

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, 22 September 2015

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. R.P. Wortley)** took the chair at 14:19 and read prayers.

**The PRESIDENT:** We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to the elders both past and present.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

### SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

**The PRESIDENT (14:20):** Just before we begin, we do not start here until 2.15. I do not think it is appropriate that I am hanging out there for five minutes after the supposed commencement of time waiting for some latecomers. There are—

**The Hon. T.A. Franks:** I wouldn't be saying that, given your lateness the last sitting week.

**The PRESIDENT:** You give me an example.

*The Hon. T.A. Franks interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** I am not here to argue with you, the Hon. Ms Franks—not here to argue.

*The Hon. T.A. Franks interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** I would advise you to be quiet. I have been sitting out there on a number of occasions. I did not say you in particular, so just stay there and listen to what I have to say. It is not appropriate to be out there for five minutes. If that is the fault of our bells ringing and not switching off, I will have discussions. There are a couple of people here for whom it may warrant keeping the bells going, but in general most people should be here on time.

*Bills*

### HEALTH CARE (ADMINISTRATION) AMENDMENT BILL

*Assent*

His Excellency the Administrator assented to the bill.

### ANIMAL WELFARE (LIVE BAITING) AMENDMENT BILL

*Assent*

His Excellency the Administrator assented to the bill.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

### ANSWERS TABLED

**The PRESIDENT:** I direct that the written answers to questions be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

*Members*

### SENATOR, ELECTION

**The PRESIDENT (14:23):** I lay upon the table the minutes of the joint sitting of members of the two houses held today to choose a person to hold the place in the Senate of the commonwealth, rendered vacant by the resignation of Senator Penny Wright, whereat Mr Robert Andrew Simms was the person so chosen.

Minutes of proceedings (Paper No. 170) ordered to be published.

*Parliamentary Procedure***PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the President—

Administration of the Joint Parliamentary Service—Report, 2014-15

By the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills (Hon. G.E. Gago)—

Reports, 2014-15—

Criminal Investigation (Covert Operations) Act 2009

Industrial Relations Advisory Committee

South Australian Government Boards and Committees Information

Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005

Regulations under the following Act—

Civil Liability Act 1936—Prescribed Information

Rules of Court—

Magistrates Court—Magistrates Court Act 1992—

Amendment No. 54

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

Witjijra National Park Co-management Board—Report, 2014-15

*Parliamentary Committees***ABORIGINAL LANDS PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (14:25):** I bring up the report of the committee, being the annual report for 2014-15.

Report received and ordered to be published.

**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION**

**The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS (14:25):** I lay upon the table the report of the committee on the committee's regional visit to the Barossa Valley.

Report received.

*Ministerial Statement***TURNBULL, HON. M.B.**

**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) (14:26):** I table the following ministerial statement from the Premier (Hon. Jay Weatherill) on the issue of the Turnbull government.

**NORTHERN CONNECTOR**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (14:26):** I table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the Northern Connector made in another place by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

*The Hon. D.W. Ridgway interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

*Question Time***LOWER LIMESTONE COAST WATER ALLOCATION PLAN**

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:30):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Water and the River Murray a question about the Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY:** On 10 September this year, members may recall that in question time I asked the minister why the people of the South-East still had no clarity about the delivery component of their licences. Since then, I have been in contact with one irrigator who was heavily involved in the volumetric conversion process. He has expressed concern that many irrigators did not know that a reduction in their allocation has occurred and some did not apply because they were confused by the correspondence.

When he became aware of his allocation he contacted neighbours: one indicated that he thought the form that was sent out only required an application for additional water to his historic use based on submitted records; another neighbour indicated the same interpretation. If flood irrigators have not been allocated their flood delivery component, it makes a mockery of the resources contributed by many volunteers as well as the paid staff to develop the delivery component conversion.

Apparently the leaflets and facts sheets clearly state that the delivery component will be available to all flood irrigators but the additional crop and bridging volumes will be available on application. The delivery component is defined as 'the volume of water that a reasonably efficient irrigator needs in excess of the crop water requirement to irrigate and grow the crop'. My questions to the minister are:

1. How many flood irrigators in the Lower Limestone Coast have not been allocated their flood delivery component?
2. When was it decided to change the policy from the delivery component being available to all and crop component on application to a policy whereby the delivery component would need to be applied for but that the crop requirement would be based on historic records without the need for application?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (14:32):** I thank the honourable member for his most important question and his ongoing interest in this area of important policy. The South-East of South Australia is of great economic and ecological importance for our state. The values are underpinned by the water resources of the Lower Limestone Coast. To provide certainty for water users and ensure water resources are sustained in the long term and protect water-dependent ecosystems, the South East Natural Resources Management Board has collaborated with the community, industry and government to develop the Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan.

Community and industry input into this water allocation plan was sought and received over an extended period and has assisted in the production of final policies that are being applied to the region. As the minister, I adopted the Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan on 26 November 2013. As I have said in this place before, in what is believed to be a world first, the Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan will license both direct groundwater extraction and interception of groundwater recharge by commercial forestry. It is a major step forward towards accounting for and managing all significant users of the resource and is part of the state's obligations under the National Water Initiative.

The introduction of these forest water licences has been well supported, I am advised. The Lower Limestone Coast Water Allocation Plan converts existing area-based water allocations to volumes and in what is also believed to be a world first, provides for commercial plantation forests to have a water allocation for recharge intersection and direct groundwater extraction.

A risk assessment also identified eight groundwater management areas where the current level of allocations presented a high or very high risk to the sustainable use of the resource. Reductions to allocations are scheduled to occur over the next eight years ranging from 3 per cent to 57 per cent as a result of the risk assessment results. Further adjustments to the water allocation were made by the South East Natural Resources Management Board and myself. The South East Natural Resources Management Board made some changes to fix small errors and omissions in the plan on 27 February 2014 and I made changes on 10 December 2014 to reflect the legal requirements to obtain a forest water licence.

The plan has been updated on the Natural Resources South East website, where both the amended plan and a table of the changes are available to view or download. Key stakeholders were informed of these changes, and the necessary Natural Resources Management Act regulations to allow the issue of forest water licences came into operation, I am advised, on 1 July 2014. All the forestry water licences were issued for the first time last financial year.

I have already put on record, extensively, the extensive communication we have had with water users in the South-East. I won't trouble the chamber by putting that extensive list on the record again but, as I said to the honourable member in my last answer, I believe, we are working with local landholders and the NRM board to address those issues and, as I said, I am waiting for advice from my department before we proceed any further.

#### **LOWER LIMESTONE COAST WATER ALLOCATION PLAN**

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:35):** A supplementary question—in fact, the original question: how many flood irrigators have not been delegated their flood delivery component?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (14:35):** I can't answer that question.

#### **LOWER LIMESTONE COAST WATER ALLOCATION PLAN**

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (14:35):** Will the minister take that particular previous question on notice and bring back a reply? My second supplementary question, and I reiterate the first question, is: when was it decided to change the policy from a delivery component available to all, and crop component on application, to a policy whereby the delivery component needed to be applied for but the crop component would be based on historic records without the need for application? When was the change of policy?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (14:36):** I will have to engage with the NRM board about their determinations about that and find the dates for the honourable member, which I am quite happy to do. As I said previously, I have already put on record the long and substantial correspondence with the community down there through public engagements, through town hall meetings, through letters, notices and journals, etc. If the honourable member would like that information once again, I will bring that back to the chamber as well.

#### **LOWER LIMESTONE COAST WATER ALLOCATION PLAN**

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:36):** When the minister does that, can he please advise whether it was actually a decision of the local NRM board or whether it was his department?

#### **GREYHOUND RACING**

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:36):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing a question to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation on the subject of animal welfare.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK:** On 31 August, the RSPCA issued a media release and did some media in relation to greyhound racing and the ongoing concerns with animal welfare issues in

South Australia and, in particular, raised two issues, one being that they say that they were advised by the GRSA that it is likely that South Australian greyhounds have been trained interstate using live baiting methods and then returned to South Australia to race.

They also raised a matter of a property at Two Wells, which was raided by the RSPCA and SAPOL on 26 March this year, at which there were some issues relating to storage of drugs at that location and the matter of some 60 greyhounds housed at those premises. The RSPCA say that they requested GRSA to test the animals for those drugs and that that did not subsequently take place. My questions for the minister are:

1. Does he stand by the statement that, 'There is no evidence of live baiting within the South Australian greyhound industry'?
2. Has he investigated this particular matter in relation to the dogs at the premises at Two Wells to determine whether any breaches of the Animal Welfare Act have taken place?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (14:38):** I thank the honourable member for her most important question. The South Australian government is committed to protect the welfare and safety of all animals, including those involved in the greyhound racing industry. This is why, clearly, the government undertook swift action after allegations were made of live baiting occurring in other states of our country.

Footage depicted on 16 February 2015 on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's episode of *Four Corners*, entitled Making a Killing, exposed the practice of live baiting in the greyhound racing industry in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. The footage depicted greyhound trainers using live bait to lure greyhounds around rail tracks, and the revelations shocked the nation and spurred the South Australian government into action. Live baiting is already illegal in South Australia, I am advised, under the current provisions of the legislation; however, the associated activities of supplying animals to be bait, providing the venue, or being present at these training sessions were not at that time.

As a response to these interstate allegations, the government undertook reforms to tighten the screws on this sort of behaviour and, as honourable members are quite aware, this included making amendments to the Animal Welfare Act, which passed this chamber, which creates new offences for participation in live baiting to mirror current offences for organised animal fights, such as dog and cockfighting, and increase maximum penalties for breaches of the new laws, up to \$50,000 or imprisonment for four years, and that is up from \$20,000 or imprisonment for two years.

The proposed legislative amendments will complement steps also that Greyhound Racing South Australia, with support from the RSPCA, have initiated on this issue. These steps include additional animal welfare and compliance staff; dramatically increasing the inspection rate of premises; new aerial drone surveillance; surveillance cameras at private racing facilities, trial tracks and registered tracks; new rules around the prohibition and compulsory reporting of live baiting; the compulsion of registered participants to disclose all private racing facilities; and protocols to inspect greyhound facilities without notice.

I am very pleased to note that the two organisations, the RSPCA and Greyhound Racing SA, have worked cooperatively and productively together throughout the development of the government's response to live baiting allegations. I also understand that on 31 August this year the RSPCA issued a media release stating that negotiations with Greyhound Racing SA had broken down and called for greater reforms to the greyhound racing industry. The RSPCA went on to recommend four areas of reform to greyhound racing.

I understand that in South Australia the regulation of the racing industry is undertaken by controlling authorities in accordance with the national and local rules of racing and the policies of the controlling authorities, and Greyhound Racing SA is one of them. I am also told that Greyhound Racing SA advises that they will contribute to an additional \$500,000 in expenses annually in support of integrity and welfare-related outcomes. The establishment of an independent body is, of course, an issue for the racing industry and a matter, of course, in parliamentary terms, for the Minister of Racing to deal with.

I am advised that Greyhound Racing SA requires licensed persons to establish and maintain records of all births, sales and deaths of greyhounds. Greyhounds are also microchipped at the breeding establishment to ensure that tampering of these records does not occur. I anticipate that the current suite of proposed changes to dog and cat management in South Australia will further assist should the parliament choose to support them. The dog and cat reforms include mandatory microchipping and a proposal for a centralised publicly accessible database. This will help assist in tracing greyhounds through their lifetime.

I understand that Greyhound Racing SA advises that the industry is also working towards national disclosure of key statistics, and the public release of data pertaining to the life cycle of greyhounds will need to be industry led. It is important to note that Greyhound Racing SA has rehomed a similar number of greyhounds to Queensland and New South Wales combined, I am advised, despite the fact that South Australia only breeds about 10 per cent of the number of greyhounds as those two jurisdictions. Greyhound Racing SA is the national leader in rehoming greyhounds, and the percentage rehomed is likely to increase further under planned retraining programs, including the successful Greyhound Adoption Program.

I also understand that RSPCA South Australia and Greyhound Racing SA have been working towards the development of a memorandum of understanding which would outline when and how referrals are made to the RSPCA. In response to the live baiting scandal, Greyhound Racing SA and the RSPCA agreed to cooperate in the investigation of all alleged animal welfare offences. Greyhound Racing SA has the authority to enter licensed premises at any time to ensure compliance. This level of inspection, with no suspicion of a breach of legislation, is not available to external bodies, including authorised animal welfare inspectors, I am advised.

If Greyhound Racing SA suspects a breach, they will advise the RSPCA inspectors who have the authority to conduct a regulatory investigation. Greyhound Racing South Australia and the RSPCA have also agreed the triggers for Greyhound Racing SA to engage SA Police in relation to a suspected or known breach of the Animal Welfare Act in situations where the circumstances are deemed to constitute, or potentially constitute, a criminal matter. To develop the MOU, and achieve a positive outcome, it is imperative that the RSPCA and Greyhound Racing SA continue to work together in a collaborative and respectful manner.

The success of the government's response to interstate allegations of live baiting is founded on the cooperative relationship between the RSPCA and Greyhound Racing SA. The Minister for Racing and I have explored the two organisations to again work together cooperatively. The government is open to considering further reforms, but the two organisations need to work together to develop a plan for a way forward and then put that plan to government, as happened so successfully previously.

In regard to the honourable member's questions about standing by what I have said previously, I have no difficulty with that. I have not been provided with any evidence of live baiting occurring in South Australia. But, as I said at the time, it would be silly for us to assume that it couldn't occur in South Australia because we know it does occur in the Eastern States. That is the rationale and the reason behind why we have moved so very quickly in this state with the legislation that has now passed both chambers.

In regard to reports of dogs being trained with live baiting interstate, there is a free movement of animals and people, of course, between Australian jurisdictions. There is no way that I know of to know whether South Australian greyhounds have been taken interstate to be trained using live baits. South Australian legislation does not apply in other jurisdictions so the South Australian government could not address this, even if there was evidence of it occurring interstate. However, this may be an area the greyhound racing authority could address through its own code of conduct with its own members, and that is something I will be raising when I meet with them this week when I have one of our regular meetings with the Minister for Racing, Greyhound Racing SA and the RSPCA.

#### **GREYHOUND RACING**

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:45):** The minister has not actually responded to the second question I put to him, which was the incident at Two Wells and whether he has investigated whether there were any breaches of the Animal Welfare Act.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (14:46):** To the best of my knowledge, no breaches have been brought to my attention.

#### WORKREADY

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (14:46):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking questions of the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills in relation to WorkReady.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** The South Australian unemployment rate is at its worst level in 20 years. I understand the government is relying heavily on programs that focus on job opportunities through improved skills. In a news release of 17 September 2015, the minister stated:

It remains a firm commitment of the state government to sustain a VET system that will help South Australians find their first job, their next job or start a whole new career.

The minister's policy transition from Skills for All to WorkReady appears to lack a sense of urgency. The processes required for the transition to WorkReady reflect this in the fact that the closing date for applications has been pushed back to 28 September 2015. This late date for applications to close has created concerns in the industry. The programs may not now commence until next year. My questions to the minister are:

1. Will the Jobs First component of your new WorkReady program be available for South Australians seeking training this year or will it now be delayed until 2016?
2. Given the critical need for training in South Australia and given our high unemployment levels, why has the closing date for applications been pushed back to 28 September?

**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):** It is obvious that the opposition is completely out of touch with the VET sector, otherwise the Hon. Stephen Wade wouldn't come into this place and ask a question about date lines where the industry itself actually asked us to push out those dates. It was in response to the industry that the time frames were changed. We listened to industry and we listened to their needs. They said they needed more time to process their programs. We listened to them and, obviously, we were prepared to help them in every way that we could. That is why the Jobs First employment part of the program time frames were changed.

The Jobs First STL programs I understand were on time according to discussions with the industry and as we had indicated. That has all been processed and training providers have been made aware of those who have been successful and, obviously, those who have not been successful. So, again, a tick: we have done exactly what we committed to doing. What the Hon. Stephen Wade is right about, though, is that WorkReady is clearly focused on a much stronger link between training and industry and a much stronger link between training outcomes and real job outcomes. We have developed a WorkReady program that makes much stronger links in both respects.

We have also worked hard to ensure that we attempt to improve completion rates by requiring training providers to report on their completion rates and also to do better assessments of their students up-front so that we are more confident that they are actually placing the right person in the right place and identifying where a student might need some prerequisite or assistance with their literacy or numeracy skills before going on to enrol in a particular qualification. So, we have a much stronger link there.

In terms of this government rolling out its WorkReady program and associated VET programs around that, just recently I announced the employment programs metro funding. The DSD allocated \$1.26 million to deliver 24 employment projects and services for more than 2,000 people across metropolitan Adelaide in 2015-16. These projects will result in around 900 people getting jobs—that is the anticipated outcome—and a further 1,105 people being better prepared for work or for further study. So, funding aligns with the state government's jobs and skills policy, Our Jobs Plan and our WorkReady skills as well, making sure that South Australia is the best place to do business.

These metropolitan employment projects will focus on a number of industries, including aged care, child care, retail, transport and agriculture. Career services will be provided in all metropolitan regions, providing jobseekers with tailored career guidance and advice on local industries and employment opportunities. People who are unable to gain work immediately will be transitioned into alternate employment pathways such as further education and training, work experience, career services or even something as simple as volunteering as part of the next step towards a pathway to employment.

Projects and services are delivered in partnership with the City of Onkaparinga, North East development agencies, Northern Futures and Western Futures as part of transition arrangements. So, the different regions received different amounts—I won't go into that. Again we see this government on the front of its feet, rolling out these programs, rolling out assistance to assist people to gain employment and develop career pathways.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS (14:53):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills a question about the VET sector.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS:** Practitioners in the vocational education and training sector are required to develop training plans to deliver training to students, conduct assessments and keep abreast of trends in industry and best practice in training delivery. Can the minister inform the chamber about the effect of changes in the federal cabinet reshuffle on South Australia for the VET portfolio and its practitioners?

**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) (14:53):** I thank the honourable member for his most important question. We are keenly aware of the need to powerfully connect vocational education and training to our economy, our learning institutions and especially to people's working lives. Across all our plans for a shift from our old economy to a new economy there is a common denominator, and that is VET. VET is absolutely a key enabler in our plan to create future jobs.

At this critical period of economic transition, we are more than ever reliant on the skills and productivity of our people. As the jobs we have today evolve, in the future we will see an increase in higher skilled occupations. We need to adapt to these future needs whilst still meeting our immediate needs for a readily accessible skilled and semi-skilled workforce.

VET is fundamental in preparing the future workforce to traverse the changing landscape and composition of the labour market here in South Australia. As a South Australian, Senator Simon Birmingham has taken a keen interest in ensuring that the VET sector and the training industry in South Australia maximises the benefits from investment opportunities such as the Industry Skills Fund. With the—

**The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire:** He is not very happy with you.

**The Hon. G.E. GAGO:** Well, I am not very happy with him either, in some respects. With the changes to the federal ministry, we hope these opportunities for South Australia will continue under the new minister, the Hon. Luke Hartsuyker, even though he is from New South Wales (we will not hold that against him). Here in South Australia we have some powerful imperatives for reform, and I am writing to minister Hartsuyker to outline South Australia's commitment to ensuring that South Australians have access to a high-quality vocational education and training system that will develop the skilled and adaptable workforce needed here in our state.

As I have said before, WorkReady brings together a range of training, employment and skills activity under one umbrella. It focuses on stronger connections between training and jobs and improved completion rates, which I have spoken about here today. WorkReady is integral to our plan for South Australia, our plan to transform our economy and, of course, to drive business, to drive prosperity and to drive jobs. It is also the platform upon which a more truly open and contestable VET system will be implemented, enabling us to continue the range of reforms outlined in the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform and beyond.

On the subject of VET on the national stage, I was honoured to present a keynote speech to the opening of the 2015 National VET Conference in Adelaide last week—over 1,000 delegates attended, and it was awesome; apparently it was the largest national VET conference ever held in Australia—and I outlined South Australia's vision for the VET sector. It was a fantastic opportunity to speak firsthand with practitioners about the need to transition and maintain our high standards of training through a combination of policies and direct training dollars to the right places at the right times, and practitioners who deliver best practice training methodologies and achieve high levels of student success in the courses. It is vital that practitioners are afforded those opportunities to share information.

I know that minister Birmingham has clearly stated he is keen to see through the federation discussions to ensure a stronger VET sector in the future, and I share that keen sense. This is an important discussion to have, as a healthy dialogue about federation between governments, employers, employees, educators and training providers will result in a more effective national VET sector. I look forward to continuing the conversation on a national approach to VET with both ministers Birmingham and Hartsuyker.

In South Australia, we look forward to working with the Prime Minister and his federal colleagues to advance our economy at this most important time. With the national partnership agreement expiring in 2017 it is an important juncture in the VET sector, and South Australia is ready, willing and able to work with the federal government to develop an agenda that will ensure our economy prospers into the future.

#### **NATIONAL WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM**

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (14:58):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing questions to the Minister for the Status of Women about the Football Federation of Australia's rejection of paid maternity leave for the Matildas.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** This month it was reported that our national women's soccer team players will have their contracts annulled and will be required to pay for their travel and accommodation costs to have their babies by their side during national team camps, after the Football Federation of Australia rejected a proposal for paid maternity leave. Of course, these developments follow an ongoing pay dispute which has seen the Matildas go on strike over the enormous pay disparity between them and their male Socceroos colleagues.

The base salary for the Matildas' players is a paltry \$21,000 per annum, and they receive \$500 per international game. By contrast, the Socceroos receive \$6,500 per standard international game. The Matildas also receive \$500 per group stage tournament game while, by contrast, the Socceroos receive \$7,500 per group stage tournament game. My questions to the Minister for Women are:

1. Is the minister aware of this significant gender gap in the sports and recreation sector of teams representing our nation?
2. What steps has the minister undertaken to ensure that the gender pay gap in this sector is both challenged and addressed?
3. Will the minister write to the Football Federation of Australia, if she has not already done so, to request that they consider policy measures to support our female athletes across the board at the national level, including paid maternity leave?
4. What course of action will the minister now take to ensure that female players who work in exactly the same conditions as their male counterparts are supported and valued in their workplaces?
5. How will she work with other members of this council and the other place to effect this change?

**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) (15:00):** I thank the honourable member for her most important question and her ongoing interest and advocacy in this area. 'Advocacy' is probably not the right word, but she certainly is a champion of women's rights, including issues around pay equity. I thank the Hon. Tammy Franks for raising this particular issue in this place. I was actually not aware of that decision and, unfortunately, you are probably not surprised that I am not surprised to hear such a report. It is consistent with other pay inequities that occur for women right throughout society, including our sport. I certainly will be happy to respond to that report.

In terms of women in sport generally, the Office for Women has developed a strong relationship with the Office for Recreation and Sport (ORS), and continues to work with it on increasing recognition of women in sport and their participation in sports leadership. ORS has set diversity and inclusion as one of their key areas, and continues to include the increased participation and recognition of women in sport as a priority.

In May this year ORS released *Words into Sporting Action*, a practical guide to achieve gender equity in sport and recreation organisations and improve performance, as a guide for organisations to help achieve particularly equal representation of women and men in senior leadership roles. The South Australian government has established a women in sport task force, and that is led by parliamentary secretary to the Premier, Ms Katrine Hildyard MP, and the Office for Women is a member of that task force. I know the Hon. Tammy Franks would know Katrine Hildyard extremely well, and again she has been a strong and forceful campaigner for particularly pay equity for women and has a long track record in this space. Katrine is really working very hard in this space at the moment.

The task force also includes representatives from the Office for Recreation and Sport, as well as high profile sportswomen, sporting body representatives and event managers. The group aims to increase the number of spectators, both in venues and TV for women in sport. I think with the increased recognition of women we could expect that that would result in an increase in pay equity as well as prize money. We know there are significant differences in the sort of prize moneys that women can achieve in sport compared with men.

A report released by the Australian Sports Commission showed that women's sport makes up at least 7 per cent of TV and print sports coverage, although the vast majority of stories, 85 per cent, were positive; 58 per cent of people surveyed felt that not enough coverage was dedicated to women in sport. The task force aims to close the pay gap between male and female athletes and attract more sporting events to Adelaide.

A social media campaign will be launched using the hashtag 'watch the woman' to encourage big crowds to attend female contests in codes such as football, soccer, cricket, netball and basketball. The task force will make recommendations to the state government and sporting bodies such as the AFL, and the women's football curtain-raiser ahead of the showdown between Port Adelaide and the Crows has been flagged as a type of event that could instigate significant interest.

There are also issues around women in sport governance that quite a lot of work has been done around, but I won't go into that in detail. If the Hon. Tammy Franks wants that information, I am happy to make that available to her, and also obviously there is quite a bit of detail around *Words into Sporting Action* that I can also make available to those members that are interested.

In terms of general society, because sport actually reflects what is going on in general society, there is a whole raft of strategies that I know the Hon. Tammy Franks is aware of in terms of trying to encourage particularly young girls into non-traditional occupations, particularly those high-tech STEM areas. We have a program of attracting young girls into STEM. These are the higher paid jobs and we are trying to, again, shift women into non-traditional areas of occupation, because we know that the workforce is split into two areas where men tend to be highly represented and those of women. Of course, those areas where men are highly represented are more often than not paid more than that of women.

There are issues around workplace flexibility, so women having access to the workplace and being able to return after maternity leave or other caring leave and to be able to fit their work commitments with their caring obligations and also to distribute more of those caring obligations to be able to share more of that with men is another area that we have also done significant work in.

There are significant programs and strategies that I could go into, but that is a thumbnail sketch for the purposes of answering the question here today.

#### **AUTOMOTIVE SUPPLIER DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAM**

**The Hon. A.L. McLACHLAN (15:07):** My question is to the Minister for Automotive Transformation. Who is responsible for reviewing the six-monthly reports that are required to be submitted by recipients of grants under the Automotive Supplier Diversification Program?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (15:07):** I will check, but I would be quite sure that is my department. If that is different, I will bring back a reply to correct that.

#### **MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN**

**The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA (15:07):** I seek leave to make a brief statement before asking a question of the Minister for Water and the River Murray on the subject of the federal leadership change.

*Members interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

Leave granted.

*Members interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** The honourable member has the call.

**The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA:** Thank you, sir, and I am very glad they all woke up. Like other honourable members, I watched with interest as the federal Liberal Party leadership change took place last week. In particular, I am concerned about the decision of our new Prime Minister to reallocate responsibility for the water portfolio from the environment to agriculture as a part of his Coalition agreement with the Nationals.

**The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire:** Great move.

**The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA:** Relax, I'm not asking you.

*Members interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Hon. Mr Brokenshire, please respect the member's right to ask a question in silence.

**The Hon. J.M. GAZZOLA:** My question to the minister is: what impact is the change in portfolio responsibilities at the federal level likely to have on South Australia as a state which has fought hard for the health of the River Murray?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (15:09):** I thank the honourable member for his most insightful question, as always concerned about South Australia and our ongoing attempts to make sure that the federal government delivers the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement on time. I am also aware of some community scepticism at the removal of the water portfolio to the agriculture portfolio, and I am even more doubly concerned now when I hear the Hon. Mr Brokenshire say it is a good idea. That should give pause for anybody. Anything the Hon. Mr Brokenshire thinks is a good idea would make us all question our position, I should think.

*The Hon. R.L. Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** The South Australian government initially greeted the Prime Minister's decision to realign responsibility for water resources with the agriculture portfolio with a degree of polite concern.

In South Australia, we are all aware that we need to maintain a healthy River Murray in order to ensure that irrigators and communities have the water they need in order to survive and prosper. This means that environmental considerations are an essential part of water management at a federal level. However, we have been heartened by recent assurances that the Murray-Darling Basin Plan will be delivered in full as promised.

I am also particularly heartened by the appointment of Senator Anne Ruston as Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Senator Ruston knows well the particular challenges facing South Australia and I am sure will carry her substantial knowledge of the South Australian context into her role as Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. I wrote to both minister Joyce and assistant minister Ruston today congratulating them on their new responsibilities. I highlighted South Australia's keen interest in continuing to work constructively with the commonwealth on the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

Through the Fight for the Murray campaign, South Australians took enormous interest and pride in the development of the basin plan as it eventuated. Industry, irrigators, environmentalists and the community came together to achieve a final plan outcome which would ensure a healthy river system and provide for viable and productive industries and river communities into the future. As a result, we achieved a joint commitment from the basin jurisdictions to secure the future sustainability of the River Murray, and the communities that rely on it, through the return of 3,200 gigalitres to the basin.

I was also quite clear that South Australians want to see the basin plan implemented on time and in full, as promised. I requested an early indication of minister Joyce's personal commitment to the full and timely implementation of the basin plan and, in particular, the specific programs related to supply, constraints and efficiency measures. I was very pleased to hear Senator Ruston on radio recently confirming that one of her main priorities up-front is to get really good implementation of the basin plan. I am sure senators Joyce and Ruston, like their predecessors, will be clear in their commitment to delivering the full return of water promised to South Australia under the basin plan.

We have enjoyed, in South Australia, collaborative and constructive relationships with former parliamentary secretaries Birmingham and Baldwin, and I look forward to continuing this important work with the new minister and assistant minister to ensure the Murray-Darling Basin Plan is delivered in full.

### **SPINAL CORD INJURY SERVICE**

**The Hon. K.L. VINCENT (15:12):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the minister representing the Minister for Health questions regarding the relocation of the South Australian Spinal Cord Injury Service to The Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. K.L. VINCENT:** I have had brought to my attention serious concerns about the relocation of the South Australian Spinal Cord Injury Service to The Queen Elizabeth Hospital as part of the Transforming Health program. It is my understanding that it was confirmed last Friday that there will be no gymnasium or physical exercise provisions within the development at TQEH. This, I believe, completely disregards the overwhelming evidence that supports physical exercise as a key component to positive rehab and long-term outcomes for people who have sustained spinal cord injuries.

I also understand that SA Health has initiated a new development process that will ensure that once the plans are signed off they will be handed over to the builder and there will be no recourse for modification once the development starts. It is appreciated, the need to expedite the build, but this adds further weight to the argument that it is imperative that the process is done right the first time around. My questions to the minister are:

1. With the newly announced SA Health development process, is there a high risk of poor outcomes for vulnerable South Australians if this goes ahead as planned?
2. Has the minister's planning for this relocation been compared to the recent redevelopment of the Fiona Stanley Hospital in Perth, where, while state of the art technology is present, I understand the OT area is not completely wheelchair accessible, nor does it have safely

useable ceiling hoists, and where patients have resorted to doing sport and recreation training in the hospital car park?

3. Given the pressures on staff and resourcing at the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre at present, will the minister ensure that extra staffing will be provided once the Spinal Cord Injury Service is relocated to The Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

4. Will the minister assure South Australians with spinal injury, their family, carers and organisations who advocate on their behalf, that appropriate accommodation and family facilities will be included in the relocation?

5. Will the minister acknowledge that a spend of only \$20 million for relocation and upgrade of rehab services seems to pale in comparison with the \$160 million given for the upgrade of the Flinders Medical Centre for rehabilitation?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (15:15):** I thank the honourable member for her most important questions directed to the Minister for Health in the other place on the subject of the relocation of the SA Spinal Cord Injury Service. In relation to her five specific questions about the quality of access, the adequacy of the expenditure for the shift and whether extra staff will be provided, I undertake to take those questions to the minister in another place and seek a response on her behalf.

#### ABORIGINALS BENEFIT ACCOUNT

**The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS (15:15):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation questions about the newest round of Aboriginals Benefit Account funding from the commonwealth.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS:** The commonwealth's Aboriginals Benefit Account is based on royalties earned from mining operations on Aboriginal lands in the Territory. There is currently a South Australian agreement with APY on royalty splitting, as well as trilateral agreements with Western Australia and the Territory on service delivery in the areas of health and policing. My questions to the minister are:

1. Is there any way for APY to benefit from the ABA, given the connection of Anangu to the Territory both geographically and in terms of kinship?

2. Is there any plan to establish a similar fund where royalties have been earned on mining operations on Aboriginal lands?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (15:16):** I thank the honourable member for his questions and his continued interest in these areas. In terms of the commonwealth scheme that applies in the Northern Territory, I am not familiar with that scheme, but if there is a way that it can be of benefit to the APY I will certainly make inquiries to see if there is any possibility, as the honourable member correctly assumes in his question.

As he knows better than most, many on the APY lands have connections right across that tri-border area, from WA, NT and SA. The Pitjantjatjara people live in all those states, so there are many connections across borders. In terms of how the commonwealth scheme to benefit Aboriginal people from mining might benefit APY, I will certainly make inquiries. I wasn't aware that that commonwealth scheme existed in the NT, so I thank the honourable member for bringing that to my attention and I will make inquiries.

In terms of the benefit that mining might provide for Aboriginal communities in South Australia, certainly I know of a number of companies that provide services in the mining and resources sector and now have expanded out into civil areas, based out of both Port Augusta and Whyalla, that are Aboriginal owned and controlled that are having some benefit.

In terms of the split of royalties under the Mining Act and how that intersects with Aboriginal landholding acts, again I will have to look at that. On that part of it, I will bring back an answer as to

how that might benefit particularly the communities that are under acts like Maralinga Tjarutja and APY and also ALT land.

### **AUTOMOTIVE TRANSFORMATION SCHEME**

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:18):** My question is to the Minister for Automotive Transformation and the Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation: can the minister tell the council how the federal government's reshuffle and change of leadership will impact the minister's portfolios of automotive transformation and manufacturing and innovation?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (15:19):** I thank the member for his very important question and his interest in these areas. The reshuffle recently demonstrates how loudly South Australia's voice booms in the corridors of power in Canberra.

We have continued to prosecute cases important to the economic future of South Australia. We have made our views and opinions very well known and I think our message has been heard loud and clear. I would like to welcome the elevation of Christopher Pyne to the portfolios of industry, innovation and science and congratulate him on his appointment.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** I note some interjections, particularly from the Hon. Rob Lucas, but I welcome the elevation. These policy areas that minister Pyne now has responsibility for will significantly influence South Australia's economic future. So, I welcome—

*Members interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The minister has the floor.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** I welcome seeing a South Australian in charge, and I know that he will act in the best interests of South Australia for its workers, entrepreneurs, start-ups, manufacturers and component suppliers. Indeed, as the Hon. Michelle Lensink points out, I hope he keeps his title as South Australia's self-styled 'Mr Fixer' because there are many important policy areas that require close collaboration between the state and the commonwealth government.

**The Hon. D.W. Ridgway:** We have a lot to fix after 13 years of you lot there.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** I note the Hon. David Ridgway continues to interject and, frankly, I think the Hon. David Ridgway would only know all too well how effective Christopher Pyne can be; he has cleaned up the conservative faction in this state good and proper, and I hope he brings the same vigour to his portfolio areas.

*Members interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** The South Australian government has already indicated to minister Pyne, and I should say I have written to him about it, that one of his priorities should be to work with us to open up the federal government's Automotive Transformation Scheme. There is \$900 million sitting in the federal budget that could be expended to enable existing component manufacturing companies (and manufacturing companies, generally) to use the funds to diversify and grow.

Given the collision of the innovation and industry parts of his portfolio responsibilities, the federal government may also consider making the Automotive Transformation Scheme funding available to companies to innovate or to establish start-up ventures in South Australia. We would not ask this federal government to do anything the state government is not willing to do. We are already altering our programs as it becomes clear they need to change to meet the changing needs of industry and workers as the closure of Holden draws closer.

We have changed the Automotive Workers in Transition Program to enable more workers to access it, from needing to be employed in automotive supply chain companies with a minimum automotive revenue exposure of 40 per cent now down to 20 per cent. We have also extended the 12-month support period to a 24-month support period, and we are open to making more changes as are necessary.

There is no doubt that the things we make and the way we make them will be very different in the future from how it has been in the past. This is why I am very pleased to hear positive comments from the new Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, about needing to innovate and do things differently. I think that at this stage, the federal government is now very much on the same page as the South Australian government on these things, and I'm sure that as a fellow South Australian minister Pyne will be working to ensure that South Australia gets our fair share including, for example, that the 12 new subs are built here.

I am looking forward to working with minister Pyne in the very near future and making sure, as Holden winds down, particularly, that manufacturing has a bright future here in South Australia and that our innovators and entrepreneurs have the backing to be as successful as possible. I know that there is great capacity for our state and federal governments to work together to make the best decisions for South Australians, and now is the time to do it. I might also point out that I was very pleased to see the Hon. Nigel Scullion, the Northern Territory senator, retain Indigenous Affairs; he is someone with whom I have worked very closely and will continue to work closely with.

#### **WESTERN MOUNT LOFTY RANGES WATER ALLOCATION PLAN**

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (15:24):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Environment and Climate Change some questions regarding a petition that I received about water levies in the Western Mount Lofty Ranges.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE:** There has been much debate about water levies per se across South Australia, particularly with the increases in water levies and also the fact that both the Eastern and Western Mount Lofty Ranges now have water levies for the first time, as of 1 July 2015. Today I received, and probably other members of parliament received, photocopies of a petition by a lot of people from the Fleurieu Peninsula in particular, and in that petition those petitioners say that they will (1) not be putting water meters on their dams and (2) that they will be refusing to pay the water levies.

My question therefore to the minister is: what action will the minister take if irrigators with new water levies or existing water levies prior to 1 July 2015 decide that they will not put water meters on their dams or bores, or that they will not pay the water levy as per their statement on the petition? What action will the minister take regarding this, or will he listen and reconsider these huge expenses that are now applying to irrigators across the state?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Climate Change) (15:26):** I thank the honourable member for his most important question. There has been, I accept, quite a bit of recent media interest about water levies and licensing in the Mount Lofty Ranges, based, I would say, on some incorrect assumptions. I do not point to any individual in putting that information around, but let me now supply some facts to assist people in this matter.

Water resources in South Australia are, of course, finite and require management and monitoring to ensure they are sustainable into the future. The NRM water levy is a direct contribution to the cost of ensuring the sustainability of those water resources in the region for all users, including industry, farmers and, of course, the environment. I do not believe anyone would disagree that we need to have sustainable management of that most precious resource.

Until the 2015-16 water-use year, water licences within the Western Mount Lofty Ranges prescribed water resources area were exempt from the requirement to pay a water levy. In July 2015, a water allocation levy was introduced and raised for the 2015-16 water-use year for this area. The allocation levy is based on the right to take a volume of water (an allocation) as endorsed on a water licence and is not determined by usage.

The farmers in the Western Mount Lofty Ranges are, of course, very similar to those in other regions who currently do pay water levies. The levies are being paid in the Barossa, McLaren Vale, the Northern Adelaide Plains, the Western Mount Lofty Ranges, the Far North, the Musgrave and Southern basins, the Angas-Bremer, the River Murray, the Mallee, the Peake, Roby and Sherlock, the Marne Saunders, the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges, the Clare Valley, the Lower Limestone Coast,

Padthaway, Tatiara, Tintinara-Coonalpyn, and the Morambro Creek region, and also those now in the Western Mount Lofty Ranges, as the honourable member said in his question, are required to pay the levy also.

Anyone who received an account and is experiencing extreme financial hardship should contact the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources to discuss the possibility of a payment plan. As I said, it now falls due in the westerns that a levy is in place, as it is in all those other areas, where farmers right around the state have been paying the levy, knowing the services that they are paying for. I would be very hesitant as a member of parliament to encourage members of the community to disobey any laws or regulations that are currently in place. I think that would be giving people very, very bad advice.

The levy, of course, supports water planning and management costs across the region, and I think most farmers would understand that, in sharing a valuable resource fairly and equitably across the region, you need to have in place certain things, and these things are: development and implementation and ongoing monitoring of the region's water allocation plans; reducing the impact of leaky wells across the region, for example; working with farmers on the Northern Adelaide Plains on adaptations required as a result of climate change; trialling the use of remote telemetry to monitor groundwater levels, as we do for example in McLaren Vale; working with Dairy SA and farmers to improve management of dairy effluent; and increasing water monitoring to validate the science behind existing water allocation plans.

These are the sorts of things that the levies go towards: direct, important functions that our farming communities rely on for their day-to-day productivity of their farms and whatever it is they are producing. It is important, I think, that honourable members, when we are talking to communities, understand that basic service delivery so that we can tell them what, in fact, those levies are spent on.

I know, for example, some people in the media—again, I won't identify any individuals—have been conflating those water levies for use for other functions that the NRM boards fund through different funding mechanisms. One of those claims was made in this place, indeed, but certainly on the radio, about works being funded at the Patawalonga, and there were allegations that the water levies were being utilised to pay for those works—not correct.

Before that was raised in the public again, I understand that Mr Chris Daniels, the presiding member of the NRM board, sent an email to the office of the member concerned providing the facts and information packs to hand out to attendees at a public meeting. I understand that that information was provided to attendees to ensure that they had the correct information before them.

People are well aware, I think, that the NRM water levy is not used to fund any works related to the Patawalonga now—I haven't heard that allegation recently—so that was a useful dissemination of facts, to let people know that, in fact, sometimes even things that are said on radio can be wrong. Having the facts at hand is a very useful way of informing our community about exactly what levy funding, for example, goes to fund.

As I said, information about development of plans is vitally important, but it also goes to science, knowledge and understanding of a water resource—understanding what is happening underground (which is not easy to see); understanding what happens in terms of seasonality to watercourses; and understanding, of course, what the local environment requires in terms of water. If you take all of the available water out of productive streams for irrigating purposes, you are going to have very negative impacts on that local environment and the ecology of the stream to the detriment of the farmers further downstream when they need to take water out of that resource for their own farming.

So, in fact, applying some equitable processes to the distribution of water resources is vitally important for people down catchment, and that is something that is often overlooked. When some members go on radio to talk about their concerns about these matters, they overlook the fact that not all farmers are created equal in terms of where they are located in the catchment system. Some of them are fully dependent on what happens upstream and, if we do not put in place proper processes to fairly distribute those resources through the environment to the community for

recreational purposes, for example, and also to our irrigator communities, someone is going to miss out.

It is vitally important that honourable members understand that and understand what that funding is for and not go on the radio and to public meetings and put out information that is, shall we say, not as accurate as it otherwise could be.

**The Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins:** You mean flag information?

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER:** Well, Mr President, I understand, in fact, that the Hon. Ms Lensink had a meeting with my departmental staff in my office this month. At that meeting, the department confirmed for her that they will be providing Ms Lensink with a breakdown of all those costs associated with water planning and management.

I really hope that she will use her influence (and it is substantial, I know) with her colleagues, perhaps one or two crossbenchers, and her colleagues in the other place also, to actually advise them that in South Australia these costs include supporting the water management requirements of the Natural Resources Management Act, including water licensing; compliance activities; science to support the development and management of water resources; development, review and amendment of the water allocation plans; and, of course, where necessary, debt recovery.

It is vitally important that members of our community understand where these levies go, what they fund and how they advantage them into the long-term future for sustainable use of that resource and productive industries.

*Personal Explanation*

**WESTERN MOUNT LOFTY RANGES WATER ALLOCATION PLAN**

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (15:33):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE:** Based on the minister's answer, I put on the public record—because of implications for members of parliament and I asked the question—that I have never, ever said to any constituent that they should not pay the water levy. In fact, I have made it very clear to them that at this point in time, under the law of South Australia, they are legally obligated to make the payment and, where they are irrigators, put water meters on their bores and dams.

*Bills*

**APPROPRIATION BILL 2015**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 10 September 2015.)

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:35):** I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill. It is simply not enough to be aware of the challenges facing this state if we do not have a plan to address those issues. The lack of detail in the opposition's economic policy for this state was the main reason they lost the state election. They have only themselves to blame and, from the response to the state government's most recent budget, it seems as though nothing much has changed.

We are all aware of the challenges facing this state as the decline of manufacturing hits its peak with the pending closure of Holden in 2018. The Australian dollar, though now in more manageable territory, had been too high for too long. Our state's manufacturers cannot continue with business models that will fail at the whim of increased export costs due to increases in the valuation of our national currency.

We need to export products that are sought for their value rather than their price, but this is easier said than done. It is this transformation with which the federal government should be assisting us. Amidst the fall in state government revenue, we are obliged to continually fight with the federal government to continue its funding into health and education as well as fulfil its commitment to

horizontal fiscal equalisation. Regardless of which state you live in, Australians should receive the same quality of health and education services.

With the fall in commodity prices, mining states such as Western Australia have learnt the hard way how a state's fiscal position can deteriorate rapidly. The weak fiscal position South Australia finds itself in is more a reflection on the economic adjustment that this state faces in ensuring that new industries replace old industries rather than the so-called reckless spending that the opposition would lead South Australians to believe.

It is interesting that as a percentage of spending to gross state product (GSP), South Australia's rate has been reducing. In the 2013-14 budget it was 16.9 per cent. It is now 16.6 per cent. Western Australia's spending as a percentage of GSP has increased in the same period from 10.3 per cent to 11.7 per cent. To put this into context, for the last couple of years Western Australia has had a much bigger pie to eat from than South Australia. The problem is that Western Australians are beginning to eat a lot more of theirs.

South Australia's net debt as a percentage of GSP sits at 4 per cent. In the most recent budget, Western Australia's has grown from 4 per cent to almost 6.5 per cent. To continue the analogy, they have been borrowing a lot more pie than we have. Their state is now projected to have an operating deficit of \$2.7 billion and their state debt is \$30 billion. Without being blessed with the natural advantages of Western Australia, South Australia has had to live much more within its means and be a lot smarter in how it spends taxpayers' money.

My question is this: is it fair that a government blessed with rivers of gold, wastes them, and then calls for a so-called 'fairer' distribution of GST, showing complete contempt for the value of horizontal fiscal equalisation? It has been that very activity in Western Australia's mining industry that has led to the high interest rates and high national currency which has plagued South Australia's traditional export industries, particularly manufacturing. This has hurt our GSP.

It is at this stage of my contribution that I will assume the opposition understands these fairly basic economic outcomes that I am talking about. Spending is not South Australia's major problem: instead, the state government needs to grow its pie, figuratively speaking. Leading up to the last election the basic Liberal Party line was that waste needed to stop, but there has been no amount of savings produced by the opposition to demonstrate that it could do this without cutting Public Service jobs or services to the community.

I do not pretend that there are not bureaucratic savings that can be found in government without hitting front-line services, but the opposition leader, Mr Marshall, cannot get away with saying that the state's economic problems will be cured simply by trimming the bureaucracy and that then there will be enough money to spend on other government services whilst having no debt and the continuation of surpluses. That is fantasy land, and I honestly believe members opposite would privately acknowledge that as well. The main game is that we need to grow South Australia's pie rather than fight about the distribution of the pie we have at this moment.

If we come to an agreement that this is the primary challenge facing our state, then it is important to reveal what plans the two major political parties in this state have to reach that goal. My belief is that the Liberal Party has confused what conventional responses need to be in responding to the economic challenges South Australia is facing in its current economic cycle. In contrast, there has been a clear philosophy behind the Weatherill government.

In the 2013-14 budget and the economic period leading up to the budget, there was serious concern at the very low level of growth in our state's economy. This, of course, was being fuelled by the peak in mining exports in Western Australia, which was fuelling the high Australian dollar. As private investment boomed in the mining states and flatlined here in South Australia, Premier Weatherill, under the banner of Building a Stronger South Australia, embarked on an aggressive government infrastructure spend.

As we know, many projects have been built under this government, the short-term gain being that people were kept in jobs, particularly in the construction industry, and the long-term gain obviously being the productivity benefits that will flow from that investment. This government never pretended that it could permanently spend its way to prosperity; this was a temporary measure, with the knowledge that the state's fiscal capacity had been seriously drained. At the time, the opposition

leader labelled the government's infrastructure spending as a false economy; now, in response to the government's 2015-16 budget, he has called for more infrastructure spending. Does the opposition not see the contradiction in these remarks?

The opposition dismisses the fact that, historically speaking, this government, in its 2015-16 budget, is still spending record amounts on infrastructure. The Weatherill government is investing \$10.8 billion over the forward estimates. It is true that there is a minor decrease in the level of infrastructure spending in this year's budget; however, this is only because it has fallen from historically high levels.

The Weatherill government has also facilitated a tax reform package announced in this year's budget. The tax reform package announced is the most ambitious in the state's history: \$670 million returned to businesses and their families. From 1 July 2016, the stamp duty on non-residential real property transfers will be reduced by a third, with a further third reduction of stamp duty on non-residential real property transfers by 1 July 2017, and completely removed by 1 July 2018.

*The Hon. D.W. Ridgway interjecting:*

**The Hon. T.T. NGO:** I will get to that point a bit later. By 1 July 2018, this government will abolish stamp duty on non-residential real property transfers, abolish stamp duty on transfer of units in unit trusts, and abolish stamp duty on transfers of mining licences and tenements.

In addition, the government plans to: (1) abolish share duty; (2) abolish stamp duty on non-real property transfers, including non-fixed plant and equipment; (3) expand the stamp duty concession for exploration tenements, including retention tenements; and (4) expand the eligibility criteria for corporate reconstruction relief.

The opposition leader has called for all these tax measures that abolish stamp duties from a number of transactions to be brought forward, as outlined by the Hon. Mr Ridgway. Does he truly expect South Australians to believe that, if the government continues with its record level of infrastructure spending and also brings forward all elements of this tax reform package, and then implements payroll tax cuts which he has been advocating for, then somehow he will deliver surpluses while reducing state debt?

Mr Marshall and the state opposition have continuously railed against increasing debt and deficits. As I said earlier, any level of Public Service spending that potentially could be saved under a future Marshall government would be dwarfed by the amount of expenditure he is effectively advocating here. Does Mr Marshall plan to cut front-line services by advocating for a smaller Public Service rather than better government? The Liberal Party's contradictory statements on the economy are because they know that their real plans will not be tolerated by the South Australian community.

In stark contrast, the Weatherill government has been transparent about its economic plan for the state. As I said earlier, before the 2013-14 budget it was about fuelling growth through public expenditure in infrastructure. In the 2014-15 budget, it was about, and continues to be about, fighting federal government cuts, as well as the discussion around ripping the GST money from South Australia. This is in complete contempt of the historical workings of Australia's federation.

In this year's budget, the Weatherill government believes that now is the right time in the state's economy cycle to implement a \$670 million tax reform package that gives the entrepreneurs of this state the levers in their own hands—the levers that will create jobs, maintain jobs and reward vision. The lower Australian dollar will help and, with the diversion of private investment from the mining states, it is time those dollars came into South Australia. This is why the government has specifically targeted certain taxes for abolition in this budget: stamp duty, the transactional taxes, which directly affect economic activity. The message from this government is that if a business wants to move headquarters or wants to invest in equipment, then it will not be penalised for doing so.

This tax reform package aims to encourage the private investment South Australia needs so that we can see growth in our state's GSP. These tax cuts aim to encourage the growth of new industries or, just as importantly, new players in existing industries. These tax reforms have reaped praise from the likes of Bank SA's chief economist, who in July, in *The Advertiser*, commended the budget and its reduction in business taxes.

The Property Council of South Australia welcomed the government's abolition of stamp duties on commercial conveyancers, calling the reforms 'a bright green light for investment'. Its executive director, Daniel Gannon, who many of you here know not long ago was the opposition leader's chief media adviser, told the ABC:

The Property Council of Australia has fought long and hard to put stamp duty abolition on the table. Today we have seen the State Government heed that call.

Meanwhile—

**The Hon. D.W. Ridgway:** He was a spin doctor, remember.

**The Hon. T.T. NGO:** He was. Meanwhile, on Sky News recently, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive, Kate Carnell, urged other states to follow South Australia's lead and cut business taxes to spark economic growth and create jobs. Ms Carnell commented:

We applaud the Government for having the foresight to take this bold initiative to invest in growth. Other states should consider following South Australia's lead and free up their own economies.

Primary Producers SA chair, Rob Kerin—of course a former boss of you guys, a former Liberal Premier of South Australia—

**The Hon. T.J. Stephens:** And a longtime West Adelaide supporter.

**The Hon. T.T. NGO:** —and longtime West Adelaide supporter—and they will be in the grand final this week—has welcomed the move to abolish transactional taxes for businesses by 2018. This particular initiative means that when farmers transfer non-residential property to family members stamp duty will not be payable. Mr Kerin noted:

To take that tax off the farming industry is really good news. Some of it is more immediate with the family transfers.

To have no stamp duty on the sale of farm land by 2018 is a good boost and I think that's good news for the sector.

It's been a huge barrier. In a lot of cases it's had some pretty severe impacts. It will certainly help with succession planning.

It seems pretty clear to me that a wide variety of business representatives see the tax reforms embedded in the state budget as necessary and timely reforms, particularly given the economic climate in which we presently find ourselves. Mr Marshall's only response to this government tax package is that it should be brought forward.

The Weatherill government has continued its small business payroll tax rebate for another year. Small business owners with payrolls equal to or less than \$1.2 million will continue to receive this rebate. This will mean an up-front payment of up to \$10,000 in this coming financial year for many of those small business owners. This is effectively a halving of the payroll tax rates. Mr Marshall has constantly argued that we are the highest taxing state in this country, and he has particularly advocated for a more permanent reduction in the state's payroll tax.

The Weatherill government has prioritised certain tax cuts over others because it is being fiscally responsible. The government believes that removing stamp duties will have a positive impact on commercial activity in the state. It should help grow the state's economic pie. This is the reason behind the Weatherill government's tax reforms, not because we believe South Australia is the state with the highest cost of doing business. This claim that the opposition continues to make is simply not borne in any fact.

With regard to payroll tax, we have seen it reduce from 6 per cent at the end of the 1990s to 5.5 per cent during the middle of the last decade, and now it is at only 4.95 per cent. That is a Labor achievement that business benefits from. Only Victoria (4.9 per cent) and Queensland (4.75 per cent) have lower payroll tax rates. Since 2000, the threshold for paying payroll tax has increased from \$456,000 to \$600,000, meaning that the majority of small businesses that have wages under the threshold are exempt from paying this tax.

Small business plays a vital part in driving the South Australian economy, and I am told—this is a very important fact—that only 10 per cent of businesses actually pay payroll tax in South Australia. If Mr Marshall wants to progress with our tax cuts to business, as well as hundreds of millions of dollars in payroll tax cuts, then where will he find the money in the budget? If the Liberals want to take government in this state at the next state election they will need to be a lot more transparent on their economic plans for this state than they are now. I commend the Appropriation Bill to the council.

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Leader of the Opposition) (15:56):** I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2015, and perhaps in my contribution I will also respond to a couple of the points made by the Hon. Tung Ngo. I thought I would have a slightly different approach to my Appropriation Bill speech and have a look at some of the historical facts that have got us to this disastrous point today.

When the Premier delivered his first budget as treasurer a couple of years ago, he spoke of the sense of purpose, self-respect and security that well-paid employment brings. By that measure, South Australia's psyche is at an all-time low. Given that speech around 27 months ago, he said that South Australia's outlook was strong, and as mining wound down in other states, we would increasingly be seen as 'the next mining and energy frontier', and he was 'committed to the manufacturing remaining as a cornerstone' of our economy.

I believe in getting a fair go, like most South Australians. Indeed, every government and premier deserves one, but Labor has had four of them: four chances to prove that they can both create and execute a plan, not only to capitalise on good economic times, but to mitigate the bad ones. We have seen the state strategic plan, the 100,000 jobs commitment, the 30-Year Plan, the seven strategic priorities, and then the 10 economic ones.

There is talk of a plan to overhaul democracy itself. There is not time for another plan, especially one which targets record jobs and employment and 12 years on delivers the opposite; especially one which banks on our being the mining frontier and maintaining manufacturing as an economic cornerstone, only to see both industries grind to a halt two years later. This government has had a fair go and a chance to deliver, and now it is time for change.

If we look back some 13 or so years, it is no lie that winning elections has a lot to do with public perception. I think it is fair to say that, in the early terms of the government, perhaps voters had opted for change, and because their trust was still relatively intact they were less inclined to thoroughly check a government against its promises. Premier Rann knew this, he capitalised on it and it became entrenched in Labor's philosophy: promise the world and deliver an atlas. In contrast, previous Liberal governments had tidied up budgetary disaster. Those budgets were not exciting, they were not sexy, and nor did we attempt to market them so, but they were necessary and prudent and, ultimately, they delivered a clean financial slate for this Labor government.

In his inaugural speech, premier Rann spruiked a charter of budget honesty but quickly lost control of the public sector employees and efficiency in government service even somewhat successfully covering his tracks by changing what a measure of a budget surplus actually was. He relied on the fact that most voters would not look at the budget in forensic detail, and he honed his skill in manipulating the public perception. Even the media gave his budget a relatively benign treatment, and that legacy has clearly carried on, with the recent ABS stats showing that for the past five years Labor's forecast of our economic performance, the state's final demand has been overestimated. That is the key measure of economic growth and it means that Labor is even less prepared than we thought it was.

Premier Rann rode on the back of deals brokered by previous Liberal governments to achieve an AAA credit rating. He also relied on the fact that serious symptoms of poor government and in particular economic mismanagement would only manifest themselves years later. I take this opportunity to remind people of a 2002 key Labor election commitment which was to hold a drug summit. Despite his supposed tough on drugs stance he waited three years from the summit to progress any of the recommendations.

Sadly, 14 years on we are on the cusp of one of the worst drug epidemics in the nation's history. In South Australia, drug lab detections have more than tripled in nine years, alongside

increased seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants and cannabis in the last 12 months. SAPOL has said that between August 2014 and February 2015 police have received almost seven kilograms of methamphetamine, arrested more than 270 people and uncovered 30 drug labs. This is bad news for our health, bad news for our economy and a metaphor for every other broken promise that Labor has made since.

Incidentally, there are some very disturbing facts that this year 2 per cent of the nation's population will try ice, and the recent stats show that 2.2 per cent of our population will try ice. We know that there are some significant impacts on the community if people become addicted to this material. I think it is just an example of a commitment that was made by a premier for the entire time that I have been in this parliament and yet, 13½ years later, we are in a worse situation than we were then. After nearly every commitment that Labor has made over the last 13 years to fix the job and fix the economy we are actually in a worse situation today than we were when we started.

I recall that there was the statewide distribution of premier Rann's famous pledge card. I still have a copy of it pinned up on my pin-up board, as if the current state of our economy is not a reminder enough of where he and his successors have failed us. One of the cornerstones was no more privatisation, a commitment which he reiterated in the 2006 election, yet in the last few years we have seen the privatisation of forestry, the lotteries, the South Australian Visitor Information Centre and travel centre, and the process is underway with the Motor Accident Commission. There was even some talk of privatising some SA Water assets, and I know the government has had some economic modelling done on it. It is one thing to commit to not selling off public assets and another to maintain that commitment through tough economic times because you have budgeted accordingly.

Crucial to premier Rann's illusion that he was actually doing something was the State's Strategic Plan of 2004. There began arguably a very effective strategy of distraction. This was drawing the voters' attention to long-term aspirational targets and away from any immediate failures. What has ensued in the decade is increasingly fanciful intangible goals designed purely to quash the preceding ones which remain undelivered.

Premier Rann promised that his grand plan would deliver state unemployment below the national average within five years; 11 years on, sadly, our unemployment is at 8 per cent which is 1.6 per cent above the national average of any of the states or territories in Australia. That is, again, another example of a promise made when Labor formed government some 13 years ago of where we would be, and that is below the national average, but now we lead the nation in an indicator of our economic failures.

He also promised that he would shirk the projected population decline but failed to effectively plan for an economy that would support any population growth. Eleven years on we are experiencing an exodus of skilled and experienced and qualified young people because there are no jobs. Meanwhile, our ageing population means that our existing bank of valuable and skilled experience has quickly been depleted at the other end. The government is cutting funding to a crucial workforce of skilled and young people.

Premier Rann promised that he would reduce the net loss of people from the state to zero by 2008 and that we would see a positive inflow by 2009. However, if we look at the facts, from 2003 to 2014 we were one of the only two states consistently recording a net loss—a net loss—yet this is a premier in a Labor government. Again, I am just demonstrating where they have continued to fail, where they said they would reduce the net loss of people from the state to zero by 2008. Sadly, we are losing people at about 3,500 per year.

If you look at the time line of job losses in South Australia over the past decade, which I will come to later, it is no great surprise that we are losing people in droves. Of course, it is not all to do with unemployment, but it is an essential measure of people's overall satisfaction with the state and what it is offering them in an employment and a lifestyle sense. Premier Rann targeted trebling our export income by 2013: the goal was \$25 billion. Two years on from that deadline—we are now 2015—our merchandise export market is worth less than 50 per cent of the \$25 billion: it is \$11.36 billion.

With more international trade opportunities than we have ever had in this state, this Labor government is poorly positioned even to capitalise upon them. It is interesting to note that the federal

leader, the Hon. Bill Shorten, wants to oppose the free trade agreement with China. While Premier Weatherill and his colleague, Daniel Andrews in Victoria, might argue against the federal opposition leader, he is the boss, he calls the shots, and if that is the path they go down and happen to form government in the future then we can look to an even bleaker future for our poor state, South Australia.

In Labor's second term, the magnitude of their financial mismanagement was becoming increasingly apparent. By 2007, South Australia was forecast to have the worst economic growth of all mainland states, and this was presenting in housing affordability and job losses, amongst many other indicators. Treasurer Foley's increases in stamp duty were blocking prospective first-time home buyers and, with the announcement that Holden would downsize, it became clear that Labor had injected millions of taxpayers' dollars without negotiating the retention of a single one of the 600 jobs.

As Mitsubishi followed suit, with a closure costing some 930 jobs, it became clear that Labor had completely failed to protect South Australia's economy and had absolutely no plan to transform this state from its existing reliance on the manufacturing sector. This was happening six years ago, but it is only now that they are saying, 'We have to have a plan to transition our economy.' The indicators were well there. The Labor Party in this state has union members entrenched in it, and people I knew in the union movement were telling us this was going to happen.

Five, six or seven years ago, they were saying that it was on the cards, yet they have done nothing to prepare this state, to protect jobs in this state. All they have done is attack the federal government because they did nothing themselves. Instead, when this all happened, the premier, Mr Rann at the time, focused on PR damage control, spending about \$25 million a term on spin doctors, and by 2009 Labor was spending some \$40 million per annum on spin doctors. In reality, much of Labor's second term was spent minimising the fallout from growing negative attention on the premier and treasurer's personal lives.

Labor was hungry for a third term, and they rightly knew this time that public perception would not be so easily swayed. They certainly could not base their campaign on results—there had been none for the preceding eight years. The key would be obstructing the public's attention. Something far more grandiose was needed, so Labor's approach was to unveil a plan with enough shock factor to momentarily disrupt the growing negative sentiment: it was the announcement that Labor would create 100,000 jobs by 2016 in industries like mining and manufacturing. The only catch was that they would need two more terms to do it.

At this time, Labor also released its 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide. Its centrepieces were improved community engagement and revitalising the CBD with an extra 11,000 CBD dwellers. The city is certainly vibrant, but perhaps not in the way premier Rann envisaged. I recall reading in David Penberthy's column, 'You can feel the buzz in the streets, a hustle and bustle as people make their way from their former employer to a job placement agency, maybe even to a real estate agent as they ponder a new life interstate.'

As for public engagement, the 30-year plan itself was the most heavily criticised Labor plan ever in terms of transparency and how it was developed. Five years on, voters are so disenchanted with Labor's public engagement farce that Premier Weatherill is appealing to them through a fluff and nonsense campaign, called the 'Innovative public participation opportunities and participatory budgeting', which I will revisit later in my contribution. In any case, the strategy to deliver on the promises made in 2010 were irrelevant to premier Rann. Labor won its third term on tactics, not on popularity and certainly not on trust. Rann's parting promise of 100,000 jobs is the most stark example we have of Labor riding a 13-year tide of empty promises.

I now turn to the last four years with Premier Weatherill; from early in his premiership, it was clear that Mr Weatherill had no economic solution either. He maintained that South Australia was on the cusp of a mining boom and that manufacturing had a bright future. He banked on unprecedented wealth and economic opportunity well into the next century on the back of the Roxby Downs expansion. He said that enterprises would spring up from the expansion that had not even yet been imagined. I was reminded of his optimism when reading David Penberthy's piece a few weeks back:

Adelaide is rising phoenix-like from the ashes of the old economy to lead the world in industries which are just around the corner and will make themselves apparent soon. Our unemployment rate is the envy of many nations. They include Spain, Uganda, and at least two of the Baltic states.

I do not begrudge this government its efforts to try to foster BHP's expansion, but I take issue with Weatherill's claim that its focus has always been the diversification of the economy. Transforming the Economy, he labelled it, as it became a common theme coinciding with Holden's 2013 announcement that it would cease manufacturing in Australia.

My question is: where is there any evidence that South Australia has been transformed from an old-world manufacturer to a digital age economy? Where is there any evidence that the government is injecting additional efforts into new sectors that we still rely on? I turn to one I am the shadow minister for, that is, agriculture.

All this time the Labor government has had their premium food and wine from a clean environment initiative, and now of course we see them constantly talking about the opportunities for food, although their federal colleague, the opposition leader, does not want to sign the China free trade agreement. If you look at the budget, over the last seven years—and this is the PIRSA budget, the total amount for agriculture, food and fisheries—it has gone from \$113 million in a steady decline and reached a low point of \$59.8 million, so only about 40 per cent of the budget. In 2009-10, it was \$113.5 million; in 2014-15, \$59.8 million; and there has been a slight increase this year to \$67.9 million.

So, all the time that they have been talking about the premium food and wine sector, and the Leader of the Government opposite me was minister for a time, they were talking it up but every year they put fewer and fewer and fewer resources behind it. Again, it was almost a hollow promise—they would talk the talk but would not back it up with the financial resources to make it work.

In 2013, Premier Weatherill released the seven strategic priorities. He targeted growing advanced manufacturing as a way for the future. To the Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, and Automotive Transformation: the northern Adelaide unemployment rate is now over 9 per cent. He sits in this chamber and it is a figure that I think he should be ashamed of.

In the first two years of the Our Jobs Plan, the government spent only \$14.9 million of the \$22 million budgeted, and 33 per cent of northern Adelaide businesses were reported at risk of closure as a result of the automotive industry shutdown. It said that Labor would realise the benefits from the long-term mining boom shortly after they announced all the extra mining jobs. They have since clarified that those jobs were estimated based on former commodity prices.

You have to question the thinking of a premier who announces that there will be an additional 5,000 mining industry jobs in the 12 months leading up to the announcement that commodity prices crashed by 25 per cent and mining jobs reduced by 22 per cent. It is a continued strategy of distracting the public from the reality of poor government, poor planning and poor decisions. The reality is that 5,300 mining jobs have been lost since the Premier made that commitment last November.

Only now, with BHP announcing its job cuts, does the Premier admit that his target is unattainable. With successive plans and targets, each more fanciful than the last, the Premier has painted himself into a corner and there is little more he can do but divert attention away from a fast-approaching and epic train wreck.

The seven strategic priorities aimed at creating a vibrant city that energises and excites is a recurring theme in Labor's plans. *The Advertiser* reported in July that there was a net loss of people from South Australia and it continues at about 3,000 per annum, and that South Australia shed 13,000 jobs in the mining and manufacturing sector in the 12 months to May this year. It is reinforcing that the ageing population is creating a worrying brain-drain. What is bewildering, though, is that, despite our high unemployment, areas like agriculture and horticulture are significantly affected by long-term vacancies.

On that note, I turn to our Minister for Higher Education, who has been pivotal in reinforcing that trend. Her management of the skills and training portfolio has been nothing short of pathetic, with cuts to regional-based training just highlighting that this Labor government has no concern for

upskilling and growing one of the sectors that has the capacity to save our economic ruin. What is the Minister for the Status of Women doing to get more women better opportunities in the workforce?

At the same time as announcing the 100,000 jobs targets, premier Rann said there would be an extra 50,000 training places for women over the past five years. How has that target gone? The unprecedented unemployment rate in South Australia has been driven by a rise in women's unemployment, which skipped up to 7.5 per cent from 6.9 per cent in April and now is the highest rate since May 2000.

The other strategic priority was to keep our quality of life affordable for everyone. Last financial year, 35,000 South Australians were referred to the state government's debt recovery unit for being late to pay the emergency services levy. Property rates and charges, including the ESL, have increased by 17 per cent in the last year and the average household water bill has grown by 241 per cent since 2002.

In August last year, the Premier thought it was time for a few more initiatives to fail the public on. He was running out of ideas, so he boosted the seven priorities to 10 priorities. Paraphrasing Tom Richardson, Weatherill was dismissive about the striking similarity to the seven priorities, saying the previous ones that I have mentioned above were about broader things not actually connected to the economy, like growing manufacturing and affordable living. Only a premier who thinks those issues are divorced from the economy is capable of such ineffective leadership.

If I have not yet succeeded in painting a picture of why it is time for actual change rather than to just talk, let me point out that, around the time of the announcement of the 10 economic priorities, the Economic Development Board was also releasing the Shaping the Future of South Australia program. The first of its 10 actions for the state government was to develop a clear, concise, meaningful vision for South Australia that can be understood, believed and followed.

Thirteen years after taking office, the Labor government is not even at the beginning of an action plan: they are just beginning to think about making one. We have had enough plans, and we have failed them all. It is clear that this government is desperate: they are out of ideas and the distractions are not working any more. Five years on from the 100,000 jobs commitment, they have delivered a so-called jobs budget which only commits to a 1 per cent jobs growth.

The federal government department for employment has provided a five-year forecast that South Australia will have the lowest jobs growth of all states and territories. It is interesting that New South Wales will have an extra 350,000 jobs between now and 2019—the federal Department of Employment has released these figures—the Victorian economy will have 300,000, Queensland will have 250,000 but South Australia will have less than 55,000.

I think we were all baffled a few weeks ago with the unveiling of Premier Weatherill's democracy manifesto. He said that the old days of announce and defend decision-making were over and that a new era of genuinely engaging people in debate and decide had arrived. What he meant was they have actually sold off everything that was nailed to the ground, there is not much left to announce, so all they have left is to flog government itself. The 24-page document speaking of foresight, fresh thinking, challenges, catalysing action, collaborative economic pilots and a festival of innovation and democracy, did not have the one word in it that every reader was looking for—jobs.

Recently, we have seen other examples that voters are not buying the distractions any more. Premier Weatherill was using the time zone debate as a diversion from important economic issues. Overwhelmingly, South Australians are not interested in that discussion, and the Premier's attempt at leadership is proving less effective, as his time zone proposal was scrapped only a few weeks ago.

If the Hon. Kyam Maher's new best friend, Hon. Martin Hamilton-Smith, the Minister for Trade and the Minister for Defence Industries, had ever listened when he had been a member of the Liberal Party party room, he would have known that this is not an issue that the broader community was ever interested in. But, sadly, listening was not one of his strong points when he was a member of the Liberal Party, and I suspect the Labor cabinet will find that out for themselves as time progresses. But I am distracted.

This government has had four chances in 13 years. It continues to blame external economic pressures under which every other state seems to be thriving or at least doing a fair bit better than us. In fact, if premier Rann and Premier Weatherill and their Labor team had fulfilled every promise made since 2002, South Australia would be protected and our economy would be safe.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. For 13 years this Labor government has continued to make promises that it has continually failed to deliver, and we have had the same result every time. Just as a little summary, we have a drugs epidemic with ice. It is a tragedy affecting thousands and thousands of families. We have more young people these days leaving the state than ever before.

In fact, I have met young families with young children who are thinking of leaving the state because there is no future here. We have the highest debt this state has ever seen. We have the highest unemployment rate this state has ever seen. We have the lowest business confidence in the nation and, of course, ours is the highest cost jurisdiction in the nation, and our standard of living is declining with increasing pressures from water, electricity and emergency services.

The Hon. Tung Ngo said in his contribution that the Weatherill government had an economic plan. Well, I have just covered the last 13 years of plans and it is plain to see that the government has failed on every one of those. If this state does not change its game plan, if we do not give another government a chance, then this insanity will just continue.

**The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS (16:21):** I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2015, more commonly known as the budget that the Treasurer handed down on 18 June in another place with much fanfare and self-praise. The Treasurer talked a lot about the government's so-called tax reform, saying that it will create jobs. A tax reform cannot create jobs: business creates jobs and should be assisted in doing so by government. This is one thing Labor does not understand.

The references the Treasurer made to the commonwealth failing to invest in our automotive industry suggests a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of government and a lack of wise management of public finances. The declaration that a few exemptions and a tinkering around the edges of Labor's business tax regime is the most comprehensive tax reform in this state's history is typical hyperbole and hubris from this Treasurer. To go on to say that the reform 'will build the enterprises that create careers' is simply embarrassing. How can levying taxes build an enterprise? Don't entrepreneurs build enterprises?

The Treasurer goes on further to say that the government's tax reform stands our state out as a beacon for business investment. The bill has not even passed yet. The language is bizarre to say the least, but we would expect no less from this Treasurer. That result remains to be seen, and we will see whether this so-called tax reform makes any impact on our economy.

I am perhaps being a touch unfair because any reduction in taxes is a move in the right direction, but I am here to say that the changes do not go far enough. Like the Treasurer, I would also like to see an efficient tax system; however, it seems that he is out of ideas on efficiency and ours are vastly different. I would like to see regressive business taxes such as payroll tax completely abolished.

I would also like to see arbitrary taxes such as stamp duty completely abolished. These are manifestly harmful taxes on productivity and on aspirational economic activity. Where is the incentive to invest when the Labor government slugs you for taking a risk and parting with your hard earned cash? This is why I am extremely disappointed with the limitation on the government stamp duty exemptions solely to business transactions—but what about mums and dads?

At a time when housing prices are at the highest they have ever been, why are we punishing working people further for doing the right thing by their family and purchasing or building a new home? The South Australian housing market and building industry is completely stagnant. Why are we not encouraging working South Australians and spurring on the economy in this way?

The Treasurer and his friends who sit opposite may ask, 'Well, how do we afford it?' The answer is in the spending. We have seen insane increases in public sector spending, partly on wages but largely in unbudgeted spending, and budget blowouts on capital works projects. We learnt last

week that the new Royal Adelaide Hospital has been further delayed by six months, costing the government a further \$34.5 million on top of the \$622 million blowout of the original budgeted figure.

I agree with the Treasurer when he says that South Australia faces serious challenges. However, if the state's economic conditions are in the control of the government, the impact of currency exchange rates, commodity prices and commonwealth funding would be far less than what they have been. The government and the Treasurer have been far too quick to point the finger elsewhere for South Australia's economic woes when the blame lies squarely on the Labor Party.

The economic mismanagement is plain to see in an example in the Treasurer's speech, when he refers to a surplus being delivered in next year's budget. How is this possible? We have just heard that the cost of the new hospital has blown out, we know that there has been no dramatic reduction in Public Service numbers, there has been increasing capital spending, and public debt is at the highest it has ever been.

The answer is fudged accounting. If the numbers are moved around it is easy to invent an operating surplus, but the reality is that any surplus is servicing mounds of debt anyway, so there are no net benefits whatsoever to the South Australian taxpayer—which, in this state, is largely business and entrepreneurs, the very people government is meant to be assisting in this budget. The lack of credibility is palpable.

Further regarding the government's proposals, it is interesting to see the Liberal Party's election commitment to abolish the Save the River Murray levy being adopted by the Treasurer. We commend him for that. As I mentioned earlier in this contribution, we on this side welcome all the reductions and exemptions from the burden of taxation for South Australians, but more can and should be done.

The Treasurer talked about no tolls being an achievement for the Weatherill government. Is this an achievement or is it just short-sighted politics? I find it quite bizarre that the government would not seek to recover some of the capital outlay for massive infrastructure spends on the north-south corridor and port access when the logistics industry itself has said it is happy to pay for better infrastructure so long as it is built immediately. It seems a no-brainer. This is a win-win, as a toll would not affect passenger traffic.

As the Treasurer mentioned, the opposition has worked with the government to implement real reform in the area of WorkCover, and I commend the Hon. Mr Lucas for his work on the bill. I agree with the Treasurer when he said that we can no longer rely on the commonwealth or others to sustain our industries, whether they be automotive or otherwise; in fact, we never should have in the first place. Inevitably, subsidies will run out, and the old business model will become unsustainable. Government subsidies create complacency in the industry.

There is no doubt that government, whether state or commonwealth, should be supporting local manufacturers and producers wherever possible, and I would be the first to support a directive to preference purchasing of local goods and services for government contracts and needs. However, crude subsidies are simplistic and ultimately harmful to the economic prosperity of the businesses immediately affected and also the wider community.

It is for this reason that I find it concerning the government is spending \$15 million on the attraction of new business and the development of key industries. How about reducing the tax burden by a further \$15 million? The government should be concerned only with the economic environment and not with individual businesses. If the economic environment in South Australia is so attractive for business already, why are there not hundreds of head offices of national and international companies here? Why would the government have to spend money on targeted assistance in order to attract those companies here?

In today's global market, where companies can choose to base their head offices in jurisdictions which offer the best tax arrangements and lowest business costs yet continue to operate globally, why are we bothering with this? It is quite pathetic. It is akin to paying the kid next door to play with your son or daughter even though you know you do not have the best toys. Eventually the kid from next door will get bored; similarly, those interstate and international companies will find a better deal elsewhere once the money dries up. It is a very short-sighted economic policy. To me,

this sort of policy only serves certain ministers, such as the Hon. Martin Hamilton-Smith and the Hon. Mr Bignell, allowing them to go on junkets under the guise of attracting foreign investment.

I welcome the increase to the government's bid fund. This is something within the purview of the government and something that is important for the state's reputation on the world stage. I would like to see more international events being hosted here in Adelaide; however, I do not believe that the Minister for Recreation and Sport's Frankfurt stopover or his \$100 bottle of Argentinian malbec got us any closer to this goal.

According to the Treasurer, the government does not believe infrastructure investment is a false economy, as it leverages private sector spending. However, if the government is using public funded infrastructure projects as an example of job creation that is, indeed, misleading. These are not long-term jobs and, quite obviously, if a vast majority of construction in this state is as a result of public funding, this is artificially propping up the industry. Essentially it is a life support system. Public-funded infrastructure spending is absolutely necessary, but should be kept within strict guidelines on a needs basis. Cost-benefit analyses are a must.

This leads us to the commitment by this government of \$1.3 billion to 'create jobs'. We understand, on this side, that it is indeed the private sector that creates real, sustainable long-term jobs. Over the forward estimates the government has committed \$3.3 billion in health, which includes the new Royal Adelaide Hospital (although one wonders if it includes the blowout as well), \$1.4 billion on road projects, \$353 million on public transport, and \$1.7 billion on water infrastructure.

What is obvious is that, if public money was spent more wisely and efficiently, and if efforts were made in cost recovery, such as with selective tolls on roads to assist the industry in adhering to the findings of cost-benefit analysis, particularly with large projects such as the desalination plant, the state and its taxpayers will get much more bang for their buck. There is far too much wastage when it comes to public spending. As a bookend, if there is so much of an increase in spending for health, why can the Repat not be kept open, given the savings from the closure are reportedly only \$14.2 million. To me it is totally mean-spirited.

Finally, I criticise the government for spruiking its supposed increase in spending for justice of \$85.1 million, while simultaneously closing suburban and regional magistrates courts, putting even more pressure on the Adelaide Magistrates Court, which is quite obviously counterproductive. To summarise, there are some steps in the right direction, but they are nowhere near far enough to have the economic jolt that South Australia desperately needs. However, as is convention, I commend the bill to the council.

**The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS (16:31):** I rise in support of the passage of this bill, and in doing so I recognise its importance in providing \$12.037 billion to the various programs incorporated in the 2015-16 budget of government. It is my intention to focus on the particular area of suicide prevention, a field in which I have long worked, as it relates to the priorities of the government and the manner in which public servants carry out those wishes.

From 26 to 29 July this year a member of my staff and I attended the National Suicide Prevention Conference conducted by Suicide Prevention Australia in Hobart. This event was attended by 400 people from across the country in both the private and public sectors, from NGOs and, of course, many volunteer members of local community suicide prevention organisations.

This gathering of incredibly passionate people allowed for experiences to be shared and also for me particularly to see the good work that other governments and groups in the sector are doing in the field of suicide prevention right across a range of jurisdictions. It was quite startling, albeit positively, to hear the level of funding and commitment that other state governments have made to the area of suicide prevention across Australia.

For example, in Victoria the Andrews Labor government is spending \$5.9 million on programs promoting suicide prevention in the LGBTIQ community. This is a continuation of the hard work that has already been done in that area by the coalition government in Victoria. Prior to the last Victorian state election I had met with the then minister for mental health, now the Leader of the Opposition in the upper house, the Hon. Mary Wooldridge MLC, and we had discussed the efforts that the then government was making to reduce the rate of suicide in the Victorian community, particularly in the LGBTIQ sector.

I remember meeting with a young lady from an area (I will not say a peri-urban area) bounding with outer Melbourne, and she was doing great work across a range of communities with young gay people who were at great risk of self-harm and suicide. I was most impressed with the work that that young lady was doing. I gather from the ongoing commitment of the Andrews government that that work is continuing in Victoria.

It was interesting to learn at the conference of the comparison of work that other governments are doing in this area. Another example was that New South Wales has tackled the issue of suicide prevention through its Mental Health Commission, which is funded to the tune of \$10 million by the current Baird coalition government.

At the conference, it was interesting that the Deputy Mental Health Commissioner presented attendees with a brief snapshot of the work that they are already engaged in and the worthwhile opportunities that they continue to pursue in the suicide prevention area. It was particularly pleasing to see the proactive approach to preventing the unnecessary deaths caused by suicide but also training people on the front line—government employees on the front line—to deal with the impacts, the pressures and the trauma caused by suicide and attempted suicide.

In particular, I was impressed by the efforts of the New South Wales government to train every front-line police officer in the state in suicide prevention and also to provide similar but more relevant training for front-line personnel on the Sydney Trains and New South Wales TrainLink networks. It is very important work and I have already asked questions about the possibility of that happening here through the minister here in this place representing the Minister for Transport.

I also understand from the input at the conference that the Palaszczuk Labor government in Queensland is also directing its efforts in suicide prevention through its own Mental Health Commission. This body is provided with \$8.5 million in funding, slightly down from the previous year. The current Mental Health Commissioner, who we heard from at the conference, has compiled a suicide prevention strategy for Queensland which is currently being implemented.

In addition to these efforts, the Queensland government has also committed to spending \$380,000 out of existing resources to train emergency department staff in suicide prevention, which as we would all agree is a very worthy and potentially life-saving act. I think it is something that we need to work on: those issues of putting those front-line people and giving them more experience about how to deal with suicide and with attempted suicide, particularly and self-harm.

The Queensland government also keeps an in-depth registry of deaths due to suicide which enables more accurate research into what have become known as 'suicide hot spots' and other issues related to suicide. This helps better target and develop more effective prevention programs across the state. Certainly, I think one thing that is consistent around Australia and in other parts of the world is that the need for more up-to-date information about the number of suicides in a particular part of a state or the country is very relevant, because a lot of the information, by the time we get it now, is quite out of date, so that is something I would urge the current government here to have a look at.

I was very lucky while in Hobart to meet with the Tasmanian Minister for Health, the Hon. Michael Ferguson, and his staff. The minister in fact spoke at the conference and presented one of Suicide Prevention Australia's awards at the conference dinner. The awards are very appropriately known as LiFE Awards. Leading up to the last state election in Tasmania, the Hodgman Liberal team committed to providing an additional \$3 million in funding to suicide prevention in the state. The current minister has delivered on that commitment and is now working very hard to deliver initiatives such as:

- develop a youth suicide strategy together with Youth Network of Tasmania;
- analyse suicide hot spots to reduce risks if places are known for repeat suicides;
- assist local communities to implement community suicide prevention plans;
- establish early intervention referral pathways;
- deliver suicide prevention awareness training to persons in key occupations; and

- ensure Tasmanian researchers can access information needed to allow in-depth analysis of Tasmanian suicides to better target prevention strategies.

Of course, on that point, I suppose I have quite a long association with suicide prevention in Tasmania through the CORES program and through the work of the University of Tasmania. I commend the Hodgman government for its extensive efforts in this field and their strong and ongoing commitment to suicide prevention in that state. I was very grateful for the time to sit down with staff from the minister's office and the department to talk about the rollout of the government's initiatives, and I appreciate the minister providing us with that valuable time.

I think it is also important to note that a state which has stepped up to the plate in recent times in relation to suicide prevention is Western Australia. A number of years ago, I met with the then minister, Mr Jacobs, who at that stage was a very new minister in a very new coalition government in Western Australia. They were grappling with, I think, very large rates of suicide, greater than the rest of the country.

Last year, I attended the National Suicide Prevention Conference when it was held in Perth, and the strong commitment of the Barnett coalition government under the stewardship of the current Minister for Mental Health, the Hon. Helen Morton MLC, became apparent. The Hon. Helen Morton's Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention is spending a massive \$26 million on suicide prevention in Western Australia over four years. The new suicide prevention strategy, Suicide Prevention 2020: Together we can Save Lives, aims to reduce the current number of suicides in Western Australia by 50 per cent over the next decade.

It was launched in May this year and is based on evidence and recommendations from the latest research and reviews completed by Edith Cowan University, the Western Australian Ombudsman, and the Western Australian Auditor-General. The strategy has six key action areas which focus on:

- greater public awareness and united action;
- local support and community prevention across the lifespan;
- coordinated and targeted services for high-risk groups;
- shared responsibility across government, private and non-government sectors to build mentally healthy workplaces;
- increased suicide prevention training; and
- timely data and evidence to improve responses and services.

I particularly thank the Hon. Helen Morton MLC and the people I have had quite a bit to do with on her suicide prevention council. They have shown a terrific commitment, along with that state's Mental Health Commission, in the continuing rollout of their initiatives in that area.

Nationally, the Coalition government is taking action to support suicide prevention. In 2013-14, the federal government spent \$113.4 million in a single year on the National Suicide Prevention Program and the 'Mental health: taking action to tackle suicide' package. The ongoing support from the federal government to the suicide prevention sector both government and community-based is commendable.

I encourage the new Prime Minister and his continuing Minister for Health, Sussan Ley, to continue to provide leadership in this area, not only through the development of strategies and the provision of funding—and I think refocused funding in some areas, and I have indicated that to the minister—but also through COAG and other cooperative bodies.

At the conclusion of the National Suicide Prevention Conference, I attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Human Rights Pacific seminar in Wellington, New Zealand. Whilst I was there, I was able to speak with officers from the New Zealand Ministry of Health who gave me a great insight into the range of effective programs the New Zealand government is operating to prevent suicide across different cultural communities. I noted the very strong leadership in this area indicated by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. John Key. It was very clear to see that the leadership comes right from the top in that government.

I also had the opportunity to speak to officers from the Ministry of Justice who advised me of their efforts to combat cyber bullying, which has been a contributing factor in a number of youth suicides in New Zealand. I commend the National Party government for its work in that area and, certainly, it has brought in legislation in relation to cyber bullying.

In South Australia, the situation is somewhat different. Despite my efforts and those of many others in this parliament, many on my side, and I must say a number of others on the crossbench and some on the Labor side, the current government has been somewhat lethargic in its efforts in suicide prevention. In comparison with interstate and overseas efforts, the Weatherill Labor government has committed only \$1.1 million to this life-saving cause.

I commend the public servants working in this field who have already done so much with relatively little. I believe that the government and the current Minister for Mental Health (Hon. Jack Snelling) should actually have the political will to do more. The minister does not play a great role in the mental health space. I note that his parliamentary secretary, Leesa Vlahos, does work in that area, but the space left by the minister's lack of action in the area is quite large.

I do not wish to be political about this, but I think the minister does need to step up and show some leadership in the area. I do not recall the minister's actually addressing the matter of suicide directly at any stage in the public arena. I think that is a shame and that he ought to have a look at the leadership shown by a number of ministers and governments of various political persuasions around the country.

I am proud that the South Australian parliamentary Liberal Party is the first political party in Australia and, to my knowledge, elsewhere in the world that actually has suicide prevention as a stand-alone portfolio. I am supported in my role very much by the shadow minister, the Hon. Stephen Wade. However, the stance of having a separate portfolio was only backed up significantly at the Hobart conference with evidence that a very large number of people who suicide actually do not have a mental illness background. It is more a set of circumstances and the severe reaction to that set of circumstances that cause them to suicide.

It is something that I feel very strongly about, and we need to recognise that many of the people who attempt suicide or who take their life are not ones who have had a mental illness background, so we need to adjust the way in which we work in this area to take account of that.

Through my time working in the field of suicide prevention, I have felt that each time the current government has finally made a commitment it has been dragged every step of the way to do that. If I have had a role in dragging them along, I am proud of it, but I think it should not be that way. There is an easy manner for the government to adopt a far more effective proactive approach because there are so many people in the community who want to work with the government in this area.

I call on the Minister for Mental Health in another place to reflect on the government's approach to this important area and consider what it would mean for South Australians in need if we were to make great strides to be a leader in this field. Having said that, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the government and the public servants who are working on the rollout of the state's Suicide Prevention Strategy, particularly on their work in establishing a number of local suicide prevention networks across South Australia. These networks have been established by the local community or, in many cases, by local government bodies to develop strategies for suicide prevention which are relevant to the community.

Once one of these networks has been established and a local strategy created, endorsed, and in many cases linked to the strategic plan of the relevant local government body, the local network can receive \$5,000 in funding from the government for their work. It has been encouraging to me to see a large number of these groups established around South Australia, largely in country areas, but we do have some in the metropolitan area. I will not go into those different ones because I have raised them many times in the past in particular, but I am pleased that there are more in the pipeline and I am very keen to see that happen, and I will go as widely as I can to support those people.

I have had the benefit of attending the two regional network of networks meetings held in Mount Gambier and, clearly, this year bring together groups from all over country South Australia and some metropolitan areas to share their experiences. It has been an absolute privilege to work with the people who have attended those events and, in many cases, travelled significant distances to be involved, and I look forward to the statewide network of networks event to be held here in Adelaide on 9 October.

I would also like to briefly mention the Indigenous Suicide Prevention Network that has been established in Mount Gambier for some time. It sits alongside the other Mount Gambier Suicide Prevention Network but is a very impressive group working together across the Aboriginal communities of the South-East. Suicide is one of the most challenging areas of Indigenous health, and I congratulate all those involved in that particular group helping to stem that alarming rate of suicide in Aboriginal communities.

I was heartened during the estimates process in July 2014 to hear the Minister for Health and Mental Health indicate that an additional one full-time equivalent would be committed to the rollout of the state government's Suicide Prevention Strategy. This additional person was to be a crucial addition to the single officer who had been allocated the mammoth task of rolling out the strategy across South Australia on their own.

Unfortunately, more than 12 months have passed, and I understand that the appointment has only just been made. In fact the recruitment process only began in July this year. Over one year had lapsed and after questions in this house from myself and subsequently writing to the minister, I was eventually advised by his parliamentary secretary that the recruitment would take place. It is just a pity that it has taken such a long time to get that person on board. I was, however, heartened to hear at the National Suicide Prevention Conference in Hobart that South Australia will soon be in consultation on the development of a new strategy that will replace the current document that will expire next year.

Another issue that I took away from the national conference in Hobart was how critical it is to support programs that promote suicide prevention in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning community. I made some reference to that work earlier, particularly in relation to the work of the Victorian government.

This incredibly important area is not being funded currently by the government. For many reasons, ranging from social to emotional, the LGBTIQ community has a significantly higher than average rate of suicide. Prevention and post-prevention programs for members of the LGBTIQ community in crisis are far more effective when they specifically target issues affecting that community, and that was proven to me when I visited the young lady I mentioned earlier who was working in the inner country areas of Victoria.

I noted in last year's estimate process that the Minister for Health and Mental Health in another place made a commitment that if an application for grant funding through the pool made available as part of the Suicide Prevention Strategy was to be made to the government for a program specifically targeting the LGBTIQ community, it would be given favourable consideration. I was encouraged by this statement but I am yet to see such an application granted, and so I live in hope that that will come to fruition in the near future.

I have hoped in this speech to give some comparison with the work that has been done in the area of suicide prevention around this country and in New Zealand. I hope that the government will continue to build on the work and the framework that is being developed and that it will start to work harder and provide greater leadership in the field of suicide prevention for all South Australians. With that I support the passage of the Appropriation Bill.

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

## **RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTIONS) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 8 September 2015.)

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (16:59):** I rise to speak on the Residential Tenancies (Domestic Violence Protections) Amendment Bill 2015. The government has brought this bill to the house as it believes that current legislation in the area of residential tenancies does not provide adequate protection to victims of domestic violence.

By way of background, the South Australian government has taken a whole-of-government response to the findings of the State Coroner in the inquest into the tragic death of Zahra Abrahamzadeh. Ms Abrahamzadeh was stabbed to death by her husband in 2010 at the Adelaide Convention Centre. As a result of her death, a number of initiatives were achieved. They were:

1. Commencing in 2015, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service will provide a greater level of support within the court system for victims of violence by providing assistance to help women deal successfully with court systems and increase their access to justice.

2. The state government has introduced an early warning system which provides a circuit breaker in instances where a domestic violence service provider does not believe the most appropriate responses to their client's situation have been received.

3. South Australian government departments will obtain White Ribbon workplace accreditation and build upon existing domestic violence workplace policies in all government departments. The Equal Opportunity Commission has commenced coordination of the accreditation process across government.

The main intent of the bill is that victims will be able to terminate a residential tenancy without facing financial penalties. Currently, the powers of the South Australian Civil and Administration Tribunal (SACAT) to recognise domestic violence are limited in cases where the victim is a co-tenant with the perpetrator. Co-tenants are jointly liable for a property and, unless the other tenant joins the application to terminate the lease, indicates no opposition to it or it can be proven that the other tenant has abandoned the residential tenancy, SACAT is unable to terminate the tenancy. This bill changes this by recognising co-tenants separately under a residential tenancy agreement.

The bill recognises domestic abuse can be a cause for ending residential tenancies. This bill also takes account of the different relationships that are involved in domestic violence, such as people who are married to each other, brothers and sisters, or parents and children.

This bill clearly exempts a domestic abuse victim who is a co-tenant to a lease from paying the costs involved in breaking it above the bond. If a victim of domestic violence who is a co-tenant is suffering from hardship by continuing with a tenancy, they can apply to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal to end the agreement. The tribunal must consider the victim's hardship more favourably than that of the abuser. The tribunal, on application by the tenant or co-tenant, can terminate a residential tenancy if it is satisfied that a person who resides at the residential premises has committed domestic abuse.

It is important when drafting this type of legislation that the interests of landlords are considered. The bill does this by allowing landlords to inspect properties before a decision is made by a co-tenant to terminate a residential tenancy. It also allows landlords, if necessary, to continue with an existing agreement with either co-tenant. The bill aims to provide a balance between a victim's interests, without unduly disadvantaging the landlord, and their right to compensation. It is important to note that compensation for damage that exceeds the bond allocated in a residential agreement can be claimed by a landlord via an order of the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, to be paid by the responsible co-tenant.

The bill also allows for the issue of orders outlining that a tenant in a co-tenancy is liable for compensation to the landlord where there is a situation of domestic violence. This will ensure that the victim is not left with the burden of paying for damage caused to the property by the perpetrator. Statistics show that 62 per cent of women have experienced physical assault by a male perpetrator and that one woman is murdered every week and one is hospitalised every three hours. This bill also prevents victims of domestic violence being listed on a residential tenancy database. A tenancy database is a list where landlords or agents record personal information about tenants who have had problems with their tenancies.

Domestic violence was once a hidden crime, but in recent years it has emerged as a mainstream criminal justice issue. Magistrates deal with a domestic violence application through the courts every six minutes, 10 every hour and more than 80 a day in some courts. It is devastating that it is often the case that domestic violence is seen as a private issue, something that usually happens in the home and is not talked about in the wider community. This is a cultural perception that is slowly changing. We need to continue to work to combat this perception in all areas of our lives. We have a collective responsibility to eliminate domestic violence.

The government should do everything in its power to address these issues, and I believe that this bill provides an opportunity to help some individuals escape domestic violence in the area of residential tenancy. Assisting victims to leave a violent home is important, and that is why this bill has my support. I commend this bill to the council.

**The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (17:07):** I rise briefly to indicate my support for the Residential Tenancies (Domestic Violence Protections) Amendment Bill. The proposed changes are intended to recognise domestic violence in our tenancy legislation and provide further protections for victims. In the main, this will be achieved by making it easier for victims of domestic violence to leave the premises they have co-tenanted without incurring financial penalties or to remove the perpetrator of the domestic violence from the premises and to minimise future dealings with that person in relation to any tenancy arrangements.

The changes will also ensure that the victim is not financially responsible for any damage caused to the property by the perpetrator. The ongoing legal liability for such damage will rest with the perpetrator. I understand that this last aspect of the bill caused some concern among landlords initially. However, the government has been working towards overcoming these concerns and striking an appropriate balance between the interests and rights of landlords on the one hand and victims of domestic abuse on the other. I certainly hope that this matter can be resolved to the satisfaction of all groups concerned and that this bill provides some relief, no matter how minor, to victims of family and domestic violence. With that, I support the second reading of the bill.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. G.E. Gago.

## LOBBYISTS BILL

### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 10 September 2015.)

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (17:11):** I rise on behalf of Liberal members to support the second reading of the Lobbyists Bill. As the government has indicated through the debate in the House of Assembly and through public statements, this is a package of measures that the parliament is being asked to consider in relation to members' of parliament accountability as well as remuneration.

This bill, together with the parliamentary remuneration bill, which we will debate in a moment—there is also to be a subsequent debate later in the session on the issue of statement of principles for members of parliament in terms of expectations in relation to their behaviour, in particular in the chamber but also as members of parliament—is part of, as the government has labelled it, a public integrity package, or an accountability package, in relation to members of parliament.

This bill, particularly with the companion bill, the remuneration bill, needs to be seen as part of a package. The government's position, which the Liberal Party has indicated support for, is that there will be greater restrictions on members of parliament post their period of employment within the parliament, in particular their period of employment as ministers of the Crown. As result of those restrictions on post-parliamentary employment prospects, there will be some adjustments made to the remuneration position of members of parliament generally.

The main aspect of the Lobbyists Bill is that once a minister of the Crown retires from parliament there will be a four-year restriction placed on that minister from registering as a lobbyist and engaging in lobbying. There are some guidelines by way of a lobbyist register which exist at the moment, but this extends the restriction that currently exist for ministers from, I think, two years to

four years. The requirements in relation to ministers' potential for work after a parliamentary career are significantly restricted, at least for that four-year period.

The other key difference is that there are significant penalties for breaches of these provisions under the Lobbyists Bill; that is, if a minister of the Crown, having retired from parliament, was to engage in lobbying and act as a lobbyist, and if found guilty of that, there are penalties, including significant financial penalties and potential terms of imprisonment. It is quite clear that these breaches of requirements under this legislation are to be viewed as serious issues, punishable by significant penalties, and clearly that is a significant difference from the current arrangements, which essentially do not have any significant financial penalties or terms of imprisonment for breaches of the lobbyist register.

There will also be restrictions on ministerial staff, if I can use that phrase and then choose to define it. Members will be aware that, for example, a minister may well have up to 15 or 20 staff in his or her ministerial office, but a small number of those, perhaps five or six generally, will be what would be known as ministerial staff or ministerial contract staff. They are employed under contracts with the Premier.

They are the ones whose salary and positions must be gazetted once a year in terms of their employment within a minister's office, and they are distinguished from other staff, such as ministerial liaison officers or administrative staff who, for example, might be public servants who are seconded into ministers' offices for a period of time. Those MLOs and administrative staff, for example, are seconded into the office and then, at the end of that period, go back to their positions within the Public Service. The ministerial contract staff generally have no such fallback provision.

I want to correct something I just put on the record by way of the restrictions on ministers. I refer to clause 13 of the bill, which states that the ministerial restriction is actually for two years, not the four years, as I indicated earlier in my second reading contribution. Subclause 13(1) provides:

- (a) the following provisions apply in relation to a person who ceases to hold office as a Minister:
  - (i) the person must not, during the period of 2 years after ceasing to hold that office, engage in lobbying;
  - (ii) the person is not entitled to apply for registration during that period.

If I can correct the record, my earlier references to four years were incorrect: it is a two-year restriction for ministers under subclause 13(1). Subclause 13(1)(b) refers to the persons engaged as members of the minister's personal staff, as I have indicated; their period of restriction is for 12 months. Similarly, under 13(1)(b), for persons who hold the office of parliamentary secretary, their restriction is for 12 months, not two years. Thirdly, members of the SAES (the South Australian Executive Service; they are executives in the public sector) are also restricted for a period of 12 months.

In relation to parliamentary secretaries, executives and ministerial staff, the restriction is for a period of 12 months, and they are not allowed to engage in lobbying in respect of matters dealt with by the person in the ordinary course of holding that office. It is intended to prevent them from lobbying in areas within which they worked during their term of employment either as a parliamentary secretary, Public Service executive or ministerial staffer.

The different restriction for a minister relates to any form of lobbying, not just lobbying in relation to their particular ministerial portfolio. The restriction on ministers is much broader and for a two-year period. The restriction on parliamentary secretaries, executives and ministerial staff, is for a shorter period of 12 months and limited to the areas within which they were essentially working whilst they were employed.

Another new element of the lobbying bill is a new restriction which essentially says that a lobbyist can be a lobbyist but cannot also be appointed to a government board. There is no such restriction at the moment; that is, someone can be registered as a lobbyist and can also be appointed to government boards and committees. Without putting it on the public record, there are one or two prominent current lobbyists, former ministers, who have been appointed to government boards at the moment.

This new restriction, if passed by the parliament, will mean that persons in that position will need to make a choice: they can continue to be a lobbyist, but they then have to resign their position having been appointed to various government boards, or they can continue to serve on government boards but they will have to remove themselves from being registered as a lobbyist and undertaking lobbying as a financial activity.

That is a new restriction on both lobbyists and board members. It obviously does not relate just to former ministers or members of parliament because there could be and probably are some people at the moment who are lobbyists who have also been appointed to boards who are not former members of parliament or former ministers, and they will have to make that decision if this legislation passes the parliament.

Another major aspect of the legislation which is new in South Australia but not new in a number of other jurisdictions is that success fees will be prohibited. Subclause 14(1) states:

- (1) A person must not give or receive, or agree to the giving or receipt of, a success fee for carrying on the business of lobbying.
- Maximum penalty:
- (a) in the case of a body corporate—\$150,000;
- (b) in the case of a natural person—\$30,000 or imprisonment for 2 years.

Members would be aware that it is widely understood that in the recent past some lobbyists have been paid very significant success fees for successful lobbying, particularly in relation to development applications being assisted through the planning and development process in South Australia. If this legislation is successful, similar success fees in the future will be prohibited, with significant penalties if those provisions are breached at all.

I think they are probably the major new initiatives. I guess I should address some brief comments. The Register of Lobbyists in future will be significantly more detailed than the existing Register of Lobbyists. Clause 10(2) outlines significant new details which will need to be provided, including:

- (a) the name, including any business name or trading name, of the person;
- (b) the business address of the person;
- (c) the ABN of the person;
- (d) the name of each owner of the person's business and any partners or major shareholders in the business;
- (e) the name of each employee of, or person otherwise engaged by, the person and their positions in the business;
- (f) any condition of registration applying in relation to the person under section 13;
- (g) each return provided by the person under section 8(1);
- (h) any details provided to the Chief Executive under section 11(1)(a) in relation to new lobbying agreements;
- (i) any other details considered appropriate by the Chief Executive or prescribed by regulation.

So there are significant new details that are required to be placed on the Register of Lobbyists by lobbyists in future. There are provisions which we did discuss with the government in terms of clause 12—Exclusion of information from register. Initially, we did have some concerns with this, but the government was prepared to make some amendment to the original provisions. Under clause 12—Exclusion of information from register:

- (1) The Chief Executive may...on application by a...person, exempt some or all of the person's details provided in a return under section 8(1) or provided under section 11(1)(a) from inclusion in the register if satisfied that the details consist of—
- (a) personal information of a confidential nature; or
- (b) information that has a commercial or other value that would be, or could reasonably be expected to be, destroyed or diminished if the information were disclosed—

and a couple of other reasons for exclusions. In reading that, can I indicate that this is a time-limited exemption. Under subclause 12(3), it states:

- (3) An exemption granted on an application by a person under subsection (1)...
- (d) remains in force until—
  - (i) 1 January next following its grant; or
  - (ii) such time as it may be revoked by the Chief Executive by notice in writing to the person (following a determination by the Chief Executive on a review under paragraph (b)(i) that the grounds for exemption no longer exist),  
whichever is sooner.

Our understanding of those provisions, as described to us, is that, in essence, whilst the exemption can be given, that exemption is removed no later than 1 January the following year. That detail would then need to be placed on the public record.

As explained and outlined to us, this was not a device to allow a permanent prevention of information being provided on the register: it was, in essence, a time-limited exemption, and certainly by no later than 1 January the following year, that exemption is removed and that information required by the legislation would then be part of the public register and available to be scrutinised by all and sundry. So there are some significant changes there in relation to the operation of the register as well.

With that, I indicate that, as I said, this is part of a package that we have indicated publicly and through the debate in the House of Assembly that the Liberal Party is supporting; therefore, we do support the second reading of the Lobbyists Bill.

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

## **PARLIAMENTARY REMUNERATION (DETERMINATION OF REMUNERATION) AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 10 September 2015.)

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (17:29):** I rise on behalf of Liberal members to support the second reading of the Parliamentary Remuneration (Determination of Remuneration) Amendment Bill 2015. At the outset, can I indicate that the Legislative Council is debating this bill following its normal process—that is, the legislation passed the House of Assembly some two weeks ago, I think the bill arrived in this chamber on the Wednesday or Thursday of that sitting week two weeks ago; it has sat on the table for public debate and comment over the last 10 days or so, and we are debating it this week.

Some other legislation, such as the APY lands legislation, was introduced on a Tuesday and went through both houses of parliament by the Thursday (in 48 hours), but we will not get into a discussion about the explanation as to why that was urgent and what has happened since then, but I am just talking about process here. Unlike that legislation which went through both houses in 48 hours, this legislation was considered by the House of Assembly in one week; it lay on the table for another week and it is now being debated in the Legislative Council. There can be no criticism, as sometimes there has been in the past, that members of parliament in the secrecy of the night have shepherded through a bill not following the due process in 48 hours or 24 hours or whatever the accusation might be.

The background to this bill, Mr President, as you would well know, is that the Premier over the last 12 months or so has made a number of public statements relating to the issues in relation to MPs' remuneration, including some public statements in relation to MPs' superannuation. The first of those statements I think was made in the Governor's speech in broad terms in relation to remuneration and, subsequently, the Premier has made a number of public statements, as I said, in relation to remuneration and superannuation since then.

The bill before us is the end product of the deliberations of the Premier and the government on these issues. The bill has been considered by the Liberal Party and, whilst it is more limited in terms of its scope than it might have been in some of the earlier indications, the Liberal party room has considered the bill and, as indicated by the debate in the House of Assembly, we have indicated our support for the passage of the remuneration bill and the Lobbyists Bill and, as I said, we will subsequently debate the statement of principles in both houses of parliament as well.

The issue of MPs' salaries and remuneration is always controversial. Unlike others, I have seen more than 30 years of debates in relation to MPs' remuneration and superannuation.

**The Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins:** Since Westies last won the premiership!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Indeed, in 1983. I have seen all sorts of arguments over the years in relation to remuneration. The one constant is that whenever it is discussed there is no doubting that the overwhelming public view is that members of parliament are overpaid, underworked and do not deserve whatever improvement in remuneration might have been contemplated by whichever government happened to be in at any point in time, whether it was a Liberal or Labor government.

In recent years, for most of the members in this chamber who have only been here in the last few years, they will recall the recent history of MPs' salaries in South Australia—that is, we were originally linked by way of a nexus with federal MPs' salaries where whatever the federal MP salary was, the South Australian MP salary was \$2,000 below the federal salary.

In 2011-12, we had a debate in this chamber, which many would have participated in, when, rightly or wrongly, we voted to increase that nexus from \$2,000 to \$42,000. We all supported the increase of the difference between the salaries of South Australian MPs and the salaries of federal members of parliament; that is, instead of being \$2,000 below the salaries of federal MPs, we voted to make sure that we were \$42,000 below federal salaries.

Another thing that has occurred in the last two years is that in 2013 the then federal government took the decision to show the nation leadership by freezing the salaries of members of parliament. The argument was, in part, that by freezing the salaries of members of parliament we would be setting a lead of austerity and that unions and workers in the private and public sector would be encouraged to follow the bold leadership of members of parliament and either accept a pay freeze for the next couple of years or significantly reduce their salaries.

As I said, having seen these freezes come and go over 32 years, it will not surprise you to know that MPs have not had a pay increase for 2¼ years—that is, no pay increase since July 2013—and no-one in the private sector or the public sector has taken a jot of notice of the leadership position taken by members of parliament. Average wages in the public and private sector in South Australia over the last two years, for which there has been a freeze for MPs, have increased by just under 6 per cent, just over 3 per cent in 2013-14, and just under 3 per cent in 2014-15—even above the South Australian government's target of 2.5 per cent for public servants.

Having endeavoured to set the lead, over the last two years no-one has followed, and I am sure, Mr President, you will be the first not to be surprised at the fact that nobody followed members of parliament when they froze their salaries. It is a salutary lesson to prime ministers, premiers, members of parliament and others on the impact of decisions such as that one. The facts are clear in themselves and, as I said, no-one took a jot of notice but continued as they had previously to negotiate increases in their wages and salaries and their conditions over the last two-year period.

I will outline the key provisions of the bill, but one of the transitional provisions is that decisions will be taken by the Remuneration Tribunal in South Australia, but those decisions are unlikely to occur, in my view, until late this year at the earliest and possibly even early next year, and so in the transitional period the existing arrangements will continue.

I am advised that the federal Remuneration Tribunal is currently undertaking a review of the salaries of federal MPs on the basis that they have had them frozen for two years. That freeze has now finished, and the federal Remuneration Tribunal is looking at what the salary of a federal MP might be, bearing in mind that wages and salaries have increased by about 6 per cent over the last two years, and I understand that they will make a determination in the not too distant future.

The transitional provisions will mean that, because we have this nexus of \$42,000 beneath the salary of federal MPs, if the salaries of federal MPs go up by \$3,000 or \$6,000, or whatever it might happen to be, there will be a commensurate increase in the salaries of South Australian MPs under the transitional provisions of this legislation. The base salary of a backbench member of parliament is approximately \$153,000, which is approximately \$42,000 beneath a federal MP's salary.

The result of the transitional provision will mean that if the federal MP's salary goes up \$3,000 or \$6,000, then the state MP's salary in this transitional period will go up by that particular limit. The new arrangements will not operate until there is a decision from the Remuneration Tribunal and there is this transitional provision. The essential nature of the bill, and the Premier's argument for this, is that there is always significant criticism of MPs' salaries and benefits, but one of the more prominent criticisms, according to the Premier, has been in relation to what is referred to as 'perks of office, travel and other entitlements'.

What has driven the government and the Premier in relation to this discussion and debate is the Premier's view, which he has put publicly in radio interviews, that there needs to be an increase in the transparent basic salary for members of parliament offset by reductions in some of the benefits and allowances that are currently paid. The Premier's essential contention has been, 'Let's be transparent about this. Increase the basic salary, but by and large reduce in a commensurate way the allowances and benefits, in some part, the members currently have.' Again, that is a feature of this bill and the Liberal party room has indicated its support for the second reading of this bill.

The bill outlines a structure for the tribunal to conduct some inquiries into determinations of its own. It is essentially saying to the tribunal that there are three broad areas of current benefits or allowances that are to be the subject of work by the tribunal. The first of those is what is known as the members of parliament travel allowance, which is currently \$13,300 or \$13,500, about that mark per year. It is available to all members of parliament. Ministers can avail themselves of it and travel as members of parliament, as opposed to ministerial travel. Of course they have their own separate ministerial travel entitlement. Not all ministers do that, but nevertheless they have that entitlement if they so choose.

That travel allowance will ultimately be removed once the tribunal makes its final decision, and the tribunal will be asked to look at what, in its judgment, is a reasonable compensation for the removal of that benefit from members of parliament. It is for the tribunal to determine whether that number is \$13,300, whether it is below \$13,300 for whatever reason, or whether it is above \$13,300 for whatever reason. Ultimately, the extent of the increase in the basic salary as a result of the removal of the travel allowance is a decision and a determination for the Remuneration Tribunal. I expect that the tribunal might call for submissions on that when it does its work. Again, that is an issue for the tribunal to determine.

I know from colleagues, crossbench colleagues, government backbenchers and others, that there is a variety of views in relation to the travel allowance. Publicly, there has been much criticism of travel. At the federal level, it related to a Liberal member of parliament; at the state level, it has related principally to a Labor member of parliament, without mentioning names and personalising this debate. But over my 32 years, trust me, it has involved Liberal and Labor members. In some cases, it is ministerial travel or it might be the office holder's travel at the federal level but, in some cases, it has been the backbenchers' parliamentary travel entitlement that is of public concern and whether or not value for taxpayers' money has been arrived at through the use of the travel entitlement.

The second issue which it will be up to the tribunal to determine is the issue of what we colloquially refer to as the gold pass (but parliamentary counsel has referred to it as the Metrocard Special Pass) and the remuneration consisting of subsidised or free interstate rail travel. As I said, colloquially, we understand that to be the gold pass; that is, members of parliament are entitled to free public transport in the metropolitan area and we are entitled to subsidised or free interstate rail travel, with limited access for your partner as well.

Again, there has been criticism in relation to the entitlement of MPs to free or subsidised travel through the gold pass arrangement. This bill will, from the date of the determination of the

tribunal, conclude that particular entitlement and the tribunal will be asked to make a calculation as to what the compensating increase in basic salary should be for the removal of that benefit.

Whilst the travel allowance is an easier calculation for the tribunal because we know what is allocated to each member and what their entitlement is, the issue of the gold pass is obviously going to be much more difficult. There are some members, for example, who avail themselves of the free public transport and the free interstate rail travel, so they have got full value from that particular entitlement. There are others who have never used the free public transport whilst they have been members of parliament, or the interstate rail travel.

It is going to be up to the tribunal as to how they determine what the increase in the basic salary should be for the removal of the gold pass. There is an entitlement there. Each of us could travel on the *Ghan* once a year with our partners, I think, and we could all take up our public transport if we wish but we do not, so it is going to be up to the tribunal to make a determination. If we remove that, there is clearly a saving to the taxpayers. I am not sure what that is per year because I do not see those numbers, and the tribunal has to determine, for 69 members of parliament, what would be the increase in the basic salary as a result of that.

The third broad area is the issue of committee payments. This has been a controversial area on occasions over the years. Our federal colleagues often remind us, both publicly and privately, that we get paid for working on committees when it is just part of the work of federal members of parliament. I imagine that if my spouse was in the federal parliament and was not being paid for committee work and I was, that might be the cause of some internal tension in that domestic arrangement. I am sure it has been raised with members by their colleagues in the federal parliament as to why we think we should be paid for committee work. My answer over the years has been that they were the terms and conditions that were there when I was elected, and I am not sure how they started but they were there and long may they continue.

What this particular bill now is essentially saying is that we will mirror the federal arrangements in relation to the salary loadings that are paid to committee members, in particular—not the committee chairs, which is again a mirror of the federal arrangement. The committee chairs are paid at the federal level and the committee members are not. The tribunal will be asked to look at that and determine what is a fair offset for all members of parliament for the removal of committee payments.

Another issue, which is not outlined in the legislation, is the payment for select committees which, upon some digging, was as a result of a cabinet determination going back to the days when we used to have a chief secretary, so that means it is many decades ago. I think the original payment was six guineas per committee member; it is now \$12.50. It is not going to add up to much but, in essence, the intention is for all of those committee payments to be removed. The tribunal will need to look at that and then determine what is a fair offset in terms of an increase in the basic salary.

I acknowledge that the result of that for my friends and colleagues—one or two of them in particular on the government backbench in the Legislative Council—will mean that this particular change is likely to have more impact on their terms and conditions than it will for many others. Most of the rest of us will lose approximately \$15,300, which I think is the payment for committee membership.

Most members are on a committee but, as I said, because of the circumstances that exist within the government at the moment—and I will not go into those and I will not mention names at all—the reality is that a small number of people are doing a large amount of work and, because of the committee payment system, they are being recompensed under the existing arrangements.

They, as I said, will be impacted in a more significant way by this particular aspect of the government's proposal which is being supported by the opposition. The reality is that if the Liberal Party is ever in government the circumstances will be reversed and the small number of Liberal Party backbenchers sitting on committees will be similarly impacted in terms of the workload they undertake on committees and the removal of the additional benefit of payments for committee membership.

They are the three aspects that will be looked at by the tribunal. If this legislation passes this week, it will go off to the tribunal (which has already been established) and they will have to undertake

their review. There is no time limit on that. It is completely up to them, as an independent tribunal, to make a determination in terms of the date of operation. The date of operation of the tribunal's decision can be backdated to no earlier than the passage of the legislation, but it may well be the date of their determination. Again, that is a decision for the tribunal to take as part of their independence and flexibility.

The other allowances that are being removed but are not being given to the tribunal to be used as an offset to increase the basic salary of members are expense allowances for the Premier and ministers of the Crown. In the Premier's case, it is about \$8,000. For ministers, I think it is somewhere between \$5,000 and \$6,000; for some other officeholders it is about \$1,000 to \$3,000. Those allowances are to be abolished and there will be no offset in relation to that. So the Premier will lose that expense allowance of \$8,000 and that will not be rolled into a decision for the tribunal to determine what the offset should be for all members of parliament.

Similarly, the Speaker, the Chair of Committees, the Leader of the Opposition and other officeholders who have small expense allowances lower than the Premier's \$8,000 will have those allowances removed and they will not be rolled into the determination of the Remuneration Tribunal.

Those are the essential provisions of the legislation. What will be their impact? That is a decision entirely for the tribunal. I have seen media reports that they will mean an increase of \$30,000 in the basic salary of members of parliament, and I am assuming that those media outlets have, in broad terms, added together the travel allowance of about \$13,500 and the average basic committee payment, which is \$15,500. However, again, if you average that amongst all members it would be significantly less than that, but someone has come up with this number of \$30,000.

I think it is important to look at the implications so that no-one can say that anything was hidden from the debate or from the public. No-one knows what that determination will be but if, for example, it were \$20,000 or \$30,000—somewhere in that range—then the flow-on impact of that would be that the Premier would receive a salary increase of between \$40,000 and \$60,000. However, as I indicated earlier, offset against that he would have the loss of the travel allowance of about \$13,500 as well as an expense allowance of just over \$8,000.

If it were between \$20,000 and \$30,000, the Leader of the Opposition would have a salary increase of between \$35,000 and \$52,500; again, he would lose the entitlement to the travel allowance of about \$13,500 and his expense allowance, which is just under \$6,000. Ministers are much the same as the Leader of the Opposition; they are paid at the same level. That is, ministers would have a salary increase of between \$35,000 and \$52,500 but that would be offset against the loss of a travel allowance entitlement and their expense allowance of just under \$6,000.

There is a new provision in the salary loadings which follows the federal arrangements, which is a new salary loading for shadow ministers. That salary loading follows the federal model of a 25 per cent salary loading, so the salary loadings in the schedule start at 100 per cent for the Premier, 85 per cent for the Deputy Premier, ministers are at 75 per cent, the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Assembly is at 75 per cent, and then it comes down to the Chair of Committees in the House of Assembly at 37.5 per cent. Shadow ministers would be at 25 per cent and chairs of committees and whips in and around that 18 per cent, with parliamentary secretaries at 20 per cent.

That would mean that shadow ministers, as a result of that additional shadow minister loading, would see—if the basic salary increases by \$20,000 to \$30,000—a salary increase somewhere between \$63,000 and \$75,000 offset by the travel allowance loss of \$13,500 and, if that member were on a committee, the loss of \$15,300 because of the loss of that particular committee. As I highlighted before, the one or two members who are currently either chairing a number of committees or who are members of a number of committees would lose significantly in terms of their current salary entitlements and the new entitlements under the government arrangements outlined in this bill.

In wrapping up, I return to what I said at the outset, that these issues are controversial in terms of remuneration. I have on many occasions, and I do so again today, defended members of parliament in terms of an expectation in relation to what a reasonable remuneration package should be for what I see as the very important job of being a member of parliament.

I had my office take out of the Auditor-General's reports for 30 June 2014 (so these figures are now 15 months out of date), and the number of public servants in departments and agencies currently earning more than \$151,000 per year was 1,353. The number of public servants earning (15 months ago) more than \$171,000 a year was 850. The number of public servants earning more than \$201,000 was 470.

I say advisedly that there might be a small reduction in those numbers because in some cases departments and agencies, when they have paid out a termination package, the end of year results take the payment of a particular public servant into a higher bracket, and not all agencies identify that issue, but that is broadly the number we are talking about: almost 500 public servants in South Australia being paid more than \$201,000, more than 1,300 public servants being paid more than \$151,000. The basic salary of members of parliament at the moment is \$153,000. Even if there was to be an increase of \$20,000 to \$30,000 in the basic salary, significantly offset by the removal of the travel allowance and committee payments, there are about 850 public servants earning more than \$171,000.

I am prepared, on behalf of my colleagues and all members of parliament, to defend the importance of the role of members of parliament. I believe that the 69 members of parliament have an important job in our democracy and, whilst some of us do a good job and some do a bad job, and some are criticised more often than others, the reality is that the job members of parliament undertake is important, and the argument that there are 850 public servants who have more important jobs than the 69 members of parliament and deserve to be paid more than \$171,000 a year, and that members of parliament do not, is not one that washes with me and not one that I can agree with. It will not be a popular view, I accept that.

The reality of this debate over my 32 years in parliament has demonstrated that you will never win that argument publicly. But, nevertheless, I hold the view, and hold it strongly, that members of parliament are entitled to be paid well for what should be seen by the public as an important job. We are the ones who make the laws and make the decisions and have to accept responsibility for what goes right and what goes wrong, and ultimately the remuneration package that members of parliament are paid should reflect that responsibility and it should be accepted by the community.

With that, I indicate on behalf of my colleagues support for the second reading of this bill and, as I said, the support of my party for the package of measures the government has introduced in terms of both remuneration and accountability through the Lobbyists Bill and the statement of principles, which we will debate later in the session.

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

#### **WHYALLA STEEL WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

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

#### **COMPULSORY THIRD PARTY INSURANCE REGULATION BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

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

#### **STATUTES AMENDMENT (TERRORISM) BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

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

At 18:06 the council adjourned until Wednesday 23 September 2015 at 11:00.

*Answers to Questions***LONG SERVICE LEAVE**

**26 The Hon. R.I. LUCAS** (3 December 2014). (First Session) For each department or agency then reporting to the Minister for Investment and Trade—

1. What is the estimated long service leave liability as at 30 June 2014 in days and dollars?
2. What is the highest long service leave entitlement that has not been taken for any employee, as at 30 June 2014, in days and dollars?
3.
  - (a) What funding, as at 30 June 2014, was held in accounts controlled or administered by the department or agency to fund long service leave; and
  - (b) What were the names of the accounts and total funds held in these accounts as at 30 June 2014?
4.
  - (a) What policies, and monitoring of these policies, are in place to ensure that there is not a build up of long service leave liability within the department or agency; and
  - (b) Are employees required to take long service leave after a certain level of entitlement has accrued?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation):** The Minister for Investment and Trade has received this advice:

**DMITRE**

1. The estimated long service leave liability for the former Department of Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade, Resources and Energy (DMITRE) as at 30 June 2014 was 40,088 days and \$11,933,000.
2. The highest long service leave entitlement that has not been taken for any employee, as at 30 June 2014, is 435 days equating to \$201,931.
3.
  - (a) As at 30 June 2014, DMITRE held a total \$12.3 million in cash or cash equivalents.
  - (b) As reported in the Auditor-General's Annual Report for 2013-2014, DMITRE held \$18.2 million in a special deposit account with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) as at 30 June 2014. This amount was held in the special deposit account named 'DMITRE Operating Account'. Deposits with the Treasurer may only be used in accordance with the Treasurer's approval. The special deposit account is for general operating expenses, including the payment of long service leave and annual leave expenses. This amount also includes cash securities held for mining remediation.
4.
  - (a) The former DMITRE did not have any policies in place to manage the accrual of long service leave.
  - (b) There is no requirement for employees to take leave after a certain level of long service leave has been accrued.

**DEFENCE SA**

1. Estimated liability of \$620,000 plus oncosts of \$37,000 for 3,472 days accrued long service leave.
2. Highest individual long service leave entitlements, in days and dollars:
  - (a) 146 days (\$86,786 (excluding oncosts))
  - (b) \$127,476 (excluding oncosts) (78 days)
3.
  - (a) Funding for leave liabilities is available in Defence SA operating account.
  - (b) Funding held in Defence SA operating bank account, with balance of \$4.275 million at 30 June 2014.
4.
  - (a) Defence SA does not have a policy for the management / reduction of long service leave entitlements.
  - (b) No.

**PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

**40 The Hon. R.I. LUCAS** (3 December 2014). (First Session) Since 1 January 2014, will the Minister for Investment and Trade list—

1. Job title and total employment cost of each position with a total estimated cost of \$100,000, or more, which has been abolished; and

2. Each new position with a total cost of \$100,000, or more, which has been created?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation):** The Minister for Investment and Trade has received this advice:

DSD (in the areas that report to the Minister for Investment and Trade)

1. Nil
2. Nil

Defence SA

1. Nil
2. Nil

#### CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

**68 The Hon. R.I. LUCAS** (3 December 2014). (First Session) Since 1 January 2014—

1. Were any persons employed or otherwise engaged as a consultant or contractor, in any department or agency reporting to the Minister for Investment and Trade, who had previously received a separation package from the state government; and

2. If so—
  - (a) What number of persons were employed;
  - (b) What number were engaged as a consultant; and
  - (c) What number engaged as a contractor?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation):** The Minister for Investment and Trade has received this advice:

DSD

1. No—not in the areas of DSD that report to the Minister for Investment and Trade.
2. Not applicable.

DEFENCE SA

Since 1 January 2014, one Defence SA employee has previously received a separation package from the state government.

#### ANNUAL LEAVE

**110 The Hon. R.I. LUCAS** (3 December 2014). (First Session) For each department or agency then reporting to the Minister for Investment and Trade—

1. What is the estimated annual leave liability as at 30 June 2014 in days and dollars?
2. What is the highest annual leave entitlement that has not been taken for any employee, as at 30 June 2014, in days and dollars?
3. (a) What funding, as at 30 June 2014, was held in accounts controlled or administered by the department or agency to fund annual leave; and  
(b) What were the names of the accounts and total funds held in these accounts as at 30 June 2014?
4. (a) What policies, and monitoring of these policies, are in place to ensure that there is not a build up of annual leave liability within the department or agency; and  
(b) Are employees required to take annual leave after a certain level of entitlement has accrued?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Manufacturing and Innovation, Minister for Automotive Transformation, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation):** The Minister for Investment and Trade has received this advice:

DMITRE

1. The estimated annual leave liability for the former Department of Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade, Resources and Energy (DMITRE) as at 30 June 2014 was 9,680 days and \$3,960,000.
2. The highest annual leave entitlement that has not been taken for any employee as at 30 June 2014 in days is 88 days, equating to \$36,141.

3. (a) As at 30 June 2014, DMITRE held a total \$12.3 million in cash or cash equivalents.
- (b) As reported in the Auditor-General's Annual Report for 2013-2014, DMITRE held \$18.2 million in a special deposit account with the Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) as at 30 June 2014. This amount was held in the special deposit account named 'DMITRE Operating Account'. Deposits with the Treasurer may only be used in accordance with the Treasurer's approval. The special deposit account is for general operating expenses, including the payment of long service leave and annual leave expenses. This amount also includes cash securities held for mining remediation.
4. (a) The former DMITRE managed annual leave liability in accordance with the Commissioner's Determination and required manager approval for any carry-over of annual leave.
- (b) Employees are required to have a plan in place to take annual leave if their leave balance exceeded 40 days.

## DEFENCE SA

1. The estimated liability of \$191,000 plus oncosts of \$27,000 for 440 days of accrued annual leave.
2. Highest annual leave entitlement is \$12,500 (excluding oncosts) (31 days).
3. (a) Funding for leave liabilities is available with Defence SA operating account.
- (b) Funding held in Defence SA operating bank account, with a total balance of \$4.275 million at 30 June 2014.
4. (a) Accrued annual leave reports are reviewed monthly by line managers. Active leave management aims to ensure annual leave is taken wherever possible in the year it accrues and that individual entitlements remain at or below four weeks.
- (b) No.