

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, 24 March 2020

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. T.J. Stephens)** took the chair at 14:15 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 the land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to the elders both past and present.

### *Bills*

#### **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC HEALTH (CONTROLLED NOTIFIABLE CONDITIONS) AMENDMENT BILL**

##### *Assent*

His Excellency the Governor assented to the bill.

#### **EVIDENCE (REPORTING ON SEXUAL OFFENCES) AMENDMENT BILL**

##### *Assent*

His Excellency the Governor assented to the bill.

### *Parliament House Matters*

#### **PARLIAMENT HOUSE SAFETY MEASURES**

**The PRESIDENT (14:17):** Honourable members, I would like to update the council on measures the Speaker and myself, in addition to the parliament's Response Management Committee, have put in place in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Advice has already been circulated to members, parliamentary staff and building occupants advising that all public and school tours of Parliament House and functions have been cancelled.

Non-access card holders will not be permitted into the chamber public galleries on sitting days or committee public galleries to view proceedings. Access card holders, including the media, will continue to have access to the parliamentary precinct. Until further notice, all parliamentary dining rooms will be closed. The members' bar will provide the standard food and beverage service consistent with a non-sitting day. The Blue Room will provide its current range of food and beverage services. There will be no provision for seated dining in both the members' bar and the Blue Room.

Members and ministers have been requested to reduce the number of members of staff they bring into Parliament House. Members, including ministers, who wish to have non-access card holders attend Parliament House must first seek approval from the President or the Speaker. Centre Hall has been closed until further notice, and access to the parliament will be via the Old Parliament House entrance.

There will be increased cleaning of surfaces within Parliament House, together with the provision of sanitiser at key locations. I ask all members to continue practising the hygiene advice that has been circulated. I remind members and staff of the advice provided by public health authorities as it relates to people who feel ill to stay at home.

I would like to thank all honourable members for their non-partisan approach to the issues that confront us in having this parliament operate. The current seating arrangements in the chamber allow for members to be separated by at least 1.5 metres when seated. I can also advise the council that the dimensions of this chamber are sufficient to satisfy the four square metre provision for indoor gatherings of less than 100 people.

I understand that the chamber will shortly consider arrangements for divisions in order to assist with maintaining the social distancing restrictions and reducing risks associated with surface contact. Bottled water has been supplied to members in the chamber, not jugs and glasses, to reduce

the risk to staff in handling glassware. I trust that a common-sense and cooperative approach will prevail to assist the council in carrying on its business.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

**PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the President—

Report of the Auditor-General—Update to the annual report for the year ended  
30 June 2019, Report No. 6 of 2020

By the Minister for Trade and Investment (Hon. D. W. Ridgway)—

Corporation By-laws—  
City of Marion—  
No. 7—Cats (Confinement) Variation  
Regulations under Acts—  
Development Act 1993—  
Bushfire Recovery  
Delivery of Goods  
National Electricity (South Australia) Act 1996

By the Minister for Health and Wellbeing (Hon. S. G. Wade)—

Regulations under Acts—  
Correctional Services Act 1982—Corresponding Law  
South Australian Public Health Act 2011—Notifiable Contaminants

**The PRESIDENT:** I lay upon the table a letter from Dr Niki Vincent, South Australian Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, in response to the resolution of this council of 19 February 2020. I table this letter today as it is the first sitting day since it has been received and therefore the first opportunity to present it to the chamber.

*Parliamentary Committees*

**STATUTORY AUTHORITIES REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (14:20):** I bring up the annual report of the committee, 2018-19.  
Report received and ordered to be published.

*Ministerial Statement*

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:21):** I table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the coronavirus made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Premier.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:22):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.  
Leave granted.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I have just tabled a statement from the Premier on behalf of the government in relation to the coronavirus, and I understand the Leader of the Opposition has made a statement to the House of Assembly as well. I will not repeat all that is included in the ministerial statement, because it is there for the record for members to read, but on behalf of government members in this chamber—and I am sure I speak on behalf of all members—I want to thank, in particular, the very many hardworking health professionals and public servants who are at the forefront of fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

I also want to thank the very many other public servants. Clearly, our health professionals are at the forefront but our police officers now have a major undertaking, not only in relation to the work they have been doing; clearly, they will now have a much more onerous responsibility in the future. Many, many other members of our Public Service also have significant responsibilities in trying to keep as many South Australians as they can as safe as possible, and I want to acknowledge—I am sure on behalf of all members in this chamber—our public tribute and thanks to them for all they have done while acknowledging, sadly, all the work they are going to have to do, that we will all have to do collectively as a community, over the coming weeks and possibly months ahead.

I also want to add to the comments you made, Mr President, on behalf of the presiding members in relation to the chamber. How long we sit is problematic at this stage, because I understand that the federal parliament has risen potentially for up to four or five months and I was advised last evening that one or two of the other state jurisdictions may well not sit for a considerable length of time.

Anyway, for however long we sit, and even for the period that we are not sitting, but certainly for the period that we are sitting can I thank the Leader of the Opposition in this chamber and the Opposition Whip for the cooperation we have seen thus far in terms of managing the procedures in the house and also the office facilities, because clearly the members of the opposition have officers who are in Parliament House all the time, together with Parliament House staff, and so I do want to thank the leader and the whip for their cooperation.

There are some urgent issues that we are having to process in the next day or two and there has been considerable cooperation from the opposition and crossbench members in this chamber in relation to those particular issues. I indicate, as leader of the government, that I think we have always handled ourselves pretty well through the use of the respectful nature of the conventions of this chamber in relation to pairing, etc., and certainly from the government's viewpoint we acknowledge that. There are some members who are unable to be with us today and who are paired. I note that, from the opposition's viewpoint and the government's viewpoint, we will continue to respect that. This is too important an issue. I know the generally smooth operations of the Legislative Council will continue in this chamber for so long as we will continue.

I want to thank the crossbench members, albeit only two are represented here today. I was going to say the hardcore members of the crossbench but I am not going to say that because I am being magnanimous and trying to be as close as I can ever be to statesmanlike. But certainly with Mr Parnell, the longest serving member of the crossbench in this chamber, can I thank the crossbenchers represented here and the ones who are not because, again, these times are such that we are having to move things quickly and sometimes not always in accordance with the conventions that we have respected for long periods of time in terms of processing particular bills. We acknowledge their forbearance and we thank them for their cooperation in terms of what needs to be done, so thank you.

#### *Parliamentary Procedure*

#### **ANSWERS TABLED**

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

#### **STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION**

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:32):** I move:

That during the present session, unless otherwise ordered, the standing orders be so far suspended as to enable the President during divisions to put the question and direct the ayes to remain in their places standing, and to direct the noes to remain in their places seated.

Motion carried.

**The PRESIDENT:** I note the absolute majority being present.

*Question Time***CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:32):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing about public health. What is the government's expert advice that has led to schools remaining open?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:32):** The Chief Public Health Officer in South Australia, Associate Professor Nicola Spurrier, is a member of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, which is meeting daily and has met daily for some weeks now. I suspect it is getting close to two months. For the early part of that period the advice of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee was going to the Australian health ministers COAG Health Council.

From Friday before last, a national cabinet was formed by the agreement of all of the first ministers of Australian jurisdictions, premiers, chief ministers and the Prime Minister. That cabinet decided that it would also endorse the AHPPC as its principal clinical advisory group. The COAG Health Council and the national cabinet consistently rely on the clinical advice of the AHPPC.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:34):** Supplementary arising from the answer: what is the health advice from the AHPPC that has led the government to have schools remain open?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:34):** I thank the honourable member for his question. I will let the AHPPC speak for itself. Its statement is dated 23 March, and the heading is 'AHPPC does not support closure of schools at this time'. I quote:

The AHPPC does not support the closure of schools given the lack of evidence of significant disease in children and the lack of reported major disease spreading in schools. Further, the closure of schools poses a major risk to children's education, mental health and wellbeing, particularly those from low socioeconomic regions, where schools provide an important environment for nurturing and learning. The impact on the critical workforce and potential exposure of elderly relatives caring for children is also of significance. School closure would achieve some degree of additional social distancing but the evidence of its benefit at this stage is minimal. AHPPC views schools as an essential service and strongly supports keeping schools open.

There are significant opportunities to improve social distancing within schools, and we will continue to work to provide advice to the sector. AHPPC will continue to review developing evidence regarding the effect of the disease in children and the role of children in the transmission of the virus.

School closures are likely to be more effective when approaching the peak of the epidemic and enforced for a shorter period. If there is a strong desire to close schools at this later stage, it is essential that an option is provided for children of essential service providers, such as health care workers, to attend school or be otherwise cared for.

AHPPC notes one state has elected to bring forward their Easter school holidays.

The AHPPC has been providing advice, as I said, to both the COAG Health Council and to the national cabinet. Of course, that advice has evolved over time and I am sure it will continue to evolve, but I can assure the people of South Australia that the Marshall Liberal government is committed to a public health response which is driven by the evidence, driven by clinicians, not by politicians. We will continue to respond to updated advice as we receive it.

**UNLEY HIGH SCHOOL**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:36):** Supplementary arising from the original answer: given the government's stated reliance on the health advice, why is the government allowing Unley High School to close?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:37):** I am not exactly sure what the honourable member is referring to. If the honourable member is referring to the advice given by the Communicable Disease Control Branch that any school with an outbreak needs to close for cleaning, then that, to me, is yet another example of the government responding to clinical advice.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (14:37):** Supplementary—

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** Supplementary arising—

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** Well, arising from the original answer is all we can go for, but we can come back to that Unley High School thing in a minute. Supplementary from the original answer: what is the evidence base and what is the modelling used for the AHPPC's advice?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:37):** I take advice from the AHPPC. They are not my agency. I don't know on the basis of which they have formed their advice.

#### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (14:37):** Supplementary arising from the original answer: is the advice and the modelling that the AHPPC are using the CDC United States data?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:38):** I am happy to take that question on notice.

#### UNLEY HIGH SCHOOL

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:38):** Supplementary arising from the original answer: can the minister advise is Unley High School moving to an online learning system and effectively closing for the rest of this term?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:38):** I am happy to take that question on notice and pass it to my colleague the Minister for Education in another place.

#### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:38):** Final supplementary from the opposition arising from the original answer: is the minister aware if any government schools have made a decision to move to online learning and close down at this stage?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:38):** I am happy to refer that question to the honourable Minister for Education, my colleague in another place.

#### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:38):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister confirm that as of this time there is no known community transmission of COVID-19 in South Australia? Can he advise how long it takes for a COVID-19 test to be returned and how many people have been turned away from testing centres?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:39):** I would refer here to national data. National data categorises source of infection by four classifications. Firstly, overseas acquired; secondly, locally acquired, contact of a confirmed case; thirdly, locally acquired, no known link; and four, under investigation. The third category 'locally acquired, no known link' is what is generally referred to as community transmission. There is no confirmed case of locally acquired with no known link. The honourable member was giving me a daisy chain of questions. Could I have number two?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN:** How long does it take for a COVID-19 test to be returned, and how many people have been turned away from testing centres?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** My understanding, as of this morning, is that the average wait was 21 hours, which, on my understanding, was down by nine hours relatively recently. One of the reasons why we have been able to reduce the turnaround time is that we are opening a series of clinics. I was delighted to be at the Hampstead centre this morning with the Premier for the opening of yet another drive-through clinic.

This is the second drive-through clinic to be established by the Marshall Liberal government. We were the second nation in the world to establish a drive-through clinic, the first being South Korea and they only beat us by a couple of days. I think that shows the innovation and the determination to deliver top quality care in the most efficient and safest way possible that we see in SA Health.

I would like to pay tribute yet again to SA Pathology and SA Health, as the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council and the Premier have done today. SA Health is demonstrating

all of the skill and expertise that they have developed over the years and has demonstrated the depth of their commitment to deliver top quality care to South Australians.

The third question was how many people have been turned away. This is an interesting question because the opposition has suggested that people being turned away is somehow refusing to face the disease. The fact of the matter is that it is not a good use of testing resources to test people who don't meet criteria for testing. In a global pandemic, we need to make sure that we target our testing so that we can support our response.

What South Australia is doing in the containment phase, and consistent with all the public health advice, is targeting our testing on people who have symptoms and who have had either a travel history or contact with a confirmed case.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:42):** Supplementary: how many people have been turned away because they don't meet the criteria the minister mentioned?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:42):** I will take that question on notice.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:42):** Further supplementary: after receiving GP approval, how many days does it take to be tested at the SA Pathology drive-through clinic at the Repat?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:42):** I would like to take the opportunity to clarify an issue in relation to what the honourable member calls GP approval. I am not exactly sure what the opposition wants us to do. When you get a medical result, it is not good clinical practice to just post it to the client. It is standard clinical practice in Australia to make sure that the person who is receiving the medical test actually has a health professional who can help them interpret and act on it.

That is not an issue when people present to an emergency department because we have clinicians, doctors, nurses and other health professionals there supporting our clients. If people are going up to a drive-through clinic, driving in and driving out, and they are not linked to a health professional, that is a risk to a good pathway of care.

Let me say this again—you will get bored with this—I want to laud SA Pathology for their innovation. They thought about this. How do you provide a drive-through service and still provide a supported pathway for patients? What they said is, 'We need to make sure that these people are linked to GPs.' So you need to have a GP referral—not a GP approval, a GP referral.

In particular, with the innovations introduced by the commonwealth government under the national health plan to respond to COVID-19, that consultation can even be by telephone. You ring up the GP for a Medicare-funded telephone consultation with your GP. They confirm that your testing is appropriate against the relevant criteria. They authorise the test, send the relevant authorisation through to SA Pathology and the test is undertaken. Through that process, the test actually has somewhere to go. The test can be referred back to the GP, who can engage the patient and support them if they are determined to be positive.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:45):** Further supplementary: does the minister agree that South Australia needs to broaden the number of people who are being tested for COVID-19?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:45):** This is one of the claims of the opposition that I find staggering—staggering. Let me refer to the AHPPC advice. The AHPPC talked about COVID-19 testing data, and it looked at Australia and a number of other jurisdictions. The ploy of the opposition is to suggest that we are testing people too narrowly and that somehow we are putting South Australians at risk. I would make two points: we are testing people on clinical advice according to clinical criteria. Up until this last weekend, that was primarily overseas travel, symptoms or contact with a known case.

On the weekend, the Chief Public Health Officer, Associate Professor Nicola Spurrier, decided that, considering the risk of community transmission from other states, it was appropriate to expand that criteria and now people who are returning to South Australia are asked to be tested if they have been interstate in the last seven days and show symptoms. That's the criteria itself. In other words, that's in a case where you choose to go and have a COVID-19 test. You can present at a dedicated clinic, you can present at an emergency department, you can present at a GP.

What SA Pathology did—let me say again that SA Pathology is an amazing, innovative organisation—very early in this pandemic is decide, 'We're not just going to test the cases where somebody has presented and meets the criteria for testing for COVID-19. If their GP or other health professional has asked for a pathology test that's related to a respiratory illness, out of an abundance of caution we will also test it for coronavirus.' Unlike any other jurisdiction in Australia—and I am not aware of any other jurisdiction in the world—we have had for weeks now a pattern of testing which doesn't just respond to criteria, it also leads to a testing for a sample where COVID-19 has not been specifically requested.

So what has that meant for our testing rate? As of 20 March, the United States of America had tested 17 of every 100,000 people. In relation to South Korea, which is often lauded as a strong case, that jurisdiction, as at 19 March, had tested 549 for every 100,000 people. Australia, as at 21 March, had tested 480. So people speak very positively about South Korea. Australia is not that far behind. Let me assure you, South Australia is streets ahead of that.

My latest advice is that we now have more than 1,000 tests per 100,000 population in South Australia, which is not only a great indication of the availability of dedicated COVID-19 testing, but the value of that respiratory panel general testing approach. So rather than nipping, undermining people's confidence in the testing regime in South Australia, the Labor opposition should actually be thanking the South Australia Pathology service for its extraordinary service to the people of South Australia.

## CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (14:49):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding public health.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE:** We are in uncertain times that no living Australian has been through before, and more than ever the community needs information about our capacity to respond to today and to the future. Reports indicate the outbreak in South Australia is some weeks behind other states and territories. This gives us an opportunity to learn from other states and respond. Given that, my questions to minister are:

1. What modelling or projections have been developed about when South Australia's current stock of COVID-19 testing reagent will be fully depleted?
2. How much reagent does South Australia have on order?
3. When is this due to arrive?
4. How long is it expected to last?
5. Do you have any expert health advice not to release this information?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:50):** Yet again, I would like to start with the end, and I would like to confront Labor's political games up-front. To suggest that clinicians are telling me not to tell the public key information about public health is a gross slur on their professionalism. It's exactly what Labor did when we had the earliest cases. You will remember we had the Chinese couple coming from Wuhan.

What Labor tried to suggest is that the public health clinicians were depriving the people of South Australia of the information they needed to keep themselves safe. They said, 'We need to know everywhere they went. We don't just want to know where there was confirmed contact. We want to know everywhere they went.' That was not relevant public health information. It served to undermine public confidence in the public health services at the very time we need their cooperation.

I would ask Labor to have a long, hard think. This pandemic is not going to be with us for a parliamentary sitting week or two: it will be with us for months. If Labor wants to be part of the solution, if it wants to be part of a community pulling together, this is like a wartime situation. If Labor wants to put itself across a partisan divide and let the people of South Australia down when they need a united community response, they will be forever shamed. In relation to the questions in relation to modelling, I will take them on notice.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (14:51):** A supplementary arising from the original answer: are these agreements in place to ensure that South Australia is not disadvantaged by other states and territories competing for the same reagent supply?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:52):** I don't know if I'm getting too sensitive, but is that the attitude for a collective national response? If I've got an Aboriginal person in the Northern Territory needing an ICU bed, am I going to say, 'I'm sorry, I might need that for a South Australian. Get lost'? No. We are going to work together as a nation, a state and a community to respond to this challenge. That will mean that other states and territories will send us supplies that we need, but that also means that other states and territories will send their Australian citizens who need care, and I am standing ready to do that.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:52):** A supplementary arising from the original answer: has the minister received any advice or any briefings on when South Australia's current stock of the reagent may be fully depleted?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:52):** I have regular conversations with SA Pathology. In terms of the capacity to meet the challenges, the fact that the Chief Public Health Officer expanded the criteria to include interstate travel demonstrates that SA Pathology and the stocks are meeting our foreseeable needs. I certainly have regular conversations with the clinical director of SA Pathology, Dr Tom Dodd, about issues such as reagents. Funnily enough, one of those was this morning.

Certainly, there will be challenges. I have said that in this house before. There will be challenges on things like reagents, there will be challenges on things like PPE, but the work being done by leading clinicians like Dr Tom Dodd, who I have huge confidence in, I believe will mean that South Australia will continue to meet the challenges of COVID-19.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:53):** A supplementary arising from the original answer: just for clarification, is the minister advising the chamber that the advice from his clinicians is that we will not run out of reagent and we have enough stocks to meet our current projected needs?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:54):** What I have said I will state again: we will have challenges across a range of medical supplies. We continue to seek fresh supplies. We continue to review the accessibility of tests. We also look at doing things better. SA Pathology yet again is showing its creativity, innovation and efficiency because they are, as I understand it, looking at different ways of managing the testing process so they can actually reduce the amount of reagent that is needed to deliver each test.

So with all due respect, I am not going to rely on back of the envelope calculations by Labor politicians. I am going to let the clinicians do what they do best: delivering high-quality clinical services. I am going to listen to the clinicians, not the Labor politicians.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:55):** A final supplementary: given that the minister is keen to take the South Australian people in his confidence, can the minister advise what the clinical advice is about the stocks of the reagent required for testing?



**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:55):** I have nothing to add to my answer.

### TRADE AND INVESTMENT

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (14:55):** My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Can the minister please provide an update to the council about how the Department for Trade and Investment is enhancing its digital capabilities to support trade and investment at this important time?

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Minister for Trade and Investment) (14:55):** I thank the honourable member for his very important question. The COVID-19 crisis presents an unprecedented disruption to how people traditionally communicate, affecting how businesses pursue global trade and investment opportunities. The state government is implementing a suite of digital measures to support and maintain our relationships with international partners during this crisis.

Upskilling our digital capabilities will not only allow us to interact with our partners in ways that we haven't ever before, it will also allow us to improve the trade and investment performance when Australia emerges from the COVID-19 crisis with new technologies, new approaches and technology. Additionally, the South Australian trade offices are more important than ever to engage with exporters and provide up-to-date information from on the ground.

To this end, we have developed a virtual action plan which has six key focuses. Firstly, our trade officers will host webinars for our local international audience that will allow us to continue to connect our state with the world and maintain important relationships with South Australia's key companies and markets. We already have webinars booked over the next two weeks with Japan, Malaysia, United States, China and the United Kingdom.

A new range of departmental digital assets will be released, including a more interactive website as well as investor portals. Video case studies that showcase our state's local producers for the first time will be able to take our partners on virtual walk-throughs of some of our state-of-the-art facilities, giving investors a real taste of the capacity of our state. For investors, we are also creating a one-stop shop where we will showcase a catalogue of investment-ready opportunities that we can promote to a global audience.

The second phase of this project will see the creation of a digital front door where the department will work with companies interested in investing in South Australia to curate and develop a suite of opportunities for them. We will also have on-demand virtual missions, and trade events will be launched, along with industry-specific sessions with the overseas offices and associations. In fact, in the very near future we will be having some virtual wine tastings. We are also launching on-demand business-to-business as well as business-to-government videoconferencing meetings.

Finally, we are taking South Australia to the world. You will see more promotion from our state's leading-edge creations and technologies across multiple channel media and social media as we pivot our strategy to focus on delivering this information directly to users' devices. With advice surrounding the crisis changing on a daily basis, our first and foremost responsibility is providing those affected with this unprecedented crisis with support and information, and the virtual action plan makes up just one aspect of my department's response to the coronavirus. We will continue to work tirelessly to support South Australian families, businesses and industry.

### HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS CENTRES

**The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (14:58):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Human Services about funding for housing and homelessness centres.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.C. PARNELL:** One of the most fundamental protections for individuals and the community during this public health emergency is that everyone has a safe and secure place to live. As well as being a basic human right, voluntary or mandatory isolation isn't possible if you don't have a home at all or if you don't know where you are going to be living week to week. With unemployment set to soar to levels not seen since the Great Depression 90 years ago, more South Australians than ever will struggle to afford their rent or mortgage and will be at risk of becoming homeless. It's also

clear that housing services and financial counselling services will be under pressure like never before.

Under current government policy, a number of housing and homelessness organisations have been told that they are being defunded. Some may be eligible to reapply for new contracts, but others are likely to close. For example, Shelter SA has reported that they will be defunded after October. They say this has come as a shock to them, and that they have provided advocacy for the housing and homelessness sector, without fear or favour, for the last 43 years.

Also, the future of the Tenants' Information and Advisory Service, Get-A-Place, and the Financial Services Clinic are uncertain from July as the government embarks on a new tendering process for a consolidated customer advisory and engagement service. My questions of the minister are:

1. In the interests of continuity of service delivery in the housing and homelessness sector, will the government suspend its proposed reform agenda until after the current public health emergency?
2. Will the government guarantee funding for at least the next 12 months to all existing housing and homelessness services, including Shelter SA, the Tenants' Information and Advisory Service, Get-A-Place, and the Financial Services Clinic?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (15:00):** I thank the honourable member for his question. In relation to the broad housing and homelessness sector, apart from the ones he mentioned in his question, their contracts have been extended for 12 months. In relation to the particular services he referred to, they were all advised earlier this month that we were looking at starting the first tranche of reforms in the housing and homelessness sector.

If I can just take it back a year or two, we had heard—both in opposition and in government—that there is not really a system. It is fractured, it is broken, it is not effective in terms of rehousing people and housing them effectively, applying early intervention to ensure, effectively, that if somebody is homeless we can rapidly get them into housing. Obviously, that is the most desirable outcome for them.

We see a lot of people who come into the system get referred between providers, who then may end up in homelessness again. There is a significant amount of funding that goes into homelessness in South Australia, in the order of \$70 million every year for some 21,000 clients. I think I have been advised by one of my colleagues not to do back of envelope calculations, but it works out to roughly \$3,000 per client, bearing in mind that it is not all unique clients. That is a lot of people who are not getting a response—which is to end their homeless situation—for that amount of funding.

We have done an enormous amount of consultation with the sector in terms of what this system needs to be. I think it is fair to say that by and large the sector is very supportive that we start homelessness reform. That is why we brought in Mr Ian Cox, who previously worked for Hutt Street, and it is why a number of us attended the global homelessness conference in Glasgow last year to see what they had done, which was major sector reform where there is much greater emphasis on partnerships and much greater emphasis on lived experience.

If I can turn to the issue of lived experience, this is the most important advice of all. These are the clients. These are the people who experience homelessness, and they have told us that the system isn't working for them. This is a cohort we are obviously quite concerned about at the moment, and I think we would be derelict in our duty if we were to pause this important reform. That is basically saying, 'What you have told us doesn't matter. For the sake of existing services, we are going to allow them to basically continue to support a system which isn't helping you get out of homelessness.'

Those particular services are not being 'defunded': they are being asked to put in tenders for a much more joined-up approach which has lived experience front and centre as we go forward. It is not my intention to pause that in any way. I think the crisis we have demonstrates how this important reform work should have taken place earlier. We have done the important consultation that I think was absolutely necessary to start the process, but we are very keen to ensure that these services are delivering for our most vulnerable.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:04):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding public health. I know that the minister has outlined some of the elements of the requirements to be eligible for a COVID-19 test. I am wondering if the minister could give a concise outline of the requirements or guidelines, whatever they are referred to as, to be eligible for a COVID-19 test as it stands today?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:05):** The Communicable Disease Control Branch of SA Health has advised clinicians that persons with a COVID-19 compatible illness who have been overseas or in contact with a known case in the 14 days prior to illness onset or interstate in the seven days prior to illness onset should be considered for SARS-CoV-2 testing.

**The PRESIDENT:** Supplementary question.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:05):** I am wondering if the minister can outline with the guidelines to be eligible that he has just stated, are all of those solely the South Australian experts who have come up with those or are some of those from the federal body that advises?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:05):** I wouldn't be surprised if our clinicians have gone nationally and internationally. There's advice on these matters available from a range of sources.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:06):** Supplementary: I might rephrase that. Is the minister aware what has been advised nationally and what elements of what he has outlined are over and above what the national guidelines currently suggest?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:06):** Certainly. As I indicated earlier, my understanding is that the interstate and the seven days prior to illness onset is a recent innovation in relation to South Australia. With all due respect to my interstate colleagues, it's because we've got significant community transmission in New South Wales that we need to put that in place. I can certainly understand why they wouldn't need to put it in place as for us going there.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:06):** Supplementary arising from the original answer: under the testing requirements as the minister outlined in his original answer, has every student who was on the bus with the Unley High School student who tested positive been offered a test for COVID-19?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:06):** I am happy to take that question on notice.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:07):** Supplementary arising from the answer and a similar question under the testing eligibility requirements that the minister outlined in his original answer: would somebody who worked in a cellar door in the Barossa, who developed symptoms but has not travelled, be offered a test?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:07):** The criteria are as I have laid down. I would highlight the point that the request for self-isolation in relation to people who have had a close contact is not relevant to the testing criteria. We don't actually ask somebody who is self-isolating to get tested; my understanding is we ask them to self-isolate.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:07):** Supplementary arising from the original answer: if someone is showing symptoms but has not come into contact with someone from interstate or overseas, or has not themselves been interstate or overseas, are they eligible to receive a COVID-19 test as it stands today?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:08):** I'm going to take all of these questions on notice, including the answers I have already given. The key point here is that clinicians are going to drive the testing criteria. Clinicians are going to drive the self-isolation requests, the COVID-19 tests on people who have had close contact with others. The particular response is driven by clinicians not directed by politicians.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:08):** Supplementary arising from the original answer: are there suggested guidelines from the AHPPC in relation to who should be eligible for a COVID-19 test?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:08):** I am happy to take that question on notice.

### ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (15:08):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. The COVID-19 pandemic is having an unprecedented impact on the South Australian economy and health system. Can the Treasurer please outline the details of the government's economic stimulus package, and is the government proposing any further assistance measures?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:09):** The Premier announced—I think the first state leader to announce—a very significant economic stimulus package of around about \$350 million. It does seem like months ago but it was probably only a couple of weeks ago, the time has moved so quickly.

The broad elements of that were, to the extent that it was possible, to provide some relief to actually—consistent with the advice that the Reserve Bank Governor and many other national commentators had made at the time—try to bring forward shovel-ready maintenance and/or construction programs into the latter part of this financial year and the start of the next financial year, so that we could help maintain jobs and economic activity within the community.

The best example of that was that by my colleague the Minister for Health—the outstanding and hardworking Minister for Health—in relation to country hospital maintenance programs. Money was brought forward from the forward years into this financial year and the early part of the next financial year for the essential maintenance which always needs to be done within country hospitals but does not always get done; however, because those programs were ready to go and the department was ready to go, authorisation was provided to the agency and then to those hospitals for that to continue.

We are similarly looking at that in relation to all other departments. The most obvious example is in education, but in other departments where there are ongoing maintenance programs where any of the work could be brought forward into this particular year or the start of next financial year, agencies and ministers are being encouraged to do that. There is still a very significant negotiation going on with the commonwealth government at the moment in relation to agreed funding, primarily for projects in regional areas.

The attraction of projects in regional areas in terms of country road funding such as road sealing and shoulder sealing is that country families and constituents generally welcome very openly any money being spent by any government on facilities in their particular areas. It is sometimes more of a challenge in built-up areas where there may well be compulsory acquisitions required in terms of congestion and work, there may well be planning issues and there may well be protests from residents who might be adversely impacted.

None of those issues generally apply when you talk about spending extra money in regional areas on regional roads in terms of upgrading those particular roads. There is a very significant

negotiation going on with our minister and the commonwealth minister at the moment and we are hoping for an early conclusion to that to bring forward a number of significant projects in country areas. There is a range of other initiatives that were also included and outlined in that particular initial package.

As the global pandemic has continued and the economic devastation that has ensued has multiplied—and clearly in recent days with the announcement of forced closure of quite a number of businesses such as hotels, restaurants, cafes, gyms, etc.—the economic devastation is much more apparent and much more comprehensive. The Premier has indicated, I think in the morning newspaper and morning radio interviews, that the government is now looking at a second economic stimulus package which will look at a range of financial incentives and benefits, together with whatever it is we can do in terms of trying to protect and stimulate job activity in those industries that are still allowed to be operational.

I know that in the Minister for Health's area I would be hopeful that in the next week or so he will be able to announce an initiative there which will see important work being done from a health viewpoint but equally an important economic stimulus in terms of job creation in that particular portfolio area as well, and all ministers are being asked to have a look at that. We are looking at a range of tax relief options that other state governments and territory governments have announced. Whilst Premier Marshall took the lead in announcing the first economic stimulus package, all other state and territory governments, I think, have now announced economic stimulus packages and there is further discussion about the further support that is going to be required.

In concluding, I note that the commonwealth government, of course, has much deeper pockets than any of us—and much deeper pockets than certainly South Australia—a very significant, almost \$20 billion package and soon after that the announcement of a \$66 billion package, and the media indicates that the government is already looking at a third package that might be required. So whilst we will probably, in the next few days, announce a further stimulus and recovery package, given the length of what we are confronting, I am sure it won't be the last. We will probably have to announce further refinements as we see the economic devastation which has impacted on a broader variety of industries.

It is clearly apparent without me, because I am not part of the national cabinet, so therefore I am not revealing anything that I clearly don't have any knowledge of at the moment, but clearly all the decisions that are taken internationally are that we move to more and more restrictions and, eventually, there will be wider and wider impacts in terms of the economic impacts right across the board. The commonwealth government has a very big role, which it is taking the lead on. We acknowledge the support of the federal opposition, in terms of very quickly, I think in less than 24 hours, in unprecedented fashion passing a package of measures which went through.

Whilst the opposition may have not agreed with everything if they had been in government at the time, they nevertheless said, 'We are prepared to support this to go through in the nation's interest,' and we acknowledge that support from the federal opposition and the crossbenchers in both houses of the federal parliament. So we will announce something, but it won't be the end of it. We will have to look at what occurs, and we will probably have to announce further packages of support as more and more information becomes available over the coming weeks and months.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:16):** Supplementary: given the closure of pubs, clubs, restaurants and other premises serving alcohol, will liquor licences be suspended or waived, either on a full or pro rata basis?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:16):** That's a perfect example of one of a range of options the government is currently considering, and our response will be apparent in the coming days, when we announce the second package. But, yes, clearly once the commonwealth government and the national cabinet makes a decision to say, 'Thou shalt not be allowed to open,' there are clearly economic impacts which both the federal and state government need to take into consideration. We are mindful of that.

We are aware of the views that are being expressed, and we are having to look at what our response, together with the commonwealth government response, might be, not just in relation to hotels—and I am sure the honourable member just used that as an example—but if you are running a gym, if you are running a cafe or a restaurant, or bars in the CBD, for example, with the liquor licensing fees that were already being charged but the increases that were coming through.

There are very many impacts. We are mindful of that. We are not adopting a position. Perhaps I should have said in response to my colleague the Hon. Jing Lee's question that I have said publicly on any number of occasions—so, too, has the Premier—that the government's major priority is obviously to protect as many lives as we can from a health viewpoint and to provide as much community safety as we humanly can, but similarly we are also mindful of the impacts on families and businesses during this particular period. They will be our priorities.

We have acknowledged—I acknowledged some many weeks ago now—that we will not deliver a budget surplus this year. We will not deliver a budget surplus next year. We will have significant budget deficits this year and next year. That is not our priority. I may well be the first Treasurer in the state parliament to ever publicly acknowledge that. We might have thought that perhaps some treasurers had that view, but they would never have admitted to it, but I do so on behalf of the government.

Our priorities are the priorities that we've outlined. We will have to spend whatever we have to spend in terms of combating the health threats that the Minister for Health identifies for us and the spending that needs to be spent in those areas. We will have to find the money and, yes, we have been and I guess will still be criticised that we are increasing the level of the state's debt to fund important infrastructure programs, but we will continue to fund those infrastructure programs where they can continue, and we will have to increase the level of the state's debt to fund the important health initiatives and the payroll tax or any other initiatives that we look at in terms of trying to maintain job activity within the community for at the very least this year and next year.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (15:19):** Supplementary arising from the original answer: as we move to further community restrictions, as highlighted by the Treasurer, can the Treasurer break down what of the \$350 million, or the future package, will go into the back pockets of South Australians and households?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:19):** No, I can't give a simple answer to that. Let me give the simple example of essential maintenance in country hospitals. We would hope to see a lot of that go into the back pockets of South Australian tradies in country communities. That is work that they might not have had, but we can bring forward essential maintenance, whether it be painting, plumbing or electrical work, or whatever it is. Otherwise, they might not have had jobs and they might not have had money in their back pockets to feed both themselves and their families. Through that essential work and contract, they will have money in their back pockets.

It is not, from our viewpoint, a simple issue. The commonwealth government has, for example, virtually doubled the unemployment benefit or the Newstart Allowance, whatever the new title is for that particular benefit. That is money directly provided, and they have also provided money by way of one-off grants to individuals. They have provided very significant lumps of money.

Of course, because they have much deeper pockets—as I said, \$20 billion and \$66 billion that they are able to spend in the first two packages and they are looking at a third package, so we understand—they have the capacity to do that, but I don't think we should downplay the significance of what we in the state and regional governments can do. We can do some lifting in relation to providing direct cash benefits to certain South Australians.

What we are going to do, for example, from 1 July this year, when we will still be in the middle of a coronavirus pandemic, is offer a very significant reduction in water prices in South Australia. That will mean South Australian families will have more money in their back pockets, to use the honourable member's phrase, because their water bills will be significantly lower from 1 July.

So, yes, we can and will do some issues there, but I don't think we should downplay the significance of being able to provide contracts and jobs to tradies and others in certain areas when

otherwise they might not be getting that economic stimulus and support, and providing funding for them.

### ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

**The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (15:22):** My supplementary question is: Treasurer, when you are in discussions with the federal government about bringing forward some of these—I think he used the word 'shovel-ready'—projects, is consideration being given to redirecting some of those government commitments to projects that are more relevant to South Australia during an emergency, such as projects that create more jobs or, as the Treasurer mentioned, projects that might relate to the health system?

To put the question in another way, rather than widening Portrush Road, Cross Road or Fullarton Road—these contentious urban projects—is the minister asking the feds to redirect some of those tens of millions of dollars to other projects that might be more relevant to South Australia during a health emergency?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:22):** The simple answer is no. We are actually asking the federal government to put their hands in their back pockets and give us more money for those regional road projects. Both the federal and state governments do believe these projects have merit in terms of built-up areas, but they necessarily take time, for the reasons that I have outlined.

We are not resiling from the importance of the congestion busting intersection projects that have been announced in the last 12 months, but what we are saying in this climate of emergency to the commonwealth government—and they have agreed—is 'Okay, if you are looking for shovel-ready projects and work that can be done much more quickly, then there are important shoulder sealing and, in particular, road sealing works in country areas that fit the bill.'

Previously, I have been publicly quoted as saying overtaking lanes, but I have been advised by people more expert than I that there are marginally more complications in getting overtaking lanes done through planning requirements and others. It is much quicker to get road servicing and shoulder sealing done, and so my language has excluded the third in more recent times, based on much better advice. That is the area that we are negotiating. I am not, but minister Knoll is negotiating with his commonwealth colleagues. As I said, we are very hopeful that in the very near future we will get some announcements in relation to regional road projects.

### ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:24):** Supplementary from the original answer: does the Treasurer have or can he take on notice and bring back a figure of what portion of the \$350 million is new money, what portion is brought forward from the forward estimates and what portion was money that had been indicated may be spent outside the forward estimates?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:24):** I am happy to take that question on notice. We have openly acknowledged, as I have outlined in this house today, that a significant part of the maintenance-type projects that we talked about in the \$350 million was the bringing forward of projects which are in the forward estimates in maybe years three and four of the forward estimates into year one and year two. A number of the other initiatives were obviously examples of new money that the government had committed to. I am happy to get a broad description of those and bring them back to the house.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:25):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. What do your projections and modelling show about how many ICU beds our state may need to treat COVID-19 patients?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:25):** The modelling being done by SA Health shows that we will need a vastly divergent set of requirements and resources depending on the scenario.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:25):** Supplementary: my question—perhaps the minister didn't hear correctly—was how many ICU beds? As part of that divergent set of needs, how many will be ICU beds that are needed?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:26):** Let me go slowly, then. The whole strategy of this government is to slow the spread of coronavirus so that we can not only minimise the peak but also push it out. The reason for that is because, if we can spread the ICU demand and the demand for other health services over a longer period, our health system will have a greater capacity to cope. It will also mean—to go back to the ICU bed point—we will need significantly fewer ICU beds.

The reality is that a relatively small proportion of people will experience severe symptoms of COVID-19. Unfortunately, it is particularly amongst people with comorbidities and the elderly. But, as the WHO Secretary-General reminded us in recent days, young people are not immune, and also young people have a responsibility to support the health of the whole community, not just their own. The projections for the demand on ICU beds are completely predicated on our capacity to flatten the curve, to slow the spread.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:27):** Further supplementary: is the minister saying that the projections don't include a number of how many ICU beds are expected to be needed, given the information that we currently have?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:27):** They certainly do involve estimates. The fact of the matter is that, for every scenario, there will be a different set of resource requirements.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:28):** Supplementary: can the minister advise what is the high-end projection of the requirement of how many ICU beds will be needed?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:28):** I am happy to take that on notice.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:28):** Further supplementary: can the minister advise how many ICU beds we currently have in our system today?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:28):** I will take that on notice to be precise. My understanding is that we have in South Australia, across the whole system, over 200.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:29):** Further supplementary: are new ICU beds being created, and, if so, at this stage where will they be and what will the numbers be at each location?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:29):** The challenge in terms of ICU will not be so much the beds but the workforce to run them, so the major effort in relation to building our ICU capacity is actually expanding and upskilling our workforce to be able to man the beds as they are needed.

### CORONAVIRUS

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:29):** A further supplementary: the minister didn't answer the question of how many new ICU beds are being created and at what locations.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:29):** Again, to go back to my earlier comments, the modelling has a wide range of expected demand. In terms of supply, SA Health is continuing to roll out strategies to expand the supply of ICU.



**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:30):** A further supplementary: are any new ICU beds currently being created?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:30):** Yes.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:30):** Supplementary: can the minister advise what that number is then, as we are at today?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:30):** I refer the honourable member to my previous answer.

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:30):** A further supplementary: how many additional clinical staff are being trained to support the ICU and beds for COVID-19 patients?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:30):** I am happy to take that question on notice.

**SHOP TRADING HOURS**

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:30):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question to the Treasurer on the topic of the shop trading hours deregulation trial.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** Members would be well aware that just recently *The Advertiser* announced in a blaring headline on the front page that a 'shop 'til you drop', perhaps unfortunately titled, trial would be done over 30 days of deregulated and extended supermarket shopping hours for our state. My questions to the Treasurer are:

1. What was the process that led to the announcement of this trial?
2. How will the trial be evaluated?
3. What public health evidence is there to support such a trial?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:31):** I am very mindful of the time and that we do have an important engagement across the road, so I will make my answer relatively brief, but I am happy to respond on another occasion. In terms of making the decision we took, we were aware of the health advice that was being provided to the government about the concerns that were being expressed about the pandemonium that was occurring within shopping centres, which was clearly from a health viewpoint not productive. It was also abhorrent in terms of social behaviour as well, but from a health perspective the thousands of people trying to cram into aisles cheek and jowl to get whether it be toilet paper or whatever else wasn't productive.

The health advice was to try to spread the shopping hours with the option of a longer period of time so that the people could actually shop over a longer period of time, in particular the more restricted hours through the weekend. Trading hours in the suburbs already allow you to shop for 21 of the 24 hours anyway, so that wasn't really the focus of the government's announcement. It was to try to extend the period, if the option was picked up.

As I have said in the paper this morning, the government was delighted with the response. Some supermarkets took up the option of extending their hours, some significantly on the weekend. One particular supermarket amongst the independent group extended their hours on one day by about seven hours in terms of extra trading hours. That was the from the Drakes Supermarkets group. Woolworths have extended their hours on weekends; Coles didn't. I don't believe Aldi did either. But the government's view was to allow the option for those that wanted to and, from a health viewpoint, to try to spread the shopping over a longer period of time, if traders wanted to do it.

I do note that one of the fierce opponents of shop trading hours extension, the Hon. Frank Pangallo, publicly urged me to do this and indeed took credit for it and was acknowledged

in the *Sunday Mail*, I think, as having had a good week because he could say, 'I told you so.' So whilst he was a fierce opponent of extended shop trading hours, he not only advocated and called for it, he actually was pleased to accept credit for the government's, what he would have seen as, very wise decision in an emergency response to the coronavirus pandemic just for a period of 30 days.

*Personal Explanation*

**CORONAVIRUS**

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:34):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** In answer to a question from the Hon. Clare Scriven, I referred to ICU beds. I will clarify that, across the system I am advised that including the capacity for surge we would have more than 300 ICU beds.

*Address in Reply*

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from 4 March 2020.)

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:34):** I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the Address in Reply debate. I acknowledge publicly their contributions. We look forward to presenting the Address in Reply to the Governor in the very near future.

**The PRESIDENT:** I advise honourable members that His Excellency the Governor will receive the President and members of the council appointed to the committee to prepare the draft Address in Reply at 3.40pm today for the presentation of the Address in Reply. I ask those honourable members to accompany me to Government House. The council will resume at the ringing of the bells.

*Sitting suspended from 15:35 to 15:49.*

**The PRESIDENT:** I have to inform the council that, accompanied by the mover, seconder and honourable members appointed to the committee to prepare a draft Address in Reply, I proceeded to Government House and there presented to His Excellency the Address in Reply to His Excellency's opening speech adopted by the council this day, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:

The Honourable the President  
and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council

Thank you for your Address-in-Reply to the Speech with which I opened the Second Session of the Fifty-Fourth Parliament.

I am confident that you will give your best consideration to all matters placed before you.

I pray that your deliberations will add meaning and value to the lives of our South Australian community.

His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC

GOVERNOR OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

*Bills*

**FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 March 2020.)

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:50):** I rise to speak today about the Fire and Emergency Services (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill. Much of the time of this parliamentary session so far has been occupied by members' contributions regarding the recent horrific bushfire season that had such a tremendously terrible impact on South Australia. We have heard numerous recounts of the damage and lost inflicted on South Australian citizens and their properties right across the state, but especially on the peninsula, in the Hills and on Kangaroo Island. Many spoke about how South Australians banded together and in some cases did so despite significant adversity that they faced as individuals. What is clear from all the members' contributions that we have heard on that topic thus far is that there is unanimous support for our state to recover from these terrible fires and the devastation that ensued.

Fortunately, the bushfires that were ablaze for weeks have now all been extinguished for some time and the effort to clean up and recover is well underway. The inevitable fact of the Australian environment is that bushfires will burn again in the future. We have seen them in the past and, unfortunately, we will see them again. With all that is happening in the world currently in addition to that, we cannot neglect to implement improvements from the lessons learned from the fire season that we have all just suffered through.

There is much work to be done. Albeit just a single piece in the puzzle, this current bill before us is a step in the right direction for our state and our future resilience in the face of a very significant emergency. I know that my colleague minister Wingard has been working hard on this bill for some time. He and the department have consulted widely and considered the findings of a parliamentary committee and presented a bill which will improve the state's emergency services. The bill was introduced following a number of reviews undertaken over several years, dating back to the previous government.

This bill aims specifically to rectify a range of long overdue technical issues that were identified in the reviews. Other adjustments include improvements to the fire safety provisions, as well as recognising the command structures of the SES. All of these changes should streamline and complement the current legislation. As you would be aware, this bill also seeks to protect volunteers who sacrifice so much for their fellow South Australians, and this is one aspect of the bill of which I am particularly proud. If passed, this bill would protect volunteers from being liable to dismissal or prejudiced in some way in their employment due to being called to the emergencies in their capacity as a volunteer.

As we have seen recently, volunteers missed significant amounts of their normal work time to go and fight the fires and help save properties and people's livelihoods. As a government, we want to continue to incentivise South Australians to volunteer for their local CFS brigades or to join an SES unit. To the greatest extent possible, these volunteers should not be financially penalised due to their generosity and sense of service. Indeed, we should do all we can to protect them in the circumstances.

Under this bill, a volunteer's sacrifices cannot equate to their job being sacrificed, lost or in any way prejudiced against them. These employment protections solidify what I believe would be a widely held community belief that those who help in our time of need for no personal gain should be protected in their work. Another change this bill seeks to reform is the procedure regarding the cessation of an activity that may cause a fire. This bill will grant power to SAPOL to direct a person to cease an activity deemed likely to cause a fire. A significant activity which would fall within the scope of this section is, of course, harvesting.

The minister has consulted widely on this section and it has clear implications on those regionally based. The power to cease harvesting considers this consultation and draws on the recommendations of the parliamentary select committee report of 4 April 2019. It is clear that this is not a power for SAPOL to exercise daily throughout the harvest period and, as the member for Narungga has said in the other place, many of our farming communities have sophisticated networks of weather stations that they utilise to guide their harvesting.

This cessation direction power is a safety net for our community and it should only be used in the most rarest of circumstances. Indeed, it is very unusual for farmers to engage in rogue or

unsafe practices and it is our government's intention to try to create safeguards against future preventable fires in our regional communities.

I should stress that, whilst there has been some considerable debate about this particular issue in this particular bill, I think it has landed in the right place. These powers rightly lay with SAPOL in my view, and they should be used very rarely indeed. Farmers, on the whole, do a magnificent job, are very sensible people and will do nothing to risk unnecessary fires. That is why these powers should be used very sparingly indeed and I hope that is the case.

I congratulate the minister on this bill. It is one thing to commission reports and it is another to go about making change. Now is the time to implement greater protection for emergency volunteers in their everyday employment. Additionally, it is an appropriate time, given what we have seen, to implement precautions for our community's safety. Granting SAPOL the power to cease activity deemed likely to cause a fire is one safeguard we can implement to try to stop preventable fires in high-risk areas. I stress again that I see this power as being something that should be used in very limited cases where appropriate, and SAPOL is the appropriate agency to be able to enforce that power.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:56):** I rise on behalf of the Greens to support the Fire and Emergency Services (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill but note that we have some concerns that will be addressed by support of the Labor amendment to this bill. Without support for that amendment, however, we will withdraw our support for the bill in total.

I outline that this has been a long time in the making. I draw members' attention to the fact that we have heard that the minister has consulted long and broadly. We had a select committee in the other place because the minister had not originally consulted appropriately. Errors were made, lines of responsibility and liability were not clarified, and key stakeholders were neither consulted nor happy. Those key stakeholders being the police, through their representation of the Police Association, and the CFS Volunteers Association representing those volunteers that we laud so long and so rightly in this place when we talk about these topics.

The Greens say it is not worth all of the words that we put on the record in this place, that we value our volunteers, that we value our police force, if we cannot listen to them when we legislate to directly affect them. When that legislation may indeed adversely affect them, as the Police Association has raised in the case of the police, then we need to listen a little harder in the Legislative Council so that the government ministers of the day may perhaps hear.

I draw members' attention to the correspondence of 9 December 2019, which was a reason for this bill being deemed as somewhat controversial and not passing before parliament was prorogued last year. That letter from Mark Carroll, the President of the Police Association of this state, states that with regard to this:

The Police Association does not support this clause in its present form.

With regard to the insertion of section 1051A—Power of direction by police officer, he notes and I have had conversations with Mr Carroll about this as well to inform the Greens' position:

It is concerning that legislation would empower a police officer to direct a person (or a farmer) in this manner, without advice from an authorized expert possessing the requisite skills, knowledge and training.

I also have concern for members who might fail to give a direction, and are subsequently blamed for a fire and loss of life or property. Without some form of legislated interaction with an authorized expert, police officers will be set up to fail.

At the time, he noted that the legislation also makes no provision for what form the direction of a police officer might take, and it was the association's view that a prescribed direction should be included in either the act or supporting regulations. My understanding is that while nobody actually disagrees with these errors that were identified with the legislation through the consultation process of the parliament—not of the government through that select committee process—despite efforts by the Police Association, they have been assured by the minister that he understands their concerns, he agrees with their concerns, but it can all be fixed up in the regulations later.

That is not acceptable. That is not something that this Legislative Council should accept, and the Greens will not accept that. Those changes, that nobody disagrees with, that everyone has now

through that select committee process been made to realise is the appropriate way forward, should be in the act, not in the regulations.

We will not leave to chance something to be gazetted by a minister who failed to consult properly on this bill in the first place, who has failed to amend the legislation we currently debate, and who has waited for the Labor opposition to put that amendment to this bill that we debate in coming days and hours. That is not good enough and the Greens will not support this bill unless that Labor amendment is endorsed.

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

### **LABOUR HIRE LICENSING (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 20 February 2020.)

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:01):** I rise to put on the record the Greens' position on this bill. Not for the first time have the Greens made their intentions known on labour hire licensing legislation for this state. Indeed, under the Weatherill government it was a hard-fought campaign and a very close vote to pass the original legislation which, of course, was then the subject in this Marshall government of a repeal bill seeking to not have this legislation progress at all.

We have seen several incarnations now of attempts to water down labour hire licensing in this state. We are told that it is too expensive, it is too hard, it is too tricky, and every excuse in the book has been placed into the public realm to somehow neuter laws that I think we should have been very proud, as a parliament, to pass and have seen implemented well before they were.

The scheme has now started up and there are some what you would call teething problems; however, the attitude of this government to stymie, delay and obfuscate and say that it is all too hard to implement does not imbue the Greens with trust. So while we will support the second reading of this bill, we reserve our right to oppose it at the third reading stage. I understand that the Labor Party has amendments that may seek to alleviate some of the concerns raised, to hone this legislation so that it does indeed target those it most needs to.

However, we put on the record that we do not resile from the very worthy principle that this parliament passed under the Weatherill government: that we need protection for those workers in the labour hire industry who are the most vulnerable and the most exploited workers, and if it costs more to ensure that they are not made so vulnerable, that they are not exploited, then so be it. If the government wishes to save money, we suggest they save money elsewhere.

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

### **PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (COMMENCEMENT OF CODE) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Final Stages*

The House of Assembly agreed to the bill without any amendment.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Introduction and First Reading*

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

#### *Second Reading*

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Minister for Trade and Investment) (16:05):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation and the detailed explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

The Local Government (Public Health Emergency) Amendment Bill 2020 (the Bill) will amend the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act) to allow the Minister to make a notice that varies or suspends the operation of specified provisions of the Act during a public health emergency to allow councils to continue to operate and make critical decisions.

As all Members know, we are now facing an unprecedented public health emergency.

Like Federal and State Government, councils are now planning how they must operate during the COVID-19 public health emergency. It's critical that they do, so that they can continue to provide the essential services that our communities rely on. It's also critical that the State Government take the steps that are necessary to support councils to continue to operate, and make the decisions that are so vital to our local communities.

One important action that we need to take care of is to simply ensure that councils can continue to meet and make critical decisions. This Bill proposes to give the Minister a power to make notices that vary or suspend the operation of specific provisions of the Act, to allow councils to continue to operate and make critical decisions in a public health emergency.

Councils are rightly concerned that public health measures, such as requirements for people to self-isolate, or restrictions on gatherings, may prevent council meetings from meeting quorum requirements under the Act, and therefore prevent critical decisions being made.

This concern is generated by the fact that the Act requires council members to attend ordinary and special meetings of council in person. While members of council committees and subsidiaries can participate in meetings through electronic means, this is not available to council meetings, to ensure both the highest integrity of council decisions and accountability and transparency of council activities. However, in a public health emergency, our priorities must be balanced.

I therefore propose that, if this Bill is passed by Parliament, after the commencement of the new powers, I will immediately make a notice to allow council members to participate in council meetings through electronic means, and make necessary variations to other meeting procedures to enable this.

I am also aware that it is possible that while this initial notice would be made to ensure that councils can meet quorum requirements, a situation may arise where a council or a number of councils cannot make quorum due to illness or other circumstances related to the public health emergency.

As the Bill allows for the Minister to make a notice varying or suspending the operation of any provisions of the Act, I would consider making a notice to allow councils to make decisions inquorate, if absolutely necessary. I expect that a notice to this effect would only be made in exceptional circumstances where a council's ability to form quorum has been affected by illness, and critical decisions must be made, particularly decisions that, under the Act, councils cannot delegate to a chief executive officer or other body.

I am also aware that councils have raised concerns regarding their ability to comply with provisions of the Act that require council meetings to be open to the public or to hold public meetings as part of required community engagement, if restrictions on gatherings are in place to protect public health. It's not reasonable to expect councils to prioritise compliance with these provisions ahead of public health at this critical time.

However, the proposed amendments would allow this matter—or any other that may arise through a rapidly evolving public health crisis—to be addressed through a notice, if it is reasonably necessary. It will be possible to vary or suspend the operation of any part of the Act as necessary to address public health concerns, or to support councils to continue operating as effectively as possible.

I am aware that I am asking Members to consider granting the Minister a very wide-ranging power. This is why the Bill includes several critical restraints to ensure that it strikes a balance between assisting councils and their communities in a responsive and timely fashion while ensuring that this power is used appropriately.

The first of these measures is that the Minister will only have the power to make a notice when a public health emergency has been declared under s 87 of the South Australian Public Health Act 2011. The Bill does allow for a circumstance where a public health emergency has been superseded by a declaration under the *Emergency Management Act 2004*, however, a notice cannot be made until a public health emergency has been declared.

Secondly, while a notice may specify a period for which it is in effect, it is important to note that all notices cease to have effect 28 days after the cessation of all declarations relating to the emergency to which the notice relates. Therefore, it will not be possible for a Minister to make a notice that has longer-term impacts on the operation of the Act.

The Bill also allows for notices to be disallowed by Parliament, under the Subordinate Legislation Act 1978. This will ensure the proper scrutiny, and if necessary, change, of any notice made by the Minister. The Minister will also be required to consult with the Local Government Association before making any notice, and cannot make a notice that imposes restrictions or limitations on the power of a council to impose rates and charges in land within its area.

Finally, the notice can also include conditions that councils must comply with. I expect that these can be used to protect the openness and accountability of council decisions, if necessary.

I emphasise that this Bill is before Members for one reason—to enable councils to continue to operate effectively and make critical decisions during periods of public health emergencies.

I commend the Bill to Members.

#### Explanation of Clauses

##### Part 1—Preliminary

###### 1—Short title

###### 2—Amendment provisions

These clauses are formal.

##### Part 2—Amendment of Local Government Act 1999

###### 3—Insertion of section 302B

This clause inserts a new section in the Act allowing the Minister, by notice, to vary or suspend the operation of provisions of the Act if that is reasonably necessary in response to an emergency that has been declared as a public health emergency (whether or not that is subsequently also declared under the *Emergency Management Act 2004*). The notice may apply to specified councils, or classes of councils, or to all councils and may operate subject to conditions. The notice is disallowable and may operate for up to 28 days after the end of the period of the declared emergency, provided that the variation or suspension of the specified provisions remains reasonably necessary as a result of the declared emergency. The section also contains a sunset provision and a review requirement.

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

### **CORONERS (UNDETERMINED NATURAL CAUSES) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Introduction and First Reading*

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

#### *Second Reading*

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (16:08):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Coroners (Undetermined Natural Causes) Amendment Bill 2020. The bill amends the Coroners Act 2003 to allow the state Coroner to return a finding of undetermined natural causes in appropriate cases. The bill is intended to ensure efficient use of state forensic resources and to spare families the stress of a coronial investigation where possible.

The role of the state Coroner is to investigate certain South Australian deaths to determine the cause of death. Section 29 of the Coroners Act requires that a cause of death be found for each and every death reported to the state Coroner. A reportable death is defined in section 2 of the Coroners Act and covers a wide range of circumstances, including deaths by unexpected, unnatural, unusual, violent or unknown causes; deaths that occur within 24 hours of being discharged from a hospital or having sought emergency treatment at a hospital; deaths of persons protected under guardianship or administration orders; and deaths in custody.

If a death is reportable, a person becoming aware of the death must report it to the state Coroner or a police officer. In some cases, forensic pathologists or other medical practitioners can be confident that a death was due to natural and unsuspecting causes but a post-mortem examination is required to determine the precise cause of death; for example, whether the natural death was due to pulmonary embolism or ischaemic heart disease.

In these circumstances, the act requires that forensic testing on the deceased be performed regardless of the family's wishes and the public interest in performing such testing. The bill instead provides the state Coroner with a discretion to state that a death was due to undetermined natural causes and to discontinue the investigation. Under the bill, it is proposed that the state Coroner's discretion is subject to several safeguarding conditions.

First, the finding of undetermined natural causes cannot be made if an inquest is required. Under the act, some deaths reported to the state Coroner are subject to a hearing by the Coroners Court, known as an inquest. The court hears evidence about the surrounding circumstances of the death to provide extra oversight and to ascertain whether and how the death could have been

prevented. A full court inquest into the cause and circumstances of a death requires precise findings. An undetermined natural causes finding is not appropriate if the matter will be progressed to an inquest.

Secondly, to use the undetermined natural causes finding the state Coroner must be satisfied, after obtaining relevant medical information or advice, that the death was due to natural causes. A natural cause death refers to a death due to an illness or internal malfunction of the body rather than directly caused by external factors. To illustrate, naturally occurring diseases, degenerative ageing or congenital anomalies are natural causes of death. Accidents, animal attacks, suicide or homicide are not natural causes.

Thirdly, a senior next of kin of the deceased person must give their consent for the state Coroner to cease testing and return a finding of undetermined natural causes. New South Wales has a similar provision in their Coroners Act and, in their experience, the next of kin frequently support the decision to cease testing as the coronial process can be very stressful for families of the deceased. The state Coroner retains the ultimate discretion as to whether to use the undetermined natural causes finding. They will be able to continue investigation into any death by natural causes if they consider it is in the public interest, even if the senior next of kin would prefer that investigation cease.

It is expected that the bill will help to reduce the workload on Forensic Science SA, which performs the necessary forensic testing for coronial investigations. The pathologists at Forensic Science SA experience a heavy workload and the demands on their time are great. Several government measures are being implemented to assist with this workload, including this bill. Another effort is the government commitment to fund an on-site CT scanner at Forensic Science SA.

Work on this bill has been underway for some months and is part of the government's justice agenda that aims to ensure that policies and legislation reflect contemporary South Australian needs. However, reducing the burden on Forensic Science SA has become particularly critical due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the coming months, it is expected that all government services will experience strain due to staff illness and isolation. Forensic Science SA will face particular difficulties due to the nature of their work. Forensic testing on deceased persons cannot be postponed or done from home. Therefore this bill, which will reduce the need for forensic testing by Forensic Science SA, is critical.

I commend the bill to the council and seek to insert the explanation of clauses in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

#### Explanation of Clauses

##### Part 1—Preliminary

###### 1—Short title

###### 2—Amendment provisions

These clauses are formal.

##### Part 2—Amendment of *Coroners Act 2003*

###### 3—Amendment of section 29—Finding to be made as to cause of notified reportable death

This clause amends section 29 to allow the Coroner to make a finding that a death was due to undetermined natural causes if:

- no inquest was required; and
- after relevant medical advice, the Coroner has reasonable grounds to believe that the death was due to natural causes; and
- a senior next of kin indicates consent to having no further investigation, inquiry or inquest conducted for the purpose of determining the precise cause of death.

##### Schedule 1—Transitional provision



## 1—Operation of amendment

The amendment applies in relation to a reportable death regardless of whether the State Coroner was notified of the death before or after its commencement.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (16:12):** I rise to indicate that I will be the lead speaker and have conduct of this bill for the opposition. I indicate that the opposition supports the passage of this bill. Once the chamber is ready, we will be facilitating it as quickly as the government wishes through all stages so it can be enacted.

The Leader of the Government in this place has outlined succinctly what this bill does. It is a reasonably simple bill in effect. It means that reportable deaths, which are defined in section 3 (the interpretation section) of the Coroners Act 2003, can be defined as deaths by 'undetermined natural causes' if two condition precedents exist: firstly, that the state Coroner believes that the death was due to natural causes, but, secondly and importantly, that a senior next of kin of the deceased person—and the bill in a cascading flow outlines who the next of kin is—indicates in writing their consent to such. As the leader has outlined, there is the protection that, even if the Coroner wishes to do this, if the senior next of kin for the deceased does not then it goes the way that it does currently under the act.

Reportable deaths are not just things like unexpected, unnatural, unusual, violent or unknown deaths, or deaths in custody. Reportable deaths relate to certain classes of people. They have been outlined in the leader's second reading explanation. They include a person who has been discharged from a hospital after being an inpatient within the last 24 hours or a person having sought emergency treatment at a hospital within the last 24 hours; or classes of people, such as protected persons under the Aged and Infirm Persons' Property Act or the Guardianship and Administration Act or the minister or chief executive under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act.

Any person who falls into that category of person, as the Leader of the Government outlined, may have multiple possible reasons, all being related natural causes, that could have caused the death, including various respiratory conditions or heart conditions. As it currently stands, if you are one of the people who fall into one of those categories, the Coroner is required to state the cause of death, and if that requires a full investigation and autopsies, the Coroner is required to do that.

Under the changes that are being proposed here, if the Coroner, again with those two conditions precedent, after having obtained medical information or advice, has reasonable grounds to believe it was due to natural causes, with the concurrence in writing of the senior next of kin can make the finding that the death was due to undetermined natural causes.

I thank the Attorney for a briefing on this bill last night and although, as it has been explained, this bill is not about what we face with coronavirus per se, it does mean that it might lighten some of the workload that the Coroner, the Coroners Court and the Coroner's Office may face. If there were a large number of deaths that could be due to an underlying virus or other condition but end up being due to natural causes, then this may help the Coroner to undertake their workload.

There was discussion with the Attorney-General about the possibility of a legislated review of the operation of this new part of the act. Rather than hold the passage of this bill up with a legislated review, I note the Attorney-General put on the record in her contributions in the other place an undertaking that within 12 months of this act coming into operation, after 12 months within 30 days, the Attorney will furnish to the parliament a review of the operation of this particular clause that includes the number of times this particular clause has been used. I thank the Attorney for placing that on the record in the other place, which gives us more confidence to pass this.

The Attorney did explain that this is not something that has been requested or come to light in very recent times with the current crisis in mind but has been around for quite some time. With the possibility that the Coroner's workload may increase, and may have deaths due to natural causes regardless of the initial infection that a person may get, it is an opportune time to have this passed to make sure the Coroner's Office, the Coroners Court and the state Coroner can perform their duties effectively and efficiently. As I indicated, we stand ready to pass this as quickly as the government wishes it to be passed this week.

**The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (16:17):** The Greens will be supporting this legislation. We understand that it is not specifically related to the COVID-19 public emergency. However, clearly it is relevant to the emergency. In a nutshell, I think what we all expect of the Coroner is that he or she will investigate things that need to be investigated, but sometimes the response is 'nothing to see here'. A death is certainly sad, devastating perhaps, but if there is nothing particularly unusual about it then it is not something that need occupy a lot of the Coroner's time. I note that the Coroner's Office is particularly snowed under at the moment, and in fact it is taking some years for many cases to be finalised, so I do not think we want to be adding unnecessarily to that work pressure.

I note, as has already been said, that the concept of reportable deaths is much wider than what many people would think of, in terms of accidents and the like, and it does include people who have died who have recently been in hospital or who were in hospital. I think we do need to narrow the scope. The lens through which we should look at this bill, I think, would be whether someone could fall victim to foul play and find that it was just hidden amongst a statistic of COVID diseases. I think the prospect of that is extremely low. I take some comfort from the fact that the Coroner is still able, on the basis of information provided by anyone, to look into a death. The fact that it might not be formally reportable does not mean that the Coroner cannot look at it. I think that is an important check and balance.

I would say finally that we would all sincerely hope that we do not get to the situation that has apparently been reached in Italy, where the hospital staff find themselves with the appalling job of triaging who gets the ventilator and who does not. As Norman Swan of the ABC put it very bluntly some days ago, people over 60 are being pushed into the corner to die. In the context of the South Australian hospital system, if anyone suffered such neglect in the hospital system you would think that the Coroner would absolutely want to know about that and would make recommendations and want to report.

I think there would still be scope in circumstances like that because the next of kin, I am sure, would no doubt be crying out for someone to have a good look at what happened to their loved one. Let's hope and actively work towards minimising the spread of this virus and hope that we never get to the situation they have arrived at in Italy, that our health workers are never put in that position of having to make those life-and-death choices. When it comes to freeing up the Coroner to properly investigate those cases that genuinely deserve her or his attention, I think this bill does achieve that objective. The Greens are happy to support it at the second reading and through the remainder of its stages today.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. D.G.E. Hood.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY) AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (16:21):** I indicate that I am the lead speaker for the opposition on the bill and that we will be supporting it. This bill passed through the other place this morning following a process of consultation and negotiation with my colleague the shadow minister for local government, the member for Light. This bill has been introduced at short notice into the South Australian parliament today in order to ensure that South Australian councils can continue to operate effectively throughout the coronavirus public health emergency.

The continually developing and changing regulations and guidelines regarding social isolation are of course affecting councils' operations, and these will likely include requirements set out in the Local Government Act 1999. Appropriately, the government has introduced this bill to provide the flexibility needed for councils to safely respond to this crisis without breaching their legislative requirements.

This bill will allow the Minister for Local Government to vary or suspend at short notice any provision within the act by notice in the *Gazette* in order to facilitate safe council operations amidst the coronavirus public health emergency.

This bill confers broad and flexible powers on the Minister for Local Government, but there are safeguards put in place to guard against potential abuse. Many of those safeguards were

negotiated by my colleague in the other place the member for Light. These safeguards include the ability of either house of parliament to disallow any gazettal notice provided through the provisions of this bill and also a sunset clause and reporting requirement on the operation of this bill to occur by 31 December 2021. With these short remarks, I commend the bill to the council.

**The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (16:23):** The Greens will also be supporting this bill. The bill provides broad powers to the minister to issue a notice to suspend or vary the Local Government Act, with the exception of any limitation or restrictions on the ability of councils to impose rates and charges; in other words, this is not rate capping by stealth. The Greens believe the powers are necessary. It is uncertain at this stage how long they will be needed. Certainly, the health emergency, having now been declared, is unlikely to be lifted in the next period of months, yet the work of local government and indeed state government must continue.

As the member previously mentioned, an important safeguard in this bill is that these notices, these executive decisions that are published in the *Government Gazette*, will be treated as disallowable instruments. If we as a parliament think that the government has exceeded its power unnecessarily, suspended any portion of the act, then of course we could move disallowance.

Having said that, I might just mention at this stage that I do not expect this to be the last of the COVID-19 bills that we see. Certainly, we have only had two so far. We have had the powers of public health officials and the South Australian Public Health Act and we now have this local government one. The bill that we have previously considered in relation to the Coroner's powers, whilst related, was not specifically directed to COVID-19, but there are so many other areas of regulation that will need to be revisited in light of this public emergency, so I expect we will see more bills coming.

I also note in passing that if safeguards such as the ability to disallow such notices are to mean anything, parliament must continue to sit. I do note the decision of the New South Wales parliament to suspend for a period of months, which I think makes a mockery of all the checks and balances. I appreciate theirs is a bigger parliament. I appreciate that New South Wales has been harder hit by the COVID-19 virus, but certainly from a Greens' perspective we will do everything we can to cooperate with all the public health warnings so that we can keep this workplace going because I think these checks and balances are important.

The other reason we are keen to support this bill is that it has the support of the Local Government Association. I received an email from them today basically saying, 'The LGA has been involved in the development of this bill and we support the passage of this legislation as an urgent measure to ensure that councils can continue to operate effectively and safely during the public health emergency.' They urged the Greens to support the bill, which is what we are doing now.

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Minister for Trade and Investment) (16:26):** I thank the honourable members for their brief remarks. I am very pleased to hear that they will be supporting the bill. Can I also thank the LGA for their support; I think it is important. As members have indicated, this is a COVID-19 bill and it is here because of it. I think the government and the people of South Australia appreciate that at times like this all parties tend to come together and support the necessary changes to legislation, and clearly this is when we have the capacity for council meetings to be held electronically. We have not had that in the past, the act did not allow it.

I think this bill spells out that ministers can suspend and vary any provisions under a public health emergency, which then gives the minister flexibility. The amendments that have been made, to make them disallowable, also have a sunset clause and I think they are important. In fact, the sunset clause is 31 December 2021. I am sure we all hope that the coronavirus is well and truly behind us in December 2021. Nonetheless, there will be a review process prior to that. I thank all members for their contribution and consideration.

Bill read a second time.

*Committee Stage*

Bill taken through committee without amendment.

*Third Reading*

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Minister for Trade and Investment) (16:30):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

At 16:30 the council adjourned until Wednesday 25 March 2020 at 14:15.

*Answers to Questions***SCHOOLGIRL ASSAULT**

In reply to **the Hon. C. BONAROS** (6 February 2020).

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer):** The Minister for Education has provided the following advice:

In response to this very serious incident, the Minister for Education immediately commissioned an external review of the school's policies and procedures including in relation to the management of this incident. The Minister for Education continues to be regularly briefed by the Department for Education on the matter and actions being taken.

The Minister for Education spoke with Maddy's family to assure them that the government and the school are treating this matter very seriously, and the level of distress experienced by her and her family is of primary concern to all involved in responding to the situation.

The school principal has been in regular communication with Maddy's family since the incident to check on her wellbeing and offer support, with the first contact occurring on the evening of the incident. The principal has offered to meet with the parents at their convenience if they wish to discuss supports available to Maddy.

The education director and the department's Social Work Incident Support Service are also available to meet with Maddy's parents.

In relation to the two alleged offenders, I note that court proceedings are currently underway and I do not propose to provide further comment at this point.

**BUSHFIRE RECOVERY SUPPORT**

In reply to **the Hon. T.T. NGO** (6 February 2020).

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer):** I have been provided the following advice:

All states and territories are covered by the 2018 Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). Under these arrangements the commonwealth provides financial assistance to the states in respect of eligible expenditure on relief and recovery assistance.

Payments from the commonwealth to states and territories made under the DRFA do not have a direct impact on the distribution of GST revenue under the assessment approach currently used by the Commonwealth Grants Commission (CGC).

However, disaster recovery expenses incurred by states and territories (states) net of any commonwealth DRFA funding (i.e. out-of-pocket expenses), do have an impact on the distribution of GST revenue.

As part of its assessment approach, the CGC considers a states' relative share of net disaster recovery expenditure. If a states' share of net disaster recovery expenses is greater than its population share, that state will receive additional GST revenue and vice versa. This is consistent with the underlying principle of horizontal fiscal equalisation that all states should have a similar capacity to provide a comparable level of services to their citizens.

The CGC's natural disaster assessment is based on the expenditure criteria outlined in the DRFA agreement (net of any relevant commonwealth assistance received). From a process perspective, each year the CGC requests natural disaster relief expenditure data through a data request process. States are required to provide data on eligible expenditure net of DRFA funding provided by the commonwealth and re-insurance receipts.

Data is provided for the most recent financial year and data can be updated for prior years (if there were subsequent changes). The CGC has measures in place to check the reasonableness of the state provided data. The CGC collects data from Emergency Management Australia (EMA) to review state data.

As CGC assessments are based on the average of data for three years, there is a natural lag in the assessment and redistribution process. For example, increased net disaster recovery expenditure incurred by states in 2019-20 will only be reflected in the 2021 update, which determines relativities and the distribution of GST in 2021-22. In addition, the impact will only be fully reflected over a three year period due to averaging (eg 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 for expenditure incurred in 2019-20).

Although there is a lag in the assessment of the disaster recovery expenses by the CGC, states benefit from the immediate provision of commonwealth DRFA funding.

**PUBLIC HOUSING**

In reply to **the Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition)** (18 February 2020).

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services):** I have been advised:

My office and the SA Housing Authority have been working to secure appropriate accommodation for this person.

**ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY-CONTROLLED ORGANISATIONS**

In reply to **the Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition)** (18 February 2020).

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services):** I have been advised:

An extensive statewide co-design process for the Child and Family Support System included a dedicated Aboriginal-led design stream. This process engaged Aboriginal people from a very wide range of nations at workshops held across South Australia, including Narungga and Ngarrindjeri representatives.

The process was led by a highly skilled Aboriginal facilitator and empowered Aboriginal people to put their views at the centre of planning and design of the new system.

This co-design process culminated in the development by these representatives of Aboriginal Co-Design Principles and Aboriginal System Design Criteria. These have been adopted by the government and are now guiding implementation of the Child and Family Support System.

In addition, we have convened an Aboriginal Leadership Group, including Narungga and Ngarrindjeri representatives, to provide ongoing advice on the design and implementation of the system.

#### LAND TAX

In reply to **the Hon. J.A. DARLEY** (18 February 2020).

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer):** I have been provided the following advice:

RevenueSA has on average, at any particular time, five (5) staff answering land tax inquiries.

The amount of staff answering land tax inquiries can fluctuate depending on circumstances. For example, in peak periods beginning in August and ending in December (when notices are generated and sent to taxpayers), RevenueSA will have up to another nine (9) general contact centre staff assisting those five (5) dedicated land tax contact centre staff, available to answer land tax inquiries.

Between 2 September 2019 and 20 February 2020, RevenueSA received 8,882 land tax calls. The average wait time was 1 minute and 17 seconds with:

- 55% of land tax calls answered within 30 seconds;
- 71% of land tax calls answered within 2 minutes; and
- 97% of land tax calls answered within 5 minutes.

Specifically, in relation to the land tax reform, since 10 September 2019 RevenueSA has taken 289 calls relating to land tax reform. Of those 289 calls, 265 have been taken after the land tax reform letter was sent out in December 2019. Call answer times were similar to those listed above for all land tax inquiries.

#### BUSHFIRE RECOVERY SUPPORT

In reply to **the Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN** (19 February 2020).

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services):** I have been advised:

As at midnight 7 January 2020 there was \$1,033,856.38 in donations from the community and \$2 million from the SA government.

#### COMPULSORY ACQUISITION

In reply to **the Hon. J.A. DARLEY** (20 February 2020).

**The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (Minister for Trade and Investment):** The Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Local Government has advised the following:

There are no outstanding payments whereby claims are undisputed and all required approvals and documents are received.

The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) ensures to expedite payments once agreement is reached, and all necessary documents are executed and approvals obtained. At times there could be delays which are outside of DPTI's control, including having funds released from the court or banks providing consent and final mortgage payout amounts.

#### WOMBAT CULL

In reply to **the Hon. T.A. FRANKS** (4 March 2020).

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer):** The Premier has provided the following advice:

The land on which the wombats the subject of the question are established is owned by the Aboriginal Lands Trust and sub-leased for farming purposes to provide an income and employment to the Point Pearce Aboriginal Community.

The Aboriginal Lands Trust has informed me that original research on the presence of wombats was undertaken in 2011 by Shimmin Environmental Consultants with funding from the Northern and Yorke Natural Resources Management Board. The research identified 1,200 warrens on the land with an estimated three wombats per warren.

The trust has further advised that more recent evaluation of wombat numbers, including by drone surveys, has shown that in some instances, the number of wombats per warren far exceeds the previous understanding of their numbers. In some cases, up to eight wombats per warren were identified.