

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 25 February 2015

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. R.P. Wortley)** took the chair at 14:17 and read prayers.

Parliamentary Committees

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS (14:18): I bring up the second report of the Legislative Review Committee.

Report received.

The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS (14:18): I bring up the third report of the Legislative Review Committee.

Report received and read.

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table:

By the Minister Sustainability, Environment and Conservation (Hon. I.K. Hunter)—

Breakaways Conservation Park Co-management Board—Report, 2013-14

Question Time

SKILLS FOR ALL

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:20): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills a question about the Skills for All program.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: Under the Skills for All program, registered training organisations (known as RTOs) have previously been encouraged to include bridging units in the training provided to South Australians to ensure that they are well prepared for their vocation in the wider workforce. Recently, a number of RTOs have been advised that bridging units are noncompliant, triggering a request from the government to return funds paid for delivering these bridging units. My questions to the minister are:

1. How many registered training organisations are being asked to return subsidies paid under the Skills for All program in relation to the alleged incorrect use of bridging units?
2. What is the total quantum of funds that the department is seeking to recoup through this process?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:21): I thank the honourable member for his most important question. In relation to the details around bridging units, I will have to take that on notice and bring back a response. I don't have those operational details on me, but as I said, I am happy to take that on notice and bring back a response.

However, in a broader policy sense, in relation to Skills for All we know that various changes have been made over the last number of years. Those changes have largely been in line with ensuring that we have budget control over expenditure. We continue to work with RTOs to understand their businesses. We continue to work with industry to understand their skill needs and

we will work with the industry and employers to ensure a long-term sustainable and viable training sector.

SKILLS FOR ALL

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:23): I have a supplementary question just to follow on from the minister's attempted answer. Are bridging units noncompliant and have RTOs been asked to repay the money?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:23): I am not aware of the details of these matters. I have already said that; I have already answered the question and said that I don't have details around these matters. I am happy to take it on notice and will bring back a comprehensive response.

SKILLS FOR ALL

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (14:23): I have a supplementary question. Given the minister's response, how does she then explain that individual RTOs have been advised in a letter: 'The minister'—that is you—'believes that the bridging units claimed are not compliant with the Skills for All contract'?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:24): That may well be, but what I am saying to you here today is I don't have that detail with me. It is most important, in the rigours of this place, that I bring accurate and detailed information. I don't have that level of detail with me, so I am going to take the whole question on notice and bring back a response.

SKILLS FOR ALL

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (14:24): I have a supplementary question. How does the minister claim that she doesn't know whether or not RTOs have been advised that bridging units are noncompliant when those RTOs are being told that the minister believes—not the department or a section of the department but the minister—that the bridging units claimed are noncompliant?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:24): I have already answered the question, Mr President; the same question.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The minister has already made it quite clear that she wants to give a detailed answer and she needs to—

The Hon. D.W. Ridgway: But she misled parliament. She's written a letter—her signature, by the sound of it, Mr President.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Let's all wait until she comes back with the answer. The Hon. Mr Lucas.

SKILLS FOR ALL

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (14:24): I have a supplementary question arising out of the answer. Given that I have been advised that the deed of settlement in terms of repayment of funds is between the minister herself and the RTO, is the minister indicating to this house that she is yet to sign one of those deeds of settlement?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:25): Mr President, I have responded to this question. It is a detailed matter, and what I am going to do is—

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: Have you signed a deed of settlement?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I said that I don't have the details of these matters with me today. I have agreed to take them on notice and to bring back a comprehensive response to the house as soon as possible.

SKILLS FOR ALL

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (14:25): I have a supplementary question arising out of the minister's answer. Does the minister concede that she is either incompetent or negligent if she cannot indicate to this house whether or not she has signed one of these deeds of settlement? She would have had to sign the deed of settlement if one has been completed at this stage, so does she accept that she is either incompetent and/or negligent in her responsibilities as a minister if she cannot at least answer that question?

The PRESIDENT: With all due respect, the Hon. Mr Lucas, the minister has said that she will bring back a full and detailed response, so I think that is more important.

HOSPITALITY GROUP TRAINING

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:26): My questions are to the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills and are in regard to Hospitality Group Training. My questions are:

1. Is the minister aware that there are problems confronting Hospitality Group Training?
2. Will the minister outline the issues faced by Hospitality Group Training as she understands them?
3. What is this government doing to support the apprentices and trainees employed through HGT to ensure that they are able to complete their training?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:27): I thank the honourable member for her most important questions. Indeed, I was very sorry to hear the news yesterday of HGT going into administration; it was a very sorry day indeed. I was advised that they had entered into administration on the 24th and that they have appointed Clifton Hall as the administrator.

As I am sure members here would know, HGT is a good training organisation that employs apprentices and trainees and places them with host employers in the hospitality industry. They have been highly renowned as a quality trainer and GTO. They have been in this space for around about 30 years providing excellent apprenticeships and excellent quality training, so it is indeed very sad to see that they have entered into administration.

HGT had been in contact with my department previously, and we had worked with HGT on a number of matters. HGT currently employs, I am advised, 18 staff, with around 116 apprentices and trainees presently, who they host to other businesses. HGT is also a Skills for All training provider, and the closure of the Hospitality Industry Skills Centre will impact approximately 300 learners, I am advised, of whom 162 are apprentices and trainees, and that includes those 116 directly employed apprentices and trainees.

As I have said, this government places great importance on ensuring that we understand the needs of the sector, that we understand employers' needs and training needs, and that we work very hard with the industry to create a long-term, stable and viable training sector into the future. So we consult with the industry and employers to ensure that we develop employment priorities.

Over the years the training sector has become increasingly more competitive. It was part of the national partnership agreement with the federal government, that more private operators enter the system to increase competition. That has impacted on all jurisdictions here in South Australia. It resulted in a handful or so of private providers, prior to Skills for All, and we are now operating I think about 170 private providers (or it might be just under that) so you can see that there has been a large influx of private providers into this sector and that clearly brings greater competition and challenges to the sector.

We have worked with HGT in the past to help identify training and diversification opportunities for them. It is to be noted that HGT are operating in the same business environment as the rest of

the industry. In relation to other detailed business matters, they are matters for HGT and they would need to be addressed to either HGT or the administrators.

The other part of the question was what we are doing with the apprentices. Our office (DSD) has already met with the administrators. We are working with those apprentices who are currently employed by HGT to move over to other employment contracts so that they can finish the employment component of their apprenticeship. For those students who have training that is incomplete we will again be assisting wherever we can to help those students move to alternate training providers that can fulfil the completion of that training requirement.

We will continue to work with the administrators to do all we can in that space to ensure that the students who are affected can move to the successful completion of their apprenticeship and their other training requirements.

HOSPITALITY GROUP TRAINING

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:32): I have a supplementary question. Can the minister outline what representations HGT has made to her in relation to contributing factors to its collapse, and can she confirm whether this includes bridging units and the structure of Skills for All?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:33): As I indicated, we have met and discussed with HGT, on a number of occasions, matters relating to their business. I am not prepared to give details of those; they are matters that go to the business of HGT and some of them are fairly commercially sensitive. It would be most improper of me to discuss the business matters of HGT. That is a matter for them to discuss. I advise the Hon. Michelle Lensink to direct those specific questions to them.

We did meet with them on a number of occasions to work through issues that they had identified. As I said, we tried to assist in relation to diversifying or broadening their training scope, and a number of other matters as well. Clearly, those measures have not been enough to turn this around. It is most unfortunate as they are an excellent training provider and a GTO, and it is very sad to see them moving into administration. However, I think it is important to remind honourable members that being in administration does not necessarily mean that long term business operation has not been determined. It is really important that we don't do anything to undermine their potential to eventually work their way through this. I remind honourable members that this is only one step and long-term business outcomes have clearly not yet been determined.

HOSPITALITY GROUP TRAINING

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (14:35): I have a supplementary question arising out of the answer.

The PRESIDENT: A supplementary; yes, Mr Lucas.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Did the minister at any stage receive advice from HGT that government policy decisions in relation to cutting funding for Certificate I and Certificate II courses were a significant cause of the problems that the training organisation faced? If so, what action, if any, did the minister take?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:35): I have already indicated that I am not prepared to talk about matters that go to the business of HGT. What I can say is that the rules around Skills for All and the changes that have been made over the year apply to everyone in the sector and it is no different for HGT. They are operating their business on the same level playing field as every other GTO and training place, and it is tough.

There is no denying it is a very tough environment at the moment. We know that the commonwealth government has withdrawn funding money. We know that Skills for All is facing challenges. We have had to put caps and banding in place over the last couple of years. We have not hidden those facts, but they are the same rules that apply right across the sector.

HOSPITALITY GROUP TRAINING

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (14:36): My question is directed to the minister. Has the minister received any advice that other training organisations other than HGT are in significant financial difficulty and facing going into administration or being closed down?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:36): To the best of my knowledge, I am not aware of any other training organisation that believes it is going into administration.

UNLICENSED CAR DEALERS

The Hon. T.T. NGO (14:37): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Business Services and Consumers a question about unlicensed backyard car dealing in South Australia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.T. NGO: Buying a car can be an exciting time and a fulfilling experience, but there are some pitfalls to watch out for along the way. Minister, last year you informed the chamber that motor vehicles continued to be one of the top consumer inquiries to Consumer and Business Services (CBS), and CBS would be undertaking a major investigation into unlicensed backyard car dealing in South Australia. My question is: can the minister inform the house on the outcome of this major investigation, including any disciplinary action that has been taken or is being considered?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:38): I thank the honourable member for his most important question. When you buy a car, it is often a major purchase and should be a pleasant experience rather than a daunting one.

Jurisdictions throughout Australia have licensing regimes in place for motor vehicle dealers to ensure a fair marketplace is maintained and that consumers are protected. However, when purchasing a used vehicle privately from someone who is not a dealer, you are not covered by statutory warranty, and there are those out there who might seek to take advantage of consumers by carrying on a business as an unlicensed car dealer. We don't want to see these dodgy dealers tarnish the reputation of the vehicle sales industry, and we don't want to see consumers stripped of their statutory warranty.

I am pleased to advise members that the state's consumer watchdog, Consumer and Business Services (CBS), undertook a four-month major investigation into unlicensed car dealers from September to December 2014. CBS investigators conducted operations across the state, cracking down on the sale of vehicles by 'backyard' and other unlicensed second-hand car dealers.

CBS investigators identified eight matters warranting prosecution and/or disciplinary action under the Second-hand Vehicle Dealers Act, ranging from trading without a licence to trading from unregistered premises. This resulted in CBS securing the surrender of three second-hand vehicle dealer licences from dealers now involved in ongoing criminal prosecutions. I am advised that the briefs of evidence against four other unlicensed dealers are currently being prepared, while a further case has been submitted to the Crown and is awaiting charges.

CBS investigators also received written assurances from seven dealers that they would not repeat their offences and delivered three warning letters for fairly low-level breaches. These backyard dealers were selling multiple vehicles from their homes, offering the consumer no warranty, and the safety of these vehicles is often questionable. I believe one vehicle that was looked at was virtually two cars welded together, so they can be very unsafe.

Unfortunately, there will always be a small number of dodgy car dealers who think they can flout the law and get away with it. However, this major investigation has put those dealers on notice. The state's consumer watchdog will remain vigilant in their efforts to protect consumers and maintain a fair marketplace. CBS worked with the industry throughout this investigation also to ensure that not only consumers but licensed traders are protected from any unlicensed activity.

The major investigation has also seen CBS assisting state and federal law enforcement agencies in intelligence-gathering operations. Collaboration with fellow state or federal agencies is not uncommon for CBS, nor is working with the industry, which I believe contributes to a robust and effective operation. Overall, the investigation found that the level of compliance with the act was high, so consumers should feel generally confident when buying a second-hand vehicle through a licensed dealer, but I remind people that it is in their own interests to ensure that they do check that it is a licensed dealer.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I advise members of the presence in the gallery today of students from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. It is good to see you here.

Question Time

NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE ROYAL COMMISSION

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (14:42): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking questions of the Leader of the Government, representing the Premier, on the subject of the nuclear royal commission.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL: As members would know, the draft terms of reference for this inquiry were published on Monday and, despite the period for public comment being very short at only seven days, some 309 submissions were lodged in that week. A number of people who made submissions also sent them to me, so I know that many of those submissions called for the terms of reference to include an investigation into the impacts of past and present nuclear activities in South Australia.

The reason so many people raised this issue is that, unless the royal commission looks at the industry as it is, it will not be able to properly determine what the impacts might be if it is expanded in the future. This is one of the most basic tools of research. You have to start with the present in order to assess possible future impacts. Nevertheless, it is clear from the published draft terms of reference that those calls fell on deaf ears. In any event, there are still over 300 submissions that I have not seen and, in fact, neither has anyone else, because they have not been published. My questions to the Premier are:

1. Why is the government keeping the content of these 309 submissions secret or, in other words, why won't the government publish these submissions on its website in the same way that it publishes other submissions made pursuant to a public call for comments?

2. If the submissions are not published, how can the public assess whose submissions are taken seriously and whose submissions are ignored?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:44): I thank the honourable member for his questions, and will be pleased to pass them on to the Premier in the other place and bring back a response. In terms of general comment, obviously members are well aware that on Sunday 8 February the Premier announced the establishment of a royal commission to allow South Australians to consider the role our state can play in the fuel cycle of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. This royal commission will look at opportunities and risks associated with the nuclear sector.

We want all South Australians to be able to explore this complex and often emotive issue, to look at the practical, financial and ethical issues raised by the prospect of greater engagement in this sector here in South Australia. Of course, we expect that there will be a wide range of views and evidence taken as part of the process, to which the Hon. Mark Parnell has referred. I am sure there will be many very deeply held views, but this process will allow all those who want to to have a say and to have evidence assessed to inform public debate.

I am confident that the royal commission will allow the facts to be presented in a way that enables all to engage in what is an important debate for the future of South Australia. As members would be well aware, the Premier has announced that former governor of South Australia Kevin Scarce will be appointed as the commissioner. I am advised that, in addition, a number of independent experts will be engaged to assist the royal commissioner in his work. I understand that the government is now consulting with the Hon. Mr Scarce in relation to those terms of reference and the appointment of the independent experts who will assist him. In relation to the detailed matters that the Hon. Mark Parnell has referred to, I will bring back a response.

BUSINESS CLOSURES

The Hon. J.S. LEE (14:46): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Business Services and Consumers a question about business insolvency.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: According to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, South Australia has had a high number of businesses fall into insolvency due to court wind-ups or creditor wind-ups. Many jobs have been lost from businesses that close their doors, and a number of these businesses attributed their closures to the high cost of doing business in South Australia. My questions to the minister are:

1. Does the minister know how many businesses have entered into insolvency over the last 12 months?
2. With businesses stating that the cost of business is very high in South Australia, when will the minister address these problems for South Australian businesses?
3. How many jobs have been lost due to the closures of these small businesses, and how does that tie in to reaching the jobs target set by the government?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:47): I thank the honourable member for her most important question. Indeed, the marketplace is a very open and competitive one, and one of the features of that marketplace, and the freedom that businesses have to enter it, is that some are, unfortunately, not successful.

This government has done a great deal to help support business growth. I know I have spoken about this in this place before; in fact, I think the last time was yesterday, when I reminded members that this government has assisted businesses with payroll tax concessions and with reforms to WorkCover. We estimate that \$180 million worth of savings to businesses will come from those reforms.

We are building a skilled workforce, we are providing more help for businesses to win government work through initiatives such as Tender Ready, in collaboration with Business SA. We have just recently announced a tax reform agenda in the Governor's speech, which will be a comprehensive review of our taxation system, a bold and brave thing. So we have certainly indicated that we are prepared to look at further reforms in relation to tax.

I have spoken in this place before about the Small Business Roundtable that has been established to provide greater collaboration and communication between the state government and particularly the small business community. The round table will help assist in fixing up unnecessary barriers to business growth and ensure that our regulations promote innovation and speed up approval processes, as well as act as a sounding board on policy issues where appropriate. Members will be well aware—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: I do not want to interrupt your caucus meeting here, but the minister is trying to answer a question from the Hon. Ms Lee, so I think it is important that we can all hear what is being said. Minister.

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: Thank you, Mr President. Honourable members will also, I am sure, be aware of initiatives—because I have spoken about them in this place before—in relation to our voucher system, which is mainly targeted at small enterprises to help them build new innovative developments into commercial activities. There is a grant program that also assists particularly small businesses to be able to grow and develop their businesses.

WILD DOG STRATEGIC PLAN

The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA (14:51): My question is to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation. Will the minister update the chamber on the consultation process regarding the draft State Wild Dog Strategic Plan and the important role that the South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group is playing to increase awareness about the issue?

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (14:51): I thank the honourable member for his most important question. Sir, as you would know, the management of wild dogs and dingoes presents an obvious and very complex challenge for government and the pastoral industry. We strive to find the right balance between protecting the livestock industry while at the same time respecting the ecological and cultural importance of this wildlife species. It is important that we get the balance right, that stakeholders work in unison to address the problem and that adjacent landholders work together with their neighbours to make sure there are no holes in our approach to baiting.

What we have found in the past is that, within South Australia, many of the tactics used to control wild dogs have occurred at a local level involving the South Australian Arid Lands NRM Board and one of the numerous dog fence boards. In addition, the National Wild Dog Action Plan was also released on 4 July 2014 and was, of course, endorsed by the government. The discrepancy between these two approaches made it pretty clear that there was a gap in our state's approach to wild dog management.

Given the vast area affected by the problem of wild dogs, as well as the different stakeholders and the impact of the problem across jurisdictions, we felt that we needed a more consistent state-based approach. This is why in 2013 we established the South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group, to provide recommendations and oversee the implementation of priority actions for South Australia under state and national wild dog plans. Representatives from industry, natural resources management, the Dog Fence Board, biodiversity conservation, Aboriginal communities and government sit on this advisory group. The chair is Mr Geoff Power, a highly respected figure in the Australian wool industry and President of Livestock SA, I am advised.

The advisory group has met on seven occasions and is focusing on determining priority actions and investigating opportunities for long-term funding models to improve the management of wild dogs in South Australia. I am pleased to report that it has been highly successful in improving communication and coordination on this issue with the community.

Together with Biosecurity SA, the advisory group has developed a draft state wild dog strategic plan that has now been released for public consultation. The draft plan acknowledges the different perspectives that exist, and suggests ways to protect the livestock industries while maintaining populations of wild dogs in northern South Australia (outside of the dog fence). Importantly, this draft plan aims to bring together all of the current activities by NRM regions, the dog fence boards, Biosecurity SA and DEWNR into the one document. It will also be the mechanism by which South Australia can implement the National Wild Dog Action Plan.

Successful wild dog management requires a coordinated approach by government, industry and community stakeholders. It is important that all interested parties have a say on the draft plan so that the views of a broad cross-section of the community is represented.

The South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group will play an important role in ensuring that a wide range of stakeholders are engaged in the review. The comments on the draft stage of the wild dog strategic plan are due by 27 February 2015. To aid this process a stakeholder consultation forum was held in Port Augusta, I am advised, on 12 February this year; it was attended by around 60 people representing pastoral, conservation, Aboriginal and government perspectives. The forum was strongly in favour of having a state plan and provided valuable comments on the draft document.

The management of wild dogs is essential for sustainability of South Australia's extensive livestock industries. This draft plan outlines a coordinated statewide approach to managing the threats and the benefits of wild dogs. It is available on the Biosecurity SA and DEWNR websites, and I encourage all interested parties to provide their feedback by Friday 27 February.

I also take the opportunity to thank the South Australian Wild Dog Advisory Group and all agencies that played a part in drafting this state-based plan. I look forward to reporting back to the chamber once the plan has been finalised.

DISABILITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (14:55): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking questions of the minister representing the Minister for Disabilities regarding the Disability Equipment Service (DES).

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT: I have been contacted by constituents, most notably a gentleman whose wheelchair broke down during the weekend just gone, I believe. This gentleman called the after hours number for DES, only to find that that office was closed at 5pm on a Sunday. Surely this is not a true after-hours service. I know from contact with other constituents, and from my own personal experience, that this experience is not unique, and it can be incredibly difficult to get someone out to do wheelchair and other equipment repairs after hours. My questions to the minister are:

1. Can the minister confirm the best way to get efficient repairs on equipment done out of hours?
2. Will the minister ensure that DES is better resourced so that people can get their equipment repaired quickly so as to ensure their safety, freedom and independence?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:56): I thank the member for her important questions and will refer them to the Minister for Disabilities in another place and bring back a response.

SA WATER CHARGES

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (14:57): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Water and the River Murray questions about SA water charges.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY: As I briefly outlined on 10 February, I understand that this financial year SA Water sent out individual accounts for each unit in a retirement village at Para Vista, when in previous years the village was receiving two accounts for the entire village as a whole. For this village it has resulted in 26 supply charges at a cost of \$7,352.80 per annum, compared with \$565.60 last year. The sewerage charges have also increased from \$1,556.97 last year to \$9,136.40 this year. The cost per unit, based on these costs alone, have increased from \$81.63 last year to \$634.20 this year.

I understand that having individual accounts means that those who are entitled to a pensioner concession will now be able to apply for their concession. However, I am concerned that the maximum pensioner concession for sewerage is \$110 and up to 30 per cent of the charge for water consumption, capped at \$295. Based on these figures, residents are at a minimum \$147 worse off per year if they received the maximum concession totalling \$405 per year. In other words, even if all the residents are pensioners, SA Water would be receiving an extra \$3,822 per year from the village. My questions are:

1. Can the minister advise whether the accounts for this village have now been placed on hold while SA Water investigates the impact that this has on their customers?
2. Can the minister advise the status of SA Water's investigations to remedy the problem?

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (14:59): I thank the Hon. Mr Darley for his important question. I have answered this question in this place this year already. To summarise, the situation is this: essentially an independent statutory authority, the Valuer-General, has made some changes in terms of title for retirement villages. Those changes have resulted in a policy change being applied to those titles, which has had the inadvertent effect of driving up costs to individual residents of retirement villages.

I have indicated to this place before that I found that an unacceptable approach to adopting a policy that flows from one agency to another, albeit that the first one is an independent statutory authority, and I have asked SA Water to urgently review the situation, to make sure that retirees are not caught out in this sort of situation in the future.

However, there are swings and roundabouts involved. As the Hon. Mr Darley mentioned—and this has been a constant complaint—pensioners have not been able to access pensioner discounts on their water bills because they have not had any individual water bills. The situation, however, has resulted in a net increase in cost to these pensioners in the retirement village, which the Hon. Mr Darley brought to my attention. That was never the intention of SA Water's policy in this regard. As I say, it has flowed from a decision made by an independent statutory authority, and I have asked SA Water to change the way it applies those decisions into the future.

The PRESIDENT: Supplementary, Mr Darley.

SA WATER CHARGES

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (15:00): My question is: what is the status of that investigation at the moment?

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (15:00): I have answered the question. The status is that I have asked SA Water to engage with the retirement village industry and to engage with a particular retirement village and make sure that these policy decisions do not flow through from an independent statutory authority's decision-making processes. SA Water can choose whether or not it applies those decisions to its policy. My advice to SA Water is to come back with a better answer.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND RECONCILIATION AGENCY

The Hon. S.G. WADE (15:01): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation a question on agency publications.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: Yesterday, the minister informed the chamber that, as part of the new funding arrangement, APY has agreed to 'meet higher standards of accountability and transparency' including publishing the minutes of the monthly APY Executive Board meetings on the organisation's website. Ten years ago, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation released its first Progress on the APY Lands report. Over the next decade, another 14 of these reports were published online. Two of these reports appeared in 2012 and another two in 2013. More than a year has now passed since the last APY progress report appeared.

Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation is also the lead agency for driving government efforts to meet the Aboriginal wellbeing target established 11 years ago when the government first launched South Australia's Strategic Plan. According to the State's Strategic Plan website, data on 21 specific indicators is gathered as a way of monitoring progress made against this particular target. The data currently available on the State's Strategic Plan website for the Aboriginal wellbeing target has not been updated for some time. The most recent data cited comes from mid-2012, more than 2½ years ago. My questions are:

1. Will the minister be making sure his agency, Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, meets the same high standards of accountability and transparency as he is now requiring of the APY Executive Board? In particular, will Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation be producing any more progress on the APY lands reports and if so when will the next one be released?

2. Is Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation still the lead agency for the Aboriginal wellbeing target established under the State's Strategic Plan, and if so, when will updated information on the 21 indicators linked to that target be released?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (15:03): I thank the honourable member for his important questions. In relation to the substance of what he asked, I will take that on notice and bring back a reply about the reports and seek advice from my departments about how they may be published and what we will do with them.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS (15:03): My question is to the Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation. Can the minister inform the chamber about the recent Baxter industry event and what impact it will have on manufacturing in South Australia?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (15:03): I thank the honourable member for his question and, yes, I can inform him in relation to that.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: As it happens, I can inform him.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: It took me some time, but I do have that information here. There is no doubt that the uptake of new technologies is one of the most crucial factors in business innovation. Cutting-edge technologies offer manufacturers the ability to create new and better products, to reduce costs and improve productivity and efficiency. Technology is fundamentally changing the value proposition of manufacturing in South Australia, and we now find some of our greatest successes competing on global markets through the value of our products, services and solutions.

As the honourable member alluded to in his question, I recently had the opportunity to attend the Baxter industry event at SAGE Automation in Melrose Park, to launch a new robot, Baxter the robot, which is designed to work safely alongside people and undertake a wide range of tasks. SAGE Automation is a proud South Australian based automation and control services company and is the Australian integrator of Baxter the robot.

This is the first of this type of robot in Australia and, with the support of the state government through a grant of \$50,000 as part of the business innovation voucher program, it will be used by Haigh's Chocolates, our iconic South Australian chocolate manufacturer. Through the state government's business transformation voucher program, manufacturing firms in South Australia are assisted in developing and implementing new activities or improving existing operations to enhance their profitability and productivity. The voucher program in this instance has enabled Haigh's to engage outside expertise, in this case the rather brilliant minds at SAGE Automation, to assist them in enhancing their profitability and competitiveness.

The success of this robot, Baxter the robot, has been proven on the factory floor in the United States and in Europe in a wide range of tasks, and I am confident that, once the SAGE team completes Baxter's programming, it will significantly increase Haigh's manufacturing efficiency. This is expected to be completed this year and installed at Haigh's after Easter, which understandably is a very busy time for that company.

Baxter the robot will be located within Haigh's Chocolates' Greenhill Road facility and will be visible to the over 34,000 visitors each year who take part in the free factory floor tour, which will also offer an opportunity for industry to gain exposure to this potentially transformative piece of technology. While this is a very advanced robot, I still don't think we are in a position to say that we welcome our new robot overlords, but I congratulate Haigh's Chocolates on their willingness to embrace new technology and their willingness to embrace change. It is little surprise that they have been innovators and stayed ahead of the curve for the last 100 years.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter: Did you get a sample bag? It's important stuff.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: It is important stuff. No, I plan to visit after it is installed, in April, and avail myself of some of the chocolates then. The industry day held at SAGE Automation was an excellent opportunity to introduce this new Baxter the robot, the first of its kind in Australia, to a wide range of South Australian manufacturers who were at the open day. Like many others who were there, I look forward to learning how Baxter is integrated into manufacturing processes throughout South Australia in the years to come.

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:07): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills a question in relation to unemployment levels.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: South Australia currently has an unemployment rate of 7.3 per cent. We know that changes to the automotive industry as well as the future of the ASC contracts call into question employment levels in the future, job training, the reskilling of people and job security in South Australia. It was reported yesterday that the Housing Industry Association expects that new home building will decline over the next 12 months, resulting from high unemployment levels and weak economic conditions, according to their reports.

The Housing Industry Association executive director, Robert Harding, noted that about 41 per cent of the cost of a new detached home was taken up with state, local and federal government taxes, which certainly create a barrier to development. Additionally, in recent news we have seen the sacking of 520 staff to date at Santos, after a \$935 million four-year net loss, resulting from the significant drop in global oil prices, amongst other things.

The redundancy program has months to run at this point and it is unclear what the expected job losses at Santos will be. They employ 1,586 people directly in South Australia and have another 2,574 contractors, so any future job losses would be of grave concern to South Australians in general and, obviously, in particular the people directly affected. My questions to the minister are:

1. What is the government doing specifically to ensure that retrenched or unemployed workers have appropriate and affordable support and training opportunities available to them to reskill and gain employment?
2. What strategies is the government using to ensure sustainable employment for South Australians?
3. What measures, apart from tax reform, which the government has talked about, is the government taking to attract multiple industries to South Australia so that reliance on a single industry or only a few industries can be lessened?
4. Does the government attribute any benefits to population growth and the knowledge economy in terms of developing a more sustainable South Australia as a potential for growth?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (15:09): I thank the honourable member for his most important questions. Indeed, the employment figures for January were of deep concern. However, I have spoken in this place before about the volatility of that month-to-month data and that it is important that we do look at the longer-term trends and, if we look at that, as I have indicated, employment has increased by over 1,800 over the past year compared with this time last year. So, there has been some growth in the longer term, albeit slow. I think that it is important that we are mindful of the longer-term trends; nevertheless, those figures were very disappointing and are something we are obviously watching very carefully.

This government is committed to working with industry and business to ensure that we lead a strategy to modernise and diversify our economy. We know that we have traditionally relied on an older automotive manufacturing model, and we know that we have to transition out of that to try to assist the supply lines to find alternate growth and markets and to assist those people who are currently employed at GM to find alternative employment, and part of that strategy is to assist them in reskilling and suchlike, including retrenchment support as well.

I have indicated in this place before that, although it is easy for us to focus on the doom and gloom, nevertheless there have been some positive elements on our horizon; for instance, South Australia has had record-breaking production in oil and gas and record production in minerals—\$7.5 billion in 2013-14, the highest record in South Australia's history. We have had steady export growth, which I have spoken about here before, where the ABS showed that the value of goods exported overseas by South Australia totalled \$11.9 billion in 12 months. South Australian products continue to be in great demand, with exports exceeding \$11 billion per annum, which is a 2.4 per cent increase on the same period last year. I know that they are export figures, but we know that they translate to jobs somewhere in the supply chain.

I have spoken about private new capital investment being higher in South Australia, seasonally adjusted, compared with a year earlier, so we are doing reasonably well there. South Australia was one of only two states to record a rise in capital expenditure in the quarter. In trend terms, retail figures for South Australia released in January demonstrated that again we were the leading state in retail sales growth in November and, again, that is jobs.

We have invested \$60 million in our jobs plan to stimulate the economy, encourage investment and growth in business and build a skilled workforce. We have invested \$63 million over three years in skills training and \$44 million of initiatives for the resources and energy sector, \$10 million in the new regional Jobs Accelerator Fund, and \$10 billion towards productive infrastructure, such as roads, rail and suchlike, to help boost our economy and create employment.

I have talked about our jobs plan. It has six pillars to it, and that is aimed at securing the future of our state's manufacturing sector and assisting in diversifying our economy. That involves accelerating the transformation of our manufacturing sector into advanced manufacturing through support for things like clusters, as well as funding for collaboration and innovation. There are a number of initiatives in that pillar.

The second one is accelerating significant infrastructure projects to create jobs during the transition and to help lift productivity. The third element is the creation of a new jobs accelerator fund, around \$20 million, to help drive growth in key industry areas. The fourth one is retaining displaced automotive workers to secure new jobs in emerging sectors, and the fifth one is about helping to transition automotive supply businesses into new markets and supporting northern suburbs communities to help generate local activity.

I have talked about support for business growth so I will not go over that—but that is payroll tax concessions, WorkCover, tax reform, and building a skilled workforce. So those drivers are there. Again, I know it is easy to point to those areas where there are closures and suchlike, but we can focus on things like the fact that our major development directory lists over 300 projects that are either under way or in the pipeline and worth around \$94.6 billion.

The projects include things like Playford council's \$400 million redevelopment of the city centre, SA Water's \$62 million upgrade of the Aldinga wastewater treatment plant and Flinders University's \$63 million redevelopment of the plaza and student hub; and SA Power Networks has signalled an intention to spend \$2.49 billion in upgrading infrastructure and doing reliability works over the next five years.

The South Australian-based Hornsdale Wind Farm has been selected as one of three Australian wind farms to deliver power to the ACT under a 20-year deal. That is likely to see the development, I am advised, of around \$900 million in wind farm development in this state. There is good news from Sundrop Farms, and a whole raft of other areas where we see new investments and new business growth and development. As I said, we continue to work together with businesses and industry to ensure that we have a vibrant and strong economy and strong jobs growth.

MEDICAL STUDENTS

The Hon. A.L. McLACHLAN (15:18): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, a question about medical students in South Australia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A.L. McLACHLAN: The Repatriation General Hospital and the Noarlunga Hospital emergency department are important teaching facilities for the Doctor of Medicine course at Flinders University. South Australian medical students have raised concerns regarding the quality of their future training and uncertainty over placements and internships usually held at these facilities that are now to be closed by the government.

The President of the Flinders Medical Students' Society has warned that the government's proposals had thrown the future of several placement courses into doubt as a large component of second, third and fourth year is taught at those sites. He said that there was now uncertainty about how the university would be able to continue to deliver training in some specialties. Concerns have also been raised about the quality of future training if larger student groups are placed with doctors at the Flinders Medical Centre once students have been diverted from placements at the Repat and Noarlunga facilities.

Has the Minister for Education consulted with the university or student bodies about these concerns and, if so, what are the outcomes of those consultations, and what input will her department have to ensure that the quality of practical training provided to our medical students is not compromised if the government's proposals proceed?

The Hon. G.E. GAGO (Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (15:19): I thank the honourable member for his most important question. This government continues to work with all relevant stakeholders in relation to health planning to identify issues of concern and to work with those stakeholders to help overcome those issues, and that exchange and dialogue will continue.

APY LANDS, GOVERNANCE

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:20): I address my question, on the topic of the APY lands and the upcoming election for the APY Executive, to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, and I seek leave to make a brief explanation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Yesterday in the InDaily online publication, in the article by Bension Siebert it was reported that the shadow minister for Aboriginal affairs and reconciliation, Dr McFetridge, has called on the minister to suspend the APY elections, due under the act in May, for at least 12 months and appoint an administrator, without sacking the executive board. My question to the minister is: is that legal; is that possible under the act; and do you have any intentions of changing the act within the next day, given the Electoral Commissioner has already issued the election dates?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (15:21): I thank the honourable member for her question and her demonstrated continuing interest in these matters. It is a very important question, and I have had discussions with the honourable member about these matters in the last few weeks. As many would know, the APY Land Rights Act requires an election of the executive board to occur within three months after the third anniversary of the previous election. The previous election was held on 28 February 2012, which means an election is due to be held before the end of May this year.

As I have previously informed this place, between late 2013 and early 2014 a review of the APY Act was undertaken focusing on options for more contemporary governance and accountability. The review, in particular, covered the current election system including electorates and the composition and capacity of the executive board.

The review panel, chaired by the Hon. Dr Robyn Layton, consulted broadly with Anangu communities across the APY lands and with the executive board. The recommendations in the final report included both changing the electorates and the composition of the executive board to ensure both gender balance on the board and a better proportional representation of all Anangu across the lands.

I was asked in the last sitting week a question by the Hon. Stephen Wade about whether the Layton review constituted a review under the act. This might be an opportune time to indicate that I am advised that review did meet the requirements of the review provisions as outlined in section 9(8) of the APY Land Rights Act. So, the honourable member can take that as a response to the question I took on notice in the last sitting week.

I have met and had discussions with members of the APY Executive Board about this matter. I have also received a letter previously from the APY Executive Board requesting elections be held as they would in due course in May. I am also advised that my department has been in contact with the Electoral Commissioner about the APY election. I recently received a letter from the Electoral Commissioner outlining her intention to hold the elections on 25 May 2015, so I have taken advice from the APY Executive.

There has been correspondence from the Electoral Commissioner. I have had a number of discussions with the department and many people, including members here and in the other place who have an interest in this matter, and it is my intention that the interests of APY and all Anangu are best served by holding an election as scheduled in May this year. This will be on the basis—as in all the discussions I have had—that we will be considering later this year changes that reflect the Layton review recommendations, and are implementing a new system and the intention is that fresh elections will be held sooner than the next three years after that.

In relation to the very specific questions of the honourable member, I will take it on notice to check that I am correct, but I think it is the case that if an administrator is appointed the board does not have its statutory functions as they have them now. I will double check that is correct, but that's, I think, the advice.

Matters of Interest

NEWSTART ALLOWANCE

The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:24): Today I would like to express my concern over the Abbott government's changes to the Newstart allowance that will negatively impact our youth. Axing the Newstart allowance for up to six months is not the solution to our high youth unemployment rates. It is abandoning our youth when they may need the most help. It is interesting to note *The Daily Telegraph* reporting a couple of weeks ago that this was a measure that was reportedly considered too harsh by senior members of the Coalition government such as ministers Eric Abetz and Kevin Andrews. Nevertheless, it was included in the 2014-15 federal budget on Mr Abbott's insistence.

As an applied science in computing and information economy graduate, it took me close to 12 months to gain employment due to the relatively small IT industry in South Australia. Those 12 months I spent time knocking on doors and doing a lot of work experience. If I was forced to wait six months for an allowance, I may have had to take up the Abbott government's suggestion and work as a fruit picker. I would not have had the time to build up my work experience in the IT industry. I am sure that at this moment there are thousands of South Australian students in a similar situation. Repeatedly telling them that they should get a fruit-picking job is not a solution. It is selling our students short.

The Abbott government's own papers tell them that up to 65,000 or 30 per cent of graduates will be jobless four months after finishing their degree. Starting salaries are also predicted to fall and will be worse from 2016-17. At the same time, student debts are expected to soar due to deregulation of university fees. This evidence demonstrates that graduates should be entitled to six months or a year on Newstart to look for work in the first instance, not the other way around as proposed by the Abbott government where young people will need to wait to receive Newstart for up to six months.

One of the key elements of the original changes proposed to the Newstart allowance was the mandatory requirement for job seekers to apply for up to 40 jobs or face their benefits being cut off. This proposed mandatory requirement was prohibitive to people trying to gain work experience to enable them to gain employment in a field relevant to their studies. It also would have placed a huge burden on employers who would have been swamped by large numbers of job applicants

placing a large cost burden on their organisations. The Abbott government has since reversed this decision, returning to the current requirement of 20 job applications a month.

Changes to Newstart come at a time when our youth will face huge debts due to the deregulation of university fees. It also comes at a time when university students continue to graduate from fields where there is little or no demand for employment in their relevant industry. As I have said previously in Matters of Interest, maybe the Abbott government should focus on its reforms in the tertiary sector rather than punish our youth who are trying to build up their experience to get a job. Newstart does not give people enough money to live comfortably, but it can help young people to get by. If we do not provide this support for up to six months, we will be leaving our young generation behind.

Ministerial Statement

O-BAHN TUNNEL

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (15:28): I table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the O-Bahn City Access project made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Minister for Transport.

Matters of Interest

CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR

The Hon. J.S. LEE (15:29): I would like first to convey to honourable members and staff of the Legislative Council a very happy and prosperous Lunar New Year: Xin-Nian-Kwai-Ler in Mandarin, Gong Hey Fatt Choy in Cantonese, and Chuc Mung Nam Moi to the Hon. Tung Ngo. It is indeed my great pleasure to rise today to speak about the Lunar New Year of the Sheep, Goat or Ram. There seems to be some confusion out there as to which zodiac animal this year is supposed to be. Well, all three of them would be correct; goats, sheep and rams are all considered to be one family under the Chinese zodiac.

The Lunar New Year is the most important festival in China and for Chinese people living overseas around the world. The United Nations estimated that world population exceeded 7 billion in 2011. The population of China is approximately 1.3 billion people, and people of Chinese origin currently constitute one of the largest overseas populations in the world. The Han Chinese constitute over 19 per cent of the global population, and the world's most-spoken first language is Mandarin Chinese, which is spoken by 12.4 per cent of the world's population. When you look at these numbers you can imagine the magnitude of Lunar New Year festivities that are being embraced by communities around the world. The two largest communities celebrating the Lunar New Year in South Australia are the Chinese, who commonly refer to it as the Spring Festival, and the Vietnamese, who know it as the Tet Festival.

In the 1950s Australia was famously riding on the sheep's back, and for that reason I like to refer to this year as the Year of the Sheep. The first day of the Lunar New Year of the Sheep started on Thursday 19 February. It is usually celebrated over 15 days; however, due to the active and vibrant Chinese, Vietnamese and Asian communities in South Australia it has been stretched over a lot longer period of seven weeks.

I wish to extend my gratitude to all the Chinese, Vietnamese and other Asian associations who continue to organise wonderful Lunar New Year events with the South Australian community. These events highlight the importance of culture and tradition, and their efforts to foster a very strong multicultural presence in our state. My deep appreciation goes to:

- the Australian Chinese Medical Association of South Australia;
- the Chinatown Association of South Australia, which actually organised three functions: a street party during the day, a street party/banquet dinner at night, and His Excellency the Governor also hosted a cocktail party at Government House;
- the China Business Network of South Australia;
- the Chinese Welfare Services;

- the Malaysia Club of South Australia;
- the South Australian Zhu-Lin Buddhist Association;
- the Overseas Chinese Association (His Excellency the Chinese Ambassador Mr Ma Zhaoxu and Mrs Ma were actually here in Adelaide celebrating the New Year festivities);
- the South Australian Xinjiang Association ;
- interuniversity Chinese students associations;
- the Hong Kong ABA and the Hong Kong Economic Trade Office (HKETO);
- International Student Entrepreneurship Capital;
- the South Australian Oceania Federation of Chinese organisations from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos;
- the Vietnamese Farmers Association of South Australia;
- the Vietnamese Community in Australia/South Australia Chapter;
- the UniSA Australian Centre for Asian Business and the Hawke Centre (I did a book launch with them, and also had a Chinese New Year celebration at UniSA).

Various banks also hosted many festivals, dinners and cocktail parties, including the ANZ Bank, the Commonwealth Bank, NAB and Westpac. As you can see, some of the festivities are already happening, and some of the common themes for Lunar New Year celebrations include lion dance performances, firecrackers, and traditional songs and dance, all of which are very entertaining and joyful. There is quite a marathon of events that are happening.

I wish to thank my colleagues who have attended various events with me. From this chamber there is the Hon. David Ridgway, the Hon. Michelle Lensink and the Hon. John Dawkins. From the other place I would like to thank the state Liberal Leader Steven Marshall, the member for Adelaide Rachel Sanderson, the member for Unley David Pisoni, the member for Morialta John Gardner, and the member for Hartley Vincent Tarzia. I have already mentioned the Hon. Tung Ngo, who attended many functions during this very busy time. I think I also saw the Hon. Gerry Kandelaars at the Chinatown banquet dinner and, of course, the President was there as well, is that right?

The PRESIDENT: I was there, yes.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: Did you have a good time?

The PRESIDENT: A great time.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: I bet you did. I would like to convey that the Year of the Sheep is very auspicious for everyone, and I want to wish everyone a happy Lunar New Year.

INDONESIAN JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS (15:34): I rise to implore the Indonesian government to reconsider its position on capital punishment and to grant all those on death row in Indonesia clemency. Whilst we know of the impending execution of two Australians, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, there are another nine who also face the same fate as Andrew and Myuran. I fear the 11 condemned prisoners' fate is already sealed, as it would appear that the Indonesian government is determined to make a public political statement.

I acknowledge the very determined multipartisan efforts here in Australia to plead with the Indonesian government for clemency for Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran. As we all know, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran were the ringleaders of what is referred to as the Bali Nine, a group that tried to smuggle over eight kilograms of heroin into Australia in 2005 and were caught in Bali as a result of an Australian Federal Police tipoff to the Indonesian authorities. They certainly deserve to be punished for their part in that crime. Their actions were reprehensible and a shocking mistake, but they do not deserve the death penalty for their mistake.

I oppose capital punishment as I believe it is an appalling waste. The death penalty is the ultimate denial of human rights, the right to life. The sanctioned killing by the state significantly diminishes our humanity. It has been over nine years since Andrew and Myuran were convicted and sentenced to death. In that time both individuals have undertaken significant rehabilitation resulting in a remarkable transformation. In a recent debate in the federal parliament, both the foreign minister, the Hon. Julie Bishop, and the deputy leader of the opposition, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, spoke on the efforts of both Andrew and Myuran in their rehabilitation and repaying their debt to society.

In her speech, the Hon. Julie Bishop outlined that, in the case of Andrew, he had completed a degree in theology and is now a pastor who provides religious counselling and support to fellow prisoners. In Myuran's case—and he is often referred to as the 'gentle giant'—she pointed out how he has nearly completed a fine arts degree and has become an accomplished artist with the assistance and tutelage of his friend and mentor, renowned artist Ben Quilty.

In her speech, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek pointed out how her husband had been caught and convicted of drug offences overseas prior to their relationship. She gave a personal perspective of how he had repaid his debt to society for his stupid mistake, and, more importantly, how he continues to contribute to our society.

Andrew and Myuran have been recognised by officials, warders and fellow inmates of the notorious Kerobokan prison for their positive contribution and leadership in the rehabilitation of themselves and fellow prisoners. Their deaths would be a tragic loss to us. Over 35,000 Australians have sent letters to Indonesian President Joko Widodo seeking clemency for Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran.

Interestingly, Indonesia's foreign affairs department is seeking to prevent the execution of at least 229 of its citizens who are facing the death penalty for crimes such as murder and drug offences. Whilst I commend the Indonesian government's efforts on behalf of its citizens facing execution abroad, the ongoing use of the death penalty at home reflects an inexplicable double standard. As I said earlier, I fear the Indonesian government is determined to make a public political statement by these executions, but I believe there are far better ways to show that you can get tough on drug crime. Please, please, President Widodo, reconsider your position and grant clemency to all those facing execution. Compassion is not a weakness: it is a strength, and I urge you to provide clemency to all facing execution in Indonesia.

HEALTH REVIEW

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (15:39): I rise to address two issues today, one being in relation to the ongoing controversy on the issue of Transforming Health. The particular issue I address briefly is the claim I have seen repeated, and repeated again in the House of Assembly yesterday in question time when the Minister for Health, when challenged about the potential savings of some of the issues in relation to Transforming Health, said:

We have not modelled savings because this process isn't about savings.

That is absolute rubbish. The health department, SA Health, has come before the Budget and Finance Committee on a number of occasions over recent years. They have acknowledged that they are facing, as a result of state government cuts prior to the recent decisions in relation to federal government funding, state government cuts of many hundreds of millions of dollars over the forward estimates period, and they have indicated that they were looking, prior to Transforming Health, at a range of controversial areas in terms of budget savings.

It is a nonsense, it is rubbish, it is untrue for any member, in particular the Minister for Health, to say in a house of parliament that this issue is not about generating budget savings. I guess, ultimately, it is an issue for the House of Assembly in terms of privilege and in terms of misleading the house of parliament, but there is no doubt that there are very many documents, I am sure, available both within Treasury and within SA Health that would be proof positive that Transforming Health is about generating budget savings, is about meeting budget savings targets, and that calculations are available within SA Health and within the Department of Treasury and Finance which have already looked at what savings might be generated.

It is then an easy segue for me to move to just another grotesque example of government waste within the Public Service, and that was the recent decision by Premier Weatherill to pay his own personally appointed and chosen chief executive, Mr Kym Winter-Dewhirst, a salary increase of \$125,000 for the job that he has just been given. This is a job that has been reduced in size, because a number of key parts of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet have been removed: Arts SA has been removed, SafeWork SA has been removed and Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation has been removed and transferred to other departments. I am advised that there are ongoing discussions in relation to corporate services and other shared services with Treasury that might at some stage also be removed.

So, we actually have a department, an agency, a CEO, responsible for a smaller group of not only employees but responsibilities, and for some unjustifiable reason Premier Weatherill decides that he is worth \$125,000 a year more than the former CEO, Jim Hallion who, as I understand it, is wandering around somewhere, whether on a full-time or part-time contract, still being paid because he has almost 18 months of his contract still to serve with the government.

That is what makes people angry. You have this grotesque waste of money at a time when the Repat hospital is being closed and emergency departments are being closed. You have the position of a former Labor Party staffer, Mr Kym Winter-Dewhirst. I have no problem in relation to, ultimately, a premier choosing his or her own chief executive, but that chief executive then executed eight, as we understand it, rather than 11 senior executives, without notice, without warning, on one particular morning, they being told that they were no longer wanted.

In one case an executive, who was only one year through a five-year contract, will have to be paid out and was treated without any dignity, as I have said before. What is appalling public servants is twofold: in doing that, as I indicated in the last matter of importance, people like Adele Young, who is a Labor Party honcho from the Northern Territory, adept in running campaigns, are being given key positions within the department and other former Labor staffers like Mr Flanagan and Mr Morris are being given positions, whilst these long-serving, loyal public servants are executed.

SAFE HAVEN LEGISLATION

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:45): I bring a sober topic to the attention of the council this afternoon, but it is nonetheless very important. At the end of November last year, a baby boy was abandoned in a drain and left for up to five days before passers-by discovered him, after hearing what they thought were the cries of a wounded cat. The baby was dehydrated and malnourished, but thankfully he was alive. His 30-year-old mother, who had no criminal history up to that point, was charged with attempted murder.

Within a week, the body of another baby was found buried in a shallow grave on a popular Sydney beach. The baby was in such a state of decomposition that an autopsy had to be carried out to establish the cause of death, the age at the time of death and whether the infant was in fact a boy or girl. There was the case of Keli Lane who was convicted and gaoled for 18 years for murdering her own infant. The body of the baby was never found. In Sydney in 2011, a newborn girl was found dead in a shoebox which had been left near a block of units.

In our own city, here in Adelaide, in 2007, a young mother gave birth to a boy and left him to die on the floor of the bathroom of Adelaide TAFE. A year later a newborn died from exposure after being left in an Adelaide driveway. There was also the case of baby Joshua, who was abandoned on the doorstep of a house in Adelaide in 2003. Fortunately, in that case, baby Joshua survived and was later adopted. Sadly, infants in Australia are abandoned all too frequently.

This is not a situation we can just continue to ignore. It has been suggested that annually at least 12 babies are abandoned around Australia. However, due to concealment of pregnancies and failure to register births and the like, it is entirely likely the number is much higher. As I understand it, there are some 15 countries across the world that give unwanted babies a chance at life in the form of baby drop boxes, or so-called safe havens.

We have already seen legislation pass through this chamber which was introduced by the Hon. Ann Bressington to create a system which would allow for the lawful surrender of newborn

babies so these tragedies could be avoided but also those who desperately want a child could be given the opportunity to adopt, which is incredibly difficult at the moment.

Unfortunately, attempts to get this legislation through have fallen on deaf ears in the other place. The government has refused to pass the bill, citing that their priority was on early intervention to assist mothers who may be considering not keeping their child. We do not disagree with that, but we should be doing both.

The then minister for education and child development cited sufficient mechanisms within legislation to adopt unwanted children should a mother decide not to keep her child. Unfortunately, this attitude is not consistent with anecdotal evidence, which suggests that women who abandon their children are often young, disconnected from their support systems or unwilling to access support systems and simply do not realise that they are pregnant in some cases or do not know what to do in the event that they are.

Forensic psychiatrist Rod Milton notes that some mothers are overwhelmed by the situation. They may have mental illnesses or the like and in some cases simply do not feel anything for their baby. Andrew McCallum, the CEO of the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies in November last year, stated that baby abandonment 'does not fall into the normal child abuse and child protection framework' and that it really is about mental anguish and what is happening in some people's lives.

Accordingly, regardless of early intervention strategies, it is likely that mothers and babies will be failed by our current system. Obstetrician Michael Paech, the Sydney West Area Health Service's head of women's health and former Australian Medical Association president, has said that baby hatches would give women in a desperate situation the option of saving their baby's life. There are some mothers who are in a situation where they cannot talk things through, he said. They might not want the baby in their life but in most cases they do not want it to die, Dr Paech has said.

I am asking the government today to revisit this issue and to start a conversation about how we can prevent the abandonment of newborns. We do not have an appropriate support system at the moment for this most important and complex issue and, if the government chooses not to have a look at this issue, which in good faith I hope it will, then certainly I will be introducing legislation to do that.

MUSIC INDUSTRY

The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA (15:49): Recently, I represented Premier Jay Weatherill, Mr Jack Snelling and minister Susan Close at the following functions. Firstly I spoke at the launch of a unique collaboration between Music SA and the Adelaide Airport titled 'This is SA Music'. This partnership sees local musicians performing original music in the main airport terminal every Friday afternoon and alternate Saturdays and Sundays. It is a showcase of local songwriters that can be enjoyed free of charge, giving arrivals to our state a taste of what the South Australian live music scene has to offer.

Artists performing on the day were Tom West, Vincent's Chair, Brillig and the Germein Sisters. As a one-off opportunity, the state government, through a Music Development Office grant, supported the release of 2,000 limited edition cards entitling listeners to a download-only compilation of songs from 16 artists from the series. Names such as Kurna Cronin, the Baker Suite, Ash Gale and The Brouhaha featured on this release, truly a diverse and talented assortment of local artists.

Thanks must go to Mark Young, the managing director of Adelaide Airport, and to Gordon Anderson, industry development officer, and Lisa Bishop, general manager, from Music SA, for their vision and determination to make this project work. Through the Music Development Office, our government will continue to support the growth of the local music industry as we recognise the significant cultural and economic value that it brings to our state.

Another outstanding music industry event I had the pleasure of attending was the launch of the Yesterday's Heroes exhibition at the State Library. This partnership initiative between the State Library, Adelaide Music Collective and the South Australian Music Hall of Fame showcases a celebration of South Australia's influence on popular music from 1956 to 1986. The exhibition draws on a network of enthusiasts and collectors to display items and memorabilia from personal collections, most of which have never been on public display. Many industry items complement this

exhibition: posters, photos, records, music magazines and articles, even a test pressing of Cold Chisel's Khe Sanh and drumsticks owned by Bill Ward from Black Sabbath and used at the Myponga Pop Festival. It is all there and on display until 22 March.

The State Library is also hosting a series of Up Close and Personal sessions to complement the display. Each session kicks off on a Tuesday evening with a contemporary artist's solo performance followed by a Q&A with some of our heroes of yesteryear who helped shape the Australian music industry through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Big names such as The Masters Apprentices, The Twilights, John Brewster, Rockin' Rob Riley from Rose Tattoo, Fraternity members, Bev Harrell, Johnny Mac, Barrie McAskill, John Schumann from Redgum, and Evan Jones. It is hoped that from this participants will gain an increased appreciation of the importance of this period in South Australia's music history.

Thanks must go to the South Australian Music Hall of Fame founder, David 'Daisy' Day, whose personal contributions to this exhibit are quite staggering and who plays host to the Up Close and Personal sessions. I would also like to highlight the contribution on the evening of Mr Alan Smith, the director of the State Library, the Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Martin Haese, MC Gary Burrows and John Schumann, and acknowledge the attendance of Isobel Redmond, the member for Heysen.

It is events like these that promote a rejuvenated sense of pride in the South Australian music industry, by reflecting on the past and providing opportunities for the public to engage with a talented assortment of emerging contemporary artists. I urge all honourable members to visit the exhibition and, importantly, get involved and support our artists. I would like to congratulate everyone involved behind the scenes in putting these events together, as we all know that behind every rock star there is a great roadie.

YOUNG, MS STELLA

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (15:53): Yesterday, 24 February 2015, would have been the 33rd birthday of the very fabulous Stella Young, but as some members may be aware, Stella passed away, much too soon, on 6 December last year. I had the somewhat unenviable honour of speaking at Stella's memorial service, which was held at Melbourne Town Hall on 19 December, to celebrate with her family, friends and supporters the fantastic amount of living that she managed to squeeze into 32 years of life and the extraordinary positive impact that she had made lobbying for change on behalf of people with disability.

As you are probably aware, Stella was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, more commonly, and certainly more crudely, known as brittle bone disease, a physical disability. What she lacked in height she certainly made up for in hilarious wit and sarcastic comments. She was a talented writer, a journalist with the ABC and a comedian, as well as a public speaker on disability rights issues. Today, nearly three months since she died, Stella's loss is still keenly felt by me and by others in the disability community. Family and friends, of course, would be feeling it more keenly on the occasion of her birthday.

Stella had a tattoo on her arm which was a quote from a Laura Hershey poem, which stated 'You get proud by practising'. I would like to touch on some of the things I mentioned at her memorial service and some of the ways that people with disabilities are still 'getting proud by practising'.

In my opinion, Stella embodied so many of the best things about several movements that are greatly important to me. As a woman, she was outspoken, funny and fearless. As a disabled person, she was proud, honest and a leader who was not going to wait for the world to catch up but was out there actively showing the world how it was done. Stella never took the easy way out not only because I believe that this was an innate part of her driven nature but also because, like me, she knew that for too many people with disabilities there is still no easy way.

If we lived in a world in which every person had the option of living the easy way, then, for example, those of us who use mobility aids would be able to jump on a bus, train or tram to get to and from work without worrying about the accessibility of that particular vehicle or whether there would be a kerb ramp at the train, tram or bus stop.

The easy way of living is one in which no disabled person sees their taxes time and time again paying for services which we ourselves cannot use, and in this world you would not have to wait for someone well-respected and loved in our community to pass away to hold an event as accessible as the memorial for Stella Young was. This standard ought to be the norm so that we can not only come together as a community in times of grief but also get on with living our daily life.

Stella knew, as many of us do, that this is not yet the world in which we live. People with disabilities are still burdened, stifled and squandered by the low expectations of others. We are still all too often denied educational opportunities equal to those offered to our non-disabled peers. We are still expected to carry out menial work, regardless of our individual interests or talents, for wages that would be not only insulting but also illegal for others to receive. We can be held in prison for years without charge, and we can be denied a say in our own reproductive rights. These are just some of the ways that people with disabilities are having to 'get proud by practising'. We will fight against these things, against the better judgement of society at large.

We know that our population is ageing at an alarming rate and that we need to prepare a society that is accessible and welcoming to everyone. We know that providing someone with a good education helps them live a longer and healthier life, with less reliance on government services. We know that all of us need access to our community as the population ages, and we must continue to make these arguments clearly, loudly, without fear and, of course, proudly. Stella, we miss you, we need you, and we will be here 'getting proud by practising'. My thoughts are with Stella's family and friends every day and especially on the occasion of her 33rd birthday. Happy birthday, Stella; thank you for everything.

Parliamentary Committees

STATUTORY AUTHORITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14

The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS (15:58): I move:

That the annual report of the committee, 2013-14, be noted.

As members would be aware, the Statutory Authorities Review Committee is a multipartite parliamentary standing committee, whose five members are drawn solely from the Legislative Council. This report is the 61st report of the committee and my first as Presiding Member. It provides a summary of the committee's activities for 2013-14. Throughout 2013-14, the committee met on 14 occasions, completed its inquiry into Funds SA and continued its inquiry in the State Procurement Board.

In 2013-14 the committee continued to hear evidence for the Inquiry into Funds SA and undertook a cross-jurisdictional study of Australian investment fund managers. It visited Victoria and New South Wales to hear from the Victorian Funds Management Corporation, Victoria's Emergency Services and State Super Board, the New South Wales Treasury Corporation, State Super and First State Super in New South Wales. This evidence proved to be invaluable as it allowed the committee to compare the South Australian funds management model with those of its interstate counterparts. The committee's report on the Inquiry into Funds SA was published in January 2014. The committee's recommendations included that:

- the Treasurer consider amending the South Australian investment framework to include the adoption of a formalised tripartite relationship between the Department of Treasury and Finance, the client and Funds SA;
- the Treasurer, in conjunction with the Department of Treasury and Finance, conduct a review with a view to the resolution of any issues between Funds SA and the Motor Accident Commission;
- the government continue to monitor broad industry trends in investment funds management; and
- common performance criteria be set to be adopted by all government agencies involved in funds management.

For the Inquiry into the State Procurement Board, in 2013-14 the committee commenced hearing evidence and published an interim report. Following the state election in 2014 the composition of the committee changed, and I am very pleased to have been appointed as the Presiding Member. I would also like to thank the committee's former presiding member, the Hon. Carmel Zollo, and its former members the Hon. Ann Bressington and the Hon. Terry Stephens for their contribution to the committee. I welcome the Hon. Dennis Hood, the Hon. Tung Ngo and the Hon. Stephen Wade to the committee. I also look forward to working with all current committee members into the future.

During 2013-14 the committee also welcomed Peter Dimopoulos as its new secretary. It farewelled Mr Gareth Hickery, the committee's secretary, and Ms Linda Eckert, who acted as the secretary while Mr Hickery was on leave. The committee thanks both of them for their service and wishes them well into the future. In 2014 we saw the committee's research officer, Ms Debbie Bletsas, move on from her role. The committee thanks Ms Bletsas for her service and also wishes her well for the future. The committee welcomes our new research officer, Ms Emma Moulds, who I am sure will acquit herself very well.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. T.T. Ngo.

Motions

COWDREY, MR MATTHEW

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (16:03): I move:

That this council acknowledges the extraordinary Paralympic career of Matthew Cowdrey on his retirement from elite swimming on 10 February this year, just over a fortnight ago and that:

1. He embodies a social model of disability which acknowledges that it is society that creates barriers to people with disability succeeding, not disability itself;
2. Amongst the 20 medals, he won 11 gold medals across three Paralympic Games in 2004, 2008 and 2012, making him Australia's most successful Paralympian; and
3. Throughout his successful career, he has become an outstanding ambassador for the Paralympic movement.

Before I list the incredible achievements that Matthew has amassed in the first part of his life, I would like to acknowledge his philosophy and approach to life as someone who grew up with a disability. At 26 years of age, he is the same age as me (putting me to shame). Matthew was born with a disability. He has also embraced and, in fact, lived sometimes unwittingly, but always quite passionately from what I have observed, what is often referred to as the social model of disability.

Often, society decides that people with a disability need to adapt or live with the unworkable way that our community is often constructed or, indeed, that a cure for disability would fix the problem. This is the medical model of disability. It presumes that a person with disability has to change to fit their often inappropriate physical surroundings such as buildings, carparks, transport services etc. or that they just have to fit in with an unadaptive education system, health system, or justice system—whatever may be the barriers they are facing—and that it is their problem. It also assumes that people have to try and change their disability because the way they are just cannot be accepted.

It is the social model of disability that Dignity for Disability would prefer to see adopted by all services and governments in Australia. It is not my choosing that I use a wheelchair in many respects and, therefore, cannot access the front entrance of this very parliament, for example. But by not adapting this building to allow people with prams, mobility aid users, or people with vision impairment to come through the front door we say that our democratic institution is still only accessible to some. However, perhaps this is somewhat of a digression.

Matthew Cowdrey has always taken the view, presumably with the support of his family and friends—as is always important—that he could do all that his able-bodied or non-disabled friends and peers could. He may be one forearm and one hand down than your average person on the street, but he always focused on what he could do rather than let himself be limited by what he could not do or, more often than not, what he was told he could not do—as is often the case for many people with disabilities.

I am not sure if he dislikes 'people with disability' being used as what is often called 'inspiration porn' as much as I do, so I will stop short of saying that he is an inspiration because that is a word that has come to be rather vehemently disliked in the disability community. However, I think we can confidently say that he is a positive role model for all young people, in particular, with or without a disability.

While some sports people, as they grow in success and notoriety, become better known for what they do off-field in their exploits and misadventures, Matthew has always conducted himself in a humble and down-to-earth manner, at least from what I have observed. He has always been grateful for the support he has received from South Australia, our state.

He has maintained his unassuming nature, despite becoming Australia's most successful Paralympian ever. He competed in the 2004 Paralympic Games, 2006 Commonwealth Games, 2008 Paralympic Games, 2010 Commonwealth Games and the 2012 Paralympic Games winning 13 Paralympic gold medals and 23 Paralympic medals in total—one for almost every year of his life. A very impressive achievement.

In addition to winning many commonwealth, world, state and national swimming titles across his swimming career, in 2004 Matthew Cowdrey was also named the Australian Paralympian of the Year. In 2006, Cowdrey won the Commonwealth Sports Award category of Male Elite Athlete with a Disability (EAD). Swimming Australia named him its Swimmer of the Year with a Disability for four years in a row from 2004 to 2007. He was also named Swimming Australia's All-Star Swim Team in 2006 and 2007. Swimming World Magazine has named him their world Swimmer of the Year with a Disability. In 2009 he was named Young South Australian of the Year. In 2011 he was inducted into the Australian Institute of Sport's Best of the Best.

Cowdrey was a finalist for the 2012 Paralympian of the Year. In 2012 the South Australian Aquatic and Leisure Centre decided to name the main competition pool after him, and the City of Salisbury gave him the keys to the city in 2013. In October 2014 Matthew Cowdrey was inducted into the Path of Champions at the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre.

Dignity for Disability, as I am sure everyone else in this chamber does, wishes Matt Cowdrey the very best on the occasion of his retirement and with whatever he chooses to do in his future, which I am sure will be very bright. I thank him not only for his sporting achievements but for the way that he has demonstrated the benefits of a social model of disability and what can happen when society moves to eliminate the barriers which people with disabilities too often face. We thank him for this work and wish him well. I commend the motion to the chamber.

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

Bills

ELECTORAL (LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VOTING THRESHOLDS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (16:11): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Electoral Act 1985. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (16:12): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I rise to introduce a bill to amend the way in which members are elected to the Legislative Council for the consideration of this place. There can be no doubt that sophisticated preference harvesting strategies employed at election time have brought about surprising results leaving voters unable to fathom what has taken place.

Following the last federal election in particular, political commentators have noted with concern the potential to strategically manipulate the ticket voting system by engaging in preference harvesting to secure election with a very small number of first preference votes. Political consultant Glenn Druery was reported to have advised some 30 to 32 micro parties about harvesting

preferences in the last federal election and claims success at getting numerous people elected with this method.

The most obvious and frequently cited example of preference harvesting, as it is called, is that of Senator Ricky Muir, and I mean no disrespect to the senator, of the Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party. Senator Muir received a primary vote of just 0.51 of 1 per cent but, due to cleverly negotiated preference deals, he was able to secure election over better known candidates and parties. In Western Australia it was reported that up to 10 of the 77 candidates for the Senate re-election were not even residents of the state. Accordingly, allegations of deliberate 'front' for feeding preferences to parties were made, alleging that they were running for preferences alone.

After the federal election, allegations arose of systemic exploitation by parties which were created solely for the purpose of deliberately manipulating the distribution of preferences. Further to that, a frequent criticism was that parties which had opposing policies actually banded together to share preferences with each other. For example, some parties which supported mining were reported to share preferences with those who opposed mining.

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters of 2014 noted that a threshold could be implemented which would provide a solution without requiring any other changes to the current system whatsoever. Clearly, this also would be true of the South Australian system. The simplest and most easily understood response to the issue of preference harvesting is to introduce a minimum voting threshold into the Electoral Act in South Australia, and I believe federally.

The public do not want to see a system which would allow strategic preference deals to take place over primary votes. From Family First's perspective, this is not a good outcome and members elected to the parliament should have at least a minimum level of support in the voting community.

A primary vote threshold would eliminate election predominantly by the trading of preferences. By implementing a formal threshold, we will ensure that candidates are elected only when there is clear community support for the party on which their platform runs or which they support as an independent. We are certainly not about disenfranchising smaller parties, and we do not believe that its implementation will prevent minor parties from being elected. However, we do believe that the deliberate harvesting of preferences and the manipulation of the electoral system must be rectified in order to ensure voter confidence in our democratic process.

A simple system of operation must be engaged so that South Australian voters, whether politically astute or not, are able to understand what happens to their vote. Family First believes that creating a fair and democratic system is what is most necessary for voter confidence and the wellbeing of this state, and the integrity of the electoral process of this chamber.

The bill I am proposing is operationally the same as the bill I introduced last year with, however, the minor change in the threshold. This bill creates a minimum threshold of 2 per cent by which a person or party can be elected. Only primary votes will count towards the meeting of that threshold. A party, group or individual that does not reach the mandated 2 per cent simply cannot be elected to this place. In instances where someone is not elected—that is, they receive less than 2 per cent of the primary vote—their preferences will be distributed normally, exactly as is currently the case.

The threshold for this bill has been adjusted from my previous bill at 2.5 per cent to 2 per cent based on information received during the consultation period. I point out that I am not wedded to the figure of 2 per cent; however, it seems to be the one that most people I have spoken to agree on. It must be pointed out that it is rare for someone to get elected here in South Australia with less than 2 per cent and, as such, we believe that this is a suitable threshold that would have community support. We believe this is a fair and achievable target, even for very small parties who are serious about being elected to the South Australian parliament but who do not have the benefit of being in the major parties—or, indeed, what you might call the major minor parties such as Family First and the Greens.

As I have mentioned previously in this place, thresholds have been used for some time in other jurisdictions, so this is not a new concept. By way of example, Sweden has a threshold of 4 per cent, Israel has a 2 per cent threshold, and thresholds also exist in New Zealand, Turkey and

Germany. The threshold of 2 per cent that we are proposing is in line with what other countries have implemented. It is certainly achievable for very small parties, and we strongly believe it will provide assurance to the public that those people they vote for in substantial numbers will actually form the parliament and be elected to this place.

Further, we are attracted to this model because it ensures that no-one's vote is wasted, if you like, because votes do not exhaust. Rather, they continue to flow via preferences. Under an optional preferential system, for example, should a voter select 11 candidates (if that is the model that was determined) and none of those candidates were directly elected, then that vote is exhausted and has essentially been wasted. Under a threshold system, every vote counts every time.

Additionally, a change in the voting system to optional preferential voting is significantly different from what the public is used to. They are not conditioned to vote in this manner and would require considerable education. The model I am proposing is very simple and easily understood; nothing changes except the simple fact that someone cannot be elected to this place unless they achieve at least a minimum 2 per cent of the primary vote. Family First believes this simple change will prevent the harvesting of preferences so that it is reflective of the intentions of the voters on the day of election. Furthermore, we believe this will have very strong widespread support throughout the electorate for the simple changes, and it will be easily understood by the electorate.

As I said during my contribution, I repeat that we are not necessarily wedded to the figure of 2 per cent and are happy to discuss what it should be with other members of this place. I think it is about right. One of the reasons that was fed back to me that that was the appropriate level was that the now Senator Nick Xenophon was elected on 2.6 per cent, as I recall, and it was suggested to me by a well-known political commentator that a threshold should not be set above the level at which someone like that was originally elected to this place. I am inclined to agree with that; we should not be seeking to shut the gate on Independents or very small micro parties, as they are called, and I do not seek to do that.

However, I do believe that the public has had enough of what they see, and what has been reported to me, as a rotting of the system and a manipulation of the voting process. A situation that sees parties (as I gave in my example), one of which may be opposed to mining and one of which may support mining, actually preference each other in order to use those preferences to get one of them elected really is an abuse of our system and should not continue. I commend the bill to the house. I will be bringing it to a vote in the future, and I look forward to some debate and discussion on these topics so that we can find a way through this once and for all.

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

ANIMAL WELFARE (GREYHOUND TRAINING) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (16:19): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Animal Welfare Act 1985. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (16:20): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

We are all aware of the horrific footage aired on the ABC *Four Corners* program recently. This bill is an attempt to respond to that matter. Essentially, it amends the Animal Welfare Act, which I will refer to consequently as 'the act', to assist in the detection of live baiting in the greyhound racing industry in South Australia by requiring that lure coursing, and in particular devices known as bull rings, be licensed.

The program was aired on Monday 9 February, showing greyhound trainers and industry figures using a range of animals as live bait. It can only be described as horrific. The footage taken from training tracks in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales has led to over 70 individuals being implicated and the suspension of some 20 to 30 owners and trainers so far. The New South Wales board of greyhound racing was given its marching orders.

Since this time there has been widespread public outrage at how deep this practice may be entrenched within the industry. Understandably, questions are now being raised about how these individuals have been able to escape the system for such a long time undetected. Animal welfare advocates, including the RSPCA, believe the practice is entrenched and systemic in the industry.

That brings us to the question of South Australia, and questions have been raised about whether live baiting does, or could, occur locally. The advice of the two agencies which have some oversight of this, that is Greyhound Racing SA, indicated initially that they were completely shocked by the footage. They had no indications that this practice had been taking place in South Australia and have set forth trying to get to the bottom of whether it might take place in South Australia.

My sympathies go out to the many good and decent people who work in that industry who, unfortunately, have perhaps been tarred with the same brush as the malicious practices interstate. There are a number of people who are fanatical in their standards of animal welfare practices. Also, the RSPCA has no indication that the practice takes place in South Australia, and I understand that there is a cross-party working group which is looking into trying to find a way forth.

The history of the practice is that live baiting started to be phased out in the late 1920s when the mechanical hare, which was designed to simulate live prey, was used on a circular track. Later, the use of a squeaky toy was added to the lure. The use of live prey was made illegal in Australia in the 1980s, with the last event held in South Australia in 1985.

I understand that over the past two decades it has been reported that only two cases of live baiting have been pursued by industry stewards in Australia. Clearly, based on the footage that was aired, a lot more were taking place than we were aware of. It is time to restore confidence in the industry for the sake of all the honest and decent people who work in the industry and to establish a set of rules to ensure that this practice is not taking place in this state. The CEO of GRSA has been shocked; he stated that on air. He said on Radio Adelaide, in an interview on 18 February:

...we have no evidence of it occurring in South Australia...[our] processes, they're not dissimilar to those of the Eastern Seaboard, and if you'd asked them two or three weeks ago is this occurring in their states they would have said no.

He was also asked about whether there were rumours in the industry. He said:

...I've been in the industry...for 20 years...and I was stunned...

He also went on to say:

...we're not the body [GRSA] in this state that's empowered; we don't have special investigative powers of entry and so there are severe limitations on racing bodies to perform this monitoring...When we go on to property we typically have to give notification; we can't engage in sophisticated surveillance and we have to gather our evidence in a manner that satisfies the prosecutory requirements...

I think part of the problem is the interaction between the regulatory regime that exists under the GRSA and the interaction with the Animal Welfare Act and the RSPCA, as the body tasked with enforcing the Animal Welfare Act. In terms of the legislation, live baiting is illegal, as it would be considered an offence under section 13(1) of the act, attracting a gaol term of up to four years or a financial penalty of up to \$50,000. Clause 13 of the Animal Welfare Act refers to ill treatment of animals, that is, subsection (1):

- (1) If—
 - (a) a person ill treats an animal; and
 - (b) the ill treatment causes the death of, or serious harm to, the animal; and
 - (c) the person intends to cause, or is reckless about causing, the death of, or serious harm to, the animal,the person is guilty of an offence.

As I said, the RSPCA is the authority for monitoring and enforcing the act. There are wide-ranging powers under the Animal Welfare Act for the collection of evidence. The RSPCA can enter property, seize animals and collect evidence in line with other authorised officer provisions under other acts of parliament, and these authorised officer powers are in clause 30 of the Animal Welfare Act.

Greyhound Racing SA has a code of practice for greyhound establishments, its latest version being June 2011. It is predominantly focused on standards for the welfare of greyhounds. There are 1.5 FTE GRSA stewards who undertake kennel and track inspections, and in South Australia there are approximately 300 premises and 350 trainers who are likely to receive a visit once every two years.

GRSA SA inspectors do not have the same powers under their code as the powers under the Animal Welfare Act. Stewards have the authority to inspect land, buildings or any fixed or movable structure that is under the control of any person who is licensed in their code. They cannot, however, undertake inspections on private property or where a person is not licensed. So, whilst this regulatory regime in South Australia mirrors that of interstate, the GRSA has stated that it has no evidence that live baiting occurs in South Australia, but it also cannot rule it out.

In practice, the RSPCA, or indeed South Australia Police, would need to be the authority required to catch out, if you like, this practice and subsequently prosecute such a practice, which relies on them receiving a tip off. We were approached by an individual, who I will not name, who advised the Liberal opposition that there are a few rogue elements who do practise live baiting, and that the way to stamp out this practice would be to license lure coursing and these tracks known as bullrings. For the sake of the record I will read the definition of 'bullring', as contained in the GRSA code, as follows:

Bullring—an enclosed circular training facility designed to train the greyhound to run. The specifications of a bullring vary in diameter but it is usually surrounded by a fence approximately 1 metre in height and uses the natural surface of the ground.

The bullring may have a pole in the centre, to which a rotating arm is attached which in turn may be used to trail a lure. The rotating arm may be motor powered.

These are the devices that we believe should be licensed and this will enable the authorities—and not just the GRSA, but also the RSPCA—to know where they are located, which will certainly assist in the detection of these practices.

The bill seeks to do several things. As well as requiring the device to be licensed, there is a penalty for having one of these devices and not having it licensed. That attracts a fine of \$10,000 or imprisonment for one year. While there are general animal cruelty clauses in the Animal Welfare Act, this particular bill will also outline that live coursing will attract the same penalty as applies under that act—a \$50,000 fine or imprisonment for up to four years. We believe that that will enable the collection of evidence and prosecution to be made a little bit simpler because in that case the prosecution does not need to prove animal cruelty but has a lower test of proving that live coursing was taking place.

A new penalty, which applies to anyone who supplies or sells an animal to another person knowing that the animal is to be used in this ghastly practice, will attract a maximum penalty of up to \$20,000 or imprisonment for two years. The feedback that we have had from GRSA and the RSPCA has been positive. They are clearly looking at a range of other issues and in particular one of the matters that they need to determine is how the GRSA stewards will interact with the RSPCA to ensure that, if there are instances, evidence is collected properly and can be used effectively in prosecuting cases.

As we know, there have been cases in the past where there have been difficulties with prosecution under the Animal Welfare Act when certain matters have not been done properly and, for the sake of the animals and for community expectations, we want to make sure that the evidence cannot be thrown out of court but will actually be able to be tendered and used effectively.

The bill is being tabled today for consultation. I look forward to the recommendations that will arise out of the government, RSPCA and GRSA working group, but I think that licensing of lure coursing is important and needs to be put on the table and considered as part of any suite of reforms that the government and this parliament considers. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. T.J. Stephens.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS (SURROGACY) AMENDMENT BILL*Committee Stage*

In committee.

Clause 1.

The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: I would take this opportunity today to respond to questions that were raised during the second reading debate on this bill in December 2014. I indicated to members of this committee by way of email that that would be the purpose of the debate today. That allows members to further consider my response. I am hoping to proceed with the further stages of the committee in the very near future, but I will work with members on that and keep them informed in the normal manner. I hope the committee will bear with me as I deal with the responses to those questions. The first question is from the Hon. Tung Ngo, and I will quote the member:

My question is whether surrogacy should only be recognised if it is sought through this register. It would seem to me that doing this would clear up any potential future ambiguity over whether a particular agreement constituted legal surrogacy. This may mean that those surrogate mothers who only choose to be a surrogate for a specific person they may trust would need specific recognition within the register.

My answer to this question is no. The intention of this bill is to provide a register to assist potential parents who may be looking for a surrogate once they have been advised that they are unable to conceive naturally or otherwise; therefore my intention is to continue to allow the current practice whereby suitable surrogates are sourced by the prospective parents without reference to any register, whether these surrogates be friends or otherwise who are not on the register. I continue with the Hon. Tung Ngo's questions:

Another question I would like a response to is whether this amendment bill is effectively setting up an industry, whether altruistic or not, which needs adequate safeguards built in to provide certain protections for all parties involved. Even if a surrogate acts out of altruism, she would still expect that the necessary expense she has incurred throughout pregnancy would be accounted for by the commissioning parents. If this does not occur, what protections are available in this bill? What if there are unexpected complications in the pregnancy, and this changes the attitudes of commissioning parents? Do these matters become a purely civil issue with no protections available to the surrogate mother?

My response is that this amendment bill is not in any way setting up an industry or commercialising surrogacy in any form. My intention is to simply make accessing surrogacy easier for everyday South Australians and allow reasonable recompense to surrogates for the expenses they incur during the process. However, after recent contact from a constituent, on which I will expand shortly, I am considering some small amendments to clause 7(5) of the bill. A further question from the Hon. Tung Ngo:

Likewise, Mr President, as a man I will never be able to understand the emotional bond that develops between a mother and her baby during pregnancy, but I can foresee a scenario where surrogate mothers who have previously come to an agreement with commissioning parents then decide that they want to keep the baby. How is this issue dealt with? I would also like to know what information will be available to women who are considering placing themselves on the register. It is a very big decision to make.

As alluded to earlier, in addition to the Hon. Mr Ngo speaking of his concerns on this matter, I have recently had a constituent visit me to discuss this very issue, which she herself has faced firsthand. I do not wish to mention the constituent's name on the record, but what I will say is that this mother has accessed surrogacy using the current legislation in South Australia and provided me with a unique perspective about this law in action, which I feel would also be of benefit to the committee. The constituent concerned has written her story in her own words and I quote:

Unfortunately I am a recurrent miscarriage patient primarily due to an autoimmune condition which causes my blood to clot. After many years of infertility, failed IVF cycles and heartache, surrogacy was the best way for us to finally realise our dream of having a genetic child. My husband and I are very grateful that the existing laws in South Australia allowed us to engage in altruistic surrogacy locally, which ultimately resulted in the birth of our darling son last year.

Initially we had three attempts with a surrogate in California in the United States. Although surrogacy is a very well trodden path in the States, it was extremely expensive, difficult and for one reason or another, it didn't work for us. Our agent was about to 'match' (as is the terminology in the States) us with a new surrogate for a fourth attempt when everything changed and we decided to take a new direction. A local lady unexpectedly came forward and

together we excitedly decided to try and have a baby through Repromed here in Adelaide using embryos we had already created and frozen. We were so incredibly lucky that it worked first try.

One of the main reasons we went overseas initially was that we never thought we'd find someone at home willing to be our gestational surrogate, but also because local surrogacy is so uncommon in South Australia. Most people mistakenly believe that it's not even legal! In all honesty, while the process was lengthy and at times difficult, on the whole we actually found the process, especially the steps that needed to be taken to establish a 'recognised surrogacy arrangement' at the beginning of our journey, easier to navigate than we imagined. We were very fortunate that we were able to pursue surrogacy locally for many reasons—for example, it means we could be involved in, and very much be a part of, the pregnancy.

Along the way we found out that there actually are women out there that are willing to be gestational surrogates, indeed it is something they WANT to do as a way of 'paying it forward', by giving the ultimate gift of helping to create a family. We also have excellent fertility treatment available to us here in South Australia. So for these reasons and others, I feel there is so much potential for there to be more and more altruistic surrogacy arrangements here in South Australia in the future and I certainly hope that is the case.

I do thank the lady concerned for the time she has given to me and particularly for allowing me to read that particularly unique perspective into the record. However, this constituent subsequently had legal issues similar to those mentioned or foreshadowed by the Hon. Mr Ngo. The current legislation does not provide a legal circuit breaker, so to speak, in those types of situations, and South Australia is not unique in the commonwealth from this perspective. The use of the legal system, often expensive, is the only way to resolve these issues, often having to grant a parenting order to resolve the case.

After hearing the Hon. Mr Ngo's concerns and listening to the issues faced by the constituent who approached me, I am considering amendments to the bill that will provide some kind of option for the parents and/or surrogate to utilise when these cases arise. I would now like to move on to my responses to questions from the Hon. Ian Hunter. His first question was: 'In practice, does the bill exclude same-sex couples?' The answer to that question is that the current law does not include provisions for access by same-sex couples, and my bill does not seek to alter that in any way.

The second question from the Hon. Mr Hunter was: 'In practice, does the bill exclude single women?' Again, the answer to that question is that current law does not include provisions for access by single mothers and my bill does not seek to alter that in any way.

The third question from the Hon. Mr Hunter was: 'What criteria, under the bill, would the minister impose on restricting the access to various groups under the framework proposed?' Any criteria imposed by the minister would be up to the Hon. Mr Hunter's cabinet colleague or any subsequent responsible minister in that position. The bill calls on the minister to develop a framework via regulations to regulate the usage of the agreements, and I would suggest that, if this bill is passed by both houses and becomes law, the Hon. Mr Hunter and all other honourable members lobby the responsible minister for what they would like and not like to see included in the proposed framework.

Unfortunately, as a member of the opposition I do not receive the resources or expert assistance that is far more readily available to members of Her Majesty's government and, therefore, for that reason and reasons relating to ensuring the framework is dynamic and readily kept up to date with community expectations, I have considered it appropriate to leave this framework to be developed by the minister and implemented by regulation.

A further question from the Hon. Mr Hunter was: 'Could couples who engage in overseas surrogacy be subject to an offence as outlined in section 10H(22)? If so, what is the intent of legislating for such an offence? How does the incorporation of the offence balance with parliament's desire to legislate in the best interests of a child? Does this bill work to deny appropriate legal recognition of parentage to children born through overseas surrogacy?'

From the outset of this answer I would like to put on the record that it is not my intention to create an offence for individuals who engage in overseas surrogacy; therefore, whether someone has committed an offence or not when procuring a commercial surrogacy agreement overseas depends on whether an individual's action has, by law, created a territorial nexus and, therefore, enables their actions to come under South Australian law.

Like all laws in South Australia if a territorial nexus (which I will explain further for the council shortly) exists then when you breach a law of the state in another jurisdiction you can, depending on

the facts of the case which have to satisfy very specific criteria, be prosecuted for that offence in South Australia. However, in the case of overseas surrogacy I am advised that this is very unlikely as the individual facts of the case and the location of the offence itself have to satisfy the aforementioned specific criteria which is laid out in the legislation.

Therefore, unless a case occurred in which someone procuring a commercial surrogacy agreement overseas somehow satisfied the requirements of the necessary territorial nexus (which as I said earlier is very much dependent on the individual case and circumstances) they could not be prosecuted for an offence under this bill. Therefore, for someone to be prosecuted for an offence under clause 6 of the bill, their actions would first have to satisfy section 5G of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (South Australia), specifically that there was a necessary territorial nexus.

As honourable members would be aware, a territorial nexus exists for all laws in South Australia, not just surrogacy, so whilst a prosecution might be possible if the specifics of the case satisfies 5G of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act, in most cases it would be most unlikely as it would be incredibly hard to prove.

Whilst I cannot provide the council with a simple yes or no answer in this case, I am advised that it appears as though prosecution would be highly unlikely if international commercial surrogacy is procured in a legitimate fashion and wholly conducted and commissioned overseas. The reasoning for such a provision is simply to help prevent baby Gammy cases from eventuating or, if they do, provide a domestic avenue for prosecution and to keep the current status of altruistic surrogacy being the only form of legal surrogacy in this state.

It is in no way the intention of this bill to deny appropriate legal recognition of the parentage of a child born through overseas surrogacy. If the procurement of the overseas surrogacy agreement is completed in accordance with the law, the reasoning behind these provisions is to solely protect the interests of children born through the use of this bill.

In conclusion, it is still my wish to proceed through the remaining stages of this bill in the near future. I will certainly keep members informed as I develop the possible amendments that I have foreshadowed today. As a humble member of the opposition, I am very grateful to parliamentary counsel and to Brad Vermeer of my staff for the commitment to making this bill as good as possible, and we will take reasonable suggestions, in due course, as we develop the possible amendments.

I am grateful to members of this chamber for their support and their interest in this legislation. I have responded to those who put questions on the parliamentary record late last year. Other than one or two members of the community, there have not been any other queries since that time.

This is something that I believe in very strongly. It is certainly not perfect. I will do everything I can in the next few weeks to bring some amendments in that may help us to further improve this legislation. I do repeat again what I said late last year and that is that if there are members with suggestions—and I know that the Hon. Tammy Franks has given me great notice that she will be developing an amendment—but if there are other members who have concerns or wish to do something along that line, I will be very grateful if they would let me know and give me notice at the earliest point.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

Motions

EMERGENCY SERVICES

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

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be established to inquire into—
 - (a) the government establishment of the commissioner to replace chief officers in the proposed emergency services reform;
 - (b) the process involved in consultation and what consideration was given to matters raised during consultation in developing the reform proposal;
 - (c) the business plan;
 - (d) cost-benefit analysis and probity regarding the proposed reform;

- (e) consideration and consultation with volunteer organisations affected by the government proposal;
 - (f) the establishment of legal requirements for the chief officer and chief executive officer of emergency services and SAFECOM and the SAFECOM board; and
 - (g) any other relevant matters.
2. That standing order 389 be so far suspended as to enable the chairperson of the committee to have a deliberative vote only.
 3. That this council permits the select committee to authorise the disclosure or publication, as it sees fit, of any evidence or documents presented to the committee prior to such evidence being presented to the council.
 4. That standing order 396 be suspended to enable strangers to be admitted when the select committee is examining witnesses unless the committee otherwise resolves, but they shall be excluded when the committee is deliberating.

(Continued from 11 February 2015.)

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (16:54): I rise on behalf of the opposition to indicate that we will support the motion introduced by the Hon. Robert Brokenshire. The Liberal Party has been quite vocal in its opposition to the government's proposed emergency services reform agenda. Much to the dismay of almost the entire emergency services sector, the government is seeking to amalgamate the CFS, MFS and SES under one commissioner. It is because of this strong and vehement public backlash that the opposition will be supporting the proposed select committee to inquire into the establishment of the commissioner and the consultation process (or lack thereof) undertaken by this government.

It is interesting to note that the minister has said he is perhaps not going to press ahead straightaway, and I think that will be a very good short-term outcome to have this select committee, and at least the select committee can do its work and report to parliament and, although it rarely happens, the government minister might take some note.

Under the government's proposed restructure, there will be no chief officers for the CFS, MFS or SES as is currently required under the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005. The MFS has been advised by the minister that there will be a state control fire centre located at the State Communications HQ with the state fire and rescue commissioner as the state fire controller which will be a uniformed commissioner directly responsible to the Minister for Emergency Services.

The MFS has also reported that the commissioner will be supported by assistant commissioners allocated from each of the Metropolitan Fire Service, CFS and SES and a number of others for corporate areas, and meetings of a sector consultative forum will occur with details such as criteria and regularity yet to be established.

The South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) will be dismantled and the SAFECOM board will be dissolved and abolished. The government proposes that there will no longer be a CFS state HQ and a shared services model will be applied for CFS volunteers across the sector supporting all other agencies, that is MFS, CFS and SES.

The details of the proposed restructure I have just listed have been met with a lot of resistance from our community. On 28 January we had about 500 CFS volunteers protest here on the steps of Parliament House. These CFS volunteers want to maintain their autonomy. They feel that a one size fits all management system will not work. It is clear that the majority of our volunteers and the members of the MFS, CFS and SES as well as other associations such as the Country Fire Service Volunteers Association and the South Australian State Emergency Service are strongly opposed to the proposed changes or will only provide conditional support for a few of the proposed measures.

The government proposal in effect abolishes the existing independent agency SAFECOM and just replaces it with another bureaucracy, the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. Consistent with other insightful Labor proposals, this bureaucracy will no longer be independent but is directly responsible to the minister. We saw some issues recently with the minister in relation to coming up to the recent fire and being there to have photographs taken. Maybe we would have been better off to have those CFS personnel continue to fight the fire.

The government would in effect create a new centralised bureaucratic model when the overwhelming majority of the emergency services sector is publicly advocating the existing model is working well. The devastating Sampson Flat fire which occurred only last month highlighted the efficiency, coordination and effectiveness of our current structure. It should be noted that the efforts and response of our brave emergency services throughout this time have been widely commended by all sides of politics—a testament to the current model.

I am reminded of a couple of sayings. If it is not broken, why fix it? One of the gentlemen I used to do business with in The Netherlands many years ago said, 'If you don't have a headache, don't take Panadol.' I think this is a good example of that; we have a system that works very well and it has served this state for some significant amount of time.

It is also interesting to note that an independent review in May 2014 by Ernst and Young, entitled 'Independent review of shared services in the fire and emergency services sector', identified that it is the Labor government's cuts in funding to SAFECOM which is the principal reason why emergency services have experienced difficulties in recent years, not the structure of the emergency services.

We have seen the government remove the remissions for the emergency services levy which no other state has done. They claim it is because of some cuts that the federal government has made, yet no other state has done that. It is interesting how they continue to try to blame the federal government for funding shortfalls. It has always been somebody else's fault. It is something I have noticed about them for the more than 13 years I have spent in this place. With this government, it is always somebody else's fault and it is time they took some responsibility of their own.

However, I am digressing slightly. Given the overwhelming disapproval towards the government's proposed emergency services restructure and the lack of any substantial reason, the opposition will be delighted to support the Hon. Robert Brokenshire's motion to establish a select committee into the establishment of the commissioner.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (17:00): Very briefly, Dignity for Disability wholeheartedly supports this motion. Recent events have, unfortunately, demonstrated quite clearly that there is a need to pressure the government into being more consultative and collaborative, particularly on issues of emergency services reform. We thank the CFS Volunteers Foundation, in particular, for the feedback it has given us on these issues and for its advice to support this motion. We believe the best way to get good outcomes is to properly involve the people those outcomes most affect, and we will support this motion for that reason.

As something of a side note, I want to flag that Dignity for Disability is also working very hard on making emergency broadcasts more accessible, particularly to people with disabilities. We held a very successful public meeting on that subject recently, and I am very thankful for the feedback we are receiving. I was particularly thankful to see a CFS volunteer firefighter attend that meeting of his own accord, and show goodwill for what we are trying to achieve in making those announcements more accessible. I think it is clear that the CFS does want to work with the community to ensure that people are more informed and safe, and in order to do that it needs to be consulted in the first place. We certainly support this motion.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (17:01): I rise on behalf of the Greens to indicate that we will be supporting this motion, brought by the Hon. Robert Brokenshire, to establish a select committee; indeed, we look forward to being involved in populating that select committee. As members are aware, and as many in the South Australian community are aware, last year minister Piccolo announced that it was the government's intention to have a sole commissioner oversee emergency services in South Australia.

While I have not been contacted by the MFS or the UFU on this issue, I have certainly been lobbied to support this select committee motion by both the CFS Volunteers Association and the South Australian State Emergency Service Volunteers Association. I would say that given that two key stakeholders' representative bodies have grave concerns and support this select committee, then the government should be taking note of the select committee and participating fully in it. Sonia St Alban, who is the executive director of the CFS Volunteers Association, writes, in a letter dated 24 February:

The CFSVA writes to you in relation to recent media release by the Minister for Emergency Services, Tony Piccolo. Through the media on Sunday 22 February 2015 (the day before the reference group meeting) and Monday 23 February 2015 (subsequent to the reference group meeting) the minister issued some 'loose announcements' without detail, which the minister suggests shows he is 'listening' to concerns raised by volunteers.

The CFSVA is totally frustrated by the minister's reactionary process which lacks substance, detail and most importantly direction. This continual change is causing CFS volunteers to be angry, disillusioned and indeed nervous for the future of CFS and the emergency services in South Australia.

Minister Piccolo will only discuss the sector reform process with the CFSVA at monthly reference group meetings in case, as suggested by the minister, it might be seen that the CFSVA is attempting to do a side deal. The minister's position is forcing the CFSVA to seek alternative avenues of raising the serious and justified concerns of 13,500 CFS volunteers.

Ms St Alban goes on, but I say that this government should be listening to those 13,500 volunteers who sacrifice not only their health and personal safety but also their spare time to work for South Australians and to protect our life and liberty. On 24 February South Australian State Emergency Service Volunteers' Association Chair Warren Hicks wrote to me and no doubt other members of this council:

On behalf of SES volunteers, the Association endorses the proposal by the Hon. Robert Brokenshire for a Select Committee to be established to look into the proposal to amalgamate the Emergency Services Sector in South Australia under a Commissioner and asks that you support his motion.

The letter goes on:

The proposal still lacks considerable detail and even the announcement by the Minister yesterday is ultimately saying that the restructure will take 12-18 months, having not allowed the time required for the legislative changes needed for full implementation. In the interim he proposes to appoint a Commissioner as soon as practical and volunteers are concerned this will become a Community Safety Directorate Mark 2 and we are all well aware how that failed dismally and was best summarised by Police Commissioner Gary Burns who said: 'he did not really have a handle on what the body's role was'. And then 'he did not know how the directorate differed from the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Simply the Government by establishing their new body 'SAFER' is going to increase the senior management structure with a Commissioner and 6 Assistant Commissioners, when if SAFECOM hadn't been decimated via the Sustainable Budget Commission, the Sector would still then have been supported fully in areas such as Procurement, IT, HR, WH&S, Finance etc, instead of agencies trying to cover the shortfalls that resulted.

Strong words from both of the volunteer associations here who are key stakeholders. When the minister announced these reforms he said that agencies would retain their individual identities, and certainly here these agencies are asserting their own individual identities and I believe they need to be listened to. While the minister said that there would be a two-phase process, I certainly note that the minister has proceeded with advertising for the appointment of a commissioner, which I believe is putting the cart before the horse and treating this parliament with contempt because this is, of course, a two-part process.

The minister himself admitted that when he announced it, and the second part of this will require legislative change. To debate that legislative change, this select committee will certainly properly inform that debate and give stakeholders a voice that they believe is not being heard by government at the moment. With those words, I indicate that we will be supporting and populating this select committee.

The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS (17:07): I rise on behalf of the government to respond to the honourable member's motion. The motion calls for the establishment of a select committee of the Legislative Council to inquire into the government's emergency services reform, including the appointment of a commissioner.

First, if the honourable member had attended one of the 30 or more roundtable events held across the state he would be more aware of the reform process and the consultation that has been undertaken and what the reform is seeking to achieve by the appointment of a commissioner. Secondly, as the former minister of emergency services, the honourable member would be very aware of a number of past independent reviews into the sector which made recommendations that were consistent with the government's proposed reforms. The most recent of these reviews (in 2013), undertaken by the Hon. Paul Holloway, concluded in the first recommendation, and I quote:

That the MFS, CFS and SES be incorporated into a departmental structure under the direction of a Chief Executive based on interstate developments over the past two decades, which establishes this arrangement as a benchmark for the governance of Emergency Services in Australia. The MFS, CFS and SES would operate as separate units under the ultimate direction of the CEO.

This is almost identical to what the Minister for Emergency Services has been openly proposing during his extensive and transparent consultation process since June 2014.

Should a select committee be established, it would need to consult with hundreds of witnesses, as Paul Holloway and the Minister for Emergency Services have already done over many, many months. At the end of the day they would almost certainly come to the same conclusion that everybody else had come to: that the governance of the sector needs reforming. This is not to cast any doubt on the wonderful job that the emergency services staff and volunteers perform every day; this is about getting the structure right, allowing the sector to get the best results for the community.

The honourable member has suggested that the select committee should inquire into the reform process and consultation. Let me save the member some time. All this information is freely available on the SAFECOM website today. The process has been totally open and transparent, and the minister is continuing to talk with staff and volunteers across the state to ensure they have the facts about the reform and not the myths being deliberately spread by those who oppose the reform.

I remind this chamber that the minister has undertaken over 30 round tables and has travelled to 40 brigades, units, stations and flotillas, speaking to more than 2,000 staff and volunteers across the state. This does not include the hundreds of letters, emails and other conversations the minister has undertaken as part of his consultation process, or the live and interactive video conference that was beamed across the state last December, where the minister again described the reform and answered questions. It also does not include the interstate visits where the minister, accompanied by CFS and SES volunteer associations and the UFU, spoke to emergency services commissioners, officials, volunteer associations and unions.

During the consultation process the model for the sector has been changed as a result of feedback received. In fact, the model described in the December discussion paper was amended significantly due to the concerns raised by CFS and SES volunteer associations. Further modifications to the sector were proposed by the minister at a reference group on 23 February 2015, two days ago.

As the minister has advised many times, the structural reform is based upon various independent reviews. The more detailed aspects of the reform are now being worked through by the reform project team and working groups, which comprise expert members of the sector. No detailed business plan or cost benefit analysis can be established or undertaken until these details have been worked through and thoroughly tested. However, let us be very clear. Almost everybody in the sector recognises there is duplication that needs to be removed, allowing resources to be freed up and allocated to volunteers in brigades and units on the ground.

With regard to the legal items the honourable member has raised as needing to be investigated, these have been and continue to be worked through with the relevant authorities in South Australia, such as the Crown Solicitor's Office and the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment. Is the honourable member suggesting that the legal and public sector administrative expertise of these departments needs to be scrutinised? I think not.

I remind this chamber that the reform is not about merging the CFS, MFS or SES: the reform is about appointing a commissioner to ensure the best interests of the community are considered, including the allocation on a statewide basis, rather than three services competing for resources. Notwithstanding this change, the three services, led by chief officers, will retain their identity and chain of command, and very little will change operationally. When the minister commenced as the Minister for Emergency Services, the sector—particularly the volunteer associations—demanded that more resources be allocated to the front-line services and towards volunteer support. This is exactly what this reform will achieve.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (17:15): I will be brief, because the work has been done, and there is other business to be done in the next hour. I thank all honourable members for their

contributions. I have already made a case for why I believe there should be a select committee, and I commend the motion.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (17:15): I move:

That the select committee consist of the Hon. Tammy Franks, the Hon. John Dawkins, the Hon. Gerry Kandelaars, the Hon. Andrew McLachlan and the mover.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE: I move:

That the select committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to place and to report on 29 July 2015.

Motion carried.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

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

That this council calls on the state government to immediately—

1. Withdraw the calling of applications for the position of commissioner for emergency services; and
2. Not further proceed with foreshadowed changes to the structure of emergency services pending consideration of the report of the select committee of the Legislative Council, should it be established.

(Continued from 11 February 2015.)

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (17:16): I rise briefly to make some comments on the motion which calls on the government to withdraw calling for applications for the position of commissioner for emergency services and not proceed further with the foreshadowed changes of structure to the emergency services pending consideration of the report of the select committee. It is very self-explanatory and, as I indicate, we will be supporting this motion of the Hon. Robert Brokenshire. I gave obviously a reasonable contribution on his select committee just—

The Hon. S.G. Wade: And it was an excellent contribution.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: Thank you. My colleague the Hon. Stephen Wade interjects. I know it is out of order, but he says it was an excellent contribution. Thank you. For the same reasons I outlined, we will certainly support this motion. It does not make sense if you have a parliamentary inquiry and the minister has said he is probably not going to pursue any of his potential changes for about 12 months, so it seems crazy to pursue this appointment and any of the reforms. We are certainly very happy to support the Hon. Robert Brokenshire's motion.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (17:17): Briefly, given that we supported the establishment of the inquiry, it makes sense that Dignity for Disability will also support not pursuing this appointment until that inquiry is completed.

The Hon. T.T. NGO (17:18): I rise on behalf of—

The Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins: I hope this is a better speech than Gerry's last one.

The Hon. T.T. NGO: I rise on behalf of the government—

The Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins: Different speechwriter?

The Hon. T.T. NGO: Different speechwriter—that's correct—to respond to the honourable member's motion calling for the government to cease the recruitment process for the position of commissioner for emergency services. A four-week international recruitment campaign commenced in mid-January 2015, utilising a specialist recruitment company, national newspapers, including *The Advertiser* and the South Australian Government Notices of Vacancies. Numerous applications for the position have been received and the new commissioner is expected to commence on approximately 1 July 2015.

The recruitment panel consists of three highly regarded South Australian and interstate commissioners as well as an expert in change management. All relevant public sector protocols and processes have been followed. The need to recruit the commissioner was approved by the government in December 2014. There are no surprises here. This was well known to everyone who participated in the Minister for Emergency Services' extensive seven-month long consultation process.

The Hon. Mr Brokenshire is very well aware of a number of past independent reviews into the emergency services sector that have made recommendations that are consistent with the government's reforms, including the need to appoint a single commissioner or chief executive.

The most recent of these reviews in 2013, undertaken by the Hon. Paul Holloway MLC, included in the first recommendation:

That the MFS, CFS and SES be incorporated into a departmental structure under the direction of a Chief Executive based on interstate developments over the past two decades, which establishes this arrangement as the benchmark for the governance of Emergency Services in Australia.

This is identical to what the Minister for Emergency Services has been openly proposing during his transparent consultation process since June 2014.

The intention to appoint a single commissioner or chief executive was published in the September 2014 reform discussion paper, which was widely circulated within the sector. Once again, none of these reform discussions cast any doubt on the wonderful job our emergency services staff and volunteers perform every day. This is about getting the governance structures right. Despite what some people would have you believe, there are important areas in the emergency services sector that can be improved. For example, the community does not always get the nearest, quickest and most appropriate response when they call 000. This is not acceptable. Those who do not want to recognise this fact need to read the Hon. Mr Holloway's review.

The allocation of resources to community risk also needs to be significantly improved. The minister has received an overwhelming number of submissions advising that one service gets more than another at the expense of their service and community safety outcomes. There is also a critical need to remove duplication in training, procurement and various administrative and corporate functions between the services and reinvest savings into front-line services and volunteer support. The current structure has not allowed these critical improvements to be implemented. This is no longer acceptable.

I remind the council that the reform is not about merging the CFS, MFS or SES. The reform is about appointing a strong commissioner to oversee the sector, particularly the back office functions. The three services led by chief officers will retain their identity and chains of command, and very little will change operationally.

During the consultation process the model for the sector has changed as a result of feedback received. In fact, the model described in the September discussion paper was amended significantly due to concerns raised by the CFS and SES volunteers associations. Further modifications to the sector were also proposed by the minister at the reference group on 23 February 2015. As this clearly demonstrates, the minister has been listening, and not simply dictating, as some of the members have claimed.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (17:24): I rise to support this motion and add further to my comments in supporting the establishment of a select committee. I have no doubt that the government has done extensive consultation. It is just that I think that their definition of consultation is a little more like mansplaining than listening. This government, the Weatherill Labor government, came to power after the years of the Rann government saying that they would no longer do a 'declare and defend' strategy. This appears to me to be a 'decide, declare, travel all over the state and have 40+ public meetings and talk, but not listen' strategy.

Yes, some amendments have been made, but I would point out to government members that the letters I just read out in the previous debate were from this current week from the CFS Volunteers Association and the SES Volunteers Association. They are not outdated letters; they are current, contemporary letters of the last few days.

The volunteers associations are still not happy, even though they have had extensive consultation. To me, if you are saying that you are having a conversation, perhaps that conversation does need some more active listening. This is a way that this Legislative Council can say to this government, 'We are listening to those associations, and we are standing up and we are giving you a very large red flag that, when you bring legislative reform to this place, we will stand up for the volunteers associations, unless they are happy with these reforms.'

They have said that they are open to a mature debate. I would think that the nuclear industry is not the only place in this in state that we can have a mature debate, and there is no more important area than our emergency services, particularly in this era of climate change, where we need to ensure that we have a healthy, volunteer-led and, indeed, a high-morale emergency services.

These are people who put their life on the line for us. They deserve to be listened to, to actually be heard, not just treated as if they are somehow needing to be mansplained that this government knows what is best for them. With those words, I say that, at this point, the Greens wholeheartedly support a big red flag being sent to this government by saying that we will support this motion.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (17:26): I thank all honourable members for their contribution. The CFS and the SES do not raise these issues lightly, as many of my colleagues have highlighted. There are genuine concerns, and they are bona fide concerns. I would point out to the government, particularly the minister, that the key to the start of a potential slippery slope is this appointment of a commissioner.

There are lots of opportunities for being able to do pretty much everything the minister has said he wants to do within the current structure, but the elephant in the room, if I can put it that way, is the proposal for a commissioner, particularly because I am advised by lots of phone calls after just about every meeting the minister has had that there has been no bona fide, genuine explanation as to why they want to set up this commissioner.

Therefore, I appeal to the minister to be open-minded, fair and considerate to the volunteers and to listen to the Legislative Council, which is calling on the minister to halt the process—there is no need at all for the minister to rush into this process—and to let the select committee do things in a democratic manner, to come up with some recommendations after proper deliberation and proper consultation, where we can hear from all sides in an open, transparent and genuinely public opportunity, and then have a look at what comes from that select committee.

The minister has said that he will slow down the process but, at this point in time, that only means that, instead of bringing in the commissioner in July, he says that he will bring in the commissioner in August. That is not a very great slowdown of a process, in my opinion—it is about a month.

I say to the minister, 'You still have goodwill out there with the volunteers. Without the volunteers, we are in a big mess in South Australia.' Please minister and please government, listen to the volunteers. I can say honestly that volunteers do not come out like this unless they have genuine concerns. They put up with more than they should put up with. Just like when the Hon. Tammy Franks put up legislation to give them equal rights with the UFU, which should have been there from day one, they again had a genuine reason. Please let us get on with the select committee, stop the process of the commissioner, and let's see where it eventuates after the select committee reports. I commend this motion to the house.

Motion carried.

DEFENCE RESERVES SUPPORT COUNCIL (SA)

The Hon. A.L. McLACHLAN (17:30): I move:

That the council acknowledges the contribution of the Defence Reserves Support Council (SA), Air Force, Army and Navy Reservists and employers of reservists, and in particular:

1. Acknowledges the contribution of Dr Pamela Schulz OAM as the recently retired chair of the council;
2. Congratulates Dr Andrew Cannon AM as the new chair of the council;

3. Recognises the contribution of reservists in war and peace, locally, nationally and internationally, and including the Sampson Flat bushfire; and
4. Appreciates the support of the employers of reservists to facilitate their contribution.

This motion will also be moved by the member for Bragg in the other place and provides an opportunity not only to recognise reservists generally but also to highlight the number of other agencies, including police, who contribute to civilian emergencies

The Defence Reserves Support Council is comprised of a group of employers drawn from all sectors in the state who advise, direct and endorse strategies for engaging and supporting employers of reservists in South Australia. The council aims to ensure the availability of the reserve component of the Australian Defence Force by promoting the benefits of employing members of the reserve. It also adds to establish a flexible partnership with the community and employers so that they are encouraged to support those in the reserve.

The recently retired chair, Dr Pamela Schulz OAM, was appointed in 2009 and was the first female to be appointed chair of the South Australian committee of the Defence Reserves Support Council. She is a longstanding public servant who has devoted herself to community education and encouraging people to participate and act on issues that are relevant to their daily lives. These issues include parenting, vaccination of children, parliamentary engagement, justice and the rule of law.

Dr Schulz has presented workshops and seminars around the nation and, indeed, around the world, on her research into discourse analysis and its impact on community and public engagement. Her focus has always been on communication and community, and she continued this through her work as chair of the council.

The incoming Chair, Dr Andrew Cannon AM, is well respected and has a long judicial career which has recently included serving as Deputy Chief Magistrate. His judicial career has been combined with academic research into court systems and he has been instrumental in the introduction of many reforms to civil and criminal processes. He has a PhD from the University of Wollongong on court policy and is an Adjunct Professor at the Flinders Law School and also at Munster University in Germany. He is a guiding voice in international forums on the future of the legal system, and I have no doubt that the council will benefit from the experience he brings, coupled with his genuine interest in helping the community.

I would like now to speak briefly about the contribution of defence during the recent Sampson Flat bushfires in South Australia which included an important contribution by reservists. The RAAF airbase at Edinburgh responded to the emergency by providing logistics support to airborne firefighting efforts from 4 to 7 January. Two large air tankers, a Bird Dog aircraft and more than 10 aircrew and support staff were deployed to assist the South Australian Country Fire Service. The defence aid provided refuelling, air movements and water replenishment support to contracted firefighting aircraft from Victoria.

Mr Norman Kent, who managed the base support task, said that due to the efforts of a small but hardworking team of personnel, the aircraft were able to be sent straight back to work after arriving at the Edinburgh base. He also said that the rapid rate of aircraft operations was something out of the ordinary as, by the end of the day—which was effectively only a half day—there had been 10 aircraft movements with the air tankers averaging a turnaround time of just 25 minutes. To put this into perspective, he explained that this turnaround time was from when the aircraft took off from Edinburgh, dropped its water supplies onto the fire, came back, reloaded and returned to the fire ground again.

These aircraft had virtually just taken off when, 10 minutes later, they were landing again having already completed their task. To achieve such a short turnaround time was truly remarkable. Victorian Country Fire Authority Aviation Officer, Wayne Rigg, has revealed that the support provided by defence at such short notice was instrumental in supporting the South Australian community during the fires. He also commended the Edinburgh base staff who coordinated the resources and equipment so that once the air tankers had arrived they were immediately able to scale up their operations and get to work.

Over the four days that the air tankers were deployed, 320,000 litres of water was able to be provided for the fire retardant mixing plant. In addition, 14 refuels were conducted supplying more than 50,000 litres of fuel to the aircraft. These are exemplary efforts which deserve our acknowledgment and our thanks.

Australia's defence force continually seeks the skills and expertise of reservists to help maintain its capability. Receiving the support of employers means reservists are available to undertake their duties when called for service. Late last year, five South Australian employers were recognised at the Employer Support Awards. The event recognised employers who have been particularly supportive of their reservist employees.

I would similarly like to acknowledge and thank those employers of reservists who have facilitated their contribution, for without the ongoing support of employers such as these it would not be possible for reservists to successfully synchronise their civilian and service roles. I commend the motion to the council.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins.

SAMPSON FLAT AND TANTANOOLA BUSHFIRES

The Hon. T.T. NGO (17:36): I move:

That this council—

1. Acknowledges with gratitude the inspirational efforts of the emergency services staff and volunteers in fighting the Sampson Flat and Tantanoola bushfires which resulted in the declaration of a major emergency on 3 January 2015;
2. The dedication and professionalism demonstrated by SA emergency personnel and their colleagues from New South Wales and Victoria over the six days before the fire was contained prevented much worse destruction and any loss of life; and
3. Also acknowledges the work of the many agencies, community groups and individuals involved in establishing and running the relief centres at Golden Grove, Sandy Creek, Willaston, and later, Gumeracha, and those now still involved in the recovery phase led by the State Recovery Office and the wider community for their enormous generosity during and after the emergency.

On Friday 2 January, while many South Australians were still enjoying their Christmas/New Year break, a number of fires started across the state including one at Sampson Flat and Tantanoola—areas that were declared catastrophic fire districts the previous afternoon. Catastrophic fire danger days have the worst conditions for a bush or grassfire. On these days, if a fire starts and takes hold, it is likely that it will be extremely difficult to control and will take significant firefighting resources and cooler conditions to contain it. Spot fires are likely to start well ahead of the main fire and can result in the fire spreading rapidly. The ember attacks which start these spot fires can come from many directions.

Through the Friday and Saturday, this type of fire behaviour was experienced as the Sampson Flat fire intensified threatening the towns of Kersbrook, Gould Creek, Hermitage, Inglewood, Paracombe, Cudlee Creek, Prairie, Gumeracha, Kenton Valley, Birdwood, Forreston, Mount Crawford, South Para and Humbug Scrub. It also threatened the heavily-populated suburbs of Greenwith and Golden Grove.

The Sampson Flat fire, with a perimeter of 222 kilometres, was the most significant in size and danger that has been experienced in the Adelaide Hills since the 1983 Ash Wednesday fire. Close to 200 Country Fire Service brigades from around the state comprising about 3,500 firefighters from around the state came together and joined the fight. The CFS was supported by many other agency staff and volunteers, including hundreds of State Emergency Service staff and volunteers, almost 500 Metropolitan Fire Service firefighters, and significant contributions from SAFECOM, SAPOL, St John, Salvation Army, SAAS, SA Water, ForestrySA, SAVEM and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources—amongst others. In fact, all tiers of government and community more broadly rallied together against the threat.

This fire burnt over 12,500 hectares and it is truly remarkable that no-one was killed. While it was devastating that 27 homes were lost, this number could have been much higher. Another 34 houses were damaged and 103 buildings destroyed as well as over 200 vehicles.

These fires, while smaller in size, acted as a painful reminder of the 1983 Ash Wednesday fire, especially for many of those Adelaide Hills residents who lived through that fire. The Ash Wednesday fires, as I am sure honourable members are aware, caused great devastation to both life and property, claiming the lives of 28 South Australians, destroying 383 homes as well as burning approximately 208,000 hectares of land. We are extremely grateful that in this case all our volunteer and paid firefighters returned home safely. This is testament to the training and professionalism of the emergency services.

The fire was finally considered contained on 7 January. It must not be forgotten that at the same time as the Sampson Flat fire, CFS staff and volunteers along with ForestrySA were busy fighting the Tantanoola fire in the South-East. The fire had the potential to travel through to the outskirts of Mount Gambier and beyond towards Victoria, impacting the surrounding communities. The Tantanoola fire did not get the attention it would have otherwise received owing to the fires in Adelaide's North-East but it also had the potential to cause widespread damage and loss of life.

Due to the remarkable efforts of firefighters, the Tantanoola fire was quickly contained as it moved out of the plantation forests before it could impact the surrounding communities. It was declared contained on Saturday evening after burning almost 900 hectares.

The state government has committed \$21 million in assistance to the communities affected by the bushfires. Ms Karlene Maywald has also been appointed as the Local Recovery Coordinator. Importantly, the community has also pulled together to help their friends and neighbours to recover from the fire and the State Emergency Relief Fund has received almost \$1.5 million from 300 generous donors. I know a number of groups with which I have been attending Lunar New Year celebrations have also donated money raised at those events.

At this point, I acknowledge the great support our firefighters received from our interstate colleagues, particularly from the New South Wales Rural Fire Service who sent almost 600 personnel as well as the 280 personnel from the Victorian Country Fire Authority and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. The New South Wales and Victorian governments also contributed 15 firefighting aircraft.

Other jurisdictions also provided offers of assistance and made contingency plans to assist our state if needed for which the government was extremely grateful. Once again, our emergency services and the community banded together against Mother Nature and showed the strength of our state and its communities. I thank the CFS, our emergency services personnel and all those other staff, volunteers, community groups and individuals who came together to help out when our state and community needed them most.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. S.G. Wade.

HEALTH REVIEW

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. K.L. Vincent:

That this council notes that the Delivering Transforming Health document—

1. Plans to shut down the Repatriation General Hospital and Hampstead Rehabilitation Service thus disenfranchising the clientele who are both familiar with and confident in the services these facilities provide;
2. Ignores the additional positive rehabilitation benefits of the community outreach programs offered by the Hampstead Centre which facilitates reintegration into family, community and work;
3. Fails to recognise the ongoing rehabilitation value of access to attractive outdoor environments in contrast to an acute clinical environment;
4. Fails to address the shortage of adequately equipped hydrotherapy pools in metropolitan Adelaide;
5. Ignores that mental health services in South Australia are already overstretched;
6. Fails to address the issue of people with mental illness presenting to emergency departments due to a lack of support services;
7. Completely ignores the June 2014 SA Health report on borderline personality disorder which recommends establishing a statewide borderline personality disorder service;

8. Fails to address the critical shortage of primary healthcare services available in the community following the minister's cuts to these services in light of the McCann review; and
9. Remains silent on the poor communication between SA Health, Disability Services, Housing SA and other commonwealth social services and that this miscommunication prevents people returning home once they have been declared fit for discharge, and in doing so continues to waste taxpayers' money.

(Continued from 11 February 2015.)

The Hon. S.G. WADE (17:44): I rise to indicate that the Liberal team will be supporting the motion put forward by d4d in the name of the Hon. Kelly Vincent. In speaking to the motion the Hon. Ms Vincent reiterated that d4d has concerns in relation to rehabilitation but is not opposed to health reform per se. That is also the position of the Liberal Party.

In my consultation on the Transforming Health discussion paper and proposals paper, in particular, a range of issues have been raised with me in relation to rehabilitation. For example, there is concern about the number of rehabilitation beds and whether they will be dedicated or protected for rehabilitation, ensuring that the best of current programs are retained and that there is an assurance of no loss of outpatient and ambulatory services. There is certainly an eagerness to retain the excellent facilities at the Repat and Hampstead and an awareness that services, whilst they are more than just the building, have developed and evolved within their sites, and that the clustering of related services is a real boon and contributes strongly to centres of excellence.

There is certainly concern that rehabilitation, as the Hon. Kelly Vincent highlighted, is not just a matter of access to services, and that an appropriate and nonclinical environment which is conducive to holistic rehabilitation is important. The site needs to be disability friendly, it needs to have outside areas, it needs to have training areas.

In that regard, I make two particular points in terms of concern about the Transforming Health process. First, there is the lack of consultation. The disability sector highly values consultation. There is a saying in the disability sector, 'Nothing about us without us', and, in relation to a sector which particularly values consultation, this process is particularly poor in consultation.

I think the Hon. Tammy Franks was highlighting some of the weaknesses of this government's approach to information, and I think Transforming Health is a good case study in that regard. We were given 3½ weeks to discuss a radical health cuts plan when apparently we needed eight weeks to talk about how we want to structure our time zone, and we were given 3½ weeks to discuss a radical health cuts plan when we have been given five weeks to discuss rerouting a bus. This process is not only lacking in terms of time for consideration and dialogue on the issues, it is also lacking in terms of information. You cannot properly have a consultation, you cannot properly have community understanding and acceptance of proposals, unless the community is properly informed.

Considering that this is a health-related process, perhaps I can make the point that if the government were a health professional and the community were a patient, I think it would be reportable to disciplinary agencies, the fact that it cannot get informed consent to the radical health cuts plan with the current consultation because it is so poor.

Even within the process it deserves criticism. For example, at the discussion paper stage the government arranged 39 community information events. That was when, if you like, they were discussing the standards, the high-level principles. Then in the second stage, the proposals, when particular options were on the table, they had three community events. The 39 events for the discussion paper were all around the state but particularly in the metropolitan area; the three community events, obviously, did not even touch the areas of concern, and the particular area of concern raised by the Hon. Kelly in this motion is that of rehabilitation. There was not even a community event addressing the issue of rehabilitation. The Liberal Party shares the concerns of the Hon. Kelly Vincent and D4D reflected in the motion, and I urge the council to join the Liberal team in supporting it.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (17:49): I rise on behalf of the Greens to put on the record some of our concerns about Transforming Health. In doing so I echo the Hon. Stephen Wade's words. I have grave reservations about the time frame that has been given for people to make submissions

with regard to the Transforming Health document, the end of this week being the deadline. I called for that time frame to be extended. I have heard many in the sector express concern that they do not have the detail they need to make an appropriate response. Certainly with a conversation this important, I really think we need to take the time to get it right.

However, I do in many ways commend the government for taking on health reform, because it is essential. On a Channel 2 program (I am not sure what the program was) that covers state politics there was a joke where one of the characters, who was a member of parliament, was threatened with punishment by his colleagues by being given the health portfolio if he did not pull his head in. I think it is a bit of a poisoned chalice to be given the health portfolio, but it is also a privilege. It is also vital, which is why it is important that we get it right.

I have been disappointed with the lack of attention to the Hon. Kelly Vincent's and my previous work on raising awareness about a specialised service for borderline personality disorders. I urge the government to keep that on the agenda. It is a great way forward and it ensures that people are not needlessly in an emergency department, which is the worst possible environment for them.

It is an area of mental health that is quite rightly defined as the Cinderella of mental health, although in this case I think 'Cinderella' is possibly too kind a description for the way borderline personality disorder and people with borderline personality disorder and their carers are treated. Some people find themselves leading quite desperate lives in those situations. There is a great deal more that we could do in this area. There is more we could do that would actually save the health budget. It would be good health economics and it would be a better, kinder, more compassionate way of handling the situation for those people.

I have been contacted by a registered nurse who has worked at the Repat for a significant amount of time. His name is Daryl Bullen. He has been campaigning online, raising awareness about the role of the Repat. I note that many members are aware that the Repat is more than just a building, and I think that is one of the things that has been borne out by the ongoing rallies and protests that we have seen and the real passion that the proposals in Transforming Health have held for the Repat. Mr Bullen writes:

So here we are Adelaide. We're going to close the Repat. I have worked at the Repat for 19 years. In that time I have worked on all of the wards and services that will be closed. What I think is special about the Repat is that all of the areas are linked to each other and nurses go relieving to each of them, so the culture becomes blended, creating a post-World War Two country/state hospital. It's a Repat thing.

So what does this mean? Hospice. Many South Australians have had their loved ones die at Daws Road. Everyone would agree that the compassion they received was excellent, and the care and ease of suffering their loved ones received was of the highest standard. Many people have been so moved by the care that their loved ones received that they came back to volunteer, staying on long after their family member's death. The nurses that I have worked with are both skilful and compassionate and have taught me a lot about pain relief and caring for the dying. I have taken these learnings into other aspects of my role in the hospital and into my home and community.

Many Vietnam vets have made the Repat their second home. I even heard the words 'sacred site' used to describe it. Many of these men suffer PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) from their time served in Vietnam. When I have listened to their stories I have learnt what horrific experiences they've had and understand the importance of a place to feel safe and to share with a 'family' that understands them. This family is made up of the Vietnam vets, volunteers, nurses, doctors, physios and occupational therapists, ward clerks, social workers, the ward 17 support community, church groups, and many more. This is the Repat family that has taken years to develop. It is not just a specialised unit that can be uprooted and placed anywhere.

The surgical and medical wards at the Repat have evolved out of the original nightingale wards, which were established in 1950 when Repatriation hospitals were modelled and built in cities around Australia. The post WWII years were the busiest and most exciting for the Repat, and helped establish the relaxed but compassionate approach employed to care for the Aussie Larrikins, who were the WWI and WWII vets.

Most of the acute wards at the Repat now are only equipped to look after the post-operative, semi-acute patients, or medical step down acute patients. The wards take a large stress off the Flinders Medical Centre, and in the winter they help to reduce ambulance ramping. Wards such as 1 and 2 deal a lot with newly diagnosed dementia patients, who are predominantly elderly patients. When I go relieving there I am in awe of the skill and compassion the nursing, medical and multi-disciplinary teams (all of the rest) show the confused patients. These patients require a special unit and cannot be mixed in with the general population. The Repat suffers the same budget restraints as other hospitals, but those teams keep delivering the goods, and I believe maintain that relaxed compassionate feel that has been passed down since WWII.

The Intensive Care Unit is the ward which has been increasingly under-resourced each year, the unit provides specialised nursing care to our more critically ill patients and is also the medical emergency team for the rest of the hospital.

I work in the rehabilitation section. Around the year 2001 an \$18 million rehabilitation health unit was built to cater for 40 patients. This is a fully functioning State of the Art rehab service. It has an Olympic size pool, a massive gym, a large physiotherapy area, great facilities for amputees and, of course, an excellent rehabilitation ward. Last year a new Vita ward was built to cater for 20 extra CVA patients who require rehab. I work in this facility. Southern Health only funds 55 beds, so the rehabilitation service at the Repat is a 55 bed service. The Vita ward is a beautiful unit; the prettiest health facility I have ever worked in. It has a patient lifting gantry system and a beautiful physio gym. The patients have private rooms with ensuites. It would have cost SA Health a lot of money to build it. Many patients come back and visit the rehabilitation service and give back in some way, either through motivating other patients or volunteering in some way.

I believe that closing the Repat is a ridiculous money wasting venture, when a simple retrofit upgrade would be more effective. A lot of unfunded resources will be lost if the Repat is closed due to the amount of volunteer work given to the hospital because of the special connection people have with it.

I understand that the Repat is not going in its entirety, and that is some of the detail we have in this document, but there is great uncertainty, and certainly when you have a Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the Minister for Health on the radio with two different answers about what will happen with Ward 17, those who work in this sector, those who have a connection to the Repat, have every right to be reassured and to have real answers and meaningful dialogue.

The business case must be released. Those documents must be provided to ensure we get this right. Dignity for Disability is quite a right to raise concern. While I acknowledge that much work and a lot of consultation has gone into preparing the documents that we have to inform the present debate, a three and a half week time frame for public submissions to be made is inadequate, and is a sign that I think shows a disdain for people's concerns, along with the lack of detail that the sector is complaining about, not having the Salaried Medical Officers Association, and so on.

These are not people who engage in this without great expertise themselves, but we need to get the health sector right. If Transforming Health is truly to work, I think the government should be taking heed of the words in this motion, ensuring that we have an informed debate and not just talking about getting the right medical treatment right the first time but getting the debate right the first time.

The Hon. T.T. NGO (18:00): I rise on behalf of the government to oppose this motion. The case for transformation of our health system in South Australia is driven by a quality imperative—to deliver a high-quality sustainable hospital system to all South Australians. The Transforming Health Proposals Paper was released on 3 February 2015 and is open to feedback until 27 February 2015, which is this month. The proposals in this paper were developed with groups of clinicians and a focus of achieving the quality principles that they consider essential for an effective health system. These are patient centred, safe, effective, accessible, efficient and equitable.

I will address the specific concerns raised in the motion of the Hon. Kelly Vincent MLC. In response to her statement about plans to shut down the Repatriation General Hospital, it is proposed that medical and surgical services currently provided at the RGH be integrated into the Flinders Medical Centre, Noarlunga Hospital and The Queen Elizabeth Hospital for local residents. Palliative care provided at Daw Park Hospice is proposed to move to Noarlunga Hospital by early 2017. Geriatric evaluation management services will be relocated to the Flinders Medical Centre.

Rehabilitation services will also transfer to the Flinders Medical Centre which will include 55 beds, a new pool and a gym. Whilst a range of services are being relocated to other hospitals, the existing orthotics and prosthetics service will continue on the site. The chapel and the Remembrance Garden at the RGH will be retained for their considerable significance, particularly to Second World War veterans and their families. The government will also explore opportunities for future use of the pool by community groups.

A new centre for excellence in the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder will be built through a \$15 million investment. It is envisaged that services provided will include assessment, counselling and, where appropriate, drug therapy by dedicated, highly-skilled mental health clinicians. A committee of veterans and clinicians will advise on appropriate models of care and the

most suitable locations. Feedback will be sought from the veterans' community, consumers and clinicians before any final decisions are made.

With regard to Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre, the proposed integration of current Hampstead Rehabilitation Services into metropolitan hospitals will provide better patient care by ensuring that consistent rehabilitation begins as soon as the patient is deemed clinically capable. Current outpatient clinics and outreach services provided at Hampstead will continue to be available at sites where patients receive their inpatient care.

The proposed Transforming Health initiatives recognise the benefits of physiotherapy in a hydrotherapy environment and will increase the access of patients to hydrotherapy pools, with new rehabilitation pools to be constructed at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Modbury Hospital and the Flinders Medical Centre.

Improving access to mental health services and reducing long waits in emergency departments for people with a mental illness remains a priority for this government. Transforming Health provides us with an opportunity to refocus and redesign services. To assist in achieving improved services, the minister has established a mental health advisory group, comprising clinicians, consumers and carers, to provide guidance and monitor progress on our improved performance.

Further, the minister has set new performance targets for the state's mental health services. These targets include that by January 2016 no mental health consumer should wait more than 24 hours for admission to an acute hospital bed and that by July 2018, 75 per cent of mental health patients should be admitted within four hours and 90 per cent within eight hours. These targets will be achieved through new or expanded existing initiatives, such as the establishment of short-stay units in all three of our major metropolitan hospitals. This will allow for greater ability to directly admit to a mental health bed, avoiding emergency department attendance.

Additionally, through improved streaming of services and improved information to people who are already clients of the community mental health services, some emergency department attendances will be avoided because consumers will know how to contact the community mental health team in the first instance. Mental health service provision will be aligned to the same geographical boundaries as general health services, supporting the integration of mental health services and general health. Alignment of mental health with the local health network boundaries will improve coordination of care between mental health and general health, which will improve overall services for mental health consumers and their families.

In 2014, the Statewide Mental Health Clinical Network released the borderline personality disorder (BPD) report. The report made a number of recommendations, including options for a separate specialist BPD service or a stepped approach across the local health networks incorporating existing BPD programs. SA Health has committed to a coordinated stepped system to care for people with BPD. The BPD service improvements project has commenced and input from the expert clinical reference group comprising consumers, carers and clinicians will inform this work. Statewide implementation under the auspices of the BPD steering committee will begin from April this year.

To respond to the Hon. Kelly Vincent's motion that the proposed paper fails to address the shortage of services in the primary care space, I wish to emphasise that the overarching aim of Transforming Health is a more streamlined hospital healthcare system that provides better service for patients. Whilst the government has started with a focus on the metropolitan hospital system, this is not the end of the process. The government wants to improve the links between our hospitals, GPs and community-based care, as well as look at the quality of care provided in our regional areas in the future. As part of this, I would expect the minister will look to continually improve communications with other agencies so that the patients can be discharged at the appropriate time.

In conclusion, I would love to hear from the Hon. Ms Vincent or other honourable members what are their solutions in terms of dealing with the healthcare reform. I know that the Hon. Ms Franks has mentioned that we need to deal with this issue. Data has shown that we are not delivering the quality of health care as we should be compared with other states or compared nationally, so what are our solutions in terms of dealing with quality of health care? Also, how do we respond to the

federal government no longer funding or reducing funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Hospital and Health Workforce Reform.

The federal government has indicated that they no longer want to fund health growth, they only want to fund it by inflation or by population growth, as many of you would know. Inflation currently is running around 3 per cent, our state population has not grown very much at all in the last 30 years, and health care is growing at 8 per cent plus each year. How do we fill the gaps, the difference, that the federal government has given the state since they indicated that they no longer want to fund that difference?

In the last federal budget, the federal government already acted on that, and they have reduced funding by \$300 million to the state government in terms of no longer wanting to fund the growth in health. At the end of the day, the federal government has the purse strings in terms of funding the state government's health system, so how do we as a state deal with this issue? It is important, I think, that we as members of parliament are able to come up with solutions to deal with the two issues that I just raised and provide the government with those solutions. I would like to finish off by saying I am really looking forward to members contributing and providing solutions and telling us what is wrong with our health system.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (18:11): In summing up, I would like to thank my parliamentary colleagues for their contributions to this debate: the Hon. Mr Stephen Wade, the Hon. Ms Tammy Franks and the Hon. Tung Ngo, and those other members who have indicated their support without necessarily going on the record as such. I would take some issue (I am sure it is no surprise) with some of the comments from the Hon. Mr Ngo in which he seems to insinuate that I, as Dignity for Disability's representative, have been nothing but critical of these reforms. If my memory serves me—thankfully I do not have to rely on my memory; I also have media transcripts—I have actually been, I think, rather positive about these reforms. We in Dignity for Disability have merely been critical of the lack of clarity around the proposed reforms and the concern that that is creating in the community.

The Hon. S.G. Wade: You said that in moving, too.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT: The Hon. Mr Wade interjects (out of order, I know) that I also said that in moving the motion. I would like to give a few quotes from correspondence I have received from various professionals and members of the community about these reforms to again illustrate the lack of clarity and the concern around that in the community. This one I think is particularly relevant on the subject of emergency department closures:

There is widespread agreement for the need for greater efficiency in healthcare and there is a great merit in some of the 'Transforming Health' proposals such as 24/7 cover for emergency cardiac [and] stroke treatment, improved discharge pathways on weekends and the creation of a 40 bed 'waiting for placement' unit to improve patient flow through the system. However, the doctors and nurses working on the 'frontline' at Modbury Hospital [in this particular example] are gravely concerned about this proposed downgrade and the consequent loss of Acute Care and Critical Care services at Modbury Hospital.

Or this one on the subject of the Hampstead Centre:

The setup and layout of the Hampstead Centre is flat and very accessible for me and others with mobility issues because there is sufficient disability car parking near entrances, hand rails to lean on and I am generally able to walk the distance between the buildings I use.

Or this one on the Repat:

Over the decades, the RGH [Repatriation General Hospital] has developed teams of medical specialists who have built up an understanding of the veterans' needs and expertise in dealing with and resolving these problems. It is like a house of cards—pull out one, and the whole will likely collapse.

This does not sound to me like anyone is being overly critical or denying the need for healthcare reform point blank. It sounds very much to me like members of the community who are just concerned about the way these reforms might look and, if they do not have that information, it is very difficult for them to make informed decisions about whether or not they agree with those reforms. I think that we can all agree that there is need for healthcare reform. We simply cannot have a healthcare budget that continues to grow exponentially, particularly when we are not getting a return for investment with improvement in the health of our community.

I am sure that we all want affordable, modern health care which delivers a timely service which the community can rely upon. Technology, surgeries and drug therapies available for the chronically or critically ill or injured are better than they have ever been, but they do not come cheap; I am sure that there is no denying that. What is and always has been timeless and will not change is that prevention is better and often much cheaper than a cure. Prevent someone from suffering heart disease and expensive bowel surgery at 50 years of age through a healthy diet and regular exercise and that person will probably not only have better health outcomes and lifestyle for themselves and their family but you will save the health system plenty of money. Prevent cancer through a healthy diet, exercise and support and again you save money and improve people's quality of life and health outcomes.

No, we can never prevent all injury; I am not stupid enough to believe that. We cannot prevent all injury, illness or chronic disease, and it would be naive to think that we could, but with quality primary health care we can certainly lessen the burden on the healthcare system which currently exists. So, we all agree that there is a need for healthcare reform, but on how we do this we have widely varying views.

The Transforming Health document, while I am sure was well consulted with a select group of people, is light on detail. This lack of clarity on the peculiarities of the reforms is a serious cause of concern that is causing much unrest amongst patients, the community and most health professionals to whom I have spoken on the subject.

There are many of the reforms that have been welcomed by the sector, and again I make that point. In particular, bodies such as the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation have been widely positive and welcoming of these reforms, but even those mainly in support of these reforms admit that there is far too much to be nipped out before any of this can be properly implemented.

Dignity for Disability's motion focuses on a few areas within our healthcare system, mainly rehabilitation, mental health and the need for collaboration between government departments. Firstly, we have two high-functioning rehab facilities in the Rehab and Hampstead. The Repat, I believe, has six gyms and what I am told by one particular health professional is Australia's best hydrotherapy pool. How is that going to be replicated with the space constraints at Flinders? Do those running Transforming Health know that there are six rehab gyms at the Repat and, if yes, why have they not detailed in the document how this will be replicated at Flinders hospital?

It is all very well and good for people like those of us in this chamber, who are able to attend special parliamentary briefings, to get information through the media, to liaise directly with ministers and so on, but what about the people out there who are directly affected and directly using these services day in and day out who are not in the privileged position in which we find ourselves, who do not have those avenues to go to and who rely on a document such as the Transforming Health document to provide them with enough detail to make an informed decision?

I know that the government is capable of pretty effective and positive consultation like that we have seen under the rollout of the Disability Justice Plan. This arguably did not happen to begin with, but once some pressure was put on the government it did become very consultative and collaborative with stakeholders in that particular project. I am incredulous and simply do not understand why this kind of mentality only seems to have spread throughout that project. Surely it would not be hard for the government to follow its own example. Perhaps I digress.

The Hon. S.G. Wade: You have.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT: I have digressed, I am told, but with good reason. What about hydrotherapy? As one example, I was on air with ABC radio 891 last week where—

The Hon. S.G. Wade: Name dropper.

The Hon. K.L. VINCENT: Name dropping again, I know—Professor Dorothy Keefe assured me that the closed down hydrotherapy pools would be replaced, but there is already a shortage of adequate hydrotherapy pools, as I have mentioned before. So how are you going to increase the number of hydrotherapy pools in South Australia, which is essential in any state with an ageing population. Again, I make the point that it is all very well and good for someone like me, who is able to call up the radio and get on air quite easily and talk to the good professor, but again I ask: why

was that information about the new hydrotherapy pools proposed under the project not detailed in the document?

What about things like meal times? Are there going to be separate dining rooms for those in longer-term rehabilitation? Rehab requires discrete programs, particularly if they are in a mainstream hospital setting. On the subject of beds, if there are fewer rehabilitation beds, is there going to be a step-down facility for those in long-term rehab? None of these questions appear to have been adequately answered to allay some of the community concerns.

Hampstead provides world-class rehabilitation from brain injury, spinal injury, stroke and other traumatic injuries and health occurrences. It has outpatient services and a peaceful garden setting. My question is, again: has anyone measured the value of that to patient rehabilitation and wellbeing in the long term? The measures used to collect statistics do not seem to take completely into account everything provided in a health service, like what you might call the non-medical things such as the provision of a nice peaceful garden setting. We in Dignity for Disability certainly believe that you do need to take holistic stock of these measures and a true account of the effect that they have on people's recovery and wellbeing. So many people who have contacted my office report how essential to their recovery these kinds of facilities at the Hampstead centre have been.

On the subject of mental health, as I have previously elucidated, I find it deplorable that only three pages of Delivering Transforming Health is devoted to our all too often crisis driven mental health system. As the Hon. Tung Ngo mentioned, the document aims to reduce waiting times in emergency departments. This is certainly something I am sure we can all get behind, but when we consider the fact that the document proposes reducing waiting times in emergency departments to four hours, I believe, for people with physical complaints compared to 24 hours for people with a mental health issue we have to ask: is this really the best that we can do?

Just because 24 hours is better than a worse option does not make it particularly good. The glaring gap of 20 hours in waiting time if you have a mental health issue again demonstrates that perhaps this government does not understand the true effect that mental health has on people's lives and perhaps does not understand that a mental health issue can be just as debilitating and urgent, if not more so, than a physical complaint. That is of great concern.

I also would like to touch on the fact that the Hon. Mr Ngo, when talking about the area of primary health care, has touched on the fact that Transforming Health is meant to be—I think he used the word 'overarching project'. Again, I labour the point that we do not deny the need for hospital reform, but what about keeping people out of hospital and the health outcomes that that can achieve and the money that that can save in the longer term?

I do not understand, and I am very interested to know when, in the minister's mind, hospitals became the Mecca for all health and wellbeing, particularly for people with mental health issues. We know that keeping them in the community and connected to the things that make their lives routine, stable, connected and meaningful is vital. The lack of clarity around the importance of community support is very concerning.

In the absence of any detail, health professionals, patients and the broader community have jumped to the worst possible conclusion, because the Minister for Health and the government have failed to provide details. I am not saying that anyone in the community who has contacted me has been particularly misleading or alarmist. I believe it is simply human nature, when you hear that a service that you rely on or have relied on in the past is going to change and you do not understand that change, to be worried about that. It is very normal and understandable.

The government has once again, as it did on emergency service reform, said, 'Trust us, everything will be fine.' They are saying that it will all be for the better, not worse, and yet we have no real concrete evidence to work out how that will be so. How do we know that this will provide better services than those we already have? Some of that we do and I again add that some of the proposals have been very welcome. However, the less consultative governments are the easier it is for people to jump to conclusions.

Again I labour the point that the best way to get good outcomes is to involve the people who will be directly affected by those outcomes, particularly in terms of promoting primary health care for all South Australians. Dignity for Disability is saying that we want our taxpayer dollars to build a fence

at the top of the cliff and not fund an ambulance to pick up the pieces at the bottom, as the old saying goes—and perhaps it has never been more fitting.

It is clear to me that the public does not feel adequately consulted or confident in what the government is currently offering. Therefore, I am not saying, 'Blow up the entire project. Let's not reform the healthcare system; it's too hard.' We all know that needs to happen, but do it in a way that respects and listens to the concerns of real people who are directly affected by these services. The government must take action to restore confidence in this process, both for the sake of people using the healthcare system and for its own sake, for its own reputation and to do its job properly. Again, if we do not involve the people who are directly affected it is not going to help anyone.

If people in the community and SA Health employees thought that they were listened to and that their suggestions would be implemented, then I am sure that they would not be calling my office (and I am sure other members' offices) in the numbers that they have. I welcome a day when we do not have to put this sort of motion to parliament. I welcome the day that we do not have to remind the government to do its job. With those few words, I thank members for their support. Once again, I implore the government to extend its consultation on this to be more consultative, to be open, to actually explain what is going on and they might be surprised at the positive results. I commend the motion to the chamber.

Motion carried.

Bills

REAL PROPERTY (PRIORITY NOTICES AND OTHER MEASURES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

At 18:30 the council adjourned until Thursday 26 February 2015 at 14:15.