

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL****Wednesday, 9 February 2022***Parliamentary Procedure***PRESIDENT, ABSENCE**

**The CLERK:** I have to advise the council of the unavoidable absence of the President this day.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:17):** I move:

That the Hon. T.J. Stephens do take the chair as Deputy President.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (14:17):** Seconded.

Motion carried.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon. T.J. Stephens)** took the chair at 14:18 and read prayers.

**The DEPUTY 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 Committees***LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (14:19):** I bring up the 51<sup>st</sup> report of the committee.

Report received.

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI:** I bring up the 52<sup>nd</sup> report of the committee.

Report received and read.

*Parliamentary Procedure***ANSWERS TABLED**

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

*Question Time***HOSPITAL BEDS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:24):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding hospital beds. Minister, given that the budget papers show the operational funding and all FTEs allocated to COVID measures end this financial year, does the budget contain any money to continue operating the promised 392 beds after 30 June? Also, how many of these 392 beds are operational right now and, finally, does the budget contain any funding to continue the 712 FTE staff listed under this measure after 30 June?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:25):** In relation to the 2022-23 budget, it will hardly surprise the honourable member that the government that is elected on 19 March will be constructing that budget, and so the ongoing need for resources that are funded in the COVID context will be assessed in the context of that budget and in the context of the progress of the pandemic at the time. In terms of the 392 beds, my understanding is that 300 of them are currently commissioned.

### HOSPITAL BEDS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:26):** A supplementary arising from the answer given: in the Liberal government's budget, is there any funding for any single one of the 392 beds beyond 30 June of this current year?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:26):** I am really not sure why the Leader of the Opposition is going to such lengths to show his lack of financial literacy. The fact of the matter is that budgets are financial year budgets. The budget that the Hon. Rob Lucas tabled last year was the 2021-22 budget. It informs the public what will be spent this year.

### HOSPITAL BEDS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:27):** A further supplementary arising from the answer: is it the minister's actual contention that the budget published makes no provision for the funding of services beyond 30 June 2022? Is that really what the minister thinks the budget does?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:27):** The budget is an annual appropriation with forward estimates. Appropriations are done within financial years.

### HOSPITAL BEDS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:27):** A final supplementary: can the minister inform the chamber if it is estimated in the forward estimates that there will be any estimated funding for the 392 beds beyond 30 June this year, or does he actually not have a clue?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:27):** My understanding is that COVID initiatives are funded up until 30 June 2022. The reality is that just as we could not have foresee—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order, the Hon. Mr Maher!

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Minister, the Hon. Mr Maher is obviously answering his own supplementary question. You may continue if you want. Before we go any further, I don't actually have a list, Mr Whip, as to—I am assuming it is the Hon. Mr Maher again? No, okay.

### MENTAL HEALTH

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:28):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding mental health.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN:** The government has recently closed 30 mental health beds in the southern and western intermediate care centres. Last Friday, staff at the Southern Intermediate Care Centre at Noarlunga packed up their desks and left, having been told that they would not be returning for 12 months. It has been said that this is the worst possible time to be closing mental health beds given the higher pressures on mental health since the borders opened. My questions to the minister are: when exactly will staff at the Southern Intermediate Care Centre at Noarlunga be returning and have any other beds closed or been repurposed and staff diverted elsewhere?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:29):** My understanding is that there were two particular mental health centres that had problems in maintaining continuity of care, particularly because of furloughed staff in the context of COVID. My understanding is that one of those was in the Central Adelaide Local Health Network and one was in the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network.

In terms of the Central Adelaide Local Health Network, my understanding is that if that hasn't already reopened it is due to do so this month as the impact of COVID on staffing is dealt with. In relation to the southern centre, I will seek advice from the department on when that's expected to reopen.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:30):** Supplementary: can the minister advise whether any other beds have been repurposed or staff diverted elsewhere, and why hasn't he answered that part of the question?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:30):** I certainly would not describe this as repurposing. My understanding is that it was part of a response to COVID, but I will certainly seek advice. It is true to say that there was significant disruption to both our hospital services and our ambulance services during January related to the COVID pandemic.

In terms of the current state of the workforce, I will see if I can get some data on that. Yes, even today, as I understand it, there are 309 furloughed staff across SA Health and there were significantly more earlier on this year, particularly in January. As those furloughed staff return, both close contacts and COVID-positive people, it certainly is making it easier for our health managers, our health leaders, to deliver services.

**MENTAL HEALTH**

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (14:31):** A further supplementary arising from the original answer: why have staff at the Southern Intermediate Care Centre been told that it will be at least 12 months until the site reopens?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:32):** As I said, I will seek further information as to when the southern centre is expected to be reopened. In one of my other supplementary answers, I also indicated to seek further information in relation to that centre. I will do both.

**The Hon. C.M. Scriven:** So you've got no idea?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** As I said, I will seek the information—

**The Hon. C.M. Scriven:** As you said, you've got no idea.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —the honourable member seeks.

**NURSE STAFFING LEVELS**

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (14:32):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding nurses:

1. Given the recent revelations from the nurses' federation that CALHN planned to cut up to 100 nursing shifts, why was the government considering these cuts to nurses?
2. Was the minister informed of this decision?
3. Can the minister rule out that these cuts will be back on the agenda post the election?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:33):** These are the lies and misrepresentations that the South Australian people are constantly subjected to by the Labor opposition. They have repeatedly said that we have cost health staff, and we are not cutting health staff.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** Let's remember that when this—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Do the Hon. Ms Bourke the courtesy of allowing the minister to answer her question.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** The reality is that this government has more than doubled the graduate nurse intake from 600 to 1,200 this year. We have doubled the graduate paramedic intake. In the last year alone, we have added a thousand additional frontline health staff and, in terms of the impact since last election, there are 2,500 more health staff under this government—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** I can't hear the minister.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —than when we inherited it.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** In relation to the CALHN—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Minister, please continue.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy President. In relation to the reference the honourable member is making to the CALHN surge plan, my understanding is that the CALHN surge plan is a plan to help CALHN deliver nursing care in the COVID-19 pandemic environment.

This is part of not only CALHN's response but all of our health network's response to make sure that we can deliver the 500 dedicated COVID-19 beds if we need them, and that has led CALHN to talk to the unions about opportunities to deliver different models of care. That will mean fewer nursing shifts within those particular wards, but my understanding is this is not about job cuts: this is about making sure that our hospitals can surge to provide the care that South Australians need.

#### **NURSE STAFFING LEVELS**

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (14:35):** A supplementary arising from the original answer: is the minister suggesting that the nurses' federation is incorrect in suggesting the CALHN report recommended cutting 100 nursing shifts?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:35):** I'm certainly referring to the CALHN nursing workforce model. As I said, my understanding is that that is not about a reduction in FTE. It may well mean a reduction of shifts in particular wards in terms of nursing shifts, but it's in the context of a varied model of care in the context of the COVID response.

#### **INTERSTATE MIGRATION**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (14:35):** My question is to the Treasurer. Can the Treasurer please outline to the house recent figures on net interstate migration and how they compare to the record prior to 2018?

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:36):** I'm sure all members will be delighted to hear the answer to the honourable member's question. In relation to the net interstate migration figures—that is, a comparison of how many people are fleeing our state compared to how many people are coming into our state—we are delighted to be able to say that—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** —under the most recent 12-month figures through to the June quarter of 2021, there were more people coming into South Australia than fleeing South Australia to go to other states. That number was 704.

*The Hon. I.K. Hunter interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order, the Hon. Mr Hunter!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Under the former Labor government, for the period from the March quarter of 2014 to the December quarter of 2017, their four years—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! The Hon. Mr Hanson, put your mask back on.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** We can hear them squealing like stuck pigs over there. They don't want to hear the record of their government, but they are going to hear it.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** They will take their medicine, as they should. Their record, under the former Labor government for that four-year period—

*The Hon. I.K. Hunter interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order, the Hon. Mr Hunter!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** —on an annual basis, was that annually 5,807 more people fled South Australia to find jobs in other states than were attracted to South Australia during that particular four-year period. That was the sad, sorry, disgraceful record of the former Labor government: almost 6,000 people a year more fleeing the state of South Australia, seeking desperately job opportunities, whereas in the last 12 months—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! The Hon. Mr Hunter and the Hon. Mr Hanson, enough!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** —actually more people being attracted to the economic growth, the job growth prospects, a record low unemployment rate—the lowest ever on record at 3.9 per cent—and the fastest growing economy in the nation at 3.9 per cent, the first time ever since records have been collected that we have had the fastest growing economy in the nation. The sad and sorry record, as I said, is almost 6,000 a year more fleeing the state than this year, 704 more people coming into the state because of the changed direction and the vision for the future that the Marshall Liberal government has provided to them.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! The Hon. Mr Pangallo is on his feet.

#### **PORT AUGUSTA ALCOHOL SALES BAN**

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO (14:39):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, representing the Minister for Police in another place, a question about racism by stealth in Port Augusta.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** In an extraordinary move, the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner yesterday introduced a temporary ban on alcohol sales in the township in an attempt to address an increase in alcohol-fuelled crime and antisocial behaviour linked to COVID lockdowns in remote communities and flooded highways to the north and west. According to media reports, police appealed for action after an increase in alcohol-related offences and antisocial behaviour in recent weeks. Four-litre wine casks have been banned and limits placed on hard liquor for all except senior business managers and station managers.

Human rights and native title lawyer, Tim Campbell, believes the three-week ban is race motivated and targets people from the APY lands who have found themselves stranded in Port Augusta because the lands have been shut due to COVID and other areas north of the city unreachable due to recent flooding. An alcohol rehabilitation facility that caters for Aboriginal clients believes the restrictions could lead to more people sharing alcohol, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission and cause some people to have alcohol withdrawals, presenting to medical services that don't have the capacity to treat them. Port Augusta Mayor, Brett Benbow, says the council wasn't even consulted about the ban.

My question to the minister is: on what grounds was the commissioner allowed to impose such a blanket ban, which impacts the entire community, not just problem drinkers? Did he seek advice and input from the state government and/or the State Coordinator before doing so and was it

discussed by the COVID-Ready powwow? If so, what was that advice and if not, why not? Did his consultation include the Indigenous community and will the government immediately reverse this perverse decision?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:41):** I thank the honourable member for his question. The commissioner you are referring to, as I understand it, is the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner, who I suspect reports to the Attorney-General rather than to the police minister, but I will certainly refer the honourable member's questions to the relevant minister and seek an answer to them.

#### PARAMEDICS

**The Hon. J.E. HANSON (14:42):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding paramedics. Given the government's recent announcements about 51 paramedics, can the minister advise if those paramedics are an election promise or are they a government budgeted measure? Secondly, when will the 51 paramedics be brought online and, thirdly, where exactly will they be deployed?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:42):** In relation to the honourable member's question, my understanding is that the Marshall Liberal government's investment in 51 additional FTE paramedics is budgeted, therefore it is not subject to the re-election of this government.

It has been long foreshadowed by the Minister for Industrial Relations, who is also the Treasurer. In the last budget, there were 74 additional paramedics who were budgeted for and at that time the Treasurer foreshadowed that he expected to be funding additional paramedics in the future. That \$30 million investment will provide an additional 40,000 crewing hours, a significant enhancement of our capacity. I am advised that the paramedics will be on the road within 12 months.

I think it's important to see this in the context of other important human resourcing initiatives of the government in relation to the Ambulance Service. Since the Treasurer announced the 74 additional FTE ambulance officers in the state budget, we doubled the paramedic intake last year and we have committed to maintaining that doubling in this current year. We have hired more 000 call takers and we have significantly engaged paramedic students in the context of the COVID response. So I would ask honourable members to be mindful not only of the 74 plus the 51 but also other investments in the Ambulance Service.

#### PARAMEDICS

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (14:44):** Supplementary: how many of these positions are ongoing full time and permanent, as opposed to contract and short term?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:44):** I will certainly clarify it, but my understanding is that the 74 and the 51 are ongoing.

#### PARAMEDICS

**The Hon. J.E. HANSON (14:44):** Supplementary relating to the original answer: where exactly will they be deployed?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:45):** I have sought briefings from the Ambulance Service so that we can make that determination.

#### PARAMEDICS

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (14:45):** Final supplementary: is the minister able to indicate if these are effectively already baked into the budget and not an election commitment dependent upon the re-election of a Liberal government? Is the minister aware if these 51 extra paramedics are accounted for in last year's state budget, the Mid-Year Budget Review or in some other area out of contingencies or IR funding?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:45):** I suspect that the honourable member is really going to matters of public finance that are better addressed to the Treasurer. My understanding, as I have already advised the house, is that this is a budgeted initiative by the Marshall Liberal government and is not subject to our re-election.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (14:46):** My question is to the Minister for Human Services regarding children of domestic violence. Can the minister please inform the council of how the Marshall Liberal government is finding new innovative ideas that promote support available for people experiencing domestic violence?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (14:46):** I thank the honourable member for her question. We are keen to always expand the reach of our messaging to ensure that anybody who is experiencing domestic and family violence is aware that support is available and to learn to recognise what are the symptoms, if you like, of domestic and family violence.

We do hear it reported, particularly from people who work on the frontline and in the community services sector and particularly our volunteers through the safety hubs, that sometimes people come in and have those conversations with those frontline workers and volunteers and aren't actually aware that what they are experiencing has that name, and that can often lead to a fair amount of stigma.

In terms of our Break the Cycle campaign, we have been extending that as well. To date, a total of \$475,000 has been funded to roll out the Break the Cycle campaign. I think I have spoken in this place before about our Australia-first partnership with Tinder, so that it was appearing on that platform. In total, the Break the Cycle campaign has attracted more than 1.8 million impressions on social media, bus shelters, toilet doors, radio and Tinder.

We therefore are pleased that we are extending this to have the message about the Break the Cycle campaign printed on the back of prescriptions, knowing that that is another way that people may be able to access that information. We are providing \$40,000 in funding to boost this in a total of 20 pharmacies across regional South Australia, from Port Augusta to Mount Gambier, Coober Pedy, Berri, Port Pirie and a range of other areas.

We also will be providing information in doctors' waiting rooms and on on-demand TV and YouTube in regional South Australia to ensure that that message is getting to people, so that they can seek help and get connected with services so that they can break the cycle of domestic violence.

## COVID-19 RENTAL EVICTIONS

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:49):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question without notice to the Minister for Human Services on the topic of the rental moratorium on evictions for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS:** In May, the parliament provided renters experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 with a reprieve when it extended the moratorium on evictions until September 1. This was again extended until December but has since expired. Given the pandemic has entered a new phase, with borders being opened by the Liberals and the Omicron variant therefore running rampant, we know that the pandemic and the associated economic crisis has coincided with a rental affordability crisis in our state and there are more and more South Australians struggling to find affordable housing.

My question to the minister is: what arrangements, if any, have been put in place to ensure that no South Australian will be evicted into homelessness now that this moratorium is no longer in place?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (14:50):** I thank the honourable member for his question. The government runs a number of services that assist in the homelessness prevention space. I think that certainly what we saw through COVID, especially in the early phases, was that before the financial support was made available for people who needed it, there were grave concerns about people being evicted into homelessness.

I would be hazarding a guess that in terms of people who are in the private rental market, particularly those who have sustained private rental for some time, we do see some people who come to our services, either to the South Australian Housing Authority to register for public or

community housing and also to seek support from the homelessness service providers. A number of people wouldn't actually require those services, but support is always available.

I think we are in a period where we are transitioning certainly the economy and in terms of people's employment prospects, as the Treasurer has already outlined, we have very low rates of unemployment. Generally speaking, people in South Australia are doing as well as anyone in the world on that economic front. We always have services available regardless of what the particular situation is and, indeed, the queries that come across my desk are generally resolved one way or another so those support services are effective and they are working.

#### COVID-19 RENTAL EVICTIONS

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:51):** Supplementary: has the minister advocated to her colleagues for the moratorium to be extended?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (14:52):** The honourable member may not have the benefit of how government operates, but these are cabinet decisions and, as a member of cabinet, that is my decision as well.

#### KORDAMENTHA REPORT

**The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (14:52):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Health and Wellbeing regarding health.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY:** The KordaMentha tranche 2 report from less than a year ago says that it was requested because CALHN had to find \$70 million in savings. My questions to the minister are:

1. Was the minister briefed before the KordaMentha report was requested?
2. Does the minister now have a copy of the report and has the minister read the report?
3. How much were KordaMentha compensated for producing this report?
4. Can the minister rule out the re-engagement of KordaMentha so long as he holds the title of Minister for Health and Wellbeing?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:53):** In relation to was I consulted before this report was prepared, my understanding is that I wasn't. In terms of the report itself, I was not provided with it. It was an internal working document by CALHN. In terms of any future re-engagement of KordaMentha, the fact of the matter is that KordaMentha is a highly respected set of advisers but I am aware of no suggestion that they be re-engaged.

#### KORDAMENTHA REPORT

**The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (14:53):** Supplementary: can the minister rule out the closure of gynaecological services in CALHN, a cut to outpatient services, the privatisation of ophthalmology services, or a consolidation of clinics across CALHN, including cardiology, plastic surgery, rheumatology and palliative care?

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Mr Wortley, I am a bit interested as to how that could be taken from—

**The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY:** I could hardly hear him through the mask, so I can only assume that he answered something there which—

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** I could hear him and I didn't find any reference to any of that and so it is not a supplementary question. It is a very nice try, but if the minister wants to add anything he can.

#### KORDAMENTHA REPORT

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (14:54):** Supplementary question: can the minister advise the chamber why he was not provided a copy of this report?



**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:54):** At last count, I only have about 44,000 employees in Health. I would be dizzy trying to estimate how many reports and documents they produce. Please don't send me them all.

#### HEALTH SERVICES

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (14:55):** Will the Minister for Health and Wellbeing please update the council on health services in the north and north-eastern suburbs?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:55):** I thank the honourable member for her question. Nearly four years ago, the Marshall Liberal government was elected with a strong commitment to undo the damage of Labor's disastrous Transforming Health experiment. The damage was particularly felt in Adelaide's north and north-eastern suburbs, as services at Modbury were downgraded and more families more frequently had to travel to the Lyell McEwin, putting pressure on that hospital, or the new RAH to get the treatment they needed.

The Marshall Liberal government has been working hard to reverse this. We have committed a record \$7.4 billion investment in the health budget this financial year, \$900 million more than Labor's last budget. For the northern suburbs, that means an increase in the budget of the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network from \$534 million in Labor's last budget to \$829 million in this financial year. That is \$275 million more being spent on health services in the north and north-east.

The report of the independent Commissioner for Public Sector Employment shows that there were 4,197 FTEs in NALHN as at 30 June 2021, 589 more FTEs than at 30 June 2018, an increase of 16 per cent. In addition to putting more nurses, midwives, doctors and paramedics on the ground, we have been investing in the bricks and mortar of our hospitals, with nearly \$200 million budgeted for infrastructure projects in the north-east.

Modbury Hospital in particular is being revived by the Marshall Liberal government with a \$145 million investment. We have delivered a new four-bed high dependency unit, allowing more complex surgeries to be undertaken at the hospital; a 12 treatment bay extended emergency care unit; a new 26-bed short stay general medical unit; a new 20-bed palliative care unit; a new outpatient building; and upgraded theatres for surgery. Labor promised the extended emergency care unit three times. The Marshall Liberal government promised it once and it has delivered.

On top of this upgrade to Modbury Hospital, we are expanding the Lyell McEwin emergency department to provide better support for residents of the north and north-east who need urgent care. We are also investing in mental health in the north. Our most recent budget includes an additional \$163 million investment in mental health, with a particular focus on the northern suburbs.

We are establishing a 16-bed, 24/7 crisis stabilisation centre in Adelaide's northern suburbs. The centre will provide acute crisis care based on a recovery model, with highly skilled professional staff and peer workers in a therapeutic and safe setting. This will reduce admissions to our public hospitals and ease pressure on emergency departments.

We have also committed \$48 million over four years to construct a 20-bed older persons acute mental health facility at Modbury Hospital. Woodleigh House at Modbury will be decommissioned; it is well past its use-by date. That will allow the transfer of the current older persons mental health unit from Lyell McEwin to the Modbury.

Labor failed the north-east and downgraded health services. The Marshall government is delivering on its commitment to undo the damage of Labor in the north-eastern suburbs, with better hospitals, more services and more health staff.

#### VALUER-GENERAL

**The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (14:59):** My question is to the Treasurer, representing the Attorney-General, a question regarding valuation objections. Will the minister ask the Valuer-General when they disallow an objection they include in their letter of disallowance that the valuation is considered fair and reasonable having regard to sales of comparable properties but they are only prepared to provide that sales evidence when it refers to residential properties but no other land uses such as vacant land, commercial or industrial properties, thus discontinuing a long-held practice since 1971?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (14:59):** I am happy to refer the honourable member's question to the minister and bring back a reply or provide a reply.

#### **AMBULANCE RAMPING**

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:00):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing about ramping. What were the total ramping transfer of care hours for January this year, and has the minister seen the ramping statistics? How many patients with COVID have been ramped since the borders opened?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:00):** The honourable member knows full well that the government that he was part of never released ambulance ramping data. It is this government that is the first government and, from my understanding, the only government in Australia that releases ambulance ramping data. The other jurisdiction that it is provided for is Western Australia, and that is as a consequence—

**The Hon. I.K. Hunter:** Why have you stopped it now?

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —of the fact that the services are provided by a non-government provider.

**The Hon. I.K. Hunter:** Have you got something to hide?

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** The government's announcement of regular reporting of transfer of care data was on a quarterly basis, and the first distribution was made at the end of December. My expectation is that the end of the next quarter is the end of March.

#### **AMBULANCE RAMPING**

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:01):** Supplementary: has the minister seen the ramping statistics for January?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:01):** In terms of the point I often make to the opposition, you can see on a real-time basis on the SA Health website the impact of transfer of care loss. I would make the point that the December data showed that there had been a 25 per cent decrease in the last two months of last year. That's very encouraging and it's—

**The Hon. C.M. Scriven:** Have you seen the January statistics? That was the question.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —continued. In terms of the advice I have been getting in terms of regular updates on the operation of the health networks, it continues to be a positive situation in terms of a lower level of transfer of care loss. This improvement, and particularly since October, I believe is a significant reflection on the positive initiatives that the state government has taken. We have expanded the—

**The Hon. I.K. Hunter:** It's still the highest in the country.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. I.K. Hunter:** On your watch.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —emergency department capacity or are in the process of expanding the capacity in the Southern Health Expansion Plan—

**The Hon. I.K. Hunter:** The highest ambulance ramping on record in the country brought to you by Stephen Wade.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Mr Hunter, enough!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —the Lyell McEwin Hospital redevelopment, stage 3 of The QEH, the paediatric emergency department upgrades at the Women's and Children's Hospital, but, very importantly, the programs in the community: the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre, the mental health co-responders, the Child and Adolescent Virtual Urgent Care Service. All of these things are helping South Australians to get the care they need in hospitals with increased capacity or in the community, avoiding the need to transfer.

#### **AMBULANCE RAMPING**

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (15:03):** Further supplementary: why won't the minister answer the question of whether he has seen the January statistics on ramping?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:03):** As far as I'm aware, I have not received a briefing from the Ambulance Service on the transfer of care hours lost.

#### **BUSHFIRE RECOVERY SUPPORT**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (15:03):** My question is to the Minister for Human Services regarding bushfire recovery. Can the minister please update the council on how the Marshall Liberal government has supported our resilient South Australians affected by the devastating Adelaide Hills and Kangaroo Island bushfires?

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (15:03):** I thank the honourable member for her question. Indeed, South Australian individuals and businesses, and other supporters from around Australia and the globe—indeed, even Elton John supported South Australia through the State Emergency Relief Fund. While it is two years on since we had the devastating bushfires in the Adelaide Hills and on Kangaroo Island, it is good to know that people are rebuilding their lives in these important regions with the support of all of us.

In particular, we have had more than 1,000 families, individuals and businesses who shared in over \$9 million which was donated and some \$2 million in funding from the government. The Webb family of Kenton Valley have been a family who have been quite open and been prepared to speak publicly about their situation. They received more than \$30,000 in government grants, which obviously has been particularly helpful.

One of the things that they have relayed has been that because there were various rounds of grants, where they were in the early days where they needed to replace school uniforms and the like, they have now been able to put subsequent grant funding towards other things that they may have realised they needed, such as landscaping for the rebuild for their homes.

We have provided close to \$3 million to 195 households whose residences were destroyed, nearly \$3 million to 937 households to repair property infrastructure, nearly \$2 million to support loss of income to 509 businesses and \$1.12 million to support community projects. At this time, it is very important that we continue to support these communities. We thank everybody who made a donation to this very important fund and look forward to those communities continuing to recover.

#### **COVID-READY COMMITTEE**

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:06):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Treasurer as a member of the Premier's COVID-Ready powwow group on its deliberations.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. S.G. Wade:** That's not the right title.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** Neither is 'committee', minister. According to *The Advertiser*, the COVID powwow group—I won't call it a committee because committees are meant to be reporting and investigating—

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! The Hon. Mr Pangallo, that's a bit of opinion there. Take it out, please.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** Okay. Well, the minister popped up. He provoked me. According to *The Advertiser*, the COVID powwow group is considering a range of options to allow isolating

South Australians to vote. My question to the Treasurer, who told us he is a member of the committee, or group, is how does this group make a decision when we have been told it doesn't make any decisions and doesn't keep records of its deliberations, who makes the decisions the Premier announces, and has the COVID powwow discussed the alcohol ban in Port Augusta?

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The honourable Treasurer, I am not sure about the powwow thing, but I think you know what the Hon. Mr Pangallo is alluding to.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:07):** Mr Deputy President, I have been called lots of things in my time, and so be it. Bodies that I work on have been called lots of things, so it is up to the honourable member what he calls it.

The issue in relation to the election was canvassed at considerable length yesterday. I am happy to repeat what I said on the public record yesterday, and that is that it is not the COVID-Ready Committee that will be making decisions in relation to election voting issues. Thankfully, in South Australia under our system, it's not politicians—whether it be the Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Health or the COVID-Ready Committee—that dictates to the independent Electoral Commission how the Electoral Commission conducts the election process. It is a decision for the independent Electoral Commissioner in terms of how he and his team will conduct the election process.

As I understand it—I haven't seen the detail of it—the Electoral Commissioner might have issued some sort of statement today in relation to anticipation that in the not too distant future he will make some announcements in relation to the conduct of the election, with the objective that we all share, and that is to try to ensure that all those people who want to vote are given the maximum possible opportunity to vote, either before election day or on election day.

So the honourable member, although for different reasons, is quite right. The COVID-Ready Committee is not going to be making decisions in relation to the way the election is going to be conducted, and I hope he would be supportive of that. The notion that someone other than the independent Electoral Commissioner would make those decisions would be abhorrent to me and, I suspect, abhorrent to the majority of South Australians.

#### COVID-READY COMMITTEE

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:10):** Supplementary: when did the COVID-Ready Committee first discuss the issue of the election?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:10):** I don't have a date, but the issue has been discussed on a number of occasions. It's been discussed publicly. The Electoral Commissioner has been having his and their own discussions in relation to the issue. Clearly, it's been an issue of some ongoing interest to the Electoral Commissioner because I think it was late last year sometime there was a request for significant increase in funding to manage a COVID-impacted election campaign.

My recollection is I approved additional funding of \$1.8 million to the Electoral Commission to allow him to do what he wanted to do in relation to ensuring a COVID-safe election process. As I indicated to this house yesterday, and I did so again today to some members of the media, if the Electoral Commissioner comes to me as the Treasurer and says, 'I need additional funding to make these further arrangements,' then he will be provided with the additional funding that is required to ensure, as I said, the shared objective is met; that is, that those people who want to vote are given the maximum opportunity to vote either prior to the election or on election day.

#### COVID-READY COMMITTEE

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:11):** Supplementary: will any request from the Electoral Commissioner be abided by with directions furnished by the State Coordinator for anything that the Electoral Commissioner requires?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:12):** I don't know what that question implies. I am not sure that the Electoral Commissioner is looking for direction from the State Coordinator or not. Until the Electoral Commissioner indicates what it is that he wants—for example, the \$1.8 million in additional resourcing that I provided, I don't believe required any direction from the State Coordinator. It was just the way the Electoral Commissioner was going to conduct the election and additional

resources that he needed. I don't believe he needed to have a direction from the State Coordinator to do what he wanted.

I can't read the Electoral Commissioner's mind in terms of what he wants to suggest. It would be a lovely skill or attribute to have, but I don't have it. Until he makes the decision in relation to what he chooses to do, if it is a resource issue, then it will come to me, and I have indicated, as I did with his last request, a willingness to provide the resources that he requires. If, for whatever reason, and I can't contemplate it, it requires a direction from the State Coordinator, I would assume he would discuss that directly with the State Coordinator.

#### COVID-READY COMMITTEE

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:13):** Supplementary: were any minutes taken of the meeting with the Electoral Commissioner and the COVID-Ready Committee?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:13):** I am not aware that the Electoral Commissioner meets with the COVID-Ready Committee. I think it has been indicated before, the COVID-Ready Committee doesn't take minutes. I think that question has been canvassed in various committees upon which I thought the honourable member sat.

#### COVID-READY COMMITTEE

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:14):** A supplementary, and this might make the last response clearer.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Mr Maher, perhaps a final supplementary on this one so we can move on.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** Treasurer, has the Electoral Commissioner or anyone from the Electoral Commissioner's office to your knowledge ever attended a COVID-Ready Committee meeting?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:14):** I don't get to all of them, but certainly he has not attended any particular meeting that—

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

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** He has not attended a particular meeting. But the Electoral Commissioner is independent. He and his team make decisions independently in relation to the conduct of an election. I would be very disturbed if anyone was suggesting the Electoral Commissioner should be subject to either the direction or the influence of a politician—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** —for example, so if that is the position the Labor opposition wants to adopt let them defend the position.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** The Leader of the Opposition sledged the Electoral Commissioner's views yesterday. He then sought to deny his statement and then when I placed on the social media record exactly what he did say, and *Hansard* recorded it, it was a stony silence from the Leader of the Opposition in relation to that.

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**The Hon. I. PNEVMATIKOS (15:15):** My question is to the Treasurer regarding COVID planning.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Can you just let the Hon. Ms Pnevmatikos ask her question, so that I can hear it, please, and the minister.

**The Hon. I. PNEVMATIKOS:** As Leader of the Government in the chamber, does the minister accept that the Marshall Liberal government did not have an adequate plan for reopening borders, and why did the government ignore and disregard the expert health advice regarding borders when the Omicron variant emerged?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (15:15):** No.

### **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (15:16):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing about mental health. Could the Minister for Health and Wellbeing please update the chamber on how the government is doing to support mental health for mothers.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:16):** As members of the council would be aware, the government has worked very hard to rebalance the health system towards mental health and part of that is providing support for mothers needing mental health support in the months after birth. At all ages and stages of life, this government supports services for South Australians to maintain positive mental health and wellbeing.

Helen Mayo House is one of the services of SA Health which provides inpatient services for parents who have significant mental health challenges in the postnatal period. It has been my privilege to open the annual Helen Mayo House conference each year that I have been the Minister for Health and Wellbeing and to celebrate the dedicated specialist staff in just one part of our mental health care system, and taking the opportunity to confer with them and learn from them—both local and interstate and international colleagues—how we can best support the very important parent-infant bond in those first months of life.

Women carers and their infants aged 12 months and under can be admitted to Helen Mayo House if they are the parent with primary responsibility for the infant and have a mental illness. Mental health problems such as severe depression, anxiety or psychotic illnesses are considered to be significant if they impact on the parent's ability to function in everyday life and care for the child.

Parent carers admitted to Helen Mayo House are likely to have an average stay of two to three weeks, and during this time they receive care from psychiatrists, nurses, clinical psychologists, social workers and parent-infant therapists. Parents will also have the opportunity to participate in various group programs run on the wards, such as mindfulness, skills training, baby massage, arts and music sessions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for all in our community but for women birthing babies with either pre-existing or emerging mental health issues I am sure it has been particularly difficult. The same can be said for the families that support these mothers as they journey through pregnancy, birth and the infant period with their babies, and for the healthcare staff, including midwives and nurses, GPs, neonatologists, obstetricians, psychologists and social workers, to name just some of the clinical team who provide support.

Throughout the past two years of the pandemic, however, Helen Mayo House clinical and other staff have been there for mothers. They have continued to provide an important and specialised service to parents and babies without fuss, without fanfare, despite the infinite challenges COVID has brought.

Acknowledging the demand levels for this service and the analysis of data for future need, the government is proud to be doubling the size of Helen Mayo House at the new Women's and Children's Hospital. Helen Mayo will become a 12-bed service, doubling in size from its current six. This government has a strong commitment to providing world-class health care and world-class care to mothers, babies and their families.

I take the opportunity again to congratulate the staff of Helen Mayo House for the mental health care and support they have provided professionally, quietly and passionately to the mothers and families of South Australia throughout the pandemic and for the last 30 years.

### SA PATHOLOGY

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:20):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question on the topic of SA Pathology to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** In April 2020, we saw the announcement that SA Pathology will be moving to a new state-of-the-art laboratory in the CBD's health and biomedical precinct. The advance tender notice for this was released on Monday 20 September 2021. That tender calls for a private consortium to buy the land and build the building to then lease to SA Pathology. The lease payments will then need to be paid from SA Pathology revenue. That this could put further cost pressures on SA Pathology and create pressure to cut staff even further have been some of the concerns raised with me.

Pathology is of course part of health care and therefore it is a normal part of health care and expected that the government covers some of that cost. Certainly, it has been raised with me that expecting SA Pathology to somehow pay for itself would be unrealistic. Workers are also concerned that, if most of SA Pathology is now under one roof, it will be easier to sell it off.

Therefore, my questions to the minister are: why did the government decide for a 'build and leaseback' model for the new SA Pathology building? Going forward, who will pay the lease on the new SA Pathology building? Once built, is that building expected to reduce costs to SA Pathology, increase costs, or is it revenue neutral?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:21):** I thank the honourable member for her question because it does highlight, yet again, this government's commitment and investment in SA Pathology. The proposed development for SA Pathology and the other new laboratories will give this world-class organisation the world-class facilities that it deserves.

In terms of why this particular financial approach was taken as a result of discussions within government, I presume it was the Infrastructure Cabinet Committee that has been shepherding this process. As health minister, in effect, I am the client minister, but I can assure you that that committee is rigorous, as is the Budget Cabinet Committee, in driving value for money for taxpayers.

The appropriate business cases are done throughout projects, whether that's an outlined business case, detailed business case, or otherwise, to make sure that it is value for money. As the client minister in this context, as the minister responsible for SA Pathology, I am sure that what is being pursued will mean a good deal for not only SA Pathology but for all its staff and all its clients.

### SA PATHOLOGY

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:23):** Supplementary: have past rounds of voluntary separation packages reduced capacity in SA Pathology and in SA Health more broadly?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:23):** What I would stress about packages such as voluntary separation packages is it gives an opportunity for agencies to, shall we say, refocus their workforce for the contemporary challenges the workforce faces. SA Pathology could not be a better example of an organisation that has had to be incredibly dynamic.

In terms of the suggestion that we are using TVSPs to reduce the workforce, the figures just speak for themselves. As I said earlier, there has been a net increase of more than 2½ thousand health staff across the health services under the Marshall Liberal government, and a thousand of those in the last year alone.

### SA PATHOLOGY

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:24):** Supplementary: will SA Pathology be expected to cover all costs associated with the building?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:24):** It's almost hypothetical but let me stress that the agencies, as part of normal government administration, are expected to cover from their budgets a whole range of expenses. Now, of course, you are probably again leading me to an area which is the province of the Treasurer, and he would be much better to answer them,

but certainly my understanding is that standing costs like accommodation costs are covered by the agency.

### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (15:25):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Health and Wellbeing a question regarding COVID planning.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** At the end of January, the Mount Gambier *Border Watch*, an exceptionally reputable publication, had an article entitled 'McBride: election an influence on border opening'. The article went on to quote the local member for MacKillop, Nick McBride, saying:

'He wanted the problems in January...nothing like that in March,' Mr McBride said, suggesting that the border opening in November was hoped to get a forecast surge in problems associated with the expected peak in Covid-19 cases out of the way early so that it would be 'as normal as possible going to March and beyond'.

It was a stunning revelation from the member for MacKillop about the political strategy of the government. We heard even further stunning revelations yesterday in this chamber in relation to the attempts to politicise the health department and the COVID response from the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. We heard about the revelations from the Ombudsman about attempts to do so, media commentary from last week about attempts to do so and other members talking in this chamber about it.

My question to the minister is: can the minister explain why the government's border reopening plan was politically designed to help the government at the coming state election, as revealed by the member for MacKillop?

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (15:27):** I regard that as a bizarre suggestion. If I could remind the honourable members of what happened at the end of last year—

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** Are you having a go at the member for MacKillop? That's an outrageous way to describe Nick McBride.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Minister, please! The honourable Leader of the Opposition, you have asked your question. It was listened to in silence. You have invited the minister to provide an answer. He will be heard in silence.

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** He is calling Nick McBride 'bizarre'.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The honourable Leader of the Opposition!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** The honourable member seems to be wanting to suggest that somehow South Australia prematurely opened its borders for the sake of the timing of the state election. Let's remember that at the end of last year—

*The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —the South Australian government decided to open its borders on 23 November. During the week after that, the world became aware of Omicron. After—

*The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** Excuse me, Mr Deputy President, are we going to have order in this house?

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** Health said to shut the borders, and the Chief Public Health Officer told you to shut the borders.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The honourable Leader of the Opposition, do you want an answer or not? Because if you don't, he can sit down and we will just move on. Now, enough.



**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** The South Australian government made the decision in relation to 23 November. That was before Omicron had been identified. The—

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** It was the government who made the decision? Nothing to do with the police commissioner?

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** So it was a political decision by the government?

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order! Do you want an answer or not?

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** Sorry. Yes, sir.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** Subsequent to the identification of Omicron, the government of Tasmania and the government of Queensland went ahead with their plans to open their borders. By Christmas 2021, there was only one government in Australia that hadn't opened its borders, and that is the government of Western Australia. Western Australia has not been able to escape the Omicron variant, and I refute the suggestion of the honourable member—

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** Nick McBride.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —the honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** Are you having a go at Nick McBride again? You are refuting his suggestion once more.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** I refute the implication of the honourable Leader of the Opposition that this decision was a political one.

#### *Matters of Interest*

#### **COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (15:29):** Today, I rise to speak on South Australia's response and recovery from COVID. We can all agree on something here today: South Australia is the greatest state in the greatest country in the world and I am very proud of everything South Australians have done to support our state during challenging times. Our beautiful landscape, community spirit and uniqueness are why we are all lucky to live here.

Through the hard work and determination of South Australians, our state has evolved into the land that we know today. With high-quality infrastructural development, environmental upgrades, education and healthcare facilities, Adelaide has been named the third most livable city in the world and the first in Australia. It is the best city in which to work, live and play. This begs the question: where else would you rather live?

I would like to say thank you—thank you to every single South Australian. Thanks for your hard work and determination so that industries such as hospitality, tourism, retail and many more can continue to operate and keep South Australians strong and safe. I would also like to say thank you to the Adelaide City Council for their commitment to CBD businesses. I know that COVID has created hardships right across our state, but our most hard-hit industries are right here in the CBD.

Because of this, the Marshall Liberal government has committed to ensuring that we are boosting capacity and support to our local CBD businesses. We have put in \$1 million for the City of Adelaide's Adelaide Unleashed program, \$250,000 for the City of Adelaide's grand activation grant scheme and up to \$5,000 for eligible businesses to activate the area outside their premises in the CBD. Our small businesses are extremely vital.

South Australians' resilience, strength and faith in our government and health experts have pulled us all through this turbulent time. With an overall \$4 billion COVID stimulus package and a record-breaking \$17.9 billion infrastructure investment, the Marshall Liberal government has not only

supported small business but created more employment opportunities. The current job vacancies and opportunities have pushed us to the lowest unemployment rate since 1978, at 3.9 per cent.

The Marshall Liberal government recently released another round of Tourism, Hospitality and Gym Grants to provide eligible businesses in those industries with up to \$22,000. As a bonus, an additional round of the Business Hardship Grant provides an extra \$8,000 for all other South Australian businesses impacted by the Omicron outbreak. We have also introduced round 7 of our Great State Vouchers, with up to 160,000 vouchers worth \$100 each available for CBD stays. To assist with transport throughout the festival period, the Marshall Liberal government has implemented free public transport from midday Friday to midday Sunday.

By the Marshall Liberal government making difficult decisions, we have passed our peak in South Australia. We have been able to ease restrictions back to 50 per cent capacity and we will have an effective decrease in COVID cases in South Australia. However, this is not the case in many other states.

Western Australia has declared a state of emergency for COVID. Since the beginning of the pandemic, they have had the harshest border closures and the strictest travel requirements in Australia. They are prisoners within their own state; however, the worst is yet to come for them. While they are seeing higher cases by the day and are unsure where the next steps will go, South Australia on the other hand is slowly returning to normal and learning to deal with COVID as part of our everyday lives.

We have seen incredibly high case numbers in Victoria and even Queensland. Queensland have had triple the cases of South Australia, despite opening their borders almost a month later. The fact that we have passed the peak proves that we truly are lucky to live in a state like South Australia.

### LUNAR NEW YEAR, TET

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:34):** I rise today to speak about the Lunar New Year, in particular the Tét holiday celebration in the Vietnamese culture. Tét is short for Tét Nguyên Đán, which means Festival of the First Morning of the First Day. Lunar New Year celebrations can be traced back 3,500 years ago to the Shang dynasty in China before spreading to countries across Asia, when the date was fixed about 2,000 years ago during the Han dynasty. It is also celebrated in Vietnam, Korea, Singapore, Mongolia and Taiwan.

For those of us who have moved away from our birth countries, whether by choice or necessity, connection to our former homeland is significant. Being able to practise the cultural beliefs of our diverse Australian communities and share celebrations with others helps all Australians to live a rich and creative cultural life.

In China, the celebration lasts 15 days, with the Spring Lantern Festival on the final day. The Tét Festival was originally a three-day celebration, but it has gradually expanded to last a week or two. One of the most important customs during Tét holiday is ancestor worship. Prior to Tét families go to their ancestors' graves and offer food and drinks. Just like Western new year, it is about starting afresh. Everything we do will start as new, but with past experience to make things better.

It is a time for family reunions. Vietnamese people usually visit friends and relatives during Tét and exchange new year's greetings and special Tét gifts. It is also time for people to practise religious traditions, to pray for good luck and happiness by visiting Buddhist temples. Some of the most popular Tét traditions in Vietnam that my family still practise are:

- cleaning your house before Tét. It is traditional to clean your house in preparation for the new year. This is seen as a way to sweep away the old year and make way for new beginnings, and you are not allowed to do any cleaning during the Tét holiday;
- decorating with Tét flowers and plants. It is considered good luck to decorate your home with flowers and plants during Tét holiday. The most popular Tét flower is the yellow apricot blossom or Hoa Mai; and
- lucky money or 'li xi' is given out in red envelopes. Kids are given these instead of stockings, filled with lollies and stuffed toys.

Adult family members give younger generations lucky money in exchange for the promise to study hard and behave. At the same time, older family members also receive lucky money to wish them continued long life and good health. One of the most important foods during Tết celebrations is Bánh Chung, or square sticky rice cake, which is topped with pork and mung beans and wrapped in banana leaves.

In Australia, I think it is fair to say that most of our children and grandchildren have a good education and good job prospects. We should all feel proud of what we have improved and laid out for the next generation. I know the life lessons I have been taught help me to continue to work hard, to remain dedicated and to be respectful of other fellow human beings, especially our elderly. I want to encourage my children to do this too. It is especially important for the Vietnamese, as well as other Asian cultures, to keep connected from generation to generation.

In conclusion, I would like to wish all honourable members and your families good health, much happiness for the New Year of the Tiger. Chúc Mừng Năm Mới and happy lunar new year.

### ENDOMETRIOSIS

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:38):** I rise today to talk about the struggle that many women, and people assigned female at birth, go through to have their pain taken seriously, and why we as a state need to urgently address this. I particularly want to highlight this as we go towards March, which is endometriosis awareness month. Endo is as common as asthma or diabetes. It affects one in every nine people born with a uterus.

What is predominantly women's pain has been largely ignored, and continues to be discounted, and where it has been recognised it often has not been prioritised, with comparatively little research, funding, specialists or treatment options. Often, even after diagnosis, many women have to continually fight with healthcare providers to have their condition understood, sometimes even having to explain to their doctors what endometriosis is.

Currently, the wait on average for a diagnosis of endometriosis is a little between eight to nine years—not months, but years. It can only be confirmed through laparoscopic surgery and often girls are told they are 'just unlucky' or they have 'bad period pain' and are made to feel that they are exaggerating the severity of the pain they are feeling.

Endometriosis is a condition where tissue that is the same as the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus. It can grow in the pelvis, ovaries, fallopian tubes, bladder or bowel, or elsewhere in the body. There have even been cases where endometriosis has been found in the brain. It is a whole-body disease. Endometriosis means that when a woman has her period, that tissue acts as it normally would, bleeding with each cycle into the body which causes inflammation and pain.

Endometriosis can appear as a small bleb, a lump surrounded by scarring or as an adhesion, holding two organs together. For some women, it takes so long to get a diagnosis and to have their pain taken seriously that they have organs fused together or are so scarred that parts of those organs need to be surgically removed. Many women who are eventually diagnosed with endometriosis have to jump over so many hurdles and are told as they raise concerns about their health that it is all in their head and that they have a mental health condition, not this physical one.

When they finally are correctly diagnosed and have surgery to treat their endometriosis, that surgery to remove endometriosis is not a catchall solution. It is estimated that about 21.5 per cent of patients will have the disease recur at about two years post surgery and somewhere between 40 and 50 per cent will have it come back in five years. Despite a successful surgery, at least 20 per cent of women will return after surgery with the same levels of pain.

What this means for those women is that they cannot go to work, cannot go to school and, because of the pain that this causes, their lives are limited. In fact, studies have shown the lost productivity in women with endometriosis is equivalent to 11 working hours per woman per week. The impact of endometriosis on families, workplaces and relationships is substantial and is, of course, coupled with those economic implications.

At present, there is no cure. There are no substantive physical prevention methods for either endometriosis or persistent pain and, although early intervention can lessen its impact, the exact

cause of endometriosis is still not known. Research and treatment options continue to be limited, underfunded and not prioritised. We cannot continue to stand by while so many people in our community are in long-term pain from a condition that has no definitive cause, that is grossly misunderstood and for which there is no current cure.

The Greens therefore call for our state to establish a centre of expertise in specialised endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain diagnosis, treatment and management in our state. It is something that we can look to Victoria as leading the way. With so many affected by this pelvic pain and endometriosis, we need to have more options.

When the tired old myths are pushed out about its cures, we need trained health practitioners in South Australia so that patients can easily access that interdisciplinary and holistic care. We need the education that a specialist centre will provide. We need friends of endo, endo friends, to raise awareness, provide earlier information and hopefully earlier diagnosis and to ensure that so many suffering in silence right now do not suffer needlessly and that we do all that we can to help them.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (15:43):** I rise today to speak about the Marshall Liberal government's continued investment and improvement of our public health system, a system that was dismantled and dysfunctional under Labor. The COVID-19 pandemic has put enormous strain on our health services and I am proud to say that, as part of the Marshall Liberal team, it has withstood that pressure and represents the gold standard globally.

The Marshall Liberal government's commitment to first-class health services and our efforts to undo the damage of Labor's disastrous Transforming Health policy has provided South Australia with a strong foundation to respond to the pandemic. Under the former Labor government, they cut beds, downgraded services at our hospitals and closed the Repat.

Transforming Health was predicated on the theory that you could transform the public health system by closing and downgrading hospitals, by centralising health services and ignoring other parts of the health system such as primary care. To fix the damage caused by Transforming Health, to support clinicians, other staff and management and to realise the potential of the South Australian health system will take time.

We have started the task of rebalancing health services towards investments in prevention, health promotion and primary health care. In December 2017, Labor's health minister, Peter Malinauskas, closed the Repatriation General Hospital, despite former Premier Mike Rann's pledge it would never ever be closed by a Labor government. You cannot trust a Labor government with our health system, not then and not now in the midst of a global pandemic. We scrapped the sale of the site and our government is investing in the Repat precinct as a vital part of South Australia's future health system.

Labor's recent announcements pledging \$52.7 million for the Limestone Coast and \$33 million for the Upper Spencer Gulf health systems might seem like a reasonable one, but those of us who live in regional communities across our state know that talk is cheap. We just need to look at Labor's history on health, particularly in our regions. Between 2014 and 2018, Labor spent a mere \$14 million in total on regional health infrastructure. In comparison, the Marshall Liberal government has spent more than \$70 million in its first three years. Let's think about that for a minute: that is over \$23 million per year compared with Labor's \$3.5 million per year.

In a landmark agreement with rural GPs, we are investing an estimated \$188 million over two years to ensure we are attracting and retaining the best and brightest GPs to regional South Australia. The Marshall Liberal government is doing everything we can to ensure that the highest quality of care is available to all South Australians, no matter where they live.

We have completed the upgrade to the Murray Bridge emergency department as well as significant upgrades to a number of regional hospitals across the state. The Marshall Liberal government is upgrading our metropolitan hospitals, with significant improvements to Flinders Medical Centre, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Modbury Hospital and Lyell McEwin. The Marshall Liberal government is building a new Women's and Children's Hospital to provide holistic, world-class

health care and facilities for babies, children, young people, women and their families. This commitment is in addition to upgrades to the existing hospital site.

We have committed more than \$200 million to regional health infrastructure projects. That is more than double Labor's recent commitment. It includes projects such as the Mount Barker hospital emergency development upgrade, the Whyalla Hospital accident and emergency department redevelopment, the new Strathalbyn ambulance station and a new Barossa hospital.

The Marshall Liberal government recognises that a health system is about people. We have a strong plan and track record when it comes to making sure our services are staffed. We are building on our significant investment in the Ambulance Service with a further 51 FTE paramedics on top of the 74 FTEs that were announced in the state budget. We have ensured there is a stand-by workforce of up to 100 final year paramedic students to help transport patients through the pandemic. We spend more per capita in South Australia on our Ambulance Service than any other state or territory in Australia.

We have doubled the intake of graduate nurses and doctors into our public health system since the pandemic began, securing staffing levels and ensuring our health service is not overwhelmed as a result of the pandemic or any future challenges on the horizon. Actions speak louder than words. We have delivered and will continue to deliver for all South Australians. The pandemic has demonstrated how important our healthcare system is. It allows our economy to thrive and ensures we have one of the best standards of living in the world. South Australia cannot afford Labor to get their hands on health again.

#### PORT AUGUSTA

**The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (15:48):** I rise to speak about the structural deficit inflicted on the citizens of Port Augusta by an uncaring state government uninterested in the impact on the people of this region. The Port Augusta City Council contributes more than \$1 million each year to two assets that should be funded by the state government: the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden and the Port Augusta Airport. The state government needs to fund the structural deficits of these two important operations to remove the unreasonable burden from the ratepayers of Port Augusta. Otherwise, the ratepayers of Port Augusta will have to continue to fund these initiatives in addition to services the community needs.

I have asked questions of the responsible ministers, been in regular contact with the council and mayor, written to *The Transcontinental* (the local Port Augusta newspaper), been interviewed on ABC radio at Pirie and contacted the local Labor member for Giles and the Independent member for Frome. The government is not interested in this matter. In the lead-up to the election, the people of Port Augusta need to communicate their demands to government and seek a commitment from Labor to address the million dollars cost they pay each year.

The Botanic Garden is a significant cultural tourism and natural science asset to the state. It is a jewel that the people of Port Augusta have a right to be proud of developing. The cost to council in maintaining this state and regional asset is in the order of \$750,000 each year, or some 4 per cent of their rates.

Given the considerable support provided to the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and the complementary nature of the Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden of Port Augusta and the goodwill provided by the community of Port Augusta in funding this Botanic Garden over many years, it is reasonable to now expect the state government to step up. The Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden comprises 100 hectares, showcasing plants from Australia's low rainfall regions and attracting more than 150 bird species, with surrounding views of the gulf and Flinders Ranges. Contained within the gardens and opened in 1996 are an interpretive centre, cafe and shop.

The council has endeavoured to achieve ongoing state government funding to support this outstanding garden in the same or similar manner that the Botanic Gardens around Adelaide—Wittunga, Mount Lofty and Adelaide Botanic Gardens—receive state funding. A cursory examination of the financial statements of the Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium 2019-20 reveals considerable state government support in the order of \$10 million.

The Port Augusta Airport is operated and funded by the council, ensuring that this vital infrastructure is available to the state. The airport is the hub for the fly-in fly-out operations to many mines in the north of the state. In addition, it is the base of operations for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, serving an area of 840,000 square kilometres and providing comprehensive health services to people in the far west and northern regions of South Australia.

For example, in a recent state government capital funding initiative the Port Augusta Laurie Wallis airport will receive critical infrastructure for the Royal Flying Doctor Service base while the citizens keep funding the quarter of a million dollars-plus annual structural deficit. Because of the 3½ hour road travel time to Adelaide, there is no regional passenger service from the airport to Adelaide. Given these facts, why does the state not meet this funding deficit for this important state infrastructure operation so that the burden does not fall on the ratepayers of Port Augusta? The annoyance of the ratepayers of Port Augusta should be directed to the source of their problem: the state government.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:52):** Wilful blindness involves conscious avoidance of truth and gives rise to an inference of knowledge of the crime in question. It is with dismay that I report it is a form of corruption practised quite freely in this state, at the highest levels of government, the criminal justice system and law enforcement. It is far more scandalous because they know it happens yet they tolerate it in total silence to avoid opening a Pandora's box.

Most concerning is that the very department responsible for law and order, the Attorney-General's Department, tolerates and obfuscates corrupt conduct. The most conspicuous example has created international unrest and unease among miscarriage of justice groups and eminent jurists. It is now the subject of a new book by Drew Rooke, *A Witness of Fact*, which is centred on the state's disgraced former chief pathologist, Dr Colin Manock, who was unqualified to carry out thousands of autopsies and assisted in securing over 400 criminal convictions and therefore should never have been allowed to give expert evidence.

Rooke has spoken to a raft of forensic and legal experts and they are unanimous in their verdict on Dr Manock's 27-year tenure: he was a fraud. The state government knew it because it was admitted in court proceedings going back 50 years. Attorneys-general past and present knew it. Judges, including the current Chief Justice, knew it. Prosecutors knew it. Barristers knew it. Police knew it. Yet matters which relied on his expert testimony proceeded unchallenged—unsafe verdicts sending innocent people to gaol. So why has not the word 'scandal' in South Australia's criminal history been addressed?

Australia's longest serving Aboriginal prisoner Derek Bromley's leave application to the High Court against his murder conviction, which relied on the improbable testimony of Dr Manock, is being challenged by the Crown. Mr Bromley's supporters wrote to the Attorney-General and the DPP, former Judge Martin Hinton, requesting that, as model litigants, they should disclose in their submissions in any legal proceedings reliant on Dr Manock's evidence that he had no relevant qualifications, credibility or competence as an expert witness. Going by their responses, they are not listening.

Professor Bob Moles, a respected campaigner against miscarriages of justice, sent this to me today:

How on earth can prosecutors charge people for disobeying laws if they themselves are willing to disregard the law? For me, the idea of a former Supreme Court judge declaring that he would disregard the law to maintain the conviction of an Aboriginal man who has served nearly 40 years in prison on the basis of a person acknowledged to be corrupt by his employer, the coroner, numerous judges and the Attorney General (VC) [Vickie Chapman] is manifestly absurd.

As a model litigant, the Crown has a duty to disclose evidence which could even undermine their own case. Dogged lawyer John Viscariello has been battling a corrupt system for decades, which began with rapacious insolvency practices of insolvency giant PBB (Prentice Barbery Barilla) and one of the biggest law firms in town, Minter Ellison.

It has been a tortuous journey that would have seen many quickly surrender, but amidst setbacks he scored notable victories, including a Supreme Court judgement that led to a review into

the failure of the then Legal Practitioners Conduct Board to investigate numerous complaints he made about the conduct of those who occupied the highest level of the powerful law firm, including clandestine deals between insolvency practitioners and lawyers. In the firing line was then QC Mark Livesey—now the judge heading the Full Court of Appeal—and Minter's senior management, including lawyers Nigel McBride and Greg May.

Following an unrelated fiasco, the conduct board was replaced with the Office of the Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner. Mr May not only got the plum job as the first commissioner but, paradoxically, also had to deal with Mr Viscariello's complaints about him taking years to investigate. So Mr May had to investigate himself, his old pals at Minter Ellison and bench-bound Mr Livesey.

But the legal hunter became the hunted. On its own motion, Commissioner May had Mr Viscariello struck off and then tried to have him declared vexatious. Here were obvious conflicts of interest—which Mr May later conceded to the court he had not disclosed, and three judges noted a total of five times—putting the policeman of lawyers in breach of the Public Sector (Honesty and Accountability) Act, which carries significant penalties and gaol.

Questions I have asked the previous Attorney-General about Mr May's seemingly unassailable position despite these findings of improper conduct continue to be fobbed off. Even the integrity agencies do not seem to care. Wilful blindness—

Time expired.

#### HAPPY VALLEY RESERVOIR

**The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (Minister for Human Services) (15:57):** On 11 December 2021, South Australia celebrated its most recent reservoir reserve opening for public access at Happy Valley. It was an immensely popular opening, with around 6,000 people attending that day. Young and old alike enjoyed walking, riding, kayaking, fishing and picnicking.

The member for Hurtle Vale, Nat Cook MP, was down along the banks with many others, including the Minister for Environment and Water, for the official proceedings. I am told she appeared to be friendly, cheerful, and anyone who was watching could have easily been forgiven for thinking that Nat Cook was right behind the opening of Happy Valley Reservoir to the public, that she wholeheartedly supported the opening of this fantastic publicly owned space that has been locked up behind closed gates for decades and which the former minister, the Hon. Ian Hunter, vehemently opposed.

However, outside this event the member for Hurtle Vale's attitude towards the opening of this reservoir has been far from supportive. In fact, it could be best described as hostile and oppositional. She has written to the minister on multiple occasions with false claims of kangaroo welfare issues, including apparent culling at the reserve, which is simply not true. There has been no population control, including culling at Happy Valley, since the Marshall Liberal government was elected. Furthermore, there are no plans to control the population in the future.

People visit the reservoir several times a week and there are many hundreds of kangaroos in the site. They are not bothered by visitors, as they have been occupying what is effectively an industrial site for many years. The member for Hurtle Vale also tabled a petition in parliament seeking to stop the opening of the Happy Valley Reservoir. She regularly complains on social media about the volume of traffic around the reservoir in an apparent attempt to generate angst and negativity about the reservoir's opening. The reality is the member for Hurtle Vale, Nat Cook MP, has been against Happy Valley Reservoir's opening every step of the way, which is typical of the Labor's approach to the Marshall Liberal government's Opening up our Reservoirs program, a program that has been immensely popular.

There have been over 450,000 visitations to date, including over 50,000 in Happy Valley alone since it opened a few weeks ago, but there has been plenty of opposition from Labor—plenty of opposition. We have even seen Labor make spurious claims linking reservoir recreational access to apparent drinking water quality issues, which is nonsense. The managing of our reservoirs can be considered as being world-class best practice.

Last year, an independent audit found that this government has applied international best practice in risk assessment planning for opening our reservoirs to recreational access, putting water security and quality at the heart of the process, yet Labor is happy to try to get behind the successes when it suits them. Indeed, the Labor candidate for Davenport has boasted that, if elected, Labor would connect the Minkarra Park and Happy Valley Central Link trails, which requires access through the Happy Valley Reservoir Reserve. It would be nice if there were some consistency.

Labor are two-faced and cannot be trusted when it comes to our reservoirs. Publicly, they pretend to back the program when they have seen it is successful, pretend that they support the activation of these recreational reserves, but the reality is there is no commitment from Labor and the people of South Australia should be very worried about what Labor would do to the Opening up our Reservoirs program if they were to be elected.

I would like to quote from the former minister, the Hon. Ian Hunter, in response to questions prior to the election about his views about opening our reservoirs. He said:

Well it just costs millions of dollars to disinfect the River Murray and if you're going to add that extra layer of disinfection for reservoirs in the Adelaide Hills that have people swimming and boating in them then you're going to have to pass that cost on to SA Water customers. This is what David's—

which is David Speirs—

not being upfront about. Whenever you have a risk-based system it's cheaper to disinfect the reservoirs at the moment because we keep them clean and we keep people away from them. The River Murray costs a huge amount of money to disinfect that water. Now if David's proposing to put people into our drinking water supplies then he's going to have to also tell us how he's going to pay for it and of course his bottom line will be that SA Water customers will pay the increased costs of disinfection.

What has actually happened to SA Water bills under this Marshall Liberal government? There has been an average saving per household of \$200 per annum and, for businesses, \$1,350. A Liberal government means you can have your cake and eat it too. You can have your reservoirs and you can have lower water bills. Labor wants to keep people out of reservoirs because it is ideologically opposed to them.

#### *Parliamentary Committees*

### **COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMITTEE**

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:03):** I move:

That the third interim report of the select committee be noted.

In terms of the COVID-19 Response Committee, it has been a committee of this Legislative Council since the early days of the pandemic. It has been my honour and privilege to Chair it and I certainly think it has been a most valuable asset to ensuring parliamentary scrutiny as we tread our way through these most extraordinary times.

This particular report of the COVID-19 Response Committee is the most extensive since the early days of the pandemic. The third interim report is one that the committee members decided warranted renewed interest and rigour, and certainly a renewed set of advertising. With that, on 10 December this committee resolved to readvertise for further written submissions, and they were due by 28 January this year.

The committee met on six occasions and we heard from 27 witnesses. The committee also received 15 additional written submissions, and a list of the witnesses shows that there was much interest in this particular committee. I will start by also thanking the members of the committee: the Hon. Connie Bonaros, the Hon. Emily Bourke, the Hon. Dennis Hood, the Hon. Ian Hunter and the Hon. Terry Stephens, as well as previous members of the committee, and our secretariat Anthony Beasley and Leslie Guy. We were aided very ably in this particular tranche of the committee's reporting by our acting executive research officer, Mrs Lisa Baxter, and I thank her wholeheartedly for her fine work and thorough and diligent report writing.

The status from 23 November last year when, as the State Coordinator stated a few days earlier, we let COVID into our state has been well covered by this particular committee. This



committee actually allowed for voices that were not being heard in the debates, and in the daily press conferences, but I will start with some of the statistics.

Indeed, confirmed COVID-19 cases as of 9 November 2021 were calculated, but by way of update this committee notes the following statistics as of 1 February 2022. Australia has 2,213,084 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 3,835 people dying from the virus; these are sobering statistics. South Australia has had 106,862 confirmed cases and currently has 18,928 active cases, as of the report being finalised. There have been 120 deaths as of that date. There are 93.4 per cent of Australians aged 16 years and over who are fully vaccinated and around 95 per cent of Australians aged 16 years and over have had at least one dose. Certainly, this is a very different statistic from those early days of the pandemic when there was no vaccine.

The committee noted the use of the COVID SAfe Check-Ins and the new technologies that allowed for that transition from being a state where we were seeking to eliminate COVID to one where we have sought to suppress it. Since last year, when the state government announced its COVID-Ready Plan on 26 October, the key events have included removing state border restrictions to those people fully vaccinated from 23 November last year. The COVID-Ready Plan also reduced quarantine requirements for people entering the state from overseas, from 14 days to seven days. It increased the number of people allowed at home gatherings from 20 to 30.

Some witnesses, such as the AMA, stated to our committee that they were expecting the state to open its borders closer to mid-December, and they had based that on the population being vaccinated at a level of 80 per cent plus two weeks. They described the 23 November 2021 opening date as 'earlier than we expected'.

On 24 November 2021, the first case of the Omicron COVID-19 variant was reported in South Africa. The first confirmed cases of the new variant in Australia occurred in New South Wales on 28 November 2021. South Australia had our first confirmed Omicron COVID-19 case on 10 December last year. First reports indicated the new strain of the virus as being more transmissible than the Delta strain, but less likely to cause serious disease.

We heard evidence from Dr Chris Moy, Vice President of the Australian Medical Association, who explained to the committee that the previous regime of vaccination was less effective against the new Omicron strain of the virus. I note he was quoted in our report as saying:

It appears that having two shots—against Omicron, your protection against severe disease drops from around 93 per cent down to about 70 per cent, even though Omicron is less likely to cause serious disease. However, if you have a booster, it raises up to close to 90 per cent again, so those households get protected again and people don't end up in hospital again. Every day we buy to get more booster shots is a double effect.

As I have already noted, the AMA did say that they felt that the opening date was just a little too early and that they had expected it to be mid-December when that 80 per cent mark had been reached, and there would also be two weeks of further comfort. Certainly, in hindsight, it may have given us an awareness exactly of what to expect with the Omicron variant and perhaps may have changed those decisions.

The directions of 27 December last year, as many members know, were not anticipated when we first opened the borders on 23 November that were sought to slow down the spread. Those level 1 directions were outlined as:

- three-quarter densities for seated activities;
- no communal consumption facilities;
- one in two density for non-seated activities;
- one in four density for indoor hospitality activities;
- one in two for outdoor hospitality activities;
- one in seven for indoor fitness;
- seated food and beverage consumption only for indoor and outdoor-defined public activities;

- a shisha ban that has continued for almost the entirety of the pandemic;
- a gathering at home cap of 10 (gatherings at residential premises, including residents of residential premises being covered by that);
- masks for high-risk settings.

We see here just in this chamber today how masks have become a feature of this new phase of the pandemic, where we are now in the position of living with COVID. Other directions include:

- masks for personal care services (except for the person receiving the service, if necessary for the provision of that personal care service);
- masks for healthcare services;
- masks for passenger transport services;
- masks for indoor fitness facilities (except while exercising);
- masks for shared indoor public places (except bridal parties during ceremonies); and
- restrictions on dancing and singing.

These were restrictions that were more akin to the early days of the pandemic and largely due to the Omicron variant and the abundance of caution shown.

What was concerning is that we did hear evidence from various witnesses that not only did the Chief Public Health Officer have some concerns and recommend closing the borders again in the early days post this period, but workforce plans and negotiations with stakeholders did not seem to have been done before we opened up those borders.

I will leave members to have their own analysis of the evidence presented but, certainly, we heard quite concerning stories of meatworks on the Limestone Coast, where exemptions were given that basically told people to go to work sick and not to work the full shift if they were too sick to work when they had COVID. While denied in terms of the extent of the exemptions given, there was no clarity on just how many people were given those exemptions by SA Health.

Time and time again, there is a lack of paper trail in the pandemic management. The Transition Committee, which has long been the subject of this particular select committee's focus, had been, by changes made to the act, prior to 23 November forced to publish their minutes. They made a decision that they would wind up when we reached a 90 per cent vaccination rate, a decision that did not seem to be broadcast publicly or widely before it was uncovered in particular by this committee. Those minutes certainly do not reflect those particular debates. Indeed, minutes attached to the report of this committee from December were only put on the website possibly last Friday, but certainly well beyond the legislative requirement for the publication of those minutes.

The secrecy of the Transition Committee has now been replaced by the surreal COVID-Ready Committee. We were informed by various witnesses—and I will note that the Budget and Finance Committee has now possibly almost already tabled—that it does not keep agendas. It does not take minutes. It certainly lacks transparency. It certainly raises more questions than it answers. In this new phase of the pandemic, I would have thought transparency would be more important than ever, but it seems a more secretive approach has now been taken.

Ten days before the issue of the writs for the next state election, I would hope going forward that the lessons we have learned currently, as we live with COVID now, are that transparency is going to be the way forward and that perhaps—and I say this as the Chair, not as the opinion of all members of this committee—going forward it would probably be beneficial to have a standalone piece of legislation, as Victoria has undertaken.

In that legislation there, they require, for example, public health advice to be published so that all can see it and it cannot be used or misquoted or partially quoted. Full, transparent disclosure of information is indeed in keeping with best practice across the world as we continue to work our way through this pandemic. With COVID-19, it has been essential for a good public health response.

It was most concerning to have the Chief Executive of SA Health tell our committee that if we wanted the full modelling of the Omicron variant that has been most recently done, and as was released in the early days of the pandemic when the first tranches of modelling were done, he informed the Hon. Ian Hunter that he could FOI it.

This is a most substandard and inappropriate response for the Chief Executive of SA Health to make to the parliamentary committee charged with the oversight of our COVID-19 response. Where we do not have standalone legislation, we now do not have a Transition Committee publishing minutes and we have various cogs in the SA Health wheel providing information and exemptions and running processes where there is no clear lineage of accountability, this is simply not good enough.

The committee also heard from those in the education sector, from the teachers' union, from the department and from others about the confusion over whether or not the Doherty Institute's advice actually was the advice that South Australia has followed. Again, the lack of making themselves accountable and the advice given being published raises more concerns and questions than it gave us answers.

Early this year, we had a government that was making rapid antigen tests illegal continue to make them illegal. The committee's evidence noted the questions of the Hon. Frank Pangallo to the health minister last year. Anyone who was looking around the world could see that rapid antigen tests are part of the living with COVID phase and that they should have been more accessible. Even if it was not the intention of SA Health for them to be provided more broadly, they certainly should not have continued to make them illegal.

When you had interstate travellers coming in with their RAT tests, able to use them but then also required somehow to have a test and get into the long lines that we saw in those first days post 23 November, it did beggar belief that those sorts of measures had not been put in place. Indeed, it continued to stand in the directions that they were expressly illegal unless administered by SA Health. They were tools that had been well and truly tested across the world.

The teachers, to their credit, pushed back and fought for their workplace safety. The school return plan that was first mooted is a very different return plan that we will see finalised on Monday coming, when the last cohort of students actually return to our schools. There was certainly a great deal of confusion and a great deal of suspicion and animosity between stakeholders and groups, particularly unions, in this period.

I note that the Treasurer's approach to what he calls union bosses has not been helpful. It is, perhaps, something that, under this pandemic, should have been put aside. Those old attitudes should have been put aside, as they were in the first days of the pandemic, where at a federal level the unions worked with the employer groups and with the governments. That should have been done again as we opened our borders.

The various documents that are in the public domain are often changed day to day. There is a lack of clarity on when to expect a press conference or a press release. It certainly has been somewhat concerning as well that we did open the borders without children being vaccinated. The modelling that is now available on the SA Health website does flag their assumptions that vaccination rates will remain steady, as they were prior to the borders opening, but we do know that they are now dropping and that for the third booster dose they are not as strong as they previously were, and that does call into question the modelling that already says that come April we will see a further wave.

I know there has been a lot of talk about there not being another second wave, that we are at the peak and that we are now going down, but unless you have public confidence, the public health measures will not be accepted. In South Australia we have seen all sides of politics and many in SA Health and the other associated bodies be very proud that we have what is called a compliant society. You only get compliance, though, when you have transparency and when you have truthfulness. I fear that without respect for the parliament and respect for the processes and standalone legislation, in the future our pandemic story may not be as rosy as it currently is.

With that, I recommend that all members of this place read this evidence. There are a significant number of groups and individuals who still wish to present to this committee. But I am a

realist and, with 10 days before we move into caretaker government, I do not expect that the committee is going to be hearing from them before the state election.

After the state election, I feel that this work has to continue in some shape or form. I would hope it will continue to be somewhat collegial. Certainly, even among committee members, at times we did have our moments, but largely this was done with a spirit of ensuring good outcomes and all voices being heard, but without seeking to make cheap political points from it.

The evidence to come and some of the submissions made since 23 November have called for that standalone legislation. As we move into this period, we really need to rebalance again our civil liberties and public health restrictions and forge a new way forward after the election. With that, I commend the report to the council.

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:23):** I want to start by acknowledging the excellent work of the people involved in this committee, obviously my colleague the Hon. Tammy Franks and the other members, because I think this committee has provided some really important oversight of this public health disaster and the government response, so it is really critical and important work.

I have not really spoken about COVID in general terms during my time here, so I want to use this opportunity to talk a little bit about some of the concerns I have around the state government's response and the federal government's response. Some of those are informed by my own experience with COVID over the Christmas break. Members will be aware that I picked up the virus at an event I went to on 27 December and tested positive on New Year's Day. It was not quite the positive note I was hoping for as I started 2022.

What was really interesting for me, though, was that it did provide an insight into the support that is provided to people living with the virus. I received daily text messages from SA Health asking about my wellbeing. As part of that regime, a number was provided for people with COVID to call if they would like assistance. One particular day my symptoms started off being very mild, but as I moved through the virus they became a little bit more serious and I was feeling quite unwell—certainly not unwell enough to call 000, but unwell enough to feel like I might want to get some advice from a health professional.

I contacted the number that was provided. I was required to go through a series of prompts over the phone and eventually told that I was around No. 60 in the queue. There was no estimated wait time and there was no option to leave a number for you to get a call back, so I simply hung up. In my case, I am in a fortunate position as a member of this parliament to be able to afford to organise a GP consult, do a telehealth session and to get advice at my own expense, but not everybody in the South Australian community is able to do that.

I am particularly concerned about elderly people, those who are living alone, those who may not be proficient with technology, for whom a text message is perhaps an inadequate form of communication. What support is provided to them as they try to negotiate this pandemic? What advice are they given? We keep being told—indeed, it is the mantra of the Liberal Party at both the state and federal level—that the Omicron variant is mild, but in clinical terms what that means is not hospitalisation. Mild means different things to different people.

All members of the South Australian community should have access to health advice. I am very concerned that simply receiving a text message, with no follow-up call, is an inadequate way to treat vulnerable people who are experiencing a virus that many of us have never encountered before. Certainly from my own experience, talking with different people in my friendship group and others I know who have had COVID-19, the virus impacts everybody differently and there is a need to receive follow-up calls and support, and that simply has not been provided by the government.

What they do provide is a highly complex and poorly designed website with a series of rules and directions that change almost on a daily basis, making it very difficult for people to comply with the health directives and to understand what is required of them when they are dealing with the virus. They provide no advice on what is considered normal in terms of recovery or what one might expect. I think the Prime Minister's advice has been to contact your GP, but of course we know that is not always possible. It can be very difficult for people to find an appointment with a GP.

That brings me to one of the key points I want to make here around the incompetence of the Morrison government in Canberra. It is an incompetence that has started in Canberra and I fear has moved all the way down here to North Terrace. It started with the Liberal Party's appalling handling of hotel quarantine, the botched rollout of the vaccine, where people under 40 were required to wait months and months and months before they had access to the COVID-19 vaccine and were provided with contradictory and unhelpful public health advice, with no clear directive from the government before they were able to access the vaccine.

I think it is appalling that a country with our resources did not make that the number one priority for the year 2021, yet sadly many Australians, including people in our own state, were waiting for months and months before they were able to get access to a first and second dose of the vaccine. We now know, of course, that as a result there will be delays in people getting access to their booster—simply not good enough for a country with our resources not to be able to meet the needs of its residents in that way. I must say that the leadership of our Prime Minister has been severely lacking. It is hard to think of a more incompetent Prime Minister in the modern age. He has certainly failed to manage this public health emergency.

I also want to focus on the state government's response in South Australia and the decision to open the borders late last year. No-one, I am sure, would argue that we were going to keep borders closed indefinitely here in our state—I think people recognised that borders had to be opened at some point—but there was an expectation and a hope that the planning would be done, that the government had planned for this contingency, that the appropriate resources were going to be made available when we saw a spike in COVID infections, that businesses would get the support that they needed and that public health would get the resources required.

We know, of course, that did not happen. Chaos ensued for our city businesses. Walking through the CBD (I live in town), I have seen the devastation that has been wrought on our business community. Many I have spoken to have told me that they have had their worst Christmas season in decades and decades. Again, there has not been adequate support provided by the Liberal government in South Australia or, indeed, in Canberra—once again, a huge disappointment and a missed opportunity.

My colleague the Hon. Tammy Franks talked about the lack of access to rapid antigen tests—another bizarre failure of leadership from the state government. It is difficult to fathom why rapid antigen tests were not made available for sale in South Australia prior to the Christmas period. Indeed, it is easier to get COVID in South Australia than it is to get a rapid antigen test. That is disgraceful.

It is appalling that South Australians required to meet testing requirements were expected to sit and queue for hours and hours and hours in the lead-up to the Christmas period. It is a disgrace that some of those South Australians were waiting for 11 hours or more in their cars on hot days while feeling unwell in order to access a test. Surely we can do better than that. It is appalling that there is only one facility provided for people who do not have a car.

During the Christmas break, when I needed to access a testing facility, I went to the RAH. I got there at 5.30 in the morning, it opened at 6.30, and at that time there was already an enormous queue. By 7.30am, people waiting were told that the testing facility was not going to be taking any more walk-ins that morning because it was closing at 10.30am—again, poor planning, poor resourcing, simply not good enough.

I think South Australians have a right to be angry about what has unfolded in our state and our nation over the last 12 months—the failure to plan appropriately, the failure to appropriately invest resources and the failure to support vulnerable people during this time of crisis. When I asked questions of the Minister for Health yesterday about the information provided to people with COVID, he directed me to a general information line. That was telling because I do not think the minister is aware of the poor level of support provided to people with COVID-19 in our community. That needs to improve.

If we are seriously going to live with this virus, expecting people to queue for hours and hours and hours in testing stations and expecting people to wait for hours and hours and hours on the phone just to speak to a health professional has to change. That is not living with the virus: that is

creating chaos and confusion and putting people at risk of serious ill health. If we want people to test, then they should be able to access rapid tests, they should be able to access a PCR test, and those things need to be resourced appropriately by government.

We also have seen no plan from the Liberals in terms of the implications of long COVID and what that means. We know that COVID-19 is a viral infection that can produce lasting consequences. I am yet to see the Liberals at a state or federal level talk about their plan to deal with that. Once again, we see a lot of bloviating from the Prime Minister over in Canberra, talking up the mildness of the COVID-19 pandemic. We do not see a lot of talk about what his plan is to actually try to get on top of this pandemic. It is not good enough. South Australians deserve so much better.

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

### **SELECT COMMITTEE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE TIMBER INDUSTRY IN THE LIMESTONE COAST**

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (16:35):** I move:

That the interim report of the select committee be noted.

The Select Committee on Matters Relating to the Timber Industry in the Limestone Coast was an important committee and continues to be an important committee. The timber industry is an industry that is worth \$3 billion each year. It is an industry that employs 18,000 people directly and indirectly. It is a truly renewable industry, with significant carbon benefits, and of course it provides essential products for our community, from house frames to furniture, paper, cardboard and tissue manufacturing. Increased demand both domestically and internationally, as well as losses of trees through bushfires, has created significant timber shortages, so it was an important committee to look at an important industry.

We received 33 separate submissions, which were highly detailed, lengthy and considered, and I would like to thank all of the people and organisations who devoted so much time to making those submissions, appearing before the committee and hosting site visits, particularly given the COVID interruptions and difficulties. I would also like to thank our secretary, Ms Emma Johnston, who battled through all of the challenges that COVID presented and all of the challenges that perhaps COVID did not present but which came from other sources. I also thank our researcher, Mr Bernie O'Neill, noting that Mr O'Neill was appointed very late in the day, so he had huge volumes of material to work through.

I would also like to thank the committee members: the Hon. Russell Wortley, the Hon. Frank Pangallo, the Hon. Dennis Hood, the Hon. Heidi Girolamo replacing the Hon. David Ridgway, and yourself, Mr Deputy President, the Hon. Terry Stephens, for a period of time also. I would like to particularly place on the record my appreciation of the work of those members on the committee, because it was approached in a very balanced way, without seeking to score political points but instead working cooperatively to look at future opportunities to support a crucial industry for our state.

While it is unfortunate that the complete report is not yet finalised, the gathering of the evidence has been invaluable in providing greater insight into the industry and the opportunities within it. In the report, we recommend that the committee be re-established following the election to be able to receive all of that evidence and then make and present the final report.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. N.J. Centofanti.

#### *Motions*

### **FORMER LABOR GOVERNMENT**

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (16:38):** I move:

That this council condemns the record of the former Labor government including:

1. Appalling financial mismanagement;
2. Economic growth below the national average growth;
3. Unacceptably high levels of unemployment;
4. More people leaving the state than coming to the state;

5. Increasing costs to households and businesses; and
6. Wholesale slashing of government services especially in areas of health and education.

I am very pleased to have this opportunity as we near the end of this four-year parliamentary term. I am not sure what the exact number of days is—everyone else seems to know—until 19 March. It is not very far away, just over five weeks away. It is an appropriate time to, in essence, look at where we are now as a state and, more importantly, compare it to where we were at the changeover of government in March 2018.

I have referred to my contribution as a revisiting of the Labor atrocities of the past to remind members and others what a bad government they had in the 16 years leading up to March 2018. One would expect a political opponent to at least make that claim. The challenge, of course, is to look at the facts and to compare and contrast because the danger is that South Australia's economic recovery should not at this stage be risked. There is no point in turning back to the atrocities of the past.

The new Labor leadership here is desperately seeking to indicate that they had nothing to do with the atrocities of the former Labor government—nothing to do with them, nothing to see here, they were not involved. I remind members that the member for Croydon, the Hon. Mr Malinauskas; the member for West Torrens, the Hon. Mr Koutsantonis; the member for Lee, the Hon. Mr Mullighan; the member for Port Adelaide, Dr Close; the Leader of the Opposition in this chamber, the Hon. Mr Maher; and the member for Ramsay, the Hon. Ms Bettison, were all key movers and shakers, senior players in the former Labor government and remain significant players in the Labor opposition as we lead into March 2022.

Should they be elected, they would again take control of significant portfolios, and the prospect of people like the Hon. Mr Koutsantonis and the Hon. Mr Mullighan having any responsibility for any portfolio areas is too horrific a prospect for any rational thinking person to even contemplate. This motion, as I said, seeks to look at where we are now and where we were and to compare and contrast.

The critical areas for the people of South Australia obviously relate to jobs and economic growth. Jobs are critical in terms of our state's economic future—prospects for young South Australians in particular but all families and households. Unless you have a government that can actually see its constituents employed in gainful employment, hopefully employment that many or most of them can enjoy and see prospects for the future, then it is a pretty dismal future.

As I reminded the house in question time only yesterday, South Australia's unemployment rate on the last recorded figures was 3.9 per cent, the lowest unemployment rate this state has ever recorded since, I think, the figures were collected in the 1970s. So in whatever it is, more than 40 years of these particular figures being collected, I am advised that 3.9 per cent is the lowest unemployment rate our state has ever seen.

It is intriguing that the Leader of the Opposition, in playing catch-up after being stung by the tenor of the motion that we are debating today, has moved his own motion to be debated tomorrow, and because he cannot abide by the facts—that is, what the most recent unemployment figures are or what the most recent economic growth figures are—he says, 'Well, let's have a look at the figures from a year or so ago rather than the most recent ones,' or, 'Let's look at the economic growth from the year before the good ones.' It was the best he or they were able to construct hurriedly in terms of providing any sort of response to, in essence, the implicit criticism as part of this motion.

So 3.9 per cent, but the unemployment rate under the former Labor government just prior to the last state election was a horrific 6.2 per cent. What we have seen is the unemployment rate almost halved, not quite, from 6.2 to 3.9. I am advised that, for the 12-month period leading into March 2018, the unemployment rate averaged between 6½ and 7 per cent—a very significant reduction in terms of unemployment.

It was even worse in relation to youth unemployment. There is still more work to be done but, pleasingly, the December 2021 youth unemployment figure was 7.3 per cent. In February 2018, just before the last state election, the youth unemployment rate was 15.9 per cent, more than double the youth unemployment rate, a decline from 15.9 per cent down to 7.3 per cent in that four-year

period. So for more young South Australians worried about the youth unemployment rate, their prospects are clearly rosier four years down the track as a result of the economic policies and the financial management policies of this government. Those unemployment figures make starkly clear the significant improvement in those areas.

Employment in the four years from March 2018 through to the most recent figures in December 2021: 43,700 additional jobs in South Australia. At the tail end, whilst coping with a two-year global pandemic, we have managed to increase the total number of jobs in South Australia, compared to just prior to the last election, by 43,700 additional jobs in South Australia. That is something which should give great heart to South Australian households and families. Jobs, and income coming from jobs, is a critical aspect of their daily lives and the tangible improvements in both unemployment and employment numbers in the last four years are self-evident.

As I said, the Labor Party has to scramble and say, 'Yes, but look at 12 months ago or 18 months ago.' The people of South Australia know what the figures are now, and that is record low unemployment. I am told the number of people being employed in December was the second highest on record; the highest was actually the previous month of November, by another 2,000 jobs, approximately. The November and December figures, the most recent two-monthly figures, are the highest employment figures on record.

The other measure of prosperity and economic growth—clearly, the main one is jobs, but the other key indicator in terms of how the state is moving and where the state is heading to is obviously economic growth measurements. That is measured by gross state product (GSP) figures produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In having a look at where we are now, pleasingly the GSP figure for the most recent 12-month period—that is, financial year 2020-21—was 3.9 per cent. For the first time, economic growth in South Australia led the nation. For the first time since records have been kept, we were the fastest growing state in the nation in terms of economic growth, and of course that is what is driving jobs growth as well. That is critical. It does not just happen, because what did we inherit? Let's have a look at what we inherited.

For the last two terms of the former Labor government, from 2011-12 to 2017-18, our economic growth in South Australia averaged 1.1 per cent a year. For about seven or eight years, we averaged economic growth in South Australia of 1.1 per cent. At the same time, national economic growth was two and half times that at 2.7 per cent. So we lagged significantly behind national economic growth in South Australia for the whole of the seven years.

It is not a question of cherrypicking one year or another. It is an average over the seven years of the Labor government's performance compared to the average of the national economic performance during that period, and our economy grew at 1.1 per cent a year while the national economy grew at 2.7 per cent.

I am delighted to be able to report that in the three years for which figures are available under this government, from 2018-19 to 2020-21, economic growth in South Australia has averaged 1.3 per cent, whilst national economic growth has averaged 1.2 per cent. So we are actually growing, over a three-year period, at a higher rate than national economic growth.

Having inherited an economy which was tanking, growing at 1.1 per cent a year on average compared to national growth of 2.7 per cent, in the space of three years we are averaging economic growth at a slightly higher level than the national growth rate, bearing in mind that we and all other states in the nation's economy for a part of that particular period were impacted by a global pandemic. It is a very significant improvement compared to the appalling performance of the former Labor government over a long period of time leading into 2018.

I highlighted in question time today, and I will briefly repeat, the figures in terms of net interstate migration. That is the net effect of how many people are fleeing the state looking for jobs compared with those who are coming into our state for whatever reason. In the last year of the former Labor government, approximately 6,000 people fled the state. More people fled the state than came into the state during that 12-month period leading into the 2018 election.

In our most recent 12-month period for which figures are available, that had been reversed and there had been an increase of 704. That is 704 more people came into South Australia, as



opposed to those who were leaving South Australia. That is a total turnaround of close to 7,000, a reversal of losing 6,000 in a year to gaining almost a thousand in the most recent period.

Again, in part, that will be driven by the tremendous performance in South Australia in terms of managing the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike Melbourne, which broke the world record for the number of lockdown days, and the other Eastern States, South Australia was either the lowest or second lowest in terms of the fewest number of days of lockdown compared with all the other jurisdictions. So in part there was that.

Post COVID-19 pandemic, some of those people may well return to their jobs in Sydney and/or in Melbourne, but given the exciting growth prospects in South Australia, if this government is allowed to continue and given the privilege of continuing to implement the policies that have seen this huge turnaround in just four years, if we can continue that recovery process for another four-year period we are confident that we can continue to maintain net interstate migration either at a stable level or at a positive level, as we have seen in the last 12 months.

As I have spoken about in this house on a number of occasions, one of the key drivers in terms of economic growth and jobs growth of this government was to have a completely different approach to jobs and economic growth. The former government's approach was very much politician and public servant driven. It was to pick a winner and give them millions of dollars in grant money. As long as they were prepared to stand up at a media event and say nice things about the government of the day or the minister of the day, they would get their millions to go off and supposedly create the jobs they had promised.

I have said on a number of occasions that the notion that politicians and public servants are the best people to pick winners—that is, in a competitive market, decide that somebody's company is more likely to be successful than somebody else's company—is too bizarre a thought for most sensible people even to contemplate, other than of course the Australian Labor Party and their supporters. Those are the economic policies they adopted for almost 20 years in South Australia, and they are the sorts of policies that saw economic growth at almost two to three times less than national economic growth and unemployment rates of 6, 7 and 8 per cent, as opposed to 3.9 per cent currently in South Australia.

The new government's overarching policy objective was a simple premise; that is, the way to grow jobs and the economy in South Australia was to drive down the costs of doing business in our state so that our small and medium-sized businesses could compete both interstate and internationally for business. We cannot expect our businesses to compete successfully interstate and overseas if the cost of doing business in our state is uncompetitive. If it is significantly higher than in other jurisdictions, then it is a tough ask for a business in South Australia to compete with those businesses.

It is a relatively simple premise, but nevertheless one that this government has adhered to during its four-year term, successfully driving down the costs of doing business in our state right across the board. In large part, it is that sort of policy direction that has seen in South Australia a turnaround in economic and jobs growth, and population growth as well, because the failed policies of the past were discontinued and there was a new policy objective in this state. That has had very significant benefits for households.

The average household with two children and two cars in South Australia is now around \$1,092 a year better off than they were in 2018—\$1,092 a year better off. Electricity prices are massively down, ESL charges are massively down and water rates are massively down after the rot of the former Labor government in driving up water prices deliberately so they could get more money into the budget to spend on their favoured projects. CTP and registration costs are significantly down, and the government has provided sport vouchers to help defray sporting costs for families, in particular those participating in sport in schools and other competitions.

The critical one in terms of the state's economic performance is the significant reduction in average business costs. Average business costs have declined by just under \$5,000 a year for an average business in South Australia. Again, that includes things like payroll tax, land tax, ESL, water, electricity and CTP costs right across the board—very significant costs.

For a small business, and a nursery was the example given, the average costs have reduced by just under \$7,500. For that small business, there is a very significant payroll tax reduction because the government abolished payroll tax for all small businesses with payrolls under \$1.5 million. Right across the board, there have been very significant reductions in costs for South Australian businesses.

There are a very small number of high water-using businesses in South Australia, probably no more than a handful, whose water bills this last year were up to \$1 million a year less than under the former Labor government. We significantly reduced the cost of water by removing the rort the former Labor government imposed on the price of water in South Australia. This is an enormous benefit to their budget bottom line which helps drive economic growth for those businesses. It also allows them to continue to employ trainees and apprentices and grow their businesses, not only to the benefit of the company but to the benefit of the families and households employed within those particular businesses.

The benefits of that mantra or that objective of driving down the cost of doing business in our state are absolutely self-evident. Whilst there are many other articles I can quote from that time, I want to just refer to an article dated 28 June 2017, towards the end of the last Labor government, by energy consultant Bruce Mountain, who said that South Australian power prices were going to rise to the highest in the world—the highest in the world in 2017-18 under the former Labor government.

There was a media event only last week where our independent Essential Services Commission reported that the average cost of electricity to a household had dropped by \$421 under the policies of this government. Similarly, there have been massive electricity cost savings in South Australia for businesses who are operating. Under the policies of the Labor government, electricity costs in South Australia were a job killer. With the policies of this Liberal government—with grid-scale storage, home battery storage and a variety of other initiatives this government has taken—and the further encouragement to develop the renewables industry, we have seen very significant reductions in electricity prices not only for households but for businesses in South Australia.

One of the key policy differentials in terms of electricity policy has been this view of the member for West Torrens in particular, Mr Koutsantonis. He has railed against the building of the new interconnector between South Australia and New South Wales, the Eastern States of Australia. It is clear, given his significant position within the alternative government, that not only has he opposed that forever and a day but he continues to argue against the value of the interconnector in terms of driving down electricity prices in South Australia.

If there was ever a decision that was going to be required of a minister or a government that sought to ensure any problems the interconnector project might confront, you could rest assured that the member for West Torrens would be consistent with his policy position in not bending over backwards to assist the project. He hates it. He believes it is a Liberal initiative and, indeed, it is.

Minister Dan van Holst Pellekaan has been the policy driver on this particular policy. He has successfully driven it through, or been part of the process that has driven it through, ensuring it got through regulatory approvals and whatever assistance state government departments and agencies have had to provide to ensure we got to the position that we have arrived at in South Australia at the moment.

If the Hon. Mr Koutsantonis had been driving energy policy, we would not have had an interconnector. It is just so self-evident that for a state as rich in renewable energy as we are with solar and wind energy, so much that we cannot use it all, we have to have a position where we are able, when the wind is blowing and the sun is shining, to export it across a second interconnector to the Eastern States to help stabilise electricity prices and provide stability to the National Electricity Market as well.

Conversely, if the wind ain't blowing and the sun ain't shining, then we are going to need a second interconnector to import power for those brief periods to ensure that the lights do not go out as they did under the former Labor government in South Australia. This government's pleasing record is that we have not seen statewide blackouts as overseen by the former Labor government. The

lights, by and large, have been kept on. Prices have been driven down because of the policy direction of the Marshall Liberal government.

That would be threatened, that would be jeopardised, by the troglodyte-type views of the Labor opposition, in particular evidenced by their leader and the member for West Torrens in relation to energy policy. Both of them, sadly, are more interested in playing politics than in serious policy reform and development, which is the only way you can stabilise a national energy market. It is the only way you are going to be able, on a consistent basis, to drive down electricity prices in South Australia. That has to continue, otherwise it will be threatened should there be a change in government.

I now turn to the other aspect of this particular motion, which refers to the gross waste, incompetence, negligence, financial mismanagement and various other financial atrocities committed by the former Labor government. I hope, possibly in the next motion, to provide some greater detail in relation to one of the starkest examples of the incompetence of the former government and, sadly, someone who portrays himself as, or wants to be treated seriously as, potentially a future Treasurer of the state, and that is the member for Lee.

That is the motion in relation to—it would be laughable if it were not so serious—the scandal that relates to the Parafield park-and-ride decision that he took when he was last in government. I will address the particular details of that in that motion. Sadly, if it were a one-off bungle, scandal, error from the member for Lee, then perhaps he might be forgiven. It cost the taxpayers of South Australia \$4.5 million, and it pained me, as the current Treasurer, to have to actually sign off on this settlement based on commercial legal advice, but that is the reality. It was a mess of the creation of the member for Lee, and the taxpayers are the ones who had to pick up the cost of it.

As I said, if it were the only example of gross incompetence and wasteful financial management of the former minister, then perhaps he might be forgiven. But the reality is it was just the clearest, cleanest and worst example of many examples of financial mismanagement and/or incompetence of the member for Lee as the minister prior to the last election.

One of the ones that has not attracted the attention that it should have was the mess the member for Lee left the incoming government in relation to what is known as the Gillman deal, the subject of another motion I am moving. The issue of Gillman and the approach of the former government is a part of that particular motion as well. The member for Lee was supposedly responsible for that mess, which was the subject of an ICAC inquiry, with board members resigning from the Urban Renewal Authority and all sorts of scandalous happenings which went on under the former Labor government's watch. The member for Lee was responsible, together with others prior to the 2014 election, for promising the world in relation to what was going to happen at Gillman.

This deal, which was approved by former Labor ministers, Mr Mullighan and Mr Koutsantonis, promised thousands of jobs down at Gillman and more than \$70 million in revenue. Actually it was not before the 2014 election, it was before the 2018 election, I should say. Just prior to the last state election, the then housing and urban development minister, Mr Mullighan, who was the architect of the deal, trumpeted this deal with waste company Veolia Environmental Services Pty Ltd to develop Gillman, promising hundreds of jobs during construction and thousands of ongoing jobs.

South Australians were promised that Gillman would include Veolia's new SA head office—so that would be down at Gillman—with 450 employees, an environmentally efficient logistics and employment precinct down at Gillman, a nation-leading energy-from-waste plant and Adelaide's largest solar farm with 75 to 100 megawatts. The member for Lee said his deal would see \$70 million in revenue to Renewal SA, with a net profit of more than \$40 million, and it was announced with much fanfare just prior to the last state election.

The former Treasurer, the member for West Torrens, just five weeks before the election signed off on Renewal SA entering into a profit-sharing arrangement with Veolia, which contemplated even higher profit margins for Renewal SA than that \$40 million net profit figure that the member for Lee had talked about.

The reality is that the Mullighan deal has been an absolute stinker for the people of South Australia. I would invite people to go down to Gillman to see whether or not Veolia's head office with 450 employees is down there—I think they would be struggling to find it. I would invite them to go down there to see whether or not a nation-leading energy-from-waste plant is down there—I think they would be struggling to see it. Whether an environmentally efficient logistics and employment precinct is down there—I think they would be struggling to see it. Whether Adelaide's largest solar farm is down there—I think they would be struggling to see it. I can certainly tell you, as the minister now responsible for Renewal SA, there was no \$70 million in revenue and there was no net profit of more than \$40 million.

What was the end result of the member for Lee, Mr Mullighan's deal? In the 2021 budget, \$39 million in revenue for Renewal SA was written off: \$12 million expected in 2021, \$13 million in 2021-22, and \$14 million in 2022-23. So it was a \$39 million writedown in revenue for Renewal SA—no Veolia head office with 450 jobs, no industrial precinct, no energy-from-waste plant and no Adelaide's largest solar farm. The only return to Renewal SA has been the Veolia purchase of 18.7 hectares of land for \$7 million.

What is even more damning for the member for Lee, Mr Mullighan, the former minister, is that our legal advice indicates that Mr Mullighan's deal was not negotiated in such a way as to ensure that any of these promises by the Labor government—thousands of jobs and millions in revenue—would be delivered. So with much fanfare we had an announcement, thousands of jobs were promised, millions of dollars in revenue, but our legal advice when we came to government was that there was nothing in the agreement signed by the member for Lee in relation to these promises that would see them delivered.

Sadly, it was the latest sorry chapter in the long-running saga of scandals and failure in the Labor government's mishandling of the Gillman site. It sort of came around every cycle. Just prior to the 2014 election the then minister, Mr Koutsantonis, promised thousands of jobs at Gillman: up to 6,000 jobs could be created in a new employment precinct at Gillman.

They promised thousands of jobs at Gillman in 2014, just before the election; they promised thousands of jobs in 2018, just before the election, and we have had to clean up that particular mess. Look out, people of South Australia, look out, people of the north-west, because given the member for West Torrens and the member for Lee are key movers and shakers in the alternative government I am sure they will come up with another bright idea for thousands of jobs at Gillman. They promised it at the last election, they promised it at the election before. I am sure every four years they will come up with another bright idea.

The sad fact is that these bright ideas from the member for Lee and the member for West Torrens cost taxpayers money. They break people's hearts, but they cost taxpayers money. The sad reality for South Australia is that the member for Lee is the person who holds himself out as a future Treasurer of the state of South Australia. Heaven forbid if he is ever given the responsibility or the authority of running the state's finances or books. The record shows that we will have more Parafield park-and-ride fiascos, more Gillman mirages in the wasteland down there, all those sorts of sad projects, a litany of failure of the former minister and the person who wants to hold himself out as being a future treasurer.

I note that the member for Lee has a remarkably thin skin. I made comments similar to that to the media and within virtually milliseconds he was on the phone threatening legal action against the media if they continued to report the fact that I had criticised his competence in relation to some of these deals and whether or not he was fit to be a future treasurer of the state. I have a genuine belief that he is not. I think many South Australians, as they hear the details of the fiascos of the Parafield park-and-ride, of the Gillman deal and of his many other atrocities, will also come to a similar decision.

The sad fact is that, in issues of whether it is competence, negligence or judgement, in most of those areas the member for Lee's ministerial record demonstrates that it is sadly lacking. My experience with the competence of ministers in terms of how they handle big deals and whether they are able to protect the taxpayers' interests so they are not exposed is in some part indicated by the way they treat what might be seen, in terms of billion dollar budgets, the relatively small amount of

expenses that ministers and members might have access to in terms of ministerial credit cards and the like.

Sadly, an exploration of the performance of the member for Lee, and the member for West Torrens I might say, on this gives proof to the concerns I have that if people are cavalier about taxpayer spending in terms of lunches and alcohol and dinners and the like, then they are likely to be cavalier and negligent in terms of the way they manage big projects like a Parafield park-and-ride and like a Gillman deal.

I want to place on the record some of the evidence of the abuse of the credit card system by the member for Lee and also the member for West Torrens over their time in government. The record of the member for Lee, sadly for him, was the subject of considerable scrutiny, in particular as it related to the interaction with the former CEO of his department, Mr Deegan, and was the subject of an Ombudsman's inquiry. The Ombudsman at that particular time said, and I quote:

I am all the more concerned by DPTI's practice of funding restaurant meals between the Chief Executive and other public officers. I note, in particular, that DPTI appears to have funded at least two CBD restaurant meals between Mr Deegan and the Minister responsible for this department—

and that of course was Minister Mullighan—

at least one meeting of which involved the purchase of alcohol using departmental funds.

This is the independent Ombudsman making commentary in relation to this. That is the end of the quote from the Ombudsman's report. On a number of occasions the Ombudsman's report now refers to Mr Deegan paying for a lunch with Minister Mullighan and his Chief of Staff, \$374 for a lunch at Peel Street, so just for the three of them, and for a meal with Mr Mullighan, just the two of them, at Press Food and Wine, \$247.40.

There are a number of other examples that the Ombudsman refers to: a meal paid for by Mr Deegan at The Barn Steakhouse, which as I am sure many members know is a very fine establishment in the sunny South-East of South Australia, God's own country. That was at a country cabinet meeting or a community cabinet meeting where Mr Deegan, for some reason, spent \$860.50 on what must have been a very fine meal that involved possibly a number of ministers—certainly, we understand, Minister Mullighan and perhaps one or two other ministers. The excuse in relation to that particular event was the minister said they had left their credit cards in their rooms at The Barn and therefore the chief executive of the department would be best placed to pick up the bill.

The reality is that the issue of ministerial expenses and credit cards had been going on for quite some time. This Ombudsman's report came as a result of a freedom of information request I had lodged back in 2016, which Mr Deegan successfully stymied even with the Ombudsman right through into the 2018 election, which is why the Ombudsman conducted this particular inquiry. The Ombudsman demanded copies of documents from Mr Deegan, but he continued to delay responding to the request of the Ombudsman and managed to put it off until just prior to the election of March 2018.

The reason why I lodged those FOIs in 2016 was that, in the very early days of the Labor government, ministers like Minister Koutsantonis and others had been caught out—I will return to Minister Koutsantonis in a tick—in terms of their own use of their own ministerial credit cards. What ministers then did, once the FOIs started coming for theirs, was they moved to get their Chiefs of Staff to come to their lunches and dinners and to have the Chiefs of Staff pay for the expensive lunches and dinners.

When the opposition lobbed FOIs on Chiefs of Staff so that that was revealed, some of the cleverer ministers, in terms of rorting the system, decided to get their chief executives to come to their lunches and dinners, where that was possible, and the chief executive paid for the lunches and dinners. That was what the subject of this particular Ombudsman's inquiry was.

The Ombudsman said, 'Well, hold on, you are meeting with your minister. You are both in the CBD. Why do you have to have a \$250 lunch over a bottle of wine to have a meeting with your minister? You could actually go to the minister's office and meet, as most chief executives do, with

the minister and have a chat without having to go to a \$250 lunch at some of the very nicest places in and around Adelaide.'

The former minister did not really have much of a response to that. He was the subject of some intensive questioning on morning ABC radio and he was asked exactly that question, which was, 'Why did you have to go to a lunch with your chief executive? Why couldn't you just meet them in the office?' David Bevan put the questions to former Minister Mullighan. His response is a classic, and let me quote it in full:

Oh well certainly, David, my recollection is that I only ever attended these meals because I was invited to them.

David Bevan is asking Minister Mullighan, 'Why do you actually have to go and spend \$250 at Press, or wherever it might happen to be, to have lunch with your chief executive and spend taxpayers' money for a lunch when you could just meet him in your office?' Frankly, he could ring him on the telephone if he wanted to, but he could meet in his office. His response was, 'I only ever attended these meals because I was invited to them.'

His chief executive invited him to a lunch at Press and he only ever attended because he was invited to go to the restaurant with his chief executive to partake of the finest in food and wine that the taxpayers could provide. To that end, just to describe the games that were being played in the period leading up to the 2018 election, I do want to say that the application was made in 2016 under FOI:

DPTI confirmed that refusal on what could charitably be described as a counterintuitive interpretation of the terms of the request (how does a request for 'all documents that relate to' the payment of certain expenses not extend to the relevant invoices and transaction statements?). It did so in a manner that did not invoke a relevant exemption clause...

That was the Ombudsman in essence saying that the department and the chief executive were stalling. He continues:

It was not until January 2018 that DPTI compiled the materials relevant to the applicant's request and supplied them to my Office. The delay of approximately one year from the making of the application for access to the proper commencement of the external review was, in my view, wholly unconscionable. The application had by that time lost all currency. It was in any case rendered largely irrelevant by the change of government which shortly followed.

As near as I can tell, DPTI first commenced compiling the relevant documents in approximately October 2017. By that time, DPTI had failed to adhere to five successive deadlines imposed by my Office. It would go on to miss three more.

The Ombudsman's office gave DPTI and the chief executive eight separate deadlines to provide the documents, all of which were ignored by the department.

The member for Lee's love of fine wine and dining was not just extended to getting his chief executive to buy him lunches and dinners at our nice places in Adelaide. On his overseas travel, we are told, he also got his chief executive, who travelled with him to Berlin for example, to the fabulous Grill Royal in Berlin at a cost to taxpayers of \$1,490 for their meal, with the Chief of Staff and two other non-government people.

Mr Deputy President, you will be excited to know, and I am sure former Minister Mullighan was excited that it was rated by Top10 Berlin as the celebrity restaurant in Berlin:

No matter if it is Leonardo DiCaprio, Scarlett Johansson, Samuel L. Jackson, [the late] Karl Lagerfeld or many top models—all of them have been seen there. The Grill Royal is currently THE celebrity restaurant in Berlin.

I am sure Minister Mullighan was excited. The Lonely Planet writes about Grill Royal:

...[it] ticks all the boxes of a true metropolitan restaurant. A platinum card is a handy accessory if you want to slurp your oysters and tuck into aged prime steaks in the company of A-listers, power politicians—

I am sure Minister Mullighan saw himself in that category—

[and] pouty models...

I am sure Minister Mullighan was excited that Lonely Planet said if you want to be seen with A-listers, pouty models and power politicians—I am sure he saw himself fitting the category of a power politician.

My experience with ministers is that if you are cavalier with your personal expenses as a minister, whether it be at restaurants and fine dining here in Adelaide or restaurants and fine dining in other parts around the world, then you are the sort of person who is likely to be cavalier with taxpayer funding on the big projects. It is that sort of attitude to public expenses that sees fiascos and scandals like the \$4.5 million lost on the Parafield park-and-ride, the Gillman fiasco and many other fiascos that Minister Mullighan engaged himself in as a former minister.

Should there be an alternative government elected in South Australia, the other one who would be a key player is the member for West Torrens, the Hon. Mr Koutsantonis. His record is legendary in relation to credit card expenses and abuses. I quote from an early press release of mine from October 2009: 'Cuts everywhere...except for Rann and Ministers' expenses.' This is me in that particular release:

Whilst the record of Mr Foley—

Of course, he was a standout performer in terms of travel expenses—

with travel and entertainment expenses has been well publicised, new Minister 'Turbo' Tom Koutsantonis has come out of the blocks at breakneck speed.

Appointed a Minister in March this year, Mr Koutsantonis has managed 12 separate taxpayer funded lunches and dinners in just four months.

There was a \$500 bill at Gaucho's, a \$396 bill at Georges on Waymouth, another \$613 bill at Georges, a \$425 bill at Panacea and another \$359 bill at Georges. Pranzo's would be disappointed; they only got an \$83 expense. They would be very disappointed with that. The Star of Siam at \$263, Auge at \$641—leader in the clubhouse in that first four months of Minister Koutsantonis's reign—and then Georges again at \$166.

There is very significant expenditure in those bills on alcohol. In one of those accounts, almost \$200 was spent on alcohol purchases—sorry, no, one of them was actually \$275 alcohol and a \$20 tip, all on the taxpayers' tab. He was a very generous new minister, the member for West Torrens—no expense was spared.

When this was publicised, the member for West Torrens repaid or reimbursed some of these expenses: some of the alcohol he reimbursed, I think the \$20 tip he reimbursed out of his private account, and one or two of the other lunches he also reimbursed—I am told because should there be an ombudsman's inquiry or whatever it is, the people he took to lunch would not have qualified as a work-related lunch. But that is how he started, in a blaze of glory, but of course he continued through the period. He did not learn from those particular mistakes.

In documents only released since this government was elected, under a Freedom of Information request—from either a member of parliament or a member of the media, I cannot remember, but they were placed on the Treasury website as they were being released under freedom of information—again showed that he had not really changed his position in relation to boozy lunches and dinners.

What they showed was that the member for West Torrens had hidden spending on a series of boozy lunches and dinners, such as \$856 at Louca's Seafood in the city where \$247 had been spent on alcohol. There was one lunch at Georges on Waymouth for \$2,282 involving more than \$500 worth of alcohol, including \$360 on eight bottles of Mother's Milk shiraz. So there were clearly a number of people enjoying the hospitality of the member for West Torrens and they were on the Mother's Milk shiraz and various other nice drops, including a nice Pawn Wine Co. chardonnay, on the taxpayers' tab.

The reason for highlighting these is that Minister Koutsantonis had moved beyond the experiences of Minister Mullighan. As I outlined earlier, in the early days of the Labor government they were caught with ministers putting things on their credit card. Then when they put things on their chiefs of staff credit cards, that was revealed under freedom of information. So Mr Mullighan then moved to using his CEO for some lunches, which was the subject of the Ombudsman's inquiry.

What former Treasurer Koutsantonis did was he and his office actually used the credit card of the office manager, who was a public servant back in the Treasurer's office. Under proactive disclosure, the minister was required to reveal how much on his credit card and his Chief of Staff's

credit card—and potentially his CEO had to reveal it—but the office manager's credit card went in under ancillary expenses. Therefore, all this largesse and expenditure was hidden from public view by using the office manager's credit card. The Hon. Mr Ngo, of course, has had some previous experience with Treasurer's officers, so he will understand how cunning that particular plan was in terms of avoiding public exposure.

Sadly for the Hon. Mr Koutsantonis, this FOI was lodged after 2018 by, I am sure, a well-meaning member of parliament or member of the media, and this was all revealed. What it also showed was that the member for West Torrens had a particular passion for hiding spending on expensive wine such as Penfolds St Henri Shiraz and Moët & Chandon champagne. In July 2016, the office manager's credit card—not his or his Chief of Staff's—was used for a \$61.99 bottle of Moët; in September \$100 for a Penfold Shiraz—2012, so not a bad vintage.

His taste is pretty good, the member West Torrens, you have to say. Give him credit: he can pick a decent drop, at the taxpayers' expense. He enjoyed that so much in October, the next month he went back for another bottle (\$100) of Penfolds St Henri Shiraz 2012, and then again in February. This time it cost him \$120, and then in March—he got it cheaper that day—he got it for \$89. Then in April he got three bottles. He must have done a bulk deal—'If you give me three of them, can you reduce the price?'—so he got it for \$266. Then in November it went back up to \$110.

The extraordinary thing is, if you think it through, when you go to a restaurant and you go to pay for your bill, you give your credit card. Some ministers use their credit card or, if you have your Chief of Staff there, the Chief of Staff uses their credit card. In the Deegan case with Minister Mullighan, it was Mr Deegan who was there at the lunches and he put his credit card up and paid for these bills.

The office manager, who is a public servant, does not go to lunch with the Treasurer or the minister. Chiefs of staff do. Occasionally the chief executive might go to a lunch. The office manager does not. What Treasurer Koutsantonis did was he would ring up from the restaurant and get the credit card number from the office manager and charge the bill up that way.

So the office manager was not at the lunches, enjoying the lunches, and the dinners. The office manager was rung up, the credit card number was quoted and the bill was paid, and it was hidden under ancillary expenses in the proactive disclosure. That is the sort of skulduggery that Labor ministers engage in. That is what the people of South Australia are opening themselves up for. These same people would be in positions of responsibility in terms of public expenditure.

One of these purchases from the Treasurer was actually from a Sydney wine store. Even though he was in Sydney and he had his ministerial credit card, he somehow hid the expenditure by buying one of these bottles of St Henri by ringing back—or having his staff member ring back, I assume, to the office manager—and getting the credit card number for a Sydney wine store.

I can sort of understand a local restaurant, Gaucho's or Louca's, and you have the Treasurer there, and they say, 'Hold on, I will just give you a credit card number over the phone. It is with the office manager,' they would know who the Treasurer was. If he went to The Greek on Halifax or Louca's or a variety of other places, he would be pretty well known. I am just not sure that the Treasurer of South Australia in a Sydney wine store is as well known. Anyway, somehow they managed it, and that expenditure was concealed until after the state election.

I will make some comments in relation to the media attention to this particular issue and this particular rort in a tick. But when he was briefly questioned by one section of the media as to how on earth he could justify this, he said he was giving these bottles of St Henri and champagne to dignitaries. They were gifts. That was his rationale. We did not get an explanation as to whether, in giving it to a dignitary, they both sat down together and shared it or not, but he was giving them as gifts.

All I have to say is I have been Treasurer in two iterations. This last four years is obviously clearer in memory. I have never bought a bottle of 2012 St Henri Shiraz for myself, frankly, at taxpayers' expense, as a gift to a visiting dignitary, or a bottle of Moët champagne to give to a supposed dignitary. It is really an issue for the member for West Torrens because, as I said, he is going to be a senior minister if there is to be a change of government in South Australia.



Some of us are aware that the ABC in South Australia pride themselves on forensic examination of issues that they get their teeth into. I was very disappointed in them, and one other section of the media, when this sort of information was provided to them, when the former Treasurer said, baldly, 'All of my expenses have been proactively disclosed either by me on a ministerial credit card or my staff or as part of my office expenses.'

When he made that claim, the ABC and some other sections of the media were not prepared to actually look at the facts, to look at what was on the website, to look at the documentation that was available to them on the website, and go back to the member for West Torrens and say, 'Well, hold on, you've just said all of this was publicly revealed. Show us where this was publicly revealed. Explain to us why, if you have a ministerial credit card or your Chief of Staff has a credit card, you were charging these things to your office manager's credit card, who wasn't even at the function?'

They are pretty simple questions and I think the challenge for our independent media is—if they want to pride themselves on forensic examination of particular issues—that it is not too late, five or six weeks out from the election, to turn their attention to this particular issue now that it has been laid on the public record in all its gory detail and seek an explanation, and not just a response which they accept when the member for West Torrens says, 'I have revealed all of my expenses proactively and don't you worry about that.'

Let's get the facts on the table. I have laid out the facts on the table. They are on the Treasury website; they have been on the Treasury website for a period of time. The challenge now, I think, for the media is to look at some of these expenses of former Minister Mullighan and former Minister Koutsantonis, and the people of South Australia need to make judgements as to whether these people are fit and proper persons to put in charge of taxpayers' funding, whether it be for big projects like the Parafield park-and-ride or whether it be for, in essence, smaller expenditure on items such as lunch and dinner expenses.

I conclude my contribution. There is so much more I could put on the record in relation to the atrocities committed by this former Labor government: the abuses of public expenditure, the gross policy failures right across the board, the incompetence, negligence and lack of common sense in terms of public policy.

I have not addressed some of the issues in relation to both the regions and service areas, like closing the Repat, Transforming Health and those other atrocities. I will leave that to one or two of my colleagues to add fact and information to this very important motion, and that is highlighting where we are now, highlighting where we have come from and, more importantly, highlighting the risk of the state's economic recovery and the risk of losing all that we have achieved together as a state over the last four years.

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (17:48):** I rise today to speak to the Treasurer's private member's motion. This is a private member's motion that I am proud to speak to, and being a country member I will speak to this motion from a regional perspective.

Labor governments are bad for our regions. As a mother and wife who is raising a family, and someone who has run small businesses in my region, I can tell you from firsthand experience that the last four years have been some of the best in my life, in my family's life and in the lives of those who make up our regional communities.

Prior to the Marshall Liberal government coming to office just four short years ago, the regional communities of South Australia were let down time and time again by the former Labor government. There was a backlog of regional road maintenance, roads that the former Labor government refused to fund for basic upkeep. Instead of investing in basic upkeep, they chose to reduce speed limits.

I do not need to tell you the impact of reducing these speed limits on productivity in our regions, but the Labor Party, instead of choosing to support our primary industries—that is, agriculture, food, wine and forestry—which contribute approximately \$15 billion annually in revenue for this state, chose to ignore these industries and their country communities, ignore our regional roads. The Labor Party's answer was simply to reduce speed limits.

I am proud to be part of the Marshall Liberal team. We are a government that has delivered for our regions and will continue to deliver for our regions. This government has been getting on with the job quietly, delivering for people in our rural areas. This government is fixing over 1,000 kilometres of regional roads to make them safer and to help save lives.

In fact, prior to coming into government in 2018, we made a promise that we would fix the eight regional roads the Labor Party left to ruin, and reduce speed limits. We have done just that. We have fixed and upgraded those eight roads and have safely reinstated the 110 km/h speed limit slashed by the former Labor government, meaning our primary producers can move their freight more efficiently, more safely, and ensure more money in our state's economy.

Labor do not seem to care that fatigue is also one of the biggest contributing factors to major accidents and deaths on our regional roads. They are happy for regional road users to spend more time and money in their cars and trucks, risking their lives, rather than committing to well overdue improvements, but not the Marshall Liberal government. We value the lives of all South Australians.

In addition, we are upgrading a number of strategic regional roads across our state with improvements that include junctional improvements, new overtaking lanes and overtaking lane extensions, pavement resealing and rehabilitation, safety barrier upgrades and new and upgraded rest areas for improved fatigue management. We are upgrading the Sturt Highway between Renmark and Gawler. We are upgrading the Eyre Highway and the Lower Eyre Peninsula roads, we are duplicating the Joy Baluch Bridge and we are continuing to plan and to invest. We are investing in duplication of the Augusta Highway from near Nantawarra to Lochiel, and we are investing in the Truro bypass to improve productivity and safety in our regions.

Working together, the Morrison and Marshall governments have committed \$560 million towards the Main South Road and Victor Harbor Road projects. These projects will reduce travel times, improve road safety and increase connectivity and, more importantly, productivity—something the Labor Party seem to know nothing about. These are just a few examples of our record \$17.9 billion infrastructure spend across our state.

The Marshall Liberal government is building what matters by delivering more jobs and unlocking our tourism industry to benefit all South Australians, but infrastructure is just one piece of the puzzle and the Marshall Liberal government is committed to preserving our natural environment and safeguarding our biosecurity. That includes our commitment to eradicating fruit fly from South Australia, supporting our growers and maintaining the state's pest-free area. More than \$34 million has been spent on eradicating fruit fly from South Australia, with another \$17 million allocated in the recent state budget. We are playing our part in protecting South Australia's \$1.3 billion horticultural industry, 37½ thousand jobs and 4,000 businesses.

The Labor government were happy to take preferences from the Greens, but what did they do in their 16 years of government to introduce sensible measures to protect and preserve our natural environment for generations to come? That answer is simple: nothing of note. The Marshall Liberal government has been a strong advocate for our environment under the stewardship of Minister David Speirs. I am particularly proud of our policy around single-use plastics and the steps we have taken to remove them. Many of these products end up in our waterways and land environments and have a catastrophic impact on the environment and delicate ecosystems.

We have unlocked some of our state's reservoirs, like Myponga and Happy Valley, and proclaimed South Australia's newest conservation park, the Aldinga Conservation Park. The people of South Australia have welcomed these changes. We are passionate about getting people into our natural environment and enjoying the very best that our state has to offer.

We are committed to continuing to invest in all aspects of regional health, including regional road infrastructure and maintenance, education and health services. In doing so, we can ensure that the highest quality of living, of which health care is a critical aspect—as are roads, as is education—is available to all South Australians, no matter where they live.

The Marshall Liberal government has reduced the cost of living for families across this state. In 2017 and 2018, under the former Labor government the median annual energy bill for households totalled over \$2,200. Since coming to government, we have put in measures to reduce these costs and progressively increased savings for households right across our state such that the median

annual energy bill for households in 2020-21 under our government is \$1,784, a not insignificant average saving of \$416 per household.

We have reduced car registration costs through lower compulsory third-party insurance premiums, and we have also delivered cheaper ESL bills and cheaper water bills. We will not talk about the inquiry that was performed by the former South Australian Water chairman, Mr Lewis Owens, back in 2019 that found that in 2013 the former Labor government deliberately jacked up the assets of SA Water, costing everyday households to drive extra revenue into their government coffers so they could improve their bottom line.

The Leader of the Opposition himself concedes that Labor let people down. Remember the Oakden nursing home scandal, the mismanagement of the TAFE sector and the problems within child protection. Who could forget the statewide blackout in 2016 that put lives at risk, inflicted immense damage to our economy and made us the laughing-stock of the nation. Labor could not even keep the lights on.

Then we can talk about health, and I spoke about health earlier on today. Let's look at Labor's history in health in our state but particularly in our regions. In 2008, Labor tried to downgrade, even close, dozens of hospitals in country South Australia. In December 2017, opposition leader Peter Malinauskas and Labor closed the Repat, which provided care for older patients and veterans, many of whom originated from our regions, despite former Premier Mike Rann's pledge that it would never, ever be closed by a Labor government.

Between 2014 and 2018, Labor spent a mere \$14 million in total on regional health infrastructure. That equates to a mere \$3.5 million per year spent in our regions. In comparison, the Marshall Liberal government has already delivered for health in our regions and spent more than \$70 million in its first three years. This equates to \$23.33 million per year. We have completed the upgrade to the Murray Bridge emergency department as well as significant upgrades at a number of regional hospitals across our state.

We are also upgrading our suburban hospitals, including significant improvements to Flinders Medical Centre, The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Modbury Hospital and Lyell McEwin, with revitalisation of the Repat site. This investment takes pressure off our major hospitals, which in turn benefits country patients who may require transfer to a metropolitan hospital. We are also building the new Women's and Children's Hospital to provide holistic world-class health care and facilities for babies, children, young people, women and their families. This commitment is in addition to upgrades to these existing hospital sites.

We have committed more than \$200 million to regional health infrastructure projects, more than double Labor's recent commitment: projects such as the Mount Barker hospital emergency department upgrade, the Whyalla Hospital accident and emergency department redevelopment, the new Strathalbyn Ambulance Station and a new Barossa hospital

In a landmark agreement with rural GPs, we are investing an estimated \$188 million over two years to ensure we are attracting and retaining GPs to regional South Australia. This agreement comes after years of dispute with the former Labor government, who refused to listen to our country health professionals and refused to budge on improving conditions for our country GPs.

The Marshall Liberal government is doing everything it can to ensure that the highest quality care is available to all South Australians. There is so much to celebrate about the work that the Marshall Liberal government has done for South Australians in four short years, which is in stark contrast to what the previous Labor government achieved, or rather failed to achieve, in its 16 years of reign.

South Australia's unemployment rate is its lowest rate ever, at 3.9 per cent. This is much better than Labor's average rate of 6.8 per cent in their last term and Labor's lowest rate of 5.6 per cent for the same period, that is, 2014-18. What is even more staggering is this state has achieved this whilst dealing with a pandemic. South Australia has the fastest growing economy in the country.

The Marshall Liberal government is creating more jobs and supporting businesses through our \$4 billion stimulus and \$17.9 billion investment in roads, education, sporting and health

infrastructure across our state. Job vacancies are at a record high. We have stopped the brain drain caused by Labor in its tracks, with the highest number of people moving to our state in around four decades.

We know that there is plenty more work to do, but we know that by keeping South Australia safe and strong we can continue to recover from the COVID pandemic, support businesses and create more jobs. The Marshall Liberal government has delivered what matters for all South Australians. We cannot afford another term of Labor. They failed in regional investment, they failed in economic management, they failed in health, they failed in roads and they failed our state.

*Sitting suspended from 18:03 to 19:45.*

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (19:46):** I rise to support the important motion moved by the Treasurer, the Hon. Rob Lucas, to condemn the terrible mismanagement of the former Labor government and echo the same sentiments expressed by my many Liberal colleagues. This motion serves to remind South Australians that the Labor Party had the wrong priorities when they were in government, and how the people of South Australia have suffered and were completely let down by an incompetent Labor government.

Everywhere we looked, whether it was in metropolitan Adelaide or regional South Australia, the Labor government had the wrong policy setting and failed to deliver jobs and encourage growth. Under Labor our economy was stagnant, and South Australia was at the bottom of the ladder in key performance indicators in comparison with the other states in Australia. Under Labor's poor management of our economy, even in a time without coronavirus, when the world was not facing a pandemic, South Australia under the former Labor government had the highest unemployment rate in the country, there was a lack of business confidence, and thousands of bright and capable people left our state to seize better opportunities elsewhere.

Labor failed to develop a suitable business climate and economic conditions to create jobs. Under the former Labor government South Australia had tens of thousands of individuals and families desperately searching for jobs. Some of the most disadvantaged groups of people in unemployment come from cultural and linguistically diverse communities. Some of these people are highly skilled and qualified, but due to the state's poor economic conditions and bad policies they were facing great difficulties in finding jobs under the poor management of the former Labor government.

Our Treasurer reminded us that in February 2018, just prior to the last election four years ago, the unemployment rate in South Australia was 6.2 per cent. When Labor was in government in the last term we saw some unacceptable employment numbers for the whole 12 months leading to February 2018; unemployment rates were averaging 6.8 per cent. In contrast, under the Marshall Liberal government there is an increase in people employed in South Australia while we have been fighting a global pandemic.

Recent ABS figures show South Australia as the fastest growing economy in the nation, and the unemployment rate of 3.9 per cent was the lowest since monthly records began in 1978. I am very proud to be a part of the Marshall Liberal government that is saving lives, providing support to save businesses and jobs under incredibly difficult business conditions. South Australia still managed to employ nearly 44,000 South Australians with an unemployment rate of 3.9 per cent.

This further demonstrates that the Marshall government can manage our economy while dealing with the unprecedented challenges of a global pandemic. The recent economic indicators show further positive signs that the South Australian economy will continue to recover strongly from the global pandemic. Instead of supporting our community and businesses in dealing with the new challenges presented by Omicron, opposition leader Peter Malinauskas and the Labor Party are undermining South Australia's pandemic response for their own political purposes.

I want to now turn my attention to speak about multicultural affairs. When I came into this parliament in 2010, I was honoured to be appointed by the Liberal Party as a spokesperson for multicultural affairs, and I have continued in this portfolio as Assistant Minister to the Premier. It is my great privilege to be the longest continuous serving member of parliament, serving our multicultural community for 11 consecutive years. My years of enduring service and strong advocacy for multiculturalism and interculturalism demonstrate a long-term vision and strong commitment by the Liberal Party and our government to serve our diverse communities in South Australia.

In contrast, the former Labor government handled multicultural affairs under a revolving door of Labor ministers. In 2010, the first year I entered parliament, the Minister for Multicultural Affairs was the Hon. Michael Atkinson, followed by the Hon. Grace Portolesi, then after that by the Hon. Jennifer Rankine, followed by the Hon. Zoe Bettison. When the Liberal Party won the election four years ago and formed government in 2018, we had seen the change of shadow ministers in Labor from Katrine Hildyard, the member for Reynell, to Jayne Stinson, the member for Badcoe and then back to the member for Ramsay.

Over 11 years, there have been seven changes in Labor's representation in the multicultural portfolio. Labor changed their multicultural affairs spokesperson seven times in 11 years and it says a lot about their lack of focus and interest in generally engaging with and working with our diverse multicultural communities. There is a pattern of the portfolio being handballed from one minister to another or from one shadow minister to another.

Labor never had the vision nor the courage in their 16 years in government to review and update the South Australian multicultural legislation to reflect the changing needs and diversity of our state. The Labor Party is full of hypocrisy when it comes to looking after our culturally and linguistically diverse community. Under the former Labor government, budget papers show that between 2014 and 2018, Labor had allocated around \$11 million of grants for multicultural affairs.

I am proud to report that the Marshall Liberal government in our first term of government has delivered more than \$14 million in multicultural affairs grants to support and strengthen governance, capacity building, cultural festivals, infrastructure upgrades and building stronger families and communities through four streams of grants programs, including Advance Together, Celebrate Together, Expand Together and Stronger Together.

In addition to the four grants, our Marshall Liberal government has also been responsive to the needs of vulnerable multicultural communities by listening to their concerns and redirecting funds for COVID outreach projects, translation of SA Health materials and also introducing the Connect Together grants to help the multicultural community better respond to the challenging impact of the COVID pandemic.

Going forward, we look forward to working with the new SA Multicultural Commission in consultation with our diverse community to develop the first Multicultural Charter which will shape the multicultural policy for South Australia going forward. The Multicultural Charter is the centrepiece of the new multicultural legislation that was passed for South Australia. This is unlike Labor, who continue to pretend that they are caring and supportive of people from a multicultural background and that they are backing female leadership to advance in our society but who do the opposite.

I want to take this opportunity to demonstrate how two-faced the Labor Party truly is. When they had the opportunity to support the Liberal Party's nomination for me to be the President of the Legislative Council in 2020, guess what? They went against the parliamentary convention and nominated another man for the job. The Labor Party played dirty politics, created false accusations and a negative campaign to discriminate against me, to intimidate me and deny me the opportunity to be the first female multicultural member of parliament to be the President of the Legislative Council. Peter Malinauskas, the opposition leader, speaks about equal opportunity, saying how the Labor Party is a great supporter in promoting women and a great supporter in promoting diversity. Well, they did the opposite. They are full of hypocrisy and double standards.

Later on tonight, the Hon. Rob Lucas will move another motion in this chamber that this council expresses its dismay at the toxic culture of bullying and harassment of staff that exists within the offices of Labor MPs and the lack of leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malinauskas MP, to take any action against his Labor MPs. That motion will further highlight the toxic culture of bullying inside the Labor Party.

The Minister for Health and Wellbeing will move another motion later about health. Under Transforming Health, under 16 years of Labor management of health, we saw it move in the wrong direction. It demonstrated all the hallmarks of a typical Labor government: an inability to manage budgets, subservience to the unions and an addiction to centralised government control. Transforming Health was a disaster that closed down or downgraded hospitals. So at the next

election just ask the question and remind everyone of how many services and beds were downgraded and dismantled under the former Labor government and Transforming Health.

When you look at the damaging track record of Labor, we cannot trust Peter Malinauskas and the Labor Party when it comes to managing the pandemic and we definitely cannot trust Labor to manage our economy. Only the Marshall Liberal government will continue to keep South Australians safe and our economy strong.

I thank the Hon. Rob Lucas, our diligent and competent Treasurer, for highlighting the appalling financial mismanagement by the former Labor government. I also acknowledge his comprehensive recount of Labor's incompetencies and the scandals of Labor MPs and former ministers on the public record. This record will show that Labor cannot be trusted and they will continue to be bad news for South Australia.

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

*Parliamentary Procedure*

**SITTINGS AND BUSINESS**

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (19:57):** I move:

That Notices of Motion: Private Business, Nos 5, 6 and 7 be postponed and taken into account after all remaining Notices of Motion: Private Business.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** I have been advised by the independent umpire that others can speak to the motion moved by the Hon. Mr Maher.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (19:59):** This attempt is an absolute disgrace. This chamber was brought back by a vote of the Labor Party and the crossbenchers to sit this particular sitting week. We are all here to debate private members' motions, or motions moved not as government business but as private members. We now have a thinly disguised endeavour by the Australian Labor Party to shut up Liberal members of parliament from being able to speak to various motions that they have moved. We have four motions which have been moved amongst about 30 or 40 motions that members have moved.

So we have a situation where this would be unprecedented, where, having given notice of motion for private members' business, the majority in this chamber, having taken control and saying this whole week is going to be private members' business, all of a sudden want to talk about matters that the Labor Party and maybe one or two members of the crossbench are prepared to talk about. That is not what private members' business has been. Today is private members' day—Wednesday. Tuesday and Thursday is not normally for private members' business but we have a situation where, because the majority last week required us to sit, we are all here.

As members of the government, we spend, in private members' business, as is the right of non-government members, hours and hours getting belted left, right and centre, being criticised left, right and centre—rightly or wrongly as we would see it—from three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon through to midnight on some Wednesday evenings, and that is the entitlement of private members. That is what private members' business is about. Members can move their motion, they have an entitlement to be heard and to be able to move their particular motions. It would be unprecedented for this chamber to go down the lead of this Leader of the Opposition and support a situation where, in an unprecedented fashion, members are not entitled to move their private members' motions.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It is not a question of chance. There is an entitlement in terms of the order. The reason is that the Leader of the Opposition is petrified of what is going to come in relation to Labor MPs' abuse of staff within their offices. This is an attempt by the Leader of the Opposition to prevent the genuine issues of abuse accusations against Labor MPs in relation to bullying and harassment in offices from being ventilated and discussed.

It is an abuse by the Leader of the Opposition and the Labor Party, and indeed anybody, to try to stop a member of this chamber in private members' business from being able to raise issues

on behalf of people within the Labor Party, staff of Labor MPs, friends and colleagues and family of staff in Labor MPs' offices who want their issues ventilated in this chamber.

If people vote to vote down and to stop the precedent, to prevent the issues from being raised today in private members' business, as they should be raised, as we are entitled to raise them, if it is to be a majority, they will be part of stifling the opportunity for staffers within Labor offices, for their family, for their friends, for their worried colleagues and others to raise issues of abuse, bullying or harassment by Labor MPs right across the board. The Leader of the Opposition is cleverly trying to stop those issues from being ventilated today or tonight.

The Leader of the Opposition and the crossbenchers wanted private members' business all of this week, and all yesterday there was the opportunity for bills to be moved and criticisms to be made of the government about supposed COVID-19 problems in relation to a whole variety of things. There are other motions on the *Notice Paper* for tonight after the four Liberal Party motions that have been moved amongst 30 or 40 motions that people have moved. Trust me, the vast majority of those will be critical of the Liberal government and Liberal MPs and the like.

We take our fair cop, as it is the right of private members in this chamber to be critical of the government of the day, but as private members we are also entitled to move motions to be critical of Labor MPs who, in my view, have harassed and bullied their staff over many, many years, and it is about time someone was able to speak out on their behalf in this chamber and raise their genuine concerns.

I can understand the Labor Party wanting to shut it up but, trust me, if crossbenchers are going to shut up staff members who want to raise issues in relation to bullying and harassment against Labor MPs, and if crossbenchers are going to hop into bed, in the political sense, with the Labor Party to stifle the voices of those who have been bullied and harassed after all the platitudes we have heard over the last 12 to 18 months about harassment in the workplace, about bullying, about what needs to be done—there is a motion here that is going to highlight the genuine concerns of staff against Labor MPs right across the board about bullying and harassment.

Members in this chamber are going to try to shut down a debate about those sorts of issues because it is inconvenient and it does not happen to be a criticism of a Liberal member or a crossbench member or a member of another house. However, because it happens to be criticism of a member of the Labor Party, all of a sudden we are going to be asked to shut it down, close it off, on the basis that we are not going to listen to the concerns of staff members within Labor offices who are crying out to have their stories told, who are crying out to actually be able to raise the concerns.

Because the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malinauskas, and Mr Maher in this chamber, and other Labor MPs will not do anything on their behalf in relation to the genuine concerns that they are raising, then woe betide crossbench members if they are going to hop into the political bed with the Labor Party on this tawdry attempt to shut down a genuine chance—as is our right—to speak out on behalf of staff within Labor offices to highlight the issues of bullying and harassment.

Labor MPs will not speak out and raise their issues. Trust me, they want to sweep them under the carpet. They do not want these issues ventilated or aired in any particular way. So in this particular climate—with a national debate going on in Canberra about bullying and harassment by the power imbalance that we see between members of parliament and their staff—when we have an opportunity to debate these particular issues, to have the Labor Party trying to get through this house this evening a motion with the support of some crossbenchers to shut it down and to prevent this sort of a debate is a disgrace. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition and others that our voices will be heard loud and clear on behalf of the long-suffering staff within Labor MPs' offices.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Members, at this point we are working our way through the standing orders, and I refer members to standing order 68:

When the Business of the Day is called on by the Clerk, any Member in charge of any Order of the Day which appears on the Notice Paper or which may have lapsed therefrom, may move, without notice, that such Order be postponed, discharged, or revived for a future day, as the case may be; but no discussion or amendment shall be allowed on such motions.

It actually relies on the member in charge of the motion. It would appear, the Hon. Mr Maher, that that attempt is out of order at this point, but please bear with us. Then we go to standing order 166:

Whenever a Notice of Motion is called on, or an Order of the Day is read, the Member in charge of the business in question, or entitled to preaudience thereon, shall be held to be in possession of the House, if the Member desires to speak.

It would seem that the member in charge of the motion has the right to either adjourn it or continue. It being a notice, the Hon. Mr Lucas needs to move it.

#### *Motions*

### **WORKPLACE BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (20:10):** I move:

That this council expresses its dismay at the toxic culture of bullying and harassment of staff that exists within the offices of Labor MPs and the lack of leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malinauskas MP, to take any action against his Labor MPs.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** Point of order: the motion does not refer to the Leader of the Opposition by his seat. The motion is incorrect in its description of the subject of the motion. It incorrectly refers to Peter Malinauskas rather than him by his seat, and it needs to be reworded and, I think, perhaps further amended.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** I am advised that it is appropriate for the Leader of the Opposition to be addressed as the Leader of the Opposition.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** You would think after 12 years, or however many years it is, the Hon. Tammy Franks would know that. As I said, I have moved the motion and I have read the motion standing in my name. In introducing this contribution, it is no more apt than we have just seen in that tawdry attempt by the Leader of the Opposition in this chamber to attempt to shut down debate on this particular issue. I am delighted that the rights of private members, long recognised that it is up to a private member to control his or her particular motion or bill in this chamber on private members' day, which is the Wednesday, has been a long held—

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** Point of order: I draw your attention to standing orders 186 and 367 regarding prolixity. We have heard this already for the last two hours. I do not think we need to continue to hear it.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Ms Franks, with due respect, I really have not heard much at all just yet. He has only just started.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** This is a repetition of a debate he has just had.

**An honourable member:** No, he didn't.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** Yes, it is.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Again, the Hon. Ms Franks, I am sorry, but I cannot rule in that favour because I have only just started to hear what the honourable Treasurer is saying. Treasurer, please continue, but be mindful of the concerns.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am very mindful, Mr Deputy President. The Hon. Tammy Franks is mortified that she did not get her way earlier in that particular debate.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Treasurer, please just continue.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** Point of order: the Treasurer does not know what my way is, or what it is that I want, and I ask him to not refer to me in the debate as he continues to do. Again, I draw your attention to prolixity.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** I am sure the Treasurer is going to be drawn back to his motion.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** It would be a first if you were not allowed to refer to any member in this particular chamber during a debate. My brief notes in relation to this motion to commence it was that the fish rots from the head down in any organisation, and I think that is an apt description of the



Australian Labor Party in this state. The fish rots from the head down in relation to the subject matter of this particular debate.

It is sad to see over so many years the way Labor MPs have treated and disrespected their staff within their electorate offices in particular, and also the people who have worked for them. It is a sad blight on the Australian Labor Party in this state. For all the platitudes that we have heard over the last 12 to 18 months in relation to issues of harassment and bullying in the workplace there is a toxic culture within the Labor Party.

There is a toxic culture within the way some members—and I am quite open about this, not all members of the Labor Party—disrespect their staff in the way they treat their staff, and the people they employ. I intend to name the members of parliament, the Labor MPs, on behalf of the staff members who have raised concerns at the way they have been treated, bullied, harassed, or disrespected in relation to the operations of those particular Labor MPs.

This is not a one-way debate as it has tended to be in the national environment or the national climate, and in South Australia on some occasions. There has been rightful criticism of any member of parliament—some formerly members of my own party, some members of the crossbench, I think at the national level some members of the Greens, for example—where there has been quite comprehensive criticism of the bullying and harassment of certain staff in MPs' offices.

So at the national level all parties, and at the state level, but in South Australia there seems to have been this unhealthy focus on the former members of the Liberal Party or members of the Liberal Party and others, and no-one is prepared to speak out on behalf of staff who have been crying out for help for many years within Labor MPs' offices at the way they have been treated and disrespected.

My first example was, as I said: the fish rots from the head down in any organisation, including the Australian Labor Party. I do want to refer originally to an ICAC report in relation to the behaviour of the member for West Torrens, the former minister, in relation to his treatment of people who worked for him as a minister. This is a factual reproduction of the ICAC report in relation to evidence that was given by a senior bureaucrat in relation to his treatment by the former minister.

This is the evidence of Mr Michael Buchan in that ICAC report. He was being questioned by the former ICAC, or people representing the former ICAC commissioner, or the ICAC commissioner himself, I am not sure. The ICAC question was:

Q. Is that right—because of his conduct?

The answer from Mr Buchan was:

A. Yes, the Minister—

and this is Minister Koutsantonis—

the background, Commissioner. The Minister and I did not have a good relationship. When he became my Minister, my first meeting with the Minister was something along the lines of 'Oh, Christ. I did not know I got you with the agency—if I had known that I would have got the [f-ing] street—the brooms organised and you could go down on North Terrace and do something useful and sweep the leaves for me.' That was my first meeting with the Minister.

Q. When was that?

A. That was when he took over the portfolio...

So the very first meeting the minister had with a senior bureaucrat, that was the nature of the interchange with the minister. Further on in the inquiry evidence, he was asked whether Minister Koutsantonis actually directed him to bring the result about. This is about the Gillman deal. He said, and the answer was:

A. The Minister did not direct me to create an approval for the transaction. And again, Minister Koutsantonis and directions are a difficult matter, they are not explicit, 'I sit here and formally require you to do A, B, and C.' It was more along the lines of a raft of expletives and followed by a 'Pull your finger out and get it done for me.'

Q. Can you use exactly what the language was that he used?

A. He would essentially swear at us as individuals and as a collective, as the organisation, and suggest effectively, you know, 'If you can't do these things, what do you exist for? Why are you here?' So on and so forth.

Q. Did he do that in relation to this transaction?

A. He did that in relation to most things.

Q. What sort of language did he use: I do not want to embarrass you; I think the ladies here have unfortunately heard the language before? If you would not mind telling me exactly what he said?

A. He would call you, um 'what the f—

a four-letter expletive—

would I employ you for? Are you a bunch of useless c—

a four-letter expletive—

or not? Hurry up, get things done. For Christ's sakes, what are you doing?' Da da da da da. That would be the run of the mill meeting with the Minister.

Q. Did he do this in relation to this transaction?

A. Yes, in relation to this one. It was particularly, if I can say, on the first rejection. It was, you know, for—excuse me.

Q. What did he say? Tell me.

A. It is very uncomfortable.

Q. I appreciate.

A. I appreciate you have asked me. I recall him saying, 'For Christ's sakes, would you hurry up and get this done. It is not that hard, pull your fingers out, make the contacts. Don't make assumptions. Get on with it.' That is it very simply the way he would do it—

There is a lot more colourful language that is included in that ICAC report. But what it demonstrates is the disrespect right from the top, senior ministers of the Crown at the very first meeting with a senior bureaucrat, that there is that sort of disrespect, and abuse frankly, harassment and bullying of senior staff within the minister's department. That was the sort of treatment that was commonplace by Minister Koutsantonis. There are any number of other staff within Minister Koutsantonis's department who would be able to tell similar stories in relation to his treatment of them in that particular portfolio or, indeed, any other portfolios that he was involved with over the years.

As I said, consistent with this theory that fish rots from the head down—we talked there about Minister Koutsantonis—I now want to talk about former Speaker Michael Atkinson. Whilst I will not go through all of the detail again because I addressed this issue in part in a speech to this house in August of 2017—

**The Hon. R.A. Simms:** Go on.

**The Hon. T.A. Franks:** Go on.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Thank you. This is one that the Hon. Ms Franks is probably interested in because she and my colleague have on a number of occasions raised bullying and harassment accusations against the former Speaker.

**The Hon. T.A. Franks:** I lodged an Equal Opportunity Commissioner complaint actually.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Indeed, the Hon. Ms Franks reminds us that she wrote to the then Equal Opportunity Commissioner about the issue, but I will leave that for her to prosecute. As I said, without going into all of the detail of that speech, for the assiduous or religious readers of the *Hansard*, it was on 9 August 2017.

In that particular speech, I referred to freedom of information requests that I had lodged naming two former staff members of Mr Atkinson. I do not intend to name the staff. My issues are in relation to members of parliament where there is a power imbalance between members of parliament and a staff member. There are any number of examples all across the place where staff-to-staff conflicts are engaged and are involved—and they can be traumatic, problematic and raise significant

difficulties, of course—but my issue is particularly in relation to MPs and the way they do or do not treat their staff respectfully.

In relation to former Speaker Atkinson, I lodged two freedom of information requests as to whether or not documents that referred to claims of bullying against Michael Atkinson MP would be released. The answer I got back from Treasury and the various other agencies was that there was one document—there were two documents, actually, in relation to the two requests. I lodged one naming one staff member and one naming another staff member.

In both cases, I received an answer that said, 'There is one document that matches what you have said'—that is, a complaint of bullying against the former Speaker—but we are not going to release it in the public interest,' or for whatever the reason was that it was not released. Nevertheless, there was a confirmation that there had been two bullying complaints lodged in relation to the attitude of Mr Atkinson and his staff. At that particular time, I was provided with a bucketload of information and documents in relation to complaints on behalf of staff who were concerned about former Speaker Atkinson's attitude towards them and also another Labor MP to whom I will refer later on.

Some of the complaints raised by the staff in that particular bullying complaint in their concerns were—as I said, I think some of the other issues have been raised, but they raised some more significant issues. Certainly, in the complaints that were lodged with me, trainees were being sent out to letterbox in 40° heat when they felt that was unreasonable, and a staff member was required to regularly cook lunch for the Hon. Mr Atkinson MP in the electorate office kitchen, a regular occurrence.

The major complaints clearly related to what both complainants described in their claim as bullying that was aggressive behaviour and yelling directed at staff. One particular staff member said that, on occasion, the Hon. Mr Atkinson had become red in the face and frothing at the mouth, causing her and others in the workplace to be terrified. Another staff member, who was not one of the two who had lodged a complaint, indicated that the staff member had been upset at the Hon. Mr Atkinson's treatment on a number of occasions, causing that particular staff member to burst into tears on a number of occasions.

There were a series of other complaints. One related to alleged—I hasten to say that this was alleged—inadequate management of a complaint of sexual harassment against a volunteer; that is, a staff member was complaining that the volunteer was sexually harassing the staff member, and the staff member did not feel adequately supported in terms of having raised the allegation of sexual harassment by a volunteer in the office against the staff member. I hasten to say there was no allegation of sexual harassment against the member. It was an issue between a staff member and a volunteer working in the member's office in relation to that.

The reason I raise that is I have said in this house before that there are any number of what I call single-case examples of where an individual within a member's office has a falling out and there is an ongoing dispute in relation to that individual and the MP. Whilst that is not to be either condoned or accepted, I think where it becomes worrying is when it meets the threshold of where there are a number of staff who raise similar issues against the same MP. Under that old adage: where there is smoke, there is likely to be fire. It is not necessarily provable, but there is likely to be fire.

So I do not discount the single complaint by one person against an MP, and it should not be, but I am not raising those issues here, even though I have had those sorts of complaints raised over the years. I am raising issues where a number of staff have raised issues over a period of time against a person in a more powerful position, in this case a member of parliament, as an example of where it would appear that there are ongoing issues being raised of criticism about the disrespect or mistreatment of staff members by some members of parliament.

At that same time, I was given significant other documentation not only in relation to complaints against the Hon. Mr Atkinson but I was also given significant documentation at that time, in and around that time, about the bullying behaviour of another Labor MP, which led to another freedom of information request that I lodged. In that speech in August 2017, I referred to some of that information, but not all of that particular information.

My freedom of information request was a copy of a workers compensation claim lodged by, and I will not name the staff member, in August 2015, which includes claims of insulting language and spreading rumours against Katrine Hildyard MP. The response I got was that there was one document that conformed with the freedom of information request I had, that is, there was a workers compensation claim lodged by this particular staff member in August 2015, and that particular document was refused to me.

I then subsequently lodged another freedom of information request to ask what the total payment was, if any, to this particular staff member to help settle a workers compensation claim lodged in August 2015. Again, the freedom of information officer replied and said, yes, there was one document that referred to a total payment paid to this staff member to help settle a workers compensation claim lodged in August 2015, but access to that particular document was refused at that particular time.

The documentation I was provided with was, as I said, significant in quantity—not by FOI, but documentation I had been provided with unofficially that led me to lodge these particular complaints. The complaints lodged by this particular staff member against Ms Hildyard involved that she had been subjected to abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments, unjustified criticism or complaints, excessive unreasonable workload and a variety of other issues as well.

In the documentation, there are descriptions of a long series of unfortunate incidents. To be fair, the information I was given was that the member obviously rejected some or all of the complaints that had been lodged by this staff member, albeit that with some of them that staff member had corroborating evidence from another staff member in the investigation of that particular complaint. That staff member raised the issue that a one-on-one meeting in August ended up with Katrine yelling, screaming and throwing a chair across the office, which was heard by two other staff members, who I will not name—a very unfortunate set of circumstances, as described by that staff member, in terms of their claim for workers compensation.

There is another description of a very unfortunate series of events in relation to a number of meetings with staff and the member of parliament, one of which occurred in January 2015, I think, which led to a staff member saying to Ms Hildyard, 'I felt like you were abusing me when you were yelling at me about the invitation.' It led to angry scenes and, in the view of that particular staff member, Ms Hildyard storming out of the meeting, locking herself in the office and a more senior staff member trying to coax Ms Hildyard out of her office for a period of time after that.

In the evidence of this staff member, the member then refused to speak to that staff member and another one for a number of days. The only communication that was entered into between the member and the staff member was by email. There are a whole series of other examples of concerns the staff members were raising about what they believed to be abusive and disrespectful behaviour by the member. These issues were raised with me and led to my lodging those applications in and around that period of 2016-17.

When I became Treasurer again in March of this year, I guess I was horrified when one of the very first documents I had to sign as the Treasurer was a negotiated resignation of another member of staff in Ms Hildyard's office and to authorise a separation payment in relation to that staff member. That staff member was not one of the staff members I referred to earlier in relation to 2016-17. This was a different staff member.

As I said, it had obviously been going on for some period of time because, as the new Treasurer, I was asked by Treasury to sign off on a negotiated settlement payment to that staff member in settlement of an ongoing dispute with Ms Hildyard. It is interesting that with the document that I signed/approved I insisted that no confidentiality clause be included because all these settlements were coming with confidentiality clauses incorporated in them.

The concern I had, as I said earlier—accept is not the right word—I can understand an occasional difference of opinion between a member and a staff member. In some cases the staff member will be wrong; in some cases the member of parliament might be wrong, and that is the challenge. Where there is an issue of concern is when there is a continuing series of complaints of a similar nature being made against the same member of parliament.

It is in those circumstances that those staff are entitled to have the nature of their concerns, without their names being mentioned—because, frankly, there have been so many staff members within those two offices over the years that you lose track of the number. Members of parliament need to be held to account in relation to their behaviour. It should have always been the case, but it is even more so given the debates that we have had in this chamber over the last 12 to 18 months or so and given the debates that have been conducted nationally over the last two years or so as well.

On 4 June this year, I issued a press statement based on the results of a freedom of information request the ABC had lodged with Treasury, which sought documents released under freedom of information to the ABC that revealed a series of staff grievances and/or dispute avoidances in the electorate offices of Labor MPs Jayne Stinson, Katrine Hildyard, Nat Cook and Tony Piccolo. According to those documents, which the ABC released and Treasury obviously put onto their website as well because they were released, the member for Light had had four formal grievances lodged by electorate office staff with the Department of Treasury and Finance: two trainees, an office manager and a casual assistant.

I will come to Mr Piccolo in a moment because some of those grievances, I believe, were between staff and staff and not from staff to members. There was one well-publicised case where there was an allegation against the member, and I will refer to that in a moment. I do hasten to say that I understand that some of those four occurrences or complaints raised by staffers related to other staff members within the office.

There was an instance of one for the member for Reynell (this is all in the period from 2018-19 I think it is that we are talking about) and for the member for Badcoe, Jayne Stinson, as well, and there was even one reference to the Hon. Tung Ngo in this chamber in relation to a dispute with a staff member. Again, I said at the time—and the point of raising it this time is that I have seen no action or no tangible results of any action—that really it required leadership from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malinauskas, in relation to these particular issues.

There was clearly, as I described it, a toxic culture within the Labor Party and it did require leadership from Mr Malinauskas. The way the Labor Party and Mr Malinauskas have endeavoured to handle one of the other complaints, which I will come to in a moment, is a sad indictment on the way the Labor Party addresses these issues when they occur in their own backyard. If it occurs in somebody else's backyard, they are full of holy platitudes, demanding transparency and accountability. When it occurs in their own backyard, they are quite happy to have their own internal, in that case Labor Party oriented, inquiry.

In relation to the lack of action from the Leader of the Opposition, I refer to the complaints that were made against the member for Badcoe, Jayne Stinson. The revelations attracted some publicity as a result of freedom of information requests and, I think, scuttlebutt generally within the Australian Labor Party. There are a number of staff who had worked at various times with Ms Stinson and who had been openly expressing their concerns about the disrespect they had received from Ms Stinson and about what they portrayed as bullying, aggressive, or abusive and disrespectful behaviour by Ms Stinson in relation to their employment.

There were documents released under freedom of information, I think to *The Advertiser* in this particular occurrence, which related to a trainee staffer's concerns about her treatment within the office of the member for Badcoe. It was around about the time Ms Stinson said she resigned from the opposition frontbench for personal reasons.

At that stage, I challenged the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malinauskas, to say there were clearly very serious questions to answer about what appeared to be a toxic culture within the Labor Party, but sadly there did not appear to be any response. On other issues where it did not occur in Labor Party members' backyard, the Leader of the Opposition had publicly proclaimed that he would not be a leader who looked the other way or swept things under the carpet, but when challenged or asked as to what in fact he had done about some of these concerns raised by staff members, 'crickets' was broadly the response that we saw from the Leader of the Opposition.

I am advised that the employee had raised some concerns about her treatment in Ms Stinson's office, but what assistance was offered ultimately only the Leader of the Opposition,

Mr Malinauskas, can indicate. I can indicate that Electorate Services within Treasury did provide support and assistance to this particular trainee, and ultimately a satisfactory resolution was engineered, where her remaining period, I think, was served out by her being assigned to the member for West Torrens' office for a period of time.

I was advised at that particular time that over the last three years or so there had been a number of issues raised by staff in Ms Stinson's office to the Electorate Services section of Treasury. A number of those staff had subsequently left, which had resulted in some turnover in her office. So this was not a one-off issue. This had been a continuing series of issues against Ms Stinson. Clearly, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malinauskas, and other senior powerbrokers within the Australian Labor Party had been aware for some period of time, but contrary to their public platitudes they had done nothing in relation to protecting the position of staff, including trainees, within that member's office.

On 1 March, I issued a further statement in response to further questions from *The Advertiser* on this particular issue. I said:

I have been advised that it is correct that an employee did recently leave Ms Stinson's office and has now been assigned to another Labor MP's office. I have also been advised that the employee did raise some concerns about her treatment in the Member's office but, at this stage, I don't propose to ventilate publicly the details of these concerns out of respect to the employee involved.

Again, I repeat, I am not going to go into the details of what I am aware of in relation to those circumstances. I then went on to say:

I am assured that appropriate support was provided to the employee, that is, by Electorate Services within Treasury, and it was only when a satisfactory resolution could not be achieved that she was assigned to the other MP's office.

I am also advised that over the last three years, a number of issues have been raised by staff in Ms Stinson's office to the Electorate Services section of DTF (Department of Treasury and Finance). These staff have subsequently left, which has resulted in some turnover in Ms Stinson's office.

I now want to turn, finally, to the issue related in part to some of the allegations made against the member for Light, Mr Piccolo. As I instanced earlier, there had been four complaints, not all of those against the member, I again repeat. Some were staff-to-staff complaints in relation to what had occurred in that office.

In November last year, I was asked by the media for commentary in relation to some of these issues, and I said:

In August I was made aware of disturbing claims of intimidation and bullying by Labor MP Tony Piccolo against a young trainee, Mr Bradley Johnson.

The only reason I use Mr Johnson's name is that he publicly identified himself and has adopted a public profile in relation to this issue. He indeed gave, I think, an extended interview to the *Adelaide Advertiser* and was photographed as part of his complaint.

Mr Johnson publicly outlined his allegations in a media interview with *The Advertiser*, published on 16 August. Mr Piccolo has been publicly accused by his former trainee, Mr Johnson, 22, of months of escalating harassment and alleged abuse, both verbally and via email, culminating in his forced resignation in 2018, one month before his government-funded traineeship was due to be completed.

I subsequently referred the complaint to the Department of Treasury and Finance for investigation and legal advice. The department has a zero-tolerance approach to conduct of the type alleged and, as a result and based on legal advice, has commenced an investigation into the allegations which have been raised. As this matter is currently under investigation, it is not appropriate for me to make any further comment at this time.

Further, in and around about that particular time, I was asked again by other sections of the media, and I said:

This alleged forced resignation meant that Mr Johnson was unable to receive his Certificate III in Business qualification.

That is, his employment concluded just a month before his traineeship was concluded. It continues:

It is interesting to note that back in June an ABC TV news report in relation to formal staff grievances lodged within offices of Labor and crossbench MPs noted there had been four staff complaints made in Mr Piccolo's Gawler-based electorate office of Light. At the time, Mr Piccolo reportedly told the ABC, "The grievances all related to interpersonal relationship matters between staff. Three of the complaints were about another staff member. The fourth, I understand, does not relate directly to me either."

Clearly, as publicly outlined by Mr Johnson as a trainee, that cannot have been correct. So while some of the complaints within Mr Piccolo's office were staff to staff, Mr Bradley Johnson went public in terms of his concerns about what he claims to have been bullying and harassment by the member in that media interview with *The Advertiser*.

At that time, I asked the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment whether there was an offence under section 53 of the Training and Skills Development Act 2008 which applied at the time and how that should be investigated. That section made it clear that it is an offence under the act to pressure someone into the termination of a training contract, such as a traineeship.

It is at that time the Labor Party, I assume with the full agreement of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malinauskas, launched its own independent review into the claims. How laughable, given the platitudes that came out of the mouths of House of Assembly Labor MPs in relation to other issues about the need for independent inquiries, the need for transparency and accountability, that when there is a significant accusation by a young trainee against one of their own they have their own in-house independent inquiry to look into it.

That is the nature of the toxic culture that exists within this political party in South Australia, which needs to be raised. Well-meaning people within the Australian Labor Party ought to be doing something about it. They ought to be placing pressure on the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malinauskas, to actually do something about these members, or at least investigate in the first instance and do something about members who are continually having allegations of bullying and harassment made against them by a stream of staffers. That is an issue for Mr Malinauskas, the Leader of the Opposition, to address.

Soon after that, on 16 August, I received an email from Maggie Dawkins. All members of the Australian Labor Party will be well aware of Maggie Dawkins' status within the Australian Labor Party (South Australian Branch) in South Australia. I received an email from Maggie Dawkins directed to me. I hasten to say, I do not believe I have ever met Maggie Dawkins. If I did, it must have been a long time ago. The email was as follows:

Dear Mr Lucas,

I write to seek your advice in regard to an article published in *The Advertiser* online this evening with the headline 'Labor move to investigate former staffer's bullying claims against Light MP Tony Piccolo'. It is my understanding that the member of parliament interviews candidates for the trainee position, but the trainee is employed and paid by the Department of Treasury and Finance. Is that correct? If it is correct, the trainee is not employed by the political party or the member of parliament, so why is the Labor Party conducting an investigation into Bradley Johnson's allegations and not a government agency?

Yours sincerely, Mrs Maggie Dawkins.

A pretty reasonable question from Maggie Dawkins. I then replied to Mrs Dawkins in the following terms:

Thank you for your email dated 16 August regarding the investigation of allegations made against the Hon. Mr Piccolo by his former trainee, Mr Bradley Johnson. Mr Piccolo has been publicly accused by Mr Johnson of months of escalating harassment and abuse, both verbally and via email, culminating in Mr Johnson's forced resignation in 2018—one month before his traineeship was due to be completed.

As you have correctly stated in your email, trainees such as Mr Johnson are employed within the Department of Treasury and Finance. The South Australian government takes allegations regarding the bullying and harassment of public sector employees extremely seriously. I have referred the matter to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, who will provide me with advice about options to have the allegations investigated. In particular, I have also asked the Commissioner whether there may have been a breach of section 53 of the Training and Skills Development Act 2008 which applied at the time, and how that should be investigated. Section 53(2)(d) makes it clear that it is an offence under the act to pressure someone into the termination of a training contract such as a traineeship.

Whilst nothing prevents the Labor Party from conducting its own investigation, it is my view that these complaints cannot be properly dealt with by an internal review which is not truly independent but conducted by Labor-appointed investigators into a long-serving Labor member of parliament and former minister.

Trainees are public sector employees and it is appropriate that the government take steps to investigate any reported allegations of bullying and harassment. I would encourage employees working in political offices, such as Mr Johnson, who may be hesitant to raise any such allegations with their direct manager to contact Electorate Services, Department of Treasury and Finance, or the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment. Thank you again for writing to me about this important issue.

Those who know Mrs Dawkins know that she is not easily deterred, and soon after that Mrs Dawkins copied me in to, or provided me with a copy of, emails that she had sent on 19 July—so a month before this public revelation by Mr Johnson of his concerns—to Senator Don Farrell, Senator Penny Wong and Mr Reggie Martin, who, depending on the numbers, may well become a member of the Legislative Council after the next election.

This email that Mrs Dawkins provided to me, headed 'Subject: Encourage and support volunteers and staff in Labor offices to go to SA Police Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team', is as follows:

Dear Don, Penny and Reggie,

I write as a person who has successfully campaigned for the establishment of the West Australian state government Inquiry into the Response of Government Agencies and Officials to Allegations of Sexual Abuse: How the System and Society Failed Our Children. I have supported adult survivors at the Federal Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sex Abuse. I was honoured to receive an award from adults surviving child abuse.

Recently, I have been made aware of party members and staffers who say they are afraid to provide information to the SA Police Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team for fear of being labelled disloyal to the party. Apparently they feel that if they contact police they may spoil Labor's chances of winning the next state and federal elections.

Bernard Finnigan, a former Labor government minister for industrial relations, local government and gambling, who had also acted as police minister, was convicted of obtaining access to child pornography and sentenced in December 2015. Benjamin Waters, a member of the party and a staffer who has worked in a number of your offices, has pleaded guilty to child sex abuse crimes. It appears that there are staff in the offices of MPs who fear reprisals, including losing their jobs, if they expose others within the party who are also involved in child sex crimes and are exploiting young, vulnerable men.

Five years after Finnigan, there is now Waters. Apparently, there may be others. Apart from Nat Cook's 'shock horror' public response to Waters' arrest, I have seen no public condemnation by the party of Waters' sex abuse crimes against children.

Volunteers and staff should be encouraged to reveal what they know and be protected in doing so. I suggest it is more damaging for the party to attempt to close ranks and turn a blind eye. I ask that you provide party volunteers and parliamentary staff with the very clear message that it is not a stark choice between putting in jeopardy the chance of winning the next state and federal elections or cooperating with the Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team of SA Police.

It appears that state and federal parliamentary staff were involved in creating false identities for a social media campaign that defended Bernard Finnigan once charged and ahead of his trial and conviction. Apparently, the messaging included he was innocent until proven guilty and he was sexually abused as a child, which somehow made it reasonable for him, a Labor government minister, to watch children being sexually abused.

The social media campaign assisted in buying Finnigan over four years of salary and perks at taxpayers' expense. I ask you to consider how it is not morally reprehensible for staff in positions paid for by taxpayers to be employed to conduct such activities which have nothing whatsoever to do with the electorate service they are paid to provide.

Please think of the children who have been tortured and damaged physically and psychologically beyond repair from these videos made for the sexual gratification of men like Bernard Finnigan and Ben Waters. Be the leaders you are elected to be. Show leadership by creating a safe environment for volunteers and staff to come forward. Voters expect no less of you, individually and collectively. The South Australian Labor Party cannot condone silence. Whistleblowers in the party and on your staff need support and protection.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Maggie Dawkins

To be fair, I think Mr Reggie Martin responded, as I understand it, to Mrs Dawkins. It is for him, I guess, to explain the nature of his response, but I think he indicated that people should go to the police—as they should—in relation to many of these issues that have been raised. On 20 August, I then received from Mrs Maggie Dawkins another email directed to me as follows:

Dear Treasurer,

I provide email correspondence, which I sent to all SA Labor members of parliament—



I was not aware that it had gone to everybody—

and Senators Don Farrell and Penny Wong, who are prominent faction members in the federal parliament. I included Reggie Martin, SA Labor State Secretary. I wrote to them as a result of a story which appeared in the *Sunday Mail*, which named Ben Waters, a former staffer of Nat Cook, who is convicted of child sex abuse crimes.

I draw your attention to the email I received from shadow Attorney-General Kyam Maher on behalf of all members of the Labor Party. Today I was contacted by Tom Richardson, a journalist for InDaily, who had received from another source the letter you sent me in regard to former trainee Bradley Johnson. The purpose of my correspondence to Labor Party representatives and the State Secretary was to ask that they provide encouragement and support to volunteers and staff who work in their offices to assist those who may have information that involves or implicates others who have bought, shared or viewed child exploitation material, to approach the SA Police Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team.

While I understand that the Electorate Services section of the Department of Treasury and Finance is unable to assist Labor volunteers, perhaps your department may find ways to assist the staff of Labor members who are employees of the state government.

The Labor Party once protected and advocated for all workers without fear or favour. It appears that is no longer the case. There are a number of staff who fear retaliation if they assist police with their inquiries. That there is even one member of staff who feels that they may contribute to the party's electoral demise at the next election is a sad indictment on the current state of the party. The Labor Party, to which I once belonged, would have considered it would have enhanced its standing in the community by purging itself of any party members who have engaged in accessing child abuse pornography.

Child sex exploitation pornography is not a victimless crime. Children in the videos are tortured, damaged, physically and psychologically often beyond repair, for the sexual gratification of men like the former Minister for Police Bernard Finnigan and Ben Waters. If there are others who are in the party I will do all I can to assist those who may have information to come forward without the apprehension of losing their jobs.

Mr Lucas, I ask you to consider if there is anything you can do to encourage, assist and protect the staff of Labor MPs who may have knowledge or suspicions which may assist the police as they are after all employees of the state.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Maggie Dawkins

Mrs Dawkins also copied me in to responses she sent to Kyam Maher on 19 July, as follows:

Dear Kyam and Reggie,

Thank you for your response which appears to have missed the point entirely. There are volunteers and staff with information that should be provided to the police and they do not feel supported by the party.

I suggest that you write to all volunteer and paid staff in Labor offices encouraging them to take any information they have to police and assure them that they will be supported and should have no fear of retaliation regardless of those who may be the subject of their information.

I do not see my role as taking information to the police on behalf of volunteers and staff. It is my role to defend their right to freely approach the police, and I encourage you to do the same. This is exactly the role I played in relation to the Blaxell inquiry in Western Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Maggie Dawkins

I have been copied in to a series of emails from Mrs Maggie Dawkins to various people within the Australian Labor Party and, as I said, I have placed on the record her direct pleas to me to speak out on behalf of staff in Labor MPs' offices. I hasten to say I do not know Mrs Maggie Dawkins. I have read of her formidable reputation within the Australian Labor Party in, I think, the InDaily article by Tom Richardson and others.

What I do want to place on the public record to Mrs Maggie Dawkins and to the staff within Labor MPs' offices she is speaking on behalf of is that, as a result of not just the pleas from people like the honourable Mrs Dawkins but the issues that were addressed in relation to other inquiries that the equal opportunity commissioner and then this parliament and others in relation to respectful treatment of staff within all MPs' offices, as advised to the parliamentary committee the electorate services section that manages the staff within members' offices has just released the Respectful and Inclusive Behaviour Online Learning proposal for all staff—not just Labor staff but all staff.

My attention has been drawn to an example module outline and content referred to as the 'bystanders module', which is to be a module that provides advice to people as to what they should be doing not only in the circumstances Mrs Dawkins has outlined but also in other circumstances. This module as part of the Respectful and Inclusive Behaviour Online Learning proposal for all staff in all offices—not just Labor offices but all offices—is to try to provide some advice, clarity and guidance on where people can go if they need support.

The point Mrs Dawkins is making, and others have made to me as well, is that if you are in an electorate office and you have a complaint against either the MP or the office manager and you are the trainee you might not want to raise the issue because you just do not feel capable of confronting either the MP or the office manager about concerns of bullying and harassment or whatever it is.

The plea from some Labor staff members—sorry, I am raising Labor staff members tonight, but I am sure all staff members—is about where they can go to get support and advice as to what they need to do if they find themselves in that unfortunate circumstance. It is obviously much tougher if it is the actual MP who is the one who is the subject of the bullying and harassment allegations. It is obviously much tougher in relation to knowing what to do.

Nevertheless, this respectful and inclusive behaviour proposal, and the modules included within that, are seeking to try to provide some assistance and guidance for those staff members who do not feel they can speak to someone in their immediate workplace, given that members' offices are extraordinarily small in terms of the number of staff. It may well be the case that there are only one or two staff or a maximum of perhaps three or four staff within an office.

As Mrs Maggie Dawkins highlights, I do not and we do not have too much control—we have a little bit of control, but not too much—over the volunteers, whether they be Labor volunteers within Labor MP's offices. We can provide guidance to the employed staff, but that is where Mrs Dawkins' pleas go to the Leader of the Opposition here (Mr Maher), the Leader of the Opposition in the other place, Reggie Martin and others to say, 'You're the ones who should be able to provide advice, guidance and/or directions to volunteers within your political organisation who might be working within various electorate offices.'

There is a brief segue and crossover between Mrs Maggie Dawkins, who obviously raises the issue as it relates to Mr Johnson in Mr Piccolo's office, and then the issues of Mr Ben Waters, who was a staff member of Nat Cook. In a series of emails, she traversed both those issues in some way.

Returning briefly to the member for Light, the concern I have—and, again, I think this a lack of leadership from the Leader of the Opposition—is that we are now many months down the track of not having a Labor Party inquiry into the concerns raised by Bradley Johnson, but we have appointed an independent investigator. As of close of business today, I am told that Labor MP Tony Piccolo has still not agreed to be interviewed by the independent investigator. Various staff have been interviewed, but up until today, as of close of business at 5 o'clock today, I am advised by Electoral Services that Mr Piccolo had still not agreed to be interviewed in relation to these serious complaints that have been raised by his former staff member.

I publicly say to Mr Piccolo that you owe it to your former staff—frankly, you would owe it to your political party—to front up and make yourself available for an interview with the independent investigator in relation to this issue. Frankly, this is where the lack of leadership from the Hon. Mr Malinauskas is apparent. He has been aware for some time, as there was a story back on 17 December 2021, nearly two months ago, when the headline was 'Independent probe into bullying allegations stalled because Labor MP Tony Piccolo has not agreed to be interviewed, Treasurer Rob Lucas says'.

Mr Malinauskas cannot say he is not aware of it. He was quite aware, at least from that date and probably before then, that Mr Piccolo had not agreed to be interviewed. Mr Malinauskas—if he could believe the platitudes that he mouthed in relation to related issues in the House of Assembly—should be directing his own MP to respond to the request for an interview so that he can give his side of the story to the independent investigator. I wrap it up there.

As I said, the issues I have raised have not been issues where it has been a staff-to-staff dispute. The issues I have raised have been where it has been staff, and a number of staff, raising issues with an MP—in this case, Labor MPs. I have also ventilated the concerns and worries that Mrs Maggie Dawkins has both publicly and privately sought to ventilate in terms of seeking assistance from me, as the person responsible for Electoral Services, and I have given that undertaking or outline of what we are doing, and her request to the Australian Labor Party to provide support to those staff and volunteers within Labor MPs' offices along the lines she has outlined in those emails, not only to me but to all the power brokers within the Australian Labor Party.

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (21:14):** Tonight, I rise to speak on the motion put forward by the Hon. Rob Lucas that this council expresses its dismay at the toxic culture of bullying and harassment of staff that exists within Labor offices and the lack of leadership displayed by the opposition leader, Mr Peter Malinauskas. We have heard enough about what Labor did whilst they were in government, but what is even more atrocious is their behaviour in opposition, where they think they are unaccountable.

Last year, a number of explosive documents were released, highlighting the multitude of complaints in several Labor MPs' offices. A shocking collection of serious allegations of extensive bullying and intimidation remain unanswered by the Leader of the Opposition and his party. FOIs revealed that there are several Labor MPs, including current and former members, who had multiple formal complaints from their very own staff.

One of the most concerning issues occurred in the member for Badcoe's office, in the other place. One FOI specifically asked about complaints or concerns arising from her behaviour. While the documents were heavily redacted, they revealed, 'The Badcoe EO since 2018 has experienced a higher than expected turnover of staff.' Believe it or not, 2018 is when Ms Stinson became the member for Badcoe.

FOIs also revealed that a staffer from the member for Badcoe's office had to be removed and sent to the member for West Torrens' office. It is now understood that the staff member involved was a trainee. This trainee was a person with a disability, and the reason the trainee was removed from the member's office was an incident involving the use of restrictive practice by the member for Badcoe.

For those of you in this place who are unsure what restrictive practice refers to, it is defined as 'any practice or intervention that restricts the rights or freedom of movement of a person with a disability'. Ironically, prior to the member for Badcoe's time in parliament, she was the Chair of the Victim Support Service. It was, however, marred by bullying.

When asked about the horrific incident, the Leader of the Opposition diverted comments by claiming the member for Badcoe had 'undisclosed personal issues'. What do personal issues have to do with staff complaints? Does the Leader of the Opposition think that personal issues justify harassment and bullying? It appears that the leader of the so-called workers' party has forgotten about the workers in the member for Badcoe's office and other Labor MPs' offices. Despite the unacceptable behaviour, the Leader of the Opposition has stated in this building:

I won't be the leader that looks the other way when I see people conduct themselves inappropriately. I won't be the leader that sweeps things under the carpet. If I see someone do the wrong thing, particularly if I form a view that it's potentially unlawful, then I will report it to the appropriate authorities.

What has the leader done in relation to the InDaily article revealing an employee has 'witnessed and experienced abusive behaviour, bullying and emotional manipulation' from the member for Reynell? The Leader of the Opposition needs to explain how he convinced himself that his members have been behaving appropriately with their staff. What has the Leader of the Opposition done about the staff complaints? Has he spoken to the staff directly to verify the nature of their complaints?

How many complaints from staff does the Leader of the Opposition think is enough to warrant him showing leadership and taking action? Is four enough, like the member for Light had in his office? It is time for the Leader of the Opposition to stop sweeping complaints under the carpet, fix his broken promises and come clean about bullying and staff complaints in his Labor MPs' offices. If Labor can get away with this behaviour in opposition, what will they get away with in government?

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. R.A. Simms.

### **PARK-AND-RIDE PARAFIELD AIRPORT**

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (21:20):** I move:

That this council condemns the decision taken by the former Labor transport minister, the member for Lee, Mr Mullighan MP, which led to \$4.5 million of taxpayer funding being wasted because he approved a contract for land for a park-and-ride at Parafield Airport but then realised he did not need to because the government already owned land for a park-and-ride only 60 metres away.

Members will be delighted to know that this speech is mercifully brief compared to the last two contributions I have made.

**An honourable member:** Hear, hear!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I say hear, hear too. This scandal is a story that needs to be told in full. I referred to this briefly in question time before. It is important because, as I indicated in an earlier debate, the member for Lee would like to be considered as the state treasurer in the future and it is a critical question about the competent judgement and common sense of people who do want to take on the important position of state treasurer. It is my view that sadly this scandal, and others that I outlined earlier in relation to Gillman and expenses, shows that the member for Lee is not fit to be considered as a future treasurer.

The details of this particular bungle are as follows: in 2014 the then minister, the member for Lee, approved a deal for a 33-year lease over land, approximately 3.1 hectares at Parafield Airport, for a major park-and-ride facility. Soon after, the member for Lee realised he did not need to lease the land, as the government already owned land immediately adjacent on which it proceeds to provide a car park. By immediately adjacent, I mean 60 metres away from where the member for Lee had entered into a 33-year lease.

The Crown Law advice at that particular time advised the member for Lee and the then government that his decision meant he was in breach of contract and there was a significant financial exposure to the state. My sad responsibility was, and it ground my gears, to use a colloquial expression, that last year I was required to authorise and approve a payment of \$4.5 million of taxpayers' money to Parafield Airport Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Adelaide Airport Limited, to settle this particular dispute.

Trust me, if there was any way of actually not having to cough up \$4.5 million of taxpayers' funding to sort out a mess of the making of the member for Lee, I would have done so. But the clear legal advice from the Crown that was provided to the current minister and also to me, ultimately, as the Treasurer in relation to this particular issue, was that there was really no option in relation to the issue.

I seek leave to table a map that shows the location of the member for Lee's 33-year lease at Parafield park-and-ride and the 60-metre gap to the land that he already owned, which was ultimately used.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** That map demonstrates, as I said, the 60-metre gap between the original lease and ultimately where the park-and-ride was able to be constructed. There was a huge dispute at the time, going over the years—this is going from the period 2014-15—as to what the extent of the liability might be. The department at the time estimated the total liability of the works on the land might have been significantly higher than the \$4.5 million figure.

There was a draft settlement deed provided late 2017, just prior to the state election. I say it was provided by AAL, but that was not supported by the Crown Solicitor's Office. There were various negotiations that went on during that particular time in terms of trying to seek an agreement. It clearly went on through the latter part of the former government's time, right through until just before March 2018. Then, in 2020 and 2021, it was all brought to a head for the new government.

Advice we received in October 2020 from a senior departmental officer was as follows, 'This merely reinforces the poor deal the state signed up for originally. It seems to me that our only viable alternative to agreeing this figure is a costly legal battle, which we will definitely not win, are very

unlikely to emerge from without incurring significant legal and other costs.' The advice, as I said, was overwhelming in relation to the potential for being able to fight for the case.

There was advice going back to the former government in relation to the potential for significant damages because of the breach of contract. I will not go through all the details of the advice the former government received, which was only then repeated to the new government after the 2018 election. There was further advice we received which said that obligations that had been entered into by the previous government (that is obviously the member for Lee again) left the department in a relatively weak negotiating position. Some of the concessions that were discussed by the member for Lee and his department at that time left the new government in a relatively weak negotiating position.

Whilst there was an offer from the former government under the responsibility of the member for Lee to AAL in February 2018, which was just before the election, that was not concluded. Whilst I had to grit my teeth last year, I eventually accepted the legal advice that there was no alternative other than to hand over \$4.5 million of hard-earned taxpayers' money to settle this particular scandal and contractual dispute.

I conclude by saying that this is one further example of the lack of competence, the financial mismanagement and the negligence of the member for Lee in relation to a deal which ultimately cost the taxpayers \$4.5 million. It is a cautionary tale, given all the other issues I raised in an earlier speech in relation to the scandals in relation to Gillman and ministerial expense accounts—a cautionary note to the people, should anyone contemplate wanting to see the member for Lee holding a responsible position such as a future treasurer of the state of South Australia.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (21:28):** I have quite a lot to say on this; I am going to cut it down quite a lot because I know the Hon. Rob Lucas has been talking for probably about 2½ hours on a few different motions tonight, deliberately designed to make sure that crossbenchers in particular do not get a chance to have their motions heard. It is a tactic that he obviously thinks is very clever and very funny so that they do not get their motions heard. I have to say that nothing sums up the Hon. Rob Lucas and his time in parliament better than the last three motions: smear from an absolute grub and coward.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. T.A. Franks):** I remind the member that he is speaking through the Chair, so that is what he has just described the Chair as, and I invite him to perhaps—

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** The Hon. Rob Lucas is an absolute coward, Madam Acting President. I can remember a few years ago there was a debate when the Hon. Rob Lucas was in opposition about planning law reform, and very late at night the Hon. Rob Lucas, under parliamentary privilege, in his usual cowardly way, talked about the member for Light, Tony Piccolo's mum. It was one of the most disgusting things I have ever heard.

We see it from Rob Lucas all the time: he has a secret report, he has an anonymous tip-off and then smears people. Quite frankly, good riddance to the Hon. Rob Lucas from parliament. I cannot think of anyone who misuses parliamentary privilege more than he does and, quite frankly, he will not be missed by many people, I do not think. I will challenge the Hon. Rob Lucas, when he finishes, on those rare occasions where he can find someone who will want to catch up with him, just ask them to reflect on his political career here. Ask them honestly what they thought of his time in this place. I think history will treat the Hon. Rob Lucas very poorly.

The Hon. Rob Lucas has a motion here about a deal that was reached by the Marshall Liberal government, but he has decided this is good fodder for an attempted political smear, as he has done with the last few motions. I was going to spend 10 minutes talking about a hit parade of the Hon. Rob Lucas's best financial decisions.

We have had the land tax, the electric vehicle tax, the privatisation of ETSA and what that has done to power prices, the sale of the TAB for just one year's profit, the paying of \$2 million not to have a car race, and a government travel contract to the company owned by the federal treasurer of the federal Liberal Party. He has privatised Scoop Global just quietly in the last few weeks to someone who is a former staffer to a Liberal minister.

The litany of financial mismanagement and misdeeds of the Hon. Rob Lucas goes on and on. I am not going to go through and spend any more time, quite frankly, giving credence to the base political smear that the Hon. Rob Lucas has engaged in. If other members of his party want to follow in his footsteps in the way they conduct themselves, that is something they would want to have a look at and think how they might relate to other members of this chamber going forward, if they think it is really clever, really funny and a great political tactic to follow in his footsteps.

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (21:31):** Might I say, on behalf of the Greens, this is a deeply unedifying and disappointing display that we are seeing here. I think, actually, it is the most ugly side of politics: a cynical, mudslinging exercise, where you have the two major political parties throwing mud at each other with provocative and offensive motions at a time when our state is in the middle of a huge crisis.

If you go out into the community and talk to people about the issue that is on their mind at the moment, I think most people would say they are concerned about COVID and they are concerned about myriad other issues. They want the parliament to be talking about those things, not engaging in some unedifying mudslinging contest, some sort of partisan brinkmanship, where you have the two major parties throwing mud at each other, trying to drag each other down, trying to point the finger over who wasted money when and who has run a poorer government when.

I mean, surely, we are better than this. We are all here because we have things on the agenda that we want to talk about that are of interest to the people of South Australia, important issues that they care about, issues relating to the environment, issues relating to social justice, myriad other things.

It is pretty galling hearing the Hon. Rob Lucas talk about the urgency of the issues that he has put forward, when the Liberal Party have done everything possible to try to prevent us coming back to this place, have tried to prevent this parliament coming back so that we could actually talk about the issues the people of South Australia care about.

I urge members of this chamber to move away from this farce. The Greens do not want to be part of this mudslinging. We want to focus during the remainder of the night on the issues that people care about and the *Notice Paper* is full of them. Yes, the matter the Hon. Rob Lucas has identified is important. It relates to a waste of public money, but there have been lots of examples of the Liberals wasting public money in relation to transport.

Look at the blowouts and mismanagement associated with the electrification of the Gawler line, for instance. We can all play this game. We can be here all night as we watch the two parties going back and forth throwing mud at each other. But I think we are better than that. We should be better than that, and I think we have a duty to the people of South Australia to actually use tonight, use tomorrow to talk about the issues that they care about. Really, this is becoming an embarrassing farce, so let's move on.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO (21:34):** Even though I am not here to speak, I certainly support the words of the Hon. Robert Simms about the tawdry exchanges that have been going on here tonight. In fact, some of them were actually sending me to sleep because I was waiting for them to get to the nitty-gritty and get to the bottom of it all.

Quite clearly, we know that there are issues that happen in parliamentary offices. They happen not just in Labor Party offices; I am sure they happen in the Liberal Party offices. We have seen scenes in this place, certainly in the last three years that I have been here, that I guess you would consider have been unacceptable conduct in places. It is up to the parliament to manage that. The Treasurer has gone through a litany of—

*The Hon. R.I. Lucas interjecting:*

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** Yes.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. T.A. Franks):** The honourable member, I believe, does know what he is doing and will continue.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** Yes, I do. Thank you very much.

**The ACTING PRESIDENT (Hon. T.A. Franks):** I think the honourable member was just getting started.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** I was just getting into the nitty-gritty, Madam Acting President, just getting to the bottom of it all. In relation to the decision by the former minister, the Hon. Stephen Mullighan, factually he probably did make that decision. He probably did, but I would not agree with the Treasurer that the Hon. Stephen Mullighan would not make a competent Treasurer. In fact, I find him quite a talented MP on the other side of the fence.

There are mistakes that are made, but I would dare say that probably this one would not so much have been the call by the minister at the time. It was probably a judgement he got from one of the bureaucrats he put his trust in in that department, the now Department for Infrastructure and Transport. I have had some experience with them in Budget and Finance over the last couple of years and their conduct in relation to a number of matters where they have not been forthcoming and have been dodging and weaving with a lot of things, not the least their failure to ensure compliance by rideshare in the taxi industry, which they virtually destroyed and continue to destroy.

Even though the taxi industry continually asks this department, 'What are you doing about ensuring that there is compliance?' they just get fobbed off. There are rideshare drivers and others who are constantly breaking rules and regulations, breaking the law, and do not get pinged. Why is that? I spoke about it today. It is wilful blindness, and this department does do that. I am sure there are other issues with that department.

It may have not been a wise call by Mr Mullighan, but let me tell you, I reckon the dumbest decision that I have seen the Marshall government make in the last—

**The Hon. R.A. Simms:** That's a tough call.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** Well, they have not topped it yet, and we still have up until the election. The dumbest call had to be axing the V8s, a very popular event in this state. They axed a very popular event and got many people offside with that call and then tried to justify what they did, and I would like to know how much they had to pay out to the operators of the V8 because of the cancelled contract. That would probably run into the millions as well. Then they started selling off the infrastructure. Some of it went out for peanuts—again, taxpayers' dollars. They spent a lot of money—

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** They gave some away for free.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** So there you go—and there is probably more. I am not going to go into it more. I just want to say that what the Hon. Rob Simms was saying is, yes, there tends to be a lot of cynicism and mudslinging going on here. I would hope that, going into the election campaign, both parties make a firm commitment to the voters of South Australia that they intend to lift the standard of representation in the parliament by all their members, that conduct will in fact improve markedly and that we will try to restore somehow the credibility of members of parliament, not just in this state but, of course, right around the country.

This sort of stuff that we are hearing tonight just lends to that cynicism and dislike of politicians, and all you are doing really is denigrating the work that people do in this place and also what MPs are supposed to be doing in here. When you go into the election campaign, I would say to both the Premier and the opposition leader that one of their firm policies should be to work hard to try to restore the confidence in their elected members across the board. I think that is an important thing. That is all I wanted to say.

**The Hon. J.A. DARLEY (21:41):** Can I say that in my 39 years' experience in the public sector, I saw some terrible recommendations being served up to ministers. The Westminster system is all about 'the buck stops with the minister'. Unfortunately, in this case, the Hon. Mr Mullighan was the minister who accepted recommendations from the public sector and he has to wear it, so I will be supporting this motion.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (21:42):** I thank honourable members for their contribution.

The council divided on the motion:

Ayes ..... 8  
 Noes ..... 8  
 Majority ..... 0

AYES

Centofanti, N.J.	Darley, J.A.	Girolamo, H.M.
Lee, J.S.	Lensink, J.M.A.	Lucas, R.I. (teller)
Pangallo, F.	Wade, S.G.	

NOES

Franks, T.A.	Hanson, J.E.	Hunter, I.K.
Maher, K.J. (teller)	Ngo, T.T.	Scriven, C.M.
Simms, R.A.	Wortley, R.P.	

PAIRS

Bonaros, C.	Bourke, E.S.	Hood, D.G.E.
Pnevmatikos, I.		

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** There being eight ayes and eight noes, it comes down to my casting vote. I vote in the affirmative.

Motion thus carried.

**REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL**

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (21:47):** I move:

That this council condemns the former Labor health minister, the member for Croydon, Mr Malinauskas MP, for closing the Repatriation General Hospital.

I thank the council for the opportunity to speak to this motion. I was disturbed that I was one of the speakers that was earlier proposed to be gagged. In response to the comments by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the previous motion, I assure you that I will be here for every motion that is brought before this chamber. I believe that every member has the right to be heard.

On 18 September 2010—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —Mike Rann, as Labor Premier, said:

The Repat Hospital is here to stay; the Repat Hospital will never ever be closed by a Labor government...

Exactly seven years after Mike Rann made that commitment, Peter Malinauskas, now the member for Croydon, was given the opportunity to keep that promise. On 18 September 2017, Peter Malinauskas, then a member of this council, was appointed as the Minister for Health. He had the opportunity to save the Repat. He had the opportunity to stop the closure of the Repatriation General Hospital scheduled for six weeks after his appointment. But he did not. He just let it happen.

The Repatriation General Hospital was closed in November 2017. If he had the courage, Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, would have then stopped the sale. The Weatherill government was already skulking away from its disastrous Transforming Health experiment. In June that year, Premier Weatherill had declared that Transforming Health was 'complete'.

So an incoming minister, Minister Malinauskas, had a great opportunity to reset the plan. Even then, after he allowed the hospital to close, he could have acted to preserve the site for future health services. The site is well located. The site has many valuable assets, a number well within their useful life. Indeed, Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, wanted to put the wrecking ball



through the valuable assets at the Repat site. His vision for the Repat was for a quiet land sale. His vision was not for health services; it was for multi-storey apartments on the site.

Thankfully, the people of South Australia did not support Labor's vision. At the March 2018 election, South Australians elected a Marshall Liberal government. The Repatriation General Hospital had already been closed on the watch of Minister Malinauskas, but the sale had not been completed. The Marshall Liberal government scrapped the sale. We saved the valuable health assets on the site. We rezoned the site to dedicate it for health purposes. In the four years since, we have been delivering on our vision for the Repat, a vision Minister Malinauskas could not see. As a result, the Repatriation Health Precinct will continue to be a much loved site providing health care for generations to come.

I would like to highlight how the Repat is playing an integral role in addressing some of the health challenges we face. The former Labor government failed to invest in emergency departments. The Flinders Medical Centre near the Repat was well over its design capacity before our Southern Health Expansion Plan of the last couple of years.

One of the groups that is at risk of delayed transfer of care when emergency departments are overcrowded is older South Australians requiring urgent care. One of the ways that the Marshall Liberal government is easing pressure on our emergency departments is through alternative care pathways such as the Priority Care Centre, but the Repat, too, is playing its part in providing alternative care pathways. At the Repat, the Marshall Liberal government has established the Complex and RestorativE centre (CARE) in the eastern wing of the Bangka Strait building.

The CARE service, staffed by specialist geriatric nursing and allied health staff and delivered in partnership with the Ambulance Service, has been specifically designed to improve care for older patients by providing alternative treatment pathways to emergency departments where emergency care is not required. The service is easing pressure on hospitals and giving elderly patients the best possible care. The CARE team can deliver same-day hospital level care to appropriate older people either in their homes or at the CARE centre based at the Repat Health Precinct.

The Repat is a key part of the future of health services in South Australia. If Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, had succeeded in selling off the Repat, this opportunity for alternative care pathways would have been lost.

One of the other areas where Labor has failed the state in health services is the failure to provide adequate hospital step-down opportunities. Under the Marshall Liberal government, the Repat is playing a key part in addressing this need. Former Wards 1 and 2 have been refurbished and named Bangka Strait to provide a 26-bed transitional care facility, which started providing care in March 2021.

Patients who are awaiting services such as NDIS equipment and housing or other rehabilitation services are cared for at Bangka Strait. Wards 5 and 6 have been redeveloped into a 30-bed ward called Timor Ward, which is a base for the NDIS Transition to Home service, providing transitional accommodation for National Disability Insurance Scheme consumers delayed from hospital discharge perhaps while waiting for alternative long-term accommodation or refurbishments at their own home.

Both Bangka and Timor wards help patients, including long stay patients, take their next step along their journey. It also, importantly, frees up hospital beds for those who need them. The Repat is a key part of the future of health services in South Australia. If Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, had succeeded in selling off the Repat, this opportunity for better hospital step-down opportunities would have been lost.

The former Labor government had let the accommodation of the statewide rehabilitation services at Hampstead degenerate well beyond their use-by date. The Marshall Liberal government took the opportunity of the Repat Health Precinct to repurpose the rehabilitation facility at the Repat into an exciting complex for rehabilitation care.

A new 48-bed statewide brain injury and spinal injury rehabilitation unit with a new state-of-the-art exercise physiology and sports gymnasium will see the transfer of inpatient and outpatient specialised rehabilitation services from the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre to the Repat Health

Precinct and a new town square with a community hub and open outdoor space. The Repat is a key part of the future of health services in South Australia. If Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, had succeeded in selling off the Repat, this opportunity for refreshed rehabilitation facilities would have been lost.

On 22 September 2017, four days after his appointment, Peter Malinauskas closed the final part of another facility, the Oakden aged mental health care service. That facility did need to close, but Labor went to the election without a plan to deliver the mental health beds lost with the closure of Oakden. In contrast, the Marshall Liberal team made a firm commitment to deliver older persons mental health beds at the Repat—and we are delivering.

The refurbishment of Ward 18 is providing a quality 18-bed Repat Neuro-Behavioural Unit for people with dementia experiencing extreme behavioural and psychological symptoms. Ward 18 is a key part of what is now a growing dementia care hub. Two Older Persons Community Mental Health teams now work from the Repat. Ward 20 has been repurposed as a 12-bed Specialised Advanced Dementia Unit providing specialised treatment of complex needs for dementia patients assessed as having acute medical conditions.

We have established a partnership with HammondCare, a world leader in dementia care. HammondCare is establishing a dementia care facility that will provide 70 spaces in a homelike environment for the care and support of people with dementia and people with complex needs. The Repat is a key part of the future of health services in South Australia. If Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, had succeeded in selling off the Repat, this opportunity for improved mental health care for older South Australians would have been lost.

Labor closed the Repatriation General Hospital. The Repat was an elective surgery hub. I understand that 25 per cent of Adelaide's orthopaedic and neurological elective surgeries were delivered at the Repatriation General Hospital. In partnership with Nexus, the Marshall Liberal government is investing in the Repat site to support elective surgery. Nexus is to build a new world-class surgical facility, which will include up to six theatres, 30-bed overnight capacity, a 20-chair renal dialysis unit, a GP clinic, a community pharmacy, space for specialist medical and other allied health services and capacity for 540 car parking spaces.

In partnership with SA Health, Nexus will deliver services to public patients from the new facility, which are expected to significantly help to reduce waiting lists across the health system and ensure the state can meet demand for health care into the future. The partnership with Nexus will increase capacity across the SA health network, and make high demand services available on site at the Repat, including services such as ophthalmology; orthopaedics; plastics and reconstructive; ear, nose and throat; general surgery; urology; and colonoscopy procedures.

The Repat is a key part of the future of health services in South Australia. If Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, had succeeded in selling off the Repat, this opportunity to enhance elective surgery capacity would have been lost.

The decision of Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, to close the Repatriation General Hospital was particularly galling to our veteran community. For veterans, and for many South Australians, the Repat is sacred ground. They were so traumatised by the decision that a group camped continuously on the steps of this parliament for 161 days. They led the charge for a petition which collected over 85,000 signatures.

Having stopped the sale of the Repat site, the Marshall Liberal government, in partnership with the commonwealth, was determined to secure veteran services at the very heart of the Repat site. The Repat is now home to a dedicated Veteran Wellbeing Centre. The centre aims to strengthen relationships, improve service coordination, advocacy and integrate health promotion activities to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes for veterans and their families.

The Repat is a key part of the future of health services in South Australia. If Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, had succeeded in selling off the Repat, this opportunity for veterans' services on a veterans' site would have been lost. Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, deserves to be condemned for closing the Repat. He was the health minister. He failed to act. I commend the motion to the council.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (22:01):** The Greens, in terms of our response to this motion, question why it seeks to condemn the current member for Croydon, the former Hon. Peter Malinauskas of this place and now the Leader of the Opposition, for closing the Repatriation General Hospital. It was actually Minister Jack Snelling who made this decision, and I did not hear the words Family First once in the previous contribution, but I know that Transforming Health was, indeed, the baby of the former minister, Jack Snelling, so I do find it odd that that was erased from history.

I also find it odd that we are here discussing matters of history. It was long known that the Greens supported the continuation of the Repatriation Hospital. We supported the protesters on the steps, we supported the hospital continuing and we are pleased that the Marshall government has created that health precinct. We welcome that.

I find it odd that we are here revisiting decisions made well over four years ago that we rightly condemned at the time but, if you want to start talking about condemning previous decisions, then let's start with the privatisation of ETSA and the Treasurer in this place because that has had a far more profound negative impact on this state than any of the other decisions that have been made—and, by goodness, there have been a lot of negative decisions made by both sides in this place over time.

Indeed, selling ETSA will dog the Treasurer. It will go down in history as one of the dumbest decisions—even dumber than the car race, I would venture, the Hon. Frank Pangallo. I do not think they are on a par. You cannot go any further than the privatisation of ETSA, our essential service, for dumb decisions. With that, I echo the words of my colleague the Hon. Rob Simms with regard to his contribution to the previous motion.

We are here at 10 o'clock or so on a Wednesday night debating decisions made by a minister who is now not even in the Labor Party while a government, who has had power now for four years, is still acting like it is an opposition. Those opposition games may have served you well in opposition, but they do not serve you well in government. Leadership is not about these petty political games. Leadership is about moving forward.

The current Minister for Health and Wellbeing should be congratulated on what he has achieved with the Repatriation Hospital. He should be congratulated for his efforts, particularly under the stresses of a pandemic, but that is not what we are debating here tonight. We are debating a motion about the Leader of the Opposition, who in fact was not even the one who made the decision to close the Repatriation hospital. With that, the Greens understand there may be further amendments to this motion. We call it for the political game that it is, and we reserve our right.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Mr Pangallo, have you already spoken on this?

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO (22:05):** No, I have not. I know we are all confused about it because there has been so much dirt flying around on different subjects, but I have not. I am going to indicate that I will move an amendment on the floor to this motion, and I think it is important that we do because we have just had the health minister put on the public record errors of fact. Mr Malinauskas was not the person who closed down the Repat: it was actually done by the previous minister in the previous government.

*The Hon. S.G. Wade interjecting:*

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** But it was not the opposition leader. I am going to propose an amendment off the floor that condemns the previous Labor government for attempting to close the Repatriation hospital.

I live in the electorate of Waite, and I have had family members who had reason to use the Repatriation hospital. I have to say that I was also quite angered by the decisions the previous Labor government were going to make to close the Repatriation hospital down. It caused a lot of outrage in our community and in our electorate for those people who view that facility as quite important, particularly for war veterans and also for other seniors in the community.

As the Hon. Tammy Franks has pointed out, I will commend the Marshall government for what they have done with the Repatriation hospital. I go past it almost on a daily basis and I have seen the work that has been carried out on that place. To see it revitalised and returned brings a

great deal of joy to the community that there is that facility there, and I guess it brings some faith back in governments that were out to axe so many facilities in the health system of South Australia. It was fortunate that it was not sold off. No doubt it actually cost the sitting member his position at the time.

I think the government certainly deserves some credit there for what they have done with that place, but they need to get their facts right. I think it is important that if you are going to come in here with a motion like this, get it right, rather than try to politicise it all just to have a crack at the current Leader of the Opposition. We have been talking about waste; we did it in the last motion about where money has been wasted. Let's not forget that this government has also wasted money with KordaMentha going through the Royal Adelaide Hospital, trying to find more than \$100 million in savings. That has not happened probably only because of COVID.

Another thing I omitted to mention in dumb decisions by this government in my previous address is Smith Bay on Kangaroo Island, which the suspended Attorney-General killed off. She killed off an industry. She killed off hundreds of jobs. She killed off the potential for an industry that would have sustained the economy of that island for decades. Despite the fact that her own department, the State Planning Commission, had actually given it a conditional green light, she chose to axe it. It cost hundreds of millions of dollars to that economy. At the same time, it cost Kangaroo Island Plantation Timbers something like \$30 million, a private company that had invested, done all the right things that were asked of it, and that money was lost—totally lost—and it destroyed investment confidence.

The other nightmare that has emerged from that decision, of course, is the timbers that are still stuck on that island. The current government has not even found a proper solution to get that off the island. There are millions of dollars of timber rotting away on Kangaroo Island with still no plan on how to get it out. Governments do make mistakes, do make bad calls of judgement, but in this instance I cannot support the motion in its current form.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Mr Pangallo, just for clarity, the amendment you are moving—do we have this right—is leave out the words 'health minister' and 'member for Croydon, Mr Malinauskas MP' and insert the word 'government'?

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** 'The former Labor government'.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** That actually falls into place. Is that the amendment?

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** That would be my amendment.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Does somebody want to second that motion?

**The Hon. J.A. DARLEY:** I will second that motion.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Mr Darley seconded the motion. Have you concluded, Mr Pangallo?

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** Yes, I have, thank you.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Leader of the Opposition) (22:11):** I will not speak very long. Other members have made the exact point I was going to make. To place on the record, under the strictures of parliament and the need for accuracy, I am informed that the Repatriation General Hospital's closure decision was some 301 days before the member for Croydon, Peter Malinauskas, was a member of parliament and some 958 days before the member for Croydon was the health minister. That is the information I have. If the motion is to read accurately, it cannot refer to a decision that someone purportedly took 958 days before they had responsibility.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE (Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (22:12):** Let me make it clear that I do hold Peter Malinauskas responsible for closing the Repat. Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, was the health minister in November 2017. That is when the Repat was closed. He had responsibility. The Hon. John Darley has made this point in relation to the previous motion in relation to Mr Mullighan: if you are the minister, you are accountable. He was there for six weeks before the Repatriation General Hospital closed. He had the opportunity to act. When he was the minister, the Repatriation General Hospital closed and it should not have.

*The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** He has shown a lack of character, a lack of courage and leadership. He failed to act when he could have acted. He allowed the Repatriation General Hospital to close. The Repatriation General Hospital closed on his watch. Let's be clear: there is nothing factually incorrect.

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** Sure, the decision was made earlier, but he assumed the responsibility—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Order!

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** —as the Minister for Health and he failed to act to stop it. In spite of the fact we already had 85,000 signatures tabled in this place calling for the Repatriation General Hospital to be kept open, in spite of the fact that we had Repatriation General Hospital advocates on the steps of Parliament House for 161 days, in spite of the fact that Jay Weatherill had already started backpedalling on the Transforming Health experiment earlier that year, Peter Malinauskas, the member for Croydon, failed to act. I regard that as a lack of courage and a lack of leadership. He is not worthy to be the Premier of this state.

Sure, Jack Snelling made the previous decision. He has been dispatched to political oblivion for that fact, but there was a person who took the reins and who failed to act. That person now wants to be the Premier of this state. I believe that this record disqualifies him from that privilege.

In relation to the motion, it is in the hands of the council, but whether you want to condemn the former Labor government, the former Labor minister Jack Snelling or the former Labor minister Peter Malinauskas, now the member for Croydon, matters not because they are all condemned by their failure to stand up for the Repatriation General Hospital and to preserve the site.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

**The Hon. S.G. WADE:** Mr Deputy President, I draw your attention to the state of the council.

*A quorum having been formed:*

#### *Bills*

### **MINING (PROHIBITION OF MINING IN MOUNT LOFTY RANGES WATERSHED) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Introduction and First Reading*

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (22:16):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Mining Act 1971. Read a first time.

#### *Second Reading*

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (22:17):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is good to get back to work and talk about the important business facing the people of South Australia—

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** Come on, Mr Simms, stay focused.

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS:** —rather than to engage in political games. I rise to speak on the Mining (Prohibition of Mining in Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed) Amendment Bill. This bill seeks to prohibit mining operations in the Mount Lofty Ranges, which would have a direct impact on the controversial proposal to establish a gold mine at the Bird in Hand site.

Farmers and locals of Woodside have been fighting against the establishment of the Terramin gold mine for years. The project proposes to reopen an old flooded gold mine on a plot of land next to the Bird in Hand Winery; 130 years ago, when the miners hit water, the flooding was a sentence for abandonment. In the time since that closure the surrounding area has become one of South Australia's most productive and vital farming areas. This area has seen the growth of generations of family businesses, which now produce hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity for our state every year.

Contained in the area is also the headwaters for Onkaparinga River, which provides 60 per cent of Adelaide's water supply. This region rests on a fractured rock aquifer system that provides the water needed to sustain agricultural activity. With no mains water available, households are also dependent on the aquifer for their domestic purposes. Terramin will need to mine through this aquifer if they want to extract the gold. They propose tunnelling 450 metres deep, blasting directly under vines, wine-making and tourism infrastructure, and close to homes.

This proposed mine, which is set to open for only five years, will be operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, creating noise pollution, dust and a drastic increase in traffic movements per day. Most importantly, despite Terramin's reassurances, there is simply no way that they can ensure the health of this critical aquifer. Terramin's basic proposal is that they will need to pump out 400 megalitres of groundwater around their mine shaft to keep it dry, which they plan to treat and reinject at high pressure back underground.

Forcing a megalitre of water every day into a basin type aquifer is achievable, but fractured rock aquifers are very fragile and they are complex systems. It is almost impossible to know what is going on underground and where the water may end up. Rates of groundwater movement in fractured rock systems are incredibly difficult to quantify and any modelling relies on generalisations which prevent certainty. This raises serious questions and concerns about water levels and salinity.

Within five kilometres of the mine, there is a variety of crops and farming land. This includes strawberries, apples, wine grapes, but also beef, sheep, alpacas and horse studs. This mine represents a huge threat to the people in the area and their industries, to their businesses who are forecast to generate more than \$800 million over the five-year lifespan of the mine, while employing over 800 people.

That is \$800 million of revenue being put at risk, 800 jobs being put at risk, not to mention the viability of our farming land, our wine region and some of our pristine environment. Those people, those businesses, are the future of that region, not a nearsighted mining project. What projections exist then for the community against this project? What confidence can the community have that they are going to be protected and that these vital industries, industries that are so important to our state's economy, are protected?

During the recent review of South Australia's Mining Act, SA farmers lobbied very hard to get access provisions changed to provide greater protection for landowners and cultivated land from intrusive exploration and extractive mining. This, sadly, was to no avail. Their concerns and recommendations have been completely ignored by the Marshall government. Instead the government, with support of the opposition, endorsed new measures making it easier for miners to get access to cultivated land. That is an outrage.

The act is set up to benefit and preference the mining industry and not those who have been living on and using this land for generations. It is designed to facilitate mining. It is designed to facilitate private takeovers of public land and land that could be used to the benefit of all South Australians. Why on earth would we allow this risk to be taken with one of the most productive areas in the Hills? Why would we put the future of the Adelaide Hills wine region in doubt, with millions and millions of dollars of annual farmgate turnover at risk if this mine is given the green light?

It is time that this parliament took a clear stance against vested interests and stood up to these large corporations who are devouring our landscape. It is time for this parliament to say, 'Enough is enough.' It is time to back off and put the rights of farmers and small businesses and our environment first, not the vested interests of big polluters and those that seek to exploit our environment.

We are facing an economic crisis. We have talked a lot about that over the last few days following the decision of the Liberal Party to open up our state borders with woefully inadequate planning. We have seen an economic catastrophe befall our state, a huge hit on our economy and so many businesses struggling.

The last thing they need is more uncertainty, the last thing we need are other industries that provide such an important boost for our economy being put at risk because we are seeing the interests of large corporations being put ahead of the interests of the community. At this time of economic crisis, we simply cannot afford to take that risk. The Liberals have been reckless enough with our economy over the last few months and we cannot allow them to trash our farmland as well. I encourage all members of this place, including the Labor opposition, to show some backbone on this issue and to support the Greens' bill.

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

*Parliamentary Procedure*

**SITTINGS AND BUSINESS**

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer) (22:25):** I move:

That the council do now adjourn.

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (22:25):** I have an amendment. I move:

That the council at its rising adjourn until Thursday 10 February 2022 at 10am.

That will replace the Hon. Mr Lucas's motion.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Mr Hunter, standing order 59:

A motion 'That the Council do now adjourn' may be made without notice at any time when no other Member is speaking or in possession of the House, and shall be moved and seconded without discussion and be immediately determined; but, if it be negatived, no such motion shall be again made within the next fifteen minutes, except by a Minister of the Crown.

This motion shall not be made or seconded during a debate by any Member who has already spoken in the debate, nor may the Mover of this Motion during the same debate either move it a second time or second it if moved by another Member; and similarly, a Secunder of this motion shall not subsequently move or again second it; but Members so moving or seconding shall not be held to have spoken in the debate.

My understanding is that there is a motion that has been moved by the Treasurer that the council do now adjourn.

The council divided on the motion of the Hon. R.I. Lucas:

Ayes ..... 6  
Noes ..... 12  
Majority ..... 6

**AYES**

Centofanti, N.J.  
Lensink, J.M.A.

Girolamo, H.M.  
Lucas, R.I. (teller)

Lee, J.S.  
Wade, S.G.

**NOES**

Bourke, E.S.  
Hanson, J.E.  
Ngo, T.T.  
Scriven, C.M.

Darley, J.A.  
Hunter, I.K. (teller)  
Pangallo, F.  
Simms, R.A.

Franks, T.A.  
Maher, K.J.  
Pnevmatikos, I.  
Wortley, R.P.

**PAIRS**

Hood, D.G.E.

Bonaros, C.

Motion thus negatived.

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

That the council at its rising adjourn until Thursday 10 February 2022 at 10am.

Motion carried.

At 22:33 the council adjourned until Thursday 10 February 2022 at 10:00.



*Answers to Questions***ADELAIDE PARKLANDS**

In reply to **the Hon. E.S. BOURKE** (27 October 2021).

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer):** The Attorney-General has advised:

The government has never intended to build on Pinky Flat.

**ADELAIDE PARKLANDS**

In reply to **the Hon. R.A. SIMMS** (27 October 2021).

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Treasurer):** The Attorney-General has advised:

The Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy (APLMS) identifies the need to support the activation of the Parklands by upgrading and enhancing existing buildings and structures responsive to their park setting.

The APLMS also seeks to create a network of activity hubs, create places and attractions that set the Parklands apart and promote the Parklands as a visitor and tourist destination.

The changes to the Adelaide Parklands zone seeks to meet the objectives of the APLMS through the proposed Riverbank subzone.

It is important to note that any development would require a decision of the City of Adelaide as this precinct is vested under their care and control.