

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, 3 December 2020

The **PRESIDENT (Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins)** took the chair at 11:00 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.

Parliamentary Procedure

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (11:01): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable petitions, the tabling of papers and questions without notice to be taken into consideration at 2.15pm.

Motion carried.

Bills

HEALTH CARE (GOVERNANCE) AMENDMENT BILL

Committee Stage

In committee.

(Continued from 1 December 2020.)

Clause 14.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I move:

Amendment No 3 [HealthWell-1]—

Page 7, after line 14—Insert:

- (1) Section 34(2)—delete 'employing authority' and substitute:
Chief Executive

Amendment No 4 [HealthWell-1]—

Page 7 after line 14—Insert:

- (2) Section 34—after subsection (2) insert:
 - (2a) For the purposes of subsection (2), the Chief Executive must issue policies and directives relating to terms and conditions of employment of persons appointed under subsection (1).

These government amendments amend clause 14 of the bill and section 34 of the act so the terms and conditions of employment of LHN staff and any related policies are fixed by the chief executive rather than the employing authority. As the chief executive is the employing authority of LHN staff, except SA Pathology, this is in effect a status quo position.

Through consultation, it was apparent that key industrial bodies representing our LHN staff supported the retention of the chief executive as the employing authority. The government has assured industrial bodies that we fully support this position. That is why this amendment is being filed at the suggestion, through consultation with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, to strengthen this commitment and demonstrate our commitment to the ongoing position of the chief executive as the employing authority.

Amendments carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 15 passed.

New clause 15A.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I move:

Amendment No 5 [HealthWell-1]—

Page 7, after line 28—After clause 15 insert:

15A—Insertion of section 52A

After section 52 insert:

52A—SAAS workforce culture and staff wellbeing

SAAS must—

- (a) promote a healthy workforce culture for and among staff employed to work within SAAS; and
- (b) implement measures to provide for and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of those staff within the workplace (including the psychosocial health, safety and wellbeing of staff); and
- (c) implement policies issued by the Chief Executive on workforce health, safety and welfare (including policies on workforce harassment and bullying), so far as those policies apply to SAAS.

I suggest that this amendment is almost consequential in the sense that consistently we have been putting on different elements of the government's framework of responsibility to support workforce culture and staff wellbeing. I am happy to address the clause; I am also happy if the council is willing to take that as consequential. I will therefore address the clause.

This government amendment inserts clause 15A into the bill and section 52A into the act, to insert an obligation on the South Australian Ambulance Service so that the culture and wellbeing of the workers within SAAS is a focus of the entity. This amendment has been filed following discussions with Dr Chris Moy, the President of the South Australian Branch of the Australian Medical Association, who approached me to seek my consideration of such an amendment with respect to LHN governing boards.

The government is committed to improving workplace culture and staff wellbeing, as well as stamping out bullying and harassment. That is why we are more than willing to work with Dr Moy to accommodate this request, and we have taken it one step further because we seek to impose the same standard for SAAS.

As part of SA Health's commitment to promoting a positive and professional working environment and a culture of respect, I am advised that a review of the respectful behaviours policy directive has taken place, and a new prevention and management of workplace bullying and harassment policy directive has been drafted for consultation. These policy directives will be used by the chief executive of the department to apply across SA Health, and it will be the responsibility of SAAS to implement it in its workplace.

New clause inserted.

Clause 16 passed.

Clause 17.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I move:

Amendment No 6 [HealthWell-1]—

Page 9 after line 29—Insert:

- (3) Section 93(5)—delete '*Mental Health Act 1993*' and substitute:
Mental Health Act 2009

This simply seeks to update a reference in the bill to a current act rather than a repealed act.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

The CHAIR: We now come to amendment No. 6 [Maher-1], the proposed insertion of a new clause 17A.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I will not be moving the amendment.

Clause 18 passed.

Clause 19.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: This will be consequential on my suite of oppositions to the clause on the removal of the Health Performance Council. By doing what the chamber has previously done, it would be a consequential vote to support the retention of the Health Performance Council by removing this clause.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: The government has the same understanding.

Clause negatived.

Clause 20.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: This is consequential and the same argument applies.

Clause negatived.

Clause 21.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 7 [Maher-1]—

Page 10, after line 12—After subclause (2) insert:

(2a) Schedule 3—after clause 5 insert:

5A—Requirement to publish

The Minister must—

(a) within 14 days of an appointment of a member of a governing board; or

(b) within 14 days of a removal of a member of a governing board,

publish a notice in the Gazette setting out the appointment or removal (as the case requires).

This is a simple and uncontroversial amendment. It simply requires the publication in the *Gazette* of any appointment and, importantly, removal of board members. Since the governing boards have been established, we have seen a number of board members and chairs vacate their positions. This is a very simple amendment. It means there is transparency not just in the appointment but when board members leave.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: The government supports the amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 22 passed.

Clause 23.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: This is consequential.

Clause negatived.

Schedule and title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (11:14): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

APPROPRIATION BILL 2020

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 1 December 2020.)

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (11:14): I rise to make my contribution on this year's state budget and reflect on what has, of course, been an absolutely shocking year for South Australia, and not just South Australia but the rest of the country and the rest of the world. Many people have lost their jobs and many have not been able to regain work since then. Yes, all of us have been inconvenienced, but that pales in comparison with the impacts on those people who have lost their jobs, and in turn that pales even more significantly in comparison with the impacts on those families who have lost their lives or their loved ones from the virus itself.

I am also pleased to add my contribution to the statewide recognition of how well the health response has been handled in this state. It has been exceptionally well handled under the leadership of the State Coordinator—the Commissioner of Police, Grant Stevens—and the Chief Public Health Officer, Professor Nicola Spurrier. The health response has been very good. We also need to acknowledge that the Premier made the decision that that health response and the restrictions that would have to be put in place and the management of those restrictions were to be left up to those leaders in the Public Service: the Commissioner of Police and the Chief Public Health Officer.

In separating himself from being responsible for the health response for the pandemic, the Premier, and by extension the Treasurer, became front and centre of the state's economic response to the coronavirus pandemic. As soon as those restrictions were imposed, businesses were necessarily shut down and restrictions were put on their operations, their capacity to trade and their capacity to employ people to generate their own livelihoods. Questions emerged about how the state government would support those people.

I must acknowledge and commend the federal government for their implementation of the JobKeeper scheme and also the changes to the JobSeeker scheme, which for the first time in many years made some headway in terms of that kind of support being possible to live on for more people. There are also some other schemes that have been put in place to support Australians, small businesses and their workers.

In comparison, the economic response by the state government has been somewhat lacking, and certainly extremely slow in delivering the few measures they have done. The Premier was quick to announce a stimulus package and then two weeks after that a further stimulus package, but it was disappointing to learn that less than a quarter of that had been expended, according to the Auditor-General, more than three months later.

We were promised by the Premier that it would be spent very quickly, that it would be spent over the six months in the period between March and September, but here we are in December and still less than half of that money has been expended. That is a massive disappointment, to say the least. What it has cost is people their jobs, and many people their livelihoods through their businesses.

I want to make it clear that Labor supports, and has always supported, strong economic stimulus to combat an economic crisis. We need only cast our minds back to a period 10 or so years ago to think about the response we had from the federal Labor government and the state Labor government at the time to respond to the economic crisis confronting us in the global financial crisis. The state budget in 2009 contained \$4 billion of combined new operating and investing spending measures, but we entered that period from a position of strength.

In the years leading up to the GFC, the state Labor government had paid down all the general government sector's debt. We were accruing financial assets, such was the strength of the budget position. There was plenty of capacity to combat the global financial crisis and its economic impacts. But what was the response from the opposition at that time, the Liberal politicians led by the Hon. Rob Lucas? They consistently criticised the debt. They consistently criticised the deficits. Of course, the Liberal lines around debt and deficits were 'debt crisis', 'debt emergency' and 'bankrupting the state'.

Fast-forward to now as we enter this current economic crisis, and we do so on the back of two years of a Liberal state government, again led in the Treasury capacity by the Hon. Rob Lucas. They have spent those two years trying to align themselves with Labor's strong record of infrastructure delivery, running around cutting ribbons on Labor-delivered projects. In those two years, they radically increased state government debt by \$10 billion, and that was before the

pandemic began. They have made all sorts of promises about infrastructure projects in the future. They announced the infrastructure spending but then are very slow in spending it.

In this budget the Premier and the Treasurer are asking South Australians to forget the last 2½ years. They are asking us to also forget their rhetoric in the past on debt and deficit. They are asking us to forget the dysfunction and disunity of the past 2½ years, and they are asking us to forget that they have spent 2½ years delivering nothing of substance in terms of infrastructure.

I can recall a number of conversations over the last 12 months with key industry stakeholders, who all said roughly the same thing: the state government was doing precious little to support the construction industry. They are not building anything, they are not creating jobs, and they are asking us now to forget that they have already added \$10 billion of debt to the books and delivered nothing to show for it.

As I said, Labor supports intervention to combat an economic crisis. The prudent use of debt and deficit is sometimes necessary. We did it, and we support this government doing it now that they are in power, but if we look at what they are promising to use this economic stimulus on, they are asking us to trust them that they will not behave in the way that they have in the last 2½ years and that, for the first time, they will actually start making good on the promises they made to South Australians.

The Joy Baluch Bridge duplication at Port Augusta was placed into the budget and money set aside by the former Labor government. In the first budget it was due for completion in June 2021. In this year's budget it is now slated to be due for completion in June 2024, three years late. Regarding the Festival Plaza project, once again funded by the former Labor government, the car park was due to be completed five months ago in June 2020, according to the Liberal's first budget, but that has blown out by two years. The plaza upgrade itself was due to be completed, according to their first budget, in June 2021 and it is now due two years after that.

The Tonsley rail junction, again funded by the former Labor government, is due now two years later than promised. The Springbank Road intersection upgrade is now also due two years later. The Golden Grove upgrade is now due a year later, in June 2021. The Gawler East Link Road, which was meant to open in June 2019, is now finally due for completion, despite a partial opening, in June 2023, four years late. The Port Road/West Lakes Boulevard/Cheltenham Parade intersection—which the member for Cheltenham and I know the importance of, as it services his electorate and where I stay when I am up here in Adelaide—is two years late.

There is very little in this year's budget for the state's South-East, an area that, yet again, appears to have been ignored by the Marshall Liberal government, adding to the strong opinion that this government forgets anyone south of the South Eastern Freeway, or as we say in the South-East, south of the tollgate. The Main South Road, Seaford to Aldinga, upgrade is a year late. The Dublin saleyards access upgrade project for the heavy vehicle industry is three years late. The Darlington upgrade project will not be finally completed for another two years. The train operation centre blew out by \$3 million.

The North Terrace right-hand turn, of course, was axed. The Port rail spur, of course, was axed. GlobeLink, of course, was axed. The city tram extension was described in their first budget, six months after the last state election—after they complained about how the project was carried out—as being an \$80 million project. It is now described in the latest budget as being a \$121 million project, a more than 50 per cent blowout. The Port Wakefield overpass project, the one that the Premier and Rod Hook told us would cost \$24 million, seemingly forgetting that trucks also like to use regional roads, is not \$24 million anymore but \$90 million—a 250 per cent blowout in the budget.

Aside from all the delays in those projects the real impact on the South Australian economy is thousands and thousands of construction workers missing out on the opportunity of working on those jobs, thousands and thousands of wages being paid, and thousands and thousands of opportunities for small businesses to be supported so that they can, in turn, employ people.

I wish it was just the delay that was the worst of these projects, but the fact is that nearly all of those examples have blown out in cost. The Festival Plaza project has blown out by more than \$30 million, the Tonsley rail project has blown out by nearly \$60 million, the Springbank Road project has blown out by \$35 million and the Gawler East Link Road has blown out by \$13 million. Main

South Road is perhaps one bright spot, unless it actually means what it alludes to, and that is a budget cut, and is now \$283 million rather than \$305 million.

The Darlington project is quite fascinating. When the government first released a budget, six months after the state election, six months of all the briefings that the transport department was able to provide the new minister and the Treasurer, they said that it would cost \$620 million. In their second budget they said that it would be \$667 million, and now it is \$754 million. You really have to say that it is not a bad achievement, taking a fully funded on-track Labor infrastructure project and blowing it out not once but twice. It is quite remarkable.

When we are asked to believe that they can deliver a \$33 billion debt-funded economic stimulus package, you would be forgiven, would you not, for expecting that South Australians may be a little sceptical about this government's capacity to deliver. We are being asked to forget the delays and the blowouts in the infrastructure program that they have so badly managed, and we are now being asked to trust them that, finally, in their last 18 months, they are going to get their act together and start delivering jobs for South Australians. Of course, unfortunately, the \$33 billion is not the last of it. There is more debt beyond that \$33 billion that needs to be accrued.

It is the same with the Hahndorf traffic improvements project, the Main South Road duplication project and the Victor Harbor Road duplication project. It does not stop at \$33 billion; that is just where it starts, and of course we will be looking in the rear-view mirror long after this Treasurer has gone. It will be for the rest of the state to work out how we are going to manage this.

As I mentioned, Labor supports deficits and going into further debt, as necessary, if it means that we can support our economy to get out of a crisis. It is the right thing to do to protect people's jobs and livelihoods. What we cannot support is a government that has removed a debt ceiling or a fiscal target relating to a debt from the budget papers. According to the Premier and the Treasurer, it is a blank cheque to continue spending—and do not worry about the impacts. Well, I am sorry, but that is not good enough.

Interest rates are low and, yes, this debt might be cheap—even cheaper today than it was last year—but are we not hoping for an economic recovery? Are we not hoping for strong economic growth? Are we not hoping that conditions will improve, that demand will increase and that at some point, perhaps, interest rates will necessarily increase to reflect that we have strong economic activity in our national and state and economies? Do we not think that those interest rates might bring with them a higher interest cost burden to the state budget?

And what does that mean? It means there will be less money to spend on our hospitals, which are already under pressure. It means there will be less money to spend in our schools, which still are not getting their full entitlement under the original Gonski reforms, and it means there will be less money to spend on all those other important areas of government that the public expects.

We are willing to give the government some leeway with this budget to give them the authority that they need in this parliament to get on with delivering some economic stimulus, but we say to the government that they have to break the last 2½ years of failure to deliver, failure to stimulate and failure to support South Australians. They need to actually get on with the job.

What we need to see in addition to this budget is a government that can actually deliver—that the government can actually put to work the money they are seeking the parliament's approval for and that they will actually get out and spend in the economy and support the jobs that South Australians need.

I am asking them to park their disunity and dysfunction and their inability to deliver and actually get on with the job of governing. It is what South Australia deserves and should be able to expect.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (11:27): It is encouraging to see the government putting some money, albeit belatedly, into the state's infrastructure. It has been a long time coming, and the unfortunate aspect of this better late than never approach to addressing the state's infrastructure and economic needs is that the Marshall government is still not creating anything new for the long-term future of the state.

In almost three years of this current government, we have seen virtually no new infrastructure projects. The government has, of course, been quick to take credit for Labor projects; this is evidenced by the fact that the biggest funding in this state budget is the \$8.9 billion towards the north-south corridor, an initiative of former Labor governments, dating back to 2010.

Nonetheless, I commend the government on recognising the need to complete this project, which will completely overhaul our north-south traffic system. You do have Labor's support in completing this massive infrastructure project.

Not only is that sort of indecision bad for our major traffic corridor, it is bad for jobs growth. Similarly, much-needed transport improvements, from Hove through to Klemzig and Golden Grove, have not eventuated. What is the government waiting for? People need jobs now. It is why Labor urges the re-establishment of an investment attraction fund to encourage business to relocate to South Australia.

Money also needs to be put forward to encourage South Australians to buy locally. If we produce locally and buy locally, the natural flow-on effect is that we create more local jobs. If we are going to have debt, we need to use it productively to create new jobs. When the federal JobKeeper subsidy ends in March, people are going to need work like we have never seen in our recent history. Demand will be huge, and this government will not have put in place projects or plans to create employment.

On the contrary, the government has made some very strange decisions to actually reduce jobs. By killing off the Adelaide 500 Supercars race, the government cut 435 full-time jobs with the stroke of a pen. It also culled 90,000 accommodation nights from local hotels, which of course meant those people are not eating in our restaurants or spending money in the local economy. This was rather ridiculously blamed on COVID-19. It does not take a genius to work out that if COVID was an issue the race would be back when safe and practical.

Perhaps the Adelaide 500 was being replaced with one or more other tourist events. No. Sadly, the government did not even have a contingency plan in place and now are being inundated with calls for some sort of replacement event. Even if replacement events eventuate, it will not be as a result of any proactive work from the government; it will be responding to demand. This government has a pattern of only getting things going when pushed to do so or finishing something someone else has started. They never seem to have an original idea of their own.

Actually, I stand corrected. They did come up with something of an original idea in this budget—penalising people doing the environmentally responsible thing by introducing an electric car tax. Industry sources believe the new tax, the first of its kind in Australia, will discourage ownership of electric vehicles. That means people trying to reduce carbon emissions will be penalised for doing their civic duty. On top of that, the new tax will create a precedent for distance-based taxes, which could be extended to all other road users. So the new idea the government has come up with is not to create new jobs or new wealth, it is simply to tax the dwindling money that is already in the economy.

In this government's short history, it has done very little to create growth. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, construction work in this state has dropped steadily from its peak of \$1.6 billion in the June 2018 quarter. You do not need a great knowledge of economics to know that this high was a flow-on from Labor policies just three months after leaving office, and that trend has been heading down ever since.

COVID can be used for a reason for some recent economic problems—there is no doubt about that—but the downward trend was apparent well before that. On that note, South Australians have done an exceptional job in stopping the spread of COVID-19. We can rightly claim to have had a world-class response to the health crisis. All credit should go to those on the frontline, including police, emergency services and particularly health workers. The government also deserves some credit for that, no doubt.

Unfortunately, the economic response has been in direct contrast to the good work done on the health front. Businesses have closed and we have had a sustained period of high unemployment, and our long-term economic future is under threat. When JobKeeper and JobSeeker subsidies end, it will get worse because this government has not been proactive enough to create jobs. While the budget addressed some overdue and much-needed matters, it was largely disappointing. It lacked

imagination and did not provide anything new to encourage South Australians as we work our way out of this pandemic. The people of South Australia deserve better, and we need a government that can produce a budget to create excitement going forward. They did not get it this time around.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Hunter, we need to find the Hon. Tung Ngo or either of the Greens members.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter: Mark is coming.

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (11:35): Before I commence my contribution on the Appropriation Bill, the question that is in my mind is: why don't people follow the whipping sheet? I am a lot further down the list than some other members who have missed their call.

The appropriation process, the state budget process, is, as others have said before me, one of the best indications of a government's priorities. How governments spend our money shows the community where their priorities lie. If governments spend money on things that we value, things that are important to the community, that is generally well received, but one of my eternal frustrations with the budgetary process is that massive amounts of money can be spent on projects with very little justification, and yet hardly a word is said about it.

I want to focus on two issues in my short contribution. One is the proposed expenditure of \$8.9 billion on a 10-kilometre stretch of motorway in metropolitan Adelaide, and the second issue is the proposed new tax on electric vehicles. Let me start with the freeway, or motorway as I think it is being called. This debate over the last several years has been frustrating in its narrowness. The debate appears to have been narrowed down to: should we dig tunnels, or should we have a surface freeway?

The questions arise: can we save the Thebarton Theatre? What about the Queen of Angels Church? What will happen to the local businesses along South Road? But the question that very few people are asking is: why are we doing this at all? Why is spending \$8.9 billion—that is billion with a 'b'—of taxpayers' money a good idea? I mean, after all, we know that there is no-one homeless, there are no schools crying out for resources and there are no environmental projects that need funding. Yet when the government looks behind the cushions on the couch, they find \$8.9 billion for a short, 10-kilometre stretch of freeway. I think that shows how skew-whiff government priorities are.

One thing that has disappointed me over many years in relation to South Australia is that unlike other states we do not actually have an effective civil society movement questioning the building of roads. Certainly, in Melbourne and in Sydney—in Victoria and New South Wales—they have long-established groups that have opposed the construction of massive freeways and in particular private toll roads. Those groups have been active for many years.

In South Australia we have not had such a civil society organisation. In fact, when it comes to public commentators there are very few people who are prepared to put their head over the parapet and question the orthodoxy that building freeways is good for a society. In fact, one of the few critiques I could find was from someone who I had been known to disagree with in the past but I am on the same page with this time, and that is Matthew Abraham. He is well known to all members as a former presenter of the breakfast radio show on the local ABC station. He now writes columns for News Corporation papers, including the *Sunday Mail*.

I found Matthew Abraham's column from 17 August last year, so 2019. Basically, his article criticises the government process of commissioning business cases for various projects. He criticises that process and then goes on to say, 'Well, here is a business case: don't do it!' in relation to the north-south freeway. He says:

Can we just stop and take a deep breath, please?

This is meant to be a fresh new Government—

remember, he was saying this a year ago—

can't it come up with a fresh plan to fix Adelaide's congested road network before blowing \$5.4 billion on just one road?

I mention that that \$5.4 billion has now expanded to \$8.9 billion. Abraham goes on:

Not only does this section weave past heritage properties such as Thebarton Theatre, it runs like a river of potholed asphalt through a canyon of small and big businesses.

Two big fat lies sit at the heart of the entire South Rd project. The first is that it is a 'congestion buster'—to use the latest mantra...But big new roads don't bust congestion, they attract congestion. Is Sydney any less congested for the untold billions it has spent on motorways and tunnels?

The second lie is it will be a 'non-stop motorway'. Maybe we journalists should stop parroting this line, direct from the Government's spin doctors.

He continues:

The money might eventually make it a continuous motorway but that's not the same as non-stop.

The north-south corridor will be about as 'non-stop' as the non-stop South Eastern Freeway, the non-stop Southern Expressway or Sydney's non-stop Cahill Expressway.

Peak-hour truck crashes and multi-car pile-ups on mega-roads are frequent and often lead to tremendous delays.

Besides, the north-south corridor isn't being constructed primarily for motorists. It's a trucking route. That's why the Commonwealth kicks in such big bickies.

Once completed, South Rd will be a B-double magnet. Trucks will roll down the South Eastern Freeway and, rather than turning right on to Portrush Rd, they'll keep on rolling down Cross Rd to tap into all that pristine South Rd tar.

One way to bust congestion is to stop Adelaide from becoming so congested.

I will leave Matthew Abraham's comments there, because the points that he is making have been made many times before. When it comes to freeing up roads for freight, you need to look at what traffic is causing the congestion. We all know, because most of us spend most of our time in Adelaide, that the vast bulk of congestion is single-occupant cars going to work, taking kids to school, going to university—single-occupant cars. That is the bulk of the congestion.

If you were serious about freeing up road space for trucks, you would look at the problem—single-occupant cars in peak hour—and you would look at: how else could we transport people around? What other alternatives might there be? Public transport, for example. There is an idea. But, no, the government has this notion that freeways are the solution to busting congestion.

The Abraham article that I was referring to before goes on to talk about GlobeLink. Other members have referred to that. That is now an abandoned project, but that is not to say that there were not parts of it that had merit. The part of it that had merit, as far as I was concerned, were not the new airport—I mean, that had whiskers on it—but diverting freight around Adelaide rather than through Adelaide made eminent sense.

We know that the vast bulk of rail traffic and freight, for example, which winds its way through the narrow Hills alignment, is not actually bound for Adelaide, it is bound for places further on. Yet, because there is no way around Adelaide, all that traffic goes through our city. It is similar for road traffic as well, so much of it goes through Adelaide that does not need to.

What Matthew Abraham and others have said for a very long time is that traffic expands to fill the available space. Just like empty cupboards in your home soon fill—I do not know anyone who has an empty cupboard at home—the junk expands to fill the available cupboard space you have. It is almost a law of physics: traffic expands to fill the available space. What is my evidence for that claim? Travel to any major city with your eyes open and you will see that congestion is a live issue regardless of how much jurisdictions have spent on freeways and on so-called traffic solutions.

But if members are not prepared to take the anecdotal evidence acquired through their own experiences, I will give you a report. People like to see authoritative reports. One that I have quoted in the past is a very influential report. It is now 26 years old. It is the United Kingdom royal commission into transport and environment, and its chief recommendation was: stop building new freeways; they do not work. Twenty-six years ago, the royal commission in the UK said, 'Stop it! Just stop building these new roads. There is no evidence that they reduce congestion.' The *New Scientist* magazine at the time, back in 1994, said the following:

The (royal) commission derisively refers to the department of Transport's philosophy on roadbuilding as 'predict and provide'. Present forecasts are that road traffic will roughly double over the next thirty years. The [Department of Transport] argues that this justifies its £19 billion roadbuilding programme. The commission says that

no practical programme of road construction can cope with this scale of growth, a fact that 'destroys the rationale of the predict and provide perspective'. Congestion will get worse however many roads are built.

The (royal) commission points out that building roads itself generates traffic. One estimate is that 40 per cent of the traffic on the M25, London's orbital road, was generated by the new road.

That experience is universal in cities, whether it is Los Angeles or Sydney or anywhere else, cities that have tried to fix congestion problems by simply building bigger and more roads.

I appreciate that I am a little bit on the outer as one of the very few critics. Obviously, I do not include my colleague the Hon. Tammy Franks, who coined the phrase 'South Road super waste' for another part of the project. I do despair sometimes in politics that there are so few members who are prepared to actually look at the bigger picture of our urban environment and how we can make it better. Freeways do not make urban environments better.

That segues into the second issue that I wanted to talk about very briefly, and that is the Treasurer's proposed new road user charge on electric vehicles. This is an item that did not have a very big number written next to it in the budget. It was a very small budget item that was not proposed to raise very much money at all. I do not think the Treasurer predicted it would get quite the backlash that it has, not just in this state but around the nation.

The Treasurer, at the time, whilst he did not name the other jurisdictions, predicted that other states would get on board with this idea and we know that New South Wales and Victoria are now talking about it as well. But the reaction in the community has been quite remarkable because I think the community is smarter than a lot of the policymakers in government. That is, most Australians recognise that if we are serious about climate change, the future of transport will not be the internal combustion engine. Petrol and diesel vehicles are on their way out.

I refer to that radical greenie Boris Johnson in London who has, just in the last few weeks, announced they are going to ban the sale of internal combustion engine cars from 2030. That is only 10 years away. You are not going to be able to buy a new internal combustion engine light vehicle (cars and small trucks) in the United Kingdom—ban them. Most jurisdictions now realise that the writing is on the wall and that the future will be electric.

That has a number of implications. The first implication, obviously, is in relation to climate change, the second is in relation to local air quality, and they are probably the main two aspects that conservationists in particular get excited about when we talk about electric cars. An electric car powered from a grid that is primarily renewable energy sourced will have a much smaller carbon footprint. People often say, 'But if all your electricity is coming from burning coal and you fuel your electric cars that way, well, there is still a benefit rather than burning petrol and diesel.'

We know that the electricity grid is slowly becoming a renewable energy grid, which means that all the appliances, including cars powered from that grid, will have a lower carbon footprint. We know also that there are no localised emissions from an electric vehicle, no particulate pollution, no sulphur dioxide or nitrous oxides or any of those other pollutants that we associate with air quality problems, so electric cars are recognised as a good thing. The question people are asking is: if that is a direction we need to head in, why is it that we are putting a new tax on something we want more of?

I have to say that I first studied economics in high school in 1976. I have a degree in economics from the late 1970s, early 1980s, at Melbourne University, and one thing I learnt very early on in my career is that the idea of taxing things we want less of and subsidising and promoting things we want more of was actually a really sound way to manage an economy. Why do we tax things we want more of? If we want more electric cars, why do we not yet have a proper system of subsidies and incentives for people to take up this technology? Why are we taxing it instead?

I know that the government and others who support an electric vehicle tax say, 'It will be at a fairly low rate and it won't actually raise that much money, but we'll get in early while there are hardly any electric cars around,' and somehow that makes it okay. What they have missed is the disincentive that that will impose on the market, because the market is not necessarily rational in terms of counting every dollar and people are not thinking, 'Yes, there is this new electric car tax, but it's probably less than other taxes I'll have to pay; therefore I'll still buy the electric car.'

The experts are saying that, once you have gone down this path of an exclusive electric vehicle tax, people will be nervous about the rate at which it will be applied, they will be nervous about its future and they will think, 'Why would I spend \$10,000 more on an electric vehicle when it might be safer just to buy a regular petrol vehicle for now and I'll have a look next car. Maybe next car will be an electric car.' That is the way people are thinking. It is not about the amount of money it will raise: it is about the message it is sending to the industry.

I mentioned Boris Johnson before. Some nations are already at a point where electric vehicles are dominating sales. Norway is the classic example: more than half of the new cars being bought in Norway today are electric vehicles. I was in Sweden a few years ago. Government policy there favoured electric vehicles to the point where, if you own a taxi and you want to operate out of the airport, forget it unless you are electric. That was their rule: only electric taxis are allowed to service the airport. Tell you what, the taxi companies got on to that pretty quickly—electric vehicles—because the airports are a very lucrative market. A lot of jurisdictions are promoting electric vehicles; South Australia is proposing to tax them.

The other point I would make about Scandinavian countries like Norway and Sweden is that they do not have anything like the renewable energy potential that we have. They are not the sunniest places year round. They have snow, cold winters, cloudy days. Australia has massive renewable energy potential, yet because of a lack of government incentives and proper government policy you can almost count the number of electric vehicles in South Australia without taking your socks off. There are so few electric vehicles, and that is, I say, entirely a result of the vacuum in government policy.

The other point that the Treasurer and others make is that electric vehicles, because they do not use fossil fuels and therefore do not pay fuel excise, are somehow squibbing their responsibility to contribute to roads. There are a couple of things we have to say about that. The first thing is that it is a convenient myth, which the government and I think other groups like the RAA often portray, that somehow these fuel taxes are hypothecated to road infrastructure, fixing roads or building new roads. They are not: they are part of consolidated revenue.

We also have the situation where the money from fuel excise is raised at the federal level and most of the spending on roads is done at the state level. It is not hypothecated. The body primarily responsible for collecting that tax is not primarily responsible for building roads. Of course I know that the federal government, because it has a greater capacity to raise revenue, is handing large sums of money across to the states, but this is not a hypothecated tax.

I note the Australian Electric Vehicle Association put in a submission to the fuel excise, electric vehicles and federal-state taxation review that was undertaken at the federal level earlier this year. They made the point that, as I have just said, fuel taxes are not hypothecated to roads. They made the point that, as a source of revenue, fuel taxes have been in structural decline for a long time, and that is largely not as a result of fewer cars but cars being more efficient. The state fleet vehicle that I lease I think uses four litres of petrol per 100 kilometres. It is a hybrid.

I think the average six-cylinder car uses probably 11, 12 or 13 litres per 100 kilometres. Cars are more efficient. They are using less fuel and they are paying less fuel excise, even though there are more cars. The Electric Vehicle Association knew that there was going to be a need at some point to address a declining source of revenue from fuel excise. The question is whether, in the case of that declining revenue, it is appropriate to tax one type of vehicle—environmentally clean electric vehicles—to somehow make up the shortfall. Clearly, there are other approaches.

To their credit, a lot of the electric vehicle organisations and a lot of people in the community accept that road user charges may well be a legitimate form of taxation into the future, but what people are not prepared to accept is that it is applied only to electric vehicles. That is the problem. When electric vehicles become the dominant form of road transport, maybe a kilometre-based road user charge might be appropriate. It would apply to all road users. But when it is applied only to electric vehicles, it is seen as unfair and sending the wrong message to an industry that we are trying to grow.

The other obvious point that anyone who has studied transport economics would know is that, if we were serious about recovering from road users the cost of damage that they cause to roads, we would be charging trucks hundreds of times more in fuel excise than they are paying and we would not be giving most of it back, as they do for certain industries that get a rebate on their fuel

excise. So it is not hypothecated, it is unfairly applied and, if we were to say that we want electric vehicles to pay a special tax, then that is unfair.

I would be very surprised if it gets through this parliament when the bill is eventually presented to us sometime next year. I think that should be a shot across the bow not just to this government but to the other states that are thinking about going down this regressive path. It is the wrong type of taxation to be introducing now, but it is something that we should keep an eye on into the future.

They are just two issues out of this current state budget and the appropriation of our taxes to projects that the government has deemed worthy. I think that these two examples show that the government's priorities do need to be reviewed, and I look forward to seeing further debate, broader debate, about the nature of our cities, the way we think Adelaide should develop and whether as a society we really are happy for what I think is now a third of the physical area of our city to be devoted exclusively to cars.

If we can address that issue, if we can address the proportion of our metropolitan area devoted to cars, we will end up with a more compact and more vibrant community that actually functions better at so many levels, and where infrastructure is not so stretched and ultimately so expensive.

The Hon. T.T. NGO (12:00): There is no doubt that the next four years will be challenging for South Australians. Yet, South Australians have done what has been asked of them, with almost everyone putting the needs and lives of others in the community ahead of their own so that we can all beat this dreaded and potentially deadly virus together. I thank all South Australians for taking care of one another in this confusing and bleak time for the world.

I also recognise the tireless work of our officials—Mr Grant Stevens, SA's Commissioner of Police and State Coordinator, and state Chief Public Health Officer, Professor Nicola Spurrier—who have led the state while the Liberal government takes a break. Now it is for the government to reward that discipline and give our state vision, direction and leadership. We need ingenuity, energy and opportunity to help us all rebuild our economy and return optimism to our state after the ravages of the coronavirus pandemic.

We do not need recycled headlines from governments past and yesterday's news, although I commend the government for now seeing the value of Labor's infrastructure projects, so good they must be highlighted again just a few years later. Since March 2018, this Liberal government has used our former Labor governments to blame and shield themselves whenever the road gets rocky. Now, almost three years later, it is time to stop the blame game and step up to the plate. I truly hope for an injection of this government's own ideas for getting the state back on track. Although, that said, when left to dream, the team opposite us delivers a controversial, ill-conceived and self-defeating initiative.

When I look at the future for my own children, and the children of the many people I represent, I want them to stay in South Australia and be a part of the great community and place that many young families now call home, but I worry about the legacy of debt the Marshall government will leave for our future generations. The state does not want a government that leaves its promises for a future government to commit to and deliver, especially given the unemployment rates that are plaguing this government.

When I look behind the shine and glitz of headlines about tradie boosts and building what matters, I see a government that is good at trickery and illusion; a government that tells us all about the plans it has, the plans it has made for someone else to deliver and pay for. This is a budget that is good for the media and great copy and headlines for a day or two, but I look forward to the next Labor government returning to deliver a vision and direction for the state. However, given the state of the economy Labor will inherit, I foresee a great need for more economic stimulation to increase productivity and help pay down the debt which I believe will be left by the Marshall Liberal government.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (12:05): I thank honourable members for their contribution to the second reading of the Appropriation Bill debate. I do not think there is any doubt that the government's budget, given the size of the spending projects and programs, has been

warmly regarded by a much broader group of stakeholders than what might otherwise generally have been the case for any budget, whether it be a former Labor government budget or a former Liberal government budget.

As the budget speech outlined, it is what it is. All governments have significantly increased their debt and deficits. New South Wales and Victoria, in their recent budgets, they have budget deficits I think somewhere in the order of \$140 billion to \$180 billion by the end of the forward estimates period. I think the Queensland budget, brought down only this week, increased the level of their total non-financial public sector debt to a number close to \$90 billion, and the commonwealth debt is close to a trillion dollars.

They are very large numbers but as the budget speech outlined—and I will not labour the point—the Reserve Bank Governor, the federal Treasury Secretary and virtually every economic commentator has urged stimulatory fiscal response from state, territory and federal governments, and all governments have responded in kind by significant increases in infrastructure programs in particular, and short-term stimulatory activity by way of tax relief and the like.

One point I have made for many years, I guess, but continue to make even within the construct of this particular budget is that this government has not and will not lose its laser-like focus on what is ultimately, in the short, medium and long term, the key criterion for driving economic growth and jobs growth in the state. That is, for a small regional economy such as South Australia's, the only sure-fire way of long-term sustainable economic growth is that the costs of doing business in our state have to be nationally and internationally competitive.

Short-term—if we can define two years as short term—stimulus activity and massive increases in publicly-funded public infrastructure all have a role to play, but, ultimately, long-term sustainable economic growth and jobs growth cannot forever be sustained by those sorts of spending programs over the medium and the long term. In the end, economic growth and jobs growth is only going to be generated by a healthy public sector but, more particularly, a private sector which is growing its job base and growing the business in terms of goods and services that it produces not only for the local market but for interstate and overseas.

We cannot see a long-term change to what we saw over the last 10 or 15 years, where in South Australia our economic growth was around about half the national average, our employment growth was around about half the national average and our population growth was around about half the national average. That is a sure-fire recipe for long-term economic decline such as we have seen for a number of decades.

This government unashamedly pursues the narrative of trying to ensure that the costs of doing business in this state are nationally and internationally competitive. Whilst hotly debated at the time but now widely supported by the majority of stakeholders, the comprehensive land tax reforms implemented on 1 July of this year—which, together with some other short-term stimulus activity will mean a reduction in land tax collections over the next three years of more than \$230 million and a reduction in land tax collections this financial year of over \$100 million—are all part of a long-term initiative to be competitive in the land tax area.

That is, a top land tax rate now of 2.4 per cent instead of 3.7 per cent means that many—not all but many—of the former critics of the government's proposals, having looked at them, are now taking a completely different perspective on them and, in contact with my office and other members' offices, are indicating their preparedness now to further invest in commercial property in South Australia.

I put on the public record a couple of major national investors who visited with me and with the government in the last month, who are indicating that they are now looking at investing in commercial property in Adelaide, as opposed to the western suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne. To be fair, that is a combination of a competitive land tax rate of 2.4 per cent instead of 3.7 per cent but also the final implementation, over three years, of the abolition of stamp duty on commercial property transactions in South Australia, together with what they see as the future growth prospects in South Australia under the new government, particularly in areas like defence, shipbuilding, space, cybersecurity and the like.

So that is on the land tax front. On the emergency services levy front, there is a massive reduction of \$90 million in the emergency services levy. There is the abolition of payroll tax for every

small business in this state under \$1.5 million permanently. As a short-term stimulus, as you know, this budget abolishes payroll tax for every small business in this state under \$4 million for a 15-month period from April this year through to June next year. But long term, there is the abolition of payroll tax for all small businesses in South Australia with payrolls of less than \$1.5 million.

If we move into the area of utilities charges and the like, or government costs, my congratulations go to former Labor minister John Rau, whose reforms to workers' compensation we supported in a bipartisan way. We have now seen the premium rate of just under 3 per cent reduce this year down to 1.65 per cent. That is under pressure because of some decisions taken in the last year of the former Labor government; nevertheless, a premium rate moving from just under 3 per cent to 1.65 per cent is a massive improvement in terms of the competitiveness of workers' compensation costs in our state.

This budget continues the narrative, as I said. We have reversed the horrendous decision of the former Labor Treasurer and the former Labor government to artificially ratchet up the regulated asset base of SA Water. In reversing that particular decision, households in South Australia are paying on average \$200 less a year in terms of their water bills. Businesses are paying on average \$1,400 a year less in water bills. Some businesses, high-volume water users, are paying up to \$1 million a year less in water costs this year compared to last year.

There is budget cost to that, which we have had to absorb willingly in this particular budget. That is, we have reduced dividends and income tax equivalents coming from SA Water into the budget of somewhere between \$200 million to \$250 million a year, so close to \$1 billion over four years. That is a reduced cost for business, it is reducing the costs of doing business in the state and it is reducing costs for households. It was a nice little earner for the former Labor government. That is why they did it. They artificially ratcheted up the asset base. They forced every household and business in the state to pay massively increased water costs because they wanted the money to come into the budget for them to spend.

Again, it is a key component of the cost base of business being reduced. The job killer in South Australia over the last 10 years or so has been electricity prices. My credit to my colleague the Minister for Energy and Mining on the reforms that have been introduced in terms of grid-scale battery storage, household battery storage, together with the further encouragement of the renewable energy industry. Allied with a key policy differential between the government and the alternative government is supporting what will be a key piece in terms of the jigsaw puzzle of keeping prices down in South Australia—that is, the interconnector from South Australia to the Eastern States through the Riverland. We are hopeful that in the next month or so the national regulators will take the next step in improving that second interconnector into South Australia.

The Labor Party in South Australia are trenchantly opposed to that. They want to see us continue to be subject to the vagaries of lightning strikes on the interconnector or bushfire impacts on the interconnector or rogue union strike action in Victoria on the interconnector, as we have seen over the last 20 or 25 years on occasions, which in essence completely islands us from the national market and from the Eastern States. It removes the protection we have that when we need power desperately we can import it from the Eastern States. Equally, as we have on a majority of occasions now a surplus of renewable energy, it gives us the capacity to export energy to the Eastern States to help keep prices low in the national market but also to provide system security for us all within the national market.

It just seems common sense to anyone other than obviously the opposition that having two interconnectors to give you the insurance or the protection against one of them going down for whatever reason is clearly a stabiliser in terms of the national market, a stabiliser in terms of the security of supply in protecting against blackouts but also a stabiliser in terms of price security. It is a key component of providing long-term reductions in electricity prices. As the minister has highlighted, already in the first two years the average household bill for electricity in South Australia is \$158 this year cheaper than in the last year under the former Labor government.

Right across the board, prices are being reduced for households and for businesses. The people of South Australia understand that point and acknowledge the point that there have been significant reductions. As we have highlighted on any number of occasions, the average two-person, two-child household in the metropolitan area is paying about \$800 a year less per household this

year compared with the last year under the former Labor government. That is a very significant delivery on the promise we made to lower costs in South Australia.

The second point that I would make is in relation to the issue that the Hon. Mr Parnell raised. This was in relation to the north-south corridor. This particular project is a no-brainer in terms of it being the most important economic infrastructure project in South Australia at the moment. It was recognised by the former Labor government, although they fell out of love with it towards the end of their period. It is recognised by this government. It is recognised by industry and stakeholders.

The Hon. Mr Parnell misunderstands—or does not understand, rather than misunderstands—the importance of this particular project. The Hon. Mr Parnell says, 'Instead of spending the money, we should spend the money on public transport.' For the life of me I am not sure how we are going to put the massive amounts of freight that we move from north to south or from country areas to the port or whatever it is on the back of buses running up and down the current South Road.

The Hon. Mr Parnell has a constituency and good luck to him, but it is clearly not a constituency which looks at how we actually grow jobs and grow the economy in South Australia, how we move freight and move freight quickly, and how we reduce the costs for industry in South Australia so that they can compete and compete better.

As we look at reducing the costs of doing business in our state, economic infrastructure projects with positive BCRs—benefit-cost ratios—are few and far between, sometimes, in terms of public infrastructure. This particular project has a very significant positive benefit-cost ratio, and I am sure that will be confirmed, in the final business case, by the middle of next year. So it is an essential piece of economic infrastructure. It has been recognised by state governments, Labor and Liberal, over the years and has been recognised by federal governments, Labor and Liberal, over the years, which is why the federal government is partnering with the state in terms of delivering this particular project.

The final point the Hon. Mr Parnell raises is in relation to the new road user charge for electric vehicles. Let me put a marker down in this particular speech, and that is that after the Hon. Mr Parnell has left this particular parliamentary arena, he having already indicated his intentions to retire, and after I have left—I having already indicated that I will be leaving, health willing and God willing, in March of 2022—the road user charge for electric vehicles not only in South Australia but nationally is a no-brainer and will be delivered, irrespective of the views and the plaintive cries of the Hon. Mr Parnell and those who might succeed him.

As I said, this is not just a Liberal government initiative. Comrade Tim Pallas, the Victorian Labor government Treasurer, is even further advanced than we are in South Australia: he has outlined the specific details of their road user charge in Victoria. He and I are in furious agreement that this is inevitable. It is a no-brainer.

It will be delivered at some stage within the states and territories or nationally, and there is a huge incentive for state and territory governments, as has been discussed at the Board of Treasurers for many, many years, as I have indicated before; that is, this is an opportunity for state and territory governments to take control of a revenue source, a funding base, which, albeit very small, as we have indicated in the budget speech, over the forward estimates period, will be in the long term a significant revenue source as it replaces fuel excise, currently collected by the federal government at the federal level. If state and territory governments foolishly do not deliver on this particular initiative it will be delivered by a federal government and a federal parliament, and again the funding source will be controlled by federal governments in terms of its application.

What I will say is that it does make sense—this is why this issue has been discussed at the Board of Treasurers—for there to be national consistency in the implementation of a road user charge. As I indicated in the budget speech, that is the reason we had been in active discussion with at least, as I said in an understatement, one or two other jurisdictions in the consideration of the details of the implementation of the road user charge. In the coming weeks, if not days, there will be further indication at the federal level of a growing tide of support for the implementation of a road user charge for electric vehicles.

In relation to the road user charge in this particular budget, the reality is that this government has already committed to I think \$18 million or \$18.3 million worth of infrastructure and supports, a

significant part of that being on charging infrastructure throughout the state. The two issues that are most often raised in relation to whether people pick up the currently increased cost of an electric vehicle are, first, the increased cost at the moment.

It is cost prohibitive for many South Australians, unless you are at the high end of the income-earning market in South Australia. That is why there are so many doctors and other wealthy professionals who are the current owners and users of electric vehicles. A lot of people who are in strugglesville cannot afford to purchase an electric vehicle, so they pay the massive fuel excise on their ageing vehicles, because that is basically what they can afford.

The two issues that inhibit the take-up of electric vehicles are, first, the prohibitive cost at this stage of the initial purchase price, but the second issue is a concern about charging infrastructure throughout the state; that is, what is the duration of the trip that you can get? So this government is tackling this one area, and that is where I reject the view of the Hon. Mr Parnell, who says that this government does not have any policy in relation to this; that is not correct.

An electric vehicle plan either has been released or is soon to be released by the minister, but an important part of that is already funded in this budget, and that is supporting the development of charging infrastructure right across South Australia. You need to get those structures in place. We are putting our money where our mouth is. There is \$18 million worth of funding commitment in this particular budget.

As I said, even if this legislation for a road user charge were to be implemented from 1 July next year, Treasury is estimating that on the current number of vehicles that we have in South Australia we would be collecting no more than about a million dollars a year. So we are spending more than \$18 million and we might collect no more than about \$3 million over the next three years from the road user charge.

Most of the research is showing that, of the two, the biggest component is the up-front cost of the vehicle. There is a lot of research, which I will be happy to put on the public record at another time, from eminent groups indicating that they believe that within about five years—so around 2025-26—with technological improvements and the like, we will see the cost of electric vehicles plummeting much, much closer to the cost of an equivalent vehicle in Australia.

That will inevitably occur, as happens with any new technology. For those of us who have seen all the whiz-bang things like televisions, electrical equipment and the like, there are massive costs in the early stages and then plummeting prices as the technology improves, competition increases, etc., and all of the experts—and this is not my estimation, but all the experts are feeding into the governments, not just us but the Victorian Labor government as well, and others, that we will see a much more competitive price for the vehicle.

That is the big driver in terms of people, because a lot of people will want to pick up the option of an electric vehicle if it is competitive for them to do so. The price will come down. If the cost of an electric vehicle at the moment is double the price of a vehicle that the rest of us might be driving, it is not the role of taxpayers and the government to subsidise that to the tune of \$30,000 or \$40,000 or \$50,000 in terms of the purchase price.

Some governments have token or marginal reductions in registration of \$100, or whatever it is, and this government may well look at those sorts of alternatives, but given the large-scale difference between the up-front cost at the moment, a marginal registration reduction of \$100 or a couple of hundred dollars is not going to move the dial. What is going to move the dial will be technological improvement and the cost of the vehicle from the manufacturer actually plummeting or dropping significantly.

As I said, it will be a debate for early next year when the legislation is introduced but, as I said, let me put the marker down now: whether the legislation is successful or not, a road user charge for electric vehicles will be implemented in South Australia and nationally. As comrade Pallas and myself and other commentators have indicated, it is a no-brainer, it will occur, it has to occur in terms of being able to replace the fuel excise in terms of helping to fund both new road construction but also essential road maintenance in the future.

With that, I thank honourable members for their support of the second reading of the Appropriation Bill, because in the end it will allow us to continue to pay our hardworking public servants for all the hard work they do, and continue to do, and we thank them for it.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

Bill taken through committee without amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (12:34): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL (COSTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 1 December 2020.)

The PRESIDENT: I have no listed speakers. I understand the Treasurer is going to conclude the debate.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (12:35): I thank the honourable member—or members; I cannot remember the number—for the indication of support for the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

Bill taken through committee without amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (12:37): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

EVIDENCE (VULNERABLE WITNESSES) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 12 November 2020.)

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (12:37): Labor supports the Evidence (Vulnerable Witnesses) Amendment Bill. We acknowledge the particular challenges faced by certain people in the community when they encounter the justice system. For children and people with a disability who are called to give evidence at a trial, being in a courtroom may present particular barriers. They may find it extremely difficult to give evidence in a trial without experiencing trauma or practical difficulties. We must keep the justice system accessible and supported for anyone.

Labor has and will continue to support equitable measures for children and persons with a disability to participate in the justice system. While balancing the rights of a defendant to a fair trial, we must also support people who may be vulnerable while they give evidence in criminal proceedings. This bill amends the current Evidence Act by giving effect to things that occurred for the canine court program, by clarifying the law around pre-trial special hearings for vulnerable witnesses and the admission and admissibility of pre-recorded evidence. In the Evidence Act vulnerable witnesses are defined as young children or people with a disability that adversely affects their capacity to give coherent accounts of their experiences or respond rationally to questions.

First, this bill seeks to remove doubt around the use of canine court companions. South Australia's famous canine court companion is a service dog called Zero. Zero is trained to assist distressed or vulnerable witnesses who are called to give evidence by calming them while they

may be recounting a highly traumatic experience. The pilot canine court program with the DPP also allows Zero to attend witness proofings at DPP offices. However, Zero cannot accompany witnesses while they give evidence in court.

This bill amends section 4 of the Evidence Act to define a canine court companion as a dog accredited by Guide Dogs SA/NT to ensure they are certified therapy dogs. It allows canine court companions like Zero to enter courtrooms and accompany witnesses in trials by amending sections 13 and 13A of the act. Sections 13 and 13A currently allow a court to order that a witness can be accompanied by a relative or friend for emotional support.

Section 13 relates to orders that a court can make to protect a witness from embarrassment, distress or intimidation, and section 13A covers orders that a court can make for vulnerable witnesses in a trial. This bill amends these sections so that a court can make an order that a canine companion can accompany a witness who is giving evidence during a trial. To avoid prejudicial effects on a trial, the bill proposes that the canine companion should not be visible to a jury or on video recordings.

Next, the bill amends section 12AB to expressly allow for canine court companions and their handlers to accompany witnesses in pre-trial hearings. More significantly, this bill amends section 12AB of the act to address tensions between section 12AB and section 13BA. Presently, section 12AB allows a court to arrange for a vulnerable witness to give evidence at a pre-trial special hearing for a serious offence against a person or for offences such as contravening intervention orders.

Pre-trial special hearings must be recorded and can facilitate a less stressful way for witnesses who have a physical disability or cognitive impairment to give evidence. At present, section 13BA enables the court 'in the trial of a charge of an offence' to order that recordings of investigative interviews under the Summary Offences Act or of evidence given in pre-trial special hearings can be admissible as evidence. However, section 13BA only empowers the court to admit recorded evidence at trial and not at a pre-trial hearing.

Issues can arise after a vulnerable witness gives evidence at a pre-trial special hearing because the court must determine later, when at trial, whether the evidence is admissible. If a court finds the recorded evidence inadmissible when at a trial much later after the pre-trial hearing, the vulnerable witness may be called to retestify, defeating the purpose of the protective pre-trial hearing provision in section 12AB.

The bill seeks to limit vulnerable witnesses from having to retestify at trial by amending section 12AB(9) to state that, at a pre-trial special hearing, the court may make orders about recorded evidence at a pre-trial special hearing and/or the admission of recorded evidence of an investigative interview under the Summary Offences Act. The bill amends section 13BA so that a court can order the admission of an audiovisual record of the witness examination at a pre-trial special hearing while at the special hearing.

It also clarifies that recordings of pre-trial special hearings and investigative interviews under the Summary Offences Act can be admitted by the court if they are satisfied of the witness's capacity and give the respondent a reasonable opportunity to view the recording. The bill inserts new section 12AC, which states that orders may be made by a court at a pre-trial special hearing about the admission of a witness's evidence recording, subject to certain conditions.

We must ensure equity of access for children and people living with disability when they interact with the court system. In providing support to this bill, the opposition still places on record its concern and questions why the government has repeatedly, over a number of budgets now, cut services and supports to victims by stripping funding from contracts with community organisations such as the Victim Support Service and notes that these sorts of provisions would be much more useful if victims were supported through the court process by those methods.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (12:44): I rise also to speak in support of the Evidence (Vulnerable Witnesses) Amendment Bill 2020, which aims to benefit vulnerable witnesses in two important but quite different respects. The first element of the bill is a very welcome and innovative expansion of the DPP and Guide Dogs SA/NT Canine Court Companion Program into its third stage, from assisting vulnerable witnesses being interviewed and proofed as witnesses to accompanying those witnesses in court.

I am really excited that South Australia is the first jurisdiction to legislate to expressly provide for canine court companions to accompany these witnesses while they give their evidence in court, although I do note that Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT have had well-established canine court companion programs for some time, and of course we have had our very own beautiful black labrador court companion, Zero, in our South Australian courts for over a year now.

New South Wales has therapy dog teams currently visiting 10 courthouses on a daily basis. If you are supportive of this bill, the hope certainly is that Zero is soon part of a larger team. I was especially pleased to learn that Victoria has Connie, the 24-month-old golden labrador who is currently in training for court work. She is known to lead her handler to people in emotional distress around the Shepparton court facility in regional Victoria and, as I would expect from a Connie, the Victorian court staff commented that she was 'born for this work'. It comes naturally to her.

Vulnerable witnesses are clearly defined in several parts of the Evidence Act, but within the act the court has, on application, considerable discretion to provide assistance to any witnesses the court determines need additional support. This legislation is potentially of benefit to vulnerable witnesses and those in need of those additional supports who find themselves in what are often hostile, confronting and challenging environments.

There are sensible provisions in the bill to ensure the canine companion dog is not prejudicial to the administration of justice—that is a really important point—avoiding distraction and of course the potential for a jury to be influenced in any way from the support being provided to vulnerable witnesses. For many people, giving evidence and attending court, even if behind a screen or in a videoconference, is absolutely one of the worst and hardest days of their lives. Victims and witnesses tell us that recounting their experiences to the police and then to the courts and to counsellors is to relive that incident, that abuse, that injury or that trauma over and over again. That is why companion animals like Zero and Connie are so important.

Recommendation 61 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recognised the value and importance of support and detailed measures that should be available to vulnerable witnesses. These include:

...allowing the witness to be supported when giving evidence, whether in the courtroom or remotely, including, for example, through the presence of a support person or a support animal or by otherwise creating a more child-friendly environment.

We all know about the special therapeutic calming and anxiety-reducing effects dogs can have on people. If you are a cat lover, I am sure the same can be said for cats. This has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the demand for rescue dogs and puppies in particular has outstripped supply. Scientific research has shown canine companions trigger some neural pathways to the parent-baby bond and that dogs have an ability to recognise and respond to positive and negative human emotions with great sensitivity and effect.

The beautifully trained, accredited Guide Dogs SA/NT companions like Zero, again, are especially in tune with human emotions and needs. They are able to provide just the response required at just the right time. This could be the wag of a tail, close-up eye contact, a head on the lap, a nuzzle to your hand for a pat, or simply lying on or at your feet. In the case of autistic or highly agitated and upset people, the comforting effect of a dog that has been expertly trained to gently apply their body weight on the person has been shown to provide immediate and soothing effects that benefit cognition, memory and focus.

On that note, I would like to mention that I recently had the absolute pleasure of inviting to dine with me Mr Jon Lane and his faithful assistance dog, Dexter, in Parliament House on Remembrance Day last month. He was invited here for the Remembrance Day commemoration and then joined us in Parliament House for dinner. If it was not for the occasional brush of fur on my leg I would not have even known that Dexter was at the breakfast because he sat so still under the table. Once I knew he was there, I knew he provided an absolutely vital service to Mr Lane.

When I first met Dexter at the breakfast, as I said, I had no idea that he was there. As a dog owner I can say that it astounds me how a dog can be surrounded with all these things, including food and distractions, and sit there as inconspicuous and as still as Dexter was. But, more importantly, it is the support that he provided to Mr Lane in that scenario which was the most important aspect.

I understand that Zero is also a very welcome staff member at the DPP and the courts, and provides a lot of comfort and joy to a much larger number of people than we know. Of course, Dexter and Zero and, indeed, all accredited service dogs have legislated access to all public places, including restaurants, public transport and courthouses, but this bill provides for their participation in the court process. It is my understanding that, for example, a vision-impaired witness or a person with PTSD and their own support dog would already be approved by the court to be accompanied by the accredited dog while giving evidence, but I will seek to have confirmation of this during the committee stage debate.

I think the second very different provision in this bill is a response to changes originally inserted in the Evidence Act by disability advocate and former member of this place, Kelly Vincent, in 2015. Again, I would like to commend Kelly's extraordinary efforts in terms of reforms in these areas while she was a member of this place. The intentions of those original amendments of Ms Vincent—to minimise adverse impacts on vulnerable witnesses by enabling those witnesses to give their evidence as early as possible in a criminal process, and minimise the number of times they are required to give that evidence—have encountered some unanticipated legislative hurdles that the bill addresses.

Section 12AB of the act provides for courts to conduct pre-trial hearings to take evidence of vulnerable witnesses, and that is something that is being addressed through the bill. But as section 13BA of the Evidence Act currently stands, an application for pre-recorded evidence of vulnerable witnesses must be made at trial. There is therefore a risk that a vulnerable witness will have to give evidence again should an application be unsuccessful at trial. That is absolutely not a good outcome and is something that this bill intends to rectify. It was an unintended consequence that the bill rectifies by enabling courts to make those orders at a pre-trial special hearing admitting recorded evidence and such orders will be binding in the trial court itself.

Following on from the very good work of former member Kelly Vincent, we have the bill now that rectifies an unintended consequence of some of the provisions that were introduced in 2015. Of course, if matters arise or become known between the pre-trial and the trial, the court has discretion to order otherwise. I am sure Ms Vincent will be especially pleased to see that the government has responded positively to ensure the original intentions of her amendments in 2015 are fully realised.

I will also note that the other factor I raised with the Attorney's office during our briefing on the bill was the possibility of these companion dogs not only being used in the case of vulnerable victims but potentially vulnerable people who are charged with offences and appear before our courts. We do not know all the scenarios and all the circumstances that result in someone being charged with an offence and being before the courts, but we do know that overwhelmingly most individuals who find themselves in those situations are likely to suffer from some sort of mental health issue or other health issue, and generally it is mental health. That is overwhelmingly the case.

So you would have to question how useful these dogs would be, used in that setting, and whether there is scope or whether we should be considering scope in the future to extend the program to those charged with offences as well as vulnerable witnesses. It is something that arose during discussion with the Attorney. It is something that I would like us to explore further in the context of further reforms to the bill, and of course it will require more resourcing and funding, because right now we only have Zero.

Again, I think this is a very good step in the right direction, in terms of ensuring that we assist our most vulnerable witnesses and our most vulnerable members of the community. With those words, I offer SA-Best's overwhelming support for the bill and commend the government for this bill.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (12:55): I thank the honourable members for their support of the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

Bill taken through committee without amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (12:57): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Sitting suspended from 12:58 to 14:15.

*Parliamentary Procedure***OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT**

The PRESIDENT: On Tuesday this week I laid on the table the annual report of the Ombudsman 2019-20. The report should have been ordered to be printed. I now call on the Treasurer.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:16): I move:

That the annual report of the Ombudsman 2019-20 be printed.

Motion carried.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the President—

Legislative Council—Report, 2019-20

By the Treasurer (Hon. R.I. Lucas)—

Reports, 2019-20—

Dairy Authority of South Australia (trading as Dairysafe)

Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure

Forestry SA

Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing

South Australian Dog Fence Board

State of the Sector

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Declaration under Summary Offences Act 1953—Notice of Designated Area

Review of the 2012 Management Plan for the South Australian Commercial Abalone

Fishery—Outcomes dated October 2020

By the Minister for Human Services (Hon. J.M.A. Lensink)—

Reports, 2019-20—

Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium

Department for Environment and Water

Department of Human Services

Environment Protection Authority

Green Industries SA

International Koala Centre of Excellence

Parks and Wilderness Council

South Australian Heritage Council

South Australian Housing Trust

South Australian Water Corporation

South Eastern Water Conservation and Drainage Board

Stormwater Management Authority

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

Board of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission—Report, 2018-19

Reports, 2019-20—

Administrator of the National Health Funding Pool
 Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and National Boards
 Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network
 Central Adelaide Local Health Network
 Central Adelaide Local Health Network Health Advisory Council Inc.
 Community Road Safety Fund Revenue and Expenditure
 Department for Correctional Services
 Eyre and Far North Local Health Network
 Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network
 Limestone Coast Local Health Network
 National Health Funding Body
 National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and National Health Practitioner Privacy
 Commissioner
 Northern Adelaide Local Health Network
 Northern Adelaide Local Health Network Health Advisory Council Inc.
 Parole Board of South Australia
 Riverland Mallee Coorong Local Health Network Inc.
 SA Ambulance Service Inc.
 SAAS Volunteer Health Advisory Council
 Southern Adelaide Local Health Network
 Southern Adelaide Local Health Network Health Advisory Council
 South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission
 South Australia Police
 Women's and Children's Health Network
 Women's and Children's Health Network Health Advisory Council Inc.
 Yorke and Northern Local Health Network

Parliamentary Committees

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE SOCIAL WORKERS REGISTRATION BILL

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (14:16): I bring up the report of the committee, together with the minutes of proceedings and evidence.

Report ordered to be published.

Parliamentary Procedure

ANSWERS TABLED

The PRESIDENT: I direct that the written answer to a question be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

Question Time

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:21): 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. K.J. MAHER: On Tuesday, when asked about the confidentiality of personal information provided to contact tracers, the minister said:

...the primary provisions are, first, provisions under the South Australian Public Health Act in relation to confidentiality and, secondly, in the Health Care Act 2008.

The minister went on to say:

...both acts put a duty on officers to maintain the confidentiality of the people with whom they deal.

My questions to the minister are:

1. What exactly do the terms 'personal information' and 'confidentiality' mean under the acts to which the minister referred on Tuesday?
2. On whose authority can such personal information collected by contact tracers be released?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:22): I thank the honourable member for his question. Considering that those are matters of statutory interpretation, I will seek advice and come back with an answer.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:22): I seek leave, again, to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding public health.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Assistant Police Commissioner Peter Harvey said yesterday:

...SA Health have exercised what they say is their obligation to claim privilege and not provide information to the investigators.

It is noted that nowhere in the Public Health Act or the Health Care Act does the word 'privilege' appear. Given that, I would ask the minister: exactly where does the privilege arise from that SA Health has claimed, and do you as minister have a power to authorise this information?

The PRESIDENT: Before the minister answers, we are having trouble with the clock, but I can see the time on the Black Rod's computer. We have 57 minutes and 58 seconds. I call the minister.

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:23): The issue of the provision of information to Task Force Protect is a matter for SA Health.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): Supplementary arising from the answer: who is the minister responsible for SA Health?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:24): I have nothing to add to my previous answer.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: You are stretching it to get a supplementary out of that.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): Supplementary arising from the answer, where in most usual circumstances under responsible government the minister would be responsible for things SA Health do, but apparently not in this case. My supplementary is: given that this is a matter for SA Health and not for the minister in any way, shape or form, what advice has the minister sought from SA Health about the claiming of privilege, and has he asked his department on what basis this privilege is being claimed by his officers?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:24): I was made aware of conversations between police and SA Health, but at all times it remained a matter between SA Police and SA Health.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:25): A further supplementary arising from the original answer: has the minister asked for a briefing on this matter and, in particular, where this concept of privilege arises?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:25): I have nothing to add to my previous answer.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:25): 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. K.J. MAHER: At a press conference the Premier claimed that a person who provided information to contact tracers was a person who, and I quote, 'deliberately misled our contact tracing team, their story added up and we now know they lied'. Minister, if your own department, for which you are responsible, has claimed privilege on information provided by this person to contact tracers, how on earth did the Premier have the information that led him to make these conclusions?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:26): I would refer the honourable member to the statement by Assistant Commissioner Peter Harvey issued on 2 December at 4.38pm. I quote:

The initial investigation indicated the first conversation with contact tracers was misleading. That conversation was central to information provided by SA Health to decision makers preceding the lockdown.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:26): Supplementary arising from the answer where the minister talked about the first conversation the individual had with contact tracers.

The PRESIDENT: Your question?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Minister, are you aware how the Premier came to be in receipt of that information?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:26): I understand that a government spokesman advised yesterday that the chief executive of SA Health and the Chief Public Health Officer briefed SAPOL and the Premier on the situation, including the risk associated with the Woodville Pizza Bar.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): A further supplementary arising from the original answer.

The PRESIDENT: Straight to the question.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Was there a briefing provided to the Premier giving personal information prior to the Premier making statements about this individual being a liar?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:27): I have nothing to add to my previous answer.

SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY (14:27): My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer update the chamber on the latest figures of grants to small businesses significantly affected by COVID-19?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Treasurer has the call.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:27): I am sure all members will be delighted to hear that, as of I think yesterday morning in the latest figures that Treasury provided, \$31.1 million has actually been provided to a significant number of small businesses in South Australia already, just some three weeks or so since the government announced in the November budget the second round of Small Business Grants to businesses that were significantly impacted by COVID-19.

I am advised that so far there have been 5,622 applications for the \$10,000 grants. As members will be aware, in the second round we have actually instituted \$3,000 grants for essentially

sole traders and partnerships trading from commercial premises with certain other eligibility criteria, and there are 557 of those. I think they are included in the 5,622 total. So of those 5,622, 557 of those are sole traders or partnerships.

Of those that have been paid, the \$31.1 million, I am advised that 3,334 of those applications have already been paid, of which 315 were for the \$3,000 grant. So a significant amount of money has been handed out very, very quickly to ensure that there is essential stimulus support for a significant number of small businesses that are able to qualify for the payment of this grant.

Essentially, that means they have to qualify for JobKeeper; that is, they have been assessed on the commonwealth government JobKeeper eligibility criteria as being eligible for JobKeeper. That means, broadly, their revenue has dropped 30 per cent in the September quarter compared to the September quarter the previous year and, soon to be determined in terms of the extended JobKeeper, it will be the December quarter to December quarter 2019 to see whether or not they are eligible for the extended JobKeeper.

I again highlight, as I did earlier in the week, the government has extended the application date for these particular grants through to February, which will allow those businesses which are impacted in the December quarter, potentially as a result of the three-day circuit breaker, and any flow-on impacts as a result of the gradual reinstatement of restrictions subsequent to that particular period. If that means that their business has been impacted so that they are eligible for extended JobKeeper, they will be eligible because they can apply, up until February, for the grants, based on their September quarter figures.

ODOUR POLLUTION, KANMANTOO

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (14:31): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Human Services representing the Minister for Environment and Water about odour pollution at Kanmantoo.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL: There is a foul smell hanging over the Adelaide Hills communities of Kanmantoo and Callington, which according to residents emanates from the Neutrog plant whose operation produces fertiliser from chicken manure. Residents have told me that over the last 18 months or so this company has doubled its production, which has resulted in the sickening stench pervading their town on a near daily basis.

I understand that the Environment Protection Authority is currently investigating this; however, I am told it is not a new problem. At a personal level, I worked on this issue more than 20 years ago when I was at the Environmental Defenders Office. So it is a longstanding, smelly problem. My question of the minister is: given that this is not a new issue, is the government aware of the community concerns and, if so, what is the minister doing to protect residents from being subjected to another summer of being shut up indoors to avoid the putrid smell?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (14:32): I thank the honourable member for his question. I would be surprised if the Environment Protection Authority wasn't aware of this particular matter. I think it was in today's newspaper and I am sure the good officers of the EPA have been working on these issues. But I will take those questions on notice and bring back a response for the honourable member.

KEITH AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:33): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding hospitals.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: The chair of the Keith hospital board, Mr Warren Ingerson, told ABC radio Adelaide on Tuesday:

...we still have a situation where we have done what the government asked us to do, but we are not getting any support back from them...

Because of this lack of support from the government, we have had to suspend the emergency services...

We have a minister who says we have to do certain things. If we do them we will get support of the government. Now we have an unelected bureaucrat in Chris McGowan overriding the minister saying, 'No we're not doing any of that, chuck all that out, come up with another option.' What is going on here?

Steven Marshall and Stephen Wade came to the hospital prior to the last election...and made the comment, the quote was, 'The Keith hospital will not just survive, it will thrive under a Marshall leadership,' that's what you said. We trusted you. And here we are three years down the track and we are going absolutely nowhere.

My questions to the minister are:

1. Why has the minister not signed off on the business case for the Keith hospital?
2. Why has the minister only agreed to rolling three-month contract extensions that mean the hospital can't implement the business case and attract and retain staff?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:34): I thank the honourable member for her question. I think it is very important to see this situation in its context. I am advised that the Keith and District Hospital has been under financial stress since at least the early 2000s. The Marshall Liberal government, in the context of our strong commitment to rural health, is keen to work with the Keith and District Hospital board to maximise health outcomes for people in the South-East.

That is why, since the 2018 election, the Marshall Liberal government has provided more than \$3 million to the Keith and District Hospital. We have provided more in funding support since the election than the former Labor government provided in the last seven years of their government. So we are very committed to working with the Keith and District Hospital.

The Hon. C.M. Scriven interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The deputy leader will remain silent.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge the good work of two boards: the board of the Keith and District Hospital and also the board of the Limestone Coast Local Health Network, because those two boards have been working together to develop the long-term plans for the Keith and District Hospital and, to be frank, the health services in that area.

It would have been my hope that these long-term plans could have been settled by the end of this year. That wasn't possible. Part of the reason, I am sure, is the pandemic that has distracted so much of normal 'business as usual' activity. When Mr Ingerson made the comments earlier this week, as I understand it he wasn't aware of the government's commitment to fund beyond the end of this year, but if he was let me reiterate that that is the case. The government has extended its funding support to 30 June.

I would particularly describe this funding as vital transition funding to help the hospital reconfigure the services of the hospital in the context of the health services of the region. In a conversation with Mr Ingerson recently, we were both strongly of the view that it is in the best interests of the people of Keith and the region for the Keith and District Hospital board and the public health services, managed by the Limestone Coast Local Health Network, to work together. There are not two communities in Keith. It is one community in the town and in the region, and it is very important that we work together to deliver the best outcomes.

That is why the bill we considered yesterday has a specific responsibility on local health network boards to work with other partners in their region to maximise health outcomes. I can assure you that the Limestone Coast Local Health Network board, under the leadership of Grant King, is very committed to collaboration, and we are seeing that with the good work that is being done in terms of the development of long-term plans for Keith and regions.

KEITH AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:38): Supplementary arising from that answer: when will the minister sign off on the business case and long-term funding proposal for the Keith hospital?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:38): One thing that Labor really can't understand, if you are not doing centralism, is board governance.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The opposition asked a question. Have the grace to listen to the minister's answer. The minister.

The Hon. R.P. Wortley interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Wortley is out of order.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: This government made a very clear commitment before the last election that, not only were we going to deal with a \$140 million country capital works backlog, we were also going to put decisions back into the hands of local people through local health networks. So primarily—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —this work is being led by the Limestone Coast Local Health Network and by the board.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order, the Hon. Mr Hunter!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: We are not going to usurp the authority that we have a democratic mandate—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —to put in the hands of the people of the South-East.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: Of course, that has to be in collaboration with the department. As minister, I am very keen to see a positive outcome.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: It is a bit rich, coming from the people opposite. I think it was the—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! I can't hear the minister.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I think in 2010 the state budget had a huge hit—

The Hon. K.J. Maher: When are you going to do anything, Stephen?

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition is out of order.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —against the Keith hospital.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter: Deliver on your own promise.

The PRESIDENT: Order, the Hon. Mr Hunter!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: It had a huge hit against the Keith hospital. Since this government has been elected, we have provided more than \$3 million—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —to the Keith and District Hospital. We have provided more in funding support since the election than the former government provided—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —in seven years.

KEITH AND DISTRICT HOSPITAL

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:40): Supplementary: I refer to the minister's answer, although that last answer was a non-answer. When will emergency services at the Keith hospital reopen?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:41): We don't run the hospital.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Minister, resume your seat.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! If the opposition wishes to listen to the answer, I will call the minister. Otherwise, we will move on.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: Well, that's my revelation: they have been asking all these questions, and they didn't even realise it was a private hospital. It is not our hospital.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: It is a private hospital run by a private board.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: My understanding is that the accident and emergency unit closed in November 2019. There were significant issues in relation to the GP contract and other services.

GAMBLERS REHABILITATION FUND

The Hon. J.S. LEE (14:42): My question is to the Minister for Human Services regarding—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! I'm sorry, the Hon. Jing Lee has the call. I want to hear the question she is asking and I would hope that everybody else will as well.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: My question is to the Minister for Human Services regarding problem gambling. Can the minister please provide an update to the council about how the Marshall Liberal government is improving services to support vulnerable people at risk of gambling harm?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (14:42): I thank the honourable member for her question. The Department of Human Services administers the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund, which delivers programs to minimise harm caused by gambling. It was established in 1994 under the Gaming Machines Act 1992. The government has undertaken recent reforms to the act, which honourable members may be aware of, which included a new mandate for the Gamblers Rehabilitation Fund and its administrative unit, the Office for Problem Gambling, to deliver public information campaigns, research and early intervention and prevention activities.

Under these reforms, the government committed an additional \$1 million into the GRF and is undertaking plans to allocate that particular funding. The 2020-21 state budget includes additional support of \$750,000, in 2019-20 and 2020-21, to the GRF. The government increased its contribution to the GRF to offset a reduction in funding from the industry as a result of gaming venues being closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Currently, the GRF funds 28 gambling help services that are provided by 12 government and non-government organisations. Contracts for the 12 help services are in place from 1 January 2020 for three years. The targeted gambling help services include a specialised therapy service, a criminal justice service, a program for people with lived experience in problem gambling, Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse services and the 24/7 Gambling Helpline, which is 1800 858 858.

The GRF also provides funds for Gambling Help Online, which is a national initiative funded through contributions from all state and territory governments and the Australian government. Gambling Help Online provides web-based access to counselling and information services. The GRF also provides funding to the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network mental health services to provide the statewide gambling therapy service, which delivers a free service based on cognitive behavioural therapy, as well as access to specialist psychiatric beds.

The OPG has recently contracted UnitingCare Wesley Bowden at a cost of \$220,000 over two years to trial a program called Unplugged, which will provide education to help parents understand problem gambling, identify when a young person is at risk and learn strategies to help manage healthier online use.

During the period of the gambling harm awareness, we run programs to provide information to the public. This year's theme was 'Gambling harm can happen anywhere', in recognition of the increase in mobile phone and online sports betting. The OPG offered small grants to GRF-funded services to create awareness initiatives for their community. Six services were awarded grants totalling \$62,000 for initiatives such as webinars, online workshops, printed resources, television adverts, social media adverts, videos and podcasts.

We thank our non-government and government partners for their work in this very important area as we continue to address the harms arising from gambling.

PROBLEM GAMBLING

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:46): Supplementary: can the minister advise how much gambling losses on poker machines increased from the March lockdown period until the subsequent opening of pubs and clubs with poker machines?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (14:46): I thank the honourable member for that supplementary. I think that information may well be with Treasury, but we will see which portfolio that sits with, where we can obtain that from. As I think was recently highlighted publicly through the particular budget amount, which I have just provided, the funding through poker machines actually reduced during COVID.

That is why the community support fund, which the Treasurer manages, has provided the additional funding so that it could substitute the money that was not going into the fund from pokies, but I understand that since the restrictions were lifted in the first round people certainly went back into venues. So we will find that information for the honourable member and bring back a response.

PROBLEM GAMBLING

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:47): Further supplementary: can the minister in doing so also indicate how many counsellors are currently hired to undertake routine visits to gambling venues, such as these poker machines venues, and any other venues, to monitor problem gambling behaviour specifically?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (14:47): I will undertake to find what I can. Clearly, there are staff who have a particular responsibility that is associated with their badge who also provide support to people who are problem gamblers.

LAND TAX

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (14:48): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Treasurer a question about land tax accounts.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.A. DARLEY: I understand land tax accounts were issued and sent out to taxpayers in four quarterly instalments prior to this financial year. It now appears that RevenueSA has adopted the same procedure that is used for emergency services levy accounts, that is, a ratepayer receives one account for the year and attached is a further page with the four quarterly instalments and due dates. My questions to the Treasurer are:

1. Can the Treasurer confirm that taxpayers will receive only one account for land tax for the year and they will need to remember the four quarterly amounts and pay by the due date each quarter, rather than receiving a separate notice each quarter?

2. Can the Treasurer advise how much money RevenueSA is saving as a result of this procedure?

3. By comparison, can the Treasurer advise how many reminder notices are sent for overdue emergency services levy accounts each year, which use the same procedure?

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:49): I'm happy to take the honourable member's question on notice and bring back a reply. I seem to recall the issue having been raised with my office by someone, and I thought the answer was that there will be some continuing advice on a quarterly basis to land tax payers, contrary to the understanding of the Hon. Mr Darley. However, I will have that matter checked by RevenueSA and provide an answer to the honourable member.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. I. PNEVMATIKOS (14:50): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Health and Wellbeing a question regarding hospitals.

Leave granted.

The Hon. I. PNEVMATIKOS: On radio this week, the Premier responded to questions about revealing the personal information of a COVID-19 patient. He said:

[No] I stand by my comments. That was the unequivocal health advice that I had received.

My question to the minister is: what exactly was the unequivocal health advice that your department provided?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:50): I refer honourable members to the statement of the Assistant Commissioner of SA Police, Peter Harvey. In a statement issued on 2 December 2020, he said:

The initial investigation indicated the first conversation with contact tracers was misleading. That conversation was central to information provided by SA Health to decision makers preceding the lockdown.

CORONAVIRUS

The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS (14:51): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Will the minister update the council on South Australia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Minister for Health and Wellbeing has the call.

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:51): I thank the honourable member for his question. The Marshall Liberal government has been working hard—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The minister has the call.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —throughout 2020 to protect South Australians from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A key part of this work has been to secure a supply of personal protective equipment at a time of high international demand. Earlier in the pandemic, the Marshall Liberal government was able to work with local firm Detmold to establish domestic production of surgical masks right here in South Australia.

This capacity not only helped keep our frontline health professionals safe with high-quality PPE from a reliable source but it created around 150 jobs in a time of economic challenge. In this context, I pause to acknowledge the contribution of my then ministerial colleague, the Hon. David Ridgway, who was a key partner in making sure that Detmold was supported to engage this facility. SA Health has also helped accelerate the Detmold manufacturing facility, allowing for the production of over 20 million masks a month.

Since March 2020, 70 million surgical masks have been produced and supplied from the national manufacturing facility—70 million surgical masks. What a massive contribution to our pandemic response. Proving the willingness of South Australians to work collaboratively when faced with a crisis such as the recent pandemic, Detmold has been supported by both the Flinders

University and the University of South Australia, utilising the \$450,000 research and commercialisation and startup fund to establish a face mask testing facility.

Masks were previously sent overseas for testing, taking up to three weeks, but with the health crisis in other nations it is taking even longer. Having the capability to test here has sped up the process for Detmold to ensure that the products meet stringent standards and can be rolled out to where they are needed most. There is no more important or better time than a pandemic to make sure that products are developed and delivered on time.

With the latest acceleration of production, the number of jobs created has also doubled to 300. Detmold is not only supplying local needs for surgical face masks but is assisting the local economy by supplying other states and territories. The Marshall government has demonstrated its determination to act on our expert health advice in working to ensure the protection and safety of South Australians, and I thank the staff of SA Health, Detmold and all our other partners for their dedication and commitment in meeting this challenge.

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:54): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Health and Wellbeing a question about the Women's and Children's Alliance and the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: The Women's and Children's Alliance, expressly formed to campaign for improved funding and resources for the Women's and Children's Hospital, recently announced that it was being demobilised amid fears for the welfare of clinical staff exposing themselves to sanctions by management for daring to speak out over problems plaguing the hospital. Alliance members fear that hostility shown by hospital management and the board to its tireless efforts to expose genuine problems that threaten patient care has forced division amongst staff.

This was reinforced even further earlier this week when I met with a group of dedicated clinicians at the hospital, who told me that they have been accused by hospital management of casting a negative light on the Women's and Children's Hospital by speaking out against the hospital in unfavourable terms and that the management's focus appears to be on deflecting blame rather than addressing the concerns raised by these clinicians and staff in trying to address them.

Further, had it not been for the alliance and the hospital, they say that many of the issues that have now been raised in public, which are very much in the public's interest, would not have been raised at all. My questions to the minister are:

1. Are you concerned that the alliance, formed by such respected, eminent and highly skilled clinicians, has aborted its plans over its fears that clinicians and other senior staff are being threatened by the hospital's board and executive?

2. Do you agree with hospital management that doctors are casting a negative light on the hospital by publicly voicing concerns that they have, as a last resort, in relation to patient care?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:56): Let me make two points. First of all, this government is very committed to community engagement. Reiterating the point I made earlier, that is one of the key reasons why we have moved to board governance. We also have huge respect for the men and women right across the state, 45,000 of them, who work within the SA Health network. We are keen to engage our workforce, both clinical and other workers, in shaping the services going forward.

Fundamentally, we want to make sure that these networks are healthy organisms, for want of a better word, that communicate well and resolve issues internally, but we are fully aware that from time to time issues of concern will escalate and become matters of public concern. So we respectfully engaged in the discussion with the alliance and with staff, which started late last year and went through this year.

As I previously advised the house, there were reviews done of services and additional employees added. Perhaps there was no greater project in that stream of activity than the work that was done to assess the viability of paediatric cardiac surgery. The alliance was very strongly backing a group of clinicians who believed that we could have a safe, high-quality paediatric cardiac surgery

service in South Australia, and the board showed them the respect of giving their proposal a thorough review.

I believe that the board is continuing to engage its stakeholders seriously, both in the community and within their workforce, as demonstrated by the work done on the paediatric cardiac surgery service. The board has a responsibility to deliver high-quality and safe services, and the information provided to the board is that it wasn't possible to establish a local service at the current time.

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:58): Supplementary: is the minister aware of the sorts of warnings that I referred to in my question being made to clinicians by the board and the chief executive's office, and does he accept the damage that this sort of behaviour has on the morale of our medical profession?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:59): Was that in relation to the comment that the management felt it put the network in a negative light?

The Hon. C. Bonaros: Cast in a negative light.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I would go back to the comment I made in my original remark, which is that I would hope that networks would maintain channels of communication such that people wouldn't feel the need to go beyond the network. I accept the fact that from time to time that will happen. I certainly expect health management and health boards to also respect that people have the right to speak.

Both internally and externally, as I've mentioned in my previous answer, the board is taking seriously the concerns of clinicians. That doesn't mean that every clinician is going to be happy. In that context, with the board's receipt of the two significant perspectives on the paediatric cardiac surgery, that actually served to highlight the diversity. Up until that point, the alliance was speaking in concert with a group of clinicians who were the dominant voice, if not the exclusive voice. As those reports were released and discussed within the network, it became increasingly clear that there was a diversity of view within the clinicians.

In our governance arrangements, in our consumer and clinician engagement, we are not so naive to think that with 45,000 employees there's only one view. It's not surprising that there was a diversity of view at the Women's and Children's Hospital. That's become increasingly clear over time.

The government's commitment to high-quality health services for women and children is resolute. We are committed to a very major building project west of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital, and this most recent budget saw a significant increase in the budget to the network. We will continue to work with the Women's and Children's Health Network as they continue to work with their clinicians and their communities.

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

The Hon. C. BONAROS (15:01): Final supplementary: does the minister accept that the concerns and the sorts of concerns that have been outlined are not limited to the cardiac unit and the lack of an ECMO but extend across various disciplines throughout the Women's and Children's Hospital?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:02): Yes, I certainly do, and I think that was implicit in my earlier comment about reviews being done and additional FTEs. They were certainly different services beyond cardiac.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (15:02): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding hospitals.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.E. HANSON: In March this year, the ABC reported comments from the Premier about establishing extra medical facilities for COVID-19. I will quote a portion of that:

Two hospitals are set to be reopened in Adelaide, in a bid to help health workers deal with an anticipated surge of coronavirus cases in South Australia...

The Premier said two new facilities would be based at the recently decommissioned ECH College Grove in Adelaide's north-east and Wakefield Hospital in the CBD, and together will accommodate nearly 200 beds.

The Premier was then specifically quoted saying the following:

'These two new facilities will give us an additional 188-bed capacity, this is part of our plan, getting ahead of the game,' Premier Steven Marshall said.

'Our health professionals in South Australia have been planning for this ramp up over an extended period of time. Part of that deals with beds.

'All of those things have been worked on for weeks now, but we are in front of the game and we remain in front of the game in South Australia.'

So my question to the minister is: if the proposal to use the Wakefield hospital had been the subject of planning over an extended period back in March this year, how is it possible that it's still not ready for use after being flagged for this purpose yet again in November this year?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:04): The simple version is that the challenges facing the health system in the first wave are not the challenges facing the health system now. As of today, we have 33 people in the most recent cluster. As of yesterday, I think it was, we had 10 active cases. None of them are in hospital. We do not need a hospital facility for COVID-positive patients in terms of managing our hospital demand capacity.

I think it was in March—yes, March—when cabinet made the decision to secure the ECH facility, the Wakefield facility and the Repat. That was the very month that we experienced our first wave peak, and I can assure you that cabinet was resolutely fixed on the risk that our hospital system would become overwhelmed.

We have seen much-loved communities overseas, in North America and in Europe, communities we are very close to, who have experienced very traumatic hospital demand surges which have completely overwhelmed their system. We were working very hard to make sure that did not happen.

The facility at Wakefield in particular was secured for COVID-positive patients—mildly acute. The ECH facility was more focused on I think they call it a 'cold site'—anyway, a site which doesn't have COVID patients. So there were detailed plans being put in place, but that was very much focused on hospital demand and dealing with people who were basically needing medical treatment, needing hospital care.

I would like to again pay tribute to the public health team within SA Health, the whole 45,000 workers in SA Health across the state but also, as Dr Dharminy did yesterday, I want to pay tribute to the people of South Australia, who have backed their public health team in an exemplary effort of collaboration, because I am convinced, as Dr Dharminy said yesterday, that the success of the suppression of the pandemic in South Australia thus far is fundamentally based on both the skill of the public health clinicians and the cooperation of the South Australian community.

So the reason why the Wakefield facility is not being opened tomorrow as a dedicated hotel quarantine facility as part of the Premier's eight-point plan released last week is because it is a totally different purpose. What SA Health is doing is assessing the options for the current purpose. Thankfully, we are not planning to be using the more than 100 beds at the Wakefield hospital for the treatment of people who are mildly acute in response to COVID infections.

The facility that we are looking for—sorry, and I should say that Wakefield is still one of the possible options, but I am saying it hasn't been identified as the option—is because the purpose is significantly different. We are talking about international travellers who come into South Australia and are found to be COVID-positive, either in transit or on arrival, and it is the view of this government that one of the strategies that can help us reduce the risk of transmission is to co-locate or cohort positive cases in a facility.

The design requirements on a facility for mildly unwell acute patients with COVID-19 is completely different to that in terms of travellers who might have very mild symptoms but in the context of international travel they would be still cohorted as active cases. So I don't make any apology for the fact that we can think of more than one purpose for one building.

ELECTORATE OFFICES

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:09): My question is to the Treasurer. Given the fact that the redistribution of electoral boundaries has now been concluded, can the Treasurer assure the chamber that preparatory work will be undertaken before the next election to try to ensure that MPs have suitable accommodation in their electorate?

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:09): This is a very good question. Members will recall the dilemmas post the 2018 election in relation to the location of electorate offices. In a shameful, cold-blooded decision by the former Treasurer, the member for West Torrens, when he received advice 12 months prior to the election that there were a number of members who were likely not to have electorate offices within their electorate and that work should be commenced prior to the election and funding allocations made to ensure that that would occur—as I said, the former Treasurer, in a cold-blooded fashion, disadvantaged members like the member for Wright, who then spent many, many months as a homeless person almost, searching desperately for an electorate office that the former Treasurer had denied him.

I am pleased to be able to assure the house and assure the member that I have already spoken to Electorate Services, the section within Treasury that looks at this particular area, and indicated that, as we lead in to next year's budget in June, the preparatory work be done in terms of which members will need offices to be relocated or moved to new locations within their electorate, if any, and what funding allocation might be required to ensure that would occur. Once that funding allocation is made in the June budget, there will be at least nine months—and the work can actually commence before then, I am sure, in terms of actually trying to look at potential locations—to ensure that, whoever is elected in 2022, each electorate hopefully will be in a position to be able to have an electorate office located within their area.

I do hasten to say that after a large number of members were left homeless, virtually, after the 2018 election there are still two members who are relatively comfortable in their current domiciles, albeit they are just outside their current electorate boundaries, and that is the member for Lee and the member for Black, whose offices are currently still outside the electorate and they, together with Electorate Services, have been unable to come to a landing on suitable accommodation within their current electorate. I can assure the member and the house that Electorate Services are already on notice that they need to be prepared for what will ensue post the March 2022 election.

MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:12): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question to the Treasurer, representing the Premier, on the topic of the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Item 2.3 of the general standards of conduct under the Marshall Liberal government's Ministerial Code of Conduct reads:

Reputation

In the discharge of his or her public duties, a Minister shall not dishonestly or wantonly and recklessly attack the reputation of any other person.

The document, of course, lays out processes for which the Premier shall oversee any breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct. In my role as an advocate and serving those in my community, I have spoken up online and publicly for an animal welfare organisation in previous days, as have two other members at least of this parliament in the other place.

In response, we have all received from the Minister for Environment and Water, the member for Black, David Speirs, communications which I would say go straight to a breach of 2.3, reputation, and indeed wantonly and recklessly have attacked the people of this organisation, with no procedural fairness or due process.

In the course of my inquiries, many of the claims the minister has made to us have been proven to be patently false. My question to the Premier is: what procedural fairness do you offer those whose reputations are attacked by ministers of your cabinet, and what redress for those who

have their reputation damaged by ministers of the Marshall Liberal government cabinet will be afforded?

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:14): I am happy to refer the honourable member's question to the Premier and bring back a reply, but I must say that I have every confidence in my ministerial colleague the Hon. Mr Speirs. I think he has been and continues to be an outstanding Minister for the Environment who has done outstanding work for the portfolio and the area and has done outstanding work on behalf of the Marshall Liberal government in relation to environmental issues.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. I.K. Hunter: He calls them up on the phone and threatens them.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I will stand in this chamber and absolutely—

The Hon. T.A. Franks: He makes false claims.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: —defend my ministerial colleague, but I am happy, given that this is a question that the member has asked to be directed to the Premier, to refer the question to the Premier, but I would be stunned if the Premier didn't share my views about Minister Speirs.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Wortley has the call. I am sorry, was there a supplementary?

MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:16): Yes, there is. As the Treasurer mentioned the Premier at the end, in follow-up to the Hon. Tammy Franks' question, would that section of the Ministerial Code of Conduct regarding reputational damage also apply to the Premier's criticism of the pizza worker at Woodville?

The PRESIDENT: That's a very long bow, I think.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:16): A very long bow, Mr President, but I can answer it very quickly: no, I don't believe so.

CORONAVIRUS CONTACT TRACING

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:16): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Minister, to be clear, did you, or to your knowledge anyone from your health department, provide the Premier with any details that were given to contact tracers by this individual, the pizza maker? To your knowledge, did the Premier seek or was he granted any authorisation to receive the information that he relied upon in his public statement, and has the minister authorised the release of information collected under the Public Health Act to Assistant Commissioner Harvey or anyone else involved in Task Force Protect?

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:17): I am disappointed that the members of the opposition are not listening to answers.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: On 2 December, the assistant commissioner, Peter Harvey—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order on both sides! I can't hear the minister.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: On 2 December, the assistant commissioner, Peter Harvey, said, 'The initial investigation indicated the first conversation with contact tracers was misleading'—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition is out of order!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —'That conversation was central to information provided by'—

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —'SA Health to decision-makers'—

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition!

The Hon. S.G. WADE: —'preceding the lockdown.'

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition!

The Hon. C.M. Scriven: And read it 10 times, if necessary.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Leader, I am on my feet! The minister has the call.

The Hon. S.G. WADE: End of quote. I can assure honourable members that the—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. K.J. Maher: We're not laughing with you, Wadey!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. Scriven: Your own side is not either!

The PRESIDENT: Order! We will move on I think, minister. The next question, the Hon. Dr Centofanti.

YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICES

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (15:18): My question is to the Minister for Human Services. Can the minister please provide an update on how the Marshall Liberal government is improving services and outcomes for children and young people in the youth justice system?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (15:18): I thank the honourable member for her question. As honourable members have been aware, these matters have been discussed in this place previously. There have been a number of changes which have been taking place in our youth justice system, including the development of a three-year plan to better provide support for children and young people, both in the Kurlana Tapa youth justice centre and also to those who are under community orders.

In particular we reviewed the operational model of the training centre itself, which focused on the long-term requirements for a consolidated site, including service delivery, staffing structures, staff wellbeing and welfare training and professional development requirements. This report was received in October this year and contains a number of recommendations, which align very broadly with the state plan.

They include ensuring that young people have a voice in decisions that affect them; identifying cohort-mixing opportunities to increase program and activity access during a structured day, while retaining separation in accommodation units; developing a practice framework to guide educational, psychoeducational and therapeutic program delivery; reviewing and further integrating the elements of positive behaviour support and considering a therapeutic community approach in collaboration with partner agencies; and reviewing training needs against principles of legislation and the state plan.

We have, pleasingly, seen the number of young people reducing in the training centre on any given day across the two sites, which I am sure honourable members would agree is very pleasing, such that in 2017-18 the average daily number of residents was 44.5. In 2018-19 that dropped to 39.8, and in 2019-20 that number has reduced to 34.5. Similarly, there have also been reductions in the number of children and young people under community orders, probably not quite to the same level of significance.

We have also undertaken a number of other reforms, which members would be aware of in terms of resident-worn spit protection, which ceased on 30 June. We have the body-worn trial, which commenced on 6 April, and we have also been able to implement full size body scanning. I am very pleased that we have received money in this budget that will enable us to consolidate the centre at the single site at Goldsborough Road. The Jonal Drive campus is outdated and does not provide the sort of environment we expect in relation to a modern therapeutic justice system.

We look forward to those developments. There are other developments at that particular site, which are ensuring that it is a more appropriate service for young people. We want to provide best practice services to people who are either under remand or in sentence detention.

Auditor General's Report

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:22): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable the report of the Auditor-General for the year 2019-20 to be referred to a committee of the whole and for ministers to be examined on matters contained in the report for a period of one hour.

Motion carried.

In committee.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I might outline for the benefit of the committee that we have just a few questions of the Treasurer, then some questions of the Minister for Human Services and after that some questions of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. To the Treasurer: the financial statements for Southern State Superannuation Scheme, published along with the Auditor-General's annual report, outlines that death, invalidity and income protection insurance reserves holds \$161 million. Can the Treasurer confirm to the council that the Super SA board has considered the outsourcing or privatisation of the insurance arrangements for the Triple S Scheme?

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: My understanding and advice from the Super SA board is that it is considering possible outsourcing of the insurance arrangements, but that no decision has yet been taken by the government. If there were to be a decision of the government ultimately in relation to these issues, it would require, as I understand it, separate legislation, separate to the legislation that is currently before the parliament in relation to choice of fund and limited public offer.

So potentially it will be an issue that the board would have to address. My recollection of the advice is that they indicate they are the only provider that provides insurance arrangements internally. All other equivalent funds have insurance arrangements provided through I think a small number, less than a handful, of recognised national or international providers of these sorts of products.

The answer to the question is that I understand there has been consideration and some discussion with the public sector unions in relation to the issue, so there is no super secret about the issue. The board is considering the options and has had discussions, as I understand it, with the public sector unions in relation to it. Ultimately, it will be a decision that will have to come to the government and the cabinet for consideration.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the Treasurer for his answer and for letting us know that nothing more can happen unless it comes to the government, there is a decision and legislation is passed by the parliament. I think the Treasurer said there has been some discussion by the board. Is the Treasurer in a position to advise if he knows if the board has merely had discussion or if there has been any sort of resolution of the board in relation to this?

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Certainly, the management and the board have pretty strong views in relation to what needs to be done. I would need to take advice from the board on the formal status

of final decisions. It is not really the subject of the Auditor-General's Report. I am being fairly flexible in generously interpreting, always willing to assist the opposition.

I do not know the formal status of what final decisions have been taken by the board or not, but I do know, in the discussions I have had with the chair of the board and the CEO, that this has been under active discussion and consideration. As to its final status and nature by way of board resolutions or not, I would need to take advice. As I said, the advice I have had has been that this is not an issue to be decided in the current legislation.

The current legislation is in essence a follow-up to legislation moved nearly two years ago by the Hon. Connie Bonaros in this particular chamber in relation to choice of fund. We indicated to the honourable member that we were sympathetic to the views; however, it was a complicated issue, and she has been kept well apprised of the complex discussions that have gone on over nearly two years with public sector unions and others and the introduction of limited public offer into the current debate. That is that particular debate.

The issues of insurance arrangements, if they are to be pursued to the alternative model, I am advised will need to be pursued by way of legislative amendment, so the parliament will have the opportunity to consider them. I am advised that if the board continues with the current arrangements, it will lead within the current powers to a very significant increase in the cost of the insurance product. Evidently, so they advised—I am still seeking information on this—under the former government and in the two years under this government, they have been significantly subsidising the cost of their insurance offering by drawing on their reserves to keep the prices as they are at the moment.

They believe the quality of the product they have offered to their members has been sadly lacking in terms of quality of service. There have been a lot of complaints from public sector members. Again, I am working on the basis of a broad recollection of briefings going back over a period. If and when we get to the stage where we have to debate the pros and cons of this particular issue, we will have the opportunity to do so.

What I can say again and repeat is that it is a long bow to draw in relation to the Auditor-General's Report, but whatever happens I am advised that, if nothing changes in relation to the insurance offerings, the board has a strong view that they cannot continue to subsidise the current price of the product they have offered members for many years.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I refer to Part A, page 33, which shows that somewhere lower than 30 per cent of the \$1 billion economic stimulus funds had been expended by 30 June. I have just a couple of questions on that. For the benefit of the Treasurer, I am not asking about the programs within that \$1 billion or the amount of money allocated in particular years in relation to that program. What I am interested in is, is it the case that there is no central monitoring within government of that stimulus spending?

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: No, I think that is possibly a misinterpretation of various answers that might have been provided over a period of time. It is Treasury's and my responsibility—

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: I am not sure. That sounds like a euphemism for ICAC, but we are not allowed to talk about ICAC. I do not know; it might have been discussed in ICAC, but I am not in a position to comment. Putting that to the side—

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

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS: Hypothetically speaking, yes, my colleague says. If it was, the parliamentary privilege certainly protects me from anything I said. There have been a lot of questions asked in question time today about privilege, but one privilege that is undoubted is the privilege of the members of parliament in this chamber. Anyway, I will not be diverted.

What I am saying is that it is my responsibility, and the responsibility of Treasury, in relation to oversight and monitoring of stimulus spending. I will not waste the time of the committee—because I am sure the members want to get on to other questions with me and with other ministers—about the fact that this is a two-year stimulus program and we are not going to be spending all our money

in the first three months, or six months, or nine months for that matter. It is programmed to be spent over the two-year period.

Where I think the misinterpretation comes is that I have said, and I think possibly Treasury officers have said, that we are responsible overall for the allocations of the program, but in relation to, for example, programs that are within Treasury's responsibility, clearly we have oversight of those. In relation to land tax, for example, we made allocations—I cannot remember; \$50 million or something—for land tax, but given that the bills do not arrive until October, clearly none of that money was going to be spent, or very little of that money was going to be spent, prior to 30 June, which is the Auditor-General's Report, because the bills did not arrive until October, when they could claim 25 per cent of their land tax bills if they provided relief to commercial tenants.

That is our responsibility, but in relation to where we allocate funding, for example to the Minister for Health, about which there have been questions in this chamber earlier on—about maintenance funding for regional hospitals, I think it was, that was allocated—we allocate whatever it was (\$10 million or \$15 million) to the Minister for Health and it is then his responsibility in terms of the procurement exercise that he had to go through, as I understand it, or the regional health boards had to go through, in terms of the delivery of those particular services.

Treasury in that case would have a broad oversight, and we would obviously have broad oversight in terms of our account managers who work with Health, for example, of how those programs are going. Through that mechanism, we would have oversight, but in terms of the actual expenditure of the money, that is the responsibility of Health.

Very quickly, the easiest explanation is, for example, in relation to money we give to Education in terms of maintenance. We are giving \$20,000 to \$100,000 to every school in the state and \$30,000 to every preschool in the state for maintenance. As I understand it, the way the process will work is the education department will actually allocate the funding to the school, and then it will be up to the principal and the governing council to spend that money within the 2021 calendar year.

Education will be responsible for the oversight of that particular program in terms of the expenditure. They will have to provide a report back to Treasury, ultimately, as to how that is going. But it is not the responsibility of Treasury officers or me, for example, to monitor each school every week or month as to how much money has been spent. It has been allocated. There is a requirement that they have to spend it within the calendar year of 2021, and there will be oversight by the education department. Treasury will liaise with the education department in relation to monitoring the oversight of the program.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: That concludes our questions for Treasury.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I refer to Part C: Agency audit reports, page 458, paragraph 5. Importantly, the SAHT has not yet completed its assessment of the condition of its housing stock. My question to the minister is: why has the South Australian Housing Authority not yet completed its assessment of the condition of its housing stock, which was started by the former Labor government in February 2018? What percentage progress has been made towards completion, and what is the date that you anticipate for a completed asset management plan?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I thank the honourable member for her question. As she has identified, the program did commence in 2018, and it was scheduled to be completed in March 2021. I think in either 2016 or 2017 the Auditor-General identified that there had been no asset condition report done since 2003. The program is assessing the physical and structural condition of all Housing Trust properties over that three-year period and will accurately quantify existing capital maintenance liability and assist in forming a long-term capital maintenance investment program.

RTC Facilities Maintenance was selected to conduct the inspections. The value of the contract is some \$4.4 million. In 2019-20, 26,703 inspections had been completed. The target was 29,500 but, clearly, COVID played a role in that because property access is an issue, but prior to COVID it had certainly been ahead of schedule.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I do not think the minister answered the question of when you anticipate the asset management plan to be completed now.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I said March 2021.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Sorry, I misheard that, thank you. Of the \$42.1 million allocated in the last budget for maintenance and capital works, is the minister aware of how much was spent as at 30 June 2020?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: What I can say in relation to that stimulus funding is that it has all been committed. My understanding of the \$10 million stimulus is that it has all actually been expended. The honourable member would appreciate that in these programs there are often timed payments and invoicing arrangements, but the money has all been committed.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: But my actual question was: of the \$42.1 million, how much was spent as at 30 June?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: To get that exact amount of money we will have to take it on notice. The honourable member would probably appreciate that working through a range of contractors there will be varying levels of efficiencies in terms of when they invoice us. We are required under Treasury guidelines to make sure that we pay all our businesses quite quickly, but organisations sometimes do not always invoice us in a timely manner, so we are reliant on all those organisations, companies and the like to actually get things in by a particular time. There are quite a number of variations in terms of how that takes place.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: In the Budget and Finance Committee, your chief financial officer said that expenditure was \$5.8 million as at the end of June, so I will assume that that is correct. Did the minister's department inform her that they had only spent \$5.8 million of the \$42.5 million allocated?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I think I would make a general comment that we have regular meetings and receive a lot of financial information from the organisation to keep us updated as things progress. I would also refer to my previous comments that the invoicing of various companies can be slow. Sometimes they will accrue a number of invoices before they will seek for those to be paid. So the number that the Labor Party has been excited about is really just a question of the timing of those things, but the money has certainly been committed and I think a large number has now been expended.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: For clarity, is the minister saying that, yes, she was kept informed—she knew—there was a spend of only \$5.8 million instead of \$42.5 million?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I think the honourable member is misunderstanding how these things work, in that money is allocated but it does not mean that it is out the door by 30 June. Particularly when you are talking about building contractors, maintenance contracts and a range of things, I think it is entirely reasonable, and some would be things that would have required a level of approval through council as well. I think it is a little bit simplistic to have expected that that money would have been expended by 30 June.

I receive regular updates from the agency about where things are at, and I have certainly seen the level of activity at particular sites where there have been a large number of trades on site. There has been a lot of activity, which has been supporting the building trades, particularly during the COVID period. That was also reported to me directly when I was on site, meeting not just with the Housing Authority but with the companies that have been contracted, which expressed great gratitude that they had work that was keeping them going through that period, which is also really important to maintaining trade apprenticeships and traineeships through that period.

It is about a continuous pipeline of work. There is nothing worse for the building, construction and maintenance industries than to have a stop-start period. When the lack of certainty was taking place in the South Australian community, the South Australian Housing Authority had particular stimulus programs that were certainly supporting the trades.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Thank you for that lengthy answer, even though it did not answer the question. Who exactly is responsible for making sure that promises are kept, money is spent and ensuring that homes are improved?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: Again, I think that is a fairly facile approach to these things. We have money that is allocated through a Treasury budget process. We have an agency that delivers through contracting arrangements and has to, where necessary, be involved in appropriate

procurement processes, and then we have a whole lot of trades that are involved in being engaged in those processes.

As I have tried to explain a number of times already in this session, they will have a range of approaches to their particular invoicing and arrangements. There are a lot of moving parts in this particular space, but I can assure the honourable member that the stimulus measures have been very effective not just for supporting the trades but particularly for the tenants who have much improved amenity.

I can probably point the honourable member to some particular sites. We would have before and after photos, I think, which would amply demonstrate the huge value or, if I can take the lead of the Treasurer, the massive value that we have been providing to South Australian tenants and our trades through these programs.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Was the Chief Executive of the South Australian Housing Authority and Andrew Atkinson summoned to meet with the Treasurer about their underspend of stimulus money and budget?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: The honourable member would know the Treasurer from her interactions with him. He is a benevolent human being and not in the practice of summoning people.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I think it is summoned not summonsed, as far I am aware. Are you saying that the Treasurer did not seek that meeting with the chief executive and Andrew Atkinson about the underspend?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: Clearly, there are regular meetings which take place between every agency and Treasury, but my agency chief executive advised me that he has never met with the Treasurer, apart from the BCC meetings we have, which are part of our standard cabinet and budgetary processes.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I refer to Part C: Agency audit reports, page 459, board oversight. This shows that there has been no regular reporting to the board on capital works or sales programs, non-financial, until May. So the year was almost over by the time the board was reported to. There was also no regular reporting on community housing providers. In 2019, the Auditor-General recommended that the board be advised on the \$2.7 billion of assets managed by CHPs, but this did not happen. Why was the South Australian Housing Authority board not kept informed about the management of the \$2.7 billion of assets?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: The advice I have received is that there were reporting mechanisms in place, not necessarily in the format the Auditor-General believes they should have been done in, but there have been improvements to those processes. The advice is that the board has been kept informed.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Is the minister saying that the Auditor-General was wrong?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I would never say that the Auditor-General was wrong.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Simply that he was not right, is obviously your evidence.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: Don't put words in my mouth. Don't put words in my mouth.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Why did the chair and the CEO fail to execute their responsibilities and ensure proper and regular reporting to the board, unless, as I say, the minister is saying that the Auditor-General was wrong? Can she answer that?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: The honourable member has a particular way of engaging in these debates that I think she should have left in high school. I have responded to her question in that my advice is that the board has had reporting through to the board. There is a particular format that the Auditor-General has sought, and as a result the Housing Authority has changed some of those reporting arrangements.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: What were those mechanisms, and why was the Auditor-General unable to uncover them?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I think if I can continue to characterise that the Auditor-General has sought that the reporting requirements be delivered in a particular format, and the advice I have received is that the Auditor-General has expressed a preference for a summarisation as a regular standing item of the board papers. The organisation has had specific and detailed reporting to particular board members, almost as a subcommittee, if you like, which has now been formalised into a working group, which is the reporting mechanism going forward.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: So is the minister saying that this reporting to individual members was not part of a formalised subcommittee until recently? Is that what she was saying?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I think it would be inaccurate to describe the reporting in any way as informal. It has been more that there have been particular board members. There are seven board members in total, so it is quite a focused board in terms of it is not a huge number of people where things can get lost. Anybody who is interested in governance I think appreciates that if you have boards or any committee which gets too large then things can get lost.

Being a sharp board of seven people, there have been specific members who have had very detailed information which has helped to guide the organisation on these particular programs going forward. That has now been shifted to the working group structure, which provides quarterly reporting.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I refer to Part C: Agency audit reports, page 318, National Disability Insurance Scheme. For the year 2019-20, what was the total utilisation of South Australian funds to the NDIS, and what was the total value of the underspend?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: Can you advise me which period you were asking about?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: It was 2019-20.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: It is probably important to note just technically that I do not think this is actually an audit question, but I do happen to have the information in front of me. The utilisation of commuted support in NDIS plans at 30 June 2020 for South Australia was 68 per cent, which compares nationally to 70 per cent. The figure that we have for the 2019-20 year in terms of the amount that was spent through the NDIS in South Australia is \$1.4 billion approximately.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Where do the underspent funds go in the following financial year, given they are not spent? Is it returned to the state or offset to the next year's funding requirements?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: The advice I have is that in the 2019-20 year the South Australian contribution to the National Disability Insurance Scheme was \$777 million—it is more than \$1.4 billion, but it is somewhere between \$1.4 billion and \$1.5 billion—and the amount that is expended over that is provided by the commonwealth government. There has been some underutilisation, which has led to underspends in previous years, but we are now reaching that figure that had been anticipated years ago.

The figure that I was quoted several years ago was that we had 16,000 South Australians under the old Disability SA services, which was projected to be 32,000. That figure is now over 37,000 South Australians receiving supports through the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The commonwealth is certainly now expending close to half of that as part of its commitment to the program.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: The minister I do not think has answered the question. Where there is an underspend, what happens to those funds? Are they returned to the state or do they stay with the state, or do they go to the commonwealth?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: We expend our amount. The commonwealth takes the risk for any over or underspend beyond that amount. In previous years, the state has received some funding back, but now that we are at full scheme the commonwealth has assumed the full risk for the other half. Now that we are both at full scheme and because the commonwealth is expending the other half in the sort of realm that was anticipated, the underspend is becoming a bit of a misnomer. It is hard to correlate that with the underutilisation, if you like.

If all participants expended their full plan amount, I would be guessing, but I suspect the commonwealth would be expending well over what the state contribution would be. That is the

arrangement that was struck in terms of the fact that the commonwealth has taken on the risk for any overspend in the scheme and why the honourable member may recall that a few years ago there was some discussion at a national level about increasing the Medicare levy by, I think, 1 per cent to cover that expenditure. That is obviously something for the commonwealth government.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Is the minister aware whether any South Australian member of the Disability Reform Council has expressed concerns in writing about adjustments of state payments relative to actual costs over time?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I am not sure whether the honourable member understands what the Disability Reform Council is, but it is all of the ministers from various jurisdictions, so perhaps if she could repeat her question; I am not sure that I was following her logic.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: It is a simple question, whether the minister is aware of any South Australian member of the Disability Reform Council expressing in writing concerns about adjustments of state payments relative to actual costs over time.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: There are two South Australian members of the Disability Reform Council and they are myself and the Treasurer.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: So it appears then that the minister is unaware of a letter sent by the Treasurer on 29 August 2019 in regard to those things. Is the minister concerned that she was unaware of such a letter?

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: Once again, the honourable member is putting words in my mouth.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I asked if you were concerned; that is not putting words in your mouth.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: The Treasurer and I have discussions about these matters on a regular basis; in fact, we have a Disability Reform Council meeting tomorrow and he and I discussed the matter of the reserve fund as recently as yesterday.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: I ask the minister to go to Part C, page 166. The Auditor-General highlights that the Chief Executive of SA Health failed to comply with Treasurer's Instruction 8 in failing to review the financial delegations register. Has the minister directly spoken to the chief executive about this oversight?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: This is primarily an operational matter. The department responded that it was aware of the requirements, indicating the review was intentionally put on hold while it went through structural change. It also indicated that it advised the Department of Treasury and Finance of the breach of T18 and was now undertaking the review.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: Just to clarify, has the minister spoken directly with the chief executive officer about this?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: It is a minor operational matter, which I would not have expected to be briefed on, and I understand the issue has been rectified.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: Is this not a basic requirement that a chief executive paid \$561,000 a year should be on top of?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I note what was effectively a comment.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: Should the chief executive receive counselling regarding the failure to comply with the Treasurer's Instruction?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I would refer the honourable member to my earlier answer. The review was intentionally put on hold, and Treasury was advised. It was done for a reason and it was done with communication.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: I will now move to Part C, page 162. The Auditor-General made some critical remarks about the recent introduction of large panel contracts, such as a \$680 million

Patient Services Panel contract and a \$300 million professional services contract. What specific concerns has the Auditor-General raised with the minister or his department about these contracts?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I would refer the honourable member to the second paragraph on page 162, which basically summarises the Auditor-General's concerns. The department advised that it intended to work with the State Procurement Board to provide targeted training on these areas.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: The Auditor-General has said that there was no probity planned for the Patient Services Panel. Is this not of significant concern, given the extremely large sums involved in this contract?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: The Auditor-General raised a series of issues. The department identified a range of actions in response, indicating the fact that they see these issues as significant issues and are addressing them seriously. Again, I would refer the honourable member to page 162, which outlines those responses.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: Can the minister confirm whose decision it was to start rolling out these large panel contracts, and on what basis?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I would highlight the point that the Patient Services Panel and the Professional Services Panel are involved in engaging a range of providers, a number of whom were already established providers to the department. It was the department's view that going to a panel procurement approach in these two domains helped the procurement process to be more efficient and effective.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: So this decision was by no one individual. Was it the decision of the general department, or can you specify who in the department it was who decided to roll out this large panel?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I would highlight the point that procurement panels of this magnitude do not just happen with the whim of a pen. They are subject to detailed evaluation processes with skilled evaluation panels.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: I am happy to move to Part C, page 203. For the Central Adelaide Local Health Network, the Auditor-General has identified targeted voluntary separation packages amounting to \$35 million paid to 293 employees. Can the minister confirm that 293 positions were made redundant in CALHN just last financial year?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I do not have specific briefing papers on that issue, but in relation to the third dot point at the top of page 203 I would make the point that, as well as offering voluntary separation packages to employees, CALHN would have employed other employees. The honourable member needs to be mindful of the net impact of FTEs.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: I appreciate the minister does not have the information at hand, but if he could please take that on notice and provide that information. As a result of the 293 positions that were made redundant, were any of them frontline staffers?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I make the point that a key criterion of TVSPs is that they did not impact on frontline services. There may well be health professionals amongst that number. They may be, for example, in back of house roles.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: Can the minister provide a further breakdown of those 293 positions? If not, can he take that on notice?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I am happy to take the question on notice.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: Can the minister also undertake to provide on notice how many entry-level nurses could be employed over the forward estimates with the \$35 million—unless you have the information available?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: The honourable member rightly highlights the point I was making just a minute ago, which is that the TVSPs need to be considered in the context of other employment opportunities, other employments that are being made during the year. I can assure you that SA Health is one of the most important graduate nurse employers in the state, and CALHN would be a very significant part of that.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: Have any voluntary separation packages already been offered and accepted in this financial year?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I do not have that information.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: Could the minister please take that on notice?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I would suggest that the honourable member's question relates to next year's Auditor-General's Report, not this year's.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: I can only try. I refer to Part C, page 170. The Auditor-General highlights several risks posed by the unsigned service level agreements between networks and boards, and notes SA Health indicates that they would provide service agreements for 2020-21 in September, expecting them to be signed shortly after. What were the risks as identified by the Auditor-General?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: Unsigned service agreements present the following risks: uncertainty over functions, obligations, expectations or performance deliverables; impeding the local health network governing board's legislative function to manage performance against the performance measures in the service agreement, as required by the Health Care Act; reduced accountability for specific service obligations and the performance requirements; and it conflicts with the National Health Reform Agreement, which requires service agreements.

I think this refers back to a conversation we were having yesterday in the context of the Health Care (Governance) Amendment Bill. This department does acknowledge that there was a prolonged service agreement negotiation throughout the year, and whilst not all service agreements were signed in 2019-20, it had set and communicated the budget for each local health network clearly and transparently.

In my comments in the context of the bill yesterday, I alluded to the fact that there was significant concern amongst the boards in the previous financial year about the template, if you like, for the service agreements, and the department respectfully responded to that and significant work was done. I think they would be humble enough to say that they were much more collaborative in the second series than the first. This is an evolution. This is a work in progress.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: I am happy to move to Part C, page 240. The Auditor-General found that in the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network inappropriate approval of some direct negotiation procurement occurred. Can the minister provide further detail as to the nature of those inappropriate approvals?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: My reading of the Auditor-General's Report is that the nature of the inappropriate approvals was that the procurement should have been approved by the chief executive, and I presume therefore that they were not. The response from the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network was that advice from the Department for Health and Wellbeing's procurement and supply chain management unit was that due to SA Health's changing requirements, including a move forward towards electronic record keeping, the project to secure a whole-of-health printing contract may not now proceed.

NALHN also advised that it had arranged fixed pricing from various printing suppliers and would be incorporating those prices into its purchasing system. It also intended to move to a different model for document management services and also provide procurement and contract training sessions, reinforcing the duties to relevant managers.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: On Part C, page 162, the Auditor-General highlights that there were several instances of contracts being executed after their commencement dates. On how many occasions did this happen and/or for what specific contracts?

The Hon. S.G. WADE: I cannot give the honourable member the number. I will take that question on notice.

The CHAIR: The time has expired for the examination of the Auditor-General's Report.

*Bills***HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION NATIONAL LAW (SOUTH AUSTRALIA)
(TELEPHARMACY) AMENDMENT BILL***Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 15 October 2020.)

The Hon. C. BONAROS (16:25): I rise to speak for five minutes on behalf of SA-Best on the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia)(Telepharmacy) Amendment Bill. If there is one thing that COVID-19 has taught us, indeed forced us to acknowledge, it is that we have to be open to adapting to new and innovative ways of doing things, especially via technology. This bill seeks to clearly and expressly enshrine telepharmacy into South Australian legislation. That is, in my view, a good reform.

It confirms the power of the Pharmacy Regulation Authority South Australia to authorise the remote supervision of pharmacies by pharmacists under strict conditions. PRASA, as the authority responsible for the administration of pharmaceuticals in this state, has been proceeding on the understanding that telepharmacy is not in fact prohibited. Express temporary measures were confirmed earlier this year via the COVID-19 emergency response bill that we passed and extended under the subsequent response legislation to February next year.

This bill intends to remove any possibility of doubt going forward. It does not appear to create any loopholes for new business models to operate entirely by remote means. Telepharmacy services will only be authorised in certain circumstances, namely, when a person would not otherwise be able to access pharmacy services in a timely and direct manner and when all reasonable steps have been taken for code of conduct compliance by the provider.

Again, as 2020 has proven, the delivery of pharmacy care via telecommunication has proven to be an invaluable healthcare tool. It is particularly useful when physical presence is not a logistical option and in instances where it is necessary for infection control. Falling under the broad category of telehealth, telepharmacy has contributed to keeping both patients and pharmacists safe during this pandemic. Remote consultations were already gaining traction in the pre-COVID era but, as I said, I think it is fair to say that the events of this year have cemented the future of these practices as part of the healthcare sphere.

It is a practical solution to the tyranny of distance, immobility and disease control. It means pharmacists can see more patients, work more flexible hours and continue to operate extended business hours without requiring the physical attendance of staff. It also means that they can support healthcare self-management any time of the day or night, any day of the week. The provision of these services, I think, is particularly beneficial for South Australians living in isolated communities, because we know from research carried out by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in 2019, and just generally, that people living in remote areas generally have poorer health outcomes and less access to the sorts of services that they need, deserve and are entitled to.

Preventable hospitalisation rates for people living in these remote areas are, as we know, worse than for people living in major cities. Average life expectancy decreases and, as remoteness increases, the physical option of consulting with a GP, specialist, pharmacist, physio or psychologist decreases. We need to use all the tools available to close this gap.

There are about 32,000 registered pharmacists in Australia, which is about 4.3 per cent of all registered health practitioners. They have a significant role to play, not just in a physical sense but because we know COVID is not the only pandemic threatening South Australians. The profession is one of the most trusted, I think, and is perfectly positioned to identify mental health risk factors, especially for the most isolated and vulnerable.

Even before COVID, it was estimated that one in five Australians experience mental health illness every year, commonly taking the form of depression, anxiety and substance abuse disorders. We know that 45 per cent of Australians will experience a mental illness at some stage in their lives, and more than half of them do not access treatment.

So pharmacists, as I said, I think are perfectly placed to start the conversation, and they are already doing that when making supply determinations in the pharmacy setting. There is often a link between substance misuse and deeper issues warranting treatment, a link which can be identified with the very specialised skill and training of a pharmacist. This is, of course, just one of the many recognisable benefits to the remote provision of pharmacy services. There are many more: post-discharge medication counselling, improved medication management, cost efficiencies, improved patient satisfaction. In my view, the bill is a no-brainer. I look forward to being part of improved healthcare outcomes for those South Australians who need them most.

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

LOBBYISTS (RESTRICTIONS ON LOBBYING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 30 June 2020.)

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (16:30): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; bill withdrawn.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (FUND SELECTION AND OTHER SUPERANNUATION MATTERS) BILL

Second Reading

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (16:31): 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 them.

Leave granted.

This Bill seeks to make amendments to the following Acts for the purpose of making amendments to the superannuation arrangements provided under those statutes: the *Southern State Superannuation Act 2009* (Triple S Act) and the *Superannuation Act 1988*.

The main proposal dealt with in the Bill is the introduction of 'choice of fund' and 'portability' for members of the Southern State Superannuation Scheme (Triple S). Triple S membership is currently mandated for the majority of South Australian public sector employees, despite this fund not always being favoured by some such employees as the fund of their choice. In addition, the long standing requirement for mandated Triple S membership no longer aligns with general community standards to provide freedom of choice to public servants regarding their superannuation in the same way that applies to private sector employees. Triple S is also the last open exempt (accumulation) superannuation scheme in Australia that does not offer choice of fund to its members (with equivalent funds in other state jurisdictions all doing so).

The Bill therefore introduces a proposal whereby members of Triple S will generally be permitted to direct their government superannuation contributions (including salary sacrifice contributions) to an eligible superannuation fund, rather than to Triple S. The Bill also incorporates the current ability to elect to direct employer contributions to Super SA Select into this regime and provides that any person who has already done so is still included. However, the Bill does not contemplate 'full' choice of fund under the *Superannuation Guarantee Administration Act 1992* (Cth) (SGAA), but instead introduces a 'state-based' arrangement. The facility has therefore been designed to fall within the scope of the existing exemption applicable to government employers from full choice of fund, as contributions will continue to be made, even to the selected fund, pursuant to the Triple S Act (being a law of the state). For example, even if a member makes a fund selection, government employer contributions will still continue to be made pursuant to section 21 of the Act, on the same basis that they are made in respect of Triple S members; namely the same contribution rate, generally on the full salary of a member, with the same definition of 'salary' applicable to Triple S members. This also ensures public sector employees are treated equitably in terms of employer superannuation contributions, regardless of whether they are members of Triple S or another complying fund of their choice.

Where a member makes a fund selection, the Bill provides for them to request that their entire accrued balance will be transferred to the selected fund, in which case membership in Triple S would cease. However, members may instead request a portion of their superannuation to be rolled over to the selected complying fund ('portability'), or take no action at all, in which case their full accrued balance would remain in Triple S. In both cases, their Triple S membership (and any insurance coverage they hold) would continue. In addition, the Bill provides that members may only select one fund at a time. They can make subsequent elections for their superannuation to be directed to another

fund (including the direction of their government employer contributions back to Triple S), subject to special timing restrictions. The insurance entitlements of such persons will be addressed by regulation.

The Bill also seeks to introduce 'portability' for members of Triple S, which will enable them to rollover/transfer their accrued superannuation balance to a complying fund of their choice. This is subject to a minimum amount being retained at the time of transfer, (which will generally be set by the Board, other than in the case of prescribed members, which will be set by regulation). Currently, the ability to exercise portability is generally restricted to those members who have terminated public sector employment. However, if a member exercises portability, it would be the responsibility of that member to ensure that sufficient funds are held in Triple S, via ad hoc voluntary contributions or rollovers to Triple S, to maintain administration and insurance premiums. If they do not, then this will impact their Triple S insurance and membership. This is particularly relevant for those who have also made a fund selection and would thus no longer have regular employment contributions coming in to Triple S to sustain their account.

The Bill has particular implications for prescribed members of Triple S (Police and SA Ambulance). Given the nature of the employment of these members and the inherent risks associated with these occupations, Triple S insurance is of significant importance. As a result, employer contributions and compulsory member contributions will continue to be required to be made to Triple S (noting they will also continue to have the ability to direct these contributions to Super SA Select, Super SA's taxed superannuation fund). This will ensure that adequate funds remain in Triple S to sustain premiums in respect of their mandatory insurance. Prescribed members of Triple S will, however, be permitted to exercise portability, subject to minimum amounts being retained in Triple S that will be set by regulation. Operational Ambulance members will also be impacted the same way.

The second part of the Bill concerns the Super SA Board's employment powers. Pursuant to section 10(3) of the *Superannuation Act 1988*, the Super SA Board makes use of the staff of the Department of Treasury and Finance, as an administrative unit of the Public Service, to administer the superannuation schemes for which it is responsible. Section 10(1) of that Act also permits the Board to employ staff directly with the approval of the Minister to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities under that Act (ie administration of Lump Sum, Pension and SA Ambulance Service Superannuation Schemes). Such employees will not be public service employees. However, this employment power does not extend to the employment of staff in connection with the other Act for which the Super SA Board is responsible, the *Southern State Superannuation Act 2009*. This Act governs the administration of the state's main public sector scheme, Triple S. The final part of the Bill therefore seeks to make amendments to the *Superannuation Act 1988* to correct this anomaly in order to extend that employment power to those engaged in the administration of that Act also.

If the Board employs one or more staff directly, the Bill also makes a number of other consequential employment changes. Firstly, Super SA (as a branch of Treasury and Finance) also administers a number of other superannuation schemes, for which the Super SA Board is not responsible. In this regard, the governing legislation of those schemes provides that the relevant boards responsible for their administration may make use of the staff of an administrative unit of the public service (eg the Department of Treasury and Finance). However, the *Superannuation Act 1988* currently provides that any person employed by the Super SA Board is not a public service employee. The Bill therefore clarifies that in the event that such staff are employed by the Super SA Board (rather than DTF), those employees will also be permitted to assist in the administration of those other schemes.

The Bill also provides that the Board is not a 'national system employer' under the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Commonwealth) in respect of any such person, to assist in ensuring that employment conditions would be subject to the *Fair Work Act 1994* (SA) (as is currently the case for public sector employees). Also, should the Board determine to employ Super SA's Chief Executive Officer directly in the future, the terms and functions of the appointment have been specified (rather than the existing arrangement of that role being appointed by the Department of Treasury and Finance).

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

This clause is formal.

2—Commencement

Although operation of the measure will commence on the day of assent, the majority of the provisions will commence on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

3—Amendment provisions

This clause is formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Southern State Superannuation Act 2009*

4—Amendment of section 3—Interpretation

This clause inserts new definitions of *fund* and *fund selection*. The latter term is defined by reference to proposed section 21C(5), which is inserted by clause 10. The definitions of *salary* and *salary sacrifice contribution* are

also amended to take account of the fact that some provisions of the Act referring to salary may apply to former members of the Triple S scheme who have made fund selections.

5—Amendment of section 5—Employer contribution percentage

The amendments made by this clause are consequential on amendments made to section 20 of the Act that mean that a member who has made a fund selection may make contributions to their selected fund rather than to the Treasurer.

6—Amendment of section 15—Other accounts to be kept by Board

Section 15 sets out account keeping requirements that apply to the Board. This clause amends the section so that the Board is not required to maintain accounts of employer contributions paid to another fund pursuant to a fund selection.

7—Amendment of section 19—Membership of scheme

This clause recasts section 19(2). The effect of this amendment is that a person who makes a fund selection and opts to roll over all amounts standing to the credit of accounts maintained by the Board on their behalf to the selected fund is not a member of the Triple S scheme. This operates subject to section 21H, which allows for a person who has made a fund selection, and opted to rollover all amounts, to return to the Triple S scheme.

8—Amendment of section 20—Contributions

Section 20 as amended by this clause will provide that a member who has made a fund selection cannot make contributions to the Treasurer as a deduction from salary but may, if the Board is continuing to maintain a contribution account on behalf of the member, make monetary contributions to the Treasurer.

9—Amendment of section 21—Payments by employers

Section 21 imposes an obligation on employers to make payments on behalf of members of the Triple S scheme. This clause proposes amendments to section 21 that are consequential on the fact that a person who has made a fund selection may cease to be a member of the scheme. If a person's superannuation arrangements have been transferred to another fund under section 21C, the employer is required to make payments to the person's selected fund rather than to the Treasurer.

10—Insertion of Part 3A

This clause inserts a new Part.

Part 3A—Portability and fund selection

Division 1—Interpretation

21A—Interpretation

Section 21A provides definitions of a number of terms that are used in Part 3A.

Division 2—Portability

21B—Transfer of funds

This section provides that amounts standing to the credit of one or more accounts maintained by the Board on behalf of a member may, at the option of the member, be transferred to another complying fund. This general rule operates subject to certain matters set out in the section.

Division 3—Fund selection

21C—Member may direct employer contributions to other fund

Section 21C applies to a person who is a member of the Triple S scheme if—

- the person's employer is required to pay an amount to the Treasurer on behalf of the person under section 21; and
- the person is not a member of the scheme solely by virtue of an arrangement under section 6 with a participating employer; and
- the person is not excluded from the operation of the section by the regulations.

A person to whom the section applies may, by giving a notice to the person's employer, direct the employer to make payments required to be made by the employer on behalf of the person under section 21 to an eligible fund specified in the notice. The notice is a *fund selection notice* for the purposes of Part 3A and a person who gives a valid direction makes a *fund selection* for the purposes of the Act.

21D—Effect of fund selection

If a person makes a fund selection, the liability of the person's employer to make payments on behalf of the person under section 21 will be determined in accordance with that section. This means that

the person's employer will be required to make payments to the person's selected fund rather than to the Treasurer.

This section also provides that all amounts standing to the credit of accounts maintained by the Board on behalf of a member who has made a fund selection may, at the option of the member, be rolled over to the member's selected fund. This does not apply in relation to a police member or a member of a prescribed class.

21E—Employer obligations

This clause sets out the circumstances in which an employer of a person to whom section 21C applies must provide the person with a fund selection notice.

21F—Matters affecting eligibility of funds

If the fund specified by a person who has made a fund selection ceases to exist, ceases to accept contributions or ceases to be an eligible fund, and the person does not, within the prescribed period, give their employer a new fund selection notice specifying a different eligible fund, section 21 then applies as if the person had not made a fund selection.

21G—Change in employer

A direction given by a person under section 21C(3) continues to operate despite the person commencing employment with another employer that is also required to make payments on behalf of the person under section 21.

21H—Person may elect to return to Triple S scheme

A person who has made a fund selection may direct their employer to make payments required to be made by the employer on behalf of the person under section 21 to the Triple S scheme. If the person's membership of the scheme has ceased and they are eligible to be a member of the scheme, the person will become a member of the scheme.

21I—Immunity from liability

This section provides that no liability attaches to an employer or the Board in connection with action taken in compliance with a direction under Division 3 of Part 3A.

21J—Employer to report to Board

This section requires an employer of a person who has made a fund selection to report to the Board on matters relating to the fund selection.

11—Amendment of section 24—Employer benefits and contributions if person on leave without pay

This clause makes consequential amendments to section 24.

12—Amendment of section 28—Confidentiality

This clause makes a consequential amendment to section 28 of the Act so as to enable certain confidential information to be divulged to a person responsible for the administration of a fund—

- that is a selected fund for the purposes of a fund selection; or
- to which amounts are to be, or have been, transferred on behalf of a member under Part 3A,

provided the information is divulged for purposes related to the administration of the Act.

13—Amendment of section 30—Regulations

Section 30(4) of the Act authorises the making of regulations that provide for administrative charges to be fixed by the Board. The amendment made by this clause prevents the fixing of charges in connection with the making of fund selections.

14—Amendment of Schedule 1—Transitional provisions

Schedule 1 clause 12 of the Act sets out certain entitlements for a person who became a member of the Triple S scheme by virtue of section 14(2a) of the *Southern State Superannuation Act 1994*. As amended by this clause, clause 12 will cease to apply to such a person if the member makes a fund selection. Furthermore, if an amount standing to the credit of an account maintained by the Board on behalf of such a member is at any time transferred to another fund under section 21B, the retirement benefits to which the member would be entitled under the regulations are to be determined for the purposes of clause 12(2) of the Schedule as if the transfer had not occurred.

Part 3—Amendment of *Superannuation Act 1988*

15—Amendment of section 8—Board's membership

Section 8(2) of the *Superannuation Act 1988* prevents a person who is employed in duties connected with the administration of the Act or the *Southern State Superannuation Act 2009* from being eligible for election as a member of the South Australian Superannuation Board. This clause amends the section so that a person occupying the position of chief executive officer of the Board can be eligible to be elected as a member of the Board.

16—Insertion of section 9A

This clause inserts a new section.

9A—Chief executive officer

Section 9A provides for the appointment by the Governor of a person nominated by the Board as the chief executive officer of the Board. The person is to be appointed for a term of up to 5 years and is eligible for reappointment. The chief executive officer's remuneration is to be determined by the Board.

17—Amendment of section 10—Staff of Board

Section 10(1) of the Act provides that the Board may, with the Minister's approval, appoint staff to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities under the Act. As amended by this clause, the provision will also refer to the Board's responsibilities under other Acts. A person appointed under the section may assist in the administration of other superannuation schemes or funds established or administered by the Board, or otherwise assist the Board in the performance or exercise of any other functions or powers.

Section 10 as amended will also include a declaration that the Board is not a national system employer for the purposes of the *Fair Work Act 2009* of the Commonwealth.

18—Amendment of section 21—Reports

Section 21 as amended by this clause will require the Board's annual report to the Minister to include prescribed information relating to the remuneration of the chief executive officer.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. E.S. Bourke.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (RENTING WITH PETS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 23 September 2020.)

The Hon. C. BONAROS (16:33): I rise to speak on behalf of SA-Best on the Residential Tenancies (Renting with Pets) Amendment Bill 2020. As we know, the bill seeks to enshrine the rights of tenants to keep pets, in the absence of a SACAT ruling to the contrary. I think we can all appreciate it is certainly well intended. It is aimed at reducing the number of pets surrendered to rescue organisations every year due to tenants of rental properties being unable to secure suitable accommodation where a landlord allows pets.

Just by way of note, the RSPCA says it has seen a 13 per cent increase in the number of animals surrendered in the 2019-20 financial year due to their owners being unable to obtain pet-friendly accommodation. There is no doubt that this is sad for all concerned.

My dog, Millie, is absolutely an important part of my family. I cannot imagine having to give her up purely because of the fact that I cannot secure a rental property that will allow me to keep a pet. The benefits, if you like, that she provides to my family and to me are, in my view, priceless. I absolutely understand the intent of this piece of legislation.

Studies certainly show and continue to show that pets have a very positive impact on our mental and physical health. Dog ownership, for example, has been found to be associated with lower blood pressure. Pets have the potential to keep us active as well as help alleviate stress and loneliness. They can provide important non-verbal emotional support to children and adults. If you are Millie, they can cost you a lot at the vet. But such benefits are generally enjoyed by two-thirds of South Australian households.

We know renters already face huge barriers in securing accommodation without taking into account the lack of pet-friendly inventory in the market. The 2020 Rental Affordability Index report released this week ranks Adelaide as the second least affordable capital city in Australia for rental properties when comparing rental prices relative to household incomes, and it is clear many households are under huge financial stress, even with pets taken out of the equation. I note the ACT and Victoria have commenced similar legislation in the last year. The NT has also passed renting with pets legislation, which has been put on the backburner due to the COVID pandemic.

There is, of course, a counterargument to all of this debate, particularly by some landlords, who might ask: what if I do not want a pet living in my property? What if I intend to move back into the property and I have allergies, I have health conditions or I just simply do not like them? What if I have spent a considerable amount of money planting a new garden and a new tenant wants to bring along a puppy or a full-grown dog or other animal who could cause considerable damage? What are the rights of property owners?

That is really, I suppose, the dilemma in this debate. I am sure the mover of the bill would say that the landlord would have the opportunity to make an application to SACAT to exempt the property, and on the current bill this would need to be done within 14 days and at the landlord's expense. Then there is the risk that more rental properties will come off the market, instead being listed on short-term rental sites like Airbnb, reducing even further the number of pet-friendly rentals on the market.

So I suppose there are lots of factors at play here which need to be explored, and I genuinely think there are valid points being made on both sides. I suppose the difficulty and the dilemma that we have is potentially striking the right balance in relation to those concerns. I understand the Attorney has sought to have further discussions about this bill, and I am very hopeful that in those discussions with the member we might be able to iron out some of the concerns of individuals and particularly landlords—because I think that is predominantly who we are dealing with in terms of the concerns about the proposals—some of which were raised in the recent submission by the Law Society of South Australia.

With those words, can I indicate our support for the second reading of this bill. We would also reserve our position based on those further discussions that we know will be taking place with the Attorney regarding the complex nature of the relationships that we are talking about and the issues I have just outlined.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (16:38): I rise to speak today on the Residential Tenancies (Renting with Pets) Amendment Bill 2020. Pets are part of the Australian way of life. Sixty-eight per cent of South Australian families include a pet as a member of their household. There has been research into elderly people who own pets, and it has been found quite conclusively that elderly people who own pets live a lot longer and happier lives. This is mainly because they have something to look forward to when they go home. It also gets them out of the house to walk the dog. So it is a very important part of growing older that you are able to keep a pet with you when you live in a rented property.

Yet, it is estimated that little over 20 per cent of South Australian rental properties will consider a tenant with a pet. This can mean that many people seeking a rental property are either forced into giving their pets to friends or family or surrendering their beloved pets to a shelter to ensure they can maintain a roof over their heads. The RSPCA says that in the 2019-20 financial year they had a 13 per cent increase in the number of animals surrendered due to their owners being unable to obtain a pet-friendly rental property. It is clear that more needs to be done to ensure that South Australians with pets can obtain secure rental accommodation.

There has been a raft of legislative changes across Australia in this space. These need to be examined closely to ensure that we in South Australia get the right balance between tenants' and landlords' rights. In Queensland, as the legislation currently stands, a tenant must obtain written permission via their tenancy agreement to have a pet in their rental property. The tenancy agreement in Queensland also stipulates that a tenant with a pet is responsible for any damage caused to the property by their pets.

The Queensland government is seeking to further reform its act so that a landlord can only refuse a request if they can provide reasonable grounds to not allow a pet on their rental property. Importantly, the Queensland legislation would seek to define the reasonable grounds that a landlord can use to refuse permission for pets in their property.

It is also investigating the option of a pet bond to cover the cost of pet damage at the end of the tenancy. The pet bond issue is a cause of much disagreement between those advocating for tenants and landlords. There is concern on the tenant's side that a pet bond would make pet ownership unaffordable for those on low and fixed incomes. On the other hand, landlords raise

concerns about potential for additional property damage not being secured by a bond. Further investigations must be conducted on this vexed issue.

Earlier this year, the Northern Territory government passed a bill to allow pets in rental properties when a tenant provides written notice to a landlord, yet this reform has not progressed following the COVID emergency and the new legislation has not been implemented to date. As it stands, we cannot take anything away from the territory's legislative changes to determine the potential for South Australian tenants.

In Western Australia, tenants are required to obtain consent from landlords and the pet must be listed on the lease. Western Australia also makes provisions for landlords to seek a pet bond of up to \$260. The Victorian government recently passed legislation, which this bill is largely based on. Tenants are required to request their landlord's consent to bring a new pet into a rental property. However, a landlord must not unreasonably refuse to allow a pet and may only do so with an order from the VCAT stating that it is reasonable to refuse the request.

It is clear that there is a shift occurring across Australia in relation to ensuring that tenants are allowed pets in rental properties. We all know that pet ownership has its health benefits. However, before we dive headlong into changing our legislation we must reflect on the changes that have been made interstate. The experiences interstate will enable us to determine the best model for South Australia to achieve the best result for both tenants and landlords.

As this bill currently stands, there are shortcomings that must be addressed. Landlords effectively have no choice in determining what type of pet can be housed in their rental property or whether their rental property is suitable to accommodate pets without incurring the time and cost of seeking an order through SACAT. Landlords are not provided with recourse in the bill to secure a bond against any potential damage caused to the property.

We look forward to examining how the legislative changes interstate affect tenants and landlords so that the best option can be presented to the parliament to ensure that we can achieve the right balance between the rights of tenants and the rights of landlords.

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (16:43): I rise on behalf of government members to address the second reading. As I think the Hon. Mr Parnell has indicated, the Attorney-General on behalf of the government has indicated a willingness to further engage in discussion with the Hon. Mr Parnell. To that end, the government is prepared to support the second reading but will reserve its position, obviously, during the committee stage and finally at the third reading.

The government's party room is probably not too dissimilar to some of the issues the Hon. Mr Wortley has raised, which were obviously raised in the opposition party room and probably in the community as well; that is, there are those who are sympathetic to the landlords' view of the world and there are those who are sympathetic to the tenants' view of the world. The issue is what sort of model, from the selection that is emerging across the country, should we support, if we are going to support any change at all.

Our party room, the government's party room, I suspect is no different to the broader community and that is that there are some who are sympathetic to the landlord view of the world and some who are more sympathetic to the tenant view of the world but are prepared to further engage through the Attorney-General in terms of discussions with the Hon. Mr Parnell, and indeed others, to see whether any sort of agreement can be reached or not.

My office has produced a quick summary, which was useful from my viewpoint, and I think the Hon. Mr Wortley actually in part addressed a number of these issues. My office has produced their summary, and this is only my office's view of the flavour, if I could put it that way, of the equivalent legislation in the other jurisdiction.

Under the characterisations, the more tenant-oriented pieces of legislation, the first example is the one that this is modelled on which is the Victorian legislation: since reforms in March 2020, if you want to keep a pet, you must give your landlord a completed pet request form and your landlord can be only refuse a pet request if the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) orders that it is reasonable to do so. Only in recent times is this a tenant-friendly or tenant-oriented piece of legislation in terms of issues in relation to pets within tenancies.

The other one that my office has characterised as more tenant oriented is the ACT legislation, which has been summarised for me as follows: if a landlord wants to refuse consent for having a pet, they must do so with the approval of the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT). Landlords are required to apply to the ACAT within 14 days of the tenant's request.

At the other end of the continuum my officers summarised are South Australia and Tasmania, for example, as current law stands, and it is currently up to the landlord as to whether a tenant can have a pet or not. The other one is New South Wales. Landlords may include a clause restricting or prohibiting pets in a residential tenancy agreement; however, note that as of very recently no apartment building in New South Wales is allowed to have a blanket ban on pets, following a New South Wales Court of Appeal ruling in October—so that is very recent—that overturned the right to pass bylaws prohibiting animals. That decision, I am advised, from the New South Wales Court of Appeal, was just over a month ago. I might note, that is the advantage of having to two Crown lawyers in my office now as my own in-house Crown counsel, so I am indebted to them.

Then in this more landlord-oriented area of legislation is Western Australia. It is currently up to the landlord as to whether the tenant can have a pet; however, note that the government recently completed a consultation paper on changing the law to adopt a similar approach to Victoria. So Western Australia is actually looking at the Victorian model, given that it is recent, which is what the Hon. Mr Parnell is suggesting. Whilst they have made no decision, I am advised, they have not gone out to consultation and would appear to be considering seriously amendments similar to Victorian legislation.

I am also advised that Western Australia is currently the only state where a landlord can legally ask for a pet bond, although I did note some of the comments from the Hon. Mr Wortley there. That is the advice I have. Queensland's legislation is also more landlord oriented. Landlords may include a clause restricting or prohibiting pets in a residential tenancy agreement; however, note that the government recently completed a consultation on changing the law to adopt a similar approach to Victoria.

Queensland and Western Australia, both Labor administrations, are currently looking at the Victorian Labor government's introduction of reform in this particular area. No decision has been taken, but they are contemplating the Victorian model. Finally, in the middle, my office has summarised a compromise position from the Northern Territory. It is up to the landlords as to whether the pets are allowed; however, a tenant can apply to the NTCAT to remove or change a no pets clause on the grounds of it being harsh or unconscionable.

My office has characterised them as two jurisdictions with tenant-oriented pieces of legislation. Including South Australia, there are five who are more landlord oriented. We have Western Australia and Queensland contemplating the Victorian model, and of course Mr Parnell is asking South Australia to contemplate the Victorian model as well, and the compromise position is the Northern Territory position in the middle.

The Hon. Mr Wortley summarised a number of the reasons from a tenant's viewpoint as to why this is an important issue for a significant number of people. Before I address the tenant's viewpoint, I acknowledge absolutely, as I am sure some of my colleagues would wish, that there are important issues here on behalf of landlords.

A landlord who owns a property that ends up getting trashed or significantly damaged through a pet being kept on the premises clearly is going to be mightily concerned if they are left out of pocket as a result of any legislative change to that end. So the Hon. Mr Wortley raised the issue of pet bonds and those sort of issues. There may well be other ways of addressing that.

I do not know whether any jurisdiction looks at the fact that—I can imagine someone who owns an inside cat, if I can describe it that way, as opposed to a very large dog that requires lots of room to bound around and the capacity to cause significant damage inside a particular house, or others who have pet pigs or whatever it might happen to be within their premises, the nature of the pet from my viewpoint, if I was a landlord, would be that I would feel more comfortable if someone had an inside cat that was being kept as opposed to a Doberman, a bulldog, or whatever it might happen to be, inside a premises.

The Hon. Mr Wortley raised the issue in terms of the importance of animals to in particular older South Australians. If you have had to, for whatever reason—the death of a partner or unfortunate financial circumstances—move from a house at a property location and you have had to move into rented premises, and you have had a pet for 10 or 15 years—the connectivity between an individual and his or her pet is significant.

Many of us probably have within our friendship groups or family circles people who treat their long-term family pet almost as well or maybe even better than other human members of their family, and love them probably as much if not more because they are there all the time and they are a constant companion for them. That is important.

I would not downplay the significance of the connection younger people have with their pets as well. The Hon. Mr Wortley talked about what happens, that animals get handed in to animal welfare or RSPCA because they have had to give them up, or a variety of other options, but the other option, which is not uncommon amongst some younger tenants, is that as soon as the landlord comes around, particularly if they have an indoor cat or a small indoor dog, someone has to hop in a car and drive around for a couple of hours whilst the landlord does an inspection of the premises.

The pet, the animal and the kitty litter (or whatever else it happens to be) is removed for a period of two hours while the landlord does the inspection, and then the pet returns to the premises after the landlord has completed the inspection. There are all sorts of devices or processes that tenants go through in terms of trying to stay connected to their pet.

For all those reasons, the government through the Attorney-General is prepared to engage in further discussion. At this stage, it is only a commitment to support the second reading, as I said. I should again speak on behalf of my colleagues. There are some who are very strongly opposed to any contemplation of a move down this particular path. Our party room has not arrived at a final position until there has clearly been further discussion with the mover and other stakeholders to see the final nature of the bill, but we are prepared to support the second reading at this particular stage of the debate.

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (16:55): I will start by thanking the Hon. Connie Bonaros, the Hon. Russell Wortley and the Hon. Rob Lucas for their contributions and also for the fact that all those contributions have kept an open mind on the possibilities for reform in this area. I note that the Hon. Rob Lucas, now that apparently he has half the South Australian bar on his staff, has access to excellent legal research. I think he has reasonably accurately summarised the state of play around the country. One thing all the contributions had in common is they all reflected that this is an exercise in the balancing of rights and responsibilities. Clearly, that is what this exercise is.

The Hon. Rob Lucas categorised the approaches in different jurisdictions as either landlord oriented, tenant oriented or somewhere in the middle. That is one way of looking at it but, at its most basic level, in this balance of rights and responsibilities there is one person who owns a freehold title to a piece of land with bricks and mortar—that is their interest—and there is another person for whom those bricks and mortar represent their home, the community in which they live and the home in which they raise their children, look after their elderly parents, or whatever it might be.

Clearly, there are important and valid interests on both sides of this debate, and the challenge for us as legislators is to get that balance right. I brought this bill forward because I think there is in fact no balance at all. It is entirely one-sided at present because the law is that, if the landlord says 'no pets', it does not have to be reasonable that they have said that. They can just say it and that is it, no ifs or buts. No pets, no debate to be entered into; that is the final word. That is not a balancing act: that is a one-sided contractual arrangement.

I think we can do better than the status quo. I know, and some members raised this, there is always the fear that, if we make standards or we make the law too onerous, there will be a vacation of the field and people will not want to rent their houses anymore. If we make rental properties subject to minimum standards, for example, or we pass pet laws, no-one will want to rent properties anymore. They will all go to Airbnb instead.

I do not accept that. In fact, it is the same argument against minimum wages, that if we could pay people less, if we could drop the standards a bit, we might get more people employed. It is an age-old argument. I do not accept that it strikes the right balance. Certainly, people have raised issues of things that can go wrong with pets. I just add the point that things can go wrong in many

families. I can think of many more children of my acquaintance who cause far more damage than a lot of pets.

I think we do need to keep this debate going. I am grateful to the Attorney-General for keeping an open mind. No-one so far has denied the importance of animals in people's lives. No-one has denied it because it is clearly factual and true that pets are important to so many people. No-one has denied that. It is a question of, as legislators, getting the balance right, so I am looking forward to resuming this discussion in the new year.

For the record, and I think I said this in my second reading contribution, we have consulted with landlords, we have consulted with real estate agents and we have consulted with tenancy groups. It is not as if we have come to this on a whim. As the Leader of the Government acknowledged, all states are going through this very same process. I am keen to work with the Attorney-General. I think we can do better than the current one-sided arrangement. I think this bill is the way to go, but let us see what the balance of opinion is in the parliament. If there are other changes that people want to put forward, then of course we will look at those.

I am very pleased that this bill will be read for a second time today, and I look forward to engaging with members, and with the government in particular, to see if we can get something in place fairly early in the New Year. I am pleased this bill will be read a second time today.

Bill read a second time.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

RADIATION PROTECTION AND CONTROL BILL

Final Stages

The House of Assembly agreed to amendments Nos 1, 2 and 4 to 7 without any amendment and disagreed to amendment No. 3.

Adjournment Debate

VALEDICTORIES

The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (17:02): I move:

That the council at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 2 February 2021.

In moving the adjournment motion, it is the opportunity for us to wish everyone well and thank everyone, and I will do so briefly on behalf of government members. Can I firstly thank you, the President, and all the table staff who ably assist you in the task that confronts you. Particularly for the table staff, the challenges of managing through the global pandemic has meant many new challenges, which many of us would never have contemplated: committees that needed to have videoconferencing or whatever else it is.

All sorts of new skills have been learnt. The chamber has proved to be flexible, agile and adaptable in terms of divisions and not closing doors and all the sorts of innovations that have had to be developed to try to be as COVID-safe as possible. For all those reasons, we thank you, but in particular the staff who assist you ably through all of this process. Included in that, of course, are the messengers who assist us in this chamber as well.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the two whips, and the crossbench leaders and whips, for their willingness to generally work through, again, the challenges that COVID-19 has brought upon us in terms of sitting schedules, legislation that in the early days was being dropped on us from a great height at very short notice and all those challenges that none of us have ever seen before, frankly. We have all had to adapt and cooperate. There were individual members who, because of vulnerability, had to absent themselves from the chamber for periods of time. All of those issues have had to be catered for. I think, by and large, they have been catered for in good spirit, good cheer, and in a spirit of cooperation.

Can I thank members because today is a very good example of where proceedings went much more quickly this morning than I anticipated. Today, we processed the Health Care (Governance) Amendment Bill, the Appropriation Bill, the Evidence (Vulnerable Witnesses) Amendment Bill and the South Australian Employment Tribunal (Costs) Amendment Bill. All of those bills have been processed, and on behalf of the Attorney-General I discharged the lobbyists bill which had been languishing for some considerable period of time on the *Notice Paper*.

There are still three pieces of legislation which will require—there are a number of new ones, of course—significant debate in February: the electoral bill, the local government review bill, which is another attempt at local government review, and the correctional services bill. We were going to endeavour to see if we could process the correctional services bill together with the others today, but I am advised that our colleagues in the assembly will be gone in a relative few minutes and the prospects of getting the bill through the committee stage in the next 25 minutes I am advised are relatively slim, if I can use an understated phrase. Our colleagues in the assembly are not going to be here next week and, therefore, we will return to debating that particular issue in February when we return.

Can I also thank all of the other staff in Parliament House: the Hansard staff, the catering staff, parliamentary services, the library, all of the staff in Parliament House who assisted members in (a) coping with the global pandemic and (b) in all of the normal tasks that they undertake on our behalf in terms of making our job easier.

With that, on behalf of government members I wish all of the staff in Parliament House and all the members of the chamber a happy and healthy Christmas season. We look forward to re-engaging through the committees which will continue to sit on occasions in this period leading up to February, but then re-engaging when the parliament recommences in the first week of February.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (17:07): I wish to break with tradition and indicate that I oppose the adjournment motion. I do so for the reasons that the Hon. Rob Lucas just outlined, in that we are not debating the correctional services bill today. This is a bill that precedes not just the current minister in this Marshall Liberal government but originally had the content of it with the previous minister, Minister Malinauskas. The reason I am so outraged that we are not debating this bill today, which has now languished, is because a very important part of that bill is the provision that prison officers would have to comply with the direction of the chief executive of Corrections.

As members would know, that was something that I was gravely concerned about with the death of Wayne Fella Morrison, and it came to light and to the fore that this was utterly inadequate. This is a year where we have just seen a pandemic, but we also have a pandemic of racism, and we know that Aboriginal people are the most incarcerated people in the world. We just had Commissioner Roger Thomas in the other place give those first steps towards a voice in parliament but this parliament does not even make the time to ensure the basic human rights and the basic expectations that we should be affording people in correctional services—that very important issue that this government has finally brought to this place and that three ministers have now had carriage of—will be enacted.

I was sitting here today waiting to debate that bill, only to be told that the Labor Party thinks it will take too long. I have to say it has already taken a very long time. It has already taken years for the content of this bill to make this place. There were also amendments that the Greens had put up for the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture which we believed had the support of the crossbench and the government to be implemented.

For those who say that black lives matter and those who say that they care about Aboriginal affairs to say that they do not have the time in these last minutes on the last day of parliament this year to debate the correctional services bill, something that has now languished not just this year but in previous years, is utterly contemptible. Therefore, I will be opposing the adjournment.

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL (17:10): I acknowledge the absolute passion that my colleague, the Hon. Tammy Franks, has for this place to do its job as thoroughly as possible.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. M.C. PARNELL: I do share her disappointment that this important piece of legislation is not going to be dealt with today, but I also want to make some more general reflections on the year that we have had in parliament. There is no doubt that this has been a year like no other. The COVID pandemic has hit everyone hard. I think it is probably fair to say that most of us feel grateful that we have been through the pandemic in a country like Australia, and in a state like South Australia, where civil society is generally strong enough for public health measures to be given the best possible chance to work.

COVID has been hard but it has been harder in other places. That might seem like cold comfort to those who have lost their jobs or their livelihoods, and I do not mean it in that way at all. We really do need to make sure that in a wealthy First World country like Australia, and in South Australia, people do not fall through the cracks.

As the Leader of the Government said in his adjournment contribution, in parliament we have adapted our practices, and I think we have also curtailed some time-honoured processes of accountability—some processes that, in the normal course of events, I could not have imagined we would voluntarily relinquish. These are measures that enable us to do our jobs as members of parliament and as members of the upper house of parliament in holding the government to account.

I think the one word that sums up how parliament has managed COVID-19 is probably 'trust'. We have trusted while certain processes have been truncated, shortcuts have been put in place and unprecedented power has been given to officials—not just elected officials and ministers but also unelected officials as well. So it has been a remarkable year and, like other members, I hope that next year we can put COVID behind us and that the normal process of legislating for the good order of the people of South Australia can be put back in place.

I would like to briefly take the opportunity to thank my parliamentary team: Cate Mussared, my Chief of Staff; our office manager, Emily Bird; our junior trainee, Leif Gerhardy; and my casual administrative and research staff, Alice Mussared, Matt Trainor and James Murphy.

I join with the Leader of the Government in thanking you, Mr President, and also the parliamentary officers, Chris Schwarz and Guy Dickson. I also thank their hardworking team who help us so much in our work here. I am always nervous that I will forget names, but thanks to Leslie, Anthony, Emma, Karen, Mario, Todd, Charles and Kate—I think have everyone there.

I would like to thank the building attendants; the catering division, who feed us so well; the Parliament Research Library, who answer our difficult questions; and parliamentary counsel, who make us sound better than we are. I know everyone says that every year, but they do. Sorry, that was Hansard. Hansard make us sound better. Parliamentary counsel make us sound learned in the way they draft our bills. I thank the security team, who keep us safe and usually have a friendly smile as we arrive each day.

Last but not least, I give my thanks to my parliamentary colleagues and their staff. I was going to say that it has been a pleasure to work with you all this year, but it is a mixture of pleasure and pain. However, I reckon that pleasure has outweighed pain most of the time.

Where it has been painful, it has at least been professional. I think that is the best that we can hope for where you have a contest of ideas and you have people who disagree. We behave relatively well most of the time towards each other, whether we agree or disagree. Whenever we do adjourn to, I look forward to continuing to work with you all. I wish people a very restful break over the holiday season.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (17:15): I echo the sentiments expressed by all members just now. Can I just say at the outset that I can completely appreciate the frustration the Hon. Tammy Franks has just described. If you are on the crossbench in particular, you know that a great deal of work goes into preparing for these debates.

We have staff and teams who do an enormous amount of work behind the scenes, as do all members, preparing for these things. I appreciate that we all came here today thinking that this is something we would be dealing with, and we did not know that we were not going to be dealing with this, and so I am saddened that that has put a dampener on the end of today.

On a more positive note, I would like to say that in my view this is not the year to get anything you want, it is not the year to get everything you want, but it is absolutely the year to appreciate everything you have. We in SA have a lot to be grateful for because, as we are acutely aware, no matter the challenges that we all may have faced in this place—personally, professionally, whatever they may be—there are people around the world who have and continue to be confronted with much more challenging times in the face of this pandemic.

I, for one, am extremely grateful for the way that South Australia as a state has dealt with this pandemic and the efforts that have been made to keep us and our families all safe. I am extremely grateful for all those individuals involved, from SA Health and everywhere else, and the role they have played in that. I just want to place that on the record.

Like other honourable remembers, I would also like to thank everybody here who makes coming to this place possible every day and who makes it an enjoyable experience on days when you do not necessarily feel like being here. My thanks to the library team, led by John Weste, whose passion for shoes, I think it is fair to say, is equal to mine. To Hansard, who are ever so patient with us, the scribbled notes and everything that we give you and the notes that we do not give you in time, we are extremely grateful, as Mark said, for making us sound a lot more articulate than we often are when speaking on our feet.

My thanks also to the building attendants and security personnel, the catering division, the messengers and the Clerks, the table staff, Mario, Todd, Karen and Charles—who have I missed in that team, I am not sure, but I know I have missed somebody—everybody who makes our jobs easier. Not only that, they make coming here a more enjoyable experience.

One thing I love most about this place is the chats I have with staff around the building in the corridors that do not necessarily have anything to do with the role that we play here as members, but are just getting to know people and learning about their lives. I thank parliamentary counsel, who I think it is fair to say make us all look much more clever than we actually are. All these people go above and beyond each and every day to make our jobs easier and to make our jobs possible. I am extremely grateful for everything they do for us.

In closing, it would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity, with your indulgence, Mr President, to give a big thank you to Nicky and Karen, and a big happy birthday to Nicky in our Blue Room. She is actually celebrating her birthday today, so happy birthday, Nicky. With those words, like the Treasurer, I take this opportunity to wish everybody, all the staff, all the members, all the staff in the building, our members' staff officers who we work closely with, a happy and safe Christmas and holiday season and a brighter year ahead.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (17:19): I thank you, Mr President, for your leadership of this chamber in a year when there has been so much uncertainty and change. It has been comforting to end this year with a couple of familiar constants: the Richmond Tigers as premiers and Dustin Martin as the reigning Norm Smith medallist.

The Hon. R.I. Lucas: Where's your yellow and black tie?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I had it on on Tuesday. Mr President, thank you for presiding fairly over us for part of this year, and I acknowledge the many other presidents we have served under during other parts of this year.

The Hon. S.G. Wade: They come and they go.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Well, you know when daylight saving starts and finishes that you change your fire alarm batteries, and you change the President of the Legislative Council; I think that has been well recognised.

I thank the Leader of the Government in this place, the Hon. Rob Lucas, whose every suggestion about what we might do raises suspicion about what is he up to and what is he trying to pull over us? However, he is actually trying to make the place work productively, but we will still treat every suggestion with the suspicion it deserves.

I thank the whips in this chamber: the Government Whip and the Opposition Whip, the Hon. Ian Hunter, who hums show tunes at a much greater pace than the Hon. Dennis Hood, so he has some catching up to do. I thank the Hon. David Ridgway, and I think everyone in this chamber is poorer for his decision not to be a minister anymore. Without him answering government questions,

none of us know which are the best country pubs to stop at or which are the best entrees served up at award nights. Without him answering these Dorothy Dixers we are all much, much the poorer.

I would like to thank all the members of parliament in this place. I would like to thank the Clerk; Mr Black Rod, Guy; Leslie, Anthony and Emma; to Super Mario, Karen and Charles; to—

An honourable member: Todd.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: —Todd and Kate; and to the staff in my office: to Hicky, to Chris, to Craig, to Margaret, to Elana. I associate myself with the happy birthday wishes. To Ben in the parliamentary cellar—among people from all walks of life I think those who control wine have had a very important role in most people's lives during COVID. I thank building services; John Weste and his amazing shoes, as is often mentioned; the corporate and financial services folk, who rarely are seen but the place grinds to a halt without them; PNSG, who have had their work cut out for them as people try to work remotely and call them 17 times a day to get told where the on button on the computer is.

I thank Hansard, the wonderful people who know what we mean when we say it, then we say it and they record it and then they do it—and that will be interesting to try to get down; to the protective security staff, who have had a very important role this year, to the old ones and new ones. Importantly, I also thank Paul and the whole cleaning crew in this place, who work exceptionally hard and who, when we go home at 1.30 or any time of the day, are still here making sure that our workplace is a safe place. To all those people, thank you.

This time last year, I had the remarkable privilege of spending a couple of months on the hot red dirt in the centre of Australia rather than on the red benches of this chamber. I had plenty of time to reflect on just how privileged we are to do what we do but also just how much of what we do is supported by so many other people. So thank you to all who have supported everyone in here to do what they do.

The PRESIDENT (17:23): I would like to make a few remarks, and I thank the leaders and the crossbench representatives for their comments. I think their comments about all the people who support us are well appreciated and are certainly appreciated by me.

As a former member of the whips' union, I must always refer and defer to the work of the whips. I think until people have been a whip—and I know there is at least one leader in this place who was a whip—the whips' work is always underestimated, and I take my hat off to the way in which the whips have worked since I have come into this role.

I also thank the number of people I have asked to fill in here for me, either in this chair or the one below. I appreciate that very much. I think it is of great benefit to this chamber to have more people who have had some experience in doing it, and there are a couple of others who have indicated an interest in it, and we will fulfil that in the new year.

I indicate my great thanks to the Clerk, the Black Rod and all the Legislative Council staff, particularly on my coming into this role just on 12 weeks ago. There have been many who have contributed and assisted me in that transition. I particularly pay tribute to Isabella, Tom and Adele in my office.

I make no apology for the fact that I think I am a great advocate for this chamber, and I have been very grateful for the assistance I have had in my short time in this role. I do put great importance on it being as fair as it can be for all members of this chamber. As was mentioned earlier, I know there will be times of disagreement, but I am pleased that in the last six or seven sitting days we have averaged just over 15 primary questions per day. That will not always be possible, but it is something that I want to continue, which means that a higher proportion of the people in this chamber get a chance to ask a question every day, and I am grateful for people's assistance in that work.

I also want to thank all the people who work in this building and in associated ways with us. As has been mentioned, Hansard, obviously the parliament library, catering, building services and other employees of the JPSC, parliamentary counsel, and the PSOs. As someone who has very recently benefitted from having a chauffeur, I would be criticised if I did not mention the very dutiful people who do those jobs for those of us who have the benefit of having a chauffeur.

In conclusion, I thank everybody. As has been said, it has been a difficult year for all of us. It is a very unusual thing to be able to sit in this chair and look through the interview room to see what is happening across the other side of North Terrace. We had one week where we did not do that, but we have all had to adjust this year, and I am grateful for the way in which we operate in this place. I always take great pride in the standards that we hold here, and I will devote myself to maintaining that. I wish everybody a happy and blessed Christmas, and every best wish for 2021.

At 17:28 the council adjourned until Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 14:15.

*Answers to Questions***WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

In reply to **the Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN** (9 September 2020).

The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing): I have been advised:

The Women's and Children's Health Network have offered voluntary separation packages for staff as follows:

- There were no offers made during the 2017-18 financial year.
- There was one offer accepted during the 2018-19 financial year.
- There were a total of 22 offers accepted during the 2019-20 financial year.
- As at 13 October 2020, there have been no offers made for the 2020-21 financial year.

The total number of FTEs at the Women's and Children's Health Network increased by 42.85 in 2018-19 and 20.79 in 2019-20.