happy to present a petition signed by 570 residents of South Australia on 11 November last year, requesting this council to urge the Minister for Health, the Hon. John Hill MP, to establish an independent inquiry to reassess health services in Burra and restore an attending doctor for accidents and emergencies at Burra Hospital as quickly as possible. I do understand that there are issues around that but, certainly, it should be seen as a matter of priority for this government that people have access to quality health care no matter where they live in this state.

With my colleague the Hon. Mark Parnell, I joined people from Moonta, Ardrossan, Keith and other areas of rural South Australia in rallying on the steps of this place, calling for a fair go for country hospitals. I am new to this place, so I am not sure whether there are always so many rallies. However, from the outside, I certainly did not see as many as I have seen in the past months since the state government's most recent budget.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: The Greens have publicly called for more support for these facilities, both in this place and in the federal parliament, where the member for Melbourne quite stridently supported Liberal motions for better support for South Australian rural health. Any South Australian could need a country hospital. Lives can be lost for the sake of a budget saving that amounts to a little more than a few ministers' phone bills. I understand that this government plans to close ambulance and emergency facilities at Ardrossan and put South Australian lives at risk. Ardrossan Accident and Emergency receives a measly \$140,000 a year, which is not even a significant sum to cut, although it is cutting a significant service.

In the past, the Greens have been called on by the Hon. Bernard Finnigan, along with the opposition, to provide some detailed costings of what we would have cut in the government's state budget. The government made the choice to cut rural health, and I would say that the Greens would not have chosen to cut rural health. In fact, we would have taken some of the Sustainable Budget Commission's other identified areas of government largesse. For example, we would have reduced the number of ministers by three, from 15 to 12, which is something unnecessary when you do not have a minority government anymore, and we would also get to the national average ratio of ministers to lower house seats had we done that, and that would bring \$7.5 million of savings.

We would also reduce chauffeur-driven vehicles and use a centralised administration system, which also could have saved over \$2 million per annum. By just implementing a log book for ministerial cars and reducing the associated fringe benefits tax payable was, in fact, estimated by the Sustainable Budget Commission to be worth about \$1.2 million in savings. Improving fleet vehicle utilisation (primarily by reducing home to office use) could have resulted in about \$7.4 million by 2013-14. In real terms, these are small figures but, in terms of country health, comparable figures will have a significant impact on rural and regional people in this state.

Adopting any or all of these measures would have freed up a substantial sum of money that could have been redirected into the health system and ensured that our country hospitals were not forced to close as a result of inadequate resourcing.

The Hon. B.V. Finnigan: You are talking here about subsidising private hospitals.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: You may double the amount elsewhere, but you would have cut it to those particular services I have named today. If you are denying that you have cut those services—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: —that's a whole different matter. The government's own State Strategic Plan sets targets, which include growing prosperity, improving wellbeing, attaining sustainability, fostering creativity and innovation, and building communities and expanding opportunities—and that means for all of us, not just for some of us and certainly not just for those who live in marginal electorates the Labor government would like to retain. The Greens are concerned that the current plans for health services in regional South Australia may indeed undermine the state plan, and we urge the government to have a real good look at addressing the wellbeing of our communities right across this state.

We welcome this motion from the Hon. Michelle Lensink. We do not take lightly the decision to refer matters to a committee. This is obviously a committee that is undertaking business in this council; this is not an additional committee. While Labor members keep whinging about having to sit on committees, they should remember that they are privileged to be here in this place representing the people of South Australia. If they cannot turn up to a few more meetings, when they are doing such disgusting and destructive things to country health, maybe they should hand over the government to people who would willingly attend a few more committee meetings. With those words, I commend the motion to the council.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (21:19): I rise to briefly indicate my support for the honourable member's motion to establish the Social Development Committee inquiry into the future delivery of country health services and the report of health performance councils on the operation of health advisory councils.

It seems like only yesterday that this place was debating the Health Care Bill 2008, which significantly reformed the structure and management of health services, including those in rural areas. At that time, we were promised by the minister that country health services would only

prosper under the new arrangements; of course, it saddens me to learn that this has not been the case.

May I say that in hindsight this is one of the top 10 issues on my list that raises my level of cynicism toward promises that governments make to get their legislation or their policies through. Sadly, I have come to learn that the only motivation for any sort of reform in this state to do with health or any other social issue is a money-saving initiative and that, when we are making those decisions based on the bottom line only, there is going to be human carnage out of that. We are seeing that over and over.

I also reiterate the Hon. Tammy Franks' remarks about members from the government whingeing about the number of committees. The fact of the matter is that if this government was actually doing its job and delivering on social issues the way a government is supposed to, we would not need all these committees to be called. If we had more information freely available to us, we would not need to have these inquiries to try to drag the truth out of bureaucrats and everybody else who has been involved in the drastic policies that have been introduced since my time in here.

I might also say that I have put in a freedom of information on fluoride data. It has taken four months, but there is still no response and they keep asking for an extension. That is one health issue that is on my list of priorities, but there are laws around freedom of information. We have actually to put in freedom of information to get the most basic of information or to try to get some sort of idea of why this government is doing what it is doing, how much it is going to cost and all the rest of it.

We do not get that in our second reading speeches, we do not get it in this parliament in the debates. We have to go hunting for it, and that is not actually our job. I know the Hon. Bernie Finnigan does not like committees and thinks that all committees are politically motivated and whatever.

The Hon. B.V. Finnigan: Always.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: Always—not that members in this place actually might want to have an opportunity to question people about what is really going on and get another perspective, other than the tripe we are fed in here in debates.

I have been informed that the honourable member and a colleague in the other place (the member for Stuart) have worked with the Minister for Health to draft an improved terms of reference for the inquiry, which I believe is accepted and supported by the government. If that is the case, the government should be commended for its cooperation, although the old maxim, 'Never hold an inquiry unless you know what the outcome will be,' comes to mind.

I am sure the minister believes that the Social Development Committee will deliver a glowing report. Time will tell if his belief is well founded. Given what we are now told about the viability of the Keith hospital and other complaints that have been raised in this place and elsewhere, I do not see how that could possibly be. I look forward to reading the report.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (21:23): I rise on behalf of Family First to support the motion. I refer honourable members and others to my second reading comments on 23 March (the last Wednesday of sitting), reintroducing Family First's Country Health Guarantee Bill and my question on 24 March concerning community hospital funding.

I will not speak to every aspect of the committee's terms of reference under this motion, but I do hope it is understood that issues such as bullying and understaffing are allegations that the committee ought to look at, rather than established fact. They may well be true, but I am cautious about such allegations.

My concerns are on the record about the funding situation at Keith, Moonta and Ardrossan hospitals and, in the case of Keith, the fact that they have had to secure pledges to keep that hospital's emergency and other doors open for the immediate future. From where we sit in the parliament we are seeing a concerning trend, with this government creating bureaucracies and taking away from communities and community organisations the initiatives that they have come up with and, in some cases, supported for years, if not decades.

One clear example of this is the community hospitals that the Health Care Act unfairly labels as private hospitals. Throughout country South Australia they include infrastructure that was put in there by fundraising and donations from their community. Country communities have great

love for their community hospitals, and there is a frustration that they have lost control of those hospitals. The Hon. Michelle Lensink's motion picks up on that sentiment.

As an example, the community and I had to fight to ensure the ongoing operation of the McLaren Vale hospital, which a minister in a former Labor government decided was going to be cut. Today we have a vibrant and integral hospital that is so important in supporting the tertiary hospitals at the Flinders Medical Centre and Noarlunga. There are other issues more minor but still important. I recently raised with the Minister for Transport the issue of lighting of the landing strip at Renmark which, I understand, did not function correctly during a recent medical evacuation. The patient had to be taken to Loxton, which created an unsatisfactory delay in an emergency situation.

This is a timely motion. It will, through the Social Development Committee, give an independent assessment of the state of country health, and I look forward to that feeding back into my bill on Labor's country health guarantee—and indeed the guarantee has now been broken. I support the Hon. Michelle Lensink's motion.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (21:26): I would like to indicate to the chamber that I will be moving an amendment to this motion, which will be coming shortly. It has been discussed with the opposition and it is in agreement with it. The amendment ensures that the proposed questions are framed in a more neutral and fair light.

The scope of the inquiry into country health is very broad and appears to be based on anecdotal claims. We do not oppose investigation into these 13 areas of inquiry; in fact, we think it is a very good story to tell about country health care and how the reforms will deliver new services to regional patients. However, the original terms of reference pre-empt the outcome of the inquiry. The amended terms do not prejudice the outcome of this inquiry. For example, the original point 11 regarding bullying and understaffing at the Port Augusta hospital failed to reflect that this is a claim only. This is against the principles of natural justice in relation to the management team and staff at the Port Augusta hospital.

I note that two formal claims of bullying were submitted to Port Augusta hospital in 2010. Both of these were investigated by an external consulting firm and the independent reports found them to be unsubstantiated. I understand that bullying and harassment claims are treated very seriously, and all claims are investigated at the hospital. I am concerned that the Liberal Party wants to pursue this case against the Port August hospital management team and staff. I think this pursuit will create a reluctance in staff to provide statements in the future and impact detrimentally on staff morale. These investigations are about protecting staff safety and welfare.

In another example, point 9, it is claimed that there is a reduction of admission rights for country general practitioners. Admitting rights have not been reduced. This is a misunderstanding. Instead, it is a fundamental principle by Country Health SA to ensure competency in the delivery of services to country hospitals by making country general practitioners subject to a credentialling process. The Liberal Party may think it is appropriate for those matters to be investigated by the Social Development Committee. I have not opposed its inquiry. All I have suggested is that these and all other proposed matters should start discovery in an objective way.

A number of items specifically relate to health advisory councils in country South Australia, which, members will be aware, will be reviewed by the Health Performance Council in accordance with the Health Care Act 2008. The Health Performance Council was set up to be a new consumer voice for South Australia's patients, volunteers and community members. Legislative Council members may recall the substantial work undertaken to ensure that the Health Performance Council conducts an independent overview of health services in this state.

It was all Independent, non-major party members of the council who supported this legislation, including the Hon. Ann Bressington. Dennis Hood, of Family First, moved an amendment requiring that the Health Performance Council review the governance arrangements after a period of three years, and this was supported by the government.

Members may recall that it is a requirement under section 101 of the Health Care Act 2008 that the Health Performance Council must, within a reasonable time after the third anniversary of the commencement of the act, furnish to the minister a report on the operations of the health advisory councils established in relation to any incorporated hospital or hospitals established to provide services in the country area.

This statutory report must review the effectiveness of the relevant health advisory councils in promoting the interests of local communities; review the level of satisfaction with the governance

arrangements between the relevant health advisory council and any relevant hospital from the perspective of the members of the health advisory councils, the local community and the hospital; and identify any other significant issues relating to the operations of the health advisory councils considered relevant by the Health Performance Council.

The minister must, within 12 sitting days after receipt of this report, cause a copy of the report to be laid before both houses of parliament. The minister must, within six months after receiving the report, cause a formal response to the report to be laid before both houses of parliament. The Health Performance Council has formed a Health Advisory Councils Governance Review Advisory Committee to provide advice to the Health Performance Council on the development and implementation of the Health Performance Council's 2011 Health Advisory Council Governance Review Project.

I have asked for an addition to the inquiry; that is, it is proposed the Social Development Committee inquiry first consider the review of the Health Performance Council on the operations of the health advisory councils in accordance with the Health Care Act 2008. In doing so, the Social Development Committee respects the intent of council members only three years earlier. That is as far as my submission goes. Hopefully, the council will see fit to support the amendment. I move:

Leave out all words after 'That the Social Development Committee' and insert:

1. Examine the review by the Health Performance Council on the operations of the Health Advisory Councils in accordance with the Health Care Act 2008; and
2. Inquire into and report on the current provision and plans for future delivery of health services in regional South Australia, with particular reference—
 - (a) the role and responsibilities of Health Advisory Councils and the benefits, or otherwise, of the removal of local Hospital Boards;
 - (b) trends in local community fundraising for medical equipment services;
 - (c) how funds currently and previously raised by local communities are held and spent with particular regard to authorisation and decision making.
 - (d) the ability of Keith, Moonta and Ardrossan community-run non-public hospitals to operate sustainable budgets and retain services;
 - (e) timing of finalised operational budgets in country hospitals;
 - (f) ownership and transfer of property titles of country hospitals;
 - (g) the process and timing of the hiring of staff for new and existing positions;
 - (h) South Australian Ambulance Service arrangements, including the role of volunteers, fees and fundraising and the benefits, or otherwise, to local community events;
 - (i) admission rights of country general practitioners to country hospitals and the provision of accident and emergency care;
 - (j) procurement by Country Health SA and the benefits, or otherwise, to country communities;
 - (k) claims of bullying and understaffing at Port Augusta Hospital;
 - (l) the benefits, or otherwise, of all of rural and remote South Australia being classified as one Local Hospital Network within the Federal health system; and
 - (m) all other relevant matters.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (21:32): Honourable members will be pleased that I will be brief. I did circulate that we (that is, the member for Stuart, myself, the member for Morphett and the minister's office) had come up with an alternative form of words because the minister's office was concerned that the wording in the initial motion may skew the debate, if you like, because the language was not particularly neutral.

We have come up with a set of words which is acceptable and which I think will still cover the intent of what the member for Stuart in particular was seeking to inquire into. I thank honourable members for all of their contributions and look forward to the Social Development Committee reporting on this very important matter in due course.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

CHILDREN'S PROTECTION (LAWFUL SURRENDER OF NEWBORN CHILD) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 9 February 2011.)

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (21:35): I am sure that it will not surprise members to hear that Family First is a strong supporter of the bill moved by the Hon. Ms Bressington. Members will be pleased to know that I have a short speech, but I just want to put on the record a few thoughts in support of this, I think, very important bill. The honourable member has noted in her introduction that this bill establishes in South Australia a regime for safely relinquishing newborn babies anonymously and legally. Naturally, the thought of giving up a baby is a horrifying thought to many, including myself. However, baby safe haven laws which are sometimes called baby Moses laws are regarded in many jurisdictions as being the only appropriate solution to the tragic plight of abandoned newborns.

Simply put, the fact that even in South Australia we have seen newborn babies abandoned and left to die is such a tragic situation that we should consider offering safe locations to leave apparently unwanted newborns so they can be cared for appropriately and offered for adoption or fostering, as the case may be.

As I have pointed out in the past, however, I believe that there is no such thing as an unwanted newborn. There are literally hundreds of prospective parents waiting for the opportunity to adopt and love a child in South Australia, many of which will never have an opportunity given that few children currently are offered for adoption for various reasons. Indeed, in 1970-71, some 879 children were legally adopted in South Australia. By 2008-09, there were only 35 finalised adoptions, and only one of those children was a so-called local child placed for adoption.

Unfortunately, abortion and short-term foster care placements are replacing adoption as an option for some. As the honourable member notes in her speech, in many countries, including Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Portugal and every state in America, as I understand it, there is some form of baby safe haven legislation in place. I believe that the Hon. Ann Bressington is correct in saying that Texas first introduced a safe haven bill back in 1998 after 13 children were abandoned in one year in that state. Indeed, 41 other states followed within five years.

According to the member, over 1,000 babies have been safely surrendered during that time, many of which may have been abandoned in unsafe circumstances otherwise. The Australian Medical Association supports the introduction of safe haven laws, and the incoming New South Wales Liberal government may be introducing laws such as this one, at least it has indicated that it will.

About a dozen babies are abandoned each year in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia combined. Unfortunately, some states do not record statistics. A baby girl was abandoned with her umbilical cord still attached in a 40 centimetre shoebox outside a city apartment block just a few months ago. In January, another baby was found in a Sydney rubbish tip wrapped in a sarong. No doubt we all still remember the story of the deceased child found in a university bin a year or so back, and I imagine that members can also recall the unfortunate abandonment of a newborn (just an hour or so old) on a driveway. I think that was in the Adelaide northern suburbs within the last 12 months.

I will not go into more details. These are horrific stories that no-one enjoys hearing, but what I will say is that this bill will fix that situation once and for all. For that reason, we wholeheartedly commend the member for introducing this bill. It will be a terrific addition to our statute book and we strongly support it.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. Carmel Zollo.

NATIVE VEGETATION (APPLICATION OF ACT) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 21 July 2010.)

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (21:40): I rise briefly to indicate that I will support the bill introduced by the Hon. Mark Parnell. The bill seeks to bring inner hills suburbs in the City of Mitcham, such as Belair, Bellevue Heights and Blackwood, which are considered to be outside the Hills Face Zone, into the ambit of the Native Vegetation Act 1991. As the honourable member

outlined when introducing this bill last year, the proposed amendment to section 4 of the Native Vegetation Act 1991 is identical to the amendment proposed in the government's Native Vegetation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2008.

As I recall, that bill failed to pass this place due to other unrelated issues, namely, the protection of native vegetation in the context of bushfire prevention or preparedness. Having reread the second reading contributions and the committee debate for that bill, it is clear that the amendment proposed by the honourable member had the support of both sides of the floor. While regrettable, this is unfortunately one of the consequences if this parliament is unable to reach agreement.

My office has contacted the City of Mitcham, which, while noting that the current regulations provide minimal protection to native vegetation in residential areas, supports the passage of the bill. It being a simple and straightforward piece of legislation and there having been no objections raised, I see no reason not to support this piece of legislation.

Debate adjourned on motion of the Hon. P. Holloway.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 12 May 2010.)

The Hon. M. PARNELL (21:42): I note that when the Hon. Rob Brokenshire introduced this bill he was very brief, the reason being that our former colleague here, the Hon. Rob Lawson (whose bill the Hon. Rob Brokenshire has reintroduced), made a more extensive contribution back in 2009. The Greens support this legislation. One of the reasons we are supporting it I outlined earlier this evening in the debate on the fees being attached to the property identification system for biosecurity.

It is a shame when we are faced with the dilemma of having to disallow the whole of a regulation, even though the vast bulk of it might be something that we support. This is a sensible amendment. I understand that for the government of the day it is a matter of some convenience to be able to mix the good and the bad in regulations, because they know that members of parliament will be loath to disallow the entire regulation when that means throwing the good out with the bad.

This is a sensible measure. It certainly passed this house back in 2009, from memory. My expectation is that it will pass this house again this time and it is worthy of support. I note that the Hon. Stephen Wade will introduce some amendments, and I understand that, whilst we were scheduled to vote on this matter tonight, perhaps we will not now do so to allow members time to consider those amendments, and I welcome that opportunity as well. In terms of the bill as it stands, it has the Greens' support.

The Hon. S.G. WADE (21:44): I rise to indicate that the opposition will support this legislation and I foreshadow an amendment I will move when we get to the committee stage. As the Hon. Mark Parnell has indicated, and as the Hon. Robert Brokenshire indicated in his second reading speech, the parentage of this bill is related to the work of the Hon. Robert Lawson, formerly of this place.

By way of background, of course, the Subordinate Legislation Act 1978 regulates the making, printing and publishing of certain subordinate legislation. Subordinate legislation is legislation made by a body other than the parliament under authority granted to that body often by an act of parliament. Subordinate legislation must be tabled in both houses within six sitting days of being made and can be disallowed by either house within 14 days of being tabled.

In 2009, a former member of this council, the Hon. Robert Lawson, introduced a private member's bill which he highlighted would address four particular weaknesses in the current arrangements for subordinate legislation. Firstly, if either house of the Parliament of South Australia disallows a regulation, the executive can make the same regulation straightaway after the disallowance, and repeatedly do so. This creates uncertainty in the community. This parliament has been witness to some extraordinary ping-pong matches between the parliament and the executive in terms of regulations. It is not a good use of anyone's time.

A second weakness that was highlighted by the Hon. Robert Lawson's bill was that either house has the power only to disallow the whole of a regulation. Parliament does not have the power to disallow part of a regulation. Therefore, while it may only be necessary to remove one part to deal with a problem in the regulation, the parliament is forced to disallow the whole of the

regulation or allow the regulation to proceed unamended. There certainly have been cases where I think the parliament felt as though it was being manipulated, because regulations that had one negative element might have had six substantial positive elements, and our capacity to provide parliamentary oversight is undermined.

The third weakness that the Hon. Robert Lawson highlighted was that neither house of parliament has the power to amend regulations. The fourth was that section 10AA of the act provides that regulations will commence four months after they are made but that the minister can allow early commencement if it is considered necessary and appropriate. Over time, almost all regulations are said to be necessary and appropriate for early commencement.

In this regard, I acknowledge the work of the Legislative Review Committee. Unfortunately, I do not see any encouraging signs that the executive is weaning itself from the overuse of the early commencement provision. I am not particularly accusing the current incumbents of the executive benches. I suspect it is a trend that has developed in this state over some time.

As the Hon. Mark Parnell has acknowledged, on 12 May 2010 the Hon. Robert Brokenshire introduced into the Legislative Council a bill identical to that of the Hon. Robert Lawson, and the Hon. Robert Brokenshire indicated that in his short second reading explanation. The bill seeks to remedy the problems identified in the following ways.

Firstly, section 10(6a) is to be inserted. I will not read it, but it allows for disallowance in whole or in part. If a regulation is made in contravention of that subsection, it is void. Provisions that limit the re-enactment of subdelegated legislation, such as that clause, operate in the commonwealth, New South Wales, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the ACT.

Secondly, the bill deals with whole or partial disallowance. It provides that a regulation could be 'wholly or partly disallowed by resolution of either house of parliament and will cease to have effect to the extent of the disallowance'. As I understand it, the parliaments of New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania can all disallow a subdelegated piece of legislation in whole or in part. Thirdly, new section 10B would allow parliament to vary or substitute regulations. As I understand it, Western Australia is the only parliament that has a similar provision but does require the concurrence of the other house.

Fourthly, for a regulation to commence in less than four months, the minister would need to certify that 'commencement on the specified date, or at the specified time, is required due to the exceptional circumstances specified in the certificate'. That is provided for in section 10AA. The issues and remedies that the Hon. Robert Lawson's bill sought to address, of course, are still pertinent and of course we support the bill. We have identified, though, an opportunity to improve the legislation, and I will be moving an amendment at a later date to address this issue. The most innovative element in the third reform (the section 10B reform) is allowing either house to amend a regulation without the concurrence of the other house. As I indicated, Western Australia has a similar provision, but it does require the concurrence of the other house.

I appreciate that those of us in the Legislative Council are suspicious of the House of Assembly at times because it is controlled by the government. The very government that is making the regulation that we are reviewing has control of the other house, and people might say, 'Well, what's the point of having an ability to amend if the concurrence of the other house is required?'

Whilst the concurrence of the other house effectively provides the executive with a veto, the executive has a veto anyway, as it has the right to revoke an amended regulation as soon as it is gazetted following amendment by a house; and, as an amended regulation under section 10B is not subject to tabling and disallowance in its own right, our view is that there would be a risk that the bill in its current form would allow the executive to amend its own regulations in the House of Assembly and to effectively subvert parliamentary scrutiny.

On balance, we believe that that is a flaw and that we should follow the precedent of Western Australia and require concurrence; and, after all, we are not by ourselves a parliament, we are one component. It is therefore suggested that concurrence is an appropriate balance of the interests.

We also noted what we believe is a drafting error, and amendment No. 1 in the set that I have distributed is meant to address that. Members might look at it first thinking that it is a substantive change: it is merely meant to be replacing an 'insert' with a 'delete' because it produces a doubling-up of the words. Certainly, we do not believe there is any change in policy, just a drafting issue.

With those few remarks, and thanking the house for the opportunity to foreshadow the amendments to be moved in committee, I indicate that the opposition will be supporting the Hon. Robert Brokenshire's bill.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (21:52): I rise to indicate that I will be supporting the Hon. Robert Brokenshire's Subordinate Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2010, which seeks to give this parliament the powers to amend regulations tabled by the relevant minister, in addition to its current power to simply disallow the regulation as a whole.

As the honourable member indicated, this bill is identical in almost every way to that introduced by the Hon. Rob Lawson in 2009. I have made clear in this place on numerous occasions my respect for the Hon. Robert Lawson QC, who I have no doubt is now doing very well in the private sphere. His expertise always greatly enhanced the debate in this place, and I for one miss that.

I would also like to commend the Hon. Stephen Wade for being able to step up to the plate to fill that void. As the Hon. Robert Lawson outlined when introducing it, the bill amends the Subordinate Legislation Act 1978 to empower either house of this parliament to amend or delete a contentious section of a regulation as opposed to our—

The Hon. R.P. Wortley interjecting:

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: Excuse me?

The Hon. R.P. Wortley interjecting:

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: —maybe if you did something worthwhile I'd commend you once in a while as well—current limited power to disallow the entire regulation—

The Hon. R.P. Wortley interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins): Order! The Hon. Mr Wortley will get his chance.

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: While the saying 'using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut' is used often in this place—

The Hon. S.G. Wade: Leave Russell out of this!

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON: —what, the sledgehammer or the walnut—I can see no more fitting example than disallowing an entire regulation to address a single section of concern, as other members have mentioned. This bill also addresses what is to my mind a fundamental flaw in the current process provided by the Subordinate Legislation Act 1978, that being the ability of the relevant minister to reintroduce regulations the day after they have been disallowed by the parliament.

This happened recently with the regulations under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986 dealing with exit fees for those businesses seeking to be self-insured, which, despite this council voting to disallow on two separate occasions, was reintroduced without amendment.

I have no doubt that it will again occur with the disallowance today of the regulations under the Livestock Act concerning property identification code fees. Actually, it did not go through, so there you go! By failing to engage with members in an attempt to address and rectify their concerns and instead reintroducing rejected regulations, the executive, I believe, shows contempt for this parliament. This simply should not be allowed to occur.

Additionally, the bill seeks to address the long-abused ability of the relevant minister under section 10AA(2) of the act to commence regulations immediately upon being gazetted, where necessary and appropriate. The act assumes that this would occur only in exceptional cases and that most regulations will come into effect in accordance with section 10AA(1); that is, four months after being gazetted. This period is intended to allow time for this parliament to undergo proper process in scrutinising the regulation through the Legislative Review Committee and, if moved, to debate a motion to disallow before it comes into operation.

This period would ensure that those who would be impacted by the regulation were given the opportunity to engage the democratic process by making representations to the members of parliament about their concerns before having to comply, and it would prevent this parliament being faced with the difficulty of being asked to disallow a regulation that has already commenced.

However, as was noted by the Hon. Robert Lawson, ministers certifying that it is necessary and appropriate has become the norm. This is undoubtedly due to this threshold being too easily satisfied, hence this bill is proposing to require certification that there are exceptional circumstances justifying early commencement.

I can see no principle of governance that this bill offends. In fact, this will only enhance the role of this parliament in overseeing, scrutinising and contributing to instruments of our law and better reflects its supremacy over the executive, as is inherent in the Westminster democracies. While the government will no doubt oppose the bill, as it did in 2009, it will do so not in the interests of this parliament or the people it represents, but in its own self-interest, for which it should be ashamed. I commend the bill to the house.

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (21:56): I rise briefly to speak on this bill. I note that the bill is identical to that previously introduced by the Hon. Robert Lawson. Whilst I appreciate what the Hon. Robert Brokenshire is trying to achieve through this bill, I have some reservations about how it will work in practice. The role of making regulations is one that has always been within the purview of the executive arm of government.

It is government agencies that are responsible for all the legwork and consultation involved in the making of regulations. The Legislative Review Committee plays a pivotal role in examining the regulations and the process by which those regulations have been made, including consultation with interested parties and the community. Either house of parliament has the power to move to disallow any regulations that are considered unacceptable.

This power is particularly imperative to members of the Legislative Council. That said, it sometimes results in an entire regulation being disallowed, even if it is only one part of that regulation that is offensive. I myself have a disallowance motion before the house which, as a whole, is not unacceptable; however, I cannot simply move to disallow that part that is of concern to me.

The process for moving disallowance motions and disallowing regulations is by no means perfect; however, I am concerned that the measures proposed by the Hon. Robert Brokenshire could potentially circumvent the checks and balances currently undertaken in relation to regulations. I am not suggesting that regulations as presented by the executive are always right, but it is not the procedural role of the parliament to effectively be amending regulations without adequate provisions for scrutiny. Given these concerns, I will not be supporting the bill.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (21:58): It is good to hear a responsible presentation. This bill seeks to amend the Subordinate Legislation Act 1978 to prevent regulations from being reintroduced immediately after they have been disallowed, to allow either house of parliament to disallow part of a regulation or to vary or substitute regulations, and to replace the current test of 'necessary and appropriate' for a certificate of early commencement with a test of 'exceptional circumstances'.

This bill is the same bill as that which was introduced in this place on 14 October 2009 by the Hon. Robert Lawson MLC. The government opposed the bill then and it opposes it now, for the same reasons. The government is particularly concerned with the clause in the bill allowing the disallowance part of a regulation and preventing the executive from making a regulation of substantially the same effect as the disallowed regulation within six months after the disallowance.

The disallowance of one provision, or certain words in a regulation, has the potential to radically change the effect of the regulation or even to render provisions of the principal act ineffective. This is completely undesirable. Further, if a regulation cannot be remade for six months because it is of substantially the same effect as the disallowed regulation, the consequences of such an action may be detrimental to the effective functioning of the principal act. For this reason, the government opposes the bill.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. P. Holloway.

SUPPLY BILL

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

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Public Sector Management, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Government Enterprises) (22:02): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is an act for the appropriation of money from the Consolidated Account for the financial year ending 30 June 2012.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.M.A. Lensink.

At 22:03 the council adjourned until Thursday 7 April 2011 at 14:15.