

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 1 November 2023

The PRESIDENT (Hon. T.J. Stephens) took the chair at 11:01 and read prayers.

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

Parliamentary Procedure

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (11:02): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable petitions, the tabling of papers, question time, statements, notices of motion and matters of interest to be taken into consideration at 2.15pm.

Motion carried.

The PRESIDENT: I note the absolute majority.

Bills

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY BILL

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clause 1.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: We have heard a lot of talk about the business case for this merger. My question to the minister is: who wrote the business case?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I am advised that it was written between the university and external advisers.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Who were the external advisers? I will advise that I did ask these questions in the committee, and I did not receive answers there, so I am asking them again now.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for her question. The universities, as I said, between them authored it with external advice. I do not have information about who that external advice was from. That would be up to the universities to answer, should they wish to at some stage.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: With regard to the lack of clarity on who these external advisers or consultants were, what efforts were made within cabinet to ensure that there was no conflict of interest when the decision was made to enact this legislation through cabinet and make those decisions there?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that the government had no part in putting together the business case, so I am not sure about a conflict for government. It is difficult to see how that would be present for government.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: On the issue of conflict of interest, is the government aware of media reports about the potential involvement of Deloitte and a member of Deloitte participating in discussions regarding the university council merger? Is the government aware of that and what action has the government taken to assure itself that conflict of interest provisions have been considered?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that the universities have assured the government that all probity issues were of the utmost standard during the business case.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Can the government rule out PwC's involvement in developing any business case?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: As I said, I do not have information about who any of the advisers were. That would be up to the universities, should they wish to disclose that.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Since the matter of the business case was first raised, and it has been subject to quite widespread public publicity, has the government sought to have a look at the business case?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for his question. I am advised that there was a comprehensive summary of the business case prepared and that has enabled government, as well as others who have seen the public release of that, to make decisions.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Can the Attorney confirm it is indeed the case that those elements of the business case that are indeed not compromising to any competitive advantage and not commercial-in-confidence were disclosed during the inquiry process in camera and that members were given the opportunity subsequently to scrutinise forensically that material and that there were subsequent responses to those provided to members?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for her question. Yes, that is my understanding.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Did the government seek to confidentially view the business case?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for his question. I have no advice in relation to that; however, as I said before, I am advised that information was provided that was part of that business case so as to enable government to make decisions on this policy.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Can the minister rule out that Deloitte was involved as one of the advisory bodies with regard to the preparation of the business case?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for her question. I cannot remember if it was her question previously or her colleague's question, but I am happy to repeat the answer: my advice is that the universities engaged advisers and it will be up to the universities to disclose those, should they wish.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Can the minister advise that the consultancy or agency that prepared the business case is not going to profit from the changed management and transition processes involved in the merger?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: As I have said, I am happy to repeat that the university informed the government that proper probity issues and proper probity avenues were complied with.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Does the government agree that the public has a right to access the minutes and agendas of public institutions like universities?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I am advised that given the very competitive environment universities operate in there are a number of issues that need to be taken into account to ensure that we have a level playing field with other institutions, with the South Australian institutions, to make sure information is not unnecessarily disclosed that would tend to disadvantage South Australian institutions and therefore South Australians.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: So to be clear, it is the government's position that the community does not have a right to see the agendas or the minutes of university council meetings?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the member for his question, and his invitation to respond in the way that he has put that, but I will not be doing that. What I can say, on advice, is it is the government's position that we ought to be doing what we can to make sure our institutions in South Australia remain competitive with those around the rest of the country.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: By way of commentary, we will have an opportunity to test the government's views on this during the committee stage when I move my amendments. I would be aghast if they thought it was appropriate to conceal minutes and agendas from public institutions like

universities, but let's see. Can the government advise what other public institutions conceal their minutes and agendas?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is, from the information that we are aware of, it is not commonplace for every part of every deliberation to be published in institutions around Australia. For the conduct of this committee, it might be helpful to do this at an early stage: the honourable member talked about amendments that he is putting forward, and he went through a lot of the rationale for the amendments in his second reading contribution, which I think was useful for this chamber, particularly with this committee.

I might at this early stage, and it might save us some time as we go around with each amendment being put up—I think there are 23 Greens' amendments, maybe three or four amendments from the Hon. Connie Bonaros and a couple from the Hon. Jing Lee—to inform the committee that it is the government's intention to support amendments Nos 13 and 14 that the Hon. Robert Simms has filed in relation to a code of conduct, but not the other amendments that the Hon. Robert Simms has put up.

It is the government's intention to support the two amendments that the Hon. Jing Lee has put up on behalf of the opposition, and it is the government's intention to support the series of amendments that the Hon. Connie Bonaros has put forward.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: If it assists the government and others with their preparation for the day, they might want to pack their running shoes because I do intend to call divisions on the range of amendments that I am moving. One of the issues in the bill relates to economic priorities—clause 7—and it sets out economic priorities. I am just keen to understand: will the direction of the university have to change with a change of government? How are those economic priorities going to be determined?

The CHAIR: Just before we go any further, I will remind the committee that clause 1 gives us the opportunity to make general comments or ask general questions, but, the Hon. Mr Simms, you are actually referring to clause 7.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I can leave it until clause 7.

The CHAIR: It would be helpful if we actually dealt with it at clause 7.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Yes, that is fine.

The CHAIR: This is not an attempt to gag, but is an attempt to run through the process in a proper way.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: In your hands, Mr Chair.

The CHAIR: That would be nice.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Has the Auditor-General sought to view documents submitted to the government in relation to the university merger?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is we are not aware of that.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: As part of the agreement the government reached with One Nation, did they have any discussions regarding the structure of the new university or potential offerings of the like?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for his question. He has asked similar questions I think before the bill was introduced. I will repeat what I said then, which is, from public comments made by individuals, they have taken their views based on the merits of what has been put forward. I certainly have not been a part of any other discussions.

Clause passed.

Clauses 2 to 6 passed.

Clause 7.

The CHAIR: At clause 7 there are amendments in the name of the Hon. Ms Lee and the Hon. Mr Simms. I think the first one we are dealing with is the Hon. Ms Lee, so would you move your amendment, please.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: I move:

Amendment No 1 [Lee-1]—

Page 7, line 31 [clause 7(1)(e)(ii)]—After 'scientific' insert ', social'

I will make an explanation about why I moved this amendment. We understand that universities serve a greater purpose and this particular clause 7(1)(e) is to serve the South Australian, Australian and international communities and the public interest by elevating public awareness of education, scientific and artistic development, but by inserting the word 'social' would actually reflect the humanities area which is currently potentially under threat, such as classics, languages, arts, etc. This consideration of inserting the word 'social' would allow social development and social policies that the universities are undertaking to actually shape the future of South Australia.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: The Greens will be supporting the amendment. It is a good addition from the opposition.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I indicate that we will be supporting the amendment.

Amendment carried.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 1 [Simms-1]—

Page 7, after line 35 [clause 7(1)]—Insert:

- (fa) to be an exemplary employer, offering secure and meaningful employment to staff members;

I briefly touched on the reason for this amendment in my second reading speech but, really, this is setting the standard for this new institution. It is in line with recommendations at a national level and I cannot fathom why the party of the worker, the Labor Party, which supposedly supports industrial democracy, would be opposed to such a straightforward amendment. I urge the government to support this change. It would mean a lot, I think, to employees of this new institution to see this principle included in the act.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for his contribution and I completely understand the motivation behind the amendment. Of course we want universities to be good employers and treat students and staff well. He is right: the terminology that he has used here reflects the Australian Universities Accord interim report, which states that, 'We must ensure all Australian universities are exemplary employers.' One of the priority actions from the interim report is a national working group to focus on the universities being good employers, concentrating on student and staff safety, and membership of governing bodies.

Although we completely understand the motivation for moving this, it is the government's view that it would be better to wait until final recommendations are received rather than basing our legislation on wording in the interim report. Certainly, that is one of the reasons there is that 12-month review, so that once the final report is handed down that can be taken into account.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I rise to say I will be supporting this amendment moved by the Hon. Mr Simms.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I rise to indicate that, whilst I support the principle of the amendment, I will not be supporting it at this stage. It is important to state for the record, again, that during a different process from this one we picked apart that accord interim report and the likely outcomes of that. One thing that was clear to everybody was that following the final report—not the interim report—there will be many changes that will need to be made.

I think this is one of many changes that we will make, but we do not know what that would look like in that final report. There will almost certainly—and I will say certainly—be the opportunity to revisit this issue, though, and I am glad that the government has put in a 12-month review clause,

because the purpose is to acknowledge the fact that we are awaiting the final accord report, the recommendations that are made and changes such as this one, amongst many, many others.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition does support the principle, similar to what the Hon. Connie Bonaros said, but we do agree with what the government has articulated in terms of pending the accord final report. We also feel that this seems like a proposed industry policy for new institutions and, without knowing all the elements that come from the accord report, at this moment in time the opposition will be opposing this amendment.

The committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes3
Noes.....14
Majority11

AYES

Franks, T.A.

Pangallo, F.

Simms, R.A. (teller)

NOES

Bonaros, C.

El Dannawi, M.

Hood, B.R.

Lensink, J.M.A.

Ngo, T.T.

Bourke, E.S.

Girolamo, H.M.

Hunter, I.K.

Maher, K.J. (teller)

Scriven, C.M.

Centofanti, N.J.

Hanson, J.E.

Lee, J.S.

Martin, R.B.

Amendment thus negatived.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 2 [Simms-1]—

Page 7, lines 39 and 40 [clause 7(1)(h)]—Delete paragraph (h)

This removes the requirement for the new university to support and contribute to the realisation of South Australian economic development priorities. It is not the role of the university to realise the economic aims of the government of the day, and I am concerned that this clause could be used as an avenue to pursue further commercialisation of our universities moving more to a corporate model. That is particularly worrisome when one considers the absence of provisions that might protect workers that were opposed by the other parties in this place, except for the Hon. Frank Pangallo, so I think this is an important element to remove from the act.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: The government will be opposing the honourable member's amendment. My advice is that this does not talk about the economic development priorities of the government of the day, but we think it is reasonable that universities broadly take into consideration the realisation of South Australia's economic development goals as a whole.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I rise to say that I will be supporting this, and I would like to know from the government whether they expect that this is happening now with the other three universities. Would they expect that of them?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I might answer that. My advice is that the three universities do make a very significant economic contribution to the state and do help to realise the economic goals of South Australia. I am sure that will continue into the future, and this reflects that as well.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The opposition will be opposing this amendment because we feel that, with the government investment into this merger, somehow some economic measures need to be taken into account, so we will be opposing this amendment.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I indicate that I will not be supporting this amendment, and I will make one comment which was just alluded to but I think applies across a number of the amendments that are being moved; that is, we are dealing with the new university act. As I said previously, there

is a 12-month review that we are expecting following the accord final report. Some of the amendments that we are discussing do need to take into account the Flinders University Act, and they also need to take into account the issue of national competition. My position remains firmly that that should happen once we have had the opportunity to see the final review of the accord.

It is worth noting again for the record that there was a letter that was tabled during the parliamentary process, which I am happy to table again now, Chair, which indicates that there is absolutely nothing about this merger under the current accord process preventing the merger from going ahead now, but there is an acknowledgement that once that report is done there will need to be a number of changes made. I think that is a general statement that applies to many of the amendments we are considering, because it will not just be this legislation that needs review, it will be others as well.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I do not find that argument very compelling given the decision has been made to press ahead with the merger in the midst of the accord process, yet apparently any changes or improvements to the act are somehow pre-empting the accord outcome. I do find that a little bit of an inconsistent argument. The proof will be in the pudding. If in 12 months' time there will be a review, I really look forward to the members who are speaking out against these quite sensible changes to get fully behind the proposals of the Greens in 12 months' time. We will see.

Amendment negatived; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 8 to 10 passed.

Clause 11.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 3 [Simms-1]—

Page 9, after line 35—Insert:

- (3) Any fee payable to the University by a student relating to the provision of student services at the University must be paid by the University to the associations formed under this section.

I am not sure if the accord speaks to this one, but it is an important issue that I hope the committee will consider. It picks up on some of the submissions made to the inquiry from student organisations asking that they get 100 per cent of the student services and amenities fee to assist with their vital work. We in the Greens think that is very important. Both the Hon. Tammy Franks and I have a proud association with student unions and we see their work as being vital. It is important that, when students are paying a student services and amenities fee, that money goes to support those associations in the way that students would envisage.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for his amendment. Whilst we understand, and it is a noble principle, we will not be supporting it. The commonwealth government has very clear stipulations on the student services and amenities fee, including what the fee can be spent on and requirements for a formal process of consultation with students, including elected student representatives, regarding the specific use of the student services and amenities fee. These stipulations are part of the federal Higher Education Support Act, which require higher education providers to have a formal process of consultation with democratically elected student representatives and representatives from student organisations of the university regarding the specific proceeds from the fee.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I will speak to this issue again when I get to my amendment. Indeed, I will have a letter to table at that point, which deals with this issue as well and ties in to the amendment that I will be moving. I do note that, for the reasons that have been outlined, there are other federal pieces of legislation at play here, and there is the very real opportunity, when we move through these amendments, that we are going to be faced with questions of constitutional validity in terms of how those fees are actually set under the Higher Education Support Act.

The mover may scoff, but I have actually gone and sought advice on that issue—I have gone and sought that advice myself. It is a real issue. Regardless of that, I am not supportive of this on the basis that there is a letter that will be tabled which will outline commitments that have been made

Page 11, line 17 [clause 14(4)]—After 'University' insert:

and educational and research outcomes for the University and must have a primary focus on the student experience.

This is a pretty straightforward amendment. I have said a few times during this debate that I have been concerned that students have not been central to the discussion around this new university. This just makes it really clear that the university is going to have a focus on the student experience.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: The government will be opposing this. It is the government's view that by adding those extra words onto the end—specifying educational research and student experience—would tend to narrow the interpretation of this section.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Sorry, before we go on, can I get the minister to elaborate on that? How exactly does the inclusion of the student experience narrow the clause? Could he share that advice with us?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for his question. As it is currently stated, the council must in all matters endeavour to advance the interests of the university. Putting on other features after that necessarily will narrow it. I am advised that the functions clause captures many activities of the new university and these include research, education, and staff and student success within the functions of the university already.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition believe this amendment might put restrictions on the degree to which council members can pursue important matters of those interests of the university that do not necessarily relate to student experience. Significant proportions of the research effort by universities, including that directed towards areas of strategic interest for South Australia, do not necessarily have a substantial overlap with students' teaching and learning. Requiring a primary focus on the student experience might just create negative unintended consequences and for those reasons the Liberal opposition will be opposing this amendment.

Amendment negated; clause passed.

Clause 15 passed.

Clause 16.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 5 [Simms-1]—

Page 12, line 5 [clause 16(1)(d)]—Delete '8' and substitute '4'

This would change the composition of the council so that it would have four members recommended by a selection committee rather than eight.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: The government will be opposing this amendment. Public universities are sophisticated and complex organisations managing very significant budgets and substantial infrastructure, providing extensive student services, investing in research and teaching and employing many thousands of staff and educating many more thousands of students. A strong and effective internal governance is central to ensuring universities retain their reputation as highly respected institutions of learning and research benefitting Australian society in a number of ways.

As increasingly complex organisations, universities require very highly skilled council members to govern them. It is the government's view that having eight appointed council members is an important provision to ensure the appropriate skills mix on a university council.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: In order to save time, a whole heap of these amendments I am about to deal with relate to the composition of the university council, so what I might do is just outline what the amendments do as a block and then I will move each one individually and then members may want to indicate their position.

The first amendment I have just moved will reduce the number of members that are recommended by a selection committee, but then we will be proposing that there be two members of academic staff elected by academic staff, rather than the existing, which is just one. We will also

be moving a subsequent amendment that will ensure there are two members of professional staff elected by academic staff.

Finally, we will be moving that there be one postgraduate student elected in a manner determined by the council and two undergraduate students who are appointed or elected by students. We would also want to see three graduates of the university who are elected. I will also be moving an amendment that will require the council to include two members who are culturally and linguistically diverse. What this would do, in effect, is ensure that there is a majority of students and staff on the council.

One of the issues the Greens have been very concerned about over many years is the composition of university councils and the fact that there is often a fairly narrow skills base represented at the table. There is a disproportionate influence of figures from business, retired politicians and people from the fossil fuel industry and commercial enterprise. There is often a lack of diversity and, in particular, a lack of respect for the principles of industrial democracy within our universities. What we are seeking to do is ensure that a majority of this new university council would be staff and students.

The CHAIR: Attorney, I do not know if you can give us an indication of whether you are going to be consistent in the way you intend to vote on these.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Yes, that is what I intend to do. I indicate that, as the government, we will be opposing all of the range of amendments the honourable member has helpfully spoken to that will follow. As I said earlier, with the increasing complexity and the skills needed to manage such important and very large organisations, we think this gets the mix right.

What is being proposed at this university is consistent with what is reflected in councils at universities right around Australia. The composition of the council under this bill has a governance of the university with staff and students comprising 37½ per cent of council membership; that is, six out of 16. While I understand the honourable member's motivations, we think that strikes the right balance in terms of what the university needs. With amendment No. 8 that talks about student representation, I am advised there is no jurisdiction in Australia that currently has more than two students on their council.

The Hon. R.A. Simms: Let's be a leader.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Indeed, there are jurisdictions in New South Wales and Victoria that have just one student on their council, so even under this it is more than some others, but my advice is it is no worse than any others in terms of student representation.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will be opposing the range of amendments introduced by the Hon. Robert Simms. The reason is that the Liberal Party has traditionally supported university leadership having access to skills-based councils, taking into consideration, of course, the complexities and also contemporary needs of their skill sets as well. For those reasons, the Liberal opposition will be opposing those amendments.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I rise to say that I will be supporting those amendments, and I will just go back to what I was saying yesterday in my speech in relation to the survey into student satisfaction at universities. Many of them are dissatisfied with their experience at some of the universities that they are attending and, quite clearly, are expressing that they should have a bit more say in what happens in those institutions, particularly when it affects them and their learning experience and other outcomes from their period of study, so I will be supporting it.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I rise to indicate that I will not be supporting the amendments, and I might speak to them as a package, given that we have just had that discussion. I do agree with the comments made by the Attorney, particularly in relation to the complex nature of these organisations. Under this merger, they are going to become even more complex and, as a result, there is a need then for having highly skilled council members to govern them.

I think one of the points that has not been made, though, and is important, is the requirement and the necessity indeed for those governance arrangements and best practice principles that the majority of members should be independent. That is something that I do not think has been

mentioned, but is very important. I understand the issue around increasing staff members. I think there is only one jurisdiction, Victoria, that has more than one staff member on their council. In relation, specifically, to the issue of students, the same best practice governance principle does apply, in terms of having a majority of members being independent.

I will note, though, that—and there is no jurisdiction in Australia that currently has more than two students; some of those only have one—this was the issue of discussion during the accord interim report. There was no recommendation made in that report regarding an increase to numbers. There is discussion, however, in terms of governance arrangements more generally. I think also it is important to note that there are differences in terms of the current compositions, which we should remember as well.

There is a preference that the Adelaide University legislation is consistent with the outcomes of the accord, and of course the new review provision—which we have referred to now a few times—will play a key part in considering that when that final report comes out and any recommendations are made specifically regarding governance. I think it is also worth noting that, in addition to the independence, there is also the issue of having students elected determined by the council providing greater flexibility around student appointments.

We have examples, I think, with the current universities. At UniSA, the students on council are appointed by the council following their election by students onto the student association. That reduces the need for two sets of elections. The provision is broad enough that if this approach was not adopted, the council could run their own elections. The University of South Australia Act does not include a graduate on council, while the Uni of Adelaide does, so there are some differences.

I think all those things are worthy considerations, but we are awaiting that final report. Governance is an important issue. Independence is an important issue. Qualifications and skilled people is a really, really important issue and so we are best placed to deal with that following the release of the accord report and any recommendations that may ensue.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Just to assist members in terms of planning their afternoon, I will call divisions on the next suite of amendments that relate to the composition of the council. I have spoken to them as a block, but I will call divisions on each of the sections, just so that you know where you are at. Again, it is interesting to me to hear the accord being used as the rationale, that we need to wait for the accord, but we need to rush ahead with the university merger at the moment while the accord process is still in train.

I do not accept the argument that staff are not necessarily qualified or best qualified to be on the university council. We are talking about academics, people who have significant experience in the university sector, so I think they would certainly make an important contribution.

The committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes3
Noes.....14
Majority11

AYES

Franks, T.A.

Pangallo, F.

Simms, R.A. (teller)

NOES

Bonaros, C.

Bourke, E.S.

Centofanti, N.J.

El Dannawi, M.

Girolamo, H.M.

Hanson, J.E.

Hood, B.R.

Hunter, I.K.

Lee, J.S.

Lensink, J.M.A.

Maher, K.J. (teller)

Martin, R.B.

Ngo, T.T.

Scriven, C.M.

Amendment thus negatived.

Page 15, line 9 [clause 22(b)]—After 'University' insert:

and educational and research outcomes for the University and must have a primary focus on the student experience.

This amendment would require council members to act in a way that the member thinks will best promote the interests of the university as well as educational and research outcomes for the university, and place a primary focus on the student experience. The rationale is very similar to that I outlined in relation to the other amendment. What we are seeking to do is ensure that the interests of students and educational and research outcomes are front and centre. We regard that as sometimes being a different focus from the broader interests of the university, and that is why we have sought to stipulate it in this way.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for his amendment. It is very similar, if not identical, to that we traversed in, I think, the honourable member's amendment No. 4. For the same reasons, we have a concern that this may narrow it down by putting those words in rather than just the interests of the university. In any event, the functions at clause 7 capture many of the activities the member has outlined.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will be opposing this amendment based on the reasons we have already explained, which are that we believe it is consequential to amendment No. 4 moved earlier.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I also indicate that I will not be supporting this amendment. I agree that the current wording is deliberately broad to cover all interests of the university and is appropriate.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I rise to indicate I will be supporting the amendment.

Amendment negated; clause passed.

Clauses 23 and 24 passed.

New clause 24A.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 13 [Simms–1]—

Page 15, after line 21—Insert:

24A—Code of conduct

- (1) The Council must have a code of conduct for its members.
- (2) The code of conduct will be determined by the Council.
- (3) A member of the Council has a duty to comply with the code of conduct.
 - (ii) would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest;

I think the rationale for the amendment is self-evident.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I rise to indicate, very happily, that the government will be supporting the honourable member's amendment No. 13, and also what I suspect will probably be a consequential amendment at No. 14. I want to make the point that all public officers in the university are subject to obligations under various state legislation, including examination by state integrity agencies. However, we are happy to support this amendment.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will also be supporting this amendment. We believe this is a very sensible suggestion, reflecting the requirements of many organisations at this level to have accountability, so we will be supporting this amendment.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I will be supporting it as well.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I, too, will be supporting the amendment.

New clause inserted.

Clause 25.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 14 [Simms-1]—

Page 15, line 24—Delete 'or 24' and substitute ', 24 or 24A'

As has been explained, this is a consequential amendment and relates to the previous amendment.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: I have a question at clause 24.

The CHAIR: Sorry, you have a question at clause 24?

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Yes. If a student does not wish to have Adelaide University on their transcript, will they be given that option to keep either the University of Adelaide or the University of South Australia?

The CHAIR: The Hon. Ms Franks, we have actually put and agreed to clause 24 and new clause 24A, so you may wish to raise that later.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: I cannot imagine there is another place to raise it because that is that clause.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I may wish to point it out at some stage.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Yes, that would be good.

The CHAIR: We are at clause 25, but the Hon. Ms Franks has asked a question and I believe the Attorney is prepared to provide an answer; is that correct?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Yes. I thank the honourable member for her question. I will have to get a little more detail. My initial advice is there is a transition period when the student can choose to have, essentially, the parchment co-badged, and after that transition period it will be the new university. I do not have the details of what that time period is, but I am happy to get that for the honourable member.

The CHAIR: The Hon. Mr Simms, you have an amendment at clause 25.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I just moved it, yes.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Amendment No. 14 [Simms-1] is consequential to the one we just supported, so we will be supporting this amendment.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: Similarly, the Liberal opposition will be supporting this amendment because it is consequential.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I will be supporting it.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 26 passed.

New clauses 26A and 26B.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 15 [Simms-1]—

Page 16, after line 1—Insert:

26A—Meetings to be held in public except in special circumstances

- (1) Subject to this section, a meeting of the Council must be conducted in a place open to the public.
- (2) The Council may order that the public be excluded from attendance at a meeting to the extent (and only to the extent) that the Council considers it to be necessary and appropriate to act in a meeting closed to the public in order to receive, discuss or consider in confidence any information or matter listed in subsection (3) (after taking into account any relevant consideration under that subsection).
- (3) The following information and matters are listed for the purposes of subsection (2):
 - (a) information the disclosure of which would involve the unreasonable disclosure of information concerning the personal affairs of any person (living or dead);

- (b) information the disclosure of which—
 - (i) could reasonably be expected to confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the University is conducting, or proposing to conduct, business, or to prejudice the commercial position of the University; and
 - (ii) would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest;
 - (c) information the disclosure of which would reveal a trade secret;
 - (d) commercial information of a confidential nature (not being a trade secret) the disclosure of which—
 - (i) could reasonably be expected to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied the information, or to confer a commercial advantage on a third party; and
 - (ii) would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest;
 - (e) matters affecting the security of the University, members or employees of the University, or University property, or the safety of any person;
 - (f) information the disclosure of which could reasonably be expected to prejudice the maintenance of law, including by affecting (or potentially affecting) the prevention, detection, or investigation of a criminal offence, or the right to a fair trial;
 - (g) matters that must be considered in confidence to ensure that the University does not breach any law, order or direction of a court or tribunal constituted by law, any duty of confidence, or other legal obligation or duty;
 - (h) legal advice;
 - (i) information relating to litigation, or litigation that the Council believes on reasonable grounds will take place, involving the University or an employee of the University;
 - (j) information the disclosure of which—
 - (i) would divulge information provided on a confidential basis by or to a Minister of the Crown, or another public authority or official (not being an employee of the University, or a person engaged by the University); and
 - (ii) would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest;
 - (k) tenders for the supply of goods, the provision of services or the carrying out of works;
 - (l) information relevant to the review of a determination of the University under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*.
- (4) In considering whether an order should be made under subsection (2), it is irrelevant that the discussion of a matter in public may—
- (a) cause embarrassment to the University; or
 - (b) cause a loss of confidence in the University; or
 - (c) involve discussion of a matter that is controversial within the University area; or
 - (d) make the University susceptible to adverse criticism.
- (5) If an order is made under subsection (2), a note must be made in the minutes of the making of the order and specifying—
- (a) the grounds on which the order was made; and
 - (b) the basis on which the information or matter to which the order relates falls within the ambit of each ground on which the order was made; and
 - (c) if relevant, the reasons that receipt, consideration or discussion of the information or matter in a meeting open to the public would be contrary to the public interest.

- (6) A Council meeting will be taken to be conducted in a place open to the public for the purposes of this section even if 1 or more members of the Council participate in the meeting by telephone, audio-visual or other electronic means in accordance with any procedures determined by the Council (provided that members of the public can hear the discussion between all Council members).
- (7) In this section—
personal affairs of a person includes—
 - (a) the person's—
 - (i) financial affairs; or
 - (ii) criminal record; or
 - (iii) marital or other personal relationships; or
 - (iv) personal qualities, attributes or health status; and
 - (b) the person's employment records, employment performance or suitability for a particular position, or other personnel matters relating to the person.

26B—Public notice of Council meetings

- (1) The Chancellor must give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting of the Council.
- (2) A notice under subsection (1) must—
 - (a) be given at least 3 days before the date of the meeting; and
 - (b) be publicly available and continue to be publicly available in accordance with section 27B(1) until the completion of the relevant meeting.
- (3) The Chancellor must ensure that a reasonable number of copies of any document or report supplied to members of the Council for consideration at a meeting of the Council are available for inspection by members of the public—
 - (a) in the case of a document or report supplied to members of the Council before the meeting—on a website determined by the Chancellor as soon as is practicable after the time that document or report is provided to members of the Council; or
 - (b) in the case of a document or report provided to members of the Council at the meeting—at the meeting as soon as is practicable after the time that the document or report is provided to members of the Council.
- (4) However, subsection (3) does not apply to a document or report that relates to a matter dealt with by the Council on a confidential basis under section 26A.

Basically, this amendment requires the university council meetings to be held in a place open to the public. It gives the university council the power still to exclude members of the community from a council meeting if need be if they are dealing with commercially confidential information and the like. It is a very important principle for the Greens that public institutions should operate in an open and transparent way, and members of the university community should have an opportunity to attend university council meetings. That is a very important principle and one in line with industrial democracy.

These are public institutions, they are not secret societies, and they should not be able to have secret meetings behind closed doors unless there is a very good reason to do so. You will see that our proposed amendment outlines the reasons why they may wish to have a meeting behind closed doors.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: As I outlined previously, we will not be supporting this amendment. As I outlined previously, given the very complex nature of organisations that are public universities today, the very competitive nature of these complex organisations that are public universities today, we think there will be necessity for universities to discuss matters about how they operate that they would not want those that they are operating in a competitive environment with to have full access to.

It is our view that clause 27 of the bill makes adequate provision for the conduct of meetings, including the taking of minutes. I note that the proposed amendments appear to be in line with or very similar to those that apply in chapter 6 of the Local Government Act in relation to the conduct of meetings. It is the government's view that they are two very fundamentally different things. A local government authority that is directly elected by members has a compulsory rating and spending power as opposed to a university. It is the government's position that they are not the same sorts of things and there are very different competitive pressures on those two very different types of organisations.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will be opposing this amendment because we believe universities compete with other universities for domestic students, international students, research funding and private sector partnerships. It is not in the state's best interests to put all of this business in the public domain when the people most interested in that business will invariably be competing institutions from other jurisdictions. For this reason, we will be opposing the amendment.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: For the reasons outlined, I will be opposing this. I am glad the Attorney pointed to the differences and entirely different situations that this wording appears to be based on. It seems to be consistent with what is in the Local Government Act, and a university is in an entirely different position. I do not think that you can simply pick up one and apply it to the other.

I think the other very important point that has been made is that there is the opportunity already for the universities to consult with communities. But importantly, we know that at these council meetings there will be strategic decisions being made on issues of a competitive nature and a commercial nature, involving confidential information which you do not want to discuss in the open.

The Hon. R.A. Simms: Which is covered by my amendment.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I appreciate that the member says it is covered in his amendment, but overall there is already the ability for the council to undertake those levels of engagement. There are already provisions in the bill about what is required of the council meetings, and I simply do not agree that those should apply and extend to council meetings, given the issues that have been outlined.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I rise to support the Hon. Robert Simms about this. Let's make it quite clear: even though we have not had the accord yet or whatever and what status they are going to give this new institution, it is a public institution and not a private institution. It is public, and public money is going in to support this. The public have a right to know how those institutions are being operated, being governed.

The Hon. Robert Simms has actually put measures in place there to ensure the confidentiality of certain business the university might be able to do. All this does is just allows the public to be able to peer inside this elitist organisation and to have some knowledge about what is being discussed. If there is anything that is going to be secretive or business-related that may impinge on its advantage, that can be covered quite easily.

Again, let me just say this: as we pointed out yesterday, I do not know why people are worried about competition. Competition is actually good. If you have a university that has some great ideas that actually might flow on outside into the community, it is all well and good if we know about it, rather than keeping it all secret. I will be supporting it.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I seek clarity from you, Chair: in relation to 26B, am I moving that at the same time, or am I moving that subsequently?

The CHAIR: You can move both, but I am going to put—

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I might speak to that, too, if you like?

The CHAIR: You can speak to it, but I am going to put two separate questions.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I will speak to that now and then that will close things off. I thank the Hon. Frank Pangallo for his comments and I reiterate them. In terms of this issue around meetings to be held in public, just so that members are under no misapprehension around what I am proposing,

Ngo, T.T.

Scriven, C.M.

Question thus resolved in the negative.

Clause 27.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 16 [Simms-1]—

Page 16, lines 34 and 35 [clause 27(7)]—Delete subclause (7)

Just to explain to members the rationale behind the amendment, it is a deletion of that clause because the next amendment, amendment No. 17 [Simms-1], relates to inclusion of a new clause that requires minutes to be publicly available and to be kept to ensure proper reporting of the work of the council.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I rise to indicate that the government will not be supporting this amendment. It is the government's view that having a subclause specifying that the minutes of council proceedings must be kept in a manner determined by the council under clause 27(7) is sufficient.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will be opposing this amendment for the reasons that were given earlier for amendment No. 15 moved by the Hon. Robert Simms.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I will be supporting the amendment of the Hon. Robert Simms.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I will not be supporting this amendment and I suspect it has been drafted probably as part of two amendments, including the next one. It will disappoint my friend on the other side to know that I will not be supporting that one either. As a standalone amendment, I do not support it on the basis of poor governance practice.

Amendment negatived; clause passed.

New clauses 27A and 27B.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 17 [Simms-1]—

Page 16, after line 36—Insert:

27A—Minutes

- (1) The presiding member of the Council must ensure that accurate minutes are kept of the proceedings at every meeting of the Council.
- (2) Each member of the Council must, within 5 days after a meeting of the Council, be provided with a copy of all minutes of the proceedings of the meeting kept under this section.
- (3) Section 27B(1) does not apply to a document or part of a document if—
 - (a) the document or part of a document relates to a matter dealt with by the Council on a confidential basis under section 26A; and
 - (b) the Council orders that the document or part of the document be kept confidential.
- (4) No action for defamation lies against the Council in respect of—
 - (a) the accurate publication under this section of any information, statement or document (in whatever form); or
 - (b) the accurate publication under this section of a transcript, recording or other record of a meeting of the Council.
- (5) A document purporting to be minutes of proceedings at a meeting of the Council signed by the Chancellor, or a copy of or extract from such minutes, will be accepted as proof, in the absence of proof to the contrary, of the matters contained in the document.

27B—Access to documents

- (1) The Council must—
 - (a) make prescribed documents publicly available on a website determined by the Chancellor; and
 - (b) on request, provide a person with a printed copy of a prescribed document (on payment of a fee (if any) fixed by the Council).
- (2) This section does not limit or affect the operation of the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* to University documents.
- (3) In this section—

prescribed document means—

 - (a) the minutes of a meeting of the Council; and
 - (b) the agenda for a meeting of the Council; and
 - (c) schedules of dates, times and places set for meetings of the Council.

That is, that a new clause on page 16 after line 36 be so inserted.

The CHAIR: So you are moving 27B as well?

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Can I do them together? Is that your advice? I thought I could not.

The CHAIR: Yes.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: In that case, I will move 27B and I will call a division that will relate to both clauses. This amendment would ensure that the council is required to make prescribed documents publicly available on a website determined by the chancellor and on request provide a person with a printed copy of a prescribed document. Again, I think the rationale for this is fairly clear. I have outlined the reasons for the Greens' commitment to transparency at a university level, but it is also something that the NTEU and others have been advocating for. There is significant public interest in these institutions and they should be transparent about their work.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I very briefly rise to say the government does not support these amendments. The honourable member's reasons are very similar to previous amendments he has moved and the government's opposition is very similar to what I outlined before about the competitive nature of these organisations in an Australian context.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will be opposing this amendment.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I will be supporting the amendment.

The committee divided on the new clauses:

Ayes3
 Noes.....14
 Majority11

AYES

Franks, T.A.

Pangallo, F.

Simms, R.A. (teller)

NOES

Bonaros, C.

El Dannawi, M.

Hood, B.R.

Lensink, J.M.A.

Ngo, T.T.

Bourke, E.S.

Girolamo, H.M.

Hunter, I.K.

Maher, K.J. (teller)

Scriven, C.M.

Centofanti, N.J.

Hanson, J.E.

Lee, J.S.

Martin, R.B.

New clauses thus negatived.

Clause 28.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 18 [Simms-1]—

Page 17, after line 8—Insert:

- (4) The salary of the Vice Chancellor is to be determined by the Remuneration Tribunal established under the *Remuneration Act 1990* and is payable by the University.

What I propose I do, Chair, because I am conscious that I have been taking up a bit of the time of the council with divisions, is I will speak to a block of these amendments now and then I will move them separately, just to save the council a little bit of time.

Amendment No. 18 relates to the salary of the vice-chancellor and suggests that it should be set by the Remuneration Tribunal. At the moment, it is the university council or a subcommittee of the council that sets the salary and, quite frankly, I think the salaries of the vice-chancellors are obscene. I mean no disrespect to the vice-chancellors, but I do think they are significantly out of step with community expectations.

I have had a bill before this parliament to cap vice-chancellor salaries in line with the Premier, who is somebody who is very hardworking and does not earn anything next to a million dollars a year. I think it would be appropriate to have a cap in place. I recognise though that there has not been support from the government or the opposition for that proposition, so I proposed instead that the salary be set by the Remuneration Tribunal as it is with many other public officials.

The other amendment that I will be moving—and I indicate I will be calling a division on amendment No. 18 and the next amendment No. 19—requires the disclosure of certain agreements; that is, when a council or a vice-chancellor:

...enters into a contract, agreement or...arrangement with a person for the purposes of that person providing advice to the Council...

This relates to the role of consultants and ensuring that that information is put into the public realm. It has been a key issue during this debate around the university merger and I think the community has a right to know that information. There have been lots of questions asked during the committee stage about the involvement of external consultants that the government has been unable to answer, so that amendment will relate to that. I will do those two as a block and I will revisit the other issues down the track.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I rise to indicate that the government will be opposing both of the amendments that the honourable member is putting forward. I appreciate the honourable member's consistency with his views about putting the University of South Australia at a competitive disadvantage to the rest of the nation in relation to salaries.

I can understand the motivation: you see the huge salaries some people are paid and some of them are staggeringly high salaries, but that would put this new university as the only university that was subject to that restriction, which we fear would put this university—with everything we are doing, aiming to become exceptionally competitive and world class—at a competitive disadvantage. For that reason, we will be opposing the amendments.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: I have a question for the minister. He has noted 'world class' in his response about competitiveness. Can he explain why Australian vice-chancellors are paid so much more than they are internationally?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I do not have advice on why that is, but we are talking about not just how we compare with the rest of the world but how we compare with other universities around Australia.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: I thank the minister for that answer. Can he tell us how we compare with the ANU?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is the ANU has recently appointed a new vice-chancellor and we do not have information as to what the remuneration is.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Can the minister provide advice as to what the previous ANU vice-chancellor was paid?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that the previous vice-chancellor was paid less and that, my advice is, was a decision of the vice-chancellor before that.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Does the minister think that the ANU could not attract the best and brightest vice-chancellor in the country and that perhaps monetary gain is not everything in this consideration of being a vice-chancellor?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I am not aware of the negotiations that were held. As I said, we are not aware of the new vice-chancellor's salary, but certainly there will be individuals who may make that decision that, because of their circumstances in life, they do not wish for a salary even if it was offered.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Is the minister aware that you can read the ANU's minutes and agendas of their university council online as a member of the community, and does he find that that is somehow endangering their competitive advantage?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the member for her question. My advice is that different universities have different policies and principles about what is published, including information by newsletters and other forms of public information.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Just one final question: is it not the case that under the Remuneration Act, the Remuneration Tribunal, in setting the salaries, would take into account competitive factors anyway?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for his question. It may be the case that that is but one of the factors that may be taken into account, possibly.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: So then why is the government opposed to the change?

The CHAIR: So this is the final, final question, the Hon. Mr Simms. I am sorry I did not hear it. Are you asking something or not?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: For the reasons that I have outlined before, we think that, although it could be something that could be taken into account, there would be other factors in that, and we do not wish to place this new university at a relative disadvantage to other universities around Australia.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: Irrespective of what one thinks about any VC salary decisions, these positions are competitive across the country, as we heard, and creating uncertainty over the university's potential to offer a competitive package when compared with other institutions would create a risk in our view to the new university's prospect of success. For this reason, we oppose the amendment.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I rise to indicate that I will not be supporting this, and whilst I understand the intent, I also live in the real world. There was a lot of discussion during the inquiry process about the lengths that we would be going to to recruit the finest talent to lead the university. I hasten to say that that Remuneration Tribunal process is one that at present would be unfamiliar with the higher education sector, but also it would put us at odds and, in fact, at a huge disadvantage with other universities that do not have those same requirements in place.

We did talk extensively. There are recommendations around the appointment of the new VC and the need to go out far and wide to attract the best talent available to lead this new university. I say I live in the real world because attracting the best talent available sometimes does come with a price tag, and I do not think that it is appropriate, regardless of whether it does or not, to be putting us at a competitive disadvantage given the magnitude of the merger.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I will be supporting the Hon. Robert Simms. Let me just say from the outset that I have no objection to attracting the best possible talent to any job, but a million dollars to run a university to me is totally obscene. It is more than twice what the Prime Minister of this country gets.

The Hon. C. Bonaros: He gets a nice pension, though.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I am sure there are benefits also for chancellors at universities as well, but a million dollars is totally obscene in anyone's language. As to the fact that you have to keep these salaries at this level to attract the best possible talent, I do not buy that at all. It just does not ride. The fact is that the Remuneration Tribunal can easily familiarise itself with terms and conditions for a position such as this.

If you are going to set a base level, and let's just say you are going to set it at a million dollars like it is now, from there on in the Remuneration Tribunal can determine what the salaries are going to be. I just think that what is going on here is to try to keep a cap on these outrageous costs that go towards the salaries of vice-chancellors, not just here in South Australia but also in the country, that get out of hand. I am not familiar with what vice-chancellors get in other jurisdictions overseas, but I am sure they do not hit these types of levels. With that, I will be supporting the amendment.

The committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes3
 Noes.....14
 Majority11

AYES

Franks, T.A.

Pangallo, F.

Simms, R.A. (teller)

NOES

Bonaros, C.

El Dannawi, M.

Hood, B.R.

Lensink, J.M.A.

Ngo, T.T.

Bourke, E.S.

Girolamo, H.M.

Hunter, I.K.

Maher, K.J. (teller)

Scriven, C.M.

Centofanti, N.J.

Hanson, J.E.

Lee, J.S.

Martin, R.B.

Amendment thus negatived; clause passed.

Clauses 29 and 30 passed.

New clause 30A.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 19 [Simms-1]—

Page 17, after line 28—Insert:

30A—Disclosure of certain agreements

If the Council or the Vice Chancellor enters into a contract, agreement or other arrangement with a person for the purposes of that person providing advice to the Council or the Vice Chancellor in relation to the performance of their functions or powers under this Act, the Council or the Vice Chancellor (as the case may be) must, as soon as practicable after entering into the contract, agreement or other arrangement, make publicly available on a website determined by the Chancellor—

- (a) the names of each party to the contract, agreement or arrangement; and
- (b) the date on which the contract, agreement or other arrangement was entered into by the parties.

This relates to the disclosure of consultants, and I outlined the rationale in my previous contribution.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: The government will be opposing this amendment for the reasons we have previously outlined.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will be opposing the amendment.

The committee divided on the new clause:

Clauses 33 to 39 passed.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

Sitting suspended from 12:59 to 14:17.

Parliamentary Committees

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (14:17): I bring up the 33rd report of the committee.

Report received.

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN: I bring up the 34th report of the committee.

Report received and read.

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table:

By the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (Hon. K.J. Maher)—

Principal Community Visitor of South Australia—Report 2022-23

Ministerial Statement

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL COCHLEAR IMPLANT PROGRAM

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (14:19): I table a copy of a ministerial statement made by the Hon. Chris Picton MP, Minister for Health and Wellbeing, on the topic of the Women's and Children's Hospital Cochlear Implant Program.

Question Time

COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:20): I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to addressing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development about commercial horticulture viability in South Australia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: A *Stock Journal* article from 26 October entitled 'Cost pains heighten insolvency danger' notes that declining consumer spending, higher interest rates, several years of labour shortages, steep labour expenses and an increase in the cost of consumables used in business have left many with low cash reserves and a lack of confidence to continue.

The article predicts a wave of insolvencies in horticultural farming and packing. It notes farm inputs have jumped 37 per cent in the past two years to July. Fuels and packaging resources are up 55 per cent, some fertilisers are now costing 107 per cent more than two years prior and it is no secret that the federal Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry predicts farming comes to be down an average of 41 per cent right across the board in Australia, according to their own media release on 5 October.

The *Stock Journal* article also notes that for fruit and vegetable production nationally, many farmers were reporting the 2022-23 financial year was the toughest in at least two decades. My question to the minister is: what is the minister and her government doing to keep the cost of doing business down for South Australian horticulturalists?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:22): I thank the honourable member for her question. I think it certainly is of concern. We hear a lot about the cost-of-living crisis, which of course we can

experience and see every day, but also when we look at businesses and in particular small businesses, but not only small businesses, they are similarly facing increased costs.

We know, of course, that since COVID there have been huge disruptions in terms of international trade, in terms of obtaining certain goods and particularly inputs for agriculture and a number of other barriers and challenges. I would also like to put on the record something which I guess we all know but that is certainly worth emphasising: the innovation and the resilience of many of our small businesses, particularly and including in the horticulture sector.

We continue to work with all sectors within our \$17.3 billion agribusinesses and primary industries sector, including the horticulture industry. One of those initiatives, which has been industry led, is the recently announced biosecurity precinct, which will certainly help a number of people within our horticultural sectors—that is just one—as well as investments in things like agtech and maintaining the capacity at SARDI for a number of programs.

COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:23): Supplementary: what is the government doing to keep costs of water, labour and electricity down for these businesses?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:24): I think as a government we have certainly shown that we are keen to have impact where that is possible, and some of those things are also, of course, outside of direct government control. We very much have an open-door policy in terms of discussions about ideas or initiatives that might assist in this. I have talked before about the capacity for some of our big projects, such as the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, to have positive impacts across the sectors and across the economy.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS DEPARTMENT

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development regarding her department PIRSA. Can the minister confirm that the Department of Primary Industries and Regions is moving office from Grenfell Street to Waymouth Street and, if so, what is the reason behind the move?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:24): Yes, it is accurate that the office will be moving. I am happy to bring some more fulsome comments back to the chamber, but when this was put forward some time ago it was indicated that currently the location for the department is not all in one place on one or two floors within the Grenfell Street building.

There are also issues around the adequacy of the facilities there and also the costs going forward to be able to be, if I recall correctly, compliant with a number of aspects that are expected in modern workplaces. Therefore, the decision has been made that it is an appropriate change which will lead to more efficiencies and better communications within the department and be able to have a positive overall impact on the operations of the department.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS DEPARTMENT

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:26): Supplementary: what is the cost involved to taxpayers for that move?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:26): As I mentioned, when the proposal was put forward it indicated that there were offsetting benefits. Some of those would have been monetary, potentially, but others would have been around capability and efficiency, so that is the reason for the move.

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND REGIONS DEPARTMENT

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:26): Supplementary: has the minister considered moving the department out into the regions?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Minister, I want you to ignore your whip and I want the honourable Leader of the Opposition to remain silent.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter: It cost the government more money, it cost the taxpayers more money.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Hunter, enough!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:27): PIRSA has a number of offices already in the regions.

LIVE SHEEP EXPORT

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries regarding sheep prices in South Australia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: When asked a question in this chamber on 8 March this year on the topic of whether the minister supported the federal government's move to ban live sheep exports, the minister said, and I quote, 'That is obviously a matter for them,' and that:

They—

that is, we the opposition—

might also be interested to apprise themselves of how much live export happens from South Australia when it comes to live sheep export, because I think they might find that particularly interesting reading.

For several months, sheep prices have been plummeting dramatically. Analysts and livestock agents say there are many factors behind the price crash, including limited kill capacity at abattoirs, sheep being sold off in dry areas like northern New South Wales, uncertainty about drier conditions ahead and a hit to confidence because of the looming live export ban.

Western Australia as a state has significantly fewer abattoirs compared with eastern states, including South Australia, because of their live sheep export trade. It has been predicted that the loss of live sheep export trade will see more sheep trucked across the border for processing, further driving down the already low prices per head. My questions to the minister are:

1. Has she been contacted by sheep producers about their concerns regarding the effect of flooding of the market of sheep from WA and its impact on South Australian producers and sheep prices?
2. What is she doing to ensure that South Australian sheep producers will not be affected by the Albanese Labor government's ban on live sheep exports?
3. Has she advocated on behalf of South Australian sheep producers to her federal colleagues to reverse the live sheep export ban?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:29): I thank the honourable member for her question. I do wonder, though, whether she has taken my advice back from 8 March that she quoted of going and finding out how much live export there is directly from South Australia. It would sound as though she hasn't taken that advice. But be that as it may, it is worth pointing out that the ban on live sheep export of course hasn't as yet come into effect. If I recall correctly, the commonwealth government has indicated that it won't be implemented in this term of the Albanese government, but of course the planning going ahead is progressing, as I understand it.

I think one aspect that the member mentioned is accurate, which is that there are many factors impacting the prices of sheep at the moment. My understanding is that we have, I think, an additional 15 million sheep over the last five years because of good conditions and a number of other factors. There has certainly been a boom in terms of sheep, and the prices have been very, very good in recent months—they have, of course, dropped considerably.

In my many discussions both with producers and with peak bodies, a number have indicated that this is part of the usual peaks and troughs they have experienced in business, including and not limited to the sheep industry as well as other agricultural industries and, indeed, many other businesses. Notwithstanding that, that doesn't, of course, relieve the pressure on those businesses as they experience it.

The many factors are topics of discussion at many of the meetings that I have, but it is fair to say that specifically live sheep export hasn't formed a predominant role in those discussions. It has certainly been mentioned, mainly in passing, by most of the producers that I have spoken with. More of an issue is their concerns around drought in the Eastern States, which is causing people in expectation of those drought conditions to be reducing the size of their flocks.

Another factor which I don't think the honourable member mentioned is around the capacity of processing facilities to actually process the volume of sheep that is there at the moment. It may be that it was mentioned and I didn't hear; there was a fair bit of other noise in the chamber at the time.

I think those issues are certainly top of mind for a lot of people wanting to be able to take their sheep or lambs to the processing facilities but those facilities not being able to process the volume that they might like. I know that one major facility has been running only one shift because of difficulties in gaining labour to run a second shift. Hopefully, some of that will begin to improve. We know that labour shortages are issues across many, many industries, including the agricultural industries.

LIVE SHEEP EXPORT

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:32): Supplementary question: what are the minister and the South Australian government doing to improve those labour shortages?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Excuse me, you don't have to respond to the whip, right? Listen to the minister.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:32): I thank the honourable member for her supplementary question. Knowing that labour shortages are such an issue across all our regions, indeed even in our cities, the Malinauskas Labor government has been working on a number of programs to assist with that.

One of those is, in partnership with the federal government, to have fee-free places in agricultural courses, among others, which is of importance. We will also be investing more in our education system overall and, in particular, looking at how we can better support teachers in regional areas—for example, making permanent the retention allowance for teachers is part of that.

Secondly is looking at regional housing, an area that has been ignored. I was very, very pleased to be in Bordertown last week with the Premier and the Minister for Housing from the other chamber to be announcing a housing program. We know that in Bordertown there has been pretty much nil rental availability, and so through a partnership agreement with the Tatiara District Council we are going to be building additional dwellings and we were able to be there on the site of that.

Bordertown of course has a meatworks, as does Naracoorte, and finding staff for those two processing facilities without housing for those staff is, of course, particularly challenging, so I am very pleased this is one more initiative from our government that will go some way, step by step, to addressing the labour shortage issues.

BIOSECURITY PRECINCT

The Hon. T.T. NGO (14:34): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Can the minister update the council about the recent announcement of the construction of a \$50 million biosecurity precinct in South Australia?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:35): I thank the honourable member for this question and also his long advocacy and involvement in a lot of the horticultural sector, particularly in the northern areas of Adelaide.

I recently had the very distinct privilege of being able to announce a partnership between the commonwealth and state government along with industry for the development of a \$50 million biosecurity precinct to be based at the South Australian Produce Market in Pooraka. I was joined by Tony Zappia MP, member for Makin, representing the commonwealth government; the CEO and chair of the South Australian Produce Market, Mr Angelo Demasi and Ms Joanna Andrew; along with Citrus SA chair, Mark Doecke; and Tony Ceravolo from Ceravolo Orchards in making this announcement and I thank them all for their ongoing work on this project.

A state first for South Australia, the post-harvest treatment facility will provide inspection, quarantine and treatment of fruit and vegetable produce, which is vital for exporting SA's produce globally. This industry-led initiative, which has also received funding from the commonwealth government through fruit fly resilience funding and the state government through the Thriving Regions Fund, will see the construction of a facility that will provide pressure cooling and treatment technology and will be the largest scale multitreatment and inspection facility in South Australia.

Once completed, the project may unlock a potential additional \$100 million in fresh produce exports over a five-year period, creating up to 172 direct and indirect ongoing jobs and assisting in cost reduction for our state's primary producers. Previously, producers have had to send their fresh produce to either Melbourne or Brisbane to be treated, which then adds additional costs for freight. The biosecurity precinct here in Adelaide will cut out a significant cost in the process, which is great news equally for producers and consumers.

The biosecurity precinct will ensure produce coming from fruit fly-impacted areas within the state is able to be inspected, quarantined and treated if required before produce is distributed to retailers across South Australia, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and overseas.

I am advised that construction of the biosecurity precinct at the South Australian Produce Market at Pooraka will commence in early 2024 and will provide a more sustainable alternative, along with the ability to increase the shelf life of fresh produce for export purposes. Having this technology here also opens the door to other potential and exciting benefits to the state, such as sectors including health and medical, space and defence. Once in operation, the precinct will allow us to inspect, quarantine and treat produce, which will safeguard our industry and ensure a stable supply chain.

Once again, I thank all key stakeholders for their ongoing involvement in delivering this project and I look forward to being able to continue to provide updates in this place as the project progresses.

ADELAIDE CASINO

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (14:38): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs in the other place, a question about facial recognition technology.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Yesterday, I revealed the bombshell by the Chairman of SkyCity Entertainment Group, Julian Cook, that the company will probably make admissions related to allegations Adelaide Casino breached anti-money laundering laws and will likely pay a multimillion dollar fine. If it hasn't already, it should have sent shockwaves throughout the state government, with lawyers scrambling to provide advice on actions and penalties available to the government should the New Zealand-based company make admissions to serious corruption charges and therefore be found unfit to hold a licence.

But there is more. In New Zealand, the company is facing a 10-day suspension of its licence due to failings with its facial recognition technology, a critical part of its host responsibility responsibilities to detect problem gamblers. The government department in charge of regulating

SkyCity Entertainment Group's casino licences, the Department of Internal Affairs, launched an investigation following a complaint by a former New Zealand casino customer, presumably a problem gambler, that the facial recognition tool failed. Mr Cook didn't rule out other complaints or suspensions. My questions to the minister are:

1. Can the Commissioner for Business and Consumer Affairs, the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner, provide details of the facial recognition technology in operation at the Adelaide Casino?
2. Is the Adelaide Casino using the same facial recognition technology under investigation in SkyCity's three New Zealand casinos?
3. Can the commissioner provide details of any inspections that have been carried out on facial recognition technology used in the Casino and in other gambling venues, and whether the technology has failed to detect problem gamblers and on how many other occasions?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (14:41): I thank the honourable member for his questions. I certainly will refer those to the minister he suggested is responsible for the commissioner and bring back a reply for the honourable member.

ABORIGINAL REMAINS, RIVERLEA PARK

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:41): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing questions to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding the Riverlea housing development and the discovery of Aboriginal remains.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: As has been noted in this place before and in the media, the local native title body, the Kaurua Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, has stated that the community's preferred position was for the ancestral remains to be undisturbed. My questions for the minister are:

1. Is this one of the options being considered?
2. Is the consideration of a memorial garden and reflection centre at Riverlea also on the table?
3. Will the government be funding this?
4. Given that there are those in the community who are said to be unaware of the situation, is the minister confident that the consultation process has been adequate?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (14:42): I thank the honourable member for her question. Most of the answer will be as I have said in this place yesterday. I am not going to and in fact it wouldn't be at all appropriate for me to talk about specifics of a process that is underway under section 23 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act and is ongoing and, as I said yesterday, will be until early next year. Certainly, no decisions have been made, and nor should any decisions have been made, in relation to what the honourable member asked. They will be part of this section 23 process.

In terms of consultation, I know that I can speak generally that in these applications there is a very thorough and very wide consultation that takes place. That is why for much of the time, and certainly it has been the case under governments of all persuasions in the past, many of these applications take in the order of six to 12 months to make sure there is as thorough consultation as there possibly can be.

ABORIGINAL REMAINS, RIVERLEA PARK

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:43): Supplementary: is the minister able to give a confirmation that all options are being considered as put forward by the community?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (14:43): I am not going to give a running commentary on a process that is underway. I have seen some references in the media to views of some people but,

as I have said, what the process is that has developed over many years under governments of both persuasions is a consultation process occurs, reports are then put together, and then it is put before the minister who is the decision-maker under those parts of the Aboriginal Heritage Act to consider it all together, so I am not going to be commenting on anything before that final process occurs.

ANTI-RACISM STRATEGY

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (14:44): My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Will the minister please inform the council about his attendance at the government's yarning circle to launch South Australia's Anti-Racism Strategy?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (14:44): I thank the honourable member for his question. I recently had the privilege to attend a yarning circle for the first part of the launch of the South Australian government's Anti-Racism Strategy. This yarning circle held at Tauondi Aboriginal College is the first component in the two-part launch, with many senior public sector leaders and ministers in attendance, including my colleagues the Hon. Katrine Hildyard, the Hon. Joe Szakacs, the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment and the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, to name a few who attended recently.

Once the second part of the launch has taken place, the strategy will outline how the South Australian government is developing a public sector workforce that is culturally capable and seeks to stamp out racism in all its forms. Importantly, this work supports the government's commitment under the Closing the Gap program and many of the commitments it has made under its multicultural and ethnic affairs policy to remove this type of inequality and promote inclusion within the public sector.

The strategy and action plan draw upon extensive community consultation, including leaders from Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. It showcases the government's commitment to combat racism in all its forms and provide a clear road map for policy, initiatives, education and community engagement. This is an active way in which the government can work towards creating a more inclusive, equitable public sector workforce and society in general.

The recent yarning circle provided a platform for ministers and senior public sector officials from various sectors to come together and engage in discussions about experiences, the impacts of racism in society and how to address the issue. As we all know, it is imperative that change needs to be supported and enforced at the highest levels.

The yarning circle's focus on Aboriginal voices and perspectives was a very strong feature. It involved Aboriginal leaders such as Uncle Lewis O'Brien and his son Uncle Mickey O'Brien who shared their personal experiences and stories, shedding light on some of the deep-rooted issues in the community. Their firsthand perspective was a powerful reminder of why it's important to address these issues collectively. It was also a privilege to hear the views of Tilly Coulthard and her aspirations for how the strategy could increase Aboriginal retention and engagement in the public sector.

One key takeaway from the yarning circle was recognising the intersection of racism with other forms of discrimination and the need to craft policies and strategies that are inclusive and effective. The yarning circle also highlighted the role of education and awareness in combating racism, and the collective experience and knowledge shared by participants underscored the need for open dialogue and learning about diverse cultural perspectives. I am very much looking forward to the final stages of the launch of the strategy and the action plan later this month.

YOUTH TREATMENT ORDERS

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:47): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before a question without notice to the Attorney-General on the topic of youth treatment orders.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: In her report tabled in parliament yesterday, the Youth Treatment Orders Visitor, Shona Reid, provided serious concerns about the implementation of youth treatment orders which allow the SA Youth Court to order drug-dependent children in detention to receive

mandatory treatment. Ms Reid described her commentary in the report as 'scathing' and stated that, and I quote from the report:

The Youth Treatment Order Visitor believes that the rollout of the Youth Treatment Order process from November 2021 put detained young people to further trauma and harm, with poor preparation for the scheme's implementation and a distinct lack of child-centred practices and policies and a rights-based approach.

One of the recommendations made in that report is that:

The Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre not be used as a secure holding facility for children and young people who primarily have therapeutic needs for which it does not have a real and resourced capacity to address those needs.

My questions to the Attorney-General are:

1. What is the government doing to address the rights of young people in our justice centres?
2. When will the Malinauskas government raise the age of criminal responsibility to avoid children being caught up in the justice system?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (14:49): I thank the honourable member for his question and I will answer it particularly in relation to the preamble he gave in terms of youth treatment orders. Youth treatment orders, as we know them in South Australia, came into operation in November 2001 with commencement of part 7A of the Controlled Substances Act 1984. Their introduction was intended as a last resort for young people who are drug dependent, have refused to engage in voluntary treatment, pose a risk to themselves or other people, and only where all other appropriate treatment orders have been exhausted.

The youth treatment orders program sits alongside health services already available to young people detained in Kurlana Tapa, including mental health support, medical treatment and voluntary drug programs. Their introduction was intended to provide that circuit breaker only in the most serious of cases. To date, and I think as was outlined in the report the honourable member referred to, there has been one youth treatment order application, which was made in October 2022.

The assessment order was granted for the assessment; however, the detention order was withdrawn so no treatment orders have actually been made since the introduction of the scheme in South Australia. I am aware that in accordance with section 54P of the Controlled Substances Act, a review of the operation of that part of the act will need to be completed after the third anniversary of the commencement of the section, so that would be three years from November 2021, so from November next year, there will be a review of that section of the act. As I said, there has not been a single order yet made under that provision.

QANTAS CHAIRMAN'S LOUNGE MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (14:52): I seek leave to give a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development about membership.

Leave granted.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO: Yesterday, I was provided with answers to questions on notice that I had submitted some weeks ago regarding the minister's neglect in acknowledging her membership of the Qantas Chairman's Lounge. To my question, 'On what date did the minister become aware that her register of interests was incorrect?' the minister answered, 'Refer to answers provided in *Hansard* 26 September 2023.'

To my question, 'On what date did the minister update her register of interests?' the minister answered, 'Refer to answers provided in *Hansard* 26 September 2023.' To my question, 'What items did the minister update in her register of interests at the time of the latest update?' the minister answered, 'Refer to answers provided in *Hansard* 26 September 2023.' The same answers for all three questions.

Now, you are probably not surprised that I went and reread the *Hansard* from 26 September 2023 which makes absolutely no mention of the actual date. My questions remain to the minister:

1. On what date did the minister become aware that her register of interests was incorrect?
2. On what date did the minister update her register of interests?
3. What items did the minister update in her register of interests at the time of the latest update?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:54): I refer to my answer on 26 September 2023.

QANTAS CHAIRMAN'S LOUNGE MEMBERSHIP

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (14:54): Supplementary.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Supplementary question—I will listen, but it has to relate to the answer that was given.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO: Sure. In referring to *Hansard*, and noting that the answers are not within—

The PRESIDENT: No, you have to ask a question.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO: Yes, I am asking for her to answer the questions and provide the actual dates. The dates are not in *Hansard*. Please provide the actual dates.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

BEST OF WINE TOURISM AWARDS

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister inform the chamber about the—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J.E. HANSON: The hardest working member, come on, keep quiet. Will the minister inform the chamber about the global Best of Wine Tourism Awards recently held in Switzerland?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:55): I thank the honourable member for his question and I refer members to when I have discussed some of these topics in the past. I recently updated the chamber about the Great Wine Capitals—Best of Wine Tourism Awards, which saw seven outstanding South Australian wine tourism businesses being recognised for their innovation and dedication.

These seven award winners represented South Australia at the global Best of Wine Tourism Awards, which were held last week in Lausanne, Switzerland. I am very pleased to advise the chamber that Alkina Wine Estate in the Barossa Valley took home a global Best of Wine Tourism Award for wine accommodation. This is an award that recognises wineries across the 12 Great Wine Capitals around the world.

The global Best of Wine Tourism Award was presented by the Australian Ambassador to Switzerland, Elizabeth Day, at the Great Wine Capitals AGM in Lausanne, and the South Australian Minister for Tourism, the Hon. Zoe Bettison, accepted the honour on behalf of Alkina Wine Estate. Alkina Wine Estate, in their own words, is described as a new story on an old place, providing luxury accommodation in a restored cottage and homestead. Their farm was established in 2015 by vintner Alejandro Bulgheroni and winegrower Amelia Nolan. They have lovingly and carefully restored the property's 1850s buildings and planted new vines.

Both the accommodation and a tasting room opened to the public in 2020, and a stay at the homestead offers visitors an opportunity to enjoy bespoke food and wine that showcase the quality produce of the Barossa Valley region. Alkina Wine Estate is dedicated to sustainable farming practices, and they work to ensure that they leave the soils and the ecosystems in a healthier state than when they found them.

The Great Wine Capitals—Best of Wine Tourism Awards are coordinated by the Great Wine Capitals Steering Committee, which includes PIRSA, the South Australian Tourism Commission, the SA Wine Industry Association, the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia. Congratulations again to the team at Alkina Wine Estate: your win highlights both the strength of our wine regions and the passion of our local wine tourism businesses. I also pass on my congratulations once again to all the nominees who represented South Australia at the global awards for providing an incredible showcase of our world-class wine tourism industry.

POKER MACHINES

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:58): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs, a question about poker machine losses.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Australian gamblers lost more than \$14.5 billion on poker machines last financial year, significantly more than in 2018-19—the last full financial year uninterrupted by COVID restrictions. The new analysis by Monash University School of Public Health and Preventative Medicine, on behalf of the great anti-gambling organisation Alliance for Gambling Reform, found South Australia reported the steepest increase in the country with gambling losses over the four years up by 34.6 per cent to \$917 million—that is almost \$230 million a year, or \$630,000 a day, and does not include EGMs at the Casino. The Alliance for Gambling Reform is urging all states to fast-track the introduction of mandatory pre-commitment cashless gaming cards.

New South Wales Premier, Chris Minns, has committed to undertaking a two-year trial and Victoria has indicated its intent to introduce a similar system, while Tasmania is leading the nation on these reforms, committed to bringing in mandatory precommitment from November to limit losses to \$100 a day, \$500 a month and \$5,000 a year. My questions to the minister are:

1. What meaningful reforms is this government planning to introduce to directly address this appalling situation?
2. Does this government have the same intentions as Tasmania and, if not, why not, given the lives of South Australians are being ruined by their addiction to poker machines?
3. According to the latest Auditor-General's Annual Report tabled in parliament, there are now 11,706 EGMs in hotels and clubs in SA. How is this justifiable given the prescribed targets and requirements for reductions in numbers of EGMs in this state?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:00): I thank the honourable member for her question and her interest and advocacy in this area. I will refer those questions to the minister responsible in another place and bring back a reply.

SOUTH-EAST REGION

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (15:00): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development regarding South-East school infrastructure.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: As the minister knows, development in our regions is dependent on quality infrastructure, whether that be public transport or other things, including that of our state schools. My question to the Minister for Regional Development is: has the minister met with any schools in her home region of the South-East to discuss any significant infrastructure concerns they are facing and, if so, when?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:01): I thank the honourable member for his question. I frequently meet with people across the region, including those involved in our school system. In terms of specifics, obviously the Minister for Education has a direct role in the sorts of matters that the member is referring to.

SOUTH-EAST REGION

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (15:01): Supplementary: given the minister speaks regularly with the Minister for Education, has he provided any information to her regarding the crumbling infrastructure of the South-East schools, and will she commit to action or take action with the minister on these significant issues?

The PRESIDENT: I don't actually believe that's a supplementary question arising from the original answer.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Read the *Hansard*. Minister, it is up to you if you would like to reply or not.

FORENSIC SCIENCE SA AWARDS

The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:02): My question is to the Attorney-General. Can he tell the council about the recipients of the Forensic Science SA Professor Hilton Kobus Research Award and the Justice Ted Mullighan Outstanding Case Award?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:02): I thank the honourable member for his question. I certainly can and I certainly will inform him and the chamber about the recipients of the Forensic Science SA's Professor Hilton Kobus Research Award and also the Justice Ted Mullighan Outstanding Case Award.

It was an honour, earlier this year, to acknowledge and be present at the award ceremony for the many dedicated people working at Forensic Science SA. The research undertaken through Forensic Science SA and the numerous papers published by the staff, in collaboration with researchers either based here in South Australia, interstate or, in some cases, from other parts of the world, is one of the many reasons Forensic Science SA is the envy of forensic labs right across this country and across the globe. It is vital that we continue to foster that collaboration and the ongoing role played by the staff and students who work at Forensic Science SA.

It is research like this that can underpin those huge advances in technology that lead us to places we probably can't even imagine at this point. The Divett Place complex where Forensic Science SA currently operates was opened way back in 1978, and there have been so many big leaps forward since then, with areas of molecular biology, forensic toxicology and even things like being able to identify someone based on DNA sampling, which just wasn't possible back when that complex opened.

I have talked before about the new facilities that will be built for Forensic Science SA to make sure that they have a purpose-built home to continue these sorts of advances. In the spirit of the innovation, research and commitment that was shown in Forensic Science SA, the annual awards reflect the work that is being done and the steps forward.

As I mentioned, I had the great pleasure to present awards to some outstanding recipients over the last 12 months. The Professor Hilton Kobus Research Award was awarded to Duncan Taylor and Damien Abaro for their published research paper titled, 'A lights-out forensic DNA analysis workflow for no-suspect crime,' which provides a proof of concept for using automated DNA profile reading and top-down analysis to improve efficiency in a no-suspect workflow.

The Justice Ted Mullighan Outstanding Case Award was awarded to Roger Byard for his work in the case of Jasmeen Kaur, who was abducted in March 2021 and murdered. Roger was able to demonstrate through pathological findings the cause and manner of the death in what was quite a horrific crime that the accused pleaded guilty to earlier this year.

I commend the talent, commitment and efforts of each and every employee of Forensic Science SA, especially those whose achievements are celebrated at the annual awards.

FORENSIC SCIENCE SA AWARDS

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (15:06): Supplementary: were concerns raised with you about the poor condition of Forensic SA's facilities during your visit to the awards presentation?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:06): I thank the honourable member for her question. At the recent awards that were held at an Adelaide City Council facility, no, I don't recall the conditions being raised. As I have outlined to this chamber previously, in the actual visit to Divett Place, the actual Forensic Science SA facilities, yes, I did have people raise concerns. And do you know what? That is exactly why, as I have outlined to the chamber, we have made a commitment for many hundreds of millions of dollars for a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility, which the previous government did not.

FIRST NATIONS VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:06): My question to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs is: can he please update us on the progress towards South Australia's First Nations Voice to Parliament?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:06): I thank the honourable member very much for her question. As has been talked about a number of times in this chamber, we passed legislation—this parliament, both houses, agreed to legislation—back in March of this year for the establishment of the South Australian First Nations Voice to our parliament and to our government.

Preparations are well underway, with the Electoral Commissioner, I understand, having visited only in the last week or so communities as far away as the APY lands and, I think, the West Coast of South Australia to talk about the upcoming elections, encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander South Australians to be enrolled so as to be eligible to nominate and to vote.

The South Australian Commissioner for First Nations Voice is also doing a lot of work with South Australian communities, with organisations, particularly Aboriginal community controlled organisations, and individuals to have an educational program to make people aware of the upcoming elections. The nominations open—it might be the 22nd, but if it's not it is around there—January, closing mid-February for elections on 16 March.

I know that the Electoral Commission particularly has been doing a lot of thinking and work in the processes in relation to nominations, and from my last briefing the Electoral Commissioner had come up with a process whereby when they are out in communities they can actually take nominations from now. They have not officially opened but will accept nominations so that if someone is interested when the Electoral Commissioner is out in Aboriginal communities they can take those nominations now and formally put them in when nominations open.

So planning is well underway, and I have to say even in meetings earlier this week with Aboriginal community groups—I had one in Port Adelaide earlier this week where there was a very large degree of excitement amongst the Aboriginal community for these elections.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILD PLACEMENT PRINCIPLE

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:09): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General about Aboriginal affairs.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The preliminary report into the inquiry into the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle in the removal and placement of Aboriginal children in South Australia was released on 4 October 2023. The report reveals that Aboriginal children continue to be disproportionately over-represented in the child protection system in Australia at every level.

One out of every two Aboriginal children were subject to at least one child protection notification in 2020-21, while for non-Aboriginal children these rates decreased to just one in every 12 children. For unborn child concerns, one in every three Aboriginal children were subject to an unborn child notification, compared with just one in 33 non-Aboriginal children. In South Australia, the report predicted that, without change, by 2031 there will be as many as 140 out of every 1,000 Aboriginal children in state care. My questions to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs are:

1. Has the minister received an official briefing on the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's Preliminary Report, and when did that briefing take place?

2. Out of the 17 recommendations that were made in that report, which measures will the Labor government implement to reduce the rate of Aboriginal children interacting with the child protection system, and how will the government improve outcomes for those currently in the system?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:11): I thank the honourable member for her question. I have probably done one better than ask for a written briefing, I have had discussions with the minister responsible, the Hon. Katrine Hildyard, Minister for Child Protection, directly in relation to Commissioner April Lawrie's report. Certainly, it is something that she is actively working on as the minister responsible, and in the coming weeks and months I am sure the honourable member will be pleased to see the government's response and actions in relation to that report.

COUNTRY CABINET

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (15:11): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister please update the council about the recent country cabinet in Naracoorte?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Attorney-General, Government Whip, Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Ms Girolamo, order!

The Hon. E.S. Bourke interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: And now the Hon. Ms Bourke is chiming in. Enough! Order!

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Attorney! Enough! Minister, please, your answer.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:12): Thank you, Mr President.

The Hon. K.J. Maher: You should get out to the regions.

The PRESIDENT: Attorney, stop fishing.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: And stop biting.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I thank the member for his question and I am delighted to update the chamber about country cabinet. It's not surprising that those opposite want to do everything they can to stop us talking about country cabinet, because it's something that they totally rejected when they were in government and continue to reject in terms of their support for the fact that they are so popular in our regional areas.

In contrast, members on this side of the council understand and appreciate the importance of country cabinet to regional communities and that, of course, is why we hold them on a regular basis across the state. It is in stark contrast to the approach the previous Marshall Liberal government took to country cabinet, because they refused to take cabinet out to the regions and, presumably, expected regional communities to make their way to North Terrace—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —to engage with the state government. They couldn't be bothered.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Minister, sit down. The minister will be heard in silence. Minister, continue.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: The former Liberal government couldn't be bothered to go out to the regions as a cabinet, to take their chief executives, to actually and actively listen to regional communities on a regular basis so that they could engage and get feedback into their policies. Clearly, they did so poorly with that—

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Point of order.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —that they were kicked out after four years.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Mr Simms has a point of order.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: On relevance, can the minister just answer the question?

The PRESIDENT: Minister, we would like to get through some more questions today, so if you could get on with it.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: It is about country cabinet.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Last week, the state government held country cabinet in the electorate of MacKillop with its hardworking and popular local member, Nick McBride—Independent local member, I might add. I am pleased to advise that many regional residents—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Attorney-General!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —along with regional sporting groups and community clubs were engaged.

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Attorney-General!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: On Wednesday of last week, I joined the member for MacKillop, along with the Naracoorte council CEO, Trevor Smart, and Mayor Patrick Ross, at the Naracoorte Regional Livestock Exchange. On Thursday morning, I joined the Premier and Minister for Emergency Services, along with the member for MacKillop—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —the member for Mount Gambier and Telstra's Regional General Manager in South Australia, Michael Patterson, in Millicent to announce the state government's contribution to the proposed Limestone Coast Regional Connectivity Project. We were delighted to also have there representatives of local government—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Attorney! Stop fishing.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —and also of industry, who of course are also contributing to that project.

The Hon. H.M. Girolamo: She has already done this speech.

The PRESIDENT: And stop biting.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I spoke at length during question time yesterday about the benefits of that announcement for the Limestone Coast.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I then had the opportunity to join the member for MacKillop and the Minister for Emergency Services at the Naracoorte Aerodrome.

The Hon. K.J. Maher: He's a good member, the member for MacKillop.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Very hardworking, the member for MacKillop.

The PRESIDENT: Responding to interjections is out of order, minister.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: We announced that two firefighting aircraft will service the Limestone Coast as part of a broader investment into aerial firefighting capacity. An additional fixed-wing aircraft and a Black Hawk helicopter will be stationed in the area and provide a significant boost to water bombing capacity in the region. The announcement will, of course, offer greater protection for landowners and the forest industry alike from fires during the bushfire season.

Later in Naracoorte, I once again joined the member for MacKillop and the Minister for Trade and Investment at a wine round table hosted by the Limestone Coast Grape and Wine Council. I thank the president of the council, Helen Strickland, for hosting us and allowing members of the council the opportunity to ask questions of government about some of the opportunities and challenges facing the wine industry.

In the evening the whole state cabinet, led by the Premier, hosted a country cabinet meeting, or forum, at the Naracoorte High School, where residents from across the Limestone Coast region attended to ask government ministers a long and varied list of questions relating to their local community. Something that became clear when I spoke to members of the local community at the forum, and beforehand and after, was that they are sick and tired of being taken for granted as a traditionally safe Liberal seat, and they certainly appreciated the opportunity—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —to raise questions directly with members of cabinet. They also appreciated the fact that we have our chief executives of departments also in the room at these forums, which means that sometimes questions or issues can be resolved immediately or very soon after because of that involvement and that interest from the highest levels of government.

On Friday, I had the opportunity to join other members of cabinet to meet with mayors and CEOs of a number of councils within the electorate of MacKillop, which provided them with an opportunity to address additional matters relevant to their respective local councils. Then we were on to Bordertown, and I was able to participate in the announcement of a huge housing boost in the local area.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: The state government has partnered with Tatiara District Council on stage 1 of the development by investing \$2.7 million to construct five key worker homes and contribute to civil works which will play a significant role in developing up to 60 new homes on the 5.8-hectare site, and hopefully will play some role in addressing the regional housing crisis in Bordertown.

As I think I mentioned earlier today in question time, Bordertown has a near zero rental vacancy which, if not addressed, will hurt the region's economic growth and its ability to attract and retain the workforce required for essential services in the region. Members on this side know that regions matter, and I'm pleased the Malinauskas Labor government continues to work with regional communities to deliver better outcomes.

I want to reflect on some of the comments that we had at both the forum and also at some of the other events in relation to country cabinet.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Minister, I'm keeping an eye on the clock, and I think you have gone well past the time allowed for a Dorothy Dixier, so wind it up, please, so I can go to the next question.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I am sorry that those opposite are not keen to hear about country cabinet and its engagement with regional communities.

The PRESIDENT: I will sit you down. Conclude.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I would have thought that regional communities were important. Certainly, on this side, we think they are.

PATIENT ASSISTANCE TRANSPORT SCHEME

The Hon. S.L. GAME (15:20): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing a question to the Attorney-General regarding the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.L. GAME: On 13 September this year, the government supported my motion on the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme. This motion acknowledged that we need an immediate review of our ineffective Patient Assistance Transport Scheme. More than 13,000 South Australians who received financial support last year through the scheme rely on it.

ABS data has found that the highest mortality rates over the last 10 years were in country towns, including Ceduna, Port Pirie and Port Augusta. The expansion improvement of the scheme is crucial to ensure accessibility, efficiency and responsiveness to the changing needs of South Australians. The government has accepted that it needs to review its current framework.

My question to the Attorney-General is: when will the Malinauskas government review the scheme and will the government plan to consult with clients and stakeholders?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:21): I thank the honourable member for her question about the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme. I will refer that to my colleague the Minister for Health in another place and bring back a reply.

Matters of Interest

CANCER COUNCIL, FUNDRAISING

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (15:21): In June, I met with a young man called Kylan Beech and his father, Mick. The family, originally from Barmera, has a remarkable story. Kylan, at 21, is the youngest of five siblings. Three of those are his older brothers, Jordan, Nick and Jono. On Kylan's 14th birthday, their mum, Tammy-Lee, was diagnosed with lung cancer. Despite her never smoking and having no noticeable symptoms, Tammy's cancer was so advanced when it was identified that she barely had an opportunity to fight. Within less than a year, she sadly passed away.

It was a terrible shock for Tammy to be diagnosed at such a late stage of illness. After hearing Kylan and Mick speak about their experience, it is clear that the short time frame from her diagnosis to her passing made losing Tammy much harder for her family. Out of the tragedy of her loss, Tammy's sons found an inspiring way to honour her memory. In 2019, the boys cycled 220 kilometres to raise funds for the Cancer Council. They rode from their hometown of Barmera to Adelaide in an event they called 220 for Tammy and they raised a fair amount of money.

But it left Kylan wondering: what if they went really big? So he came to his brothers with an idea. Over 14 days in October and November last year, the Beech brothers cycled 2,200 kilometres from the Gold Coast to Adelaide to raise more money for the Cancer Council. Their goal was to help make sure that fewer people in the future have to suffer the sudden loss that they did. They focused their fundraising efforts on supporting the early detection of cancer.

They did not make the journey alone. They had a six-person support crew in three cars that drove with them the whole way. During the ride, they were rerouted by flooding and hindered by injury, but they pressed on riding for many hours each day. They had strong support from the communities they rode through, often spending their evenings chatting to locals in the country pubs. They met many people whose lives had been touched by cancer and in just about every town they received donations. They said that the brief but heartfelt connections they formed with strangers in those moments were some of the best parts of the experience.

The boys rode into the Riverland to a hero's welcome. They finished that day at their mum's gravesite in Barmera. Family and friends joined them to raise a glass to Tammy as the inspiration for their ride. After a very draining couple of thousand kilometres, the last 220 to Adelaide were a breeze. The lads wrapped up their ride flanked by supporters at their last destination—the Cancer Council headquarters on Greenhill Road.

Between their 2019 and 2022 rides, the Beech brothers have raised over \$100,000 for the early detection of cancer. As proud as they are of their effort, I can only imagine their mum would be even prouder of the fact that they have turned the tragedy of her passing into something so positive. Their dad, Mick, was in one of the support vehicles for the whole journey, but Mick also honours Tammy in his own way every day.

In late 2020, Mick made good on the couple's shared dream to open a cafe. Mick has made their dream not just a reality, but a huge success. The High Street Cafe at 4 High Street in Kensington won the bronze award for the best coffee shop in Australia at the 2022 National Restaurant and Catering Awards for Excellence. This is a family that does not do things by halves. I will leave you with Kylan's reflections:

I actually don't really care about the amount of money that we raised. It's great to raise a lot of money. But I just want to make a difference to at least one person, or one family. If everybody just tried to make a difference to at least one person in the world, we would be in such a better place.

Kylan is certainly doing his part to get us to that better place. I congratulate the whole Beech family and all those who helped them achieve something extraordinary in honour of Tammy.

VETERANS

The Hon. S.L. GAME (15:25): I rise today in support of our veterans and to emphasise the contribution they make to our community in South Australia. Despite this contribution, however, I am mindful that some of our veterans need help, and that the state government has an important role to play.

I asked the Minister for Veterans Affairs if it was appropriate for psychologists providing mental health counselling for veterans in South Australia to receive \$61 less per session under the federal rebate system than they would treating NDIS clients. The state government needs to provide more support for veterans in South Australia to make up for this shortfall, which is seeing some providers dropping veteran clients in favour of NDIS clients. I am pleased that the minister has agreed to write to the federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs to request that the disparity between the Medicare Benefits Schedule fee between NDIS and federal Department of Veterans' Affairs clients be investigated.

Other states provide broader concessions to veterans to ease cost-of-living pressures. In Victoria, for example, they offer more discounts, including free ambulance transport for all white and gold card veterans. In South Australia, we only offer a discount for gold card veterans. In New South Wales, ex-defence personnel with a transport concession entitlement card receive free travel on most public transport. In Queensland, eligible veterans receive a subsidy up to \$200 each year on council rates. I would like to see the same level of support for our veterans in South Australia as we see interstate.

The fifth annual suicide monitoring report commissioned by the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs, 'Serving and ex-serving Australian Defence Force members who have served since 1985 suicide monitoring: 1997 to 2020', found that 1,600 ADF members and veterans with service after 1985 died by suicide between 1997 and 2020. In fact, Australia has lost more serving and ex-veterans to suicide than in any operation in the last 20 years. These numbers emphasise the

urgency of the need to continue to work to improve services and support, and to reach out to our veterans.

Due to protective factors associated with ongoing ADF membership, current serving military personnel are half as likely to die by suicide as everyday Australians. However, there is a dramatic difference for military personnel once they leave the ADF. In fact, ex-serving male ADF personnel were revealed to be 27 per cent more likely to die by suicide when compared with the Australian population, while ex-servicewomen are twice as likely to take their own lives than those who have not served.

There are many reasons why veterans commit suicide. The 2022 report found the most common risk factors for permanent, reserve and ex-serving ADF members who died by suicide were experiencing a mood affective disorder, such as depression, and problems in spousal relationships. There is PTSD, depression and anxiety that are related directly to the service, as well as transitioning into civilian life, which can be difficult.

We have several hardworking agencies and organisations, including Veterans SA, Home Base SA, Veterans Advisory Council, Veteran Wellbeing Centre and Jamie Larcombe Centre, which provide mental health and PTSD services to veterans. These organisations are vital, but in need of additional funding from the state government.

The budget has allocated \$2½ million to Veterans SA over the current financial year, a welcome increase from the previous year; however, we know this deal falls well short of what is required. There are significant systemic problems getting veterans in to see a treating psychiatrist because there are not enough beds available for psychiatrists and other specialists to treat them.

Many of the Australian Defence Force personnel aged in their 20s have more responsibility than their civilian peers but, even so, transitioning out of the service can be a difficult process for the veterans who do so every year. These are often individuals who have lived experience of leading people or managing crises. They have demonstrated the ability to work hard and learn quickly. The important role of family in supporting current and ex-serving ADF members needs greater focus, as more support is needed for partners and families.

Many veterans have reported negative experiences when dealing with government agencies and there is a pressing need to streamline administrative practices. We know the state government needs to do more to provide better support for veterans, particularly in the mental health space. The death of any current or former serving ADF member is a tragedy felt deeply by all in the Defence Force, veteran communities and the broader community. As a parliament, we need to continue to advocate for our veterans in need.

HUMAN RIGHTS (CHILDREN BORN ALIVE PROTECTION) BILL

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (15:30): There is currently no national law protecting babies born alive after a failed abortion. This means that those babies have no legal rights and, in some cases, are left to die without any medical care. The Human Rights (Children Born Alive Protection) Bill was originally introduced by the Hon. George Christensen into federal parliament in 2021.

It sought to place a duty of care on medical practitioners to provide the same requisite care to babies who are born alive after a failed abortion as that provided to a child born under any other circumstance. Breaching that duty would incur a penalty and there is an obligation for medical practitioners to report to the federal Department of Health on children born alive as a result of abortions.

The bill has been reintroduced into the Senate in 2022 by Senator Matt Canavan and I admire him for doing so. I would also like to commend my federal Liberal colleague and friend Senator Alex Antic for co-sponsoring this bill. Both senators are working hard to defend and protect the rights of babies who are born alive after a failed abortion. I wholeheartedly support this bill, which is about protecting the most vulnerable in our society. The bill's explanatory memorandum states that, and I quote:

In Australia, the protection of all human life is core to the values we uphold as a nation. The purpose of this bill is to enhance Australia's human rights protections for children, by ensuring that all children are afforded the same medical care and treatment as any other person, including those born alive as a result of a termination...

Australia has voluntarily accepted obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (the ICCPR). Denying babies born alive medical care and treatment places Australia in breach of its international obligations under the CRC and the ICCPR which codify the right to life and adequate quality healthcare.

A 2018 research paper published in the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* examined 241 instances of late-term abortions performed on foetuses where foeticide was not carried out. The study found that over 50 per cent of the babies were delivered alive, with an average lifespan of 32 minutes. One baby survived for more than four hours. According to a submission made by the Canberra declaration to the Senate inquiry, there are multiple examples of babies born alive.

Some of these stories include: Tim, a Down syndrome diagnosis survivor, who was left to die without medical care for nine hours but survived; Gianna Jessen, who survived a saline abortion and now advocates for the rights of babies born alive following abortion; Melissa Ohden, who was found crying amongst medical waste at a hospital by a nurse and went on to live a healthy life; and an unnamed baby zipped into a medical bag while still breathing at Westmead Hospital in Sydney.

I am pleased to say that in South Australia care is provided. I provided my support to amendments put forward in this parliament in 2021 to the then Termination of Pregnancy Bill. Those amendments mandated that requisite medical care be provided to babies born alive after a failed termination. Under section 7 of the South Australian Termination of Pregnancy Act 2021, entitled 'Care of person born after termination', medical professionals are under the same duty to provide medical care to a baby born alive as a baby born other than as a result of a termination.

I note that New South Wales has passed a similar law to South Australia, and Queensland Health has also recently changed their guidelines to require this same care. However, other states and territories have failed to pass such laws, meaning that fundamental birth outcomes now vary from state to state.

The provision of medical care should be based on a formal equality principle, with all newborn babies entitled to equal medical treatment under the law nationally. Again, I commend my colleagues Senators Alex Antic and Matt Canavan. I support their efforts and I urge the federal parliament to pass this bill.

BANKING SCAMS

The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:35): I rise to speak about an increase in banking scams. The Consumer Action Law Centre based in Victoria reported earlier this year that between 2019 and 2022 scam losses via bank transfer reported in Australia had increased by a staggering 200 per cent. They have been identified as the most common payment method for scams. Time is crucial to recovering bank transfer scams, but by the time action is taken the money has often been withdrawn, sent overseas, or converted to cryptocurrency.

The reality is, we live in a digital environment that is constantly changing and so, too, are the ways in which scams and identity theft are occurring. At the moment, individuals can receive messages from scammers that look or sound similar to ones they are used to receiving from their bank and companies they have been dealing with for many years. Banks need to reassess how they communicate with their customers so that legitimate communications are not confused with scams.

According to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) report released in May 2023, about 31,100 customers across the four big banks—ANZ, Commonwealth Bank, NAB and Westpac—collectively lost more than \$558 million. The banks only paid around \$21 million in compensation and the rate of reimbursement was most often very low, ranging from 2 to 5 per cent.

Last year, I was approached by a South Australian who had lost more than \$300,000 when transferring funds to the trust account of his conveyancer, only to find out later that the funds had somehow been redirected to another bank account. Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA) is currently investigating this particular case as the bank involved refused to reimburse their customer. This individual, like us all, has grown accustomed to online banking. Many banks in our

local communities have closed their doors and gone, which means that managing our banking needs online is often the only option.

The Consumer Action Law Centre CEO, Stephanie Tonkin, said putting banks on the hook for compensation would encourage them to invest more in preventing scams occurring in the first place. However, media reports state that Australian banks are arguing that requirements to bear the costs of internet fraud could create complacency among consumers and lead to even more losses.

The Age and *The Sydney Morning Herald* obtained internal documents under FOI in which ASIC stated that there was 'strong opposition' from the banks about requests for banks to do more to prevent scams and to improve their reimbursement processes. Such banking reform has been happening in the UK for years. Back in May 2019, a new code of practice called the Contingent Reimbursement Model (CRM) was introduced for the finance sector.

The CRM code is designed to give bank customers fairer and more consistent redress. Next year, the CRM code of practice will become a mandatory requirement for the UK's banking sector. This means that banks in the UK will be liable to reimburse victims of scammers who impersonate financial institutions or the police. The reimbursement costs will be split between the bank sending the funds and the bank receiving the funds.

The UK has seen the need to legislate these changes so that all banks are incentivised to respond more diligently to scams. The fact is that many scams happen through our banking services; this is the reason our state and federal governments must continue urging all banks to invest in improved cybersecurity measures. The best way to achieve this outcome is by mandating it through legislation.

MOUNT GAMBIER, PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (15:40): I rise today to address something I am quite passionate about, something I have been banging on about not so much in this place but when I was Deputy Mayor of the City of Mount Gambier, and that is the completely inadequate public transport we have in the state's second biggest city. I will quote the Mayor and councillors, and will quote them a few times during my five minutes because they themselves call it vastly inadequate.

We have a bus service that only runs five days a week, nine to five; it is not accessible for daytime office workers, for night-time employees or weekend workers. It is not available on the weekends at all. Key locations are not served at all or barely: the university, the TAFE, Mount Gambier hospital and Foodbank. If you want to get from the east end of Mount Gambier to Foodbank, it could take you up to two hours—it is only about seven kilometres away, not even that. You will get dropped off by the bus, walk a kilometre and a half to Foodbank, pick up your food, walk back a kilometre and a half, wait for the bus and get home; it could be about six hours all up just to get to Foodbank.

The new residential areas, and when I say 'new' I am talking about Conroe Heights, which is probably about the same age as me, the bus still does not service that area. I am flummoxed. I asked a question in question time yesterday of the Minister for Regional Development, because we know we need critical infrastructure like public transport in places like Mount Gambier, and there are no answers there, absolutely no answers there. I am just dumbfounded.

Councillors and the Mayor are dumbfounded as well. It caused one councillor to do a bit of a social media campaign asking, 'Where's Clare?', very similar to 'Where's Wally?' 'Where's Clare on public transport? You would think the Minister for Regional Development would be having a bit of a crack at this—it is so important. Indeed, where is Minister Tom Koutsantonis?

What we are seeing now is a government having locked us into another eight years of completely inadequate services for Mount Gambier in terms of public transport, and then only now, after doing that, thinking, 'Let's review public transport in the regions.' If this review comes back saying how inadequate is public transport in the regions, we are locked in for eight years. Irrespective of what they come back with, nothing is going to happen.

The Hon. R.A. Simms: They won't read the reports.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: Probably not, the Hon. Rob Simms. They probably will not read the reports; as we know, this is their MO in this government.

The City of Mount Gambier does read reports; in fact, they make reports. In 2021, they did the regional public transport review and they found in that review that in Adelaide per capita we spend \$234 per head on public transport. In the regions we spend \$11 per head for public transport. That report also found that in Mount Gambier the current public transport system is adequate for a town the size of 3,000 people. We have 27,000 people in Mount Gambier. We service a population of over 70,000 in that region. It is just not good enough, the impact on the residents of Mount Gambier.

ABC South East, *The Border Watch*, *The SE Voice* have all done stories on residents who simply cannot use this service. Ally Finnis, who lives with a vestibular condition, is forced to rely on family and friends. Paul Manfrin, who is legally blind, is forced to rely on his wife for transport, because taking the bus would just make him late to his appointments. He has had to wait or do a two to three-hour round trip just for a 30-minute appointment. Even seniors are forced to walk a kilometre to their nearest bus stop.

Terry Walters, Chair of the Hallmont Estate Residents Association, ended up fundraising for a minibus: 'Public transport is not going to work, I will have to fundraise for a minibus.' It is terrible, the state of our public transport in Mount Gambier, but council is at least advocating for something better. I acknowledge the advocacy of Deputy Mayor Max Bruins and Mayor Lynette Martin. They cannot believe they have a 30-year-old bus contract that has been renewed for another eight years, and that we are only just now seeing a review into public transport.

It is not good enough. I encourage every single person in Mount Gambier to tell this government that it is not good enough, raise their voices and tell the government about their concerns and emphasise the need that in a city that is the second biggest city in South Australia, with a population of 27,000 people, we deserve infrastructure that will grow our regions, and public transport is exactly one of those. I hope this government will listen, and I hope they actually read the report when they get it back.

PAULINE HANSON'S ONE NATION

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (15:44): The matter I rise to speak on this afternoon is one that will be of interest to all South Australians who care about the health of our democracy, and that is the rising influence of the One Nation political party. It is fitting that yesterday was Halloween because this party's record will send a shiver down the spine of many people in our community. They are a dangerous political party, one that casts a sinister shadow over our democracy, and this is something that the government should consider very carefully when they strike deals with One Nation.

One Nation is the only political party in this place that is on a registry of Australian hate groups. Back in October of the last year, the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism added One Nation to their register for its track record on anti-multiculturalism, white nationalism and COVID-19 conspiracy theories. Looking at the history of this party, you can see why.

I found it galling to hear the One Nation party talking about the voice of division during the recent debate about a First Nations Voice to Parliament. It is galling because the One Nation party has been a consistent voice of division over the past 25 years. They are the party of racism. In 1996, Pauline Hanson launched One Nation with an inflammatory and offensive speech in which she claimed that Australia was 'in danger of being swamped by Asians'. She went on to make another series of appalling claims in that speech.

What a despicable thing to say of Asian-Australians, who are such a vital part of the fabric of our multicultural society. Pauline Hanson has doubled down on this rhetoric over the years, attacking a range of other groups in our community: First Nations people, African-Americans, African-Australians, and people of the Islamic faith. In fact, she has even referred to Islam as 'a disease'. In 2017, Pauline Hanson wore a burqa into federal parliament as part of her grotesque stunt. She made a mockery of the Muslim community, and she used that stunt to call for a ban on the burqa.

Pauline Hanson has called for an end to multiculturalism in Australia. She wants to axe the Racial Discrimination Act, ban mosques and also have a royal commission into Islam. This is the

party that has the gall to criticise those who are campaigning for a Voice to Parliament, and claim that they are being divisive. Give me a break!

But it is not just racism that defines One Nation, it is also their contempt for democracy itself. In 2018, Senate candidate Steve Dickson met with the National Rifle Association in Washington and said that if One Nation won the balance of power in the federal parliament they would seek to weaken Australia's gun laws.

Hanson does not respect our democratic traditions, either. Back in 2017, she heaped praise on Vladimir Putin. This was after Putin was exposed for his complicity in the downing of the M17 flight that killed 298 people, including 38 Australians. On climate change and COVID-19, One Nation peddles lies and bizarre misinformation—Senator Malcolm Roberts is a treasure trove of strange quotes; he once suggested that climate data had been corrupted by NASA—and they have peddled lies and misinformation about COVID-19.

The Hon. Sarah Game is not Pauline Hanson, but she is a representative of the One Nation party. If she does not support these views then she must disassociate herself from them. She must make her position on One Nation's policies clear. In the meantime, the Greens will continue to call out the divisive and dangerous politics of One Nation in our state and federal parliaments, and caution all members of parliament from sharing the rostrum with One Nation.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (15:49): In 2010, I was renting in Adelaide. It was a nice place. I enjoyed it, I had no pets, I looked after it. The landlord and I got on pretty well, I think. One day a letter was sent to me by the landlord, and it said that for reasons of sale I had to leave. After a bit of googling—you could google back then—I discovered I had no options. I had around about four weeks—actually a little bit less than that—to find a new home. Well, I did not. I ended up falling back on family. That was in 2010, nothing like what the rental market is now. The fact is, even though I did not think it then, I was lucky.

With a vacancy rate of less than 1 per cent, tenants are facing unprecedented levels of housing insecurity. In the media, in the pub, around the water cooler, having a coffee, people are talking about it. Everybody is talking about it. Too many people are urgently seeking advice because they have found themselves, often without a great deal of warning like I was, either homeless or days away from being homeless. It is not about dollars. Most will tell you they have a job. Some are even actually quite accomplished professionals. Some are single people, but many are families with children and often with dearly loved pets.

Unlike some in parliament, I am not a landlord. I do not own more than a dozen properties. I own a home. It is mine. I live in it. That said, while not all landlords are good landlords, the situation we are in has not arisen because a majority of landlords are doing the wrong thing. The fact is, we cannot take our hands off the wheel when it comes to addressing the housing crisis. We have to take action, and that is why Peter Malinauskas and Labor are doing so.

We have begun already by cutting taxes for first-home owners, releasing huge tracts of land for new housing and purchasing sites of land to offer more affordable homes for public housing. We are doing this not in far-flung places, some are right here in the CBD or just outside of it on major transport corridors.

This week, impressively, I feel, we are going to go further. I am pleased and quite genuinely relieved, in fact, that this week Labor is acting so decisively to change our rental laws. I thank the pragmatic Greens for supporting us in doing so. Their support is very necessary for this to occur. These laws will improve security for tenants while balancing the rights of landlords. It is a very pragmatic approach.

Today, we will see the beginning of the end for no-cause evictions in our state. Today, we will begin changes that make it easier to rent with your loved ones who just happen to bark, meow or otherwise. Today, we will support a tenancy advocacy service. Today, we will make it easier for people who are fleeing domestic violence to break a lease. The fact is, this is not actually revolutionary stuff, but it is what people are talking about. There is a lot to do in this space, but it is

good to be starting it. Wrong or right, these are just some of the biggest reforms to our residential tenancy laws in a generation.

Should we have got to it sooner? Maybe so, but the fact is, we are starting now. They are not revolutionary—you can see them in other jurisdictions around the nation—but I am so pleased, I am so relieved and I am actually really proud that this government is taking these reforms on the front foot. We are starting now. It is going to happen this week. It is actually going to happen.

Parliamentary Committees

ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: INQUIRY INTO THE URBAN FOREST

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (15:54): I move:

That the interim report of the committee on its inquiry into the urban forest be noted.

As a member of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee, I am pleased today to speak on the committee's interim report on its inquiry into the urban forest. The committee was inspired to look into this topic due to community concerns around effects of urban infill.

Higher density living and residential subdivisions being created have created many challenges. One of the typical flow-on effects of urban infill is the phenomenon of declining tree canopy, which we are seeing right across metropolitan Adelaide. As we experience rising temperatures associated with climate change, tree canopy loss continues to become an increasingly relevant and persistent concern for us to be considering as a government.

Following advertising in South Australia's newspapers and on social media, the committee received 229 submissions. So far, we have had 21 witnesses appear before the committee, many providing a range of technical evidence that they put a great of work into preparing. I would like to sincerely thank each and every one of our witnesses we have heard from, for the contributions they have made and the amount of time they have committed to making this possible.

My experience as a member of the committee during this inquiry has reinforced to me how much passion and how much experience we have in the South Australian community about urban trees and, in particular, tree canopy loss. As the canopy declines, the livability of urban areas is also affected. Preserving the livability of our cities requires a healthy balance of vegetation and greenery.

In a hot, dry climate like ours, trees are critically important tools in providing a comfortable, livable environment for humans and, equally, for animals. Trees and tree canopy are critical to sustaining a healthy and happy community, and a healthy and sustainable environment. A recent report from the Conservation Council of SA estimates that Greater Adelaide is losing 75,000 trees a year. A recent study into tree canopy for the whole of Adelaide, based on the 2018 data, estimated that tree canopy covers just 23.37 per cent of the metropolitan area; of this canopy, 51.9 per cent is on private land.

In 2017, the 30-year plan document—setting out the ways in which Greater Adelaide should grow to become more livable, more competitive and more sustainable over the next 30 years—laid out the target that council areas with less than 30 per cent of tree canopy needed to increase urban tree canopy cover by over 20 per cent by 2045.

The Environment, Resources and Development Committee is exploring past practices and best practices to increase our urban tree canopy, and also ways to facilitate improved tree species selection to ensure our trees have the best chance of surviving and thriving amid our challenging climate. Science tells us we need to diversify our urban forest, making it more resilient to climate as well as less vulnerable to pests and diseases. The committee is also investigating legislative and regulatory options that may offer potential to improve the resilience of new and existing trees within our urban forest.

I want to stress that this is just an interim report. The inquiry will continue and the committee will continue to hear from witnesses. The report details 13 interim recommendations plus two subrecommendations that focus on regulatory change to protect existing trees, as well as to facilitate

the planting of more trees with a view to ensuring the right trees are being selected for areas in which they are being planted.

I will not go through all the recommendations now, but they are centred around the following themes:

- exemptions to distance for removal of a tree;
- species exemptions;
- minimum trunk size for tree removal;
- canopy cover;
- fees for tree removal;
- funding for increased research; and
- the establishment of an urban forest fund initiative to grow our urban canopy.

The recommendations seek to ensure that established trees are appropriately valued and preserved and that new trees are planted to expand the existing urban canopy. This will require action on both private and public land. In making these recommendations, the committee aims to do a range of things. We want to:

- respond to the community call for urgent action on addressing the decline of the urban tree canopy;
- provide timely feedback and recommendations to government without unnecessary delay;
- provide transparency to the public about the committee's progress and thinking on key issues, and provide accountability to those people and organisations who have made submissions to the inquiry so far; and
- stimulate community debate on a topic covered by these interim recommendations.

The committee welcomes feedback and engagement on these recommendations. It is the committee's view that recommendations of this interim report relate to matters which are pressing in nature and are relevant to the whole community of greater Adelaide.

In closing, I would like to thank the committee's research officer, Dr Amy Mead, and secretary, Patrick Dupont, who have undertaken this research in a quality and professional way. I would also like to thank our committee members—most of all our Presiding Member, the member for Badcoe from the other place, Jayne Stinson, who has made sure that this committee's findings and recommendations so far have had lots of community engagement. I thank the member for MacKillop, Nick McBride; the member for Davenport, Erin Thompson; and, of course, from our chamber the Hon. Tammy Franks and the Hon. Michelle Lensink for the amount of time that they have committed to this report so far. I commend the report to the chamber.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (16:01): I rise to also make some remarks in relation to the interim report of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee into tree canopy. This is an area that I have long had an interest in. I have managed to find an old bill folder which is stuffed full of information going back many, many years, including matters such as the Development (Regulated Trees) Amendment Bill. It would be called a code amendment now, but is the old DPA for significant and regulated trees.

I would also like to add my remarks to the preceding speaker, the Hon. Emily Bourke, in thanking and acknowledging all the people that she has, which I will not run through. Suffice to say, I think there has not been much appetite to amend these rules for some time. They initially came in in probably late 2009 or 2010. The rules sit within the planning system and they are something that a number of members of parliament have long railed against.

The origin, I think, was well intended and was a bill moved by the Hon. Diana Laidlaw, as the then planning minister in the Olsen government. There had been a specific tree—I think it was

probably a river red gum—which had a significant trunk size. It was cut down through a development process and everybody was saddened and outraged. That is a very long time ago now; that was in the 1990s.

Trunk size has been used as an indicator for determining significant and regulated trees, and that has continued to follow through. That has been a source for a lot of stakeholders, particularly arborists and people in the conservation sector who acknowledge that there are a number of trees that might reach maturity more slowly or have some sort of biodiversity benefit that is not recognised through the way that the laws have been drafted up and repromulgated time and time again.

There are a lot of issues within our current significant tree laws, particularly the proximity to builds and to existing dwellings and those sorts of things, which enables them to be removed fairly easily. The species list that exists also certainly needs to be reviewed and that is something that I have spoken about in this parliament before because some of the trees that are on there certainly are pests but there are some that I do not think deserve to be on there.

With the increasing densification in Greater Adelaide, we have seen a great loss of the tree canopy and a number of trees. I think the Hon. Emily Bourke quoted from the Conservation Council. A large reason for that has been the urban infill policy, which was thought firstly to have 75 per cent of new dwellings come from urban infill and was then increased to 85 per cent in 2017. That has put pressure on our tree canopy.

It always is a balance and for that reason I think the committee, having come out with an interim report to reflect the evidence that we have received, is a way to promote conversations. There are certainly a lot of very varied views within this space. I think everybody acknowledges that and that is probably why the regulations have stayed the way they are for some time.

I am pleased there is an appetite amongst this current parliament, which is probably reflective of age. No disrespect to any baby boomers who might be reading or listening to this, but I always struggled with trying to convince them in the parliament that trees should have more value, although I never had an argument with the Hon. Dr Bob Such or the Hon. Mark Parnell on that one. In fact, I think we all co-penned a letter at one stage to complain about the current tree laws and that they needed a decent look at. So it is good that we are embarking on this.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago and we certainly need to preserve as many mature trees as possible. We look forward to stakeholders further engaging in this debate. Now that we have drawn a few lines in the sand about where we might be going, we would like to promote some further discussion, so I look forward to the ongoing deliberations of the committee and thank everybody who has made contributions and been through the evidence with us thus far.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:06): I also rise to speak to this interim report of the inquiry into the urban forest undertaken by the Environment, Resources and Development Committee. I echo my colleagues the Hon. Emily Bourke and the Hon. Michelle Lensink's sentiment, with thanks to both our researchers and secretariat as well as the chair of the committee, the member for Badcoe, and other members in both places.

It is actually a pleasure to come to this parliament with an interim report. There is more work to be done, but we have an interim report that we have all agreed on and with some recommendations that we hope the government will soon take up with regard to exemption distances, species exemptions, trunk size, canopy cover, fees for legal tree removal and fees for illegal tree removal, as well as a tree removal fund and community-based tree protection, including a call for bringing back Arbor Day and the celebration of all things trees.

Trees form the backdrop to our lives. They mark our crossroads, house our wildlife, shade our children and cool our air. They outgrow us in height and age and have witnessed events and centuries before our time. Trees help improve our mood, reduce our power bills, increase the value of our houses and, in a warming climate, they are the single best investment we can make to keep our cities cool, beautiful and liveable.

Despite all that trees give and do for us, we are cutting down more trees across Adelaide suburbs than we are replacing. The State Planning Commission's most recent report card assessing our progress against the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide found that Adelaide is not on track to

meet our canopy goals. When compared with other jurisdictions, metropolitan Adelaide has the worst tree protection in Australia. There is an astounding difference between our protections and those of the vast majority of other Australian jurisdictions.

While our state continues to focus on protecting individual large trees, the focus interstate has turned to protecting the urban forest. Local governments across New South Wales, Victoria and WA protect trees based on trunk circumference and protect trees of significantly smaller size than we do here in South Australia. Many now also protect trees based on the canopy they provide or their height. The ACT is the only jurisdiction other than South Australia where the protection of trees and vegetation is not delegated to local councils. While South Australian councils are left with the responsibility for maintaining tree canopy cover, they do not set the rules, and so they are unable to ensure that these protections meet the expectations of their local communities.

Our tree protections were fundamentally undermined by myriad regulation exemptions introduced in 2011, which permitted the unnecessary removal of large trees based on their proximity to a dwelling. Only three out of the 40 interstate jurisdictions that protect trees on private land allow for such removals without application.

Adelaide is the capital of the driest state on the driest inhabited continent in the world. We also have some of the lowest levels of tree canopy coverage of any metropolitan city in our nation. Compared with other capital cities, Adelaide also has the lowest percentage of parkland, approximately 10 per cent, compared with 57 per cent in Sydney, 40 per cent in Perth, 22 per cent in Hobart and 20 per cent in Melbourne. The significant decline comes from subdivisions and urban infill replacing gardens, trees and brownfield sites with hard surfaces such as paving, concrete, driveways, parking and roads to support higher density living. This significantly limits our ability to increase tree canopy using public land.

A report from the Conservation Council of South Australia estimates that greater Adelaide is losing 75,000 trees per year—75,000 trees per year—an extraordinary figure. With rising temperatures and smaller backyards further increasing the difficulty of replacing large trees and growing new urban forest, the protection of what remains of our current urban forest on private land becomes more important. Many of the current species of trees that make up our urban forests may be unable to thrive in a hotter, drier climate and will need to be replaced with native or more resilient species fitted with water-sensitive urban design infrastructure to support tree health and survival.

Urban trees have also had positive strong impacts on our social, physical, and mental health and wellbeing, and they help mitigate some of the negative impacts of urbanisation. Scientific evidence shows spending time in green space provided by trees can strongly protect against depression, anxiety and stress-related issues. In fact, trees help people feel happier and more relaxed.

The Urban Forest Inquiry interim report contains our committee's initial recommendations based on the evidence and submissions received to date. These recommendations encompass those areas that I spoke of at the start of this: exemption distances, species exemptions, trunk size, canopy cover, fees for both legal and illegal removal, a tree removal fund, and community-based tree protections through increased government funding, as well as funding from community and non-government groups. We think this is a good first step that the Malinauskas government should urgently take and we look forward to a positive response to our interim report.

There is an urgent need for South Australia to adopt best practice tree protections, not only for our own personal enjoyment, but also of course for improving our natural environment and biodiversity. To quote Professor Chris Daniels, the Chair of the Green Adelaide Landscape Board:

Cities grow. Cultures change. When we lose our urban forest, we lose the biodiversity that makes our region special.

Adelaide is a special region, and I do look forward to the Malinauskas government implementing these recommendations from this report and preserving what it is that makes Adelaide such an extraordinary place. With that, I commend the report.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (16:13): I thank all members who have spoken today, who are also all members of the committee, and I look forward to seeing where the next chapter of our interim report goes.

Motion carried.

Motions

COUNTRY SHOWS

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (16:16): I move:

That this council—

1. Acknowledges that South Australia's 48 country shows play an important role in regional communities as a hub for social, business and broader economic activation;
2. Notes the contribution of Agricultural Societies Council of South Australia staff and the thousands of volunteers who make agricultural shows possible;
3. Acknowledges the important role that agricultural shows play in securing the next generation of primary industry leaders and innovators; and
4. Congratulates this year's winners of South Australia's Young Rural Ambassador Award, Rural Ambassador Award, Young Judges' and Paraders' Championships.

Fresh produce, classic cars, horses in action, fashion parades, plenty of arts and crafts, loads of local businesses on site and so much more: there is something for everyone at a good old country show. As someone who grew up in the country, I understand how integral country shows are to communities, industry and succession.

We know that regions are the economic heart which pumps South Australia's prosperity. Regional South Australia contributes approximately \$29 billion to our economy every year. We are world renowned for our food and fibre production and, as a state, we must have a plan in place to ensure the next generation is ready to take up the reins.

In an increasingly urbanised world, it is crucial for children to understand where their food and fibre come from and how it is produced. Country shows offer a unique and valuable opportunity for this kind of education.

One of the key reasons country shows are such an educational asset is the emphasis on hands-on learning. They feature interactive exhibits and activities that allow children to engage with the world of agriculture. Whether it is milking cows, sorting crops, or learning about the weird and wonderful varieties of chickens, these hands-on experiences are both fun and enlightening. They give children a chance to see, a chance to touch and a chance to experience aspects of primary production that might otherwise remain abstract concepts. They are the perfect place to explore the 'farm to plate' or 'farm to table' journey.

Visitors can witness the entire process of food production, from planting and harvesting to processing and cooking. There is absolutely no doubt that country shows are invaluable. Whilst creating an atmosphere of community and fun, they also, importantly, inspire children to learn about food production, agriculture and gain an appreciation for those in the agricultural industry.

Shows, at their core, showcase the life and vibrancy of regional areas. They are where farming ideas are shared, businesses collaborate and, importantly, are a great place for the community to get together socially. They also contribute significantly to the economy of a region, as people from all over the district and beyond congregate and require a place to sleep, eat and rehydrate.

I commend the Agricultural Societies Council of South Australia, better known by their trading name Country Shows SA, for their commitment to educating the public about the role of primary industries in our economy and in our everyday lives and, importantly, for inspiring and supporting the next generation of country leaders.

Agricultural shows play a crucial role in the development and advancement of young people, including young farmers and school leavers. We need young people coming through the primary industry sector who are passionate, excited and knowledgeable.

It is my pleasure to share some of the highlights from the young leaders' program supported by the Agricultural Societies Council of South Australia. The 2023 state Rural Ambassador is Lachy Johnson from Bordertown, and the 2023 South Australian Young Rural Ambassador is Mackenzie Wilson from Williamstown. Courtney Higgs from Naracoorte, who was the 2022 South Australian Rural Ambassador state winner, represented South Australia at the national finals in Launceston last month.

The young judges competition has young people across the state growing and perfecting their expertise in alpaca fleece, on-the-hoof beef cattle, beef cattle young paraders, dairy cattle, dairy cattle young paraders, grain, meat sheep on the hoof and on the hook, merino fleece, merino sheep, poultry and soil. These competitions help young people explore, learn and thrive in the agricultural industry ensuring the continued vitality and growth of the sector.

The rural ambassador and young judges programs are important to the next generation of agricultural leaders and innovators for several reasons, including increasing confidence and developing interpersonal communication skills, experiencing learning and leadership opportunities for accelerated skill development, creating a safe platform for business ventures and entrepreneurial testing in the agricultural space, the opportunity to experience new sectors and try new things in an environment where it is safe to fail and learn, exceptional networking and career opportunity discussions including mentorships and access to experts, and the general inspiration gained from hard work, putting yourself forward to have a go and preparing ahead.

I would like to take a moment to mention one of the most important cohorts of a country show, that is, the volunteers. Regional communities in general thrive on the community spirit of volunteering and working together. All 48 South Australian country shows are run by volunteer boards across local districts. It takes 12 to 24 months to plan for each show. Encouragingly, many shows have several young people on their boards who are passionate about agriculture and their local districts.

Volunteers are most often responsible for event planning and coordination, including exhibitor sales and registration, site safety and security, car parking logistics, liaising with local government and emergency services, competition entries, marketing, media engagement and booking entertainment. The set-up and pack-down of the site: as shows are often held in highly used community spaces like ovals or schools, the turnover is fast and often labour-intensive. Volunteers are also responsible for exhibitor assistance and information, both on the days of the event and in the lead-up to the show. They also assist in judging and coordinating of competitions and presentations, as well as associated demonstrations and main arena entertainment.

The Agricultural Societies Council of South Australia is the state body for the 48 country shows and eight associations of South Australia. Forgive my indulgence as I list them all now. In the central district we have Angaston, Mannum, Tanunda, Mt Pleasant and Mount Barker. On Eyre Peninsula we have Kimba, Yallunda Flat, Cummins, Cleve, Port Lincoln, Whyalla and Wudinna and District. Over on Kangaroo Island we have Kingscote and Parndana. In our Murraylands we have Karoonda, Loxton and Pinnaroo.

Up in the northern areas we have Wilmington, Balaklava and Dalkey, Quorn, Melrose and Mount Remarkable, Jamestown, Burra, Clare, Kapunda and Light, Eudunda, Crystal Brook and Gawler. Across in the South-East, we have Kingston SE, Keith and Tintinara, Mil-Lel, Naracoorte, Mount Gambier, Penola, Millicent, Bordertown, Lucindale and Mundulla. The southern associations include Murray Bridge, Yankalilla, Rapid Bay and Myponga, Strathalbyn, Port Elliot, Coonapyn, Callington, Uraidla and Summertown. Finally, on the Yorke Peninsula we have the Copper Coast show, Minlaton and Maitland.

Country shows are an economic boost to the towns through food, accommodation and other local goods and services, are often a central feature on a town's tourism calendar and are a source of civic pride. In summary, agricultural fairs are important to country towns because they preserve and promote the rural way of life and local heritage, stimulate the local economy, educate the community about agriculture and provide a platform for social interaction and cultural exchange. These events play a multifaceted role in enhancing the vitality and wellbeing of country communities right across our state.

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

Bills

FIRST NATIONS VOICE REPEAL BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. S.L. GAME (16:26): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to repeal the First Nations Voice Act 2023, and for other purposes. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. S.L. GAME (16:27): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am introducing my First Nations Voice Repeal Bill because I believe in needs-based support and laws that do not create division within our society. Looking at the results of the Voice referendum, in which more than 60 per cent of Australians voted no, and in South Australia 64 per cent of voters rejected the concept of dividing the state on racial grounds, I know I am not alone.

Much has been said in this chamber about giving the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a voice. Much has been said by our very own Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders already have a voice, with 11 federal Indigenous parliamentarians and 26 Australia-wide. There are currently 110 advisory committees or groups that develop policies and provide advice on specific issues registered on the federal government website.

This chamber needs to be concerned with the voice of all South Australians. It is time those already on salaries and guaranteed positions listened properly and acted to create real tangible benefits for those they represent. I have been accused in this chamber of being happy with the status quo for those in despairing conditions, despite repeatedly advocating for them and making my position clear. I want every dollar to go to those who need it, not on a greater bureaucratic arm that will comprise over 100 members and, due to the potentially ever-expanding nature of the committees, potentially many more in the future.

How this equates to racism and happiness with the status quo is mind-boggling, but I will continue to advocate for needs-based, not racial ancestry-based, support. I question why it is justified to treat any child differently based on their ancestry. Surely, children, especially those living in poverty, should be prioritised based on the needs they have.

Over 20,000 children are living in poverty in South Australia. It is unacceptable and deserves our attention whether you are first generation Australian, multi-generation Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or not. I have heard stories from dedicated staff about schoolchildren refusing to listen to them because they were stolen. Schoolchildren need to be taught facts about history, both good and bad.

The Hon. Robert Simms has been critical of One Nation's education policy, a policy that promotes critical thinking and the benefits of a merit-based society, a policy that would put an end to guilt shaming, which no child should be subjected to. The way forward is not to create another massive level of bureaucracy, it lies in early intervention, keeping families together, focusing on education, and building pathways to employment regardless of background or ethnicity.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:31): I rise on behalf of the Greens, but also on at least 11 votes in this place, to speak against the First Nations Voice Repeal Bill 2023. The Hon. Sarah Game of the One Nation party has finally—after a few false starts—introduced this repeal bill to repeal a piece of legislation that has already passed this council and this parliament in this term of parliament, to repeal a bill that is a Malinauskas government election pledge made good in the parliament, and that was a Greens election pledge made good in the parliament.

When the Hon. Sarah Game claims that much has been said about a Voice, this chamber and this parliament is the voice of all South Australians in this state. When political parties make election promises, take them to the people, put their candidates out to the people, and are elected to this place, I think the people of South Australia expect us to keep our promises.

Some parties did not put many pledges out to the electorate whatsoever, and certainly the One Nation party made no statement during the state election about a Voice to Parliament that I could find on the record. What I could find was the very public commitment by the Labor Party and the Greens that we would legislate a First Nations Voice to Parliament. By my count that adds up to more than the 11 votes needed in this place, and it means that this bill is doomed to fail.

While it has finally been introduced into this place after much fanfare, largely on places like Sky News, I do not want the South Australian public to think that there is any chance whatsoever—and I certainly do not want those First Nations people who, in good faith, supported my political party and the party of government of this place—to think for a second that there is a hope in hell of this bill passing this place. It will go no further, and I challenge the Hon. Sarah Game to put it to a vote in the next sitting week of parliament rather than debating this through Sky News as opposed to the chamber of the parliament, which is the representative voice of all South Australians.

I am not the only one who has had my mind boggled by this. We have treated Aboriginal people in this country differently for a very long time. We have had White Australia policies where we have treated other races, as well, very differently for a very long time. But to treat our First Nations people in this nation so abysmally, where we sought to assimilate them, where we sought to annihilate them, where we stole their children, and have recognised this in this parliament, Mr President, as you well know, with a compensation scheme to make reparations for the harm that we have done First Nations people in this nation, it is the least we can do to make amends, not just by apologising, not just by ensuring reparations, but by ensuring that they have a voice that this parliament pledges to, hopefully listen to.

Even when members of this parliament do not listen to that First Nations Voice, some of us will be listening, and the community will hear loud and clear who is actually representing the people of this state, who is keeping their election promises and who is simply doing another stunt for Sky News and thumbing their nose at the democracy that has already happened in this parliament.

This parliament has voted on this issue. This issue should be settled but, of course, the member who has introduced this bill today, as I say, after a few false starts, wishes to have the argument again. What will not change—and we can have all the arguments in the world, and I look forward to them if that is the way the honourable member wishes to take this particular debate—is that she does not have 11 votes in this place. There are 22 members. She will need 11 votes. She does not have 11 votes. This bill is going nowhere, and with that I seek leave to conclude my comments when I hope it goes to a vote in the next week of sitting.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Motions

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (16:36): I move:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be established to inquire into the Country Fire Service (CFS), with particular reference to:
 - (a) assessing support mechanisms available to volunteer firefighters throughout the state;
 - (b) examining the processes, procedures, criteria, and timeliness of investigations into volunteer conduct;
 - (c) examining the adequacy and state of facilities at CFS stations across regional South Australia, with an emphasis on change rooms, bathrooms, and other essential amenities;
 - (d) determining the transparency and effectiveness of the CFS's capital programs, including facility and appliance replacement programs;
 - (e) evaluating the communication channels and procedures within the CFS, especially concerning volunteers' ability to voice their concerns and the organisation's responsiveness;
 - (f) assessing the role and responsibility of the minister in addressing and supporting the concerns of the CFS volunteers;

- (g) exploring the adequacy of proposed investments into station upgrades, equipment provisions and other support mechanisms for the CFS volunteers; and
 - (h) any other relevant matters related to the functioning, governance, and support structures of the CFS.
2. That this council permits the select committee to authorise the disclosure or publication, as it sees fit, of any evidence or documents presented to the committee prior to such evidence being presented to the council.

I do not think there is a person in this chamber or indeed in the other place or anywhere around South Australia who does not hold the Country Fire Service (CFS) in very high regard in the South Australian community. The bravery and the commitment of our CFS volunteers really is second to none.

Those members are our family members. They are husbands, they are wives, they are sons and daughters, they are our mates, they are our community members who put their lives on the line to save the lives and the businesses of people around this state, and they are increasingly being asked to do a significant amount of work and respond to a significant amount of emergencies and, indeed, life-threatening situations. As I said, they put their lives on hold to serve our community, and it is vitally important that our CFS volunteers have strong support systems and resources in place for them to be able to do this very important work.

I know that many would have seen the recent media reports over the last week or so in terms of CFS volunteers. Indeed, I have spoken with many volunteers around the state and have spoken with many of my colleagues, who can share similar stories. It is vitally important that we have these support mechanisms in place, that we understand that the processes that look into volunteer conduct are in place and that the transparency and the effectiveness of those processes, in terms of our volunteers, are held and put to light.

I would like to now just acknowledge the Hon. Tammy Franks' motion on 18 October in which she called for an audit into CFS facilities. I would say that it is vitally important, too, that our volunteers enjoy and can utilise the equipment that allows them to do their great work. I speak with volunteers around our state, and quite honestly some are operating out of very simple sheds and trying to do the work and protect their communities when the facilities are not exactly up to scratch. There are volunteers who need to walk across the road even just to go to the bathroom or to get changed. So I certainly acknowledge the Hon. Tammy Franks' motion in terms of the need for an audit. This select committee will go some way to looking into that as well.

As I said, within the motion details we are looking into support mechanisms for our volunteer firefighters, investigating the processes into volunteer conduct and examining the adequacy of the facilities at our CFS stations—emphasising those amenities, those change rooms. Indeed, we have some fantastic female volunteer CFS firefighters all around the state who do a tremendous job. We are also looking into the transparency and effectiveness of the CFS's capital programs, the communication channels within the CFS, the role of the minister in supporting CFS volunteers, the adequacy of investments into station upgrades and equipment, and any other relevant matters.

These people are putting their lives on the line every day to ensure that our regional communities are safe, protecting businesses and lives, and I thank them for it. I certainly hope that this chamber will support this motion into putting together a select committee so that our volunteers, the management of the CFS and, indeed, people around our state can speak to the issues and the opportunities that face the CFS here, now and into the future.

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

Bills

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MOTOR SPORT (PARKLANDS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:41): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the South Australian Motor Sport Act 1984. Read a first time.

*Parliamentary Committees***JOINT COMMITTEE ON ESTABLISHMENT OF ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY**

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.B. Martin:

That the final report of the committee be noted.

(Continued from 18 October 2023.)

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:42): I rise to speak on the motion about the report of the Joint Committee on the Establishment of Adelaide University. The joint committee was formed on 6 July to inquire into and report on the proposal to amalgamate the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia. The joint committee was given a very tight time frame because there was a requirement that the committee report must be ready by 17 October 2023. It has been a lengthy process in terms of time taken over the winter break.

During the time of inquiry the committee met on 14 occasions, with each session generally lasting on average about three hours. The committee received 86 written submissions from a long list of stakeholders. We had face-to-face evidence given by 47 witnesses, with two important witnesses, namely the vice-chancellors of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia, Professor Peter Høj AC and Professor David Lloyd, who were recalled to give further evidence.

It was a privilege to be a member of the joint committee—my first joint committee—representing the Liberal Party, along with the member for Morialta, the Hon. John Gardner, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, shadow minister for education, training and skills. I wish to acknowledge the strong leadership and passion of the shadow minister for education, the Hon. John Gardner, who worked diligently and relentlessly to engage with stakeholders across the board, not only as a member of the joint committee but outside of parliament, to conduct extensive research and preparation of briefings for key stakeholders including the Liberal parliamentary team.

From the opposition's point of view, we believe that the joint committee should have had a longer time frame to consider the proposal of a merger of this scale and importance. In opposition we have very modest resources available, and certainly the work on the committee has applied a significantly heavy workload on members like the Hon. John Gardner and myself over the last four to five months as this matter has been considered.

The membership consisted of the Hon. Dan Cregan, Speaker of the House of Assembly, as the Chair. The House of Assembly members were the member for Morialta, the member for Adelaide, the member for Gibson and the member for Florey. The composition from the upper house consisted of the Hon. Reggie Martin, the Hon. Robert Simms, the Hon. Sarah Game and the Hon. Connie Bonaros. The Hon. Tammy Franks, in the absence of the Hon. Robert Simms, was with us from 6 July until 28 August and subsequently the Hon. Robert Simms took over on the committee from 29 August.

I also want to place on the record my thanks for the members. I also particularly want to thank all the administration and research support staff for the committee. I would just like to place on the record my thanks to Mr David Pegram, the secretary to the committee, Ms Alison Meeks, Mr Shane Hilton, Ms Tonia Coulter, and the two research officers, Mr Alistair Taylor and Ms Megan Fink.

The terms of reference are well documented; I will not go into that. I just want to point to the fact that this committee was established because the government had made a decision to make special funding provisions to help the amalgamation of the two universities, namely, the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide. Yesterday, during the debate, I mentioned a great deal about the minority report subsequent to the actual report that was presented by the joint committee.

Overall, the committee received evidence from a range of witnesses in support of the amalgamation. Those that supported the merger had a number of reasons for doing so: (1) they saw it as having the ability to deliver long-term economic benefits to South Australia; (2) they saw an increased international ranking of a new institution when compared with the other institutions in the

sector; (3) they attract more international students; (4) enhanced research output and quality; and (5) provide possible benefits of scale, including a reduction of various research intensity of collaboration.

However, we also heard a number of witnesses who opposed and showed hesitation about the purported benefits. Those who opposed mentioned that the merger will: (1) lead to redundancy or job losses through efficiency measures; (2) deliver an inferior student and staff experience arising partly from the scale of the new proposed institution; (3) deliver an education model that is out of step with the ongoing review of the national higher education sector as part of the Australian Universities Accord; (4) reduce the quality of research through the failure to retain leading researchers; and (5) divert key staff from their core teaching and research roles when they are engaged in completing the merger schemes of arrangements.

There were seven recommendations. I think honourable members can read them for themselves, but the Liberal Party wants to stress that we argue very strongly that we must provide additional funding to support the institution that is not part of this merger. We call on the government to consider backing a new research fund for Flinders University and, together with the Hon. Robert Simms and the Greens, we have advocated very strongly for it. We also advocated for more funding to support regional students, the regions having onsite education delivery, and not just for the sake of merging the institutions and forgetting about the implications for the region.

Overall, we do not believe the Malinauskas Labor government has handled the merger discussions well. Their political fumbling and poor management of the process has really put a dark cloud over the proposal for months and months. It has really undermined the confidence among staff and the public and that has been spoken about. I encourage members who want to fully understand the position of the Liberal Party to read the Hon. John Gardner's extensive contributions in the House of Assembly during the tabling of the joint committee report.

The Malinauskas Labor government's incompetence highlights the importance of the work undertaken by the Joint Committee on the Establishment of Adelaide University. We made a series of recommendations to reduce the risks inherent in the proposal. The Liberal Party believes that not enough has been done for Flinders University or the regions as part of the merger proposal, which is why we are committing, as the media release has shown and the Hon. John Gardner has announced, to a new research fund for Flinders, as well as a regional university hub, if elected in 2026.

I have made many mentions in my second reading speech during the debate stage of the bill. I will not repeat them, but I do believe that the people of South Australia deserve no less than us putting them first on every occasion. While we are supporting this merger, we really want a pathway and benefits for the regional economy and regional students in their area and to make sure that there is equity and a level playing field applying to Flinders University in terms of funding.

I also want to particularly include some comments from a letter that was written to Mr John Gardner and myself dated 30 October, a letter in which both vice-chancellors want to address some of the concerns that we had when we raised the minority report. The letter reads:

Dear Mr Gardner,

We are writing to provide a response to the Minority Report by yourself and the Hon. Jing Lee MLC as part of the Joint Committee on the Establishment of Adelaide University.

Firstly, we wish to acknowledge the careful and constructive way in which both you and the wider committee have engaged with the Universities as part of this parliamentary process.

We believe that the ambition of a new University is clear. As captured in our first collective vision statement:

The Minority Report's recommendations propose a number of matters for consideration. Some are directed towards the Government; others relate to how the Universities could best manage the transition period and post-merger activities of Adelaide University. We wish to respond, in broad terms, to those recommendations regarding to risk and regional delivery.

Risk and its mitigation

The Universities, in their various submissions and evidence before the Joint Committee, outlined the detailed attention that has been given to matters of risk and their mitigation. We acknowledge the risks are tangible, though manageable and in our view outweigh the longer-term risk of not pursuing this opportunity.

The Universities have put in place very detailed plans and mitigations relating to all aspects of the merger, not all of which is in the public domain for competition purposes. However, there is some additional information we would like to provide you as part of our response to the Minority Report.

Following a rigorous tender and procurement process, with independent probity, the Universities have jointly appointed Deloitte as our Integration Management Partner. Deloitte has a proven track record of delivering successful integration projects of substantial complexity. They will support critical subject areas such as integration and transformation oversight, project management and quality assurance, business process design, systems integration, change management and the communication frameworks. This partnership is one of the key measures that has been taken to de-risk this merger.

Staff retention and attraction during any complex change of this scale is a risk.

The universities have admitted that. It continues:

It is one that the Universities identified early as part of its transition planning. Processes and procedures have been put in place to retain/minimise the loss of key staff with an ambition to attract and retain more talent in the medium to long term. While the pre-legislative period does cause a level of uncertainty, we cannot yet identify any discernible trend to suggest that the staff are departing the universities due to the merger...The new Adelaide University is committed to enhancing the student experience and do not believe that the lived experience in a merged university will be in any way diminished. The enhancement of the student experience has been identified as a key institutional strategic goal, is a key transition path and is an area in which planning has already commenced. Indeed, it is proposed that Adelaide University will appoint a Deputy Vice Chancellor whose primary portfolio attention will be upon student experience and success.

The Universities welcomed the focus the Joint Committee placed on the risk involving this merger. The Universities have always anticipated the risks and have spent considerable time identifying and putting in place management plans to address them.

In terms of regional delivery, which is a question and also a recommendation outlined in the Liberal opposition's minority report, in response to that the universities have provided these comments, and I would like to include them in my contribution here today:

Regional Delivery

As identified in the Minority Report the viability of many offerings is dependent on scale. You correctly noted one area that merits serious consideration is that of courses with low student numbers. The Committee heard evidence that a risk inherent in the status quo is for such courses. As they require subsidy from other parts of the Universities' budgets, the future of these courses might be vulnerable in times of financial pressure. It was suggested that the proposed scale of the new institution would give such courses a much stronger level of protection.

This conclusion is directly relevant to the regional campus and hubs. Both Universities have invested in regional education research in Mount Gambier, Whyalla, Roseworthy and the Waite. In addition, there are focused activities in Port Lincoln, Ceduna, Elizabeth and the APY Lands. A university of scale provides the means by which the academic offerings in the regions become more sustainable and can possibly be further expanded.

In designing and implementing a new curriculum for the new University, a fundamental principle is that the student ambition and experience will be paramount. The new curriculum will be contemporary, 'modular, adaptable and stackable' with digital underpinnings. The ability to engage with students through face-to-face, hybrid-mode or online education will provide important means of access for students in the regions. We believe that this approach to curriculum design and delivery will allow more regional students to attend Adelaide University without necessarily relocating to Adelaide...

The Universities, and a future Adelaide University, will subject to sufficient demand and support actively engage with any such state policy initiatives designed to establish regional hubs or learning centres. As the founding legislation for the new Adelaide University obligates and the existing regional campuses of our two institutions demonstrate, the new University intends to serve the state, not just metropolitan Adelaide. As such, Adelaide University would, subject to the appropriate assessment, be extremely well placed to being an anchor tenant in any regional initiative that may be advanced in the future.

We again thank you for the opportunity to respond to aspects of the Minority Report. We are encouraged by the careful consideration that has been given to the establishment of the new Adelaide University.

Yours sincerely

Professor Peter Høj AC

Vice-Chancellor and President

The University of Adelaide
Professor David Lloyd
Vice Chancellor and President
University of South Australia

I am going to make some concluding remarks. From the outset, we have always mentioned that we want the best results from the merger. It is our responsibility to ensure that this report provides all the evidence necessary. I think all along we have said that transparency and accountability were lacking in the whole process in terms of getting the merger and the haste with which the agreement was signed. With those remarks, I commend the report.

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

Motions

ESTABLISHMENT OF ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY

Adjourned debate of motion of Hon. R.A. Simms:

That this council—

1. Notes that:
 - (a) according to a survey commissioned by the Australia Institute, six in seven (or 86 per cent) of South Australians agree that the details of the business case for the proposed university merger should be made public;
 - (b) support for releasing the business case is strongest in the regions, supported by 88 per cent of respondents; and
 - (c) there is a high level of support for releasing the business case among the voters of all political parties represented in the parliament.
2. Calls on the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide to publicly release the full business case to inform the community's consideration of this proposal.

(Continued from 18 October 2023.)

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (17:02): I will be supporting this motion which seeks that the business case for the proposed merger of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia be made public. A poll by the Australia Institute—and we have to be honest here, we know that their politics are usually aligned with the Greens, but nonetheless—found that 86 per cent of those surveyed wanted the business case to be made public, that there was a high level of support for releasing the case among voters of all political parties and in the regions. I am certain if you had to do a straw poll, this poll would reflect the views of a majority of South Australians, but the Malinauskas government has not, nor will it, heed the call.

We know that the merger is going ahead now and we also know that the government, along with the Premier, did not bother to look at the business case before ploughing ahead with their merger project using hundreds of millions of taxpayers' money. Yet even after the Premier admitted he had not seen it, the Attorney-General told us today that they still had not sought to view it, even confidentially, despite the clamour for this to happen.

The two universities continued to hide it under a shield of commercial confidentiality, saying that they provided a summary of the case to the parliamentary committee anyway and that should be enough. Well, it is not. It is shameful—no, make that scandalous—that the government could commit so much of taxpayer money without seeing if it stacked up. What public corporation would do business like that? Could you see big business, say like Santos or BHP, commit half a billion dollars or more towards a mining project before doing its numbers as to whether it was financially viable to do so, and not let its shareholders know? I could not see a small business doing that either.

Taxpayers are the shareholders of the South Australian government. This is all about transparency and accountability yet this government is quickly proving it shies away from being up-front and responsible for its big spending schemes. They do not like scrutiny. Good government is not only about delivering footy feasts, festivals, car races, golf tournaments, aquatic centres, road

tunnels, hospitals, schools and other job creation schemes. It is also about how these projects are delivered, and whether taxpayers' money has been appropriately spent.

As the Auditor-General told the Budget and Finance Committee recently, his work as an independent auditor has been frustrated by this government because he was unable to access documents to determine whether transactions involving 18 projects valued at more than \$20 billion were undertaken properly. This is disgraceful. Why and what are they hiding or hiding from, you might like to ask.

Mr Richardson also said the government and he should have been able to have a look at the business case, if one exists, for the merger of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia. He, like the government, could have still done so without having to reveal what was in it, as long as someone with nous and business acumen had a look at it, but they did not do that. We must now take them on trust that it is sound and the whole thing will work, even if it takes a decade to determine success or failure. More vexing is that the government and the two vice-chancellors also refuse to tell us who created their business case.

The Hon. R.A. Simms: A secret society.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: It could have been Professor Quincy Adams Wagstaff for all we know. If you have not heard of him, google him.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (17:07): It probably will not surprise my colleagues opposite that I will not be supporting this motion. If only this motion was about transparency and accountability, if only it was intended to provide those things, then perhaps I would be more open-minded, but nothing my colleague opposite has said has convinced me of that. Before I get into that specifically, I want to touch on what did occur during that committee process.

As the chancellors and vice-chancellors indicated during their appearances before the committee on 12 August, the universities undertook detailed planning and assessment as part of the due diligence phases of the merger investigation. Concurrently to the appearance, the universities released to the university community and the committee detailed summaries of the key documents that informed the council's decisions.

The universities have responded to dozens of questions in the committee and on notice during its in camera evidence and appearance before the committee, something we have reiterated time and time again throughout other proceedings in this place. We have articulated that the university further outlined considerable work that has been undertaken—

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Point of order: the member is actually talking about in camera evidence of a committee, something that many of us are not privy to and that I do not believe she is allowed to talk about in this place.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I have not said what the in camera evidence is. I have referred to the fact that there was in camera evidence. I have not disclosed anything about that in camera evidence.

The PRESIDENT: And, of course, the Hon. Ms Bonaros, you would not disclose any evidence.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: No, I could not, and no I would not, Mr President, and the reason I would not is because it was given to the committee on a confidential basis, on the basis that it was commercial-in-confidence, on the basis that it covered issues like competitive advantage, on the basis that it covered the risk mitigation strategies that they had in place to deal with those things, and on the basis that it would disadvantage the new university merger if it was released publicly. That is why I will not comment on what was released in that evidence.

We do know, though, that there were lots of questions, lots of questions asked by me, even after that information was provided. There was, by me, a forensic examination of the information provided and questions back and forth about that, and there were responses to those questions, but it has been made clear that if the substance of those questions and the material that was actually

debated is released, it compromises the merger, it compromises the new university, it compromises their ability to do the things they are going to do on a competitive basis. That is the reason they have not.

There are verbatim extracts from the business plan—some have questioned whether it even exists—that have been provided in camera to those members on the committee. We have had the opportunity of looking at that material, of scrutinising that material. They have released considerable material and provided detailed evidence to enable representatives from here to form a view on the proposed establishment of an Adelaide University merger.

Then there was a report. Those who were convinced supported the report, and those who were not convinced provided minority reports. That is the way things work in here. The universities have only withheld the information which, if released, could compromise the best interests of the exiting universities and the successful transition to Adelaide University. Those of us who were committed to that process and who made informed decisions about that went through that process and looked at the information that was provided and made sure, before signing up to a majority report, that they were satisfied.

I am not sure there is, to be honest, a lot left in the business plan to release publicly. I will touch on that because we have had, as I said, that ample opportunity to forensically scrutinise that material. I have made clear my position on the merger and on this motion. I am not falling for the politicking. The mover knows very well this to be the case; the mover knows very well that it is a great headline, a great catchcry: 'Release the business plan'. It is amazing, it sounds great, of course people support it, but we fail to tell people what has been disclosed, we fail to tell people that everything but the information that is in the best interests of the exiting universities and the successful transition to Adelaide University, everything but the things that compromise them, has been released to the inquiry.

This is what the Hon. Rob Simms told us the other day he wanted in here. He said that the Greens led the charge for a parliamentary inquiry, and there was a parliamentary inquiry in which both houses of parliament were involved. The Hon. Rob Simms, like I, was involved in that process, and we had the benefit of that material. That is the bottom line. The only material that has not been disclosed publicly is the material that will compromise the existing universities and the new university. I am not falling for the politicking, and I am not falling for the transparency lines that are being run.

As to the previous contribution of the Hon. Jing Lee, and anyone else who agrees with that position, the uncertainty and the reason we wanted to create some certainty, the dark cloud that she speaks of, has been created by the opposition. They are the ones who have created the uncertainty, they are the ones who have raised all the concerns about the merger, they are the ones who wanted to take this into next year, despite all the evidence raised at the committee that said, 'Don't take this into the next year.' They are the ones who have been creating the media headlines.

We knew all along that it would take a brave opposition to come into this parliament and oppose the merger. I dare anyone who has criticised the merger to do what the Greens are doing. If you do not back it, at least have the intestinal fortitude to come into this place and oppose it. That is precisely what I dare them to do.

The Hon. H.M. Girolamo interjecting:

The Hon. C. BONAROS: It is not a deal, Ms Girolamo. Do you know what it is? I actually feel sorry for the shadow education minister because I do think that by the end of that process I saw the shift in that shadow minister. I saw the shift from 'Oh, crap!' I saw the shift from 'Oh, crap! This is not flying anymore. We cannot oppose this, and we have been out for months on end creating uncertainty and fearmongering in the community'—and your party was asleep. While your party was asleep, some of us were working to get outcomes. That is what happened here.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Point of order: I am all for rigorous debate but the honourable member is actually yelling at another member across the chamber.

The PRESIDENT: Yes, I think you can just tone it down, the Hon. Ms Bonaros.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: That is what you get when you interject. The opposition could have led. If I was the opposition and I was convinced, I know what I would have done. I know exactly what I would have done. I would have done what we see in poker machine debates. I would have gone and knocked on the door of the Premier and said, 'Peter, let's do a deal.' But they were sleeping while other people were working.

Since then, what I love most is that they realised they have missed out on that opportunity, they have realised that they cannot say to any of the people who provided evidence—groups that they back, business groups that they back—they have realised, 'We can't get out of this,' so they are trying to claw back victory, they are trying to claw back credit now for outcomes they did not negotiate, for commitments with the university and with the Premier that they did not land.

They put out a press release today saying that the \$60 million, 'It was us; it was us; it was us who wanted the money for Flinders.' They put out a press release saying, 'The hubs, that was our idea. That was our idea.' That is rubbish. It is the biggest load of rubbish that I have heard from them in a while—not that long, actually—but it is a load of rubbish. While they were sleeping some of us were working, some of us were trying to figure out why a good idea should be made better.

As I said yesterday, and I will repeat today, I am exceptionally proud of those outcomes. I am not going to fall into the politicking and the headlines and the catchcries of 'Release the business plan, release the business plan,' when we know that every shred of evidence that could be released has already been released.

The opposition, and anyone else who thinks that they should just be able to stand in here and criticise and criticise and criticise, feed the uncertainty, feed the dark cloud that they refer to, and then at the last minute when all else has failed say, 'Well, we are going to support the bill anyway.' My challenge to you is: if that is your position, oppose the bill.

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (17:17): I would like to start, and I hope I am not going to shock the mover of this motion, by saying that the government will not be supporting this motion. We believe the process to establish the new Adelaide University has been extremely open and accountable. The government took its university amalgamation policy to the 2022 state election. The councils of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia subsequently resolved to explore the creation of a new university for the future, signing a statement of cooperation. The universities then commenced a joint feasibility assessment and released a vision statement which was subject to feedback from within the universities and the broader community.

Upon the university councils reaching a decision to proceed with the creation of a new university, the state government published a draft Adelaide University Bill for public feedback. Even more than that, the government established a joint committee of the parliament, chaired by a non-government MP, to explore and test the evidence supporting the establishment of a new university. That committee received more than 80 submissions and heard evidence from almost 50 witnesses, including academics, students, experts, and business and community groups.

The universities themselves supplied to the committee significant documentation that informed their decision, including comprehensive summaries of the joint white paper, business case, transition plan and heads of agreement. The universities publicly released a comprehensive summary of the business case, with the only information redacted being commercially sensitive material that, if it had been released, could be used by competitors to gain an advantage.

In an in camera session with the Joint Committee on the Establishment of Adelaide University the universities provided further detailed information to the committee on the full business case. Committee members considered this additional information when reporting the committee's findings to parliament on the establishment of Adelaide University on 17 October.

Universities operate in a competitive environment both nationally and internationally, and the full business case on the amalgamation of the universities contains commercial-in-confidence material that is not appropriate to release publicly. Release of this information could provide information that has value to the university's competitors. For example, this could be commercial strategy and analysis, the university's intellectual property and/or information subject to legal professional privilege.

While I am on my feet, I understand that there is likely to be an amendment to this motion from the Hon. Jing Lee, and I would like to let the chamber know that the government will not be supporting the amendment either.

Leading up to the university's decision to proceed with the establishment of the new uni, the government worked closely with the universities to develop the financial package that helps the new university pursue some of its core objectives while being aligned to the achievement of key elements in the government's economic vision—things such as increasing levels of research and innovation and addressing equity considerations for people within the community who have experienced disadvantages.

I am advised that the university has provided the Department of Treasury and Finance with a confidential copy of their estimates of the financial profile of a new university, including core assumptions, which helped inform the government's financial package. In designing the funding package the government had regard to both funding that would assist the new university to achieve key objectives and that would address the state government's strategic objectives and benefit the broader South Australian community over time.

With respect to the disclosure of cabinet documents, the state government maintains exactly the same policy for providing access to cabinet documents as the former Liberal government. In fact, the disclosure rules were last updated in February 2019. The workings of cabinet in all Westminster democracies are governed by long established conventions of collective responsibility and confidentiality. These practices have been in place for generations and should be preserved.

We have proposed a number of options to the Auditor-General that we believe should satisfy his request for information without impacting on the long established principles of cabinet confidentiality.

The Hon. S.L. GAME (17:22): I rise briefly to state that I will not be supporting the honourable member's motion and also to echo the statements from my colleagues the Hon. Connie Bonaros and the Hon. Reggie Martin that, due to the nature of the committee process, there has already been ample evidence put on the public record. As the Hon. Connie Bonaros mentioned, there rightly should be pride in the negotiated outcomes, which seems to be absent from the commentary completely, that this merged university will in fact allow more students from rural areas and disadvantaged backgrounds to attend university.

I also just want to state that we cannot really keep perpetuating this misinformation about \$500 million of taxpayers' money being given to universities. That is completely incorrect. You cannot actually amount the figure to \$500 million no matter how you add it up. But regardless, that money is actually for research and development to benefit all South Australians, and it is for people—disadvantaged people and people in rural communities—to attend university. That is what the bulk of the money is for.

The universities have publicly released a comprehensive summary of the business case, with the only information redacted being commercially sensitive material. That redacted information, if released, could be used by competitors to gain an advantage. The universities have previously provided detailed information to the Joint Committee on the Establishment of Adelaide University on the full business case at an in camera committee hearing.

Universities operate in a competitive environment at both the national and international level. The full business case on the amalgamation of the universities contains commercial-in-confidence material that would not be appropriate to release publicly. As I mentioned, releasing this information could provide information of value to the universities' competitors: information including commercial strategy and analysis, the university's intellectual property and information subject to legal professional privilege. Such information will, of course, be valuable in ensuring the new university's success.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (17:24): I have heard over and over again in this debate, which is calling for the release of the business case, that the only information that has been kept from us as a parliament is that which is commercially sensitive material that may indeed impact on the merger.

We still do not know who wrote the business case. We have asked in parliament today. I asked in the committee in September. In fact, I addressed 15 of my questions to the universities where I asked directly:

Whilst carrying out the merger feasibility studies can you indicate which consulting companies were appointed and their roles?

The answer I received back—although by the time this answer was received, it was forwarded to my colleague who had taken over my role on the committee—was:

A range of additional external (commercial services) expertise was contracted by each institution separately and individually to support the creation of artefacts which provided input to the Councils' individual decision-making processes.

InDaily, an independent newspaper of this town, followed up with questions directly to both universities, where InDaily asked:

Did the University of Adelaide and/or UniSA engage any consultants/consultancy firms in compiling the business case and financial plan for the merger? If so, who were they and how much were they paid?

Both universities replied with a joint statement to InDaily:

'The approach to establishing a new university for South Australia has been complex and involved assessing legislative options, consumer and competition legislation, Commonwealth regulation, and higher education accreditation, in addition to the development of a business case and transition plan,' a spokesperson said.

They did not even name the spokesperson.

The Hon. R.A. Simms: It's a secret, Tammy.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: It's a secret. The joint statement continued:

'Both universities established project teams made up of internal seconded staff, and engaged legal and strategic independent advisers to verify the analysis and projections.'

InDaily then asked:

Who were the independent advisors? Will the universities name them and if not, why? And how much did the universities pay for this independent advice?

It will shock members of the council to know that the response was:

Any further detail on the engagement of advisors is commercial and confidential.

If somebody can explain to me why the question of 'who prepared the business case?' is required to be kept secret from the people of South Australia and this parliament, and how that in and of itself will sink the merger, I will be very interested in hearing a legitimate reason why that is the case.

For me, it goes to the heart of how some members of this place protest a little too much, claim a little too much credit and claim to have done their due diligence when they do not even know, and we do not even know—or perhaps they do, but we do not—who wrote the document we seek to compel through an order of production of documents today. Information that is commercially sensitive can be redacted, but one wonders: if the consultancy or advisory people or groups are so commercially sensitive that they need to be redacted and hidden from the South Australian public, are there more questions that should have been asked by all of the members of the committee? With that, I commend the motion.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (17:28): On behalf of the Liberal opposition, I would like to make some remarks to this motion introduced by the Hon. Robert Simms. The business case refers to a range of documents provided to university councils ahead of their decision to proceed with the merger.

The Premier and Deputy Premier unwisely advised media that they had not read the business case, perhaps without fully understanding what it was. Both Treasury and the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science indicated to the joint committee that they had sought various materials from the university to inform their cabinet submissions, but that they had not specifically asked to see the business case. If this does not set off alarm bells in terms of transparency and accountability, I do not know what will.

I congratulate the Hon. Robert Simms for introducing this motion because, as I said yesterday, when you Google search articles on the university merger, there are over 200 articles published in all the mainstream media, so there is a serious public interest. We can reasonably argue that the public has a reasonable expectation that more information be made available than has been.

Given the proposed establishment of the perpetual fund that will, in time, provide significant financial support to the institution, the proposed amendment is therefore suggested, as we did in the minority report. It is also worth commenting that government processes are a much bigger problem than university processes. The government's first duty to the people of South Australia is to responsibly disclose information the public wants to know.

Never once has the Liberal opposition ever said we are going to block the legislation—never. We have stayed open-minded, so I do not agree with the Hon. Connie Bonaros' earlier—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.S. LEE: It looks like you are holding hands—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J.S. LEE: —with the Hon. Sarah Game.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon Ms Lee!

The Hon. J.S. LEE: This is a disgrace.

The Hon. C. Bonaros: It was us! It was us!

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Ms Bonaros, you are making a fool of yourself. The Hon. Ms Lee, will you continue, please?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Ms Girolamo! I am trying to listen to the Hon. Ms Lee.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: I would like to move some sensible amendments in my name. I move:

Leave out paragraph 2 and insert new paragraph as follows:

2. Calls on the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide to publicly release the full business case to inform the community's consideration of this proposal, recognising that redactions of some documents will be appropriate to protect our state's interests;

After paragraph 2 insert new paragraph as follows:

3. Calls on the government to improve its processes and practices, including:
 - (a) before providing substantial government funds to third-party institutions, ministers should fully inform themselves of all available information relating to the proposal in question;
 - (b) ministers should at all times comply with Treasurer's Instruction 17; and
 - (c) cabinet should provide full submissions to the Auditor-General to enable that office to conduct its legislative duties.

I understand that some members say that perhaps releasing the full business case could be a problem, that it compromises confidentiality and also commercial-in-confidence. I appreciate that. The amendments that I propose to introduce actually amend paragraph 2, which is:

Calls on the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide to publicly release the full business case to inform the community's consideration of this proposal, recognising that redactions of some documents will be appropriate to protect our state interests.

That is one area of amendment. The other amendment, of course, goes to the heart of transparency and accountability, where we call on the government to improve its processes and practices, including:

- (a) before providing substantial government funds to third-party institutions, ministers should fully inform themselves of all available information relating to the proposal in question;
- (b) ministers should at all times comply with Treasurer's Instruction 17; and
- (c) cabinet should provide full submissions to the Auditor-General to enable that office to conduct its legislative duties.

I think these are sensible amendments. I am very disappointed in the Hon. Connie Bonaros and the Hon. Sarah Game. The whole time they have been talking about scrutinising the merger, scrutinising the bill, etc., and yet when it comes to getting the processes right to make sure due diligence is actually applied by ministers and by government, it is not supported. That is such a disgrace. With those comments, I commend the motion.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (17:34): What a debate it has been. I had no idea when I proposed this motion that it would set off such a cacophony of criticism from one side of the chamber. I am perplexed because what we are seeing, of course, is the Labor Party opposing this and their Praetorian Guard, the Hon. Connie Bonaros and the Hon. Sarah Game, leaping to the government's defence to try—

The Hon. C. Bonaros interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: —to aid the government with a political problem. I am not trying to play politics with this, but I am a politician. The role of a politician is actually to engage in political work and, quite frankly, if you do not want to engage in political work, do not be a politician.

This motion is responding to the concerns of the community. This is not a debate about what the committee has or has not seen; this is about what the people of South Australia have seen who do not have the benefit of being in the committee room and getting access to whatever information may have been presented to the committee. That is not what this is about. This is about getting information to the people of South Australia so they can form a view so they can form an informed judgement around the proposal.

The motion references some opinion polling that demonstrates there is strong community support for that proposition, particularly in the regions and across supporters of all political parties. The amendments that the opposition are putting forward I think dilute the motion a little way; however, I am happy to live with those amendments and I am happy to support them. I think the additions they have added in terms of improving processes and practices are good.

So I am happy to support this amendment and, of course, advocate supporting the motion overall. There is no reason why, particularly with the opposition's amendment, which notes that redactions may be necessary, that this motion could not pass this chamber, notwithstanding the concerns of some of the members opposite and their supporters on the crossbench.

The PRESIDENT: The first question I am going to put is that paragraph 2 as proposed to be struck out by the Hon. J.S. Lee stand part of the motion.

The council divided on the question:

Ayes9
 Noes.....8
 Majority1

AYES

Bonaros, C.
 Game, S.L.
 Martin, R.B. (teller)

Bourke, E.S.
 Hanson, J.E.
 Ngo, T.T.

El Dannawi, M.
 Hunter, I.K.
 Scriven, C.M.

NOES

Centofanti, N.J.

Franks, T.A.

Girolamo, H.M.

Hood, B.R.
Pangallo, F.

Lee, J.S. (teller)
Simms, R.A.

Lensink, J.M.A.

PAIRS

Wortley, R.P.
Hood, D.G.E.

Henderson, L.A.

Maher, K.J.

Question thus agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The next question is that new paragraph 3 as proposed to be inserted by the Hon. J.S. Lee be so inserted.

The council divided on the question:

Ayes8
Noes9
Majority1

AYES

Centofanti, N.J.
Hood, B.R.
Pangallo, F.

Franks, T.A.
Lee, J.S. (teller)
Simms, R.A.

Girolamo, H.M.
Lensink, J.M.A.

NOES

Bonaros, C.
Game, S.L.
Martin, R.B. (teller)

Bourke, E.S.
Hanson, J.E.
Ngo, T.T.

El Dannawi, M.
Hunter, I.K.
Scriven, C.M.

PAIRS

Henderson, L.A.
Maher, K.J.

Wortley, R.P.

Hood, D.G.E.

Question thus resolved in the negative.

The committee divided on the motion:

Ayes8
Noes9
Majority1

AYES

Centofanti, N.J.
Hood, B.R.
Pangallo, F.

Franks, T.A.
Lee, J.S.
Simms, R.A. (teller)

Girolamo, H.M.
Lensink, J.M.A.

NOES

Bonaros, C.
Game, S.L.
Martin, R.B. (teller)

Bourke, E.S.
Hanson, J.E.
Ngo, T.T.

El Dannawi, M.
Hunter, I.K.
Scriven, C.M.

PAIRS

Wortley, R.P.
Hood, D.G.E.

Henderson, L.A.

Maher, K.J.

Motion thus negatived.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. J.S. Lee:

That this council—

1. Recognises that October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which provides an opportunity for everyone to focus on breast cancer and its impact on those affected by the disease in our community and helps to raise awareness of the disease, educate about its symptoms and prevention and support fundraising activities;
2. Notes that the pink ribbon has become the universal symbol of breast cancer which aims to bring women together in solidarity by showing support for loved ones battling breast cancer and building an inclusive supportive network for families and friends;
3. Recognises that the flagship Pink Ribbon Breakfast Campaign for breast cancer celebrates its 21st anniversary this year, and that it is important to show appreciation to all amazing communities across Australia who, in the past 21 years, have taken part in the Pink Ribbon Breakfast events and come together to raise vital funds for breast cancer research;
4. Recognises that the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF) is Australia's leading not-for-profit organisation funding world-class breast cancer research into causes, treatment and cure; and
5. Acknowledges that NBCF has invested over \$200 million into more than 600 world-class research projects across Australia since its inception in 1994.

(Continued from 18 October 2023.)

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (17:48): I am sure I am speaking on a motion that everyone in this chamber will agree on. I thank the Hon. Jing Lee for putting this motion forward and I am pleased to speak on behalf of the government in support of this motion.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is a great opportunity to increase awareness about breast cancer and remind those eligible to check in and get a mammogram screen through Breast Screen SA. Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosis in women in Australia, with approximately 57 Australians diagnosed every day. One in seven women are diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime and about one in 500 men. In South Australia, more than 1,400 women are diagnosed with breast cancer every year. Early detection of breast cancer is critical to enable early access to treatment services that improve long-term outcomes for those diagnosed. Research shows women who have regular screens reduce their chance of dying from breast cancer by up to 41 per cent.

BreastScreen SA is Australia's dedicated breast cancer screening program, providing free mammogram screenings every two years to women aged over 40. When looking around the chamber, while we all feel like we are 21, that would almost put all of us into that category. Each year more than 90,000 South Australian women have free mammograms through BreastScreen SA at one of their 11 clinics including three mobile screening units.

Recently, the South Australian government was pleased to announce that online bookings can now be made through the BreastScreen SA website, making booking a mammogram easier than ever before. In the first two weeks of online bookings opening, there was a massive 36 per cent increase in overall bookings, the largest booking week on record. This included a 21 per cent increase in new BreastScreen SA clients and 14 per cent of bookings for women overdue for their breast screen, which is an incredible increase and an important one at that.

The online booking system follows the recent rollout of more detailed breast screening reporting with information about an individual's breast density. During a recent study, clients who screened at participating clinics were informed of their individual breast density as part of their screening results. They were then invited to provide their feedback via an optional online survey. The

survey found more than 90 per cent of respondents would like to continue to be informed of their breast density, with just 2 per cent preferring not to be told as part of their future appointments.

It also found that 65 per cent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that knowing their breast density meant they felt more informed to make decisions regarding their breast care. There are four categories of breast density and about half of women are regarded as having dense breast tissue which has been linked to an increased risk of breast cancer. BreastScreen SA now provides breast density reporting as part of their standard process through all clinics, including mobile clinics, across South Australia.

Cancer is a disease that touches the lives of so many South Australians. It is important to understand how we can better prevent people getting cancer but also the support needed for people with cancer and their loved ones. That is why the Malinauskas Labor government is delivering on our election commitment to implement the state's first statewide cancer plan since 2015. Public consultation on the draft SA Cancer Plan 2024-2028 was recently held with community feedback sought to inform the finalisation and launch of the final plan expected later this year.

The plan has been designed after extensive consultation with the community, including patients, families, clinicians and volunteers, and it covers all aspects of cancer care. The plan will benefit South Australians by providing an agreed vision and direction for all elements of cancer care. The South Australian Cancer Plan also aims to maximise prevention and early detection, enhance consumer experience, enable our health system to provide the best care possible, enhance the workforce and, crucially, strive for better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with cancer.

I would also like to recognise the advocacy and work of the National Breast Cancer Foundation and their vision of zero deaths from breast cancer. The National Breast Cancer Foundation works to fund research to improve our understanding of how breast cancer originates, grows and spreads so that we can stop it in its tracks. This Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I join BreastScreen SA in encouraging all women to check in with their breast health and remind women over the age of 40, especially those aged between 50 and 74, to book their next breast screen.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (17:53): I would like to thank the Hon. Emily Bourke for her contribution to support the motion that October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and for also highlighting some of the really crucial and important steps to prevent breast cancer. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the National Breast Cancer Foundation for their great work. With those concluding remarks, I commend the motion.

Motion carried.

Sitting suspended from 17:55 to 19:45.

Parliamentary Committees

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: INQUIRY INTO THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. I.K. Hunter:

That the report of the committee, on the inquiry into the impact of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) on South Australians living with disability who have complex needs and are, or are at risk of, residing for long periods in inappropriate accommodation, be noted.

(Continued from 27 September 2023.)

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (19:46): I rise to speak on the report of the Social Development Committee on its inquiry into the impact of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) on South Australians living with disability who have complex needs and are, or are at risk of, residing for long periods in inappropriate accommodation.

I mean no disrespect to the committee or members of the community who have a significant interest in this proposal when I indicate that my remarks will be very brief, simply in recognition of the lateness of the hour. It was a privilege to participate in the inquiry as a member of the Social

Development Committee, along with the Hon. Ian Hunter, who is the Chair of the committee and obviously a member of this place.

The committee looked into a range of important matters. Its terms of reference included the ability to access and navigate the requirements of the NDIS; the timeliness of approval for appropriate specialist disability supports, including home and living decisions through the NDIS and the processes that may lead to delays; the adequacy of funding in the NDIS plans to fund the supports required; the ability of the NDIS workforce and market, including the specialist disability accommodation policy settings and the market in South Australia and the role that it plays in delivering necessary accommodation and funded supports; the impact on the wellbeing of participants of these inappropriate accommodation arrangements; any negative impacts on state government services; and any other related matters.

The committee has made a number of recommendations, and the Hon. Ian Hunter spoke to those in his remarks during the last parliamentary sitting. I take this opportunity to thank all members of the committee but also the secretariat for their work in pulling together the evidence, which was substantial, and crafting the recommendations, and all the people who took the time to appear before the committee and share their stories with us. Some of their stories were quite personal and at times it was an emotionally challenging committee to be on and to hear that evidence, but I know that all of us really appreciated hearing from people impacted by this area and hearing about their lived experiences.

It is my hope that the government will take action in relation to the recommendations. They are detailed. There is some really good work here that could be done by the government that I think would offer some real improvements for impacted South Australians. With that, I conclude my remarks.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (19:49): Thank you to the Social Development Committee for this report. It really does highlight the huge challenges faced by the NDIS and the importance of both federal and state governments working together in order to find solutions. As shadow for disabilities, I receive numerous queries relating to the NDIS and the challenges faced, whether it be navigating the system itself or being able to get services or not being able to qualify for services due to being palliative or from an age perspective.

I also commend the acknowledgement that young people are not getting the services that they require. The recommendations within this report are excellent and I do hope the minister takes them on board and ensures that they are actioned and rolled out. It is good to see that there is support right across all parties for this report. It is an area that should and needs to be a key focus both at a federal and state level.

Some of the recommendations that I was strongly supportive of are in regard to making it accessible, making sure that there is easy access to services and making sure that both the state and federal governments are speaking to each other. Other areas are around best practices and making sure that there are learning opportunities, appropriate training and support right across the board.

We need to ensure that everyone is entitled to a house over their head, but for people living with disabilities some of the challenges faced may mean that they are not able to get the housing that they deserve. This report certainly goes back to making sure that there is a tailored approach, whether it be for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disabilities or people from different cultural backgrounds, and it really does provide a good platform.

It highlights, as I touched on before, the issue for young people not having access to the right services. I do hope that both federal and state governments ensure that there are appropriate housing arrangements for people living with disability at a very young age, not having to go into aged care but having the right facilities for them as well.

The report goes through some 40 recommendations, and I think a broad range of areas are covered. I just hope that both the federal and state governments take this on board and ensure that they are actioned and that we see positive outcomes for people living with disability right across South Australia.

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (19:52): I would like to thank the Hon. Mr Simms and the Hon. Ms Girolamo for their contributions to the debate this evening. I would also like to thank the members of the committee for the way they approached this pretty difficult and quite complex reference that was sent to us by the House of Assembly to inquire into the NDIS and those people suffering with homeless issues or housing issues in general, or inappropriate housing more particularly.

When we focused in on this it became clear to us that there was a very small cohort of the NDIS—a group of people being serviced by the NDIS—who were taking up a very large percentage of the budget of the NDIS. It seemed to us that we could actually, by making recommendations around the housing issues that we were confronted with from our witnesses, hopefully save the federal government a lot of money but also improve the quality of life for a lot of people who were struggling to find appropriate housing.

I would like to thank the members of the committee: the Hon. David Pisoni, the member for Unley; Penny Pratt, the member for Frome; Dana Wortley, the member for Torrens; the Hon. Irene Pnevmatikos; and the Hon. Robert Simms. As I say, we approached the inquiry in a very nonpartisan way, and I think that speaks to the history of the Social Development Committee and how it has operated in this place over the many years that I have been involved with the committee, since I think 2006. It is really a very useful way for the parliament to operate in terms of how we dig deeply into some of the issues that confront us.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate the comments of the Hon. Mr Simms and thank our witnesses, without whom we would not have had the information which we could pull together and on which we could base our recommendations. The personal stories about the lives of people, how they have been impacted by the NDIS and, more frustratingly for them and also for us, how the system itself stopped these people getting access to the housing that would have benefited them and saved the system a lot of money—that was the key thing that came out of this report, from my perspective at least.

I do hope, as the Hon. Heidi Girolamo said, that both levels of government will address some of these issues by talking to each other and working very closely together to improve housing for people who are on the NDIS system. With that, I commend the motion to the house.

Motion carried.

Motions

DONATELIFE WEEK

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. N.J. Centofanti:

That this council—

1. Notes that 23 July to 30 July is DonateLife Week 2023;
2. Recognises that organ and tissue donation saves many lives every year;
3. Encourages people to discuss organ donation with their family and friends; and
4. Acknowledges the life-changing decisions of donors and their families.

(Continued from 30 August 2023.)

Motion carried.

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (19:57): I move:

That this council—

1. Notes that on Friday 27 October 2023, South Australia celebrates World Teachers' Day;
2. Acknowledges the central importance of teachers in our society; and
3. Congratulates all teachers for their hard work, dedication and tireless efforts.

So much has been said by so many people across the years and across the world about the crucial importance to a society of good teachers. All of it bears repeating again and again, especially on occasions like World Teachers' Day, which Australia celebrates each year on the last Friday of October, this year's date being Friday 27 October.

Teaching is, unequivocally, a professional vocation. Educators are professionals and it is a profession that carries both enormous importance and significant responsibility. Teachers' roles in our lives and their lifelong influence on us as people extends greatly beyond imparting academic knowledge. Good teachers are among the first people in our lives who help to open our developing minds and to let in the blazing light of the vast universe of knowledge and experience that they inspire us to explore.

Teachers play a leading role in shaping the way that a young person learns, the way they receive and consider new information, and the way they regard themselves and the world around them. They help to shape what young people decide they want to achieve in their lives and, quite importantly, what they believe they can achieve. Educators have an enduring influence in shaping our beliefs, our values, our decision-making and the way we conduct ourselves throughout our lives.

Good teachers enrich and nurture their students as whole people, inspiring us to grow into the aware and responsible citizens that our communities and our nations need. This is why good teachers are not only assets to their students and their schools, but to entire societies. We know that education—including not just academic learning but all that we as humans take away from our experience of schooling and have been taught—is an extremely powerful driver of economic mobility and a transformative force in social and economic outcomes across our lives. Education helps to lift people out of poverty, helps to create better outcomes across mental and physical health and wellbeing, and helps to create and expand opportunity across the whole of a person's lifetime.

To refer back to a speech that I gave a few weeks ago (for anyone who might be paying attention to what I say this place), good teachers are crucial to a jurisdiction's capitalisation of talent rate. That is the way a jurisdiction enables, nurtures and capitalises on the innate talent that resides within its communities. This is especially true of public schools, and particularly those in which the students being educated come from backgrounds of relative disadvantage. These are schools with students for whom opportunity, as a general rule, is not as easy to access as it is for their relatively more privileged peers. Dedicated educators play a significant role in improving their chances at better life outcomes.

I imagine each of us, and indeed the great majority of people across the world who have gone through school, have had a teacher—or, if you are lucky, several teachers—in our lives who have had outsized impacts on us. I know I did at my own public primary and secondary schools. Last year, on the occasion celebrating World Teachers' Day, I spoke about Mrs Hand, Mr Day and Mr Weaver. Among all the good teachers I have had, these three will always stand out. I said last year that, apart from my parents, there is probably no-one who has had a greater impact on my life and on the person that I have become than those particular teachers. Each of us carries with us our memories of those special teachers in our own young lives and we keep close the lessons they taught us, academic and otherwise.

I am keenly aware and, indeed, the Malinauskas Labor government is keenly aware, that nowadays there are more demands on teachers' time and energy than ever before. Public school teachers in South Australia enjoy the dedicated representation of the Australian Education Union (AEU). Our government approaches the negotiating table alongside the AEU with the firm intention of working constructively to secure agreements that are fair and balance the various competing demands at play. These sorts of negotiations can be challenging, as they have been this time around, but we have the benefit of a longstanding good-faith relationship with the teachers' union that I feel confident will continue to serve both parties well in these and any future negotiations.

There is no question that all of South Australia's educators both deserve and need our recognition and our support. In addition to a heavy practical and emotional load, teachers in disadvantaged schools in particular often find themselves spending a good bit of their own money to provide materials and, sometimes, even food and clothing for some of their students. They do this typically without complaint and without seeking adulation because they understand the profound

importance of the role they play in the lives of their students. The support, the consistency and the example that they provide matters to every single student they teach.

Of course, it is not only teachers in disadvantaged schools who transform lives; there are so many fantastic schools in South Australia that are staffed by dedicated, caring and exceptional educators and staff, each of whom is a bright star in some young person's sky. I want to pay tribute to my mother-in-law, Marlene, who is one such person. A career teacher and teacher-librarian in South Australian public schools for almost 40 years, she has inspired me and many of her students. I also extend my recognition and admiration to my sister-in-law, who taught for many years in a disadvantaged school in Port Augusta and has now transitioned to work in an administrative capacity but still within the education system.

I hope all members in this place have had the privilege of being taught by a few exceptional teachers in their lives. They can be found at schools in every corner of our state, across all categories of school and at all levels of schooling. Not only on World Teachers' Day, but every day, I recognise the enormous impact that educators have on our lives as individuals and to our collective social and economic lives. I offer my gratitude and appreciation to each and every one of those teachers.

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

TOURISM AND TRANSPORT FORUM AUSTRALIA

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. J.S. Lee:

That this council—

1. Recognises that the Tourism and Transport Forum Australia (TTF) is the peak industry group for the Australian tourism, transport and aviation sectors;
2. Acknowledges the impact of TTF as a membership organisation consisting of leading businesses and institutions and its important work to grow industry capacity, resilience and connections since its establishment in 1989; and
3. Congratulates TTF for hosting its inaugural Friends of Tourism event in South Australia on 30 August 2023 by highlighting the important contribution of tourism to our regional, state and national economies and communities.

(Continued from 13 September 2023.)

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (20:04): I rise to support this motion. The recent Tourism and Transport Forum Friends of Tourism event was a great success. I commend the opposition for this motion and their obvious support for extensive engagement with the Tourism and Transport Forum, such as that undertaken by the Malinauskas Labor government. Minister Bettison was an official co-host of the event. Unfortunately, she was unwell on the night, but I am told she was well represented by Minister Champion.

The Tourism and Transport Forum incorporates accommodation, aviation, major and business events, retail, hospitality, professional services, education, technology, tourism marketing and attraction, travel operators, transport and infrastructure. The Friends of Tourism events, which are held in different parliaments around the country, enable networking between members of the industry and politicians, which is an invaluable support for providing input into decision-making and better understanding of the issues in the tourism and transport industry.

The timing for this event in South Australia was no coincidence as it has been an incredible year for South Australia's visitor economy. In the year to March 2023, which is the most up-to-date annual data we have, the annual value of the visitor economy in South Australia has grown from \$6.1 billion to \$9.4 billion. This is an increase of \$3.3 billion in a single year. The previous year-to-year comparison, which was March 2021 to March 2022, saw an increase of \$1.7 billion. Our interstate tourism spend reached a record high of \$3.5 billion at year end March 2023, up on the previous December 2022 record of \$3.2 billion.

Following the pandemic lockdowns, we found South Australians discovering their own backyards and we have seen an increase in our intrastate tourism spend to a record high of \$3 billion, which is up 18 per cent on the pre-pandemic levels of 2019.

We know that many members of the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) have their eyes and ears keenly on the return of the international market. Whilst international tourism to South Australia has grown to \$814 million, there is some way to go to recover the record high of \$1.2 billion seen in December 2019 and the Malinauskas Labor government is focused on not just returning to this number but exceeding it.

To support a quick recovery, Minister Bettison, through the South Australian Tourism Commission, supported 29 operators to meet and network with leading travel agents and product managers overseas in key UK destinations, as well as Germany, Italy and France. One on one workshops and networking events connected some of our best tourism operators with more than 300 leading industry experts to help grow market presence for both their business and the state.

Those UK and Europe roadshows follow a successful US event in March, which saw tourism operators promoting their offerings and South Australia to the North American market, which was worth \$80 million a year to the state's visitor economy pre-COVID. The two roadshows were targeted to international markets that are expected to return strongly, with emphasis on the high-value traveller and working holiday-maker, both markets which are key to growth.

I congratulate Minister Bettison for her work in this space. This is a government that understands the power of tourism in our economy. The state government continues our work towards the \$12.8 billion 2030 visitor economy goal and, of course, we value the input and insights provided by the Tourism and Transport Forum and thank them for the opportunities provided through the recent Friends of Tourism event.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (20:08): I would like to thank the Hon. Clare Scriven for showing government support. Tourism has had bipartisan support throughout the time I have been in parliament and may that continue. I would like to once again congratulate and recognise the great work of the Tourism and Transport Forum Australia. I commend the motion.

Motion carried.

AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION (SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH)

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. J.S. Lee:

That this council—

1. Recognises the Australian Hotels Association (South Australian Branch), AHA (SA), was established in 1871 and has been an integral part of SA's hospitality and tourism industry for over 150 years;
2. Notes that AHA (SA) is a peak industry organisation that represents and protects the commercial interests of hoteliers throughout South Australia, providing advice on a range of topics, including legislative changes, licensing, gaming, industrial relations, insurance, responsible gambling and community liaison;
3. Acknowledges the social and economic contributions of AHA (SA) and its members, which comprise 630 hotels in South Australia, from small country pubs to five-star hotels and resorts; and
4. Recognises the valuable work by AHA (SA) Executive Council and its Awards of Excellence program to fulfil its mission to encourage, foster and promote the pursuit of excellence in service, facilities and management practices among members for the benefit of the industry and the community of South Australia.

(Continued from 4 May 2023.)

The ACTING PRESIDENT (The Hon. B.R. Hood): I call the Hon. R. Martin.

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (20:09): Thank you, Mr Acting President, and what a fantastic job you are doing in the chair. It is an honour to speak in front of you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT (The Hon. B.R. Hood): You are too kind. Do not mislead parliament, Mr Martin.

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN: I rise to support the motion of the Hon. Jing Lee, and I thank her for bringing it to the chamber. The Australian Hotels Association has played an important part in the

tourism industry and the hospitality industry for over 150 years. They have been a fierce advocate and are never afraid to voice their views whether governments of the day like it or not.

What remains absolutely true is their commitment to South Australian businesses and hospitality workers that support their industry. Their advocacy during the COVID pandemic in particular was immense, as it is arguably the toughest time the industry has faced. Since coming into government, the Malinauskas Labor government has worked very closely with the AHA to help support the industry that suffered so greatly during this pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity in supporting this motion to thank Ian Horne, the former CEO of AHA SA, for his immense and tireless work. Ian and I have shared many a sparkling mineral water over the past 10 years. I always found it quite humorous that the CEO of the Hotels Association did not drink alcohol, and I rarely drink, so we would often enjoy that sparkling water.

I have also built an ongoing relationship with and thank President David Basheer, who has done a fantastic job, and I thought it was great to see Anna Moeller appointed as the new CEO, particularly as it is an industry which for a long time has seemed to be a very masculine industry. For Anna to have done such a good job for a long time and to be appointed as the CEO, I think, is fantastic.

The businesses the AHA represent took the brunt of COVID, and this government is very mindful of the importance of tourism to the Hotels Association. That is why when we came into government we invested \$40 million into the Major Events Fund, and we also invested a further \$45 million into tourism marketing. This is because a vibrant South Australia directly benefits the economy, and that is good for the AHA's members and the workers they employ.

The state government has brought new events to the state such as LIV Golf, which has just won the best tournament in the world, as well as bringing Gather Round to South Australia, which has really built out our events calendar to reflect the vibrancy of South Australia all year round. I am particularly impressed by the economic impact of LIV Golf, which brought in many thousands of people from interstate and overseas, and I think many of them will come back for the next event.

Events and our broader investments in tourism bring people here filling our hotels, and we have seen some record hotel rates this year. Greater numbers of visitors mean more money is spent in our hotels and venues, which directly support the employment of staff. South Australia's regions are captivating whether you are in the Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley, the Flinders Ranges, the Fleurieu Peninsula, the Limestone Coast, Upper Spencer Gulf, Eyre Peninsula, on the River Murray or, of course, on Kangaroo Island, and in any of those scenic locations you will find an Australian Hotels Association pub or member providing a critical offering to support our natural attractions.

This year the total visitor expenditure in South Australia in 12 months to June has hit \$9.9 billion. That is a record number. It is a significant increase in our state's visitor economy, which was at \$6.1 billion in June 2022. This achievement could only be accomplished with the support of the Hotels Association South Australia, their leadership, their members, and the hospitality workers who make up a significant portion of the tourism industry. Once again, I thank the honourable member for bringing this motion and indicate that we will be supporting it.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (20:13): I rise briefly in support of the motion put forward by my colleague the Hon. Jing Lee. Hotels are vibrant inclusions in our state's cultural fabric, so important in fact that 80 per cent of all live music in South Australia is hosted by hotels. Mr Acting President, did you know that hotels contribute almost \$1 billion in annual payroll across the state? There are over 630 hotels employing over 26,000 South Australians in both the Adelaide metropolitan area and across our regions. It is important to note how decentralised this workforce is. Where would a country town be without its main street country pub?

Hotels are often the hub of local communities, supporting local businesses and sponsoring all manner of sporting and community clubs. I know my own local football club—that is, the Berri Demons, where I volunteer as a trainer—and the Berri Netball Club, where my girls play, are both supported by the wonderful Berri Hotel: a community hotel. A meal at the Riverview Bistro at the

Berri Hotel is something I take pride in sharing with my family, friends and guests visiting the Riverland.

Expanding on this as a regional resident, I would like to focus for a moment on just how fantastic country pubs are. The Hon. Terry Stephens, our President in this chamber, I know has some great memories from his own Whyalla days. I hope that you, Mr Acting President, will agree with me when I say that country pubs offer a warm and welcoming atmosphere, often featuring rustic and charming interiors. They provide a comforting environment that fits with the backdrop and this encourages relaxation and socialisation.

These pubs often serve as community hubs where locals and visitors come together. They act as a gathering place for people to socialise, share stories and build strong bonds, fostering a sense of togetherness. Country pubs frequently serve traditional, locally sourced food and beverages, allowing patrons to savour regional flavours and specialities. The establishments offer a genuine taste of the area's culinary heritage, making them a culinary destination for many and also, in doing so, support many local businesses.

I was extremely pleased to read in the Australian Hotels Association SA's magazine recently about Loretta Wilmshurst's induction into the Women in Hotels Hall of Fame. I wrote to Loretta immediately, congratulating her on the contribution to regional hospitality. Her leadership at the Moonta Hotel, the Two Wells Commercial Hotel and the Commonwealth Hotel in Port Augusta shows that South Australian regions are absolutely a place where entrepreneurial female business leadership can excel and thrive.

I would like to make special note of her work in transforming the Spuds Roadhouse in Pimba, a little fork-in-the-road town 7.9 kilometres south of Woomera. Loretta advocated for and project managed her way through 4,000 tonnes of road filling for surface improvements, a completely reworked Spuds Electrics and revamped their onsite workshop. There were hold-ups. There were fires. There was COVID, but Loretta managed it all and supported her staff along the journey.

It is this can-do attitude of 630 hotels in South Australia that makes me so pleased to support this motion. Our state would be less without our hotels and motels. My colleague the Hon. Ben Hood would not have trained his voice so delightfully if not for the Sunday sessions on the guitar at the Bushman's Arms in Naracoorte. My footy club would be a penny short when it came to the end of year budget.

I would again like to thank my colleague for bringing this motion forward. I, too, would like to acknowledge former CEO Ian Horne and current CEO Anna Moeller for their dedication to the industry, as well as acknowledge the wonderful role that David Basheer plays as chair. I extend congratulations to the Australian Hotels Association executive and their staff for their continued work and I look forward to this motion passing the chamber this evening.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (20:18): I rise briefly to add my comments in support of the motion and to congratulate and thank the Australian Hotels Association of South Australia on the integral role they play on behalf of pubs, clubs, hotels and smaller hospitality venues.

I had the pleasure of meeting the new CEO, Anna Moeller, recently right here in Parliament House and I thank her for bringing me up to speed on the current issues facing the hospitality and tourism sectors in South Australia. I was inspired by Anna's passion and her down-to-earth nature and have no doubt that she will carry on the great work undertaken by former CEO, Ian Horne, whose astounding 31 years in the role will certainly be hard to follow.

The difficulties faced by the hospitality and tourism sectors following COVID-19 should not be underestimated. While the sector is resilient, they are still reeling from the impacts of wideranging restrictions that businesses and their customers were struck with. As a consequence of that period, consumer behaviour has changed. Many pubs and clubs now no longer rely on what was once steady and consistent bookings.

With more CBD staff working from home they are experiencing less customer foot traffic and this has made staff rostering more difficult to plan for. Recruiting staff has also been more challenging after this period. What was once a reliable and steady industry has had that perception changed after the immense restrictions that were put on them.

Hospitality and tourism staff also suffered as a direct result of confusing constraints and onerous mandates, and while the bump provided to the CBD with major events was no doubt welcome for hospitality venues in Adelaide it has not provided the same steady consistent streams of customers and revenue that certainly they once experienced.

I am very pleased to hear the news overnight that some great pubs that are very close to my heart were winners of the AHA SA Hotel Industry Awards for Excellence. In the category of bar presentation and experience in the country, noky at The Henty in Mount Gambier took the top gong. The Kosch family in Mount Gambier are stalwarts of hospitality and accommodation in the region, and I am so happy that Michael, Tom, Evan, Lucy and the team at noky at The Henty could take that top gong.

In best entertainment venue category was the Hindmarsh—The Gov that we love—was the stand-out winner. I have seen so many of my favourite artists playing The Gov over the years. I thought I would quickly just riff a little bit more on country pubs and my experience in them, playing in pretty much every—

The PRESIDENT: Can you just explain to me what 'riff' is?

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: 'Riff' can mean two things, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: I was just asking the Clerk, not you.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: Very good. I will just continue on, Mr President, although I was very comfortable in your seat just before, so we will see how we go.

The PRESIDENT: The Clerk does not know.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: To riff is to play something on the guitar or just to carry on like I am at the moment, not making any sense. I have enjoyed playing music all over regional South Australia, and I could only do that because of the pubs—because of the pubs that backed in live music and let people like me have a couple of beers, play a couple of songs and let people enjoy themselves of a night.

I also did pour many a beer in the Bushman's Arms, which was then known as the Commercial Hotel, in Naracoorte for about six years while Elle and I were newly married and we were saving for a house. So employment in pubs is such an important part of this. Again, I thank the AHA and congratulate them on all the amazing work they do, from small country pubs to five-star hotels and everything in between. To conclude, I reiterate my support for the motion and appreciate the AHA's efforts. I thank the Hon. Jing Lee for bringing this motion, which I support, to the chamber.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (20:22): I would like to take a slightly different path. I would love to talk about my time in country pubs, but I do not think it is probably appropriate for the chamber. I would like to—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: No, you do not want to hear them. The Australian Hotels Association is an incredible advocate for not only what they do as an industry but at a social level. We only have to look at what a pub has meant for many people in this chamber. It is often a place where we can go to to be and feel a part of a community, to feel a part of something bigger than ourselves.

You only have to look back at the very short history of our pubs in South Australia and Australia. In 1965, if you were a woman you were able for the very first time to go into the front bar of a pub. That is not that distant in the past, but pubs since then have made it their way of becoming more inclusive to bring their communities together, and I could not be more thankful for what the AHA have done for the autistic community in recent times. They have decided to put on a full-time person, with the support of Autism SA, going out to all their pubs and clubs to make them more inclusive.

People in this chamber today have shared what it means for them to go to a pub and share a special occasion, be that a family event, maybe a 21st or a 50th, but imagine if you went to celebrate that 21st birthday party and only half of your family could join you at that special celebration, or

imagine if you were going out as a family unit and only half of your family unit could actually go to celebrate that special occasion because one of your family members is autistic.

One parent often finds themselves staying at home caring for a child, while the other half of the family is going out to celebrate that special occasion. To the credit of the Australian Hotels Association, they recognised that there was an opportunity here to provide a more inclusive space for our community. I really want to thank Anna for leading the charge in this in her new role as the CEO of AHA and providing the opportunity to make our pubs and clubs more inclusive.

I believe that for the first time in our country we now have a full-time person dedicated, thanks to the AHA, to go out to our pubs and clubs and make them more inclusive so that the whole family unit can go and celebrate that 21st together or that very special family occasion as a unit. I cannot thank them enough for making that possible. As Anna from the AHA said in a recent article:

Embracing inclusivity has the potential to open your venue to the community, to over 205,000 autistic individuals, along with their families and friends and supporters.

This is the success of autistic individuals also in our workforce. We know that if we make our pubs and clubs more inclusive for our customers to come along, we also make them more inclusive for our workforce, and that is something as a government we are really proud of doing. We are proud that we are making people more knowledgeable in the space of what autism is so that we can have more people go into our workforce.

We know that in our hospitality industry quite often it is someone's very first job. If we are giving them more knowledge in their first form of employment, we are also giving them knowledge when we are setting them up for their future job opportunities as well. I say a big thank you to David Basheer as well. We know that our pubs and clubs are not only our community hub but a big family business.

The Australian Hotels Association is run by families for good reason: they believe in what they do. The Australian Hotels Association is a really good example of what a family business looks like. The Basheers: Trina is my favourite, an incredible individual, and you can just go across the road and the Strathmore is a true display of what a family business looks like with David, Trina and James quite often behind the bar.

Then you see the Hurley family, and Anna again has been incredibly supportive of the new role of having someone go out to our pubs and clubs to make them more inclusive. We also launched the new role at Kent Town of having a person go out to our pubs and clubs to make them more inclusive for the autistic community with Tom Hannah. Another family unit with Tom, Lara and Tom Junior, who you often find behind the front bar, again supporting that business as a family to make it more inclusive as well.

A very big thank you to Anna for what she has been able to lead as a new step forward, and also a big thank you to Ian, who started the initiative with making our pubs and clubs more inclusive. It is an incredible industry, one that we know gives so many opportunities to our workforce and also to our community.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (20:28): I take this opportunity to, first of all, thank all honourable members for making contributions to support this motion. It is a great recognition testament that we have so many members wanting to make contributions to this particular motion to recognise the Australian Hotels Association.

I thank the Hon. Reggie Martin, the Hon. Dr Nicola Centofanti, the Hon. Ben Hood and the Hon. Emily Bourke. Thank you also for sharing those personal stories of different pubs, fostering that sense of community that you talk about via the various different personal experiences and community achievements, that pubs have given back to the community in terms of volunteering services, donations or sponsorship of various different events in the regions—it is really amazing.

It is timely to bring this motion to a vote tonight because last night marked the 2023 AHA National Awards for Excellence, which celebrate the achievements of the South Australian hotel industry. There were 42 awards given, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate every single award winner and joint winners for the 42 categories of awards that were given by the Australian Hotels Association South Australia. Once again, there was great leadership by

David Basheer, great leadership by Anna Moeller and, of course, paying tribute to the retiring member, the CEO, Ian Horne, who has been such a staunch leader who left such a great legacy for the industry.

Last night's awards were attended by over 900 participants from the hotel industry. The room at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre was packed. Both sides of politics attended the event. I recall seeing the Treasurer, the Hon. Stephen Mullighan, and also the minister, the Hon. Andrea Michaels, there. I joined the Hon. David Speirs, the Leader of the Opposition, together with another colleague, Josh Teague, the member for Heysen, and also the member for Colton, the shadow treasurer, Matt Cowdrey. The night was an overwhelming success.

Once again, thank you so much to all the honourable members who supported this motion and who give due recognition to the AHA for their contributions to South Australia. I commend the motion.

Motion carried.

CITY OF UNLEY BY-LAWS

Orders of the Day: Private Business, No. 190: Hon. C. Bonaros to move:

That by-law No. 3 of the City of Unley concerning local government land, made under the Local Government Act 1999 on 27 June 2022 and laid on the table of this council on 6 September 2022, be disallowed.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (20:32): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

CITY OF PROSPECT BY-LAWS

Orders of the Day: Private Business, No. 191: Hon. C. Bonaros to move:

That by-law No.3 of the City of Prospect concerning local government land, made under the Local Government Act 1999 on 23 August 2022 and laid on the table of this council on 6 September 2022, be disallowed.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (20:32): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

CITY OF PROSPECT BY-LAWS

Orders of the Day: Private Business, No. 192: Hon. C. Bonaros to move:

That by-law No.2 of the City of Prospect concerning moveable signs, made under the Local Government Act 1999 on 23 August 2022 and laid on the table of this council on 6 September 2022, be disallowed.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (20:32): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

Bills

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY BILL

Committee Stage

In committee (resumed on motion).

Clause 40.

The CHAIR: Clause 40 is a money clause and, as such, I will not be putting a question. Standing order 298 provides that no question shall be put in committee upon any such clause. The message transmitting the bill to the House of Assembly is required to indicate that this clause is deemed necessary to the bill.

Clause 41.

The CHAIR: Clause 41 is also a money clause and, as such, the question will not be put on the clause. There are amendments in the name of the Hon. Ms Bonaros. The Hon. Ms Bonaros will put her amendments and speak to them. I can put the question on the amendments but not the clause.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I move:

Amendment No 1 [Bonaros-1]—

Page 23, after line 39 [clause 41(5)(a)]—After subparagraph (i) insert:

(ia) programs developed by the University in accordance with paragraph (ba); or

Amendment No 2 [Bonaros-1]—

Page 24, line 3 [clause 41(5)(b)]—After 'paragraph (a)(i)' insert:

, (ia)

Amendment No 3 [Bonaros-1]—

Page 24, after line 3 [clause 41(5)]—After paragraph (b) insert:

(ba) the Fund guidelines must provide that at least \$20 million of the Fund is dedicated towards supporting payments from the Fund to be applied by the University towards programs addressing access to the University and equity considerations for people residing in regional and outer metropolitan areas who have experienced disadvantages in education, or in access to education, or who are under-represented in education;

When I spoke on this bill yesterday, I talked about the student association groups and Ms Georgia Thomas and Mr Isaac Solomon, who appeared on behalf of those groups at the inquiry process, and their support for this merger on the basis of some safeguards.

I said yesterday that I do not make promises lightly, but when I do I usually overcommit. Of course, I would expect both Georgia and Isaac to try to get as many commitments as they can in respect of this bill and I would like to think that, following on from our extensive discussions, I have delivered on the commitments that I made to them in relation to the new university association that will be formed.

Am I am speaking to the wrong amendment, Chair? What am I moving?

The CHAIR: You are moving [Bonaros-1] amendments Nos 1 to 3. You can speak to the first one if you want to. Really, you want to speak about the \$20 million fund in amendment No. 3.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Thank you, Chair. I apologise for that. I will speak to all three amendments together. As I said yesterday, I think all of us wish that—regardless of their postcodes, regardless of whether they attend Salisbury East High School or Prince Alfred College, regardless of whether their mum or dad is a doctor or a pharmacist or an abattoir worker—all kids, all students, all young people deserve access to the same educational opportunities if that, of course, is what they desire.

We know that no matter how bright a student may be, all too often their postcodes and their socio-economic backgrounds make that education out of reach, and that is especially the case for kids living in low socio-economic areas and for kids living in the regions. A lot has been said about the funding that has been secured as a result of the commitments made by the Premier and the government and that \$60 million, but can I say this: I stand proud here today and stand firmly by those commitments because without that money, without those funds—and I will get to the \$20 million in a moment—those kids simply would never realise the opportunity of a tertiary education. They might be the brightest kid in the room, but they will never realise that opportunity.

We can call it a dud deal, we can call it a 'love boat', we can call it whatever it is that members in this place want to refer to it as, but I am exceptionally proud of the fact that there will be \$20 million quarantined in perpetuity for kids who would not otherwise have the opportunity to attend university. Yesterday, I spoke again of the discussions that I had with the university directly about how that money would be used, about what it is that we could do—I am speaking on the amendment, Chair—and about what it is that that money could be used for.

Of course, the amendment still specifically has the inclusion of the additional \$20 million. You will note from the way that the amendments are drafted that the \$20 million is quarantined, effectively, and split from the other \$100 million. It will be treated as a separate pool of money from the other \$100 million. The reason it will be treated as a separate pool of money is that those funds will specifically target kids in the regions and they will specifically target kids in outer metropolitan Adelaide. The intention is that there will be scholarships and there will be programs to enable those kids to get to university.

I outlined yesterday what Adelaide University could do, and I am exceptionally grateful to the university for the sorts of programs that we have outlined for how this money could be used. I will say it again, because it is important for the record. We know that currently the \$100 million fund is intended to facilitate equity consideration for people within the community who have experienced disadvantage. We know that that fund will generate about \$4 million to advance the objectives. That fund does not specifically identify regional or outer metro areas as a particular focus; this amendment does.

As we have said, access and aspiration to higher education has to start long before year 12. One of the things that we can do, and one of the things that the university has given me its commitment that it will do, is look at starting that process well before a child reaches year 12—for instance, look at providing them with a bursary when they are in year 11 and 12 and then a scholarship right through to the end of the degree, offering them peer support and mentorship and wraparound services so they are not lacking anything and so they are not relying on mum and dad to get them through university. There are going to be extra additional supports and services there to assist that student to get through university.

The model that certainly piqued my interest, and one that I have had discussions with the university about, has been that which exists in Queensland. It is a tailored support fund that can be established to focus on pathways to higher education for regional and outer metropolitan students. Like I said, it would include a bursary for students in years 11 and 12 at high school, mentoring and preparation for the on-campus experience and, of course, that support would continue right through to the end of that student's degree.

We know that out north, for instance, students are attracted to courses like those that fall within the allied health sector. We all know that we are undergoing a significant health crisis. It is my absolute wish that, over time, that program will grow to wrap around not just the high schools in the area but the medical facilities in that area. To suggest, as some members have, that this 'deal', as they have referred to it, is not worth its weight in gold is offensive to every one of those kids who otherwise simply would not have access to a tertiary education.

Based on the income that will be derived from that \$20 million, it is expected that about 24 students per year will get the opportunity to access this sort of program. Over the course of their time at university and their final years in high school, that will result in about 240 students every year getting the opportunity to attend university—something that they simply would not have had before.

Other members may see this as crumbs and as sweeteners and as whatever they want to describe it, but, as I said yesterday, I cannot emphasise enough how life-changing this will be for students. Any of us who are first-time graduates in our families and whose families worked really hard to get us there have to understand that there are other students who simply do not have those opportunities. They will simply never see that opportunity.

This fund will exist in perpetuity, and it is my sincere wish that the 240 will be doubled and tripled and there will be more investment by the universities and more philanthropic universities and those student numbers will grow and more and more kids who live in those areas and whose circumstances are such that prevent them from going to university will have the same benefit that we have all had.

I cannot emphasise enough how important this was to me in terms of the support for this merger, but as a result of that we also know that—and I know it is not related to this amendment, but I will speak to it—it will not, of course, just be children in the regions and out north, it will also be kids who are studying out south, for instance, at Flinders University. That is going to be the subject of a separate framework, but it means effectively that we have canvassed the whole state. There is an

additional \$60 million for kids to attend university when those opportunities simply did not exist before and if anyone wants to fault that then be my guest.

I am not sure if members need an actual explanation of the way the clause works, but basically what I have said is that the \$20 million is quarantined from the 100. The purpose of the \$20 million is very clear in terms of its intent and it will be used only for that purpose and it will indeed be quarantined in perpetuity.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I rise to indicate that the government supports the Hon. Connie Bonaros's amendment. It is absolutely an ambition of this government to make sure that we have a commitment to students in regional and outer metropolitan areas and I think the wording of this amendment is important. It provides programs for addressing access to university and equality considerations for people residing in regional and outer metropolitan areas who have experienced disadvantages in education or in access to education or who are under-represented in education. We think that is a very worthy thing to support, so we will be wholeheartedly supporting the amendment.

The Hon. S.L. GAME: I rise briefly to support the Bonaros amendment. I am pleased the government has agreed to increase the \$100 million student support fund for the proposed new university to \$120 million to ensure there is a priority focus on students from regional South Australia. It was important to me that any decision to merge improved access to university for regional students and people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I rise to speak in favour of the amendment on behalf of the Greens. We will support this. Just to be clear, our criticism of the uni merger deal was never related to money being available for scholarships. Our view was that there was no need to tie funding for scholarships for students from low socio-economic groups to a merger of two universities. They are two unrelated matters. If the case can be made for a scholarship fund for students from low socio-economic groups, which I absolutely believe it can be and we welcome government investment in this area, why tie it to a university merger? That has always been the critique of the Greens.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will be supporting this amendment, but I do have a question. I know that earlier you said I am not allowed to ask questions because of the clauses. I just want to ask this question and then you decide—

The CHAIR: You can ask questions; that is okay.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: Because clauses 40 and 41 have been struck out in the Legislative Council for this particular bill, the amendment is then moved on the clause where it has been struck out because it is a money related portion of the bill. I am just asking—

The CHAIR: This is probably a question for us rather than the Hon. Ms Bonaros.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: I will just put my question, and then you let me know whether it is—

The CHAIR: Ask your question.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: I just want to know, for clarification, whether this amendment is permissible in the Legislative Council for clauses 40 and 41. I just want some clarification because parliamentary counsel earlier said it was not allowed to have amendments.

The CHAIR: It is okay for us to put the question with regard to the amendments; however, I am not going to put that the clause be agreed to. It is a suggestion to the House of Assembly and they will take it up in their house.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: It sets an interesting precedent.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: I just want to know.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: We have not done it before. We have been told we could not do it, so it is interesting.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: For the record, Chair, I think I have previously moved suggested amendments in this place, which are money clauses effectively, and they have been treated as—

and I understand the difference here, but we are just having some commentary. I know that I have certainly moved suggested amendments previously and they have had to be dealt with accordingly.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: We were told we could not do it, so it is good to know.

The CHAIR: I am telling you that this is a suggested amendment and it will go to the House of Assembly. We will not be voting on the clause, but we will be voting on the amendments. It sounds like everybody is supporting the amendments anyhow, so I do not know why we are getting our knickers in a knot. I am going to put that the amendments be agreed to.

Amendments carried.

Clauses 42 to 47 passed.

Clause 48.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 21 [Simms-1]—

Page 26, after line 14—Insert:

- (2a) The report must include information in respect of the year to which the report relates setting out the number of teaching hours engaged in by the following categories of staff member employed by the University:
- (a) staff employed on a full-time basis;
 - (b) staff employed on a part-time basis;
 - (c) staff employed on a casual basis;
 - (d) staff employed for a specified term or period of time.

The reason for this amendment is that it draws on some of the themes I have talked a little bit about already during the committee stage of the bill. One of the concerns around the university sector over many years has been the heavy reliance on casual and short-term contracts, and it would be useful to require universities to report on this so that there is a level of transparency around some of their staffing arrangements.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for bringing this amendment to the Legislative Council; however, the government will not be supporting this amendment. Whilst we understand the reasoning behind the amendment, it would place the new university in a situation that I am advised no other university is required to in their annual reports. Moreover, matters such as these are subject to commonwealth industrial legislation and any future enterprise agreement.

I am advised, however, and this may give the honourable member some comfort, that our universities do provide data on the number of casual staff to the commonwealth Department of Education as part of their annual reporting requirements, and this audited data is published online and is publicly available.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will oppose this amendment.

Amendment negatived; clause passed.

Clause 49.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: I move:

Amendment No 2 [Lee-1]—

Page 26, line 21—Delete 'an auditor appointed by the Council' and substitute:

the Auditor-General under the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1987*

This particular bill proposes that the council appoint an auditor each year to audit its account and financial statements. However, the Auditor-General has written to members, including the Liberal Party members, pointing out that this would divert from current practice, which is that the Auditor-General conducts the audit.

For those reasons, we move this amendment to confirm the current practice, which means that the Auditor-General actually conducts the audits as established in the legislation rather than the proposed power for the council to appoint their own auditor. In the context of this significant new government investment in the university merger, this public oversight for this account is more important than ever.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I can indicate that the government will be supporting this amendment. It is our advice that pursuant to the particulars of the Public Finance and Audit Act 1987 the Auditor-General would be involved in any event, but we are not opposed to spelling that out in the legislation as the Hon. Jing Lee is suggesting.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I rise to say that I will be supporting the amendment as well. It is actually quite sensible and, as the honourable member has pointed out, the Auditor-General already does audits on the other two universities. I think it is also important that we have the independence of the Auditor-General rather than somebody the university appoints.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: The Greens also support the amendment. This is a really worthwhile transparency measure that has been proposed by the opposition. It is great to see that the government is supporting it as well. I hope they might be open to giving the Auditor-General access to cabinet documents next.

The Hon. S.L. GAME: I rise briefly to say that I will also be supporting the honourable member's amendment.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I also indicate that I will be supporting this amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 50 passed.

Clause 51.

The CHAIR: This clause is a money clause and as such the question will not be put on the clause. Are there any contributions on the clause?

Clauses 52 to 54 passed.

Schedule 1.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I move:

Amendment No 22 [Simms-1]—

Page 30, lines 33 to 36 [Schedule 1, clause 9(1)]—Delete subclause (1) and substitute:

- (1) Subject to this clause, the Transition Council will consist of up to 19 persons, being—
 - (a) the Chancellor (ex officio); and
 - (b) up to 9 members appointed by The University of Adelaide, of whom at least 5 must be appointed or elected by staff or students of the University in a manner determined by the Council of that University; and
 - (c) up to 9 members appointed by the University of South Australia, of whom at least 5 must be appointed or elected by the staff or students of the University in a manner determined by the Council of that University.

I do want to indicate for members' benefit that I will call a division on that clause. It is an important matter. It has been raised with me by the NTEU and others. One of the important principles that it seeks to establish is that this new transition council be made up of a majority of staff and students. We in the Greens regard that as being really important in terms of ensuring that there is buy-in from students and staff in the formation of the new university.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I will not speak for a great deal of time. These issues were thoroughly debated when we looked at amendments to the general nature of the council. I am tempted to speak for a while, though, because we have a bet with the Hon. Michelle Lensink about the time we would finish. If I speak for long enough I can probably win that bet, but I shall not do that.

The one thing I will point out again is, while we understand the intention behind these amendments, given the nature and complexity of universities in Australia today, we think a skill-based board, as with the transition council, is very important. I am advised that, on further checking after we debated this earlier today, we are not aware of any university in Australia that has a majority of their council made up with the combinations of staff and students. In our view, as with the council generally, it is also appropriate with the transition council, and we think we have the balance right.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Is the minister aware of any other institution going through a merger at the moment?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: No, I am not, but the point I was trying to make is analogous to the council generally as proposed in this legislation. We think the same is reasonable to apply to the transition council.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: The point I am trying to make is that previously we have been told that in 12 months we might revisit this with the work of the accord to inform our debates. Well, 12 months on does not help us with the transition process, where there has been a lack of transparency. So is the minister aware of any other institution where there is a merger going on?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I am not aware of another institution with a transition council similar to this.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I rise to say that I will be supporting the motion of the Hon. Robert Simms.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The opposition will be opposing the amendment.

The committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes	3
Noes.....	15
Majority	12

AYES

Franks, T.A.

Pangallo, F.

Simms, R.A. (teller)

NOES

Bonaros, C.

Bourke, E.S.

Centofanti, N.J.

El Dannawi, M.

Game, S.L.

Girolamo, H.M.

Hanson, J.E.

Hood, B.R.

Hunter, I.K.

Lee, J.S.

Lensink, J.M.A.

Maher, K.J. (teller)

Martin, R.B.

Ngo, T.T.

Scriven, C.M.

Amendment thus negatived.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I move:

Amendment No 1 [Bonaros-2]—

Page 37, after line 29 [Schedule 1, clause 31(1)]—At the foot of subclause (1) insert:

Note—

It is the intention that AUU will merge with the University of South Australia Student Association to form a new student association for Adelaide University pursuant to section 11 of the Act.

The amendment adds a note to schedule 1 of the bill to the effect that it is the intention of the AUU to merge with the University of South Australia Student Association to form a new student association for Adelaide University pursuant to section 11 of the act. I will explain this in a little bit of detail for members. Like I said previously on the wrong amendment, we heard from the two student associations during the inquiry process. I certainly engaged with them beyond that process, and I expect that they would have engaged with everyone to see what commitments they could get.

The Hon. Rob Simms moved some amendments earlier, and when he spoke I raised advice that has been provided in relation to the fees and also questions that had been raised around the constitutional validity of prescribing those fees in this bill. The reason I did so is there is federal legislation at play here, and that is the Higher Education Support Act. Regardless of whether you agree or not, there are some opinions that prescribing those in this bill, as WA has done, would not withstand a challenge in terms of their constitutional validity.

That said—and I am going to refer again to the accord because we did it during the inquiry, so I might as well do it now—the accord interim report has also stated that it would be examining whether more could be done to support how the SSAF is directed, including to students and considering providing a greater percentage of the SSAF to student unions. It may be that through the accord a national approach to distribution of the SSAF is agreed, which would presumably result in a change to the Higher Education Support Act in any event and would be consistent for all universities.

That is something that is yet to be seen. Notwithstanding that, I know that when I had the conversations I had with the students what they wanted was some reassurance, regardless of what happened, in terms, firstly, of their funding and, secondly, given that that could potentially be, some would say, if they were given any undertakings, a non-binding undertaking—and I hasten to say that it would be a brave university that backtracks on any undertaking that it gives to these student associations—

The Hon. R.A. Simms: They do, though.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: It will be a brave one that takes on me in that regard then, Mr Simms, an absolutely brave one that takes on me. The purpose of this drafting note is twofold. I have a letter that I will table, and members will have the benefit of reading as a result. That letter is addressed to Ms Georgia Thomas, President of the University of Adelaide Student Representative Council, and Mr Isaac Solomon, President of the University of South Australia Student Association.

In effect, what the university has done through this letter is acknowledge the issues that were raised by both associations in evidence to the inquiry. It has provided a commitment for ongoing funding. It has provided a commitment for establishment fees, associated legal fees and a commitment that there will be no less funding than is available now, but of course that does not prevent there being more funding available now or in the future.

I know, certainly from speaking to Georgia and Isaac, that they were pretty nervous about how things would end up and I can say that, based on discussions I have had with them, regardless of anything else, they have expressed deep gratitude to the universities for providing this undertaking to them and note the importance of that letter being tabled in this place today.

The other factor we discussed and tried to work around was how to make this somewhat binding. One of the concerns that the student groups had was that we could end up in a situation where we form a new student association but it does not incorporate the existing two associations. That is the purpose of this amendment, so as a package we see the letter, the undertakings, the commitments by the university in relation to the funding arrangements and in relation to transition assistance and in relation to commitments given, should there be any changes as a part of the accord process.

I will not read the letter onto the record, but I will say that from my discussions—and I certainly do not want to speak on behalf of the university—and my understanding of the discussions they have had with the universities, they are exceptionally pleased with this outcome, they are exceptionally pleased with the drafting note that ties the two things together and overcomes the sort of situation that occurred in Victoria with La Trobe, where a new association was formed.

I should say also—and it is quoted in this letter—that the vice-chancellors made it very clear in the evidence they provided to the committee at the time, but also certainly in all the discussions that have taken place since, that they were very open and committed to these processes and very open and committed to trying to alleviate as far as possible the concerns of the associations and ensuring that they are the associations that ultimately form the new association for the new university. That is all reflected in this letter. This is an extremely important outcome for the student associations

and one that I know the representatives are extremely grateful for. I seek leave to table that letter for everybody's benefit.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I do not think I have missed anything in terms of the commitments given, but it certainly has provided them with a great deal of comfort, knowing that the funding will continue, their establishment fees will be covered, their legal fees will be covered, all associated costs will be covered and they will certainly be in, for the time being at least until we see what that review comes up with, the same position financially as they are right now.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I rise to indicate that the government will be supporting this amendment. We think the amendment provides—particularly when combined with the letter that the honourable member has referred to—a level of assurance to the existing student bodies that the intention is there for a new student association to be formed through the merging of those two student bodies.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: We will also support the amendment. At least it ensures that there is going to be a student association in the new university, and that is something the Greens have been pushing. In terms of undertakings given by the university via letters or whatever, I have actually been a student representative in the past.

I was a student president at Flinders University and I can tell you that during my time as an advocate, rather than having letters or undertakings given by the university that put the student association in a position where they were reliant on the whim of the university, it was preferable to have those things baked into legislation. That said, I recognise the Hon. Connie Bonaros is not supportive of that, nor is the Hon. Ms Game or the Labor Party, so that will not be getting up.

The Hon. S.L. GAME: I rise to briefly express my support for the amendment.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Liberal opposition will not be opposing this amendment. Initially, we thought it was not necessary because it was covered by clause 11—Student associations, and also the way that this particular amendment is worded, 'It is the intention'—'intention' becomes non-binding—but after listening to the Hon. Connie Bonaros, and all the reasons she has given and has provided to substantiate it with the letter, on that basis we will support the amendment.

Amendment carried; schedule as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill recommitted.

Clause 26.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: This has been recommitted as a result of advice from parliamentary counsel on the successful passage of the Hon. Robert Simms' clause 13. Clause 13 inserted provisions about a code of conduct. Clause 26 effectively provides sanctions for breaches of the conflict of interest policy. The legislation did not anticipate the code of conduct, because that was a successful amendment, so this is now put in to not just talk about contraventions of the conflict of interest policy under section 24 but under the conflict of interest policy under section 24 or the code of conduct policy under section 24A, which is a new section inserted under clause 13. I move:

Amendment No 1 [AG-1]—

Page 15, line 28—Delete 'or the conflict of interest policy under section 24' and substitute:

, the conflict of interest policy under section 24 or the code of conduct under section 24A

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (21:19): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (21:19): I want to make a few very brief remarks, given we have come to the end of this bill. I think it is appropriate to recognise that this has been one of those difficult political debates for the chamber and certainly one of the more difficult ones over the last six months. I do want to acknowledge that, whilst it has been disappointing from the Greens' perspective that a number of our amendments have been unsuccessful—indeed, all of the amendments bar one—it is our hope that this new institution is successful.

Universities play a very important role in our state and whilst we have not been supportive of the approach that the government, and indeed the parliament, has taken, it is my sincere hope that the new university is a success. I want to take this opportunity to wish the staff and the students of the university well as they transition into this next phase, and also to make a few remarks about my relationship with the government in terms of dealing with this matter.

I have known the higher education minister for many years. I have known her to be a good person and someone who cares a lot about the university sector. Whilst we have differed on this issue, I am sure we will work together on different issues. We have had some very intense debates in this chamber over the last few days on this issue, but I think everybody has tried to engage with this with the best of intentions. I look forward to us working together on other matters in the future.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (NATIONAL ENERGY LAWS) (OTHER GASES) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

GAS (OTHER GASES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

At 21:23 the council adjourned until Thursday 2 November 2023 at 14:15.