

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Wednesday, 7 February 2024

The PRESIDENT (Hon. T.J. Stephens) took the chair at 14:17 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 Committees

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (14:18): I bring up the 37th report of the committee, 2022-23.
Report received.

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Determination of the Remuneration Tribunal No. 15 of 2023—

Salary of the Governor of South Australia

Report of the Remuneration Tribunal No. 15 of 2023—

2023 Review of Salary of the Governor in South Australia

Report of the Remuneration Tribunal—No. 16 of 2023—2023 Review of Electorate

Allowances for Members of the Parliament of South Australia

By the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development (Hon. C.M. Scriven)—

Report on actions taken by the Department for Correctional Services and the

South Australia Police following the Coronial Inquest into the death in

custody of Wayne Fella Morrison dated February 2024

Ministerial Statement

MORRISON, MR W.F.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:19): I table a copy of a ministerial statement made by the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services regarding the report in response to the death in custody of Mr Wayne Fella Morrison.

Parliamentary Procedure

ANSWERS TABLED

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

Question Time

WATER BUYBACKS

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:26): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development on production loss.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: The recent release of the federal Labor government's water and environment agency's draft framework for delivering the 450 gigalitres of environmental water in the basin states:

Basin communities may experience negative social and economic impacts from voluntary water purchases.

Further, the minister's own chief executive has provided evidence that:

If we just buy the water, then there will be loss both on economy and also jobs.

My question to the minister is: given the minister has previously stated in this chamber that she was not aware of any evidence to suggest that buybacks would have a negative impact and, incredibly, that she does not believe that voluntary water purchases would even lead to loss of production, and noting that her federal colleagues and her own department have acknowledged that there may be negative social and economic impacts, does the minister now agree with this view?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Minister, do you want to answer the question, or will we get the Hon. Mr Hunter to answer the question? I am not sure.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:27): Thank you, Mr President.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! I want to hear the minister.

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Attorney! Minister, please.

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: No, you weren't helping.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I thank the honourable member for her question. On 30 November last year, the commonwealth parliament passed the Water Amendment (Restoring our Rivers) Bill 2023. The bill included providing for the commonwealth to enter the water market and undertake a water buyback program. In addition to continued use of productivity-boosting irrigation efficiency measures, the South Australian government has supported the commonwealth's proposed use of strategic water purchases.

What those opposite fail to understand is that this is now necessary to recover the water after years of sabotage and delay. And who were those years of sabotage and delay from? The amendments to the Commonwealth Water Act 2007 and the basin plan specify the social and economic impacts are to be considered in water recovery programs. More specifically, the basin plan stipulates that:

Efficiency contribution to the SDL (sustainable diversion limit) adjustment mechanism must achieve neutral improved socio-economic outcomes.

The Australian government has also committed to minimising socio-economic impacts in delivering the basin plan. Primary Industries and Regions SA and the Department for Environment and Water are working together to provide a pathway for transition which will be achieved by providing advice to the commonwealth government on the design of any buyback program. The departments will be engaging with affected industries and communities to undertake what is incredibly important work.

We come to what those opposite are trying to achieve. We shouldn't be surprised that all the Liberal Party has to offer is scaremongering and political gains. They don't want to talk about what they did in government.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: They certainly don't want to talk—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —about the 10 years—10 years—of delays and sabotage under their federal counterparts. Why is it they don't want to talk about that?

The Hon. I.K. Hunter interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Last year, we saw the member for Hammond taking happy snaps in his electorate—

The Hon. N.J. Centofanti interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order, the honourable Leader of the Opposition!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —with the chief architect of Liberal and Coalition water policy, Barnaby Joyce, joined by the Hon. Laura Henderson, who is in this place. Talk about letting the fox into the henhouse. There he is standing up with Barnaby Joyce, who was the architect of sabotage and delays which have resulted in the threats to the health of the River Murray.

I would have hoped that the member for Hammond and the Hon. Mrs Henderson would have taken the opportunity to express their disappointment at how the former Coalition government and Mr Joyce as former responsible minister shortchanged South Australia by delivering just two of the 450 gigalitres on their watch—just two of the 450 gigalitres. Of course, we should never forget the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. David Speirs, was heavily criticised by the royal commission into the River Murray for capitulating to the interests of the former government, the commonwealth government, and those of Victoria and New South Wales and further accused—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order, both sides!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —of breaching the Ministerial Code of Conduct.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: We are getting to the point I can't hear the minister. I would like the minister to conclude your answer as soon as you can and I want to hear it in silence, please.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: There was a shameful record in the former government. The Leader of the Opposition in this place put out a media release recently, a somewhat reheated version of her release in December, and really I think she should be embarrassed. Her release in December deliberately took a comment by PIRSA chief executive Mehdi Doroudi—

The Hon. N.J. Centofanti interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —out of context to score cheap political points. I would have thought that the health of the Murray should be beyond cheap political pointscoring. Professor Doroudi's comments to the Budget and Finance Committee—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —when read in the context of his entire answer, highlight how sneaky and deceitful those opposite will be to score a political point. The question that was asked: 'Have there been any conversations around compensation for farmers and communities once the legislation is enacted?' Let's listen to all of Professor Doroudi's answer—

The Hon. H.M. Girolamo interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —which was:

At the moment, there is no compensation. As I said, the key point here is: I provide you with the example of the previous program on the River Murray SARMS, the South Australian River Murray Sustainability Program, \$250 million; the previous buyback that happened goes back to more than 10 years ago. It was not just simply to go and buy the water: it was a lot of investment also coming through the commonwealth government under the negotiations that we have had with them over water efficiencies and other developments in the region. We are trying to make sure that with the commonwealth we could develop plans and packages similar to SARMS that are going to be beyond just buying the water. If we just buy the water, then there will be loss both on economy and also jobs. It needs to be somehow replaced. That's the plan. That's what we are doing now with the environment department at a state level and also the commonwealth.

The Leader of the Opposition in this place accuses the Malinauskas government of a 'talk first, think later' approach towards the Murray, but what she fails to realise is this: that is exactly what it can look like when state and federal governments instead work together, as opposed to being dictated to as her government was by Barnaby Joyce.

Under those opposite, frankly, 'talk first, think later' would have been an improvement on picking up the phone to Barnaby first and capitulate straightaway. That's what they wanted to do. The Leader of the Opposition made further allegations in her question, again in terms of just trying to suit her own political narrative, and that concerned my answers in in this place.

What she has said in her media release are not words that I have used. I was asked by Mr Basham: 'Is the minister concerned about security of the state's future food needs following buybacks?' I said, 'I am not aware of any evidence to suggest that buybacks would have a negative impact, as the member is implying.' He said then, 'If water is sold back from agriculture into environment, is that not going to lead to the loss of production from the South Australian system if it is bought from South Australia?'

Remembering that we are talking about the evidence, my understanding is that the evidence has not shown that to be the case. I really do find it incredible that the Leader of the Opposition in this place is surprised that this is the kind of work—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —undertaken by departments—

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

The PRESIDENT: Minister, the Hon. Mr Simms has a point of order. Sit down, please.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: This is really engrossing, but I want to raise an issue of relevance. I am not sure how this is relevant to the original question.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Mr Simms, your point is well made except I am listening as best I can through the noise, and the minister hasn't strayed away from the issue with the River Murray, which is obviously incredibly important. Minister, I would like you to conclude your remarks because this has gone on nearly long enough, so please finish off and then we can move on to the next question.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I was saying I do find it quite incredible that the Leader of the Opposition in this place is surprised about the kind of work undertaken by departments to fully understand the impacts of policies and decisions. We know the state Liberals in government were dictated to by Barnaby Joyce. My department will work with DEW, with other state agencies and the federal government to support a plan for voluntary buybacks that supports communities.

WATER BUYBACKS

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:35): One supplementary, because I think it is very vital: what amount of gigalitres has been recovered under water efficiency programs by this state government since the election?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Hunter! The Hon. Mr Hunter, if you are going to answer the question, stand up.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Minister, please provide a concise answer so we can have the next question.

The Hon. N.J. Centofanti interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:36): If the former federal government had forced the upstream states to engage in water efficiencies, we might not be facing the difficulties that we are now.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Why don't those opposite care about that? Why did they capitulate to the upstream states?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Why don't they care about making sure that the rest of the country does their part?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Minister, let's pull it back. I want to hear some constructive questions and answers. The honourable Leader of the Opposition, your second question.

The Hon. R.P. Wortley interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Wortley!

COST-RECOVERY REVIEW PROCESS

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:37): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development regarding the government's independent review into cost recovery of the seafood and aquaculture industries.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: The report was finalised six months ago—that is the report of the independent review into cost recovery—but despite numerous requests by the opposition, the crossbench and industry stakeholders, the government and the minister is still refusing to release it. Under section 2.6, the South Australian Ministerial Code of Conduct states:

Ministers, their departments and agencies carry out work on behalf of the public. It is, therefore, important for information about portfolios to be made available to the public and to Parliament. A Minister has an obligation to be 'open and transparent'.

So my questions to the minister are:

1. Will the minister acknowledge that her refusal to release a copy of the review is in breach of her obligations under the Ministerial Code of Conduct?
2. What current reasons will she provide for her ongoing refusal to release the report?
3. Will she acknowledge that her refusal is not in the best financial interests of the fishing industry?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:38): First of all, the Leader of the Opposition is in error in the

first part of her question regarding being six months ago. That is not accurate, as I have said on multiple occasions in this place. Secondly, the rest of the question I answered in this place yesterday, and I would refer her to *Hansard*.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable Leader of the Opposition, your third question.

RIVERLAND WINE INDUSTRY BLUEPRINT

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:38): Thank you, Mr Government. I seek leave to make—Mr President.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: You really are pathetic.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable Leader of the Opposition, ask your question.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Mr President, I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Primary Industries a question about Riverland wine grape growers and the wine industry blueprint.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: On 6 February in this chamber, the minister indicated that she was attempting to address the issues that our growers face in the Riverland by engaging in discussions with China. Wine growers are currently facing very challenging circumstances. They feel powerless, bullied and pressured into accepting terms of a new preferred supplier agreement that has the potential to hurt the industry.

The minister has at numerous times referred to the government's Riverland wine industry blueprint as a silver bullet to address the needs of the industry. On 8 February 2023, when I then raised the crisis occurring in the Riverland wine industry, the minister in this chamber made the following statement concerning that blueprint:

This is a strategic road map to supply the recovery and development of this region over the next 10 years.

I am hearing something entirely different from Riverland constituents. A seriously impacted grower contacted my office and said the following concerning the blueprint:

The blueprint is a fundamental nonsense. It's a pretend, feel-good exercise and the Minister has a fundamental lack of knowledge of what's needed.

My questions to the minister are:

1. Does the minister seriously believe that supporting negotiations with China will address the immediate and serious issues facing our growers in the Riverland?
2. In what ways has this bureaucratically-driven blueprint actually assisted our growers in the current crisis they are facing?
3. Will the minister be attending in person the Riverland wine industry update town meeting on 21 February?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:41): I thank the honourable member for her question, despite the fact that it contains certain inaccuracies. I think I could probably place my hand on heart and say that never once have I said that the blueprint is a silver bullet. In actual fact, I have said that it is one of many actions that need to be taken. In fact, on many occasions, certainly in public forums and on media, I have said that there is not a silver bullet. It is a matter of industry working together, a matter of many steps, and I outlined a number of those steps yesterday.

The blueprint was developed with industry. The blueprint was not driven by government or by bureaucracy or administration or whatever term it was the honourable member used. The blueprint was called for by industry at a round table held in I think it was November 2022. The blueprint was then developed by industry with industry and is one of the many steps. I outlined yesterday other steps we are taking.

RIVERLAND WINE INDUSTRY BLUEPRINT

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:42): Supplementary: the minister didn't address my final question. The most important question is: will the minister be attending in person the Riverland wine industry update town meeting on 21 February?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:42): I think 21 February is a sitting day and as members of parliament I think we are required to be here in parliament.

RIVERLAND WINE INDUSTRY BLUEPRINT

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:42): Supplementary: is the minister indicating that she won't be attending that meeting in person?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. I.K. Hunter interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Hunter!

The Hon. N.J. Centofanti interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The honourable Leader of the Opposition, I am on my feet—enough!

The Hon. E.S. Bourke interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Ms Bourke will listen to the Hon. Ms El Dannawi.

UNCLAIMED GOODS ACT

The Hon. M. EL DANNAWI (14:43): My question is to the Attorney-General: Will the minister inform the council about work the government is undertaking to review the Unclaimed Goods Act?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (14:43): I thank the honourable member for her question. The Unclaimed Goods Act was introduced quite some time ago. In fact, it came into effect in 1987, when things were very, very different—emails weren't around, the marketplace was generally a physical space rather than on an online selling option—and the Unclaimed Goods Act reflects the error that was introduced and that is why we are eager to look at ways that we can revamp and modernise this important area of law.

According to the act, goods become unclaimed when they are received by a bailee and are unable to be returned by their owner, either by the owner's failure to collect the goods within the agreed time frame, the inability to deliver goods to the owner following reasonable attempts or the owner's failure to collect the goods within 42 days of a formal request being published. After 42 days have elapsed, the bailee must also then wait for three months before they are able to be sold or be disposed of. Goods are then classified into scales, and their classification determines the way in which they can be sold or disposed of.

These methods are, for the most part, rather burdensome for the business being left with the goods. Take, for example, the mechanic who has quoted for repairs on a car that the owner has decided not to proceed with and has then left the car at the mechanic's workshop and is not able to be contacted. The act sets out that, if the car is valued at over \$2,000, the mechanic can only sell or dispose of the goods with the authorisation of the court. For goods valued between \$500 and \$2,000, the goods can be sold by public auction, with the owner needing to be notified via post at their last known address.

We are committed to looking at better ways for businesses to operate, and we think this is one area where we can introduce reform and bring it into line with the 21st century. Reform in this area will make life easier for those who are trying to get on with running their business but are tied down with cumbersome and lengthy processes that reflect processes from the 1980s. The things we are looking at include the possibility of modernising methods of specified communications to include electronic communications, such as email or text messages, rather than post; allowing goods to be

sold via online platforms rather than by public auction; and looking at raising the scales of values to reflect a more contemporary value.

The government is currently reviewing this legislation and is accepting submissions on the YourSAy website until Friday 16 February. I encourage anyone interested to read the discussion paper and have their say on how we can tidy up this piece of legislation.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:46): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question without notice to the Minister for Regional Development on the topic of regional transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Today is one year to the day since the Public and Active Transport Committee tabled its report containing a series of recommendations relating to the regions. These include:

- better bus connectivity between regional centres, ensuring regional communities have access to health services;
- a trial of passenger services from Mount Barker to Adelaide, with a view to adopting similar trials at Roseworthy to Gawler, Aldinga to Seaford, and Adelaide to Port Augusta; and
- incentivising passenger rail between Adelaide and Melbourne stopping at regional townships.

Since the report was released one year ago, there has been no formal response from the Minister for Transport and, indeed, my efforts to contact his office have gone unanswered. The Minister for Regional Development has also not directly responded to the recommendations. My question to the Minister for Regional Development therefore is: has the minister now read the report, one year on, and has she understood the needs of the regions with respect to public transport infrastructure? What action has she taken in relation to those recommendations?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:47): I thank the honourable member for his question. At least he is not attributing to me responsibility for the weather, as some others might, but he does want me to be responsible for the portfolio of transport, which I think the Minister for Transport is doing a fine job on.

Whilst I think I have said in this place previously—some months ago and well before other questions on this topic from the honourable member—that, yes, I had read the report, in terms of responding to the recommendations, that is the role of the Minister for Transport. I will refer the question to him and bring back a response.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:48): Supplementary: given the Minister for Regional Development hasn't responded to the report, and the Minister for Transport hasn't responded to the report, whose job is it? When will I get a response?

The PRESIDENT: That is not really a supplementary question arising from the answer, and I think you know that—I think you know that.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLANNING

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:48): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development about regional workforce planning.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: On 11 December 2023, a media release by the Regional Australia Institute stated that the Cross-Border Future Industry Workforce Forum was held in Euston, in south-western New South Wales, to discuss regional development for the Murray Mallee region in 14 local

government areas spanning across South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. The region is on the cusp of significant large-scale new and expanded projects across the critical minerals, renewable energy and irrigated horticultural industries. An outcome of the forum was the creation of a new locally led task force to drive building a workforce in the region. My questions to the minister are:

1. What representation has the minister made to the Cross-Border Future Industry Workforce Forum since the Murray Mallee region in the 14 local government areas actually included South Australia?

2. Can the minister please outline what participation has taken place with the new Murray Mallee cross-border future task force to tackle South Australian regional workforce shortages?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:50): I thank the honourable member for her question. The Regional Australia Institute does a lot of fine work across the country in regard to a number of issues that affect regional communities. In terms of regional workforce, there are a number of activities and actions that are taking place, which I have referred to previously in this place. Members would be aware that regional workforce issues are common across the country. For example, when we are talking about healthcare workers, every regional town in South Australia is competing with almost every regional town across the country to attract those workers.

We know that there are some changes that will occur in regional workforce demands—for example, around automation or other innovations—but we also know that, because of the huge pipeline of work that will be coming to South Australia because of the forward-thinking policies of the Malinauskas Labor government, there will be an increased demand for labour and skilled labour in all sorts of industries. So we continue to work with many organisations that have an interest, particularly, for example, our RDAs and other across-government departments, to address this issue, which is a significant issue and one that is incredibly important to the future of South Australia.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE PLANNING

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:51): Supplementary: specifically, has the minister participated at the forum that was held in December last year?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:52): I wasn't at that forum. I can't recall whether I received an invitation. There must have been something else on at that time. I think it is important to note that a lot of organisations are doing a lot of important work. It is the role of my department, among others, to provide briefings on that and to feed that into the various plans that are being developed for our state.

FERAL DEER

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Can the minister update the council about the importance of feral deer eradication programs in South Australia?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:52): I thank the honourable member for his question and his ongoing concern about feral animals. As members should be aware, feral deer are a declared pest under the Landscape South Australia Act, which was enacted in 2019, requiring land managers to destroy feral deer from their land. This is done to protect primary industries, the natural environment and also road users from the impacts of feral deer.

Feral deer numbers across South Australia have been increasing, impacting agricultural regions across the state. In 2021, there was an estimated population of 40,000 feral deer, with projections that those numbers would increase to 200,000 by 2031 without a feral deer eradication program.

The simple fact is feral deer costs impact South Australia's primary production sector. In 2022, it was estimated that producers lost \$36 million in agricultural productivity losses alone.

Modelling predicts that this figure could blow out to close to a quarter of a billion dollars by 2031. Since the eradication program started in the Limestone Coast, over 6,500 feral deer in the Limestone Coast have been eradicated, which is, in terms of impact, the equivalent of 10,000 sheep grazing, so the removal of the equivalent pressure of 10,000 sheep in the region.

I am glad to say that the program is widely supported by the Limestone Coast community, in particular local farmers in the region who are already noticing the benefits of the reduced numbers of feral deer. During the 2022-23 eradication program in the Limestone Coast, the culling activities took place over a million hectares of land, which equates to 35 per cent of the total Limestone Coast landscape region. That included 20 private forestry plantations, 83 parks and forestry reserves, and more than 200 private properties.

It is my understanding that only one property in the region required an action order for works to be carried out. I might mention that an action order is a last resort. Property owners are given many opportunities to fulfill their responsibilities and comply with the law, the law which states that they must eradicate feral deer from their properties.

Given the high level of support for the program from the Limestone Coast community, along with the evidence of significant increases in agricultural productivity for farmers in the region, you would presume that this would enjoy bipartisan support, even more so given that the policy was created and signed off by the former environment minister and now Leader of the Opposition in the other place, but it appears this is not the case.

I am aware of the wild deer forum held in Naracoorte last weekend, which was attended by and spoken at by none other than the shadow minister for primary industries, as well as the Hon. Ben Hood, who I heard wants to be the new shadow minister for primary industries or is it new opposition leader in this place? I am not sure.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: The landscape board offered to present at the meeting to share factual information, but this offer was declined by the organisers. At this meeting, it appears as though the shadow minister cast doubt over the effectiveness of the eradication program, which has led to a long list of farmers in the South-East—

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Point of order: the minister is verballing me and I ask that she withdraw her comments.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! To what point do you refer? What did she say that you want her to withdraw? Can you just tell me that?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: The last point that the culling program has been ineffective.

The PRESIDENT: Minister, if that is incorrect, you can withdraw it.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: If I may, for your consideration, Mr President, what I said was that at this meeting it appears as though the shadow minister cast doubt over the effectiveness of the eradication program, which has led to a long list of farmers in the South-East asking why the Liberal Party is no longer supporting the program.

We also saw the shadow minister spread misinformation by claiming that both the Deputy Premier and I had been invited but failed to attend; however, I can confirm that I was not invited to the event, so it appears as though the Liberal Party is waging a war on Limestone Coast farmers—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —by undermining the program. I understand that the Limestone Coast Landscape Board has been inundated with calls and emails from farmers concerned about

the change of approach to feral deer eradication by the opposition. Indeed, I received a range of feedback from landowners in the region expressing support for the program. This one states:

As a landowner in the Furna area I wish to express...my strongest support for the eradication of feral deer in the Limestone Coast and our appreciation as food and fibre producers that we have the support of such a coordinated program. The need for this program has been established and must not be disrupted.

I have written to the Leader of the Opposition in the other place to ask him to clarify his party's position and, if necessary, to counsel the shadow minister about the benefits of the program. Despite the opposition to the program from members opposite, I am delighted to confirm that aerial culling operations in the Limestone Coast will occur once again in 2024. The culling will take place across the Limestone Coast, Murraylands and Riverland, Hills and Fleurieu, Northern and Yorke, Eyre Peninsula and Green Adelaide.

I urge members opposite to support feral deer eradication. It is so important for our farmers. I urge them to listen to what the farmers want us to do. I urge them to stop undermining the feral deer program and to support the eradication of this feral pest.

FERAL DEER

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (14:59): Supplementary question: is the minister aware of complaints that have been made that the eradication program, by using helicopters and shooters armed with shotguns, is proving to be an ineffective way of disposing of these animals, in fact leading to inhumane and cruel disposal of these animals that are left to either die or rot where they fall, because nobody is allowed to dispose of those carcasses?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:00): I thank the honourable member for his question. Had the landscape board been afforded the opportunity to attend the forum that was referred to at the weekend, they could have answered those questions.

In terms of the claims of high levels of lead, I am advised that as a comparison about \$6 million is spent each year on ammunition by hunters in South Australia, which equates to between 4½ and nine million rounds of ammunition. If we conservatively estimate that only half of that is used by recreational hunters, and with lead being based at an average of five to nine grams of lead per round, recreational hunting results in between 11 and 41 tonnes of lead being put into the environment, which is 15 times the amount of the South Australian Feral Deer Eradication Program.

In terms of the eradication, I am advised that the eradication program works in accordance with the national code of practice and standard operating procedures for the effective and humane control of feral and wild deer and uses thermal equipment, rifles and shotguns in aerial culls. Aerial culling is the most effective landscape-scale tool available to rapidly reduce feral deer populations and their impacts. Thermal assisted aerial culling improves the detection rate of feral deer in dense vegetation compared with the traditional non-thermal aerial culling and improves the rate at which feral deer are removed.

The research has demonstrated that compared with traditional use of semiautomatic .308 calibre rifles, programs that use shotguns have increased efficiency, as measured in terms of reduction in the time required to kill feral deer, and also better welfare outcomes for culled feral deer, as measured by the reduced time between the first shot and confirmed death, shortened pursuit times and increased likelihood that multiple projectiles penetrating the heart and lungs of culled feral deer, leading to more fatal injuries of vital organs, will minimise time until death.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Pangallo, your supplementary question.

FERAL DEER

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:02): How do they confirm a killing? How do they confirm that without having to land and go and check or not having anyone on the ground?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:02): Two things I would say: first of all, I am happy to arrange a briefing from the department for Mr Pangallo to have more detailed information on this—or it would probably be from the landscape boards. Secondly, I am operating from memory, so I will correct the

record if I remember incorrectly, but because they do a flyback after the shooting they are able to check that the animal is deceased, and because of the thermal nature, that is how they are able to identify where they are.

The PRESIDENT: The honourable Leader of the Opposition, I will take your supplementary question and then we are moving on.

FERAL DEER

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (15:02): How many alternative action plans that don't include aerial culling have been approved by the landscape board or your department in the last two years?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:03): There are a number of different opportunities to eradicate feral deer. Ground shooting still occurs and is open. What we have, though, is the difference between something that will have a small impact on the numbers of feral deer and something that will actually be helpful in the long term in terms of addressing the huge numbers and the increase in numbers.

I might refer the honourable Leader of the Opposition in this place to some other correspondence which I believe she has received from a landowner. She says she has property in the relevant area and says:

I have been collecting and collating data for years, and my data, shows, the helicopter abatement program, was immediately, effective. Leakage from unfenced neighbours—

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Point of order: relevance. She's not answering my question.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I've asked how many action plans have been approved.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Attorney-General, you're not helping at all. Minister, conclude your remarks so I can move on.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: She goes on:

...the helicopter abatement program, was immediately, effective. Leakage from unfenced neighbours with feral deer made it necessary for us to continue our own eradication program. Weekly, and more often, weather permitting, for 25 years...

Our camera data showed, we were effective, but the deer coming in, just continued.

To address my concerns of hunters or landholders [that a particular hunter] refers to, concerned about eradication of feral deer with aerial shooting programs, I make the following observations,

no mention of tagging deer as required by landholders that choose to keep/farm deer on their own property.

no mention that CWM shooters already have a MOU with parks to do ground shoots for eradication of feral deer.

no mention of the cost to landholders, and burden of having feral deer running around eating pasture and other foods, meant for livestock, or crops not meeting their yield expectation.

no mention it is the landholders responsibility to eradicate feral deer on their property.

The PRESIDENT: Minister, I am losing patience—conclude.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition—

The Hon. N.J. Centofanti interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition to read the correspondence that has come to her, to listen to the reasons for the eradication program and to start supporting our South Australian farmers.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

SKYCITY ADELAIDE

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:05): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General regarding the SkyCity Casino.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: It was reported last week that the Casino's operators were negotiating a \$73 million penalty after admissions of serious corrupt activity, money laundering and other breaches of anti-terrorist laws following an investigation by AUSTRAC and subsequent civil action. It confirms what I have often said in this place: corruption is the mortar that holds up the walls of our society.

This is quite egregious conduct by the Casino and would, in any other jurisdiction or country, lead to severe penalties. My question to the Attorney-General is: will he now release the report, a separate, independent investigation, that was carried out by the Hon. Brian Martin, and will the government now consider stripping the Casino of its licence due to character grounds?

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 his question. I will refer it to Minister Andrea Michaels, who has ministerial responsibilities for these matters. I am aware of the media reports around AUSTRAC's involvement. I am not aware of any more than what the honourable member has outlined as being reported in the media, but I will certainly refer those questions to the minister in another place and bring back a reply.

BARGARLA DETERMINATION ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (15:07): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs a question on Aboriginal affairs.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: On 20 December 2023, many members of this chamber received a letter from Sonja Dare, Chairperson of the Bargarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation, which stated, 'Bargarla do not support the desalination project proposed for Billy Lights Point.' The letter refers, in the first sentence of the second paragraph, to the Bargarla people having already advised the government about their objection to Billy Lights Point. The letter then goes on to state the following:

The Bargarla community are deeply concerned with the proposal due to the ecological and heritage issues at Billy Lights Point. We consider that these issues are insurmountable. These issues cannot be remedied by heritage surveys or other negotiations, as they go to the core issues of this development at this location.

My questions for the minister are:

1. How, when and on what grounds did the Bargarla people previously notify the minister of their objections?
2. Has the minister met with the Bargarla people about their significant concerns over the proposed project for Billy Lights Point?
3. What communications has the minister had with the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, given the significant concerns expressed by the Bargarla community?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:08): I thank the honourable member for her question. I don't recall, but I am happy to check, having received correspondence directly on the issue of Billy Lights Point from Bargarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation (BDAC). Certainly, I have met with BDAC a number of times since I have been minister, I think in Adelaide but certainly at the BDAC offices in Port Augusta.

In relation to Aboriginal heritage as it pertains to any development, there are processes under the Aboriginal Heritage Act, particularly the interaction to sections 13 and 23, to specifically deal with Aboriginal heritage that might be on the site of any potential development, whether it be a development on land or a development on the coastline, as mentioned. I haven't had, that I can recall—but again, I am happy to check—specific conversations with the Minister for Environment, who has responsibility for the project of desalination for Eyre Peninsula, but I am certain that it will come up in discussions that I have with the minister.

RIVERLAND COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (15:10): My question is to the Attorney-General. Will the minister please inform the council about his recent visit to the Riverland Community Justice Centre?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:10): Certainly. I thank the honourable member for his question. As I mentioned yesterday, I was able to visit various locations in the Riverland, particularly meeting with Aboriginal organisations and members of the Aboriginal community in the Riverland, but it was an opportunity to meet with other areas that touch on my portfolios.

When cabinet visited the Riverland area immediately before the peaks of the flood at the end of 2022, I was able to visit, as I have a number of times, with people at the Riverland Community Justice Centre in Berri. At the time I last met, at the end of 2022, there was a dire need for legal advice for concerned home owners who were facing potential losses, including in some cases their home and possessions, as well as dealing with other unexpected matters that related to the impending natural disaster, particularly things that I did not think of at the time, such as Family Court matters and child custody arrangements: how you deal with things like shared custody when you are literally cut off by virtue of not being able to get across a river as easily as you have in the past.

The Riverland Community Justice Centre has worked tirelessly throughout this time to assist the community, and I was very pleased that we were able to provide further funding over and above what has been provided in the past for the legal matters that have arisen, to assist people in the flood-affected areas. I know that both the South Australian and the commonwealth governments have provided funding to the community legal centre in the Riverland.

In meeting with the people of the Riverland Community Justice Centre, I was pleased to hear about the experience during the last year—although it was challenging—of how flood-related matters had been dealt with and had progressed at that time. It is always pleasing also to hear from legal practitioners what they love about their work, particularly in regional areas in South Australia, and the challenges that are faced in the legal profession by people who are practising in regional areas.

Services like the Riverland Community Justice Centre are invaluable. They play an important part in the community's foundation. I particularly thank Georgia, as the solicitor, and the team from the Riverland Community Justice Centre for their ongoing service to the community. I look forward to seeing this important resource for the community thriving.

CONVERSION PRACTICES

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:13): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question to the Attorney as Leader of the Government in this place, representing the Premier, a question about banning conversion practices.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: On 8 February 2022, in a letter to the South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance, the then Leader of the Opposition and now Premier said:

Labor is fundamentally opposed to the practice of conversion therapy which tries to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity and if elected, will work to ensure this practice does not occur in South Australia.

I note that bans are already in place in Queensland, Victoria and the ACT, and both New South Wales and Tasmania have announced in recent years that they will be also banning conversion practices, so most of Australia has now moved this way. My questions, therefore, to the Attorney are:

1. Is this a promise that is currently the remit of the Premier's Delivery Unit?

2. Has the Premier met with survivors of conversion practices in South Australia?
3. How is the Malinauskas government ensuring that conversion practices do not occur in our state?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:14): I thank the honourable member for her question. The elements of her question that pertain to what the Premier has done or who the Premier has met I will obviously have to refer to the Premier. I will be happy to do so and bring back a reply for the honourable member.

In relation to the banning of conversion practices in South Australia, it is an area that straddles a couple of portfolios. Certainly, I am involved in that as Attorney-General and also the Minister for Human Services, Nat Cook, is involved in that area. I know that both of our departments have done work on this to date, particularly that analysis of jurisdictions, and as the honourable member has said there are various ways that this is done in different parts of Australia, and New Zealand has moved to make legislative change in recent times as well.

I am happy to find out exactly where that is up to and bring back a reply for the honourable member in terms of other work that has already been undertaken.

ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:15): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General a question about the Electoral Commissioner and the Electoral Commission of South Australia.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: Currently, as members would be aware, there is a court case investigating voter fraud at the 2022 Adelaide City Council government local elections. As a result of that court case, it was found that two Adelaide Plains councillors were actually incorrectly declared elected at the 2022 local government election. In addition to that, the opposition has also received freedom of information documents detailing complaints of ECSA staff regarding the conduct of the 2022 state election in which staff have claimed to have felt exhausted, unheard and complained of the incompetence of those above them.

In that circumstance, that being the background, we have two very significant elections soon to occur in South Australia: the First Nation's Voice election, the very first one upcoming, and of course the by-election in Dunstan next month, presumably. My question to the Attorney-General is very simple: does the Attorney have confidence in the Electoral Commission and the commissioner to run free and fair elections in South Australia in those circumstances and in that context?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:16): I thank the honourable member for his question. Certainly, I think the conduct of elections in South Australia, compared with how you see elections happening in many parts around the world, I think we would all agree is remarkably successful and not just the conduct of elections when you have 1.2 or 1.3 million people going to vote at each election.

I am almost surprised every time how little we see in terms of controversy or problems occurring, given it is such a huge undertaking to conduct a state election, and not just the elections themselves but the transfer of power that occurs following elections is something I think we should all be proud of in an Australian and particularly a South Australian context.

In relation to some of the very specific questions that the honourable member asked in terms of staff concerns or complaints, I am not aware of those but I am happy to ask questions and bring back the honourable member a reply. In relation to some of the concerns the honourable member raised into local government elections, the conduct of local government elections falls under the remit of the local government minister. Although the Electoral Commission is an area that falls—although it is independent, it actually falls under myself as Attorney-General.

If there is any further information about the local government elections and the questions the honourable member has raised I am happy to see if the Minister for Local Government has answers as well.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:18): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Can the minister inform the chamber about how the government is supporting leadership development in regional South Australia, including by expanding training opportunities to a wider cohort of emerging leaders?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:18): I thank the honourable member for his question. Over the past two years, the Regional Development Australia network has successfully managed a state government funded Regional Leadership Development Program.

The success of this program is immediately apparent. Contracted to provide training for 420 participants, the program reached three times this number, training more than 1,300 regional leaders. The success of the program has been built on its regional design and regional delivery. Each RDA contracted their own course providers and designed their own leadership program to fill the identified training gaps in their own communities.

Where the program has been most successful has been in providing flexible, family-friendly hours for training and delivering the programs in-region, in 72 regional towns where emerging leaders actually live. This accessibility has meant that previously under-represented leadership cohorts were able to fill many of the training places and take up that opportunity.

Overall, 68 per cent of participants in the program were female, peaking at 88 per cent of those receiving training in the Yorke and Mid North region. This provides the opportunity for regional businesses, industry bodies and community organisations to attract and appoint a greater diversity of board and committee members in the future.

Preparing them for these positions, the program courses variously feature training in governance, financial accounting, strategic and project planning, marketing, managing volunteers, wellbeing and resilience, empowering leadership, harnessing diversity and inclusion, and cross-sector collaboration.

My own experience when attending a number of sessions across different regions is that the courses attracted a range of participants, from experienced community, business or public sector leaders through to younger or early career people with an interest in civic service. Based on the strong performance of the first two years of the program, I am very pleased that we have been able to extend as a government the annual \$1 million investment for a further two years.

I am advised by the RDA network that they are confident the program's strong demand will continue as referrals from current participants flow through to potential new applicants. I also encourage regional community members who wish to learn new skills and empower themselves to better contribute to their community to reach out to their local RDA and register their interest in the Regional Leadership Development Program.

Participants don't need to be particularly well qualified in a particular stream or even think of themselves as a conventional leader. The most important thing is that they have a willingness to learn and the willingness and desire to serve their community. I congratulate the RDA network and their course providers for administering such a successful program over the past two years and, once again, I encourage regional South Australians to consider registering for this program.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Hon. S.L. GAME (15:21): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, representing the Minister for Human Services, about the South Australian Housing Authority.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.L. GAME: I have been reliably informed that there are up to eight South Australian Housing Authority homes currently unoccupied on Kangaroo Island at a time of high demand. My office has been contacted by a constituent living on Kangaroo Island who has a family member currently living in inappropriate caravan park accommodation facilitated through Junction.

The family member is suffering from a mental health condition that is exacerbated by the current circumstances relating to this accommodation. Despite being classed as category 1 for public housing, more suitable accommodation has not been provided, notwithstanding these homes lying dormant. My questions to the minister are:

1. Why are these public houses unoccupied in the middle of a housing crisis?
2. How is it appropriate for a client of Junction to be placed in accommodation that is having a detrimental effect on a diagnosed mental health condition?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:23): I thank the honourable member for her question. Whilst I will refer the specifics of her question to the minister in the other place who has ministerial responsibility, I do know that questions about vacant Housing Authority houses in other regions have certainly been raised.

It is just worth pointing out that there can be a range of reasons as to why a home may be vacant or appear to be vacant, including such things as requiring to have work done on it to make it of a suitable standard, and we are all aware, I think, of the difficulties in getting trades and skilled labour available to do the work, particularly given, of course, there is a lot of ongoing work on Kangaroo Island following the devastating fires of a couple years ago.

Similarly, it may be that a tenant is ill and away due to ill health, perhaps undergoing medical treatment for an extended period or rehabilitation. All sorts of reasons may result in a property not appearing to be occupied. However, as I mentioned, I will refer to the minister in the other place.

FIRST NATIONS VOICE ELECTIONS

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (15:24): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs regarding the First Nations Voice elections.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: In the First Nations Voice Act the meaning of 'First Nations person' is prescribed through a tripartite test, requiring a person to:

- (a) be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; and
- (b) regards themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander...; and
- (c) is accepted [as such]...[by their] community.

Section 6 of the act enables the Local or State Voice or First Nations person to not disclose information that according to tradition should not be disclosed. My questions to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs are:

1. What actions are being taken to ensure that only Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people will vote in the Voice elections?
2. Can the minister foresee anybody relying on section 6 to obstruct, cast doubt on or cause illegitimacy in the elections or operations of the Voice?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector) (15:25): I thank the honourable member for his question. In relation to the second part, the answer is, no, I can't see people relying on that in relation to the conduct of the election. I know there has been some, although limited, discussion about this. I do remember a couple of years ago, when a similar representative body was proposed by the then Liberal government when there was some discussion of this, the then Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement, Dr Roger Thomas, very eloquently answering a lot of these questions.

This is not something new or untested whatsoever. The tripartite test the honourable member mentioned has been around since 1992, when the High Court handed down the decision in *Mabo v Queensland (No. 2)*. I think it was Justice Brennan who particularised the test the honourable member has referred to, which appears over and over again, both in state and federal legislation, in various ways for various regimes and schemes and has worked exceptionally well since 1992.

Even predating *Mabo*, we have had elections for the then ATSIC body. The inaugural ATSIC elections I think were in 1990 and, if I am remembering my history correctly, there were four elections for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, which of course was initially headed by Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, who we talked about yesterday. I think after 1990 there were another three ATSIC elections that had Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people voting and electing members of their own community onto regional councils and into regional zones. That occurred four times in South Australia quite effectively and efficiently.

The Australian Capital Territory, although not a legislated body, has elections for an advisory body and has had for some time. In Victoria, there is an election for a representative Aboriginal body for a treaty-making process, the First Peoples' Assembly. These things have been known for quite some time. The test or definition, as the honourable member outlined, has been used extensively throughout Australia since 1992. It has occurred and has been tested numerous times.

Matters of Interest

FERAL DEER

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (15:28): I have risen in this chamber on many occasions to speak on the importance of feral animal control. Today, I want to talk about the feral deer culling program and the concerning trajectory of this program under the current state government. Recently, I attended a community forum in Naracoorte, where over 300 residents expressed dismay over the government's heavy-handed approach. The fact that no government minister or MP bothered to turn up to listen to these constituents is a sad indictment on this Labor government and highlights their arrogance and unwillingness to listen.

First, these communities are by no means against controlling deer numbers, nor are they against the use of aerial culling as part of a range of tools if it is carried out safely and humanely. What they are against is being forced to take part in the aerial culling program, being forced out of their properties for days at a time, sometimes for up to two weeks, and being forced to sign agreements that stipulate that they are liable for any other person or the public entering their properties during that time.

What is incredibly disturbing are the reports of bullying and intimidation by the government towards landowners who do not wish to participate in the aerial culling program. Understandably, given the media reports of concerns raised over the number of safety incidents associated with deer culling programs last year, one cannot blame landholders for being somewhat tentative.

Let me be clear, feral animal control is vital for our state, not just because of the damage they do to productive agricultural land and to the environment but because of the role they would play in the spread of an exotic disease incursion. I unequivocally support the feral deer culling program; however, aerial culling is only one tool in the toolbox—

The Hon. C.M. Scriven interjecting:

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: —if the minister could stop interjecting, that would be great—and should not be used in isolation for the control of feral deer populations. It should be used alongside and as a complement to other measures, such as the use of commercial, professional and recreational hunters. It should be a landowner's choice as to which tools they use to manage the deer numbers on their property because, as Liberals, we believe in individual choice and we will always seek to protect property rights—that is, the right to do what you choose with your private property here in South Australia.

To force landowners to sign up to aerial culling by threatening individuals with action orders and promising to send them a bill to perform the aerial cull is not a choice. It does not build up trust

in these communities; in fact, it undermines trust and fails to collaborate with communities, and it is certainly not working with all landowners to tackle the problem.

It appears that every landowner in affected areas is required to have an action plan to control feral deer on their property. This initially seems very benign and reasonable, until closer inspection reveals biases favouring aerial culling over alternatives proposed by landowners. Within the government's own Strategic Plan for the South Australian Feral Deer Eradication Program 2022-2032, it states under 'Feral deer control tools', and I quote:

A range of control tools will be used to eradicate feral deer...depending on feral deer numbers, the local environment, needs of landholders and proximity to...communities.

Yet it seems that the needs of landholders are low on that priority list. Venison is fast becoming a popular protein. Venison steaks currently sell for approximately \$45 per kilo. That is \$15 more per kilo than lamb and is on par with the price of beefsteaks.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT (The Hon. D.G.E. Hood): The Hon. Mr Hunter!

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: If the government could stop interjecting and actually listen it would be much appreciated.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT (The Hon. D.G.E. Hood): Order! Please, leader, sit down. We will have silence.

An honourable member interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT (The Hon. D.G.E. Hood): I will give you more time. We will have silence from that side, please. It is tradition that we have MOIs in relative silence. The Leader of the Opposition will continue.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Thank you, Mr Acting President, for your protection. Venison's growing popularity and economic value make collaboration with commercial hunters a sensible option, especially for landowners not wanting to aerial cull. From the conversations I have had with some of these property owners, they would absolutely welcome collaboration with commercial hunters who also utilise a one-shot kill, which is preferable for animal welfare purposes.

Success and practical outcomes occur when communities, individuals and governments collaborate and work together to achieve these outcomes. It does not occur when government uses its big stick to wield power over individuals and communities, and it certainly does not occur when people feel their basic rights and freedoms are taken away from them. So I urge this current government to reassess their heavy-handed tactics and, rather than taking a big stick approach, work with individual landowners—

The Hon. C.M. Scriven interjecting:

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: —like we do with the fruit fly program, Clare—to use a range of control tools for feral deer, rather than using a blanket, one-size-fits-all-approach. If they do not, they will risk losing the community on this incredibly important program to cull feral deer.

CONVERSION PRACTICES

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (15:33): I wish to continue the story that I talked about late last year, about a woman who survived queer conversion practices in this state and the ongoing impacts on her life that the conversion practices have had. I talked last November, I think it was, about a person whom I named at the time, Sam, and a life skills program that they did, not knowing that the program was run by a church group, where they were required to pray for forgiveness for the generational curses that were placed upon them.

We understand programs like this as formal conversion practices. We know that formal and informal conversion practices are still being conducted in South Australia today, but informal practices are those being done in places where people are most vulnerable and where people are least likely to complain, like in psychologist or GP offices, places where we are supposed to be able

to trust professionals to leave their personal religious beliefs aside and provide effective clinical care to their patients. Sam said to me:

In my teenage years I had body dysmorphia. I said to my mum, I don't think I'm in the right body, and she just said you're not right, I think we need to get prayer for you, there's a spiritual curse over you, a demonic presence.

She took me to a GP and I said I was really unhappy. They didn't ask any questions about my home, nothing. They just said you're depressed and put me on anti-depressants.

The doctor knew my mum. And that's where you go, to the same GP [the family GP]. They knew my family. And I thought that was just normal.

He was Christian as well, and he used to give me scriptures. He just said to me I need to pray more.

I took the antidepressants, and I started to feel numb, I didn't feel anything and I just kept praying more. I felt tortured.

This is a case in which Sam was not able to get the help they needed and deserved. Professional trust was breached, and Sam was left feeling worse as a result of the treatment from that GP. Sam went on to tell me about their experience engaging a psychologist as a way of treating depression and anxiety from years of emotional and spiritual abuse:

I decided to go to therapy. I went to a clinic, and I asked the psychologist, can you please let me know if you're against same-sex and if you're religious? If you're those two things, I will not continue seeing you. She looked at me and said, 'I'm neither of those things.'

I was saying to her some people are trying to change me, I just want to be who I am, and that's when it came out.

It was six sessions in, when she decided to tell me she was Mormon, that my god is not the right god, and that I should consider their religion. I was just so disempowered.

I told my friend who said I should report it, but I didn't think we can, cos that's religious freedom. So, I didn't. I just left it. It scares me to this day [that] that person is still practising.

So there are professionals engaging in conversion practices behind closed doors, peddling their religious views about gender and sexuality in moments of vulnerability in their patients' lives, when they are expected to provide professional and impartial healthcare services. In this instance, the healthcare practitioner lied to Sam, betrayed their trust and then attempted to foist their religion upon them in place of clinical care.

Unfortunately, in this place we have seen attempts to further stoke the flames of a toxic culture war and drag queer people through the mud again with a posited inquiry into gender-affirming care. This politically loaded inquiry would have provided carte blanche to rogue operators to invalidate the genuine health needs of people experiencing gender dysphoria and justify religious interference in queer health care.

Predatory conversion practices must end in our state, and we must hold to account these rogue operators who breach their professional codes of practice to manipulate queer people seemingly with immunity. This is not an issue for the too-hard basket: this is an issue of holding practitioners to account to keep their religion out of health care and put the health outcomes of vulnerable young queer people first. In Sam's words:

You should never impose your personal belief system on people. I don't care what religion it is. Sexuality is not a choice; religion is. They choose to do this to people.

DUNSTAN BY-ELECTION

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (15:38): I rise to speak on a matter that will be of importance to all people in our state but in particular to those living in the seat of Dunstan, and that is the upcoming by-election and the opportunity that is presented to people living in that seat. In doing so, I do also want to acknowledge the service of the Hon. Steven Marshall, a former Premier of our state and someone who was Premier of our state during a very challenging period, in particular during COVID. I do recognise his leadership during that time, and I wish him all the best for this next chapter.

The Greens are of course participating in this by-election campaign. Our candidate is Katie McCusker, who is a local, someone who has lived in the Dunstan electorate for many years. She has

lived in the areas of Payneham, Norwood, Felixstow and Toorak Gardens. She went to school at Rose Park Primary School and attended high school in Kensington Park and Marryatville.

She graduated from Flinders University with a Bachelor of Arts, with majors in psychology and political science. As a uni student, she worked in the area at the Kensington cricket club. She volunteered at the Adelaide Central School of Art, when it was located on Osmond Terrace in Norwood, and she frequented the Kent Town Hotel, so she is someone who has been active in that community. Indeed, she was a member and volunteer of the Kensington Residents' Association and a lifetime supporter of the Norwood Redlegs football club.

But aside from her credentials as a local person, Katie McCusker is someone who has progressive values. She is not someone who is a member of a right-wing faction of a political party. She is not someone who is a member of a right-wing political party. She is someone who supports progressive issues, such as of course banning conversion therapy, and someone who has campaigned for the issues that the people in the community care about.

Indeed, she was a strong campaigner for the Voice to Parliament, which a majority of people in the seat of Dunstan supported, and which, to their great discredit, the Liberal Party did everything in their power to wreck and destroy. Opposing a State Voice to Parliament in this chamber, under the appalling leadership of Peter Dutton, they did everything they could to poison the well against that reform. Well, they are not the values that the people of Dunstan seek from their candidate.

The Greens have a clear platform that I think will be of interest to the people of Dunstan. We have been very outspoken in terms of campaigning for investment in public transport and in improved cycling infrastructure and better services that would benefit people living in that seat. We have been really active in pushing to ramp up heritage protections and prevent the practise of demolition by neglect that is causing real problems in the Norwood area.

We have been campaigning to protect our Parklands and add them to the state heritage list, campaigning to protect our green space and campaigning to move the car race that causes so much disruption to residents in that area out of the CBD.

The Greens performed very well in the last state election in the seat of Sturt, which includes the state seat of Dunstan. Indeed, we got 16.4 per cent of the primary vote and Katie, as the candidate during that election, secured a 5.21 per cent swing to the Greens. She also contested the 2010 state election for the seat of Norwood, which is now Dunstan, and she got a 3 per cent swing to the Greens at that election.

Katie has been out there campaigning over the last two years, talking to residents about the issues that matter to them, and one of the things that is clear is that the Greens message, in terms of tackling the cost-of-living crisis and dealing with the issues that are important to the people of Dunstan, is being well received and I look forward to joining her out on the hustings, along with my colleague the Hon. Tammy Franks. We are excited about the potential of this by-election for the people of Dunstan and the opportunity it presents them to finally have a progressive voice in this place.

TOUR DOWN UNDER

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (15:43): The Santos Tour Down Under (TDU) is an iconic highlight of South Australia's annual major events calendar and the biggest cycling event in the southern hemisphere. This year's event had a great atmosphere. The city and the various stage locations were abuzz with that TDU magic that we all know and love. Certainly, from everything that I saw, this year's event was simply brilliant.

South Australia does major events remarkably well. In fact, I think we are getting even better at it year on year, and the Tour Down Under is a particularly good example of South Australia's stand-out achievement in the major events area. The TDU is one of our key events that enjoys a global reach. It garners national and international attention and attracts visitors from around Australia and around the world.

One thing I love about the TDU is that it is not just an Adelaide event. This year, the race went to Murray Bridge, which I am advised is the furthest afield it has ever gone. In terms of

continuing to drive the economic recovery of the Riverland it is a great thing, and indeed it brings a welcome economic boost for every locality and region that enjoys a piece of the TDU each year.

This year, I was pleased to attend the opening Saturday evening event. At that event I met two people, Matthew and Emma. They had driven over from Dubbo purely for the race, and they were delighted to be here. Matthew, in particular, is a keen cycling fan and had come to lend his support to one of the cyclists in the women's event who was a Dubbo native. Both Emma and Matthew were thoroughly enjoying their time in Adelaide. They said to me that in fact they were somewhat surprised by just how much they liked Adelaide. This is feedback that we get from many interstaters who are visiting for the first time, and of course we love to hear it.

On this occasion I just could not miss the opportunity to be a good ambassador for the state, and I gave Matthew and Emma some suggestions for things to see and do while they were travelling around, watching the races. Emma mentioned that she loved old buildings and churches, and I took this as an opportunity to invite them in for a tour of Parliament House, an offer they gladly accepted. Emma later said of the Tour Down Under, and I quote, 'The whole event was outstanding and so well done, we haven't stopped raving to people about how well organised it was.'

Emma and Matthew's experience highlights the importance of our major events in building South Australia's reputation as a destination. The TDU's role in showing off our great state, highlighted by the fact that it leaves visitors with an overwhelmingly positive impression of South Australia, is fantastic and should be celebrated. Hopefully, many of the visitors who came for the 2024 Tour Down Under will return in January next year, but in the meantime I expect that they, like Emma and Matthew, will tell their friends and family about what a fantastic event we put on and what a great time they had here.

Towards the end of 2023, South Australia's tourism industry marked the impressive milestone of exceeding \$10 billion in total visitor expenditure for the first time. Notably, within that total figure, international expenditure has surpassed its pre-pandemic value to hit a record \$1.22 billion. This is fantastic news for our state overall and for our tourism and hospitality sectors in particular.

Major events played a key role in supporting us to reach this achievement. They play a crucial part in maintaining a successful tourism sector in our state and especially in showcasing South Australia to the nation and the world. The uniqueness and character of our major events sets us apart from other jurisdictions, and Labor has a proud history of playing to their strengths which continues apace under the Malinauskas Labor government.

The year 2024 promises to be another brilliant year of major events, with some of the highlights being the second editions of AFL Gather Round and LIV Golf Adelaide, which have both seen very strong demand for tickets. I strongly commend the work of every single person who made the 2024 Tour Down Under happen, and I look forward to continuing to show off our great state at every opportunity.

PREMIER'S PRIORITIES

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (15:47): It has been some 70 days since we were last in this chamber for private members' business and a lot has happened over the last two months, but today I want to wrap up the year that was 2023.

At the end of December, Premier Peter Malinauskas delivered his own end-of-year wrap-up in an interview with Paul Starick at *The Advertiser*. Which important issues did the Premier choose to highlight? What occupied his thoughts in its complexity and magnitude such that only the Premier's energy and influence could effect change? Was it the challenges facing his core promise to fix ramping and that he is sorry ramping is now twice as bad as even the worst time under the previous government, which was at that time successfully navigating COVID? No, it was not.

Was it the devastating impact of the four South Australian women murdered in seven days, just weeks before the Premier's interview, the impact on their families, our community and the safety of all women, or the fact that in 2023 in Australia one woman every five days is killed by someone they know? No, it was not.

Was it the prevalent topic of discussion around kitchen tables across our state of cost of living, after 13 rate rises and families feeling the pinch, living week to week, pay cheque to pay cheque, or those families who live in long-term rentals now facing the prospect of being homeless or living in their car due to the government's tight grip on the purse strings when it comes to relief for those most in need? No, it was not.

So what did the Premier use his vast platform to speak about at the end of the year? Which issue did he rail against and commit that he would use the full force and power of his office to change in 2024? The cricket.

An honourable member: Typical, all about the sports, not about anything of significance.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO: All about sport, specifically that all the way back in May 2023, some seven months earlier, it was announced that Adelaide would lose its traditional day/night test and host the West Indies for the second time in as many seasons. No longer can the Premier argue that he is not the minister for sport, and he cannot complain about how the media chooses to portray him as he is always at sporting events with friends, whether it is at the car race, the AFL, LIV Golf or, of course, the cricket.

Our great state has lost our mantle as the world's most livable city in two short years, due to the shortsightedness and arrogance of this government thinking that the only way is their way, and the proof is currently in the pudding. I have spoken several times about how this government has the wrong priorities, but what makes the end of year article particularly galling is that on the day the Premier sat down with the journalist in his office at the State Administration Centre, on 27 December 2023, a 54-year-old man, Eddie, waited 10 hours for an ambulance. When it eventually arrived, Eddie had tragically died.

This Premier went to an election saying he had a plan to fix ramping. Instead, he and his health minister have overseen the worst ramping figures we have ever seen in this state. Eddie is just one heartbreaking example of an ongoing tragedy. In an interview with the family of Eddie, who died in agony waiting for an ambulance, it was proven that all the Premier could offer were mere words. Eddie's family saw right through what the Premier was offering with his condolences. As quoted from *The Advertiser*, the family said, 'Mr Malinauskas' public condolences were "insensitive" and treated Eddie as "just another statistic". Eddie's Aunt Brenda said:

Mr Malinauskas, you promised South Australians you were going to fix ramping. You have failed...Someone needs to step up to the mark and take account for what you have done. We don't want another family to go through this.

We don't want any more deaths. Fix the ramping, fix the health system you promised to fix...You have been in power for two years...and people are dying on your watch.

This is just one example that proves that the Premier and his Labor government, including those sitting opposite, have no plan, have the wrong priorities and are letting down South Australians. South Australians deserve better.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION AWARENESS

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:52): I stand today to acknowledge International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness. This is a day we need to embrace, even if we are not yet to the point where we can fully celebrate it.

On 5 March, we have a day set aside to at least make us aware of the need for disarmament in making the world a better and safer place. That need was reinforced in 2023 on so many different levels. From the international fear of war and terrorism to the domestic terrorism that sweeps the United States on a near-daily basis with mass shootings, we know that something has to be done to fix things.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine continued into its second year, complete with the bombing of community spaces such as theatres, cafes and shopping precincts. Nothing was off limits to the aggressors and innocent lives were lost as people went about their daily routines. Just as that horror fully sunk in, the world was hit with another act of heinous aggression on 7 October. Hamas terrorists invaded Israel, killing 1,200 innocent people, many of whom had travelled there from overseas, and

locally, to attend an outdoor music concert. They had grievances with the Israeli state but could not discriminate between their enemy, innocent concertgoers and visitors.

In retaliation, the Israeli Army conducted an assault on Gaza and was also not able to discriminate between their Hamas enemy and residents of the strip. The Israeli air and artillery attacks on the Gaza Strip has resulted in more than 27,000 deaths, mainly of civilians who had no time for Hamas themselves. Just remember, there has not been an election over in the Gaza Strip in Palestine for 17 years because Hamas itself realises that they are not that popular, they have not delivered what they promised, and they would probably lose an election if they had one.

More than 11,000 of those killed were children. This is what happens when hundreds of schools and health facilities are targeted in retaliatory attacks. The world is sick of the images of children being rushed into hospital to have their limbs amputated. There have been reports of where they have done so without anaesthetic because they simply ran out. What a harrowing scene it is to see young Israeli men, on this occasion, stopping trucks delivering very important medical and food supplies into Gaza.

Israel refuses to cease its indiscriminate bombing of the Gaza Strip. Peace will not be achieved with bombs. In this case, the pen is mightier than the sword. Peace can only be achieved with a diplomatic solution. The two-state solution is widely accepted around the world, that that is the way to end, but each state has to be able to live in peace and live without the fear of attack from their neighbour.

The list just goes on and on. The civil war in Yemen continues today, 10 years after it started, where thousands of children have been killed and more than a million suffer malnutrition. Perhaps even more sobering, children as young as 10 have been recruited to fight in that war. The Syrian war is into its fourteenth year and has killed more than half a million people.

The Rwandan genocide at the start of the century led to the deaths of almost three million civilians. The heinous attacks since 2009 by Boko Haram killed 11,000 citizens in West Africa, and 98 schoolgirls kidnapped almost a decade ago are still missing. In that case, a further two million have been displaced. And of course the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have, tragically, been part of our newsfeed for decades.

In the United States, there has not needed to be a declared or even undeclared war for the casualties to pile up. On two of every three days in one of the world's so-called greatest civilised nations, mass shootings occur. Last year, there were more than 250 mass shootings. Whether it is major powers ramping up their military power or just the insane need in countries like the US for residents to have their own semiautomatic guns, disarmament is a cause worth pursuing.

In 2021, global military spending reached \$2.1 trillion. That is two thousand billion dollars. With fear and war aside, imagine what the world could do with that sort of money. Imagine the things we could do with it for progressive practices, such as producing food, educating people, dealing with natural disasters—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING PRESIDENT (The Hon. D.G.E. Hood): Order!

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: —and finding better ways to protect the environment.

Time expired.

STUDYADELAIDE

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:57): It is my privilege to rise today to speak about StudyAdelaide. As the shadow minister for multicultural South Australia and shadow minister for tourism and hospitality, I am a great supporter of the work of StudyAdelaide. Higher education is one of Australia's biggest exports and international students are extremely important to Australia and our economy, contributing \$40 billion annually and supporting some 250,000 jobs.

It is therefore critical to have an organisation like StudyAdelaide that promotes Adelaide as a destination for international students. Our education sector attracts over 40,000 student enrolments

from 130 countries and regions around the world. StudyAdelaide's key marketing activities include targeted global digital campaigns, country-specific websites and social media channels, roadshows and events, and a comprehensive inbound familiarisation program.

Once a student arrives here, StudyAdelaide goes beyond the welcome and offers a year-long calendar of free and discounted events and activities that give students the opportunity to meet, make new friends and immerse themselves in different aspects of Australian culture. As part of the familiarisation program, StudyAdelaide recruits a team of student ambassadors each year. Applications are currently open, and it is great to see that this program offers so many invaluable benefits for professional and personal development for students, as well as shaping community activities to enhance the wonderful status of multiculturalism in South Australia.

I have had the pleasure to meet so many bright and exceptional young people over the years through the Student Ambassador Program and I congratulate them for all their achievements. Furthermore, international students also improve workforce participation in our tourism and hospitality retail sectors as well as the broader economic and social impact for our state.

South Australia consistently ranks fourth for education export income by states and territories, with only New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland bringing in more income. In 2022, South Australia brought in over \$1.8 billion in income from education, which is an improvement from 2021 but similar to 2020.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the work done in 2020, when the Marshall Liberal government supported the education sector through the international student support package to support international students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We were the first state government in Australia to announce this package.

The total package amounted to \$13.8 million and included a \$10 million fund for university students significantly impacted by COVID restrictions for the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and University of South Australia to distribute to their pathway and international students. We also had \$500 emergency cash grants available to other international students not studying at one of the public universities. Furthermore, a one-off \$200 assistance payment per student living with South Australian families was provided to homestay families.

Our support for international students during the most difficult time of the COVID pandemic has positioned South Australia as a caring and supportive state for international students. This has no doubt assisted in the recovery of the education sector. The number of international students studying in South Australia totalled 45,613 for the January-October 2023 period.

In Australia, 55 per cent of international students were from the following five student source countries: 21 per cent, China; 16 per cent, India; 8 per cent, Nepal; 5 per cent, Colombia; and 5 per cent, Philippines. In 2023, over 12,500 students in South Australia came from India. The other top source countries include China, Nepal, Vietnam, Colombia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Brazil, and Pakistan.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to commend Study Adelaide and the education sector for their amazing work to welcome international students to South Australia. I would also like to thank all the multicultural community organisations who have played a critical role in providing community support and, in many cases, treating these international students as part of their extended family. With those words, I would like to thank Study Adelaide once again for the great work.

Motions

PAYROLL TAX

The Hon. C. BONAROS (16:03): I move:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be established to inquire into and report on matters concerning payroll tax in South Australia, with particular reference to:
 - (a) the effectiveness of the current payroll tax system in promoting economic growth and job creation and its alignment with the overall economic goals of the state;

- (b) evaluation of the payroll tax threshold and rates, including consideration of an annual review;
 - (c) incentives to promote regional employment and investment;
 - (d) opportunities for industry-specific incentives to support the growth and sustainability of key sectors;
 - (e) the impact of recent payroll tax decisions on independent general practitioners and the general practice sector, including the exacerbation of workforce challenges and reduced access to health care;
 - (f) the effect of grouping provisions on independently operated but co-branded businesses across various industry sectors;
 - (g) retrospective payroll tax liability determinations;
 - (h) compliance challenges faced by businesses;
 - (i) payroll tax systems in other jurisdictions to identify best practices and potential areas for reform and alignment;
 - (j) any other related matters.
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 am moving for consideration of a select committee of the Legislative Council to establish and inquire into matters concerning payroll tax in South Australia. The proposed inquiry underscores SA-Best's commitment to advocating for a fair and conducive business environment in South Australia but, more than that, it is something that I think absolutely every business and business association, business advocacy group, in the state wants to see happen.

In 2022-23, the state government collected an additional \$101 million in payroll tax revenue from businesses in South Australia. If we are going to talk about windfall gains, in total we collected \$1.7 billion in payroll tax. That is about \$5 million a day that the government is collecting in payroll tax from businesses across the state.

The Premier has previously referred to payroll tax as a tax on jobs, and he has been absolutely right in doing so. It is a tax on jobs that is delivering his government almost \$5 million a day, and let's not forget when we consider those jaw-dropping figures that a business is liable for payroll tax regardless of whether they have made a profit in the year, regardless of whether they have just broken even, and regardless of whether they have made losses. It is extraordinary that a business could be operating at a loss and still be lumped with a huge payroll tax bill.

We know, as a result of these windfall gains, it has become a cash cow for the government. That is the bottom line. It is a revenue stream that they have resisted changing and resisted reviewing because they are reliant on the income that it is generating and could not have foreseen, did not foresee in fact, those extra gains that would be made as a result.

The purpose of the committee is to examine the effectiveness of the current payroll tax system in fostering economic growth and job creation in line, of course, with the overarching economic objectives of the state, something that we know the Premier at the moment has us believe is a top priority for his government.

As I said, payroll tax has been described by the Premier himself in the past as a tax on jobs. In conversations with business owners and industry groups, issues have surfaced concerning all manner of issues around payroll tax, including grouping provisions, retrospective liability rulings and compliance hurdles, and they are things that this committee ought to delve into.

I have tried really hard to turn my mind to this, but I cannot think of any other space where we allow retrospective determinations to be made outside of any legislative scrutiny that would enable the Commissioner of State Taxation to make a determination and apply it to a group within the business world retrospectively. That is precisely what happens in this space, but I cannot think of one other instance where we would allow legislation that would enable someone to make that sort of unilateral decision that then applies to businesses across the state.

We have heard from the medical profession on this front, who are facing the prospect of grouping for payroll tax purposes, and we know that it is not limited to that profession either. We know that there are a number of other businesses in the state that the government has its eyes set on as a result of that determination who will also bear the brunt of being grouped, potentially, and seeing their payroll tax liabilities skyrocket.

I will give credit where credit is due. The Marshall Liberal government, prior to the last election that they won, had a commitment to increase the threshold that applies for payroll tax from \$600,000 to \$1.5 million, and they did do that, and that came as some relief for businesses at the time.

But costs have skyrocketed since. We have not had any changes in the last six years. The payroll tax rate of 4.95 per cent has been in place since 2009. Wages have escalated significantly, and in that time we have not seen the threshold move, so that has been constant for five years. Since 2019, the minimum wage has gone up 18.2 per cent via five annual increases. Nobody is arguing about the increase in minimum wage, but of course businesses are looking at those five annual increases and the impact it is having on their payroll tax debt and how they are going to keep a lid on their payroll tax liability. Inevitably, the only way to do that is to simply not hire more people.

In 2019, the superannuation rate was 9.5 per cent. After staged rises it is now 11 per cent and due to reach 12 per cent from 1 July next year. Business owners cannot expand their workforces or offer salary increases because of those thresholds. Yes, it is great that we increased it, and that comes with some catches, obviously, depending on where you fall on those thresholds, but there is absolutely no question, none whatsoever, that payroll tax is the single biggest factor holding businesses back from employing more people and expanding their business operations. It is doing nothing to secure business confidence in this state, and something has to give.

Business SA has collated many of the quotes from its members in recent times. I do not think members ought to listen to what I have to say about payroll tax, but it is worth hearing some of those quotes, quotes like:

Payroll tax inhibits our business to provide a higher hourly rate to our low wage earners.

It is the single largest factor which will decrease our employment, investment into our business and staff and turnover as we plan to downsize in an attempt to return to profit.

This will make us vulnerable long term to our competitors, meaning that we lose our depth of skill and must decrease the services provided.

However, if we do not do this we will not survive the market long enough to see the long term effects.

Others say:

Get rid of it!

It's a terrible tax that discourages businesses from employing local South Australians.

Combined with all the other difficulties that employers have to contend with post COVID.

Employing Australian workers is only becoming harder and more expensive forcing [small-to-medium-sized businesses] to shift to exploring alternatives.

We have quotes like:

Our business is always 'just above the threshold'.

Strongly support the discount for regional SA—it will encourage regional business to recruit higher skilled staff.

We have quotes from electricity, gas, water and waste services that say:

There hasn't really been anything too positive.

Revenue has stagnated, employment costs have increased, taxes have increased, employee availability is low, profitability hit the wall when we qualified for payroll tax.

But due to a massive skills shortage and wage increases we have a disproportionate wage bill to revenue and only that qualified us for the tax, irrespective of profitability.

People in the mining sector, with 20 to 49 employees are saying:

Payroll tax is now the equivalent of 1.5 people in our business.

Not only are we now not employing more people we are looking to downsize our business because of payroll tax.

Rental, hiring and real estate services, 20 to 49 employees, say:

Payroll Tax restricts your enthusiasm for expanding your business as you are penalised for employing more people.

Wages are increasing but the threshold does not and has only marginally increased.

People in wholesale trade say:

My industry would benefit from a change in payroll tax so we can keep growing our businesses instead of capping our staff capacity.

That is what is ultimately happening as a result of payroll tax. We are not providing or not expanding our jobs. People are having to stop employing people because they simply cannot afford the payroll tax liability that will come with employing extra staff members. That does nothing to boost economic growth, it does nothing to boost business confidence, and it absolutely does nothing to boost employment in this state. Again, we have people in the rental, hiring and real estate services saying that a concession to decrease or remove payroll tax for regional businesses already incurring large costs would be terrific.

I do not think it matters what size the business is, but across the board if you walked out onto the street now and asked any business owner what the single biggest issue confronting them as a business is, hands down they will tell you that it is payroll tax. It is not just because they are thinking of payroll tax in isolation, even though it is a tax on wages and inevitably a tax on jobs, it is the multilayered effect that those businesses are confronted with.

It is not just payroll tax that they are dealing with. They are dealing with bureaucratic red tape in other areas as well. They are probably dealing with regulatory requirements and all manner of requirements, depending on the industry that they are in, but this is the one that hits their hip pocket the most. There is only so much in today's market that these businesses can take, and something absolutely has to give.

The government never anticipated reaping the rewards that it has reaped from payroll tax, and it is only warranted that they now reconsider some of the provisions of our regulatory framework around payroll tax. There are other states that are doing that. They are leveraging targeted measures to bolster regional employment and investment. Regional Victoria offers a 50 per cent discount in payroll tax. So if you are operating a business in regional Victoria, compared with regional South Australia—even though the rate is not that different—you are getting a 50 per cent discount on your payroll tax bill. That is a huge leg-up for those businesses in Victoria.

If I were living on the border of South Australia and Victoria and I had to set up a business, I could tell you where I would not be setting it up. I certainly would not be setting it up on this side of the border, because a 50 per cent reduction in payroll tax can be the difference between a business keeping their doors open or keeping them closed.

An integral part of the inquiry that I am proposing will be exploring how incentives like the one that has been implemented in Victoria could serve as a catalyst to stimulate regional investment and employment. As I said, that is something that has already been deployed across the border in Victoria and, indeed, up in Queensland. It is a strategy that needs and warrants serious consideration if we are to remain competitive while ensuring business services in our regions.

As I said, the rate in Victoria is not that different: it is 4.85 per cent, but in their regions the rate is 2.02 per cent and 1.2125 per cent for bushfire-affected regional businesses, which is another concession that they have applied in Victoria. The principal place of business must be regional and 85 per cent of wages paid to regional staff. Queensland has the same criteria for a 1 per cent discount.

Business SA is advocating for a 50 per cent discount for regional businesses. I am sure everybody in this place is familiar with that advocacy, and I commend Business SA for doing that. It is the sort of option that this government ought to be considering. It has been proven to work in other

jurisdictions: the sky has not fallen in, revenue has not plummeted and they have still been able to maintain their profits and their revenue base for government. But, like I said, it has provided a difference to businesses, namely, of keeping their doors open or shutting them for good. So it is an option that deserves to be fleshed out here in South Australia.

It may also have a real impact on decisions made, like I said, in cross-border communities, such as in a community like Mount Gambier, for instance, where you could pay three times more payroll tax than a competitor who is operating 20 kilometres over the Victorian border.

The committee will also contemplate incentives to bolster key sectors within the South Australian economy. I should say that these terms of reference have been the subject of consultation with advocacy groups. We have not plucked them out of thin air. We have gone to those groups and asked them, 'What would you like to see if there were to be an inquiry?' They are made up from the feedback we have received from industry groups and advocacy groups.

One might be the health sector, for example, because as I said previously, of significant concern is the inclusion of independent general practitioners and the general practice sector within the purview of payroll tax following recent interstate rulings that determined that contractors in medical practices can be considered employees for payroll tax purposes retrospectively. It is threatening to exacerbate workforce challenges and impede access to health care.

Why on earth we would be considering this in the middle of a health and ramping crisis is absolutely beyond me. Why on earth we are considering this in the face of record low numbers of GPs working in South Australia and a GP shortage across the state is absolutely beyond me, because what we know is that the last thing we need is a reduction in the number of GPs. The last thing we need is any measure that will further impact the health crisis and the ramping crisis in this state.

The establishment of the committee will be a valuable opportunity to draw insights from those other jurisdictions, from Victoria, from Queensland, to look at what they are doing in New South Wales, to look at what they are doing across the country and best identify practices and potential avenues for reform and alignment. The prevailing sentiment from businesses is crystal clear: the existing payroll tax framework is impeding job growth and investment; in fact, it is doing more than just impeding job growth and investment, it is absolutely crippling it.

There has been crickets from this government in terms of offering those businesses any form of relief. Like I said, I talk to businesses every single day of the week, just like everyone else in here does, and the number one issue that is raised with me on each and every occasion is: 'When are you going to do something about payroll tax? We can't afford to hire new people. We can't afford our payroll tax liability. What is going to be done to alleviate that pressure for businesses?'

Like I said, to date, despite spruiking economic growth, employment opportunities and investment in this state, despite spruiking all of those messages, the message from this government to those businesses has been absolute crickets. They are the same economic drivers this government is telling us it is committed to strengthening, but when you speak to businesses on the ground, when you speak to those groups, it is very clear that that is absolutely at odds with the experience of those businesses.

Nobody in here needs to take my word for that because it is printed for us all to see in black and white in those budget papers. The average increase that is anticipated by the government for payroll tax over the next four years is 5.2 per cent. That will take us over the \$1.9 billion mark when it comes to payroll tax. That is tax. We are charging businesses for employing people—nothing else. If you offer somebody a job and you go over the threshold, you start paying payroll tax. You get the luxury of the government taxing you for that to the point where it becomes unaffordable and those businesses stop investing in this state.

That is not a good outcome for the South Australian economy, and I am urging the government to give serious consideration to listening to those business groups, to business associations and, indeed, to individual businesses.

A lot of these businesses are mum-and-dad businesses across the state as well and they do an extraordinary job offering jobs to South Australians. We want them to keep their doors open, we

want them to have confidence in the businesses they are running, we want to see them grow and we want them to invest in South Australia—all of the things that the Malinauskas Labor government spruiks, absolutely every one of them. We want those businesses to do that, but we need to provide them with the ability to be able to do so and right now the number one thing standing in their way of doing that is payroll tax.

I think the establishment of this committee will provide a really important opportunity for all members in this place to understand the true extent of payroll tax on businesses. I know that this is something the opposition has spent some time working on as well and I do acknowledge that and I hope they will be supportive of the establishment of the inquiry, but I really urge the government to come on board and have a real conversation with the businesses and business groups of South Australia about the impacts of payroll tax on their businesses and on the South Australian economy as a whole and on investment in this state.

With those words, I commend the motion to honourable members in this chamber.

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

Bills

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES (RESPONSE TO REPORTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:26): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:27): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill seeks to amend the Parliamentary Committees Act to require that the relevant minister provide a response to any parliamentary inquiry's recommendations within four months of the report being tabled in the parliament. Currently, there is a requirement that, if a matter is referred to the Legislative Review Committee via a petition that is signed by 10,000 people, the relevant minister is automatically required to respond, but of course we know that there is no requirement for ministers to respond to the recommendations of select committees.

Ordinarily, you would say that we could operate in a trust model in this place. We would assume that the relevant minister would, of course, respond to the recommendations of a select committee. Sadly, that is not the case when it comes to some of the ministers in this Labor government and, in particular, I refer to the Hon. Tom Koutsantonis.

As I highlighted in question time today, 12 months ago to the day I tabled the report of the Public and Active Transport Committee that made a series of recommendations. We had more than 100 people make submissions to that inquiry and more than 50 people gave evidence to the inquiry and I really appreciated the participation of members of a vast array of political parties at that committee table.

When the committee tabled the report, I contacted the minister's office on 7 February and requested a meeting and I did not hear back. I followed up again on 13 April and again I did not hear back. Prior to starting in this place, I never had a problem getting guys to call me back, but for some reason the minister seems to be ghosting me.

I do not know what is going on. I do not know why the minister will not pick up the phone and call me back, why he does not want to talk hydrogen with the Greens, why he does not want to talk transport policy with the Greens, but it seems that the minister's view is that, when the parliamentary committee hands down a report, his job is simply to take the report, pop it in a drawer, never read it again and let it sit there for months and months, gathering dust.

I think that is very insulting. It is an insult not just to us as members of this chamber and members of parliament who engage in select committees in goodwill to identify potential policy solutions for the government of the day; it is also a slap in the face to those members of the

community who have gone to the effort to put pen to paper and make a submission to an inquiry or who have gone to the effort to come and speak, as 50 people did to that inquiry, to members of parliament and address them and share their concerns.

What does the government do? In the case of the Hon. Tom Koutsantonis he has done nothing in terms of engaging with the recommendations. I fear, to quote Sam Smith, who I know the Labor government love, he is not the only one. We know that the Hon. Clare Scriven, while she did admit today that she has actually read the report, has not engaged with the contents of the report and has refused to do so. Despite being asked on many, many occasions, she uses the Scott Morrison defence: 'That's not my job.' Ms Scriven says, 'That's not my job'. It is not the Hon. Tom Koutsantonis's job either.

This bill would ensure that actually the relevant minister is required to respond and respond in a timely fashion. Under this Greens proposal the minister would be required to indicate which of the recommendations of a committee report they will implement, which ones they will not implement and the reason for their decision. That seems very, very reasonable.

Normally, it would not be required, but when we have a minister that is ghosting members of parliament and refusing to respond to their queries and efforts to engage, then the parliament needs to step up and take action, and that is what we are proposing in this instance.

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

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES (REPORTING REQUIREMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:32): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Education and Children's Services Act 2019. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:33): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill, the Education and Children's Services (Reporting Requirements) Amendment Bill 2024, is an important transparency measure. It seeks to promote equality and accountability between public and private schools, and it subjects our private schools to the same reporting requirements as public schools.

Private schools currently receive \$290 million of state government funding here in South Australia—\$290 million of state government funding—but unlike public schools there is no requirement for private schools to report on how that money is being spent. Public money is just that: it belongs to the community, and it is only right that private schools that receive public funds are required to report on how public money is spent. This is the demand that is made of our public schools and it is only appropriate that the same demand be made of private educators.

Many private schools receive significant public funds and the public has a right to know how the money is being spent. I am going to use some examples in this speech, and I do not do so to attack or denigrate those institutions. I am more just highlighting some of the inequities that exist within our school system. I want to start with an example from Pembroke, which is currently the most expensive school in the state to send your child to.

We know from publicly available data that Pembroke receives \$1,236 per year per student from the state, in addition to \$5,340 per year from the commonwealth. Meanwhile, I understand that Pembroke has fundraised more than \$6 million for building project, and the school charges \$31,000 fees for a year 12 student to attend their institution. Conversely, we have public schools in our state that are crying out for basic infrastructure and resources.

In 2019, the ABC reported on the differences between the poorest and richest schools in Australia. At that time, they reported that Sheidow Park Primary School was one of a thousand schools across Australia that spent \$25,000 over a five-year period on new facilities, while the richest private schools were spending roughly \$100 million—\$25,000 being spent over five years on new

facilities in a public primary school, while the richest private schools were spending roughly \$100 million. Something is not right there.

I had the opportunity the year before last to visit my old school, Aberfoyle Park High School and, whilst it has had some significant upgrades, it was disappointing to me to see that much of the school remained unchanged from when I was there. That was not very long ago, of course, but not much had changed in such a short window of time. It is disappointing and more money should be put on the table to support our public schools.

The My School website shows data on where schools are getting their funds and demonstrates capital expenditure, but the public are not getting clear information on where their funds are being spent. We cannot see, for example, whether or not public money is being used by private schools to support advertising activities, whether public money is being used to support luxury facilities such as swimming pools, or on courting donors.

Taxpayers have a right to know what activities they are subsidising. Is public money being used to support advertising campaigns by private schools? Is public money being used to employ fundraisers within our private schools? Many South Australians, I think, would question whether that is a legitimate use of public money.

Professor Piccoli, who was previously the director of the University of New South Wales' Gonski Institute for Education, and also a New South Wales education minister, has stated that:

The public do have a right to know where public money is going and why...and until we know that in any kind of detail, you can't be confident that they're not using it for capital [expenditure].

In December last year, the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System Report was published. The report discusses the need for greater funding transparency and accountability. On page 20, it states:

The Panel heard from stakeholders about a desire for greater transparency and accountability, including from families and communities seeking more access to information on the allocation and the use of school funding.

Recommendation 6A from that report was:

Approved Authorities improve transparency by annually publishing their school funding allocation models, actual allocations, and more information on what the funds get spent on.

This bill will address that recommendation by improving expenditure transparency and requiring private schools to publicly release their income and expenditure as part of their annual report.

Public schools are already required to report more than just expenditure. This bill would ensure that private schools are subject to the same reporting requirements. Public schools, for instance, are already required to disclose information on student behaviour, including data on suspensions, exclusions, expulsions, and all of that information is uploaded to the Data.SA website.

All we are proposing is that our state's private schools be required to do the same and that this information be reported in their annual reports. This means that the information is available to the whole community, including parents, many of whom are spending a lot of money to send their children to these schools. I would argue that they also have a right to that information.

The bill will also require private schools to be transparent about the number of complaints that are being made, to provide workforce information, such as the number of casual, contract and permanent staff and the proportion of teaching staff versus non-teaching staff, as well as the number of work health and safety incidents that occur at a school. Again, that is really important information, I think, for parents.

The data would be captured in the school's annual report, which is then made available on their website. This would give parents a holistic picture when making a choice about schools, but would also ensure that there is the same level of transparency applying to both our public and our private schools, because both are getting public money.

There is a transitional provision in the bill that ensures that this would only apply to a full financial year after commencement. That would give private schools an opportunity to collate the

information and adjust some of their reporting requirements. The United Nations global education monitoring report on accountability in education back in 2017 found that:

Far stricter regulation of private sector involvement is needed to ensure that profitability does not trump equity and quality.

While public schools are underfunded and non-government schools are being handed public money, it is important that we hold the private sector to the same scrutiny as public schools. This would ensure that we have clear data and that it is publicly available for parents, funding authorities and the community as a whole to understand the private education sector.

The Greens believe that when we are talking about public money there should be a maximum level of transparency and accountability. This is a simple reform, but one that I think would be welcomed by parents who send their children to private schools and also by the South Australian taxpayer more broadly, as the taxpayer collectively has an interest in how their money is being spent.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.E. Hanson.

Motions

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES

The Hon. S.L. GAME (16:42): I move:

That this council—

1. Acknowledges that the South Australian government's residential tenancies policies go too far and represent an attack on landlords;
2. Recognises that to protect themselves, landlords have been forced to raise rents in anticipation of the increase in costs involved in managing their properties; and
3. Acknowledges the harm this has caused tenants, who now find themselves unable to afford rental accommodation.

The state government previously progressed priority measures to provide immediate relief for tenants through the Residential Tenancies (Limit of Amount of Bond) Amendment Regulations 2023. The bond threshold was raised, which is estimated to have saved tenants up to \$1.3 million in up-front bond payments during the first month. As is always the case, the Greens and Labor backed a further round of measures in an attempt to smash landlords with further legislation.

The government strategy has all the hallmarks of Greens policy, killing off incentives for private enterprise to continue supplying private rental accommodation. These measures go too far and are an attack on landlords. In this socialist agenda, where the government insists on putting its hands in the pockets of our investors and entrepreneurs, mediocrity is the outcome. The Greens have no ideas on how to produce anything. They just roll out the same policies to redistribute the wealth created by the very people who sacrifice to run businesses, pay taxes and employ others.

Wouldn't it be great to live in a Greens' world, feet up on the couch, accepting handouts and doing stuff all? It would be funny if it was not at the expense of the mums and dads working hard to provide for their families, contributing to their communities and creating opportunities for prosperity. To protect themselves, landlords have been forced to raise rents in anticipation of the increasing costs in managing their properties.

Landlords are required to provide tenants with a prescribed reason to end a periodic tenancy agreement or to not renew a fixed term agreement. Why should landlords be forced to give a reason for termination? Why should only tenants have the right to enter tenancy with no reason? This is not fair. It costs landlords to terminate because they need to readvertise, prepare the property for reletting and take the time to find and vet another tenant. Landlords do not terminate for no reason. The government should not question the reasoning of a landlord trying to best manage their own property.

Landlords have to give prescribed reasons such as abuse or threaten the landlord or their family, property manager, agent or neighbour, which will likely further inflame already strained relationships and lead to more SATAC hearings. A system more onerous on landlords will push some out of the market. The proposed changes will not resolve the rental crisis. They simply make it easier for undesirable tenants to remain in a landlord's property. Landlords no longer have the right to say

yes or no to pets, which is simply ridiculous and unreasonable given they own the property and incur the costs of any resultant damage.

The Hon. T.A. Franks interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.L. GAME: Landlords must accept pets unless they can justify to SACAT that they cannot.

The Hon. T.A. Franks: You have changed so much, Sarah.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Ms Franks!

The Hon. S.L. GAME: Currently, the fee to apply for a SACAT hearing is \$85.

The Hon. T.A. Franks: She will reap what she sows, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Ms Franks!

The Hon. S.L. GAME: This is another expense to the landlord simply ignored by the government. Landlords need to protect themselves from losses. We know from experience that bonds rarely cover the losses incurred by landlords. Why should a landlord be forced to take on the added risk of damage caused by pets? This is not the time to start discouraging landlords from investing in a rental market that is in crisis.

The Hon. T.A. Franks interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. S.L. GAME: How is the government planning to accommodate renters in the private market now that landlords will be forced out of the industry? How will the government find housing for families unable to pay the increased costs of managing rental properties that will be passed on to tenants? I will support landlords by introducing amendments designed to restore some balance to rental laws. This will, in turn, assist tenants who will benefit from not having to absorb the increasing costs of managing rental properties under the government's residential tenancy regime.

I commend the motion and look forward to introducing sensible amendments to re-establish a more pragmatic approach to managing residential tenancies.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.E. Hanson.

Parliamentary Committees

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION: REPORT INTO THE REFERRAL OF THE WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (CRYSTALLINE SILICA DUST) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (16:47): I move:

That the report of the committee, entitled 'Report into the Referral of the Work Health and Safety (Crystalline Silica Dust) Amendment Bill', be noted.

On 15 June 2022, the Hon. Tammy Franks introduced a bill into the Legislative Council to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2012. The bill would insert a new part 2A, section 34A and 34B, into the act to define crystalline silica and subsequently ban all work exposing a person to crystalline silica dust. On 1 December 2022, and pursuant to section 16(1)(a) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991, the Legislative Council resolved to withdraw the Work Health and Safety (Crystalline Silica Dust) Amendment Bill and refer it to the Parliamentary Committee on Occupational Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation for inquiry and report

The committee's inquiries into the crystalline silica dust amendment bill was referred in response to the rise in accelerated silicosis cases in Australia. During its deliberations on this matter, the committee received 13 written submissions and heard from four witnesses. Witnesses who appeared before the committee included SafeWork SA, the Master Builders Association, SA Unions and Cosentino, a multinational manufacturer of engineered stone products to the Australian market.

The submissions were comprehensive and detailed and provided a range of opinions and suggested recommendations in relation to the proposed amendment bill. I thank all those who contributed to the inquiry through written submissions and by appearing before the committee. Throughout its inquiry, the committee examined the benefits, opportunities and challenges experienced by stakeholders, relating to the bill's proposal to ban work exposing a person to crystalline silica dust.

The committee concluded that the primary purpose of the bill brought by the Hon. Ms Franks was to address the issues associated with respirable crystalline silica in the manufacture, processing, manipulation and use of engineered stone in a construction and home renovation setting after Safe Work Australia found that engineered stone workers are dramatically over-represented amongst workers diagnosed with silicosis.

Whilst the content of submissions received varied, the committee noted that every submission acknowledged the risks associated with exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust. There was also wide support for a national approach to regulation and enforcement. The committee also relied on the decision regulation impact report provided by Safe Work Australia, titled 'Decision Regulation Impact Statement: Prohibition on the use of engineered stone', which was published on 16 August 2023.

The report made several recommendations and ultimately determined that there is no scientific evidence to determine a safe threshold of crystalline silica in engineered stone and advocated for a prohibition on all engineered stone products. The committee has made one recommendation for the consideration of the state government: supporting a continuing collaborative approach to the issue by working towards a national framework of legislation and accompanying regulations regarding the use of engineered stone.

I thank all those who gave their time to assist the committee with this inquiry. I commend the Chair of the committee, the member for Newland, and other members of the committee, the member for Colton, the member for King, and the Hon. Heidi Girolamo MLC, for their contributions in this report. In particular, I acknowledge the Hon. Tammy Franks MLC for her work on the committee and for bringing this important issue before the parliament in the form of proposed legislation. I would also take the opportunity to thank the committee's parliamentary staff, Mr Shane Hilton, Ms Jessica Watson and Ms Tonia Coulter, for their assistance throughout.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. L.A. Henderson.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNTING OF NATIVE BIRDS

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (16:52): I move:

That the report of the select committee be noted.

I would like to start by thanking the more than 1,000 people who made a submission to the committee and to the many organisations and groups who presented evidence in person. The committee took its task seriously and they were diligent in seeking to understand all of the issues regarding the hunting of native birds.

It is safe to say that there was a very big divide in the evidence submitted, with advocates for banning hunting strongly opposed to those who are advocating for the hunting of native birds to continue. It is a polarising issue, with both sides extremely passionate, and there was no outcome that would or could have satisfied both sides of the argument.

At the conclusion of its evidence gathering, the committee made 11 recommendations in its final report. These recommendations, if implemented, will provide stronger regulations regarding the hunting of native birds and place a significant emphasis on getting rid of hunters who are found to be doing the wrong thing.

I thank all those who gave their time to assist the committee with this inquiry. I commend the members of the committee, namely, the Hon. Ian Hunter, the Hon. Tammy Franks, the Hon. Frank Pangallo, the Hon. Nicola Centofanti, the Hon. Ben Hood and the Hon. Sarah Game, and I would like to place on the record the committee's thanks to Ms Leslie Guy and Ms Merry Brown, who provided support and research for the committee. I also extend my thanks to all members of the

Hansard team who assisted this committee, including on its regional trips. I appreciate your dedication and assistance and thank you for your help.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. L.A. Henderson.

Motions

EYRE PENINSULA WATER SUPPLY

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (16:54): I move:

1. That a select committee of the Legislative Council be established to inquire into and report on the water supply needs of Eyre Peninsula, including a focus on the potential location of desalination plant/s and with particular reference to:
 - (a) assessing the current and future water supply and distribution requirements of Eyre Peninsula, including for potential industrial growth needs;
 - (b) evaluating the feasibility and impact of locating desalination plant/s on Eyre Peninsula, including the selection process for locating a desalination plant in Port Lincoln, with particular emphasis on community engagement and consultation processes with residents and key stakeholders;
 - (c) examining the environmental, economic, cultural and social implications of desalination plant operations in the proposed locations;
 - (d) exploring the decision-making responsibility for water supply and distribution on Eyre Peninsula, including community engagement and consultation processes to ensure the active involvement of residents and key stakeholders in decision-making regarding water infrastructure;
 - (e) any other relevant matters.
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.

The Uley South Basin supplies about 75 per cent of Eyre Peninsula's drinking water supply, with most of the remaining drinking water sourced from the River Murray. In 2008, SA Water released a long-term plan for Eyre Peninsula that identified an eventual need to augment the Uley South Basin's supplies through desalination to meet ongoing community needs. Since the release of that plan, SA Water has monitored demand and water resources to manage overall water security.

Continued low levels of the recharge to the basin led SA Water to activate its long-term plan in 2020 to supplement Eyre Peninsula's water supply through the construction of a desalination plant. At that stage, it was assessed that the summer of 2023-24 was the critical date. However, independent advice, initiated under the previous Liberal government in 2021, indicated that extractions from the basin could be sustainably managed through to the end of 2025. This was the result of favourable rainfall over the winter and spring months, as well as enhanced monitoring and modelling.

In November 2021, in response to public consultation feedback and independent water security information, the previous Liberal government put on hold the process for the proposed desalination plant on Eyre Peninsula to allow SA Water to undertake further investigations and for more consultation to be conducted with the community and business sector. This was led by government and included the appointment of an independent third-party community engagement expert, with input from SA Water.

As part of that process, a site selection committee was established. The committee included representation from local government, regional development, industry associations representing businesses and other key stakeholders and was chaired by the former member for Flinders Mr Peter Treloar. Over 2021-22, the site selection committee shortlisted sites based on cost effectiveness, proximity to existing water infrastructure and environmental considerations. They also considered existing aquaculture and marine park sanctuary zones. This process continued when the Malinauskas Labor government won the 2022 state election.

Work was also underway with the Marine Science Review Panel, which was established in 2021 and chaired by professional bureaucrat Dr Don Plowman, former deputy CE of PIRSA and

former executive director of SARDI. In April 2022, a shortlist of four sites was announced as a result of the site selection process. The four shortlisted sites were Sleaford West, Point Boston, Shoal Point and the Sleaford original site.

In May 2022, TSA, the independent project advisory consultants contracted to support the site selection committee, held 13 community consultations across Eyre Peninsula. Community feedback has been and continues to be heavily and persistently against the original chosen site of Billy Lights Point for the desalination plant. For example, Eyre Peninsula residents and business leaders have been vocal in their opposition to the desalination plant being located within the highly productive aquaculture zone of Boston Bay.

Despite that unanimous opposition, a current SA Water-owned site at Billy Lights Point within Boston Bay was announced as the preferred location. Furthermore, a community group called Hands off Boston Bay was formed in protest of the site selection. This community group is continuously increasing in numbers, and the community forums have been extremely well attended, unlike the SA Water community information meetings.

Our media reports that all 11 Eyre Peninsula councils have written to the government to formally oppose Billy Lights Point as the site selection of the desalination plant, and Regional Development Australia Eyre Peninsula has also formally opposed the location of the desalination plant at Billy Lights Point. EP Seafoods and other seafood industry bodies have also publicly declared their opposition to Billy Lights Point. Marine biologist Paul McShane of Global Marine Resource Management, a researcher who worked with EP Seafoods, has said that Billy Lights Point was 'one of the worst possible locations for a desalination plant' and has also claimed that SARDI's modelling is flawed.

One of SARDI's own research scientists Dr Paul Rogers reported that the sulphuric acid and hydrochloric acid discharged from the desalination plant was a risk to aquaculture, as well as the possibility of juvenile marine life, such as natural mussels, being sucked into the intake pipes within Boston Bay.

Recently, we also had correspondence from the Barngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation, who also do not support the proposal of Billy Lights Point as a site for the EP desalination plant. So it appears that currently the only people who are in favour of a desalination plant at Billy Lights Point are SA Water and the state's water minister, the member for Port Adelaide, Susan Close.

In August 2022, the site selection committee chair, Mr Peter Treloar, announced that the Sleaford Bay west site was identified as their recommended location after taking into consideration a wide variety of factors. Mr Treloar said at the time that, whilst the Sleaford west site was more costly to set up than Billy Lights Point, it ticked community requirements in environmental management and social and community benefit. Despite all this, SA Water and Susan Close have remain undeterred by the strong opposition and, in March 2023, announced the intention to ignore advice from the site selection committee and to continue to push ahead with the plant at Billy Lights Point.

It is proposed that an independent review or inquiry will look into the consultation, research and decision-making process in regard to water security on Eyre Peninsula. It is important to look at the outcomes these decisions have on the community, businesses and also, of course, the environment. This inquiry is critical for transparency. A public review ensures not only that government agencies involved in consultation, research and decision-making processes are held accountable for their actions but may also shed light on why some aspects received a higher priority or a higher weighting than others. It allows for a transparent evaluation of the decision-making process.

Eyre Peninsula needs water security. Such a review would not and should not question this but rather would make an overarching review of the options available for water security into the future. It should ensure that fair and unbiased decisions were made with the best interests of the community, business and the environment. Public inquiries demonstrate a commitment to transparency and open communication between the government, their contractors, their investors

and the public they serve. By openly evaluating the government's consultation, research and decision-making process it creates confidence in the community.

There will be plenty of evidence to support the current and future needs for water security on Eyre Peninsula. As I have already said in this place, this is not up for debate. The early stages of this committee will be to inform and to examine the volume required, the source options available and the associated economic, cultural and environmental costs.

The committee will investigate what the consultation process was for the current desalination proposal, from initial discussions to the present day. There are a range of reasons—including the strong public reaction to the desalination plant, as raised above—that warrant an inquiry into certain aspects of the proposed Eyre Peninsula desalination plant, but it is important that this inquiry considers all aspects of Eyre Peninsula water supply and distribution more broadly.

In particular, it is important that, in considering water security on Eyre Peninsula, we look to futureproofing the region. We know that there are current plans for a Northern Water project to support industry in the region. What we need to be asking ourselves is whether there is an opportunity for government to work with industry to create a significant infrastructure project to sustain broader water needs for the EP and what that might look like going forward. Is there an opportunity to create one large project, rather than having multiple projects that lack vision into the future? I truly believe that this is something the committee could investigate in a bipartisan manner.

I think it is worth noting that, in its recent draft determination of SA Water's regulatory business proposal, ESCOSA raised concerns with SA Water's proposed operating costs for the EP desalination plant for the 2024-28 period. In summary, ESCOSA has stated that SA Water has overestimated its costs by over 30 per cent, from \$35.9 million to \$26 million, stating that:

- SA Water's proposal for operating expenditure has not been supported by sufficiently detailed business cases and other supporting evidence;
- SA Water's proposed \$5 million contract costs are inefficient and unjustified; and
- SA Water proposed some future costs that would not eventuate.

ESCOSA's recent comments point to another reason to further interrogate SA Water's assessment of the Eyre Peninsula desalination plant.

In closing, I do hope that members in this chamber, including the government, support the establishment of this committee. Water security is an important issue on Eyre Peninsula and one that needs careful consideration and scrutiny by this parliament to ensure that we have vision for the future and that the needs and experiences of communities on Eyre Peninsula are understood appropriately when it comes to their long-term water supply.

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

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (17:05): I move:

That this council—

1. Recognises the significant value of the agricultural industry and thanks those primary producers who secure over \$17 billion per annum to the South Australian economy;
2. Notes that the sheep industry is forecasting the worst fall in prices since 2014, policy induced disruptions to the sector, and the highest cost of doing business in history; and
3. Calls on the Malinauskas Labor government to condemn the policy actions of the federal government which is harming the sheep industry and the agricultural sector more broadly.

Today, I move this motion to highlight a matter of utmost importance to our community and our economy, and in doing so I emphasise the significance of our agricultural industry, the cornerstone of our identity, prosperity and heritage. First and foremost, it is imperative that we recognise the immense value that our primary producers bring to our community and the broader South Australian economy.

The toil and dedication of our farmers contributes over \$17 billion annually, not only sustaining their livelihoods but also bolstering the economic foundation of our great state. Let us take a moment to express our gratitude to those hardworking individuals who, despite numerous challenges, continue to cultivate our land, nurture our livestock and provide for our tables. Their commitment ensures the resilience and vitality of the agricultural sector, an industry deeply woven into the fabric of South Australia.

However, our celebration of the agricultural industry must not blind us to the pressing challenges it currently faces, particularly within the sheep industry. Recently, the sheep industry has been confronted with the harsh reality of the worst fall in prices since 2014. This alarming downturn is compounded by policy-induced disruptions, creating a storm of uncertainty for our primary producers, and it is the Labor governments both state and federal whose policies and ideologies have created this uncertainty in our farming communities.

The sheep industry, a vital component of our agricultural landscape, is grappling with significant challenges. The sector faces not only external market forces but also the highest cost of doing business in its history. These challenges threaten the very livelihoods of those who have tirelessly sustained our agricultural legacy. It is with deep concern that we note the policy actions of the federal government, which regrettably are contributing to the hardships faced by the sheep industry and, by extension, the agricultural sector at large. As representatives of this community, it is our responsibility to call upon the Malinauskas Labor government to condemn these policy actions that are harming our primary producers in South Australia.

I want to specifically talk about the consequences of a couple of policy decisions of the federal Labor government, which are being supported by this current state Labor government, that have had and are continuing to have a detrimental effect on several aspects of the sheep industry. Let us firstly look to the ban on live sheep exports. Back in September last year, after Prime Minister Albanese announced that his Labor government would ban live sheep exports, nearly two dozen farmers and livestock groups signed an open letter to the Prime Minister, pleading for the government to reverse its decision, warning it will cause irreversible harm to the struggling sheep industry and threaten Australia's political ties and \$1.1 billion trade partnerships with the Middle East.

But the current arrogant federal Labor government have ignored producers, they have ignored farmers and they have ignored regional communities. They are hiding their \$50,000 independent report into the consequences of ending the live sheep export industry. Might I add, the firm used to produce this report unsurprisingly has also provided reports for other activist groups, which in itself begs the question in regard to independence.

These decisions saw mutton prices, which were more than \$100 in January, drop as low as \$1 per head in some instances during September last year amid a national oversupply of 640,000 sheep, which has led to some farmers opting to shoot their stock. To add insult to injury, these rock-bottom mutton prices were not reflected at the supermarket check-outs, where shoppers were still paying \$10 a kilo for half a leg of lamb or \$28 for lamb loin chops at our major supermarket chains.

We know there is not widespread support for the ban. It is a cynical ploy to quiet the inner-city Greens that the ALP needs at election time. The ban is not supported by farmers on the ground. It is not supported by national farming groups and it is not even supported by Labor politicians in Western Australia, such as Premier Roger Cook, who called it an unnecessary burden on producers. Given the damage it will do to the industry, the minister should show support for farmers, such as her WA colleague, and call on her federal counterparts to reconsider this damaging policy.

We are also seeing the incompetence of both state and federal Labor governments with the rollout of the sheep and goat electronic identification for traceability. So much so that only last week WoolProducers Australia, the national organisation representing woolgrowers, pulled their support for the mandatory rollout citing 'ongoing concerns with how the process is unfolding'. They do not believe 'that adequate government funding from both the commonwealth and state governments has been committed', and they are absolutely right.

The fat lamb or prime meat producers have already indicated to the opposition and to the media that the government did not have their confidence with this program, but to now have parts of

the wool industry also walking away is a sad indictment on the confidence of the industry in the Albanese and Malinauskas governments, but that is no surprise.

It took the state agriculture minister a month after her big announcement of funding—funding that was woefully modest and not new money—to practically set up any form of scheme to assist producers. Many stakeholders are still in the dark in regard to subsidies on infrastructure delivery because it seems the minister cannot make any decisions or display any sense of leadership on this issue because, despite the initial pretence to the contrary when they were campaigning for the election and directly thereafter, they cannot hide away from the cold-hearted facts and that is that Labor ignores the regions, always have and always will.

It is incumbent on the Malinauskas Labor government as a representative body of the people to advocate for all South Australians and that includes the interests of our agricultural community. It is incumbent upon us to stand united in our call for policies that support and sustain our farmers, rather than subjecting them to undue hardships.

In conclusion, let us not forget the resilience and tenacity embedded in the heart of our agricultural industry. As representatives of the people, we must stand together, acknowledging the challenges faced by our primary producers, and demand action from our government to secure a prosperous future for our agricultural sector.

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

GENDER DYSPHORIA

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. F. Pangallo:

1. That a select committee be established to inquire into and report on young people seeking assistance for gender dysphoria in South Australia and related matters, with particular reference to:
 - (a) the health care and related support services provided, and options available, to children, adolescents and young adults seeking services for gender dysphoria or other gender identity related issues in South Australia, and their parents, guardians and families;
 - (b) the role, rights and obligations of parents and guardians of minors seeking services for gender dysphoria or other gender identity related issues;
 - (c) the public funding of health and education services in South Australia in relation to sex-related and gender-related issues; and
 - (d) any other related matters.
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.

(Continued from 15 November 2023.)

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (17:12): I rise today to speak on this particular motion, noting that the Greens will not be supporting the establishment of this select committee. I would like to point out that there already has been a recent South Australian inquiry into this issue, one done by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Helen Connolly, who in 2019 published a document called First Port of Call that supported the South Australian healthcare system to better meet the needs of trans and gender-diverse children and young people.

The recommendations of this report, supported and devised from advice that was received from trans and gender-diverse children and young people, identified four key priority areas. They included:

1. More visibility around gender diversity in both the South Australian health system and society.
2. Better information for children and their parents and carers.
3. Better education and training for GPs and health workers.
4. Implementation of gender-affirming health services to be available to children when they need them.

Funnily enough, not one of those recommendations suggested a parliamentary inquiry. Transgender kids and youth face the intersection of transphobia and the disempowering place that children face in our society. For these children and young people, this perceived judgement adds to the distress that they were already experiencing. It made them feel excluded and discriminated against. It also delayed them from finding the help that they needed, which sometimes, of course, had the additional consequences of that for their long-term health.

To quote one young person, 'Why do lawmakers make it so difficult for people to try to be who they want to be?' They need our support, not a parliamentary committee. My office has received a number of calls and emails from health professionals and community groups alike calling for the idea of this select committee. I have also received many pieces of correspondence and calls noting that it is unnecessary and an inappropriate way to address the issues that are raised in the terms of reference.

The Trans Justice Project's 'Fuelling Hate' report from 2023 shows a clear relationship between political and media speculation on the legitimacy of gender-diverse people's experience and the repetitive verbal, digital and physical violence that gender-diverse people face. This contributes to a climate of hostility and invalidation, which we know stretches into their homes and into the lives of these young people, with misgendering and transphobia being a significant cause of distress for around 90 per cent of trans-youth.

Medical expertise already exists in this area and has informed the SA Health gender diversity model of care, alongside other South Australian policies relevant to the health of gender-diverse people. This expertise, not political bargaining, is what should inform practice.

In his speech the Hon. Frank Pangallo quoted Dr Georgie Swift, a South Australian gender diversity psychiatrist involved in setting up the gender clinic at the Women's and Children's Hospital. She was quoted from a psychiatry conference that was held in Adelaide on 14 October 2023. In that conference Dr Swift gave a talk entitled, 'We're here, we're queer and we'd like to say hello: the mental health and wellbeing of gender-diverse and same-sex attracted people.'

Dr Swift told the conference, though not on the official record but as reported in an article published on Gender Clinic News:

I'm reasonably confident to say that no matter where you stand on gender-affirming health care for children and adolescents, that you agree that we need more evidence—our evidence isn't robust, it isn't good enough.

This was seized on by many who wrote to me calling for a select committee. It was also used in the Hon. Frank Pangallo's speech and repeated various times since in online campaigns.

That quote, I believe, has been misinterpreted. Even taking that small sliver, it is simply Dr Swift saying that more evidence would be good. It has been misinterpreted and misconstrued and, I believe, is being misused to justify the opposite of what Dr Swift then calls for and represents and has worked so hard to implement.

In the full speech she gave, not the selective, misconstrued quote, she said she believed there was enough evidence to prove that gender-affirming interventions brought benefits to patients but more evidence would help better uphold standards of gender-affirming care. She said there was enough evidence in her speech at that conference, but all of us, I believe, have received emails saying it was her saying that there was not enough evidence.

It is disappointing. I note that Dr Swift also appeared on the March 2020 ABC *Four Corners* TV program, entitled *Not a Boy, Not a Girl*, where she said:

Not allowing someone to socially transition or to medically transition, not supporting them in their gender identity is a high, high chance of them having significant mental health problems including high rates of deliberate self-harm, high rates of suicidality and suicide attempts.

Those were Dr Georgie Swift's words on that program. Trans and gender-diverse young people experience significantly higher rates of suicidality and politicising their care only serves to cause them further harm. They are an already vulnerable group.

I would like to reflect, for my colleagues in the council today and for the community of South Australia, on a story told by one of my colleagues at a federal level, Greens senator

Nick McKim. Senator Nick McKim is stepdad to a young trans man, Jasper. Jasper wrote something in *The Guardian* in 2023 after a rally in Hobart that was put on by Kellie-Jay Keen, also known as Posie Parker. When Jasper wrote for *The Guardian* he said a couple of really impactful things. He said, 'Transitioning has been the hardest and most wonderful thing I have ever done.' He also said, 'There were two options for me as I grew up, I could die or find a way to live as Jasper.' Those were the options he faced.

It is extraordinary that over and over again this council's time this past year has been spent on moral attacks on trans-people. That moral attack, of course, is not unique. If you want to have a debate on what is really impacting the lives of everyday South Australians, let's talk about the cost of living; let's talk about grocery prices—as we will be doing at the leadership of the Greens in just a minute. Let's talk about the level of education funding to our schools, and let's talk about what we are doing to stop violence in our homes and discrimination against women and others in this state.

Let's talk about stopping the scourge of sexual violence and the scourge of domestic and family violence. Let's talk about what we are going to do to help young people to have the lives that they deserve, to live full and healthy and happy lives. Also, let's talk about what they can do to be helped to cover their rents and not have a cost-of-living crisis face them. Let's talk about those people who are struggling just to pay the bills because the mortgage rates are going through the roof.

I do not want to take up too much more of this council's time, but I did think it was important, even though this select committee was not going to a vote today, to share these words and to share why the Greens oppose the way forward that has been proposed by the Hon. Frank Pangallo. I do not think that the Hon. Frank Pangallo brings this select committee to us with ill intent, but I do believe it opens up a forum for those who do have ill intent to be made bolder and louder and more harmful.

Trans-rights are human rights, trans-men are men, trans-women are women. I note that not all members of this council in this place right now, even in this room right now, believe that, but I believe that and I respect your right not to believe that, but I also respect the right of those who are trans in our community to not have their lives used as a political plaything.

We should be offering our collective and unanimous love and support to all South Australians, no matter their gender identity, sexuality, race, creed or religion. We should not be providing platforms to inflate hatred. I note that this select committee would have had on its number people who do not believe that trans-people exist, because we know there are a number of people in this council who have voted that way in the past year. The extraordinary proposition of having a select committee populated by members of parliament who do not believe a group of people exist in this society, to investigate that group of people, simply blew my mind in a way that *Alice in Wonderland* never quite managed to achieve.

We should not be deliberately setting up processes in this council that are designed explicitly to cause harm to people who deserve our support. It would be an appalling thing to do to a group of people that we know are already likely to harm themselves—we already know how likely they are to be self-harming—and that is not a hypothetical exercise, that is real life. This will have real-life impacts on real people, and that is what happens when you vote in this place. The Greens will not support this committee. We are here for people like Jasper, we are here for trans-folk and other folk across this whole beautiful complex web of human diversity that we get to enjoy in our society.

The wondrous condition of humanity is actually enriched by our diversity and the Greens know that diversity should be celebrated and supported. It should not be condemned and it certainly should not be used by political operatives.

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

CO.AS.IT. (SA)

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (17:23): I move:

That this council—

1. Congratulates Co.As.It. (SA) for its important support services to the aged Italian community and for achieving a special milestone of its 20th anniversary in 2023;

2. Recognises that Co.As.It.(SA) is a leading provider of social community welfare and aged-care support for ageing Italian Australians in South Australia, and that their valuable services, advocacy and programs help seniors to live a fulfilling life; and
3. Acknowledges the important work of founding members, current and past presidents, committee members, professionals and volunteers of Co.As.It.(SA) and thanks them for their outstanding hard work over the past 20 years for delivering culturally and linguistically appropriate services by applying a quality of life framework to look after the vulnerable ageing Italo-Australian community in South Australia.

As the shadow minister for multicultural South Australia, it is a great honour to move the motion to congratulate Co.As.It. for its important support services to the aged Italian community and for achieving the special milestone of their 20th anniversary in 2023. Co.As.It. is an abbreviation for Comitato Assistenza Italiani, which means Italian Assistance Committee. It highlights their mission and key objective of addressing the needs and advancing the wellbeing of ageing Italo-Australians with access to information, support, advocacy, services and programs that support a fulfilling life.

It was certainly a great privilege to attend the 20th anniversary gala celebration on Friday 27 October 2023 alongside many parliamentary colleagues, including the Hon. Vincent Tarzia, the member for Hartley, who is deeply connected with the Italian community in South Australia. Through listening to many amazing and moving speeches, I gained a deeper understanding of the organisation.

Although Co.As.It. was established 20 years ago in Adelaide, its history goes back further, to the first Co.As.It., which was established in Sydney back in 1968. The Italian consul general of the time, Dottore Guido Natali, under the auspices of the Italian government, helped to set up an organisation to provide assistance and support for the many postwar World War II migrants who had settled in Australia.

One of the Co.As.It. founding members, Vincenzo Papandrea, described in his translated speech how the idea of Co.As.It. in South Australia was first formed after several meetings in Melbourne. I quote:

There was a need to respond to the changes in strategies of both the local and Italian governments in the provision of funds intended for those more in need, such as the elderly. It was necessary to bring together all the welfare associations under a single umbrella and submit requests for funds in the welfare sector to the various bodies.

Through determination and hard work, Co.As.It. has become a proud organisation well supported by other community organisations such as Com.It.Es. and the broader Italian community and focuses on providing aged-care services and community empowerment for ageing Italian Australians.

To appreciate the incredible services of Co.As.It., I would like to highlight some key services that they provide. They provide assistance and resources to help members understand and access aged-care services, specifically through the federal government My Aged Care portal. The resources that Co.As.It. provides cover all aspects of guidance for their members to be able to successfully navigate the aged-care system, with resources also provided in Italian to help overcome the language barrier.

Registration with Co.As.It. (SA) by social support groups under the My Aged Care portal also entitles members to subsidised fees for their social programs. These programs currently include the Campania Sports and Social Club social support tombola group, where members can play cards and bocce and enjoy a typical Italian-style meal, and the Unley Italian Community Association, where members can also enjoy Italian-style meals alongside various social activities. I give a big shout-out to the Hon. David Pisoni, who is the local member for Unley and who continues to support and visit the Unley Italian Community Association.

The third program is the St Maria Goretti social group, which serves Italian meals and offers a variety of social activities, and the fourth is the Italian Pensioners of Thebarton and Suburbs group, which hosts many different activities and regular day trips for the ageing Italian community. Thank you to all the wonderful groups and local community organisations that have partnered with Co.As.It. to provide these great social programs for our elderly.

Other important programs to highlight today are their community empowerment services and programs, which take a holistic approach to ageing and where psychological, emotional and physical

wellbeing have been recognised as areas of need. Co.As.It. has collaborated with the Wellbeing and Resilience Centre within the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) to build wellbeing and resilience across the ageing Italian community.

Co.As.It. has also collaborated with the Society of St Hilarion Aged Care and the University of South Australia's school of health science to develop and launch the Italian Seniors Stay Active for Wellbeing exercise program. The exercise program is tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of the ageing Italo-Australian community and focuses on aerobic and strength training.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the volunteers and pay tribute to them. Co.As.It. offers a volunteer recognition program each year and hosts the Italian Community Volunteer Awards. The volunteer awards aim to recognise individuals who have given their time generously to serve the Italo-Australian community in South Australia. I have attended many such award presentations and I would like to express my gratitude to all the hardworking volunteers who serve at Co.As.It.

None of these initiatives, services, programs, community partnerships and volunteer coordination could have been accomplished without the strategic directions and dedication of the board of Co.As.It. When they were celebrating the 20th anniversary, the leadership team consisted of six very passionate and dedicated members including Tina Taddeo, president; Joe Scalzi, vice president; Edmondo Palombo, treasurer; Lina Scalfino, secretary; Luisa Greco, board consultant; and Anna Finizio, board member.

Co.As.It. President Tina Taddeo is a wonderful president who has a deep passion for serving the community. She brings a wealth of knowledge from her business background to excel in the president's role. Vice President Joe Scalzi, who many of us know is a former Liberal member for Hartley, has been involved with Co.As.It. for more than 10 years. Joe brings to the table his knowledge from the education sector, which has contributed to the many education programs delivered by Co.As.It. Treasurer Edmondo Palombo is an experienced registered nurse and has utilised his nursing experience to support many programs at Co.As.It.

Secretary Lina Scalfino has dedicated her professional life as an educator within the education department for the last 40 years. She has also involved herself as a volunteer for Radio Italiana 531 and also as a member of the Programs, Special Programs Events Subcommittee. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Lina on her recent appointment as the now new President of Co.As.It, which was announced about five days ago. I wish her and her new committee all the best going forward.

On the last committee, Luisa Greco was a passionate and very much involved community leader and played a critical role in Co.As.It. She was working with the founding groups from the beginning and she also brings her great experience in the aged-care sector to assist the board as a consultant.

Another board member who is worthy of mention is Anna Finizio, who regularly is a guest speaker on Italian radio to keep the community informed of legal and policy issues. Anna brings a professional background in law and health and her experience in public policy and advocacy. We are very proud that the Liberal Party has recently endorsed Dr Anna Finizio as the candidate for Dunstan, upon the retirement of the Hon. Steven Marshall, the former Premier of South Australia. We will certainly be working hard with Anna going forward in her by-election campaign.

On this note, I would also very much like to acknowledge a lifetime patron and founder of Co.As.It., the Hon. Mario Feleppa OAM, who as most of us know formerly served as a member of parliament in the Legislative Council and had the original vision of combining various Italian-based organisations in the aged-care sector in order to have the combined voice in South Australia for advocacy, funding and lobbying.

Mario's vision was greatly supported and assisted by Vincenzo Papandrea, who was then the President of Com.It.Es. and represented many Italian migrants. I would like to pay tribute to Franca Antonella, a volunteer in the Italian community and an exceptional community leader who was known by the Hon. Mario Feleppa and became the first President of Co.As.It. to help establish

the organisation. All of those I mentioned are exceptional leaders who have served the Italian community with their heart and soul.

In my closing remarks, a very happy 20th anniversary to Co.As.It. May the organisation continue to reach new heights, so that our ageing Italo-Australian community can live a fulfilling life and all their health and wellbeing is cared for. With those remarks, I commend the motion to the chamber.

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

CEYLON TAMIL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (17:35): I move:

That this council—

1. Congratulates Ceylon Tamil Association of South Australia (CTA-SA) for achieving a special milestone of 40th anniversary in 2023;
2. Recognises that the CTA-SA is one of the oldest culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations in Adelaide and is a leading community organisation that serves migrants and refugees from the Sri Lankan and Tamil community of South Australia; and
3. Acknowledges the important work of founding members, current and past presidents, committee members and volunteers of CTA-SA, and thanks them for their hard work, dedication and contributions in preserving the Tamil language and culture by delivering 40 years of outstanding community service in South Australia.

It is indeed wonderful to have this opportunity today to congratulate the Ceylon Tamil Association of South Australia (CTA-SA) for achieving a special milestone, a 40th anniversary. It was such a privilege to attend the CTA Ruby Jubilee Celebration held on 28 October last year. Over the years, I have personally witnessed CTA-SA's strong leadership, hard work, dedication and commitment to provide community services and assistance to help Tamil migrants and refugees from Sri Lanka to overcome challenges, to rebuild lives, and enjoy the freedom of a harmonious and democratic society of Australia.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognise that CTA-SA is one of the oldest culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations in Adelaide, and is a leading community organisation that serves migrants and refugees from the Sri Lankan and Tamil community of South Australia.

The Ceylon Tamil Association of South Australia was formed on 19 August 1983 under a different name, due to a number of challenges at the time. It was originally called the Sri Lankan Refugee Association of South Australia. Many of the founding members were apprehensive of using the word Tamil for the association. They encountered a number of challenges during its formation.

The mission of the association was originally established to provide aid and much-needed support to the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. They were facing extreme persecution and mass violence during the anti-Tamil riots, known as the Black July, in 1983.

The other problem was finding someone who was willing to stand as inaugural president of the association due to the fear of prosecution of their relatives back in Sri Lanka by the then Sri Lankan government. It was in the time of challenge that a leader emerged: Dr Rani Meyhandan, a Malaysian of Ceylonese descent, offered to lead the association and became its inaugural president.

Once established, the association organised many events to raise funds and collect essential items to be used as donations towards helping the persecuted and displaced Tamil community in Sri Lanka. The donations and assistance made a profound difference in preventing the loss of lives of Tamils who were escaping the violence in Sri Lanka. The financial assistance helped to provide essential supplies to displaced individuals and families, and also covered the costs of travelling out of dangerous areas.

After the end of the dark period of Black July, the association here in Adelaide changed its name to its current name, which is Ceylon Tamil Association of South Australia Incorporated, at its annual general meeting held on 3 November 1984. Since then, the association has worked to fulfil

its mission of promoting Tamil culture, customs, language and traditions. CTA-SA's cultural focus includes promoting Tamil literature, art, drama and music referred to as muthamil.

The association has also worked to develop relationships with other similar Tamil associations across Australia, forming a positive network of unity and solidarity, as well as to exchange ideas and community initiatives.

Since its inception CTA-SA has maintained a strong focus in serving the local Tamil community in South Australia. It established the Adelaide Tamil Language School in 1988, which is one of the oldest ethnic schools registered with the Ethnic Schools Board in South Australia. The Adelaide Tamil Language School has been fundamental in teaching Tamil as a mother tongue language to the Tamil community in South Australia, especially to new generations of children with Tamil heritage who either moved to or were born in South Australia.

The Adelaide Tamil Language School is open not only to the Tamil community from Sri Lanka but also to the Tamil diaspora from India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Burma and other countries. The school has served the broader Tamil community in South Australia, while promoting harmony, unity and ensuring the preservation of language within the Tamil community of South Australia.

The social and recreational activities organised by CTA-SA increase awareness of Tamil culture in South Australia and ensure that Tamil values and cultures are passed on to future generations, strengthening the multicultural facet of our state. With the increasing need to fundraise for important charities and support philanthropic projects close to their hearts, CTA-SA became a registered charitable organisation in 2023. The association currently has over 700 members of which 600 are Australian citizens and 100 are permanent residents.

The invaluable community service and support by CTA-SA, delivered by hardworking volunteers, has allowed new arrivals to settle in to South Australian society faster, which leads to better education and employment outcomes and, in turn, enabled Tamil community members to make a significant contribution to the economy and the society of South Australia.

As Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council and shadow minister for multicultural South Australia, I would like to congratulate the Ceylon Tamil Association of South Australia on its ruby jubilee celebrations and hope that the association will continue to be a shining example of the importance of a multicultural South Australia for many more years to come.

All of those achievements I mentioned above would not have been possible without the volunteering spirit and selfless dedication to serve the broader community by founding members, past and current presidents and committee members. On this note, I would like to place on the record my sincere thanks for all the members who have consistently come together in the last 40 years to provide community services. I would like to make special mention of the current leadership team of the association, including:

- President Dr Punniyamoorthy Jayachakaran (most of us just know him as Jaya, which is a lot easier and shorter);
- Vice President, Mr Rohan Augustine;
- Secretary, Dr Sev Verl Nagalingam;
- Treasurer, Mrs Sunitha Yoheshwaran;
- Adelaide Tamil Language School Administrator, Dr Sathyan Thuraiappah; and
- board member, Dr Bhavani Nirmalaraja.

I also thank the other contributors of subcommittees and members of CTA-SA for their dedication and hard work to serve the Tamil community.

The outstanding work of past community leaders must also be acknowledged, as they have paved the way for success and the continued existence of the association. Let us recognise the founding members and current and past presidents for their work and dedication. Some of these past presidents include Mr Sugunanathan, Mr Raj Srithar, Mr Jude Nirmalaraja, Dr Sev Nagalingam, Mr Kuganesan, and many more who have contributed to support CTA-SA in the last 40 years.

I look forward to working together with the Ceylon Tamil Association of South Australia. Congratulations once again on their 40th anniversary, and my very best wishes for another 40 years and beyond for their outstanding service to the Tamil community. With those words, I commend the motion to the chamber.

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

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY

Orders of the Day, Private Business, No. 92: Hon. C.M. Scriven to move:

That this council—

1. Acknowledges that Friday 17 November 2023 is National Agriculture Day, celebrating our nation's farming sector;
2. Encourages all members to note activities available on this day, including the AgDay lunch, BBQ or event, enter photos and videos in the competition highlighting innovation in agriculture, take part in 'farmer time' which connect students with farmers, wear your 'I Love Farmers' T-shirt and share selfies on #AgDayAU and attend AgDay events in your area; and
3. Recognises the enormous contribution that agriculture makes to our economy, jobs and the social fabric of our state.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (17:44): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

WORLD FISHERIES DAY

Orders of the Day, Private Business, No. 93: Hon. C.M. Scriven to move:

That this council—

1. Acknowledges that World Fisheries Day is held on 21 November each year;
2. Notes that World Fisheries Day highlights the importance of maintaining the world's fisheries;
3. Recognises the world-class fisheries management in South Australia; and
4. Celebrates and thanks the incredible seafood industry in South Australia that provides exceptional quality produce for local, national and export markets all over the world.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (17:45): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

Bills

STATUTES AMENDMENT (UNIVERSITIES) BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 22 February 2023.)

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (17:45): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; bill withdrawn.

Motions

ADELAIDE ZOO

Orders of the Day, Private Business, No. 105: Hon. R.B. Martin to move:

That this council—

1. Recognises that 30 May 2023 marks the 140th anniversary of the opening of the Adelaide Zoo;
2. Commends the Adelaide Zoo for its commitment to animal welfare, education and conservation; and
3. Congratulates all those who have contributed to the success of the Adelaide Zoo.

The Hon. R.B. MARTIN (17:46): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT REVIEW

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

That this council—

1. Notes that the state government is undertaking a review of the Residential Tenancies Act.
2. Recognises that the voices of renters should be included in all deliberations.
3. Calls on the Malinauskas government to:
 - (a) end no-cause evictions;
 - (b) introduce rent capping to protect vulnerable people from unfair rent hikes;
 - (c) give renters security and stability through long-term tenancies;
 - (d) prohibit 'no pets' clauses in leases;
 - (e) end rent bidding that forces unfair rent increases; and
 - (f) ensure all homes meet energy efficiency and ventilation standards.

(Continued from 7 September 2022.)

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (17:46): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION

Orders of the Day, Private Business, No. 167: Hon. R.A. Simms to move:

That this council—

1. Notes that as at 8 June 2022, RSPCA Lonsdale has reported almost 100 dogs up for adoption as a result of pet owners not being able to find suitable rental accommodation with their pets.
2. Recognises that landlords have greater rights than renters when it comes to pet ownership.
3. Calls on the Malinauskas government to undertake urgent reform of the Residential Tenancies Act to:
 - (a) improve renters' rights with regard to pet ownership;
 - (b) address the housing affordability crisis; and
 - (c) address the housing vacancy crisis.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (17:47): I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

GROCERY PRICING

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

1. That a select committee be established to inquire and report on grocery pricing in South Australia with particular reference to:

- (a) the trends in grocery pricing in South Australia, compared to other states in Australia and internationally;
 - (b) the disparities in grocery pricing between metropolitan and regional areas;
 - (c) the impact of high grocery prices on consumers, particularly for those on low incomes;
 - (d) the relationship between wholesale prices paid to farmers and the retail price paid by consumers;
 - (e) the prevalence of food insecurity in South Australia;
 - (f) the prevalence of price gouging practices and anti-competitive behaviour among grocery retailers and the impact on consumers;
 - (g) factors contributing to high grocery prices;
 - (h) potential opportunities for further regulation of grocery retailers and opportunities for state government intervention; and
 - (i) any other related matters.
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.

(Continued from 30 November 2023.)

The Hon. C. BONAROS (17:47): I rise to indicate my support for the motion moved by the Hon. Rob Simms. If you think there are not concerned people out there keeping a close eye on what we discuss in this place, then think again. I certainly thank those interested people who keep a keen and watchful eye over the issues that we are debating in here, including very recent developments.

As luck, or indeed good timing, would have it, the ABC, just in the last hour or so, has reported on a report by the former chair of the ACCC, Allan Fels. The report, commissioned or initiated by the Australian Council of Trade Unions, an investigation undertaken by Mr Fels, has today been handed to Ms McManus and will, according to the ABC, soon be handed to the federal government.

Mr Fels makes some 35 recommendations in that report handed down today. Those findings, in what has been dubbed a blistering report, focus on banks, supermarkets, aviation and energy companies, which he says, according to his findings, are exploiting their market power in ways that drive up inflation and hurt Australian households.

He confirms what many fear, namely that rising prices are caused by not just true inflation but often greed, corporate gouging and profit. Again, the blistering report that has been done—I have not read the report, but I have seen the article and extracts from it—states that big business is exploiting its market shares in ways that have driven up inflation and hurt Australian households. It is an 80-page report. Professor Fels says:

The power of corporations to unduly lift prices had been a central factor in the recent cost-of-living crisis affecting so many Australian households...

Companies have been able to leverage the disruptions and uncertainty that followed the COVID pandemic into unprecedented profitability.

The ability of companies to charge unfair prices, amidst the unprecedented economic and social dislocation ensuing from the COVID pandemic, has significantly undermined the well-being of the Australians we heard from.

Professor Fels also stated in his report:

Adding insult to injury, numerous of the individual allegations of price-gouging received by our inquiry dealt with unfair behaviour—

not just by the supermarkets—

by...commercial banks, which have used their market dominance to extract even more profit from customers through higher interest costs and other charges.

Consumers have been hit twice by the misuse of corporate power. First, they experienced general inflation largely caused by profit-seeking after the pandemic, then were gouged again by financial companies leveraging their market dominance to make extra profits even under higher interest rates.

Professor Fels goes on to say that these are his views. After years and years of experience with the ACCC, he has formed these opinions and intends to pass on the recommendations that he makes to the federal government for consideration. When it comes to the food and grocery sector, and in particular the duopoly between Coles and Woolworths, according to the article almost half of the public submissions to the inquiry related just to supermarket prices and practices. Professor Fels says:

Neither Coles nor Woolworths experienced declines in profit nor revenue over the pandemic as their main businesses were, rightfully, deemed essential services...

This position allowed business continuity and retained their position in the market.

What has occurred since the pandemic...is an increase in margins in both Coles and Woolworths food and grocery segments driven by low competitive forces and an ability to not pass on immediate cost reductions.

Professor Fels discussed the use of 'special' tags being used on normal grocery prices:

Misleading price displays are illegal but despite this, there is no prescribed minimum period where a business must advertise...

The extent of the obligation is that the item and a reasonable proportion of the items must have been sold at that price before businesses are able to claim it is a discount.

I did not even know that was a thing, but apparently it is, and it is in this report. Professor Fels says:

In a period of rapid price increases, it is many consumers' evidence that businesses have not been fairly claiming to be discounting.

Professor Fels welcomed the steps the government had taken, which included a review of the food and grocery code and direction to the ACCC to investigate prices. As you would expect, the duopoly of which he speaks have repudiated price gouging allegations in recent weeks and I am sure will continue to do so after the outcome of this report, but if you were to ask any average person on the street who has walked into a supermarket recently and seen the sorts of prices on shelves, I do not think they would disagree with any of the assessments that we have just heard.

There is absolutely no question that we have all seen and felt, and I think every household has felt, the impacts of supermarket prices, and if we are feeling it, then I do not know how a low-income family is actually managing to cope. I walked into the supermarket last week, and I have been watching my supermarket basket, and I spent \$180. There was no fresh fruit and vegetable in the trolley, there was no meat in the trolley, there were just staples. I knew that I would have to then go into the fruit and veg store next door and I knew then that I would have to go and buy other produce that we needed at home. By the time I got home, I had spent in excess of \$300.

I know that I am very fortunate to have \$300 to spend on those groceries, but it left me speechless because I got home and I could not see what I had. I just could not see what that \$300 had bought me. Again, I appreciate and acknowledge how fortunate I and others in this place are to be able to go into the supermarket and do that. I appreciate that, for many families, items that were once commonplace in the supermarket trolley are now completely out of reach.

I did read with interest when the Hon. Robert Simms first initiated this inquiry that Foodbank has reported that over 50 per cent of the people who visit Foodbank are actually people in paid employment, people who are working every day but simply cannot afford the prices that are being charged in supermarkets.

I suppose price gouging became really interesting as a result of COVID and things like potato shortages. I do not know who likes potato crisps in here but I know that the average packet of crisps in the supermarket now costs well in excess of \$5; some of them cost \$7.50. If you like Red Rock, the Hon. Ian Hunter, then you better be prepared to pay \$8.50 a packet—\$8.50 a packet. We laugh, but it is extraordinary that you need close to \$10 to buy a packet of chips in the supermarket. That is the point I am making.

I use the chips as an example because my son loves potato chips, and I have noticed the price of his favourite brand more than anyone else. But there was a potato shortage. There was COVID. Miraculously, at the same time, the packet of chips shrunk. The price did not shrink, but the packet of chips shrunk. The price continued to go up.

As far as I know, the potato shortage, which saw pretty much every fish and chip across South Australia run out of fresh potatoes and saw us bringing in potatoes from other states, has worked itself out, but the price of chips in the supermarket, I tell you, has not worked itself out one iota. They are expensive and that is a luxury item that we are talking about.

There is absolutely no question that families are struggling. We all know that. We know how hard families are doing it. Reports like this that lean to recommendations and findings of price gouging should be concerning to all of us. There are lots of considerations in this. When you talk to producers of products as well, they say, 'We are wearing extra costs as well, so we have to pass those on.' But there are, of course, complaints being made, very valid complaints that we need to be taking into account, by producers of those items that we enjoy at our supermarkets because they certainly do not feel like they are getting their fair share when it comes to their profit margins that are being made.

We are very blessed to live in a state which is blessed with soils and water to produce some of the best products on supermarket shelves across the nation. We are extraordinarily lucky to live in this state. The idea that not only is that produce out of reach for us as shoppers, particularly for those families who are really struggling to make ends meet in this cost-of-living crisis, but that those farmgate prices are as low as they are, impacting producers as well, is unacceptable and ought to be the subject of serious consideration.

I know these are debates that we have had over the course of history many times, but I think it is very good timing on the part of the Hon. Robert Simms to bring this motion to this place. Of course, that is not even touching on the impacts on our regions. When you look at the prices in our regions, the mind actually boggles as to how people are affording to feed themselves, because we know what sorts of prices are being paid in metropolitan Adelaide compared with our regional towns. We know that some of those items are simply unaffordable.

I think it also raises questions—and I am hoping that this is something that the Hon. Robert Simms will look at—about the practices of some of those corporate companies when it comes to greed. I am pretty sure that it costs the same amount of money to deliver Coke as it does to deliver bottled water to a rural or remote town, and yet I am pretty sure that I would be able to buy that bottle of Coke for a lot less, a fraction of the price of fresh, clean bottled water. That also brings into question some of the practices of the companies that are also being criticised for gouging off the back of these communities.

There is obviously a lot of work to be done in this space. I have only scratched the surface in terms of what Professor Fels has said today and have not delved into the issue of dairies, breads, cereals, fresh fruit and produce and so forth, but I am sure others will do that, and I will leave that to them.

I do indicate my wholehearted support for this. Not only that, I genuinely hope that there will be some learnings and recommendations that this government will take on board in terms of what we can do to ensure that households are not going without, because we know that today there are people who are making really difficult choices. I joke about being able to buy a packet of chips, but I know that is something that is a really difficult choice for some families who cannot afford to put bread on the table, let alone a packet of chips, and who cannot afford to give their kids milk, let alone spend \$8.50 on a packet of chips. They are the people who are hurting the most out of this, and I hope that will be the focus of this inquiry.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (18:03): I move to amend the motion as follows:

After paragraph 1, insert new paragraph 1A as follows:

- 1A. That the committee consist of six members and that the quorum of members necessary to be present at all meetings of the committee be fixed at four members.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (18:04): I rise on behalf of the opposition to indicate our support of the motion put forward by the Hon. Robert Simms. I note that this call for a select committee inquiring into a range of aspects affecting grocery pricing does not come as a lone voice. I acknowledge the work taking place federally with the ACCC investigation

and the Senate inquiry into the same issue, as well as state-based inquiries in both New South Wales and Queensland.

Consumers around the country are hurting and our farmers are hurting. It is proper and diligent that we have a deeper look into this issue and its impact on South Australia more broadly. Your average Australian knows all too well that we are in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. It is not just our energy bills which are increasing because this negligent government are obsessed with expensive, inefficient renewables, but, sadly, it is the cost of putting food on the table and it is the cost of packing food for children's lunchboxes. It should be the right of every South Australian schoolchild not to go to school hungry, yet, sadly, this is not the reality for a growing number of South Australian households.

We support this motion not only because we are in a cost-of-living crisis but we are also in a cost-of-doing-business crisis. Many producers of our food and fibre are telling me that they feel like they are drowning. As the cost of business consumables increase, the price paid for produce at the farm gate is simply not covering these costs. Growing food in Australia is becoming more and more unsustainable.

AUSVEG industry figures show that the average cost across their produce lines note a 30 per cent mark-up in the price of food from the farm gate to the retail shelf. This is the average. Shockingly, potatoes can sit on anywhere between a 400 and 800 per cent mark-up. All the while, growers are reporting margins—that is, net profit—of 1 to 5 per cent if they are making money at all.

Helping the farmers who feed us is as important as helping consumers who put food on their tables, but what we have is an uneven playing field. Farmers are not winning; consumers are not winning. There are two big brands who, likely, are doing quite well out of this situation.

I stress that this committee has an equally important role in highlighting and acknowledging what is working well. Our state's independent supermarkets have a transparent and mutually beneficial relationship with their growers and the produce markets and co-ops that supply them. This shows that there is another path forward which can and should be investigated. This is what this committee will hopefully get to the bottom of.

As it is, we cannot continue to erode our farming base. We must ensure the market is resilient, and we must ensure a fair price is paid at the farm gate. We must nurture an economy of resilience and investment. Our growers cannot build for the future when they are forced to operate on such exceptionally slim margins.

If a continued duopoly and complicated state and federal regulations continue to drive Australian growers to the wall, we risk shooting ourselves in the stomach. Industry body AUSVEG conducted a sentiment survey that revealed 30 to 35 per cent of growers in the industry want to get out. I do not have the exact figures at hand from the National Farmers' Federation, but I imagine the livestock industry would be similar. It shows how tough it is for our farmers here in Australia and, indeed, in South Australia. They would make more money by simply leaving their money in the bank and not growing our food. This is no way to do business, but our farmers soldier on under these conditions, because it is not just their life; it is often their love.

Paragraph (b) of the terms of reference speaks to the very real challenge of grocery price disparity between metropolitan Adelaide and regional South Australia. Regional areas face higher distribution costs, even further limited competition and logistical challenges, all leading to elevated grocery prices. It does not help that, as well as the non-existent competition, our regions have been slugged with the new heavy vehicle levy introduced by the federal Albanese Labor government. The extra 6 per cent levy to heavy road users—that is, trucks which move our food and fibre around—further add to the cost of freight from farm gate to market to distribution centre to store.

It is costs on top of costs for our regions, and it is not fair. The financial burden lugged on residents in rural and remote locations exacerbates economic inequality. Moreover, that discrepancy can and does hinder local economic development. You can rest assured that we will be investigating regulations and policies to ensure that there are no ridiculous and unnecessary burdens on regional communities to access the same food that these regions produce.

A good government should take measures to ensure equitable access to affordable food. They should want to foster balanced economic growth across the whole state, and they should want to improve the overall wellbeing of communities in both metropolitan and regional settings. I have an amendment to this motion. I move to amend paragraph 1(h) as follows:

Leave out 'regulation' and insert 'scrutiny' and leave out 'opportunities for' and insert ', including'.

There is a common misconception that more regulation is required to fix problems that are initially created through or by regulation. As Liberals, we believe in government that nurtures and encourages its citizens through incentives. We believe in transparency and scrutiny, and we believe in less regulation and less red tape, so we have moved the amendment to that effect.

It is my understanding that the Hon. Frank Pangallo is no longer moving his amendment, and I note the government also have a very last-minute amendment which has only just been put on our desks fairly recently. I would just like to make the point to the Government Whip, the Hon. Ian Hunter, and his Labor colleagues that perhaps he should take his own advice when it comes to giving other members of this chamber adequate time to consider amendments.

I look forward to this select committee being established. I look forward to highlighting the incredible work of our produce markets, producers and independent retailers, who face an ongoing battle of David versus Goliath. I thank the honourable member for bringing this committee forward, and I hope it contributes important information and recommendations to both state and federal conversations.

The Hon. S.L. GAME (18:11): I rise briefly to support the motion to establish a select committee to inquire into and report on grocery pricing in South Australia at a time when the cost-of-living pressure on families is at breaking point. Representing more than three and a half thousand businesses, Horticulture Coalition of SA has reported that growers in South Australia are being paid just 98¢ per kilo on average for produce, down from \$1.25 per kilo in the previous year. This goes some way to explaining the super profits posted by the major supermarkets, with Coles raking in \$1.1 billion and Woolworths an eye-watering \$1.6 billion in profits last year alone.

Amid a cost-of-living crisis, if supermarkets continue to deny growers a fair cut from profit margins, coupled with escalating costs due to inflation, consumers will be further impacted as growers struggle to provide more for less. There is now a major disparity between the prices farmers are getting and what consumers are paying. If farmers are forced to exit the industry because they just cannot afford ongoing increases in wages and costs of electricity, fertiliser, machinery and so on, we will be forced to buy imported frozen produce, often inferior and grown without the standards in place for our local industry.

If we want to continue to enjoy local products, we need to support growers and discourage the major supermarkets from any temptation to price gouge, which hurts consumers. It is alarming to hear stories of families cutting back on necessities such as fruit and vegetables because they can no longer afford to buy these food staples. We all know the consequences of a lack of a balanced diet. Supermarkets do not have the right to make people unwell just so they can line the pockets of shareholders. I support the motion.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (18:13): I also rise to support the motion and wish to focus on what I would consider to be the more significant aspects of this proposed inquiry. It certainly would not surprise my colleagues in this place that subparagraphs (b) and (d), which directly affect farmers in regional South Australia, are something that I am very interested in. Subparagraph (b) of the motion, depending on the amendments from the government, references disparities in grocery pricing between metropolitan and regional areas. Subparagraph (d) looks at the relationship between wholesale prices paid to farmers and the retail price paid by customers.

Subparagraph (d) must be a paramount concern because, without our hardworking farmers, we have no food and we have no fibre. In fact, I have probably said it not as eloquently as that in the past. Without farmers, we have no food. Without food, we are stuffed. I am pleased that this issue is not only being looked at at a state level but also now at a national level, as the Hon. Nicola Centofanti has ventilated. I can go on because, as a politician, we all like to hear our own voices, but everyone has spoken at length about this.

At the end of the day, if no action is taken a systemic issue resulting in wideranging adverse effects will develop. It will impact employment and it will impact health, in particular. Generations-long farmers will look to sell the family farm. Imports of fresh produce and meat will grow, and low income consumers who are unable to afford fresh produce will have to rely on prepackaged and processed food. Fresh local protein sources will become out of reach for many, if they have not already.

I am pleased to support this motion. I thank the honourable member for bringing it to us. It is timely and it is significant. Cost-of-living pressures impact us all but especially so in the regions and especially so for our farmers. Opaque pricing mechanisms and the power imbalances between farmers and the supermarket giants necessitate investigation. I hope the select committee motion garners support for that to occur, and I commend it to the chamber.

The Hon. T.T. NGO (18:15): I rise to speak on behalf of the government in support of this motion, with some amendments. I move:

Paragraph 1—leave out subparagraph (a) and insert new subparagraph as follows:

- (a) The prices for groceries and staple goods and products at South Australian supermarkets and grocery stores, compared to other states in Australia;

After subparagraph (b) insert new subparagraph as follows:

- (ba) The prices paid to local growers, producers and suppliers for goods and services compared to prices charged to consumers in South Australian supermarkets and grocery stores, and the reasons for these disparities;

In subparagraph (c) leave out 'The impact of high grocery prices on consumers' and insert:

'The impact of retail consumer pricing on consumers'.

Leave out subparagraph (d).

Leave out subparagraph (g).

Leave out subparagraph (h) and insert new subparagraph as follows:

- (h) Potential opportunities for price monitoring, transparency in retail pricing and further regulation of pricing and;

We understand the Hon. Robert Simms has brought on this motion for the establishment of a select committee in response to the impact that the rising cost of essential groceries is having on South Australians, especially on vulnerable individuals and families in our community. On 25 January 2024, Prime Minister Albanese announced that the federal government will direct the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) to conduct a 12-month price inquiry into supermarkets.

The ACCC's inquiry will consider the impacts of online shopping, loyalty programs and changes in technology on competition. It will also examine the difference between farmgate prices and checkout prices. The consumer group Choice will also receive funding to provide shoppers with a clear understanding of how supermarkets are performing in monitoring prices.

The Labor Albanese government has also announced a review of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct to ensure that the supermarket sector is working as it should, and has appointed Dr Craig Emerson to lead the review. We are sure these federal initiatives will support the intended work of this select committee.

As the Hon. Robert Simms referred to, the ABS data tells us that people are changing spending patterns and cutting back on items that are lower priorities than groceries, such as furniture, clothes, shoes and other household items. I think we can all agree with the unfairness of the reality that, while Coles and Woolies make huge profits, we have many South Australians struggling to put food on the table.

Seasonality of produce, transportation costs, competition and labour costs are all factors that will have varying degrees of impact depending on location as well as other external factors. There are steps that we can take and work together as a community to mitigate the impact of rising grocery prices and promote food security without diminishing the urgent need for more affordable groceries.

We can also look at ways that families can reduce food waste and shop smart by looking for sales and reduce reliance on processed or convenience foods.

The fact is that the prevalence of food insecurity is a real concern and this Labor Malinauskas government wants all Australians to have reliable access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food at all times. This government hopes that this select committee will help South Australia achieve better food security as we look at ways to improve access to affordable, nutritious food. We look forward to supporting this motion, with amendments.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (18:19): I want to thank all members who have participated in this debate: the Hon. Connie Bonaros, the Hon. Nicola Centofanti, the Hon. Ms Game, the Hon. Frank Pangallo, the Hon. Ben Hood and the Hon. Mr Ngo. I think it is really welcome to see that this chamber is taking this issue seriously and there seems to be a consensus across this chamber of parliament that this is an important issue for us to deal with. We certainly welcome that in the Greens.

It is, as has been observed by other speakers, a really important and timely issue for the parliament to deal with. Indeed, just this week new data has come out from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that actually demonstrates that Adelaide not only leads the nation when it comes to inflation but also leads the nation when it comes to the prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages. We have seen in Adelaide a 16 per cent increase in the cost of food and non-alcoholic beverages over the last three years—that is ahead of every other capital city in the country. I think it is important for the South Australian parliament to look into this matter.

As has been observed, there is a real issue also with respect to the prices being paid to farmers and local producers for their goods. They are being duded, and that is happening at a time when you have big corporations like Coles and Woolies making record profits, ripping off consumers in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. I really hope that this inquiry can hold those big corporations to account, hold their feet to the fire and really expose some of the price gouging practices.

I might just briefly indicate the Greens' position on the amendments. The government has reached out to me regarding their amendments. We are happy to accommodate those in order to get this committee over the line. I am aware of the amendments that the Liberal Party have put forward. I guess of concern to me is the fact that the Liberal amendment seeks to remove the potential for the committee to consider options for regulation, and I see that as being a key action point for the committee. It is important to shine a light on what is going on, but we need to insert some verbs in there as well and actually look at what we can do. The potential for regulation, I think, is important, so for that reason we will not be supporting the Liberal Party amendment. As I indicate, we will support the government's amendments.

The PRESIDENT: I am going to work my way through the amendments. The props are out of order but this is what we are working with, so I seek your patience and indulgence as we try to work through this. The first question I am going to put is that subparagraph (a) as proposed to be struck out by the Hon. T.T. Ngo stand as part of the motion. If you are voting for the pure Simms motion you will vote aye; if you are prepared to support the Hon. Mr Ngo's amendment you will vote no.

Question resolved in the negative.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that new subparagraph (a) as proposed to be inserted by the Hon. T.T. Ngo be so inserted. If you are supporting the Hon. Mr Ngo you will vote aye.

Question agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The next question is that new subparagraph (ba) as proposed to be inserted by the Hon. T.T. Ngo be so inserted. If you are supporting the Hon. Mr Ngo you will vote aye.

Question agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The next question is that the amendment moved by the Hon. T.T. Ngo to subparagraph (c) be agreed to. Again, if you are supporting the Hon. Mr Ngo you will vote aye.

Question agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The next question is that subparagraph (d) as proposed to be struck out by the Hon. T.T. Ngo stand as part of the motion. If you are supporting the Hon. Mr Ngo, you will vote no.

Question resolved in the negative.

The PRESIDENT: The next question is that subparagraph (g) as proposed to be struck out by the Hon. T.T. Ngo stand as part of the motion. Again, if you are voting with the Hon. Mr Ngo you will vote no.

Question resolved in the negative.

The PRESIDENT: The next question is that the word 'further' in subparagraph (h) stand as part of the motion. If you are supporting the Hon. N.J. Centofanti, you will vote aye and if you are supporting the Hon. T.T. Ngo, you will vote no.

The council divided on the question:

Ayes8
Noes.....11
Majority3

AYES

Centofanti, N.J. (teller)
Henderson, L.A.
Lensink, J.M.A.

Game, S.L.
Hood, B.R.
Pangallo, F.

Girolamo, H.M.
Lee, J.S.

NOES

Bourke, E.S.
Hanson, J.E.
Martin, R.B.
Simms, R.A. (teller)

El Dannawi, M.
Hunter, I.K.
Ngo, T.T.
Wortley, R.P.

Franks, T.A.
Maher, K.J.
Scriven, C.M.

PAIRS

Hood, D.G.E.

Bonaros, C.

Question thus resolved in the negative.

Sitting extended beyond 18:30 on motion of Hon. K.J. Maher.

The PRESIDENT: The next question I am going to put is that the amendment moved by the Hon. T.T. Ngo to subparagraph (h) be agreed to. If you are supporting the Hon. Mr Ngo, you will vote aye.

Question agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The next question is that new paragraph 1A as proposed to be inserted by the Hon. T.A. Franks be so inserted. If you are supporting the Hon. Ms Franks' amendment, you will vote aye.

Question agreed to; motion as amended carried.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (18:31): I move:

That the select committee consist of the Hon. F. Pangallo, the Hon. J.S. Lee, the Hon. B.R. Hood, the Hon. R.B. Martin, the Hon. M. El Dannawi and the mover.

Motion carried.

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

That the select committee have power to send for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to place and to report on 1 May 2024.

Motion carried.

Bills

BOTANIC GARDENS AND STATE HERBARIUM (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

ELECTORAL (CONTROL OF CORFLUTES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS PORTFOLIO) BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

At 18:35 the council adjourned until Thursday 8 February 2024 at 11:00.

*Answers to Questions***ADELAIDE CASINO**

In reply to **the Hon. F. PANGALLO** (31 October 2023).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector): The Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs has advised:

To be clear from the outset, the action currently being taken against SkyCity Adelaide Pty Ltd (SkyCity Adelaide) in the Federal Court of Australia is at the instigation of the federal anti-money laundering regulator, AUSTRAC, for alleged conduct in breach of Australian anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing laws at the Adelaide Casino, not for a breach of any state-based legislation. They are civil proceedings and will therefore not result in a guilty plea or a finding of guilt in relation to criminal charges. They may, however, result in findings or admissions in relation to conduct alleged by AUSTRAC.

Notwithstanding SkyCity Entertainment Group Ltd's recent comments about the proceedings, they are still ongoing and accordingly it would not be appropriate to pre-empt the final outcome or scale of pecuniary penalty. I can assure the honourable member that any relevant findings coming out of the AUSTRAC proceedings before the court, will inform the advice provided to the government and any subsequent action taken by the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner (commissioner).

If the commissioner finds that there is proper cause for disciplinary action against SkyCity Adelaide, existing powers afforded by the parliament under part 5 of the Gambling Administration Act 2019 allow the commissioner to—

- impose a monetary penalty not exceeding \$100,000
- issue a direction
- issue a compliance notice
- issue a default notice
- issue a reprimand, fine or give directions as to the winding up of operations
- suspend the casino licence for a specified or unlimited period
- cancel or revoke the casino licence
- if the casino licence is cancelled or revoked—disqualify a relevant person from being approved under a South Australian gambling act permanently or for a specified time.

Holding South Australia's sole casino licence is a significant responsibility and one that the government expects the operator of the Adelaide Casino to uphold respectfully and in full obedience of the legislative scheme. SkyCity has, as the honourable member is aware, been directed by the commissioner to prepare a program of work to strengthen its activities to combat money laundering and counter-terrorism funding (AML/CTF), as well as its responsibilities to protect people at risk of gambling-related harm.

This work is being monitored by Kroll Australia Pty Ltd, who is reviewing SkyCity Adelaide's AML/CTF and host responsibility enhancement programs, will monitor the implementation of those programs and is monitoring its compliance with its ongoing regulatory obligations relating to AML/CTF and gambling harm minimisation. As further details come to hand, the commissioner will be better positioned to decide about SkyCity's ongoing suitability to hold the casino licence. The number of compliance checks conducted by government inspectors in relation to the Adelaide Casino in 2021-22 and 2022-23 are as follows:

Financial Year	Number of Compliance Checks
2021-22	2 272
2022-23	2 223

In comparison to the four previous financial years, the number of compliance checks have increased.

ADELAIDE CASINO

In reply to **the Hon. F. PANGALLO** (1 November 2023).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector): The Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs has advised:

The Liquor and Gambling Commissioner has advised that since 2019, the Adelaide Casino has operated a facial recognition system which was developed by New Zealand based software developer Torutek Limited to assist with the identification of barred persons.

The system marketed by Torutek Limited as the 'Concern and Guardian' facial recognition system is one of seven systems which have been evaluated and approved by the commissioner for use in South Australia. The commissioner has confirmed that the Torutek Limited 'Concern and Guardian' facial recognition system in operation at the Adelaide Casino is also operated by SkyCity at its three New Zealand land-based casinos in Auckland, Queenstown and Hamilton.

In addition, I am advised:

- the Ministry of Health in New Zealand has entered into an exclusive agreement with Torutek for the implementation of a national problem gamblers database used by over 1,000 pubs and clubs throughout New Zealand
- TAB New Zealand has successfully implemented the Torutek problem gamblers database solution across all of its 600+ outlets
- the Torutek facial recognition system has been installed and is operational in over 150 gambling locations in New Zealand, and
- the Grand Casino in Dunedin has also adopted the Torutek 'Concern and Guardian' system.

As publicly reported, the proposed license suspension being considered by the NZ Gambling Commission does not however relate to the operation of the Torutek system, but rather pertains to an allegation that SkyCity had not complied with the requirements of its SkyCity Auckland Host Responsibility Programme when it allowed a former patron to engage in prolonged gambling sessions at SkyCity Auckland from August 2017 up until February 2021.

The commissioner has advised that at present, 256 gaming venues across South Australia including the Adelaide Casino are operating facial recognition technology. A number of these gaming venues, while not legislatively required to do so, have installed facial recognition technology to support their responsible gambling obligations.

To date, in excess of 817 million facial images have been scanned and compared against the Consumer and Business Services barring database, resulting in excess of 33,000 possible barred person alerts. It is important however to understand and appreciate that accuracy of such systems can be impacted by factors such as:

- the quality of the control images
- venue illumination levels
- pixel resolution, frame rate and angle of cameras
- the sophistication of the FRT algorithm, and
- attempts by a barred person to disguise themselves.

As such, while facial recognition systems are a first step mechanism for recognising or detecting a known person, venue intervention is required to confirm an individual and to execute appropriate actions. These systems should not therefore be considered a replacement for visual surveillance and intervention by venue staff, but rather considered as a tool to supplement responsible gambling obligations.

As part of the inspection of the Adelaide Casino and other gaming venues, Consumer and Business Services inspectors conduct regular compliance checks to ensure that camera placement is optimal and detections are occurring. Under section 19 of the Gambling Administration Act 2019, the details of information obtained in the course of carrying out these official functions is however unable to be disclosed.

POKER MACHINES

In reply to **the Hon. C. BONAROS** (1 November 2023).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector): The Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs has advised:

In addition to the use of facial recognition technology, a number of measures have been implemented to minimise the potential for gambling-related harm as a result of the introduction of current technology gaming machines, including:

- a restriction on EFTPOS cash withdrawals to \$250 per card over 24 hours
- a prohibition on the use of \$100 banknotes
- a restriction on the use of banknotes of any value at a gaming machine if there is already \$100 or more on the machine
- a requirement for gaming venues to offer the payment of winnings of \$500 or more by cheque or EFT.

The government will continue to monitor the implementation of emerging technologies in the form of cashless gaming that is occurring in other jurisdictions and to analyse the success of otherwise of those changes to inform any potential changes in South Australia.

Reforms introduced into South Australia in late 2019 have provided increased protections for South Australians affected by gambling harm, whilst also striking an important balance by ensuring a well-regulated and economically viable gambling industry.

While the decision to allow new technology to be introduced on gaming machines in South Australia received bipartisan support, significant amendments moved by the Labor Party whilst in opposition and subsequently passed by the parliament ensure that players are not allowed to insert more than \$100 into a gaming machine at a time and a prohibition on the use of \$100 banknotes.

Tasmania is currently in the process of designing, developing and implementation planning for its cashless gaming/universal pre-commitment system which is due to be implemented by December 2024.

The government, is closely monitoring the development of Tasmania's system. Any relevant findings will inform the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner's (commissioner) advice to the government about changes that could be made in South Australia.

In response to the honourable members question regarding the latest Auditor-General's Annual Report, the number of gaming machines in operation across South Australia fluctuates daily due to changes such as gaming room or venue upgrades, gaming machine licences being suspended or gaming machines undergoing maintenance and being temporarily taken out of operation while awaiting repair.

The total number of gaming machines in operation must however always be less than the total number of Gaming Machine Entitlements (GME) held by gaming operators at any point in time. The Auditor-General's report refers to 11,706 machines as being installed in the state's hotels and clubs as of 30 June 2023. In comparison, 13,657 GMEs are currently held by gaming operators.

To achieve the statutory objective of reducing the maximum permissible number of gaming machines operating statewide to 13,081 gaming machines, a further 576 entitlements remain to be cancelled through the approved trading system. The government, through the commissioner, has recently conducted targeted consultation and broader community consultation on proposals for modifying the approved trading system.

Feedback from this round of community consultation is being considered together with earlier submissions made by gaming industry stakeholders and subject to further consultation will inform the drafting of regulations, to amend the rules of the approved trading system.

ADELAIDE PARKLANDS

In reply to **the Hon. J.S. LEE (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** (14 November 2023).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector): The Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs has advised:

Following careful consideration of an application by the Adelaide City Council (ACC) to extend the Adelaide Park Lands Dry Areas 1 and 2 beyond 22 December 2023, I agreed to extend both areas until 22 June 2025.

The Liquor and Gambling Commissioner will work with the ACC, South Australia Police, SA Health, help services and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the dry areas. The ACC may engage with the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce to procure data to assist with that evaluation and any decision regarding the future of the dry areas.

GOVERNMENT APOLOGIES

In reply to **the Hon. F. PANGALLO** (30 November 2023).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector): The Minister for Child Protection has advised:□

1. Ms Corkhill has provided unstinting support to Mr Meekins over many years but in this instance, Mr Meekins contacted the Department for Child Protection himself. An executive of the department, not acting in her legal capacity, returned Mr Meekins call after he left a message requesting that his call be responded to directly. That executive then immediately called Ms Corkhill to fully relate to her the matters discussed with Mr Meekins. Ms Corkhill was aware that Mr Meekins had personally called the department.

2. Mr Meekins' letter of apology is the last element of his direct personal response process. An executive of the department has signed the letter. Ms Corkhill was advised of this in September 2023 and that letter is available to Mr Meekins upon request.