

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 19 March 2025

The PRESIDENT (Hon. T.J. Stephens) took the chair at 14:15 and read prayers.

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

Parliamentary Committees

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The PRESIDENT (14:16): I bring up the 58th report of the committee.

Report received.

The PRESIDENT: I bring up the 59th report of the committee.

Report received and read.

Question Time

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:19): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Primary Industries questions on the topic of drought.

Leave granted.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO: During a press conference on Monday when asked about whether the government is willing to spend more money to support our South Australian farmers the Premier of this state replied:

Look, we, we...Um, it's an important question. So obviously we have an \$18 million drought assistance package that we announced at the end of last year. We acknowledge there is a real need in the community, and the drought is significant.

Ah, of course, the thing we want more than anything is for the whole state to have a really big drink but we can't...depend on that and I think the government does have to turn its mind to what other [supports can be provided] and I have made clear that we will be turning our mind to that in the context of this year's budget.

My questions to the minister are:

1. Are the Premier's comments an admission that the state Labor government is dragging its heels and have no intention of helping South Australian farmers until it's too late?
2. Can the minister explain to farmers why waiting until the budget process to provide our farmers with further drought funding measures is a good idea?
3. Can the minister confirm that she has spoken to the farming community and that they support the Labor government's decision to sit on its hands and wait a further three months for relief?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:20): I thank the honourable member for her question, even though it contains a number of mischaracterisations. An \$18 million package was announced in November last year that included a number of different streams. That funding has not yet been exhausted. To my knowledge, none of the streams of funding assistance have closed. So those farmers who are going through incredibly difficult times at the moment are still able to apply for the various funding streams.

They include a \$5 million fund for on-farm water infrastructure. They include support for transport subsidies, for donated fodder. It includes additional assistance to bodies such as Rural

Business Support and also for Family and Business Mentors. Agriculture is worth \$18½ billion dollars to our state every year. The importance of the farming community—the individual farmers and families and communities around them—as well as the economic impact is absolutely significant to South Australia. It's absolutely key and important in terms of our state's future direction. We value our farmers.

I speak regularly to all of our farming peak bodies. I have spoken just in the last week, of course, with Livestock SA, with Grain Producers SA, and with Primary Producers SA. I meet and speak regularly with various councils and with individual farmers. I think it is absolutely key and clear that this government is supporting our farming community. We will continue to give further consideration to what else is required and, as the Premier said, it is something that we continue to look at and assess.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:22): Supplementary: what portion of the \$18 million that has been committed is new money versus existing funds?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:22): That would be the amounts that were in the media release back in November, if the opposition would care to bother to read them.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Okay. The honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition, your second question.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:23): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries on the topic of drought.

Leave granted.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO: The minister, in response to a recent media inquiry on the drought, in fact as recent as this weekend has said:

The State Government continues to monitor the situation and will determine further drought support where appropriate.

My questions to the minister are:

1. What data is the minister collecting and tracking to monitor the situation?
2. How is she evaluating the dire drought situation across all regional areas?
3. What are the factors that will determine whether further drought support is needed?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:24): I thank the honourable member for her question. The monitoring involves a number of different aspects: the first is the uptake of the assistance that is available. I might point out that there has been a huge response to the opportunity to apply for the on-farm water infrastructure grants. We have had a very strong level of interest, and the team within PIRSA that has been assessing those grant applications and drought assistance has doubled because of the strong interest. That clearly indicates that it is the type of assistance that will be useful for our farming communities.

In addition to the various drought round tables there is an ongoing drought advisory group, which includes peak bodies as well as departmental personnel, and they are providing frequent and consistent input into what things are like out on the ground and what additional assistance might be appropriate. In addition to that, I meet, as I said in the answer to the previous question, with farmers directly, as well as with various organisations, with regional councils, and so on. All of that information, as well as that which is gathered directly via PIRSA (for example, from their regional coordinators or regional managers) and all of the intel that is gathered on ground, feeds into these deliberations.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:25): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Primary Industries a question on the topic of drought.

Leave granted.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO: The opposition has been contacted by hundreds of farmers right across the state who are desperate to get food and water to their livestock, which are hungry and thirsty. Many farmers destocked months ago in preparation for the dry conditions and are now down to their breeding stock. One farmer, Jenny from Booleroo, said:

I was 10 weeks pregnant when we did an article with *The Advertiser* on drought, I'm now almost full term. That's how long the Labor Party has been silent on this drought if not longer. In the meantime they have secured tourism events, poured money into football ovals and travelled to Whyalla.

Another farmer, Carly from Melrose, wrote:

We have been disappointed with the lack of engagement from all levels of state government on the drought, in fact, I can't recall hearing the Premier utter the words. The drought is a significant issue impacting all farmers and farming communities in SA...I urge you to please get out to our communities, speak to the farmers and please step in and provide meaningful support to drought-affected farmers.

Another pleaded:

As a farmer we simply need acknowledgement at the highest level that this year is a drought with most places experiencing the driest 12 months on record. Financial support for charity organisations is the first step and must be guaranteed. But there are so many other things that should be done.

My questions to the minister are:

1. Will the minister commit to expanding the freight subsidy for the charity hay runs?
2. Does she concede that farmers are fast running out of time to get food and water to their breeding stock?
3. What is the government doing to ensure basic animal welfare standards are being met?
4. Does the minister concede that the time for monitoring the situation has passed and that the time for action was yesterday?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:27): I thank the honourable member for her question. Certainly, I think we can all empathise with people such as Jenny, who are going through the very difficult circumstances that we are faced with when we have drought in our state. Unlike many previous droughts, this is mainly confined to SA and to parts of western Victoria. I am very pleased for the rest of the country that they are not going through this because it is so very difficult.

I think it would be clear that the government has acknowledged drought, given that we announced in November a drought support package. The Premier has mentioned drought frequently, particularly in regard to the drought support package but also more broadly. I would encourage those opposite to point people towards the assistance that is available, both from the state government and from the federal government.

Things such as the charity hay runs are continuing. Currently, runs are happening, and the various inputs that we have had in terms of the feedback, both about the existing package that was offered but also, prior to that, how the development of that package was arrived at, were because of the drought round tables that we had across the state. It was because of the input from bodies into the Drought Advisory Group. We continue to talk regularly about drought, to talk directly to those who are impacted as well as to their peak bodies, and we continue to look at further appropriate assistance.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:29): Supplementary: what is the minister doing to advocate to her federal colleagues about the severity of the drought and the call for further assistance?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:29): That kind of interaction happens at all sorts of levels, and I think it's fair to say that we have made our views very clear.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:29): Supplementary: if the farmers are so crucial, why won't the minister announce expanding funding for charity hay runs?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:30): The funding for charity hay runs is not yet fully expended, and hay runs are continuing.

THRIVING REGIONS FUND

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (14:30): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister please update the chamber about the major projects the Thriving Regions Fund has enabled to come to light since the Malinauskas—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Have you finished your question?

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: No, I haven't. I have just been rudely interrupted.

The PRESIDENT: I will try to give you every bit of protection. The Hon. Mr Wortley deserves my protection.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: Will the minister please update the chamber about the major projects the Thriving Regions Fund has enabled to come to light since the Malinauskas Labor government was elected three years ago?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:30): I thank the honourable member for his question. As people know, primary industries and regions are significant contributors to our state's ongoing prosperity. In the 2022-23 state budget, the government of South Australia committed \$1.49 billion for our regions to deliver on our election commitments that support primary industries and regional communities.

As Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development and being from a regional area myself, I am extremely proud of the Thriving Regions Fund, a \$15 million annual funding commitment which supports South Australia to achieve thriving, resilient regional communities through improving quality of life, delivering diverse leadership, implementing place-based programs, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce and capitalising on growth potential. Enhancing and supporting our resilient regional communities is vital. That's why this program has had such strong support from the Malinauskas Labor government.

There are three programs that fall within the Thriving Regions Fund. The Thriving Communities Program aims to build social capital through facilitating community group participation, a sense of belonging and equity of access. This is achieved through supporting minor infrastructure, services and wellbeing outcomes.

The Enabling Infrastructure Program supports projects that strengthen and build strong regional communities through:

- value-added investment in priority community infrastructure that improves quality of life or attracts and, importantly, retains people in our regions;
- enabling infrastructure to attract and retain business (goods and services) in regions and support a strong regional economy;

- collaboration with other projects, programs or initiatives;
- having broad regional community benefit; and
- having considered latent and also future demand.

Finally, the Strengthening Industries Program: through this program the government recognises the importance of industries that support our regions to thrive. The program helps primary or regional industries impacted by significant supply chain disruptions, market access constraints and changes to the operating environment.

The Thriving Regions Fund is continuing to demonstrate its success with each round of funding that is provided. In 2023-24 alone, the Enabling Infrastructure Program funded eight key regional projects with a commitment of over \$5 million. The Thriving Communities Fund funded projects with a commitment of \$1.4 million. The Strengthening Industries Program funded nine key projects, committing \$21 million towards the regions.

A project that deserves special mention is the Royal Flying Doctor Service, which, through the Enabling Infrastructure Program, received funding of \$1 million to construct a state-of-the-art health, research and education centre for the state's Far North. The centre will help attract, train and retain a future health workforce for the Far North, including rural generalists—doctors specialising in healthcare delivery in the bush. The equivalent of 222 full-time equivalent jobs were being created during the construction phase of this project, according to my advice, with the RFDS employing 17 new ongoing FTEs as a result.

Through the Thriving Communities Program, one example is the Port Broughton Bowling Club, which received \$50,000 to construct a disabled access ramp and install an automatic door. The upgrades will make the facility more accessible, allowing elderly individuals and people with disability to participate in group activities. I am advised that the clubroom serves as a vital hub for the Port Broughton community as well as the surrounding region.

The impact of these accessibility upgrades on the community will be far reaching, enabling more community members to engage in community events. The Strengthening Industries Program has also enabled vital reforms in the region by providing funding for programs, such as fee relief for the marine scalefish fishery, large-scale biosecurity reforms, snapper fishery management and, amongst many others, the Riverland grape and wine blueprint.

I recently announced that the state government has also allocated an additional \$1.2 million to the Thriving Communities Program to help community groups in regional South Australia to bring their projects to life. The Thriving Regions Fund is a fantastic initiative that this government is very proud to support, and I look forward to seeing all the most recently funded projects coming to life to assist regional communities to thrive.

TOXIC DUST

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (14:35): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General, in his capacity representing the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Health in another place; and the Minister for Primary Industries, who is representing the Minister for Housing Infrastructure and the Minister for Planning in another place, a question about toxic dust.

The Hon. K.J. Maher: What's that, sorry?

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Toxic dust.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: The Nine Network's national *A Current Affair* program last night broadcast an excellent, yet disturbing, story on the plight of angry residents at Sellicks Beach, one of our premier beach suburbs, who are living in a constant storm of dangerous dust spewing from the nearby giant local quarry owned and operated by Adbri, or Adelaide Brighton Cement.

The residents commissioned their own testing of fugitive dust samples, revealing high levels of dangerous silica, the sort of stuff the Attorney-General yesterday was backslapping his government for banning in stone cutting, which created the same hazard these people are now

exposed to. This toxic dust is falling on their properties and getting inside their homes 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as they explained to me at a packed forum I attended at Sellicks Beach. They are living a nightmare, concerned about their health and that of their families, the environment and the potential financial loss of value to their homes.

There is clear evidence that Adbri is not complying with their operating licence, nor its dust mitigation practices. Of more concern, the EPA, the Department for Energy and Mining, and SA Health have continually ignored the complaints of residents and their calls for help. Lung Foundation Australia chief executive, Mark Brooke, has warned the state government's proposed 1,700 new home development earmarked for the area should not go ahead until there is more thorough testing and controls on the dust fallout. My questions to the ministers are:

1. Will the government support the call to put the proposed new housing development on hold while a thorough independent review of the quarry operations is conducted, rather than rely on the assurances of the operators?
2. Is the government concerned that unless this longstanding health problem is rectified potential buyers will be turned off from buying and building in the new subdivision?
3. Why isn't the government acknowledging and acting on the many complaints?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:38): I thank the honourable member for his question. As he stated, there are elements of this that I suspect touch on a number of different portfolio areas. I suspect the most relevant one for the honourable member's questions is through the Deputy Premier and the Environment Protection Authority, the authority that regulates these sorts of matters. I will certainly pass the question on and bring back a reply for the honourable member.

FOOD PRODUCTION AREAS

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:38): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question without notice to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development on the topic of the removal of food production areas.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: The Malinauskas government has announced their plan to allow agricultural land to be developed by amending the environment and food production area. Several primary production advocates have publicly raised concerns about this proposal, including Grain Producers SA, Livestock SA and Primary Producers SA.

Grain Producers SA chief executive, Brad Perry, has said that the changes would take some of the best farmland in the state out of production. He told the ABC that, and I quote:

We can't be sacrificing prime cropping land with good rainfall and turning that into housing—that's land that will never go back into production after that.

The minister has previously told this place that she has a respectful relationship with primary production organisations such as Grain Producers SA, and that they meet regularly. My question, therefore, to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development is: did the minister consult with local food producers on the removal of cropping land before the plan was announced, and is the minister concerned that South Australia will be losing prime agricultural land?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:40): I thank the honourable member for his question. I think the important point to note here is that we need to have both prime agricultural land and food security, and that of course requires a strong agricultural sector. We also need to have housing for the population of Adelaide, which is growing. The Greater Adelaide Regional Plan attempts to meet all of the necessary requirements, both for now but, more importantly, for the future, for the next 30 years. It sets out the expected land supply for the next 30 years.

The impacts on the food production areas are less than 1 per cent of the agricultural land within the Greater Adelaide region. It also looks at land that is, according to my advice, adjacent to

existing developments. I have had conversations with Primary Producers SA, with Grain Producers SA, and with Livestock SA, among others, about this matter as well as other matters to do with the importance of agriculture going forward.

I think it is also important to note that the opportunity to be able to thoughtfully design future development and provide certainty for the next 30 years is important to all sectors, including agriculture. So whilst I acknowledge the concerns that have been raised, I certainly reiterate that the amount of land that is affected is less than 1 per cent of the agricultural land within the Greater Adelaide area.

FOOD PRODUCTION AREAS

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:42): Supplementary: did the minister have these discussions with stakeholders before the government made the announcement or did stakeholders simply read the news in the paper on Monday?

The PRESIDENT: Minister, you talked about your engagement with stakeholders.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:42): I have spoken with stakeholders very recently. The development of the Greater Adelaide Regional Plan has been part of a very long process. There has been a lot of consultation and that, of course, is under the auspices of my colleague the Minister for Planning in the other place.

FOOD PRODUCTION AREAS

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:42): Supplementary: as part of the discussions that the minister referenced in her original answer, did she flag that an announcement would be made on Monday, or did these stakeholders simply read of the news in the paper? Did they get any advanced warning of what was coming down the line?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:43): I am not in the habit of saying exactly when I meet with stakeholders and exactly the nature of the discussions, but I think what I can say is that I provided as much information as early as possible.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (14:43): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries about drought.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: The hay runs that took place around Australia Day this year have provided welcome relief to farmers, keeping their remaining stock alive. These charities organise and raise funds to buy fodder. The service clubs and truck drivers generously donate their time. The program is reliant on the fuel rebate supplied by the government. There have been many calls from across the farming sector and also from the opposition to expand the freight subsidy for charity hay runs as the need for fodder remains to enable farmers to keep their remaining few stock alive.

Most livestock producers have largely destocked in response to the drought, but they are trying to retain their bloodstock, which represents the work of generational breeding in search of continuous improvement. Their bloodstock represents a living asset, and once sold may never be fully recovered. In an interview on the ABC North and West SA of 6 March this year the minister made a comment in relation to the provision of fodder that:

Some are saying look we really, really appreciate this and it's important to have for short-term support but we don't want something that's going to encourage farmers to maintain stock levels which are not actually sustainable.

My questions to the minister are:

1. Where did she receive this advice from?
2. Who decides what level of stock is not sustainable?

3. Does she concede that nobody knows better than farmers themselves who operate a particular property what level of stocking is sustainable?

4. What evidence does the minister have that some farmers may be stocking at levels that are not sustainable?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:45): First and foremost, the letter to a certain federal member that prompted this media attention clearly stated that industry feedback was saying there is a need to ensure that there is not a disincentive to maintain stocking levels at the appropriate amounts, that they need to be sustainable. So the answer is that that feedback was from industry.

It is really important to note that it is clear and obvious that breeding stock will be retained wherever that is possible. No-one I have heard of has been suggesting that breeding stock should be part of destocking unless there is no other alternative. Obviously, farm businesses are making decisions about their stocking levels, as they are making decisions about everything to do with other aspects of the farms as they face what are very, very challenging conditions.

AUTISM

The Hon. M. EL DANNAWI (14:46): My question is to the Minister for Autism. Will the minister inform the council about initiatives implemented since the Malinauskas Labor government was elected in 2022 that are making South Australia the autism inclusive state?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:46): I thank the honourable member for her question and interest in this important topic just ahead of World Autism Day on 2 April.

Since becoming elected in 2022, and after years and years and years of advocacy by the autistic and autism communities, the Malinauskas Labor government has made significant nation-leading investments in autism inclusion in our state. Beyond creating roles with a particular focus on autism in government, which we understand is a world first, the Malinauskas government has achieved many other achievements. We have:

- invested \$28.8 million to fund access to an autism inclusion teacher in our primary schools, the largest network of autism inclusion teachers in the nation;
- worked with all South Australian universities that offer a teaching degree to update their courses to include more disability and inclusive studies to better prepare our teachers before they even enter the classroom;
- consulted on and delivered the state's first Autism Strategy and Autism Inclusion Charter, which was codesigned by the autistic and autism communities;
- created and invested over \$4 million in the nation's first Office for Autism, which is based in the highest level of government, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet;
- created and released the 'Autism Works' campaign shining a light on autistic employment opportunities;
- created the Autism Works in the Community grants program to increase knowledge, understanding and belonging for autistic people and autism communities in South Australia, with the second round just recently opening;
- invested over \$14 million in early supports for families through the nation-leading Inklings pilot program; and
- created an autism assessment and diagnosis advisory round table to help address the barriers to an autism assessment.

Importantly, our government recognises that none of these achievements could have been made without the autistic and autism communities, working alongside the Malinauskas Labor government.

Time and time again I keep hearing from members of the autistic and autism communities how luck has been the enabler of their success: 'I was lucky I had a teacher who knew about autism,' 'I was lucky the nurse I went to had lived experience of autism.' There were just too many of these examples of using luck as a reason for their success. Through these initiatives our government is working to build knowledge of autism in our schools, in our workplaces, and in our general community, working towards changing the enabler of success from luck to knowledge.

I look forward to the government hosting the state's first Autism Works Employment Summit on 30 April, bringing together stakeholder industries, including defence, property, mining and energy, construction, tourism, advanced manufacturing and IT, and to undertake training from the Office for Autism and work together to explore strategies for enhancing autism inclusion in our workforce across the state.

Again, I thank the autistic and autism communities in South Australia and look forward to what we can achieve over the next 12 months and beyond.

BULK-BILLING

The Hon. J.S. LEE (14:50): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Health, about GP bulk-billing.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: The Arkaba Medical Centre announced recently that it would no longer be offering bulk-billed GP appointments for children under 16. Dr Chris Moy explained to ABC Radio Adelaide on 13 February that the increasing overheads and cost pressures facing the clinic have made bulk-billed appointments unviable. While the federal Labor government increased the bulk-billing incentive for children, pensioners and concession cardholders last year in November 2024, the Arkaba Medical Centre's announcement in February shows clearly that the cost pressures are still sky-high for GPs.

While the state government has claimed that payroll tax exemptions for wages related to bulk-billed appointments will encourage an increase in bulk-billing rates across the state, this is clearly not the case for the Arkaba Medical Centre. My questions to the Attorney-General are:

1. Can the Attorney-General explain whether the government will address the issue of GP payroll tax and the concerns that adding an additional cost burden on GP clinics that are already running on razor-thin margins will have a devastating impact on our community?
2. Is the government concerned that more GP clinics may follow suit and stop bulk-billing children under 16, leading to worse health outcomes for young South Australians?
3. What measures will the government introduce to address the problem?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:51): I thank the honourable member for her question. I might refer it to the Treasurer in relation to the payroll tax issue. I know the Treasurer has made some announcements about what the government is doing in relation to GP clinics that do bulk-bill—and payroll tax—and I will happily bring back the details exactly. I just note that there is a grave risk to bulk-billing in this country and with a federal election coming up we know very well what the federal Leader of the Opposition's views are about bulk-billing and what is likely to happen should there be a Liberal federal government.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (14:52): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries on the topic of drought.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: A recent email sent out by the minister's department said:

The Drought Support Package has a high level of interest. Please note that the current processing time for On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Rebate Scheme is an estimate of 10 weeks.

Many farmers who have been waiting to hear back from the department since putting in their application mid-December 2024 have now received an email suggesting that the process is going to take another 10 weeks. My questions to the minister are:

1. Given the minister advised the chamber today that she has doubled the amount of staff, what was the FTE in the grants process team in PIRSA as of December 2024 to process applications?
2. How many FTEs do you currently have in your grants processing team?
3. How many applications did the department receive for the On-Farm Drought Infrastructure Rebate Scheme?
4. How many grants have been approved?
5. How many have been notified that they are not successful?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:53): I thank the honourable member for his question. First of all, my advice is that there are no outstanding applications from December 2024, as the honourable member has claimed, except for those applications that have not provided the additional information that is required, so in effect the application has not been fully complete. My advice is that the staff who have been dealing with the grant applications has doubled from nine to 18.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (14:54): Supplementary: how many applications are currently incomplete?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:54): My advice is that from December there were five applications that were incomplete. I don't have figures for more recent months.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Hon. T.T. NGO (14:54): My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector. Can the minister tell the council about the government's achievements in the industrial relations portfolio since the 2022 state election?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:55): I thank the honourable member for his very perceptive and insightful question. I would be most pleased to provide an answer in relation to what this government has done in the industrial relations portfolio in the three years since it was elected, and I note the honourable member's very strong interest in making sure workers are protected in South Australia.

In the three years—I think it is three years to the day today—since the election of the current Labor government, we have delivered significant reforms in the industrial relations area to improve the lives of South Australian workers and to ensure the safety of workers to try to make sure, as best we can, that workers who go to work every day come home in the same state in which they left. The first issue that the government had to address was something that was left completely unaddressed by the former Liberal government, and that is the issue of the Summerfield case that the former industrial relations minister, the Hon. Rob Lucas, had decided to kick down the road and decided not to do anything about whatsoever.

It left a \$1 billion unfunded liability—that was the advice we got as soon as we got into government—that, unaddressed, would create an impost on businesses and SA collectively of something like \$250 million every year. This was what the Liberal government had left. This was clearly their policy: a \$1 billion unfunded liability for the WorkCover scheme and up to \$250 million a year in extra fees for South Australian businesses. We will be making sure we remind South Australians of what the Liberal government's view was in terms of cost to businesses in the lead-up to the next election.

What we did was address that. We spent a lot of time negotiating with industry, with businesses, with industry groups and also with unions to come up to a compromise that now has the Return to Work scheme almost at a 100 per cent funding rate and that has not seen that quarter of a billion dollars a year impost on businesses, as was the Liberal policy that they obviously committed to at the last election by doing nothing about it whatsoever.

We have introduced legislation to permanently restore workers' representation on the board of ReturnToWorkSA to ensure voices of workers and employees are heard when important decisions are being made. We have amended legislation to repeal the flawed second edition of the Impairment Assessment Guidelines and ensure that the future guidelines are subject to disallowance by parliament.

Just this week, we tabled that new set of the Impairment Assessment Guidelines that had so infuriated many in the industry in the last term of government. We have undertaken one of the most significant public consultation processes in relation to this workers compensation scheme to develop that third edition of the Impairment Assessment Guidelines, focused not on ideology but on the needs of the medical practitioners and the workers in the scheme.

We have introduced significant reforms to strengthen employers' obligations to help injured workers get back to work following an injury, including by extending that obligation to host employers who have injured labour hire workers. We have made changes to make our compensation scheme fairer for victims of dust disease and terminal illnesses, removing barriers to them maintaining some compensation, which I talked about earlier this week in relation to suggestions that had been put forward by our colleague the Hon. Connie Bonaros.

We have undertaken the most significant reform to shop trading hours in a very long time. Sadly, over four years of paralysis under the former Liberal government, we got nowhere. We remember very well, in the last term of the Liberal government, suggestions being made that the whole of this chamber, except for the Hon. Rob Lucas's Liberal team, voted against. Everyone was in furious opposition to what the Liberal government put forward. It took a Labor government to make these changes. We have made changes to the shop trading hours system in South Australia, bringing us in line with every other state by making Easter Sunday and the Christmas holiday, whenever it falls, public holidays. We remember well the former Liberal government not wanting Christmas Day to be a public holiday.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Absolute shame. The former Liberal government, the Hon. Rob Lucas' Liberal government—with sidekick the former member for Dunstan, former Premier Steven Marshall—had an ideological obsession with, and objection to, workers receiving what they should.

We have introduced higher aggravated penalties for people who assault frontline retail workers. We have supported a select committee of this council to look at the Return to Work system and the gig economy. We have conducted a review into the practices and processes of the South Australian Employment Tribunal and passed legislation to improve the operation of the tribunal and the quality of processes for litigants. We have amended the Fair Work Act to make gender equality an object. We have legislated 15 days of paid family and domestic violence leave for every public sector and local government worker in this state.

We have expanded the portable long service leave scheme to workers in our community services sector, delivering equality with the construction workers who have had this benefit for almost half a century. We have introduced regulations to ban uncontrolled dry cutting of engineered stone and supported a national agreement to ban the use and now the importation of stone. We have made new regulations on the management of psychosocial health and safety risks. We have fixed secrecy rules which kept injured workers and their families in the dark about investigations being undertaken by SafeWork SA. We have recognised the essential role of industry groups, trade unions and victims' advocates in supporting work health and safety by establishing the SafeWork SA Advisory Committee.

We have given the South Australian Employment Tribunal stronger powers to step in earlier and help resolve disputes about work health and safety problems before serious injuries or even

workplace deaths occur. After seven attempts over nearly two decades—and I acknowledge our colleague the Hon. Tammy Franks' valiant attempts here in years gone by—we have passed legislation to make industrial manslaughter a standalone crime in this state and delivered justice for the victims of workplace deaths.

This is just a small sample of the work this government has undertaken in the industrial relations portfolio since coming to government three years ago today. It stands in very stark contrast to the four years that preceded it.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (15:01): Supplementary: why didn't the minister reference the fact that the gender pay gap has worsened significantly since Labor came to office in South Australia?

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Ms Lensink, I never heard anything about gender pay gap and pay rates.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

IMMIGRATION POLICY

The Hon. S.L. GAME (15:02): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing a question to the Attorney-General, representing the workforce and population strategy minister, Susan Close, regarding the state government's sponsored visa programs which aim to attract skilled migrants to fill workforce shortages.

The PRESIDENT: Leave is granted, but remember that it's the Hon. Susan Close, when you are referring to another member.

The Hon. S.L. GAME: Thank you, Mr President. Modelling shows a current South Australian workforce shortage of nearly 23,000 across various sectors, while research—including by the South Australian Business Chamber in 2024—shows labour shortages are a significant issue for local businesses. These labour shortages are expected to become more acute in the coming years due to our ageing population, workforce demographics and net interstate migration loss from South Australia. My questions to the Attorney-General, representing the workforce and population strategy minister, are:

1. What tracking or data does the government have that shows the outcome and benefits of this state-sponsored migration program?
2. In addition to failing to train South Australians, why isn't the government keeping track of the people South Australian taxpayers are sponsoring and making sure they are actually doing the jobs they are trained for?
3. How can the government be sure that we have the right people being accepted into South Australia to meet the state's unique workforce needs, or is it just guesswork?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:03): I will be happy to pass those questions on to the Deputy Premier in the other place and bring back a reply for the honourable member.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

The Hon. L.A. HENDERSON (15:04): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries about eggs.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L.A. HENDERSON: Already coping with a cost-of-living-crisis, the people of South Australia are now facing egg shortages and steep prices as a result of avian influenza impacting supply, especially for cage eggs. While not yet in South Australia, it is essential that avian influenza is kept out. My questions to the minister are:

1. What scenario exercises have been done to date in preparation for outbreak response?
2. What support systems are in place in preparation for a response, such as movement tracking and restriction on birds and eggs, should an outbreak occur?
3. What knowledge and resources are in place?
4. Is there a ready mechanism for rapid communication with South Australian egg producers?
5. How many dedicated staff are ready and available for a response?
6. What dedicated resources are available?
7. Is the minister going to close the last cage egg facilities?

The Hon. C.M. Scriven: What was the last one?

The Hon. L.A. HENDERSON: Is the minister going to close the cage egg facilities?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:05): I thank the honourable member for her question. Avian influenza is, of course, a significant risk to Australia and to South Australia. We are fortunate that the strain that has been causing such significant issues around the world, including impacting on human health, has not made it here to Australia.

In February, on the 8th, Agriculture Victoria confirmed the H7 strain—H7 bird flu—in poultry at an egg farm in northern Victoria, which is near the town of Euroa, and since then another three poultry egg properties have been confirmed with the same virus. But they have all been within the same five-kilometre radius, indicating that they are all linked and connected. All properties were quarantined and a declared area was put in place to prevent movements that could spread the virus.

This is a new outbreak and different from the strains that were experienced in 2024 in Victoria and NSW and the ACT. Those outbreaks affected 16 properties from May to July last year, and they were eradicated. I would just emphasise again that there have been no bird flu detections in South Australia.

There is a nationally agreed response plan to control and eradicate HPAI, and that has been implemented, including movement restrictions for poultry, poultry products and equipment within the affected area. Exemptions are in place that allow vehicles transporting livestock and other agricultural products to travel through the declared areas.

It's certainly the case that the national layer hen flock has been significantly impacted by the 2024 outbreaks, and obviously the most recent outbreaks will also pose a level of disruption to supply. The egg industry reports that while there had been a significant recovery from the 2024 outbreak, obviously this new outbreak will have some impact.

Avian influenza is a highly infectious disease caused by influenza A viruses. They are capable of infecting birds and mammals, including humans, and strains are described as either low pathogenicity or high pathogenicity. In terms of surveillance and preparedness activities, they are a high priority for PIRSA. There are already activities underway to help protect the South Australian poultry industry, including:

- ongoing surveillance to support early detection of HPAI;
- significant focused operational preparedness and planning for any detection of HPAI in South Australia;
- purchase of supplies and equipment to support an immediate response—that includes things like PPE, decontamination chemicals and equipment and disposal monitoring equipment;
- the procurement of a mass depopulation unit, mobile laboratory and decontamination units to be deployed as required;

- ensuring that processes for engaging with other relevant agencies are well defined to support a response; and
- planning for staffing and resourcing requirements to effectively and safely support a significant response should we have an outbreak here.

PIRSA staff were deployed in the 2024 outbreak to go to Victoria. That was partly, of course, to support our interstate colleagues but also, very importantly, to bring back valuable experience and learnings from the Victorian response. There's also a national agreement for HPAI H5 in wildlife.

I guess the thing to really remember is that these sorts of risks are ever increasing. The virus is spread through wild birds, and obviously we cannot have control over that. What we can do is continue to be as prepared as possible to implement the sorts of things that I have just referred to and to maintain a strong surveillance program within our state.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

The Hon. L.A. HENDERSON (15:09): Supplementary question: what scenario exercises have been done to date in preparation for an outbreak response?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:09): In terms of the specifics of that, I am happy to take that on notice and bring back a response.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

The Hon. L.A. HENDERSON (15:09): Supplementary question arising from the original answer: how many dedicated staff are ready and available for a response?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:10): We have a response team that can deal with various exotic animal diseases and of course plant diseases. Fortunately, the various investments that we have made, including by this government into emergency animal diseases, mean that there is the opportunity for those personnel and those experts to respond to various types, whether it be bird flu, whether it be foot-and-mouth disease if that were to come to Australia, or whether it be other exotic diseases. Investment in that sort of expertise is incredibly important. We have made sure that there is more capacity in our regional areas as well as in specialised areas.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

The Hon. L.A. HENDERSON (15:10): Supplementary question: is the minister going to close cage egg facilities in South Australia?

The PRESIDENT: I never heard the minister mention cage egg facilities at all.

The Hon. L.A. Henderson interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

RECREATIONAL FISHING

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (15:11): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister inform the chamber about the government's commitment to a strong recreational fishing sector in our state?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:11): I thank the honourable member for his question. Around 360,000 South Australians take part in recreational fishing each year. That has an estimated economic impact of almost \$1 billion per year, and that includes spend on things such as travel, boats, fuel, fishing equipment, food, accommodation, and so much more, with much of that spent in regional coastal areas that are synonymous with incredible fishing and, of course, hospitality once back on land.

Since the Malinauskas government was elected, we have been working our way through a number of commitments we made to strengthen recreational fishing in South Australia, and the vast majority of those have now been delivered. Firstly, the state government reinstated RecFish SA as

the peak body and independent voice for our state's recreational fishing community, after the former Liberal government cut the funding and installed an internal body to advise it on recreational fishing.

The government further committed to recognising recreational fishing as an activity in the sport and recreation sector, which enabled fishing clubs and groups to apply for grant funding through local, state and federal governments, with grants able to flow to fishing clubs and groups through various programs, including the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing initiatives like the Active Club Program. The government also committed to and delivered investment in fishing infrastructure, with a \$1 million upgrade of O'Sullivan's Beach boat ramp, and implementing a recreational fishing tourism strategy, which the South Australian Tourism Commission has now delivered alongside RecFish SA.

One of the most important commitments we made was to provide support to recreational fishing programs for women, children and diverse multicultural communities, and I am incredibly pleased with the work that has happened in this space. With funding from the state government, RecFish SA has delivered what I am advised is the largest women's and children's fishing program in Australia. Over 100 Reel Women and Reeling in Junior clinics have been run so far in 2024-25, with more to come.

RecFish SA has travelled right across the state delivering the clinics, with 24 clinics just this month across the Eyre Peninsula and West Coast, which were enthusiastically embraced by the schools, businesses and community groups that were involved. I am told that the largest clinic had around 100 attendees, which is I think very worthy. The recent RecFish SA Facebook posts, with many happy school kids, really reinforces what the program is all about.

I am advised that 30 metropolitan and regional schools have engaged with RecFish SA to deliver fishing programs free of charge. It is great to see that kind of engagement. There is something special that draws our kids' interests to marine life and fishing, with school aquaculture programs being incredibly popular amongst students at the schools I have had the pleasure of visiting. The Malinauskas government continues to work closely with the recreational fishing community to identify needs and priorities as we continue to see strong growth in one of our state's favourite pastimes, which for many is, after all, a way of life.

Through the advocacy of RecFish SA, we have seen progress made in a range of areas, such as increased Goolwa pipi bag limits, changes to protect kingfish allocations and important input into the snapper science and communication strategies. I would also acknowledge the recreational sector, led by RecFish SA, for their commitment to sustainable fisheries and their work across a range of bodies and committees across PIRSA that contributed towards that. I look forward to working alongside RecFish SA and the rec fishing community to deliver more outcomes for South Australia's 360,000 anglers.

FRUIT FLY OUTBREAK

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:14): I have a question for the Minister for Primary Industries about fruit fly. Can the primary industries minister please provide an update on the fruit fly outbreak in the north-eastern suburbs and whether the 15-kilometre zone restricting the movement and sale of fruit from commercial primary producers is likely to be extended beyond April, or will it be withdrawn on the scheduled time?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:15): I thank the honourable member for his question. As members would be aware, there has been a fruit fly outbreak at Glynde, which was declared on 22 January, which affects Glynde but also the surrounding suburbs. Members might be aware that there is a national protocol in place that determines our actions to a large degree when there is a fruit fly outbreak, particularly of Queensland fruit fly. These protocols enable the rest of our producers to continue to claim pest-free status for our state, and it is important in protecting our very valuable industry in terms of fruit and vegetables.

The PIRSA response plan is in place, and a response team has been doing eradication procedures. That includes things like a baiting program for a period of 12 weeks, as per the national protocol, applying baits to trees within the red centre (which is 200 metres from the initial outbreak

point) twice per week, and once per week within a 1.5-kilometre red outbreak zone. It also includes implementing hygiene practices across the red outbreak zone, such as collecting fallen fruit and stripping and treating fruit trees with maggot-infested fruit or vegetables. It also includes undertaking technical checks, including inspecting fruit and vegetables across the red outbreak zone.

Staff from PIRSA offer support to affected growers, including in ways that they can continue to access markets. There are a number of established ways of transporting fruit that might be within a fruit fly suspension zone and ensuring that they can continue to trade under those protocols.

It is important to note that the 15 kilometres is, as I think I have said in this place before, a requirement under the national protocols. PIRSA believes they have evidence to suggest that a more appropriate area would be 7½ kilometres, and both PIRSA and myself as minister have advocated for that position. However, unless there is agreement from all the jurisdictions, including the commonwealth, changes to those protocols cannot occur. We will continue to advocate for that change.

In terms of the end date of the outbreak, 20 May, as I recall, was the expected end date. Where there is an additional detection, that can change that. I believe growers were advised yesterday that there has been an additional detection. I am happy to bring back further advice to this place.

FRUIT FLY OUTBREAK

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:18): Supplementary: does that mean that the restriction is likely to be extended beyond the end of May and through to winter?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:18): As I said, I am happy to bring back additional advice. However, given that the detection has occurred within the past week, as I understand it, there will be an extension, and I am happy to bring that date back to the chamber.

FRUIT FLY OUTBREAK

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:18): Supplementary: what mechanism has been used to alert those surrounding and those within this specific area that this outbreak has occurred? How have they been communicated with?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:19): I am not quite clear whether the honourable member is referring to the most recent detection or the outbreak from January.

The Hon. D.G.E. Hood: The most recent.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I understand that the peak body was advised sometime, I think, yesterday afternoon, and PIRSA endeavours to communicate with affected growers through a variety of mechanisms.

Matters of Interest

ANNUAL LEAVE

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (15:19): Anyone who has ever spent any time around me would know that I love a cup of coffee, particularly a good one. It helps me to be more productive and just get more done. I am not alone: I saw a statistic this morning that stated that 25 per cent of Australians have four or more cups of coffee every single day, and 75 per cent of Australians enjoy at least one. That is before you really even get to the energy drinks, where Australia consumes an ever-increasing amount, last gulped at over 130 million litres annually.

Why do I raise this? Perhaps it is just the coffee getting it done, but the fact is that Australia is a very productive place. Over the years, we have prioritised efficiency targets, KPIs and, frankly, just doing more with less. Wind the clock back, though, to about 1906 and the federal maritime award introduced an entitlement for workers, a notion of 10 days' paid annual leave. It was the first instance of annual leave in our nation.

This was a catalyst that led to other forms of leave being introduced in Australia, such as sick leave, maternity leave and, indeed, bereavement leave. Since those early days, annual leave has progressively increased. In 1945, as the Second World War came to a close, workers won the right to two weeks' annual leave. In the mid 1970s, annual leave increased to its present rate of four weeks for the majority of full-time workers.

Since then, though, it seems we have been drinking an awful lot of coffee, but, as recently highlighted by the member for Playford in the other place, the SDA Union, a union that represents retail and warehouse workers, recently negotiated a new enterprise agreement with Bunnings, IKEA, Big W and Apple on behalf of their members. In the agreements reached with these companies, their employees would now receive five weeks' annual leave.

That is a significant outcome for workers, and a result that shows once again the value of your union membership and making sure it is the first thing you do when you begin work. I am not making a call for a national application of five weeks' annual leave. Each employer should make their own bargain, but I do want to highlight that it has been about 50 years since the last increase in annual leave. Given that over the past decade we have not really seen wages keep up with the cost of living—indeed, some employers have actively campaigned to keep wages low—I want to take this opportunity to encourage corporate Australia to pay very close attention to the outcomes of these agreements.

I am under no illusion that paid time off from work does not come with a cost that the employer must bear, but I also believe an increase to annual leave is a good compromise between workers and their employer. If corporate Australia did decide to follow the lead of its biggest names here in South Australia, we would not even be the first nation to do so. Leading economies like Germany, France and Austria are already doing this. In fact, many of our hardworking nurses and firefighters employed on continuous shift rosters are already able to take five weeks' annual leave.

I believe that in the long term these employers subject to these agreements will see the benefits of their workers getting an extra week off every year, with the potential of a more productive workforce and, indeed, decreased stress levels and probably less sick leave usage as well. Our state will see the benefits too. Instead of reaching for a cup of coffee, workers may use the time to explore regional South Australia with family or friends, placing additional money in the coffers and hands of tourism and regional workforces.

They could learn new skills in the additional time they have, or just become mentally and physically healthier. The fact is that allowing people to spend more time with family and friends, disconnecting from work, will create a more connected state and a more connected society. With the pandemic now somewhat behind us, I think we all know the benefits of that.

COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The Hon. S.L. GAME (15:24): I rise to speak on a matter of profound importance to all South Australians, a matter that needs an open, thorough and honest response. For 793 days, South Australians lived under an emergency management declaration, during which extraordinary powers were vested in the State Emergency Coordinator, the South Australian Commissioner of Police. Borders were closed, businesses shuttered, statewide lockdowns and social distancing limits imposed, and even the basic act of standing and drinking alcohol was prohibited. These were unprecedented restrictions on our rights and freedoms, and many of us are still suffering from the effects of them.

This ongoing harm can be seen in the *Adelaide Advertiser's* 'Lockdown Kids' series, which highlights the long-term impact of lockdowns on the mental health of our young people, describing this generation as broken. However, it should never be forgotten that it was the media itself that acted in coordination with government and health authorities to fan the flames of our collective anxiety. It should come as no shock at all that our children and young people are still psychologically and emotionally suffering after being subjected to one of the greatest fear campaigns ever conducted in our history.

At the time, the only way out of lockdowns, according to government and health authorities, was mass vaccination mandated under an emergency directive. Those who hesitated or resisted

were condemned as a threat to the community, their right to refuse medical treatment and their right to bodily autonomy dismissed. Looking back, it is difficult not to feel a sense of shame at how quickly we allowed such profound incursions into our personal liberties, but we must resist the urge to deny or forget what happened.

We must maintain a commitment to a rigorous and thorough examination of the circumstances and responses that resulted in the greatest infringement on personal rights and freedoms that this state has seen. Our commitment to transparency and accountability is essential if we are to restore public trust and ensure such overreach is never repeated. We must embrace the opportunity to acknowledge the widespread injustice and suffering, and start to rebuild public confidence in our institutions.

Only last week, five years since the first lockdown, the Australian Human Rights Commission released its report into the impact of the pandemic response on human rights. The commission's report includes stories from thousands of innocent Australians who were harmed by the actions taken by governments during the pandemic. What a shame that the commission did not act or speak up enough to stop these things from happening at the time. It is clear from these stories that much of the harm caused was due to heavy-handed responses to the pandemic rather than the virus itself.

The report included stories of daughters who placed their mother into aged care and had to watch her through a glass window as she descended into despair; a man who watched his father's funeral from his kitchen over streamed video link; and a pregnant woman who did not want to get the vaccine but took it to keep her job and, at 17 weeks' pregnant, experienced a stillbirth and had to deliver her baby alone in the hospital while her husband was refused entry due to a positive COVID test. Unfortunately, the commission's report did not include the experience of the vaccine injured, despite many submissions.

In June 2023, I had the opportunity to meet with world-renowned cardiologist Dr Aseem Malhotra. It was the untimely death of his father and the growing body of evidence highlighting safety issues with certain COVID vaccines that caused Dr Malhotra to speak out. In response, the mainstream media and medical profession criticised Dr Malhotra for spreading misinformation and being an anti-vaxxer. When he visited Adelaide in June 2023, the *Adelaide Advertiser* labelled him as a controversial anti-vaxxer and criticised individuals for attending his presentation. Back then, Dr Malhotra warned that such personal attacks without analysing the data would lead to public distrust and a dangerous fall in safe vaccine uptake.

In December 2024, Dr Malhotra coauthored a petition calling for the immediate suspension of all mRNA COVID vaccines. According to Dr Malhotra, there is undeniable evidence that there are serious risks associated with the COVID-19 vaccine. He has received support from multiple medical experts and high profile figures, including Dr Jay Bhattacharya, who is set to become the new Director of the National Institute of Health in the United States. Unfortunately, here in Australia, both state and federal governments continue to dismiss growing concerns about DNA contamination from the mRNA COVID vaccines.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (15:29): It is unfortunate that I have to say this, especially with you in the chair, Mr Acting President, but Labor's lies are out of control. What is worse, they are not standing up for SA; instead, they are bowing down to their federal Labor counterparts.

For years they did not even deny it, but now Tom Koutsantonis is trying to rewrite history. The truth is black and white: Labor has always wanted to turn Cross Road into a truck freight route. Their own strategy documents prove it, and yet Minister Tom Koutsantonis continues to spin fiction. Labor's bloodlust to make Cross Road a major freight corridor is not fake news: it is true.

In 2013, the state Labor government outlined their plans for A Functional Hierarchy for South Australia's Land Transport Network and the Integrated Transport and Land Use Plan. In 2015, the Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon. Stephen Mullighan, affirmed these plans in the North-South Corridor Strategy, and in 2017 the Hon. Stephen Mullighan confirmed them again, stating that freight trucks should go down Cross Road because it was in the state's best economic interest. No matter what Minister Koutsantonis says, Labor has never abandoned this plan.

Labor's handling of freight is a complete mess. While Minister Koutsantonis claims to be working on a business case for the Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass, Cressida O'Hanlon knows that her party will not do a thing about it, so she is pushing for a decibel camera on Portrush Road—another pointless distraction that does nothing to fix the real issue.

Mr Koutsantonis told South Australians last November that the freight bypass business case was being finalised. Now it is March, and we are still waiting. He claimed it was already with Infrastructure Australia, but Senate estimates revealed they only got it a couple of weeks ago. Labor will say anything to get through a news cycle, but they have no plan, just spin.

While South Australia is stuck waiting, federal Labor is fast-tracking the Muswellbrook Bypass in New South Wales while completely neglecting our road network. The Albanese Labor government—in consultation with the state Labor government, mind you—scrapped the Truro bypass as a result of their Infrastructure Investment Program Strategic Review in 2023. This review was with the consultation of the states and territories.

This set South Australia's freight routes back by years, and has left Adelaide as the only capital city in the country still forcing heavy trucks through suburban streets. Why, Minister Koutsantonis, did you not stand up for South Australia? Why did the minister take funding from Truro and divert it to the north-south corridor? How did the New South Wales government convince the Albanese Labor government to bring funding forward for the Hunter bypasses, but our minister rolled over on Truro?

The same review resulted in additional federal funding of \$2 billion to the north-south corridor. The north-south corridor upgrade went from \$9.9 billion to \$15.4 billion under Labor, with Albanese coming up with the additional \$2.7 billion to cover the commonwealth's 50 per cent. The same thing happened in Victoria when Albanese bailed out the Labor government there on the North East Link project after a cost blowout. This went from \$10 billion in 2016 to \$15.8 billion in 2019 and then \$26.1 billion by 2024—all while being blamed on CFMEU disruptions and expensive design decisions that pander to environmental and community groups.

Labor's priorities are clear: they will splash cash in Labor strongholds while leaving South Australia to deal with congested roads, unsafe freight routes and a government that simply does not care. They have run out of ideas and they have run out of cash. I bet my bottom dollar that the Premier and Minister Koutsantonis's federal mates have told them there is no money in the federal budget for SA infrastructure—and why? Because they cut Louise Miller-Frost loose. They do not think they going to win Boothby so they are not going to spend any money. That is why they are flailing, lashing out and throwing out distractions to cover their failures.

The Premier's grand infrastructure blueprint is just that, a blueprint. You cannot drive a truck or a car on a plan, you cannot catch a strategy to work. Infrastructure needs money, and Labor simply does not have it. Instead, what they have is close to \$24,000 per South Australian of debt.

After 19 years of Labor in government over the last 23 years it is quite clear that they have run out of ideas, run out of money, run out of excuses. They have scrapped Truro, they have scrapped the hydrogen plan, they have scrapped the Hahndorf bypass. They had a choice, a real solution to get trucks off Cross Road and Portrush Road, but they are choosing to keep sending them down there. Labor is taking South Australians for fools. The truth is out: only one party has ever wanted heavy trucks on Cross Road, and that is Labor.

MEDICARE

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (15:34): Last time I rose to speak on a matter of interest I advised the chamber about the dangerously delusional Dutton's plan for a nuclear industry in every suburb in the country. Lo and behold, some Liberals must have read what I said because I see today in *The Guardian*, 'Liberal supporters launch an election ad campaign against Peter Dutton's plan to build nuclear power plants'.

I hasten to say their criticism is not the same as mine. They are saying they are trying to save the party from a policy that will gift seats to their opponents—I say hear, hear to that. 'Nuclear technology itself isn't the issue,' they say. 'It's the socialist implementation being proposed that trashes Liberal values.' It is the socialist implementation of Peter Dutton that they are referring to,

trying to save the Liberal Party from itself. But today I want to talk about and remind the chamber and Australians why Peter Dutton earned the title of the worst health minister in 40 years. I am sure everyone in this chamber will remember his record, but I might just go over a few of the highlights for our benefit.

Good policy, as we all know, is not born overnight. It takes a lot of careful consideration, collaboration, consultation with stakeholders, and thorough planning. Unfortunately, this concept seems alien to Peter Dutton and his Liberal colleagues. We saw it firsthand when he unveiled his health policy (so-called) 14 hours after Labor unveiled theirs and said, 'Ditto, we're going to copy their plan.'

Whilst that is flattering, I suppose, in one way, I have to say he did not do a lot of self-diligence in coming up with the Liberal Party health plan. It is flattering that he put all that faith and trust in Labor's hard work but very telling in relation to Mr Dutton's approach to policy development and then announcements. A few scant hours was all it took for him. But there was a very real reason why Peter Dutton was voted the worst health minister in Australia's history by medical professionals. He did not just make a few missteps; he made disastrous decisions that Australians still feel across our health system today.

Peter Dutton made several promises over the years, one of the most notable being his commitment to not touch Medicare. In 2014, during his tenure as health minister, he stood before the Australian people and assured us that he had no intention of tampering with the cornerstone of our health system, stating, 'I am not interested in dismantling Medicare. I want to ensure its sustainability.' But then what did he do? Under Dutton's watch, Medicare did not remain untouched as he promised; it substantially deteriorated.

In 2014, he sought to introduce a \$7 co-payment for GP visits, a tax on every Australian patient seeking basic medical care. It was only due to a massive public outcry and the overwhelming opposition from the medical community that this ill-thought-out proposal was shelved, but the damage had been done. The mere attempt to charge Australians for basic healthcare services was an attack on the very foundation of Medicare, and we could see where he was coming from.

To make matters worse, he froze Medicare rebates for six years. Medicare rebates to GP services were frozen for six years. While the cost of living was going up, Medicare rebates were stagnant and GPs were forced to make hard choices. For some, that meant reducing services, cutting staff or, most damaging of all, refusing to bulk-bill their patients. The result was that Australians, particularly those reliant on bulk-billing, were left facing higher out-of-pocket costs and reduced access to health care. This was Peter Dutton's plan of not touching Medicare.

Dutton can say he will not touch Medicare this time around all he likes but his actions in the past show Australians that he does not mean what he says. His record is clear. It shows that under his leadership he has an ideological opposition to Medicare and he wants to destroy it. It is astonishing how much damage he managed to do in his short tenure, just one year in office, in terms of dismantling the health system that Australians are so proud of.

We see the same pattern re-emerging in the lead-up to this election. With his recent proposals to copycat Labor's policy, Dutton is trying to dodge the issue of what he will do when he is in government, if he gets into government, to the Medicare system. We know he does not believe in Medicare, we know he wants to destroy it, and I think all Australians will remember how he behaved last time when he was in charge and not trust a word he says about Medicare. This time around, we will not be fooled again.

BUILDCONNECT

The Hon. J.S. LEE (15:39): I rise today to speak about the Master Builders Association and its BuildConnect program. To demonstrate how important the building industry is, I would like to highlight some statistics. In May 2024, approximately 1.37 million people were employed in Australia's building and construction industry. Master Builders recently released 'Future-proofing construction: a workforce blueprint', which outlines the future jobs and skills needed in our industry. It is estimated that by November 2026, South Australia will need an additional 31,149 people to meet demand, including 14,685 tradies, roughly half the overall labour requirement.

It is clear that there is a significant shortage of skilled workers in the building and construction industry. The war for talent remains a real factor in recruiting skilled workers, with South Australia having to compete against significant financial incentives offered by other states. To help address this problem, Master Builders instigated BuildConnect as a pilot program with some support from the Department of State Development.

The aim of BuildConnect is to encourage skilled migrants, including people who might already be living here but not working in their chosen profession, as well as overseas residents who might be thinking about relocating to South Australia. Currently, more than 60 trades and construction-related professions are eligible for the BuildConnect program, including everything from architects, engineers, carpenters, tilers, plumbers and project managers, just to name a few. Recently, I had the privilege to meet with the program director, Delinda Kalic, and discuss the benefits and goals of this initiative.

Delinda informed me that one of the key objectives of BuildConnect is creating a platform that can match suitably qualified migrants with complementary roles in an industry desperately seeking skilled workers. Both workers and employers will be offered comprehensive recruitment support and industry networking events as part of this pilot program. As a member of parliament who has worked in the multicultural affairs portfolio for 15 years, I support Master Builders' initiative and recognise the fact that there is an untapped skilled migrant labour force already in South Australia, with people having slipped through the cracks, not working in their chosen careers.

I know firsthand that it can be incredibly difficult for new migrants to navigate Australia's complicated immigration system and find employment opportunities in an industry where they may have no contacts or local experience. This means that there are many skilled migrants currently driving Ubers or working in jobs that are underutilising their qualifications or skills. These individuals may possess the expertise and experience that the building and construction industry desperately needs to deliver critical housing and public infrastructure projects.

Another area of opportunity that BuildConnect has identified is the substantial number of international students already residing in Australia who can be integrated into the construction industry. As of November 2024, there were approximately 2,500 international students enrolled in building and construction courses in South Australia. Many of these students have adapted to our Australian ways of life and are eager to contribute to our economy. If there is a pathway that can integrate them into our workforce, we can leverage their skill to address immediate workforce shortages and can significantly contribute to the industry's growth and success.

I am passionate about economic development and workforce planning for South Australia and would like to acknowledge Master Builders for such a fantastic initiative. While recognising that the BuildConnect pilot program is moving in the right direction, further action will be required to help achieve its full potential. I join Master Builders SA to call on the state and federal government to fully support the BuildConnect initiative by providing the necessary funding, additional resources and policy support.

For instance, government can support Master Builders further by providing accurate data for state nomination visa candidates in a timely fashion and making the information fully accessible to Master Builders SA. This will ensure that the skilled migrants arriving in our state under the 190 permanent resident visa are placed in jobs relevant to their background and qualifications rather than ending up in part-time and gig jobs due to difficulties navigating the system or systemic failures upon their arrival. I commend Master Builders SA for developing this innovative pilot program and supporting the growth of our vital construction and building industry.

AUKUS DEAL

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (15:44): Friday marks one year until the next state election and the Premier, Peter Malinauskas, and the opposition leader, Vincent Tarzia, will be facing off at a Press Club debate. While there are likely to be a few policy differences between them, one area where Mr Malinauskas and Mr Tarzia are on a unity ticket is the future of AUKUS. They are wedded to this toxic AUKUS plan, despite the fact that it will make South Australia less safe and despite the fact that it threatens to undermine our reputation as a clean, green state.

AUKUS is wrong for so many reasons. The last few months have provided citizens of the world with a grim reminder of why we can no longer rely on the United States as a friend and an ally. In recent weeks, while this parliament has been working together to support our state's steel industry, over in the United States our so-called friends have been slapping new tariffs on Australian aluminium and steel, damaging the South Australian industry at a time of crisis. If this is how the Trump administration treats its friends, I would hate to see how they treat their enemies.

The reality is that the time has come for us to think very carefully about our relationship with the United States. It is clear that the United States of America under Trump no longer shares our democratic values. Mr Trump is a dangerous and delusional man. He is an authoritarian, a sexist, a transphobe and a racist. He has no respect for the rule of law. He has no respect for the judiciary. He has no respect for democratic traditions. He has no respect for Australia. Does anyone seriously expect the Trump administration to come to Australia's aid if we are in trouble? A leader who is clearly in the pocket of Vladimir Putin and the Russian regime—give me a break. Yet, despite all of this, we are hitching our wagon to the Trump administration. Back in the sixties it was all the way with LBJ, now it is to hell in a handbasket with a basket case, Donald Trump.

By aligning our national security so closely with the United States, AUKUS puts our country at risk, and South Australia is right in the thick of it. At least five nuclear subs are set to be built in SA, with the promise of thousands of South Australian jobs, but there is a catch: we do not even start building these subs until the 2030s and 2040s. South Australians have heard all this before. Over the last decade, it has been clear to us that these submarines are so often a mirage. In this case Australia will get access to second-hand US subs, but only after we have paid billions of dollars to the United States to support their own submarine manufacturing capabilities, and a future US president does not even need to provide them if they are not assured that America can meet its own needs. How is this a good deal for Australia? How does this make our own country safer?

Billions and billions of dollars are being pumped into war machines that may never even materialise. Meanwhile, we have people sleeping on the street, people who cannot afford to get into the housing market, people who cannot afford to see a doctor when they need one and people who cannot afford to put food on the table. Surely this money can be better spent. Surely there are better ways we can support South Australians who are struggling during this cost-of-living crisis. The Greens are not alone in calling AUKUS a dud deal. Former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has described this as a terrible deal for Australia, dumb and a fiasco. I am no fan of Mr Turnbull, but a broken watch is still right twice a day. He is right on that one; it is a terrible deal.

Let us also consider the environmental risks. Just last year, state and federal parliaments backed new laws to allow nuclear waste to be stored at Osborne, just 25 kilometres from the CBD, close to Semaphore and Port Adelaide. But what about the residents who live nearby: has anyone asked what they think? What about the potential exposure to our waterways? What happens if something goes wrong? South Australians have made it clear time and time again that we do not want nuclear waste in our state. We have made it clear time and time again that we do not see a future for the nuclear industry in SA, yet Labor and the Liberals keep flogging this dead horse. It is time to let it go once and for all and to cement our reputation as a clean, green state.

Rather than tying our economic sustainability and future prosperity to a deal that will surely make our state less safe, Peter Malinauskas and Vincent Tarzia need a plan B. Linking our state's future to the reckless and volatile Donald Trump and the dangerous nuclear industry is not a sensible policy for SA. Do these leaders really think that AUKUS is in South Australia's best interests? What will they do if something goes wrong? What will they do if the promise of South Australian jobs is not delivered?

The Greens will be watching the leaders' debate closely to ensure their answers. South Australians deserve more than just more me-tooism on such important policy questions. Now is the time for our leaders to stand up for South Australia and dump AUKUS, and the Greens will be here to hold their feet to the fire until they do.

STATE ECONOMY

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:49): After failing to reach pole position for 15 years of the quarterly economic report card put together by the Commonwealth Bank's online arm, South

Australia was named the number one economy in the nation for three straight quarters in 2023-24. Even when we were recently relegated to second position, behind Western Australia, we were effectively beaten in a photo finish. In fact, CommSec still has South Australia leading the nation in real economic growth, with our economic activity 8.4 per cent above our long-term average output.

By whichever measure used, we remain a consistent leader in the economic race, well ahead of New South Wales and Victoria. It tells us that the Malinauskas government is doing a lot of things right. This government has built on the good work done by former Labor governments in getting the state moving. We have done this with massively improved road systems and a raft of new industry and infrastructure. The Australian Submarine Corp, Prominent Hill and construction work that is producing a well overdue vibrant city landscape are all adding to our economic success. We have made South Australia a destination state for business, investment, sports and the arts. Solid job markets and construction activity have been major reasons for our rise as an economic powerhouse throughout 2024-25.

The State of the States report has eight key economic indicators by which they judge each state's performance. South Australia is a leader in three of them: relative unemployment, dwelling starts and construction work done. Most of the interstate people that I talk to comment on Adelaide's remarkable transition. It is now a destination city, not just the big country town we were branded in years gone by. Labor is responsible almost exclusively for that transition. We built the roads. We took the initiative to finally address the nightmare that was South Road, and in a few years' time, when completed, it will be the best one side to the other road system of any city in Australia.

In fairness to the opposition, voters have not trusted them with as much time in office as Labor since the early 1980s, but they still had more than 16 years in office during that time, and in that time what did they do? They certainly did not get the state moving, preferring to keep things as they always were. Progress be damned: they have always been committed to the status quo.

On the other hand, former Labor governments made real changes, and the Malinauskas government has taken that to a whole new level. We only need to look at the past year alone to see the progress being made. Construction has commenced on a \$200 million military hangar at the Royal Australian Air Force base at Edinburgh. Work is underway on a new \$3.2 billion Adelaide Women's and Children's Hospital. We have also put \$576 million towards creating new housing developments at Seaton in the western suburbs and Port Noarlunga in the south, and both will have a social housing component. We have rezoned land for a thousand new houses at West Lakes as well as at Hillier Park in the north and O'Sullivan Beach in the south.

These developments do not just provide essential housing, they deliver thousands of jobs that drive the economy. All of this is done with sound economic management, proving yet again that governments can be fiscally responsible and still get things done. Economists agree that the nod from CommSec is the sort of validation that encourages further investment in South Australia. It means we are not just a great place to live and go out on day trips to the Barossa Valley and Adelaide Hills; we have earned that credibility in the minds of interstate and overseas investors.

It also gives South Australian workers the confidence to stay here instead of heading interstate in search of opportunities. It keeps our young people here. After three years of this Labor government, the opportunities are right here in South Australia.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: Before I call on business of the day, I acknowledge in the gallery, in the company and in the responsibility of Mr Andrew Lamb, from the District Council of Grant, Mayor Kylie Boston; from the District Council of Kimba, Mayor Dean Johnson; from the Mid Murray Council, Mayor Simone Bailey and Councillor Kirsty MacGregor; from the Regional Council of Goyder, Mayor Bill Gebhardt; and from Wattle Range Council, Mayor Des Noll and Mr Ben Gower, the CEO. So welcome, folks, to the Legislative Council.

*Members***MEMBER'S LEAVE**

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:54): Before I move the notice of motion, I have never heard the words 'Andrew Lamb' and 'responsibility' in the same sentence before. Be that as it may, I move:

That leave of absence be granted to the Hon. R.B. Martin until 12 May 2025 on account of medical treatment.

Motion carried.

*Bills***STATUTES AMENDMENT (RATES—ELECTRICITY GENERATION) BILL***Introduction and First Reading*

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:55): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Electricity Corporations (Restructuring and Disposal) Act 1999, the Local Government Act 1999 and the Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Act 2009. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:56): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I rise to introduce my private member's bill, the Statutes Amendment (Rates—Electricity Generation) Bill 2025. This bill is about fairness and cost-of-living relief for all 1.8 million South Australians, including, and especially for, the 600,000 or so who live in regional South Australia. The bill has been some time in the making to ensure that we get this right. It fixes a 25-year-old mistake, and it will fix it before the impact from the mistake becomes massively worse.

First, a quick history. Just a quarter of a century ago the Olsen state government was very busy privatising the state's electricity assets. Many of us have lived to regret that action and the negative impacts privatising all our utilities, including electricity, has had on our state. We do not have cheaper power and the energy sector is a complex mix of generators, wholesalers and retailers, with an overarching energy regulator and a raft of complex federal and state legislation. Any prospect of returning these utilities, their assets and, in some cases, profitable businesses to public ownership is probably a horse long bolted, although it is theoretically possible, as Queensland has demonstrated with its six publicly owned energy entities.

To achieve privatisation in South Australia the government of the day introduced the Electricity Corporations (Restructuring and Disposal) Act 1999, which for today's purposes I will call the ECRD Act. Schedule 1 of the ECRD Act regulates the calculation of council rates on land used for electricity generation. The ECRD Act, in conjunction with regulations under the Valuation of Land Act 1971, currently does two things that need to be addressed:

1. When calculating the value of land it prevents the taking into account of electricity-generating plant. This reduces the capital value of the land and reduces the council rates that are levied for that property.

2. The ECRD Act also enables the Governor to make proclamations to reduce—and only reduce—council rates on land used for electricity generation. Once one of these proclamations has been made to reduce council rates, it cannot be revoked except through an act of parliament.

That is partly why we are here today dealing with this issue in parliament. The end result, according to the figures I have seen, is that electricity generators in South Australia are, for all practical purposes, underpaying council rates to the tune of over \$6 million a year. Who ultimately pays for this shortfall? It is the families in regional South Australia—that is, local businesses, farmers and every other ratepayer, including pensioners, low income earners and mums and dads, who have to pay more because one sector, the electricity generation sector, are not paying their fair share.

To bring that point home, I can give you a dozen case studies. For example, Wattle Range Council in our South-East are losing about \$1.2 million each year in rates from electricity generators, which would be paid if that electricity generation was in Victoria rather than in South Australia. Wattle Range Council have made a public commitment that, if my bill passes, they will reduce rates to all other ratepayers by 5 per cent.

So what were legislators trying to do in 1999? Why is it that the electricity generation sector is entitled to discount council rates that most businesses are not entitled to? The theory was that, if prospective buyers of our electricity generation business were offered a discount on future council rates, they might be induced to pay a higher price to purchase our electricity assets. The trouble with this theory is that power companies do not make investment decisions based upon the cost of council rates.

In forming my views on these issues, I have been assisted by research by independent consultants the AEC Group, who are experts in the resources, energy and infrastructure industries. In February 2020, the AEC Group published their report, titled 'Rating equity in SA and the financial impacts on local government's ability to support growth'. The AEC Group research found the two main factors influencing the location of energy generation plant investment are (1) the proximity to sources of power, whether that source be coal, wind or cheap land for solar energy, and (2) access to the national electricity grid.

The AEC Group report also found that council rates are a negligible component of the operating costs of an electricity generation business. Indeed, rates are simply a cost of doing business for power generation companies, as they have found in Victoria. A recent report by the conservative Institute of Public Affairs think tank found that federal subsidies for the 50 largest wind farms, of which 70 per cent are fully or partially foreign-owned, amounted to \$1.04 billion last year. Around 75 per cent of wind and solar farms are foreign-owned, and several energy retailers are also foreign-owned, including Alinta Energy, EnergyAustralia and Tango Energy being owned by Hong Kong or Chinese state entities. Simply Energy is a French company. Clearly, investment in renewable energy projects in Australia is a very attractive proposition for foreign entities.

My point in setting this out is that the current legislation was based on bad policy right from the outset. The promise of discount rates was never going to impact on investment decisions and would never have anything but a negligible impact on the sale price of the state's electricity assets. What we do know is that privatisation of electricity assets in South Australia stopped when the Rann government was elected in 2002, so the policy objective of the rates discount ceased to fulfil its original purpose. Since then, I am told, no state government has analysed whether the purpose of the rate discount was achieved, and no state government has ever investigated whether the rates discount is achieving any other policy objective.

The AEC Group research shows that for a quarter of a century we have been giving away millions of dollars in valuable public revenue to one sector of the economy and making everyone else pay more for no good reason. I say to the honourable members in this place: if anyone opposes my bill, if anyone tries to defend the status quo, please ask them what policy objective is served by continuing the rates discount for electricity generators. There is not one.

My next observation is that in a quarter of a century the electricity industry has completely changed. Back in the 1990s, we had a handful of big gas and coal generators occupying a small amount of land. Since then, we have seen an explosion of solar, wind and other forms of renewable energy, as well as new gas-fired generation. Seventy-five per cent of this explosion is owned by foreign entities.

An increase in output in theory is a good thing, but I have to note at this point that it is simply not true that renewable energy will bring down power prices for South Australian consumers, as recent history has shown us. There is precisely zero cause for future optimism about energy prices coming down. The claim that renewables would push down prices has been decisively proven wrong.

Last week, the Energy Regulator told us that the benchmark east coast electricity price would rise by 9 per cent, bringing to \$1,300 the increase in the average energy bill since 2022. It is an indisputable fact that the two major parties' commitment to achieve net zero carbon dioxide emissions

by 2050 and 43 per cent by 2020-30, as legislated under the Climate Change Act 2022, is an economic disaster for Australia.

Remember that China, India, Russia and now the US are not committed to cutting emissions, so the playing field is far from even. The problem that this bill deals with is that every new parcel of land used for electricity generation in South Australia attracts the mandatory rates discount. Every new parcel of land so used means less revenue for the local council, and that means that other South Australian ratepayers pay proportionately more.

According to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), which regulates the national energy market, South Australia could see a three to fivefold increase in electricity generation in the next decade. Again, that is great news in many respects. However, \$6 million in foregone rates today could be as much as \$25 million to \$30 million of rates foregone in a decade. Who will make up this shortfall? Again, it is the ordinary families, small businesses, farmers, every South Australian ratepayer.

The legislation as it currently stands creates a huge cost-of-living issue for all South Australians, and a huge liability for councils. In their recent submissions to a NSW parliamentary inquiry, NSW councils revealed a chaotic process that benefits developers, many foreign owned, over rural and regional communities struggling to cope with a barrage of wind and solar proposals, transmission towers and large battery systems.

Many New South Wales and Queensland councils, where renewable approvals are galloping ahead of other infrastructure and planning, are realising this is an unfolding disaster. We do not want to replicate this in South Australia. If we do not fix the problem, it will become massively worse, and an even greater burden on South Australians. By contrast, my bill is based firmly on a number of clear principles, and I want to set these principles out for the record. These principles are in fact the state government's own principles for better regulation, which, in turn, are based on COAG's best practice regulation principles:

1. There should be a clear case for action before addressing a problem. As I have outlined today, the policy objective behind the current rating restrictions in the ECRD Act and associated instruments was flawed to begin with and is completely pointless today. However, it continues to have negative unintended consequences.

2. Government action should be effective and proportional to the issue being addressed. Again, there does not appear to be any analysis as to whether the rating restriction is doing anyone any good, and when it comes to proportionality, it is very difficult to imagine that giving away \$6 million each year is a proportionate response to any issue. This looks like a completely disproportionate response to me. Is there any other sector subsidised to this extent in South Australia? I think not.

3. Ensuring that regulation remains relevant and effective over time. This is another principle that seems to have been ignored. The purpose of the restriction may have been to help privatise South Australia's electricity infrastructure in the 1990s. Most energy generators operating in South Australia were not even around in 1999. These companies are getting a rates discount that was not even intended to apply to them. There is no good reason to keep operating under a statute that no longer has or fulfils a policy objective.

I want to add one more principle: state governments have policies and objectives. State governments encourage some activity and they discourage others. In doing so, I fully appreciate it is legitimate for the government of the day to subsidise or tax particular organisations in furtherance of their policies. What is not legitimate is for a state government to further their policy objectives by giving away local government money to big power generation businesses.

When it comes to council rates, it should be the democratically elected representatives of local communities who make decisions about what rates need to be collected, who is entitled to a rates discount and what council services those rates collected are spent on. If the state government want to fund a policy objective, state government should fund it with their own money, not fund it at the expense of local government.

A few extra points: most people accept that we have to pay rates and taxes to keep our services and communities functional. Whilst we may not be too enthusiastic about paying them, we recognise that local government needs a certain amount of money each year to provide services to pay for its facilities or to fund infrastructure like roads, bridges, rubbish, stormwater planning and services such as libraries. If one group of ratepayers gets a rates discount, the remaining rates impost falls disproportionately on other ratepayers.

We cannot in good conscience look residents, farmers, small business people and people in regional SA in the eye and say, 'You are less deserving of a discount than the big electricity generator companies.' It is not right to ask all these other hardworking ratepayers to shoulder an additional financial burden to give big electricity generators a free ride.

This bill is not a new charge: it is the end of a rates holiday. It is the end of a massive rate relief scheme that no-one but big electricity generators get any benefit from, and that we are all disadvantaged by. It will take the payment of rates back to a level playing field. Whilst electricity generator companies are not paying their fair share of rates, councils are still required to provide their services. Roads, bridges and other infrastructure need to be built and maintained, not to mention the pressure that these developments put on local schools, housing and other services.

SA currently has thousands of wind turbines, with more being constructed. The Snowtown Wind Farm has 369 wind turbines, the Goyder council has close to 1,000, and I am told that in the District Council of Goyder a 100-tonne truck with a massive crane travels around from property to property within the council area to service the 800-odd huge wind turbines—not to mention the number of heavy vehicles constantly trucking equipment and personnel in and out during construction and repairs.

As heavy vehicles of this sort travel around they do enormous damage to country roads that were never built for this amount of traffic and these consistently heavy loads. Councils have to repair these roads. Goyder council tells me that they must spend more on repairing roads for these businesses than they are able to raise in rates. So who pays for the cost of repairing this damage? All of the other ratepayers.

I mentioned the AEC Group research earlier, and I will refer to their research again to bust a few myths that have been put about over the years. An increase in the operating costs of electricity generation companies cannot be passed on to consumers by way of high electricity prices. Individual companies sell power into the national grid and, because of the nature of the National Energy Market, each generator is a price taker. If their costs—such as the cost of council rates—increase, energy generator companies are unable to pass these costs on to the local consumers of electricity.

Over the past 20 years, when councils have expressed concern about the mandatory rates discount, governments of the day have expressed concern about the impact on investment. The AEC report completely debunks that thinking. In fact, the research shows very strong levels of electricity generation investment in those states where those companies pay fair council rates.

I am yet to hear any argument justifying the retention of the rating restrictions my bill seeks to fix. What public policy objective does the existing legislation further? Why should other South Australians pay higher rates so that big electricity generators can have a special discount that no-one else gets the benefit of?

Turning now to the operation of my bill, the bill does the following things:

1. As I set out earlier, the current ECRD Act and associated legislative instruments prevent councils from levying full rates on land used for electricity generation. My bill removes those prohibitions.
2. The ECRD Act also prevents an increase in council rates over this land, except through an act of parliament. My bill removes that unworkable restriction.
3. Instead, my bill provides for council rates on land used for electricity generation to be regulated pursuant to the Local Government Act 1999, as occurs for all other types of ratable land.

4. In lieu of rates, my bill would impose a charge on the land use for electricity generation. My aim is for the bill to follow the legislative scheme in Victoria where a charge is applied based upon a statutory formula calculated according to the megawatts of electricity that is generated. The minister will have some flexibility in the details of the scheme by making a notice in the *Government Gazette*.

5. This flexibility will enable a fair solution where, if the electricity generation plant—for example, a wind turbine—is situated within a larger piece of land—for example, a farm—it is not the bill's intention for the farmer to be out of pocket.

6. What my bill enables is that smaller parcels of land will be separately assessed for the purpose of council rates. The farmer remains the principal ratepayer for the balance of the land and the farmer will not face an increase in their rates as a consequence of part of their land being used for electricity generation. This arrangement is very similar to the rating arrangement in place for telecommunication towers.

7. A charge, such as a fixed charge, could also be applied to land used for electricity storage, such as a large commercial battery. For example, it would include what is called the SA Big Battery at the Hornsdale Power Reserve near Jamestown.

8. The intention of this bill is that fair rates are paid on land used for electricity generation.

9. This electricity generation industry will not be penalised but neither will they receive an unfair and disproportionate benefit that other ratepayers are not entitled to.

10. This bill ensures that all ratepayers and users of council infrastructure and services make a fair contribution to support council services.

I would like to summarise my bill by setting out what it is not. This bill is not anti electricity generation. This bill merely ends a 25-year rates holiday enjoyed by one sector of the economy, and it will benefit business and families, reducing rates by around 5 per cent. Does this government really want to deny them rate relief, particularly in these tough economic times?

I am a great supporter of investment in regional South Australia and a great supporter of new investment by energy generators. What I do not support is one type of business having an unfair tax rates advantage over others unless there are compelling reasons. Whilst some individual landholders can make good money leasing their land to wind and solar farms, and developers shower sweeteners on neighbours and community groups, many local governments are becoming aware of how it is ratepayers will end up being burdened with major disruption and long-term costs that the electricity generators are completely avoiding. As a New South Wales council so succinctly put it:

This situation has been created by the state and federal governments without them having any skin in the game, or even any worthwhile recognition of their impacts.

It goes on:

There is yet to be any new critical infrastructure, new economic programs or access to the electricity generated in this area. This is especially difficult to accept given the subsidies and rebates to potential renewable energy developers.

The bill will not apply to small generators such as households with solar panels on their rooves. Rather, the aim is for it to apply to commercial electricity generators licensed pursuant to the Electricity Act 1996.

This bill is not anti renewable energy. It applies to some renewable generators just as it applies to some fossil fuel generators. It is neutral as to the source of energy, and that is how it should be. This country needs better law and policies to meet Australia's energy needs, but council rates are not the forum for solving these issues, and it is not fair that the average citizen is subsidising big energy generators.

This bill is not anti energy investment, either. The independent AEC Group research demonstrates why my bill will have no impact one way or another on the investment decisions of big electricity generators. The bill has been drafted to not act retrospectively. It will apply to rate

assessments issued after commencement. Rates notices will continue to be issued in accordance with the Valuer-General's official valuation of the land at the time of the council's rates declaration.

The bill does not interfere with any commercial agreements between owners and lessees of land. Rather, it will impose a revised rates obligation on the specific parcels of land used for electricity generation without increasing the rates obligations on the landowner for the balance of the land, such as a farmer, private landholder or business.

The bill itself is not anti or pro privatisation per se. I have mentioned privatisation merely to give this council some historical context about how the ECRD Act and associated legislation came into being and why we now need a bill to correct that mistake. The energy sector is doing exceptionally well and will continue to make large profits and deliver large dividends to its shareholders. By ending the quarter-century rates holiday, the bill delivers cost-of-living relief to ratepayers all over regional South Australia. It will have immediate effect. In those councils with electricity generators, the benefits would be felt in every single rates notice and for the foreseeable future.

In summary, the bill is practical, sensible and evidence based. I am encouraged that the Treasurer, Stephen Mullighan, said in 2022 that he is not opposed to fixing the problems addressed in my bill; however, these were not a government priority, so I have done the work for the government again. All of us here have the opportunity to step up and rectify a bad law. We have an opportunity to increase fairness in the council rating system and deliver relief to families and businesses doing it tough.

There is undoubtedly a need for broader reform to ensure that electricity generation benefits all South Australians, but I commend my bill to the council as the first step to address the most urgent changes to restore fairness and equity to rates payable to South Australian councils. In the meantime, Mr President, I acknowledge your acknowledgement of the attendance today in the gallery of the local government representatives you have named. I welcome them all, and I thank them all for their support. Mr Andrew Lamb, sorry that you had to cop a bit of a blast there, but it goes to show the passion that Mr Lamb has in his job as the principal legal officer at the Local Government Association. With that, I signal that I intend to bring this important bill to a vote on 30 April.

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

Motions

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:28): I move:

That this council—

1. Notes the Queensland government's announcement that it will make 50¢ fares permanent on all public transport networks in Queensland following a successful six-month trial;
2. Acknowledges that the implementation of 50¢ public transport fares in Queensland has resulted in a significant increase in public transport patronage and positive outcomes for cost of living, traffic congestion, business, and the environment;
3. Notes that Adelaide City Council resolved at its meeting on 11 March 2025 to approach the state government to explore the possibility of implementation of a similar scheme in Adelaide; and
4. Calls on the Malinauskas government to undertake a six-month trial of 50¢ public transport fares as part of its upcoming budget.

The motion that I am moving today—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Pangallo, we have been glowing in our endorsement of your guests in the gallery, but if you are going to have a conversation, please do it outside.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: That is a shame, Mr President; I think they might enjoy this one. The motion I am moving today notes the Queensland government's announcement that it will make 50¢ fares permanent on all public transport networks in Queensland following a successful six-month trial. It acknowledges that the implementation of 50¢ public transport fares in Queensland has

resulted in a significant increase in public transport patronage and positive outcomes for cost of living, traffic congestion, business and the environment. It notes that the Adelaide City Council resolved at its recent meeting on 11 March to approach the state government to explore the possibility of implementation of a similar scheme in Adelaide, and it calls on the Malinauskas government to undertake a six-month trial of 50¢ public transport fares as part of its upcoming budget.

To be very clear, the Greens support free and frequent public transport—that has been our policy for some time—but we do recognise that a reduction to 50¢ would be a significant improvement, particularly when one considers the fact that the Malinauskas government have actually increased public transport fares in their last budget. While in other states public transport fees have been going backwards, in SA they have actually been going up, so a 50¢ fare in line with what is happening in Queensland would be a really positive step.

In terms of the history of this, back in August last year, the previous Labor government in Queensland announced a six-month trial of 50¢ fares on public transport, including buses, trains, ferries and trams. The trial proved so successful in its initial stages that Labor promised to keep public transport fares at a flat 50¢ rate after the October election, and this is a commitment that was matched by the Liberal Party. The LNP formed government and they have continued with that commitment, making it clear that 50¢ fares will remain in Queensland.

It is worthwhile, I think, looking at some of the data in terms of what the evidence said. At the conclusion of the six-month trial, this is what the data tells us: the Department of Transport and Main Roads has revealed an 18.3 per cent jump in the number of people taking public transport compared to 2023. Train travel has gone up 18.6 per cent, bus travel went up 15.8 per cent, light rail usage rose by 27.5 per cent, and ferries saw the most dramatic increase in their patronage, with figures up by 42.8 per cent.

Some of the steepest increases were outside metropolitan Brisbane. In south-east Queensland, the number of people catching public transport increased by 49 per cent in Gympie, 37 per cent on the Sunshine Coast, 35 per cent at Noosa and 21 per cent on the Gold Coast. Patronage was also up 20 per cent on average across all regional bus networks, with the biggest increases being 49 per cent in Townsville and 40 per cent in Mackay.

The ABC has reported that a commuter taking the train from the Gold Coast to Brisbane used to pay around \$29 a day. If they have been doing that five times a week for the past six months, except on public holidays, 50¢ fares would have saved that commuter \$3,640. Those travelling into the city from Brisbane's suburbs for work have already saved \$1,000. In total, the government says customers have saved around \$181 million during the duration of the 50¢ fares. Leanne Wood from Anglicare says there is immense value in giving those who previously could not afford it the freedom to travel. She has said:

We're hearing stories about families being able to go out on weekends, taking trips to the Gold Coast, for example, from Brisbane. They couldn't afford to do that before.

She also said:

People are talking more about getting together with family and friends. We're starting to see people talking about feeling less lonely because they're out and about.

When the Queensland government announced that they were making this permanent back in September, the Greens called for the Malinauskas government to implement 50¢ fares as a trial. We are really pleased to see the Adelaide City Council has got on board with this push as well, and I understand that the council has passed a resolution asking the Lord Mayor to write to the transport minister, the Hon. Tom Koutsantonis.

We are calling on the government to make this a priority as part of the upcoming state budget. Why not roll out 50¢ fares in the lead-up to the state election so that we can get some evidence on the increased patronage? This is a really good way of reducing congestion on our streets. It is a really good way of easing some of the cost-of-living pressures that families are dealing with at the moment.

We have worked out that an average family of four that take public transport to and from work and school could save around \$1,800 in a six-month period. That is a significant saving for

families, particularly when one considers that the cost of rent is going up, the cost of putting food on the table is going up and the like. So we urge the government to take this seriously. I indicate to members I will be bringing this to a vote and I will do that in the next sitting period.

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

ETHNIC COMMUNITY RADIO

The Hon. J.S. LEE (16:37): I move:

That this council—

1. Congratulates Ethnic Broadcasters Incorporated and 5EBI 103.1FM radio station for reaching the special milestone of its 50th anniversary in 2025;
2. Acknowledges the founding members, current and past chairpersons, board members, station management, staff, sponsors and volunteers of 5EBI 103.1FM for their dedication and contribution to serving the multicultural community in South Australia;
3. Recognises that Ethnic Broadcasters was established with five ethnic groups, including Italian, Dutch, Polish, Ukrainian and Greek, and that 5EBI 103.1FM has grown to be Adelaide's premier multicultural community radio station and South Australia's only ethnic community radio station dedicated to giving a voice to non-English-speaking language groups and nationalities since the 1970s;
4. Notes that 5EBI 103.1FM will be hosting their 50th anniversary celebration on Sunday 9 March 2025 to celebrate 50 years of outstanding community service and to highlight their significant contributions and achievements; and
5. Commends 5EBI 103.1FM for celebrating diversity and fostering community engagement by working with over 40 multicultural language groups to broadcast a wide variety of international music, world news and current affairs programs to listeners across South Australia.

It is a great honour to move this motion to congratulate 5EBI 103.1FM radio station and Ethnic Broadcasters Incorporated on reaching the special milestone of their 50th anniversary in 2025, marking five decades of championing diversity, inclusivity and community engagement.

Located in the heart of Adelaide, 5EBI is South Australia's premier multicultural radio station. I have had the pleasure of visiting the radio station on a number of occasions. I always have the pleasure of meeting so many different broadcasters and community volunteers there and I want to acknowledge them. They broadcast a variety of international music, world news, current affairs programs and more in dozens of languages, catering to South Australia's rich and diverse multicultural community. 5EBI is South Australia's only ethnic community radio station dedicated to giving a voice to non-English-speaking language groups and nationalities since the 1970s.

As a first-generation migrant I know full well the significant role ethnic radio stations play in the wellbeing and functioning of migrant communities. When I first arrived in Australia in 1979 with my family, who could not speak much English, I witnessed how hearing familiar voices and languages on air helps migrants connect with each other and share information. We should never underestimate the health benefits and entertainment values of music and songs in languages on radio, songs that bring joy, memories and stories and help to improve the wellbeing and sense of belonging in our migrant communities.

I want to begin by acknowledging and thanking the strong leadership team at 5EBI, including the founding members and past chairpersons and board members, for their amazing contributions over the years. I especially acknowledge the life members of 5EBI, who have been instrumental in the establishment and continued operation of 5EBI. Two members are well known to the parliament of South Australia and to many honourable members: the Hon. Julian Stefani AM and the Hon. Chris Sumner AM. The other life members include Gerry Paulus, Dieter Fabig OAM and Kym Green.

The current board is made up of a diverse and experienced group of individuals who are passionate not only about their own communities but also in supporting all multicultural communities and helping them to grow and expand. Thank you sincerely to the current board members: Dieter Fabig OAM, chairperson; Bogdan Wiencierz, vice-chairperson; Sigrid Brown, treasurer; Margaret Legedza, secretary; Narayana Rai, assistant secretary and treasurer; Peter Ppiros; Qasi Sharmin Sultana; and, John Thorton.

I especially highlight the longstanding contribution of Dieter Fabig. Although he has been the chairperson since 2023, his history and legacy with 5EBI goes back over 40 years, in which he has come to be known as the German voice on 5EBI radio. Since arriving in 1968, Dieter has greatly contributed to the German community, becoming the youngest ever president of the German Club, as well as founding member of the German Aged Care, in which he also served as its chairperson.

In 1981, Dieter began volunteering at 5EBI, presenting on German Voice, one of the earliest German language programs on radio in Australia. In 2005, Dieter became the president of German Voice. Although Dieter has climbed the ranks as a board member of 5EBI, he is still playing an active role as a radio presenter, working with the German language programs, as well as presenter on Morning Music Vitamins, a two-hour morning show held on weekdays presenting a wide selection of international music. In 1989, Dieter was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his outstanding service to the German community and multiculturalism. Thank you to Dieter for his amazing leadership, outstanding service and contribution to German radio as well as to the multicultural community.

As I mentioned earlier, 5EBI has been dedicated to serving our multicultural community since the 1970s. During this period ethnic broadcasting started as an experiment at Adelaide University's in-house radio station 5UV, which was also Australia's very first community radio station. Paul Kokke, 5EBI life member, said the radio program was originally set up to support migrants in their transition to Australian life, while also helping them to preserve their identity. People felt that radio was an opportunity to maintain their culture and language. This would lead to the establishment of Ethnic Broadcasters in 1975, beginning with five community groups from the Italian, Dutch, Polish, Ukrainian and Greek communities.

On Monday 3 March 1975, the very first broadcast of the Italian program Radio Paesani marked the start of ethnic broadcasting. In the last parliamentary sitting week, I spoke about the 50th anniversary of Radio Italiana, so that is the connection there—starting with Radio Paesani. Then of course it would be followed by the Dutch family program on Wednesday 5 March, and I want to quickly give a shout-out to the Hon. Michelle Lensink's family, who have also been greatly involved with the Dutch radio program on 5EBI.

Shortly afterwards the Ukrainian, Polish and Greek communities started their programs and have continued until this day. In just a few short years Ethnic Broadcasters would expand to include 26 community groups, all broadcasting out of the facilities at 5UV. With the group of Ethnic Broadcasters rapidly growing, there was a need for the radio station to finally go independent. This would lead to the application for an FM broadcast licence.

On 6 October 1978, 5EBI was granted the first ethnic public broadcasting licence in Australia. What a proud moment on the FM band. *The Advertiser* of 4 September 1978 reported that Ethnic Broadcasters Inc. had 'the initiative, energy and imagination' to make a bid for the two available FM licences. Until this day, the initiative, energy and imagination has never ceased.

On 6 January 1980, 5EBI made its FM debut on 102.3. The station's official launch would be on 2 February, with approximately 200,000 people tuning in. Over the years, 5EBI would continue to grow with more groups and languages being added and expanding across three state-of-the-art studios. At its peak, the 5EBI family was drawn from about 47 language communities and had approximately 500 volunteers. Each broadcasting language has its own radio committee, consisting of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and members.

5EBI was nation-leading again when, in 1984, in collaboration with 4EB in Brisbane, they helped establish a National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC). Luigi Penna, the vice-chairman of 5EBI at the time, was one of the first vice-presidents of NEMBC. Today, 5EBI can be heard not only on our radios but also on digital audio broadcast, online live and on-demand streaming on their website and the 5EBI app, which was newly launched in September 2024. I think it is fair to say that adopting modern communication technology certainly helped to build relevance and connections between different generations of migrant communities in South Australia.

With such a long history and legacy and many remarkable achievements, it was wonderful to see so many communities coming together to celebrate the 5EBI 50th anniversary on Sunday 9 March 2025, which I had the honour and privilege to attend. It was a fantastic gathering that

highlighted so many of the remarkable stories shared over five decades of service to our rich and diverse multicultural communities.

During the celebrations I was able to learn more about some of the hardworking staff and volunteers at 5EBI. Pattie Todorovic, the station's general manager, has been doing a fantastic job. Although she has only been there less than a year, her dedication has already made an impact at 5EBI. Pattie was also instrumental in working with the volunteers of the events committee to organise the fabulous 50th anniversary celebration.

I would also like to give particular mention to a great friend, Mr Kym Green, who is a life member and a very long serving station manager, who aptly steered the station through the turbulent waters of the COVID-19 pandemic. I worked really closely with Kym Green during the pandemic in the former government, because there were so many information needs to be shared, and the best way to do it is via more than 40 languages across a radio station. So I want to thank every one of those volunteers who helped greatly to safeguard the health and safety of South Australia during that time. Kym has spent his entire working life, spanning four decades, in the media and he continues to have a strong presence at 5EBI.

As I reflect on the history and legacy of 5EBI, we are reminded of the power of community and developing an intercultural society that can come together to share traditions, language and heritage. As president Dieter Fabig so eloquently stated, 5EBI 'provide an important bridge between the countries we came from and Australia, our home'. It is remarkable what strong leadership, good work ethic and community spirit can achieve. I look forward to continuing to work closely with 5EBI and wish them a heartfelt congratulations once again on 50 years of outstanding service to our vibrant multicultural community in South Australia. With those words, I commend the motion.

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

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT FEES NOTICE

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. H.M. Girolamo:

That the fees notice under the Births, Death and Marriages Registration Act 1996, made on 4 December 2024 and laid on the table of this council on 4 February 2025, be disallowed.

(Continued from 5 March 2025.)

The Hon. T.T. NGO (16:49): I rise today on behalf of the government to oppose the disallowance motion for the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act fees notice. As members will be aware, government fees and charges are reviewed not only to reflect inflation but to ensure that essential services can be sustained and improved for all South Australians. The fee increases at Births, Deaths and Marriages will support the increased number of searches conducted and certificates issued annually. In the 2021-22 financial year, 83,000 certificates were issued, and this number increased to 105,000 in the 2023-24 financial year.

The fees were last increased above indexation rates on 1 July 2019 by the former Liberal government. I was told that back then fees for all standard certificates were increased by \$4.75, and a 5 per cent increase was also applied to fees for occupational and security industry licences. The Labor Malinauskas government intends to balance the need to keep fees reasonable with the necessity of sustaining and adequately meeting the needs of all South Australians, both now and into the future.

I would like to acknowledge the concerns raised by the honourable member about the cost-of-living pressures. As the honourable member said, people often seek the services of Births, Deaths and Marriages during emotionally challenging times. Without discounting these concerns, the necessary increase of around \$5 for some certificates and services is relatively modest when compared to the broader cost of funeral services, legal framework and the like.

The alternative would be for Births, Deaths and Marriages to have administration inefficiencies that would impact grieving families and new parents in far more serious ways, such as delays in obtaining these essential documents. With that said, the government is opposed to this disallowance motion. Therefore, I do hope members support the proposed modest fee adjustments.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:52): We are currently facing a cost-of-living crisis, and I think it is very cheeky from such an arrogant government to not only slug South Australians with a CPI increase but also to sneak in another increase in such a challenging time for many people in this state. It is clear that the Hon. Tung Ngo has drawn the short straw again with having to deliver this message on behalf of the government.

It is just a shame that this government cannot see that they are effectively taxing, or increasing the amount people are having to pay, at this time of need. It is very disappointing that the government will not be supporting it, but I will continue to highlight the arrogance of this government. To not only increase by CPI but also to sneak this in is incredibly disappointing.

The council divided on the motion:

Ayes6
Noes8
Majority2

AYES

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

Girolamo, H.M. (teller)
Lee, J.S.

Henderson, L.A.
Pangallo, F.

NOES

El Dannawi, M.
Maher, K.J.
Simms, R.A.

Hanson, J.E.
Ngo, T.T. (teller)
Wortley, R.P.

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

PAIRS

Centofanti, N.J.
Bonaros, C.

Martin, R.B.
Hood, D.G.E.

Lensink, J.M.A.
Franks, T.A.

Motion thus negatived.

GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE, PORT LINCOLN RSL

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. S.L. Game:

That this council—

1. Recognises the Garden of Remembrance at the Port Lincoln RSL as a deeply significant site for the local community, providing a space for reflection, remembrance, education and connection for veterans and their families;
2. Commends the tireless efforts of the Port Lincoln RSL, its volunteers and the local veteran community in maintaining and preserving this important site;
3. Affirms the broader importance of honouring and supporting veterans across South Australia, not only through memorials but also by addressing the challenges they face post-service, including mental health and social reintegration; and
4. Calls for continued investment in initiatives that support veterans and their families, ensuring they receive the recognition, care and services they deserve.

(Continued from 5 March 2025.)

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (16:57): I rise to speak to the motion brought to the chamber by the Hon. Sarah Game MLC in support of the Garden of Remembrance maintained by the hardworking volunteers of the Port Lincoln RSL. The Garden of Remembrance stands as a living testament to the valour and sacrifice of those who have served our country.

The RSL was founded in 1916 to provide comradeship and to support Australian veterans and their families. Since 1930, the Garden of Remembrance has been wholly owned and maintained

by the Port Lincoln RSL, the only branch in South Australia with its own cemetery. The Garden of Remembrance is a memorial where Port Lincoln locals can pause and reflect on the sacrifices made by members of their community who served their country. This memorial garden pays tribute to over 550 service men and women veterans of several conflicts, including the Boer War, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Remembering and respecting the fallen is important for many reasons. It is fitting to pay respect to those who are willing to offer up the ultimate sacrifice and to serve their nation in its greatest hour of need. The garden offers a peaceful space where South Australia's war history is honoured and retained in living memory as an ongoing source of education and understanding for everyone in the community. Such memorials exist not to glorify war but to remember the lasting impact they have on communities like Port Lincoln and to pay respect to those who served.

This place is made possible by the dedication of the Port Lincoln RSL, a network of tireless volunteers and local veterans who work incredibly hard to maintain this site. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the tireless efforts of the Port Lincoln RSL and the local veteran community for the outstanding work they do in maintaining this significant memorial. These volunteers spend countless hours ensuring that the garden reflects the respect and care that our veterans deserve. Whether it is organising memorial events, tending to the grounds, or simply being there to support visitors their commitment ensures that the legacy of service and sacrifice is never forgotten, and is strongly held in the memory of future generations.

We must also remember that honouring our veterans extends far beyond the monuments and memorials dedicated to their service and their memory. These sites not only provide an opportunity to remember but also serve as a reminder of the ongoing challenges veterans face after their service. Across South Australia we know that many veterans face significant obstacles in reintegrating into life after their service ends, and the adjustment to life after service often includes physical and mental health challenges and the need for social support.

It is essential that these service personnel are honoured in actions as well as words and memorials. It is a long-held belief of the opposition that our veterans deserve continued investment and support for them and their families. We must ensure that they receive the recognition, the care and the services they deserve. These investments must go beyond memorials and ceremonies. They must include tangible, practical solutions that address the real and often difficult issues our veterans face.

We must continue to build a system that serves those who so selflessly served us. On that note, the opposition commends and supports the motion.

The Hon. T.T. NGO (17:00): I rise today to speak on behalf of the Labor Malinauskas government in support of this motion. We would like to thank the honourable member for recognising the Garden of Remembrance at the Port Lincoln RSL. This site commemorates our service men and women veterans of several conflicts including the Boer War, World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. It is the final resting place of more than 550 veterans and their spouses, and is one of only four cemeteries owned and maintained by RSL sub-branches in Australia.

In 2008, the South Australian government was the first state jurisdiction to recognise the importance of a state-based veterans affairs portfolio, and established Veterans SA as a result. As the lead advocates across the South Australian government on matters relating to veterans and their families, Veterans SA works with ex-service organisations and civic groups that provide support to members of the community when and where it is needed most. The agency also shares information about services, programs and opportunities across South Australia that are available to Australian Defence Force service men and women and their families. This work has a focus on post-service support.

Veterans SA assists with connections to health and employment services, which helps members make a positive and successful transition to civilian life. Veterans SA also works with the veteran community to ensure commemoration activities are supported, remembered and preserved for all South Australians. They also administer 14 grants each year on behalf of the South Australian government.

The Port Lincoln RSL approached Veterans SA in April 2024 to inquire about support, and I take this opportunity to congratulate them on successfully winning a \$14,365 grant for the Railway Place of Old project from the ANZAC Day Commemoration Fund. The South Australian government has also provided a three-year grant totalling \$75,000 which will support the Port Lincoln RSL to maintain and plan additions to the Garden of Remembrance. This grant commenced in the 2024 financial year and continues until 2026, providing \$25,000 in each of the three years.

I was told that the veterans' affairs minister, the Hon. Joe Szakacs, visited the Port Lincoln RSL in February 2025 and toured the Garden of Remembrance. At the time, Minister Szakacs was provided with a progress update which confirmed that the murals for the main hall and tranche 1 developments at the garden are on track to be completed by ANZAC Day.

Memorials such as this are also a place of education, connection and healing where veterans and local communities can gather. The ongoing efforts of the Port Lincoln RSL, its volunteers and the local veteran community in preserving this site are truly commendable and reflect the deep respect and gratitude we owe to those who have served our nation. Honouring our veterans goes beyond maintaining memorials. This motion is a meaningful step towards reaffirming our commitment to those who have served, and rightfully affirms the broader responsibility we all share in supporting past, present and future veterans when they transition back to civilian life.

On that note, the Labor Malinauskas government is proud to support this project and many others like it around the state. We thank the honourable member once again for her motion, and we will continue to work with members of this parliament to honour those who have sacrificed so much for us.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (17:06): I rise today in strong support of the motion moved by the Hon. Sarah Game, recognising the importance and deep significance of the Garden of Remembrance at the Port Lincoln RSL, both for veterans and for our broader community. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the honourable member for co-hosting the 2025 Parliamentary Friends of Veterans Forum with the minister and shadow minister for veterans' affairs yesterday, which I had the pleasure and honour to attend.

Established in 1916, the Returned and Services League, better known as the RSL, has long been a vital institution in Australian society, advocating tirelessly for the rights, welfare and recognition of those who have served our country in conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Today, nearly 48,000 South Australians proudly call themselves veterans, each bearing their own unique stories of courage, sacrifice and service.

The Garden of Remembrance at the Port Lincoln RSL holds special significance within this proud tradition. It is much more than a memorial; it is a sacred space dedicated to reflection, remembrance, education, and connection. Over 550 veterans and their spouses rest there, commemorated for their service in conflicts from the Boer War through both World Wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and beyond. The cemetery stands as one of only four in Australia fully owned and maintained by an RSL sub-branch.

I want to acknowledge the President of the RSL Port Lincoln Branch, Mr Gary Clough, and his team of hardworking, resilient volunteers and their families who ensure that the Garden of Remembrance serves effectively as a memorial—a place to reflect, to honour and to heal. Yet, despite its importance, this treasured site faces an ongoing struggle. The dedicated volunteers of the Port Lincoln RSL bear the heavy responsibility of maintaining the garden largely on their own. They work tirelessly, demonstrating great resilience and creativity, often relying heavily on community fundraising and social initiatives such as a recent GoFundMe campaign to meet even the most basic maintenance needs.

While their efforts are commendable and deeply inspiring, the question must be asked: why should these volunteers have to struggle so profoundly to fulfil what is undeniably a collective social responsibility? The maintenance of the Garden of Remembrance is not merely about preserving history or beautifying a landscape; it is about honouring the legacy of those who sacrificed so much for our freedom. It is about educating future generations on the true cost of war and peace, ensuring the stories of sacrifice, courage and resilience are never forgotten—but honouring our veterans

extends beyond memorials alone. We must also address the significant challenges veterans face when they transition from military service to civilian life.

Issues such as mental health, employment barriers, social isolation and difficulties adapting back into everyday life demand serious, sustained attention and investment. It is crucial that we as a parliament, as a society, actively invest in initiatives and support services that facilitate meaningful integration of veterans into civilian life. We have a moral obligation to help them continue making valuable contributions to our community. Properly funding these initiatives not only honours their past service but actively supports their future, allowing veterans to continue serving society in new and fulfilling ways.

In supporting this motion, let us commit not just to the memory of those who have served but to meaningful, practical and ongoing support for veterans, their families and those who dedicate themselves to maintaining such important places as the Garden of Remembrance in Port Lincoln. With those remarks, I fully support the honourable member's motion.

The Hon. S.L. GAME (17:10): Thank you to the members who have contributed to the motion: the Hon. Ben Hood, the Hon. Tung Ngo and the Hon. Jing Lee. I rise to sum up the motion that I introduced to the chamber on Wednesday 5 March. This motion stresses the importance of preserving sites of remembrance and strengthening our commitment to the wellbeing of our veterans.

Memorials like the Garden of Remembrance are more than just places of tribute; they are symbols of gratitude, education and reflection. They ensure the stories of our service men and women are passed down to future generations and remind us of the sacrifices made to protect our freedoms. Preserving these sites is not just about maintaining physical spaces; it is about demonstrating our ongoing respect for those who served. But remembrance alone is not enough. If we are truly committed to honouring our veterans, we must do more to address the challenges they continue to face.

Far too many veterans struggle with mental health issues, social reintegration and financial insecurity after their service ends. The mental health statistics are deeply concerning. According to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, an average of 78 serving or ex-serving ADF members die by suicide each year, equivalent to three lives lost every fortnight. Ex-serving males are 42 per cent more likely to die by suicide than the broader male population, with those in combat roles facing even greater risk. For ex-serving females, the situation is even worse. They are 2.1 times more likely to die by suicide than their civilian counterparts.

These figures demand urgent action. Our responsibility to veterans does not end when their service does. It continues in the years and decades that follow. We must improve mental health support, expand reintegration services and provide greater resources to ensure no veteran feels forgotten or abandoned. This motion is a step in the right direction, but it cannot be the last. As we preserve sites of remembrance, we must also invest in the wellbeing of those these memorials honour. I commend the motion to the council.

Motion carried.

MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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

That this council—

1. Congratulates the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia (MCCSA) for reaching the significant milestone of its 50th anniversary in 2025;
2. Recognises MCCSA has been supporting migrant communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds since it was established in 1995 and that its foundations were laid in 1975;
3. Acknowledges that MCCSA is the peak organisation representing more than 120 multicultural organisations and delivers a wide range of programs to increase the capacity of its member organisations and advocate for the needs and aspirations of CALD organisations, communities and individuals;
4. Thanks the MCCSA Patron, the Hon. Hieu Van Le AC; Chairperson, Miriam Cocking; Chief Executive Officer, Helena Kyriazopoulos OAM; executive team members; board members; staff;

and supporters for their dedication and contributions to serving and empowering the diverse multicultural community in South Australia; and

5. Commends MCCSA for its significant contributions toward enhancing multiculturalism and interculturalism in our state and for supporting all people from CALD backgrounds to realise their potential as active contributors to the economic, political, social and cultural life of South Australia.

(Continued from 5 March 2025.)

The Hon. L.A. HENDERSON (17:14): I rise briefly as the lead speaker on behalf of the opposition in support of the Hon. Jing Lee's motion to acknowledge the achievements of the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia, which is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary. This remarkable milestone is a testament to the enduring dedication and hard work of all those involved, from staff to volunteers.

Almost one-third of Australians were born overseas. Many of us know the struggles associated with being a stranger in a foreign land: navigating cultural differences, language barriers, homesickness, social isolation, access to services and even identity struggles. The Multicultural Communities Council has a longstanding history of representing and supporting the needs of culturally diverse communities as they find their feet within the broader South Australian community. Founded in 1975, the council prides itself on its commitment to cultural exchange and empowerment, and it has grown to represent 125 member organisations.

Among its many achievements, the council has advocated for policy changes at local, state and national levels, provided settlement services to facilitate smooth transitions into Australian life, organised celebrations and events that build bridges cross-culturally, conducted research into the evolving needs of multicultural communities, and supported the provision of language and translation services. Through their ongoing services, leadership and community engagement the council has helped migrants and their families integrate, contribute to society and realise their full potential in Australia.

In celebrating 50 years of service, we reaffirm our commitment to supporting and strengthening the multicultural fabric of South Australia, ensuring that people from all backgrounds can continue to contribute meaningfully to our society.

The Hon. T.T. NGO (17:16): I rise today on behalf of the Malinauskas Labor government to speak on this motion, which recognises the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia (MCCSA) for reaching its 50th anniversary in 2025. On behalf of the government, we thank the honourable member for her motion, as we acknowledge the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia's remarkable milestone.

The boom in migration to Australia after the Second World War saw the rise of community organisations, and it became apparent that a voice representing and supporting all our multicultural communities was absolutely vital. Migrant communities embraced their new home, but they also wanted to share and pass on their culture in a way that included everyone. The foundations of the MCCSA were laid in 1975 with the formation of the Ethnic Communities Council of South Australia, followed by its official establishment in 1995. Since then, MCCSA has grown into a peak body that represents over 120 multicultural organisations, making an invaluable contribution to the social, economic and cultural fabric of our state.

For half a century, this is an organisation that has been at the forefront of supporting and empowering our multicultural communities, ensuring that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have the opportunities, services and representation they deserve. This has included offering targeted programs in community development and social support groups for the aged, youth, children and people with disabilities. The Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme connects bilingual volunteers with socially isolated older Australians. This program is especially valued by our older socially isolated Australians from diverse backgrounds, as it offers companionship as well as the opportunity to preserve their cultural heritage.

Through advocacy and programs that have brought people together, the Multicultural Communities Council of SA has helped countless individuals and communities find their voice, strengthen their identity and fully participate in Australian society. The culturalQ program helps businesses and organisations learn how to work better with people from different cultures. The

MCCSA's training and advice is helping to make workplaces more inclusive and welcoming for everyone in South Australia.

These are just some of the many services that the MCCSA offers to our community. I would like to personally acknowledge the dedication of its entire team, including past and present board members, leaders, staff, and past and present volunteers. This team includes the patron, the Hon. Hieu Van Le AC; the chairperson, Mrs Miriam Cocking; and the CEO, Ms Helena Kyriazopoulos OAM. Thank you all for the significant contributions you have made, especially the CEO, Helena Kyriazopoulos, who has been a stable hand and inspirational leader with the MCCSA since 2014.

The Labor Malinauskas government commends the MCCSA's legacy of service and leadership. I do acknowledge that our multicultural affairs minister, the Hon. Zoe Bettison MP, values its expertise and the support it gives to her role in shaping a more inclusive and diverse future for South Australia.

The team of the MCCSA continue with their tireless efforts in fostering multiculturalism and inclusion and sharing diverse traditions so that our understanding about other cultures can continue to grow. This is an organisation that deserves our deepest gratitude, and may it continue its vital work for many years to come. With that, the Malinauskas government wholeheartedly supports this motion and once again congratulates the MCCSA on this special milestone.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (17:22): I would like to thank the Hon. Laura Henderson and the Hon. Tung Ngo for their very generous remarks in congratulating the MCCSA on their 50th anniversary. I am sure their contributions will be cherished and appreciated by the MCCSA. I commend the motion.

Motion carried.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. T.A. Franks:

That the transcript of evidence taken by the Budget and Finance Committee at its meeting on 3 April 2024 from the South Australian Museum and attached supplementals tabled in the council on Tuesday 26 November 2024 be referred to the Statutory Authorities Review Committee for its consideration.

(Continued from 27 November 2024.)

The Hon. M. EL DANNAWI (17:22): I rise to speak on behalf of the government in support of the honourable member's motion. As honourable members are no doubt aware, the proposed restructure of the South Australian Museum was put on hold and was the subject of a Premier's review to examine the options for the Museum going forward. Following the establishment of this review, the Hon. Tammy Franks moved to establish the Statutory Authorities Review Committee inquiry. The committee, chaired by the Hon. Justin Hanson, has been taking evidence from stakeholders, including the former chair and director of the Museum.

The Premier's review has now concluded. Its membership drew on the expertise of the South Australian Chief Scientist, Professor Craig Simmons, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Museum, Dr Jim Thompson PSM. The Premier and the Minister for Arts met with several interested parties concerned about proposed changes to the Museum, including the then chair of the Museum Board, Kim Cheater, and the then chief executive, Dr David Gaimster.

Following these discussions, the Premier and the minister decided it was in the best interests of public trust in the institution to pause the restructure. Upon conclusion of the review in September 2024, the panel handed down a report with six recommendations highlighting key opportunities to enhance the Museum's effectiveness in delivering high quality outcomes for South Australians and visitors. The proposed changes and restructure of the Museum that prompted the review have been withdrawn, and no organisational changes will be proposed until the recommendations have been implemented. The six recommendations were:

1. Cease all proposed changes;
2. Develop a new strategic vision and plan;
3. Develop a research strategy and explore sustainable research models;

4. Develop a collections management plan;
5. Investigate financial and commercial opportunities; and
6. Conduct an asset management and infrastructure study.

The Museum is incredibly important to the people of South Australia, and the Museum Board is focused on delivering the recommendations made by the Premier's review panel.

It should be noted that the Malinauskas government has made significant investments in arts and culture in our state, with an additional investment of \$144 million in the arts and cultural sector made by this government in this term so far. This is a government that supports South Australia's arts and cultural sector. I commend the motion to the chamber.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (17:25): I thank the Hon. Mira El Dannawi for her contribution and the support from the government. At the request of the Hon. Tammy Franks and on her behalf, I will make a brief contribution and then bring this motion to a vote.

As stated by the Hon. Ms Franks in this place upon moving this motion, it is a simple proposition. The transcript of evidence taken by the Budget and Finance Committee from the South Australian Museum would be useful to the Statutory Authorities Review Committee's current inquiry into the South Australian Museum and Art Gallery of South Australia. As such, this motion will refer the transcript of the Budget and Finance Committee to SARC for its consideration. With that, I commend the motion to the chamber.

Motion carried.

Bills

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ELECTIONS) (AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN AND COMPULSORY VOTING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 13 November 2024.)

The Hon. J.S. LEE (17:26): I rise today to speak on the Local Government (Elections) (Australian Citizen and Compulsory Voting) Amendment Bill 2024. I thank the Hon. Frank Pangallo for bringing this bill to the chamber and for his clear commitment to strengthening the democratic processes that we hold so dear in this place.

This bill makes two key changes to the Local Government (Elections) Act to align the eligibility and voting requirements of local council elections in South Australia with federal and state elections. The bill would amend the enrolment criteria so that all natural persons must be Australian citizens to be eligible to vote in a South Australian local government election. I understand the honourable member intends for this change to protect local government elections from so-called branch stacking or actively recruiting non-citizens, such as international students, to become politically active in electorates where they only live temporarily.

I believe that revisiting the enrolment criteria has its merits, particularly given the widely publicised legal battle surrounding the 2022 Adelaide City Council Central Ward election. It is very disturbing that the District Court has now ruled that illegal practices did impact the 2022 Adelaide City Council election results and that there were a number of instances where ballot papers were handled or not filled by the intended voters.

While I can certainly see the logic in requiring that residents and ratepayers must be Australian citizens to vote in local government elections, I am concerned, however, that permanent residents will be disenfranchised by this bill. While permanent residents do not have to make a pledge of commitment and pledge their loyalty to Australia like naturalised citizens, especially those who have been here for perhaps 10, 20, 30 or 40 years, they do have a much stronger connection with Australia than temporary visa holders, such as international students.

I know of many permanent residents who have lived in Australia for many years, even decades, who for a range of reasons do not apply for Australian citizenship. However, they are strongly attached to their local communities, and some of them have children and grandchildren who were born in Australia and are Australian citizens. Many permanent residents are business owners and landlords who contribute greatly to the economy and community in their local council areas and who should arguably have a say in the decisions and policies of local government.

Turning now to the second change that is proposed by this bill, I believe that it is reasonable and logical for voting in local government elections to be compulsory just as it is at the state and federal level. Historically, only one-third of voters choose to vote in their local council elections, and councils also struggle to find enough diverse candidates willing to stand for election.

At the 2022 local government elections, there were 24 wards or areas across the state where all the candidates who nominated were elected unopposed. Seven of these required supplementary elections, as there were not enough candidates to fill all the vacant positions. I am incredibly proud as an Australian that we have compulsory voting at the state and federal level, encouraging all of our citizens to actively participate and engage in our democracy and ensuring that government must consider the whole electorate in decision-making. Time and again in countries overseas we see money and effort go into pleading with citizens just to go out and vote, let alone actually engaging voters about policies and key issues.

Over the past 20 years, the local government sector has been making increasingly large investments in promoting elections both to encourage nominations and to increase voter turnout. Despite these investments, engagement with councils at election times has remained at consistently low rates. I understand that voting in local government elections is already compulsory in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. It makes perfect sense that compulsory voting should be extended to the local government tier as well to encourage all voters to engage with the local council, which is responsible for the planning, maintenance, land care, community facilities and services that impact our daily lives.

I would hope that such a change would encourage increased voter turnout and increase our democracy and interest in standing for election at the local level to enhance the integrity of our democratic system. I thank the honourable member once again for bringing this bill to the chamber for our consideration.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (17:32): I rise to speak on the bill on behalf of the Greens and indicate that the Greens will be supporting this bill's passage through the upper house, albeit with a few reservations, and I will talk a little bit about those. The Hon. Jing Lee has articulated very clearly, I think, the two main elements of this bill. The first relates to a tightening of eligibility requirements for voting in council elections. Currently, residents are given the opportunity to vote. What the Hon. Frank Pangallo is proposing is that that franchise be restricted to citizens, in line with the voting that we see in state and federal elections. Additionally, the honourable member through this bill is supporting compulsory voting, again bringing council elections in line with state and federal elections.

On the issue of the voter roll and restricting the franchise to citizens, I do have some concerns with what the honourable member is proposing. Those concerns mirror those expressed by the Hon. Jing Lee; that is, we do not want to disenfranchise long-term members of the community, people who are part of our council communities who may not necessarily be formal citizens but who want a stake in the future of their local government. Indeed, many state jurisdictions in Australia extend the opportunity to vote to permanent residents.

I guess where South Australia is a little bit different, though, is that we do not have the same requirements in terms of permanent residency status for voting in council elections, so people can be living in a particular council precinct for a very short time and then get themselves on the roll and exercise a vote.

I can see the potential under that system for things to go awry, and so it is on that basis that the Greens will support this, recognising that of course if it passes this house there will be an opportunity to work with the government and the Hon. Frank Pangallo to address some of the implementation issues. Indeed, it would be our hope that the government, in contemplating this, will look very closely at what happens in other jurisdictions.

I want to also talk a little bit about the Greens' position on compulsory voting in council elections. I must say I am a late convert to this debate, having been elected as a city councillor more than 10 years ago now. One of the things I thought was attractive about local government was the fact that you had Independents, community-minded people who could be elected outside of the political party banner. I think that is a good feature of our democratic system.

What we know, however, is that people can still be members of political parties, and that may not necessarily be known to the voter when they cast their vote. This became a real issue in the Adelaide City Council elections in 2018, when you saw a group of Liberals under the Team Adelaide banner, who stood under the leadership of failed preselection candidate Houssam Abiad and failed Liberal Party candidate Alex Hyde, now party director, members of the Liberal Party who put themselves forward as just a group that were working closely together but were actually operating as a factional group, a secret faction.

They were elected to city council and then denied that they were members of a faction but voted as a factional group on most issues. This has been well documented in the media. That does concern me. I think voters have a right to know what political parties these candidates are connected to. That is one of the reasons why the Greens advocated strongly during the last local government elections to tighten the disclosure regime around political party membership so that voters got that information before they exercised their vote, rather than after the vote.

The problem is, though, of course that because of the optional voting system these loose factional groups are able to be formed, and the connection may not be transparent to voters. One of the benefits of compulsory voting is that people may well run under a political party banner and therefore that connection is going to be more transparent to voters.

We also know, of course, that we suffer from a very low turnout in council elections. In the last local government elections held in South Australia, in November 2022, approximately 400,000 people participated. That is a turnout of around 32 per cent of the eligible voting population. There is a bit of a difference between metro and country turnout, but it is not huge. In metropolitan areas, the turnout is generally higher compared to country areas. For example, in the City of Adelaide the turnout was around 40 per cent. Some country areas have lower participation rates, such as the District Council of Ceduna, which saw turnout of about 25 per cent.

I guess the risk when you have such low turnout is that some of these loose factional groups can wield disproportionate influence over a particular council, as we saw with the failed Team Adelaide faction led by councillors Abiad and Hyde of the Liberal Party. It is my hope that if we see this reform we might be able to safeguard councils against those sorts of antics in the future. I am open to this on that basis.

I also want to touch on one of the issues that the Hon. Jing Lee mentioned, which is the ongoing legal matter that is unfolding in Adelaide City Council. I saw that the Lord Mayor shared a statement on her social media account from the CEO of the City of Adelaide, and I thought it might be useful to just read that statement into *Hansard* because I suspect some other members may reflect on what's going on with the city council, and I think it is useful to get this information on the public record. The CEO advised the Adelaide City Council—I have a transcript of his remarks on 11 March. He said:

...on Friday the seventh of March, the Court of Disputed Returns delivered judgment in the matter of Hyde, ECSA and Li.

That matter concerned a petition filed in the court by Mr Alexander Hyde contesting the validity of the 2022 periodic election, which resulted in the election of four councillors to represent council's central ward.

In upholding the petition in part, the court found that the election was affected by illegal practices and that those illegal practices affected the outcome of the election.

At the request of counsel for Mr Hyde, the court has adjourned the matter to 4 April 2025 to allow time for the parties to make submissions regarding what orders the courts should make as a result of its judgment.

As the court has not yet made any orders, each of the central ward councillors continue to hold office as members of council in accordance with the terms of the Local Government Act.

Those councillors are entitled to attend council meetings, committee meetings and information and briefing sessions in the ordinary way unless and until the court orders otherwise.

Importantly, section 40 of the Local Government Act makes it clear that there is no risk to the validity or lawfulness of any of the decisions of council since the 2022 periodic elections arising from the findings of the court, including at tonight's council meeting. Any council decision made prior to the court's orders taking effect will remain valid even after the court makes orders finalising the proceedings.

I do think that's an important statement to put on the public record because I know there is a significant concern around the legitimacy of the council. The CEO makes clear the implications of the court's findings thus far. In closing, the Greens are supportive of this bill moving through to the next stage. We do have some reservations. It is our hope that those can be teased out through collaboration with the Hon. Frank Pangallo and the government. With that, I conclude my remarks.

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (17:42): I rise to speak on behalf of the government in regard to this matter. Following the 2022 local government elections, the state government launched a comprehensive community consultation process which canvassed the opinions and suggestions about improving participation. A Local Government Participation and Elections Review discussion paper was then released and public consultation was conducted on that via YourSAy over a period of approximately five months. In total, nearly 8,000 people visited the review's YourSAy page. There were 92 submissions received and 406 surveys completed. The government has received these findings and is currently considering them.

The other important input into the consideration of potential change to local government elections is the Electoral Commissioner's periodic review of the 2022 local government elections. It is anticipated that this report will be published in coming weeks. That will provide the final necessary advice for the government, and indeed this place, to consider reform in any comprehensive way. The community would be best served by a parliament considering a single package of reforms ahead of the 2026 elections to ensure that any changes that are made are made with an effective wider framework.

The Hon. Frank Pangallo's bill seeks to require voters in local government elections to be Australian citizens and, indeed, to make voting in local government elections compulsory for all enrolled voters. The government recognises that there are respectable arguments on both sides of these proposals, and is willing to support the passage of the bill through this place to allow continued debate and discussion; however, the government will consider its final position on these proposals between the houses following consideration of the Electoral Commissioner's report. The government may return to parliament with an election improvement package of its own where these and indeed other related matters can be collectively considered by all members.

The Hon. S.L. GAME (17:44): I rise to speak briefly on the Hon. Frank Pangallo's Local Government (Elections) (Australian Citizen and Compulsory Voting) Amendment Bill. As outlined by the honourable member, this bill has two components, and initially I shall speak in support of the first component regarding voter eligibility. This bill seeks to align eligibility to vote in local government elections in South Australia with federal and state voting eligibility. As we know, non-citizens are unable to vote in federal and state elections, yet are permitted to vote in council elections in South Australia.

Decisions made by South Australia's 68 councils impact many facets of our everyday lives, including roads and path maintenance, plus a long list of other public infrastructure, housing and business approvals and the provision of various community services. CEOs and council staff make recommendations on all these matters, but it is elected members who are empowered to ultimately make decisions—decisions that require ratepayer dollars.

Those who vote in local government elections hold the power to influence and impact council elections, many of which have far-reaching consequences via who they elect every four years. Therefore, it is only fair that these people have a vested interest in their communities and are not in any way temporary residents. This component of the honourable member's bill helps reinforce the integrity of local government elections and subsequent decision-making and, as such, I support that principle.

The second component of the honourable member's bill is making voting in local government elections compulsory. I do not support this principle, chiefly because the notion of compulsory democracy is an oxymoron. It turns the basic principle of democratic government on its head. In addition, the idea that low voter turnout at any election somehow reflects poorly on eligible voters is

a flawed assumption. In fact, not voting sends a much clearer and louder message than having disengaged voters simply ticking off their names for the sake of avoiding fines. Choosing not to vote is effectively saying 'none of the above deserve my vote'—a powerful form of political expression.

The message is this: show me a candidate with ideas worth supporting and I will vote for them. Compulsory voting has other downsides. For many people forced to vote it reduces political contest to a least worst option exercise, and it means elections are decided by disengaged voters. At other levels of government, this makes candidates more likely to promise unnecessary spending to appeal to this group at the expense of sensible, financially responsible policy. In short, disengaged voters forced against their will to vote hold a disproportionately significant influence. Remember, levels of disengagement can only truly be measured in voluntary participation elections.

My message—in not supporting compulsory voting at the local government level and, by extension, not supporting that aspect of the honourable member's bill—is that it remains the responsibility of candidates to provide policies that do engage eligible voters. Earn their vote; do not force people to vote for you. I support the truly democratic principle of voluntary voting at the local government level.

Instead of trying to introduce compulsory voting at council elections, I believe we may need to focus on the functionality and efficiency of local government. We would do this by better scrutinising discretionary spending decisions at the local government level and also by ensuring that elected members are able to speak up and speak on behalf of their constituents without the threat of action being taken against them for going against official council policy.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (17:47): The bill before us today seeks to address two distinct issues: the eligibility for non-citizens to vote in local government elections and the introduction of compulsory voting at a local level. The opposition supports efforts to strengthen the integrity of our electoral system, and we agree that voting in local government elections should be consistent with state and federal elections reserved for Australian citizens. However, we do not support the push for compulsory voting in local council elections and we will be moving an amendment to strike out that provision, although I do thank the honourable member and his commitment to seeing the democratic process here upheld in South Australia at a local, state and federal level.

At both state and federal levels, Australian citizenship is a prerequisite for voting, yet under the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 no such requirement exists for local government elections in South Australia. This anomaly has led to concerns about non-citizens influencing election outcomes, particularly in areas with large international student populations. The recent Adelaide City Council elections have exposed serious flaws in our system.

Following the 2022 Adelaide City Council election, the Electoral Commission of SA rejected 23 Adelaide City Council Central Ward ballots after it found they had not been returned by residents whose names were attached to the voting slips. The ballots came from four apartment buildings in the Adelaide City Council's Central Ward, where the vote harvesting scam targeting international students allegedly had taken place. The District Court later found that Councillor Jing Li was elected through illegal practices, including ballot harvesting. Judge Michael Burnett found, on the balance of probabilities, that more than 24 votes had been cast for Councillor Li where illegal practices had affected the result.

As former Councillor Alexander Hyde put it, 'This is a win for democracy but serious questions still linger.' Mr Hyde went on to say:

This judgement, among other things, means that a capital city election in Australia was affected through illegal activities...it has serious implications.

He is right. This case proves that ballot harvesting is not just a theoretical risk, it has happened and it has changed an election result. This finding, which is the first court of disputed returns case in almost half a century to be successful, is a damning indictment on the conduct in recent local government elections but also the conduct since.

Repeatedly in this chamber questions have been asked of the Attorney-General and consistently they have been ignored or handballed. Repeated questions have been asked of local government ministers in the other place and, again, consistently they have been ignored. It begets

the question: why has the state Labor Party not had any interest in these allegations of voter fraud and corruption in our capital city council? Why have they not acted to safeguard the integrity of our electoral system? Why have they not investigated the voter manipulation by foreign nationals in Australia? Why have they not investigated allegations heard in court that the Chinese consulate in Adelaide was approached to assist a domestic election in Australia?

The answer to me is clear: the Adelaide City councillor at the centre of these illegal practices, Mr Jing Li, was a member of the Labor Party up until the time he ran for council. This is detailed on the Electoral Commissioner's website. Mr Li used to work for the Labor government in the Department of State Development, where he held an executive position under Rik Morris. Yes, that is right, the same Rik Morris who is the chief executive of the Premier's Delivery Unit, the right-hand man of Peter Malinauskas, who is paid by the taxpayer over \$386,000 per year.

I have with me documents released under freedom of information. They contain emails between Rik Morris and Jing Li relating to his Adelaide City Council election. This details the closeness of Mr Li to Labor's most senior people. It is not surprising then that there were also allegations of Jing Li offering to secure an attendance of the Premier himself at an event where one of his supporters was opening a new bar.

We also know that Jing Li had such influence in the South Australian Labor Party such as he held an event in support of his campaign with three—that is right, three—Labor cabinet ministers in on the invite, being the Minister for Police, the Minister for Correctional Services and the Minister for Tourism. Some Labor backbenchers in marginal seats would be lucky to see so many ministers turn out to support such events.

I think we have the answer as to why Labor did not want to look under the hood of the Adelaide City Council election—because it was a mess that was created which leads right back to them. The inference is readily available that the state Labor government buried its head in the sand because they did not want to take action against one of their own, nor did they want to uncover the seedy underbelly that some of their senior members were embroiled in.

The fruits of Labor's actions are easy to see. We have in the Adelaide City Council a Labor-dominated chamber. The Lord Mayor is a former Labor cabinet minister. We have two other Labor party members who sit in that chamber and deliberate on matters, and we now have the now former Labor Party member Jing Li. The Labor Party is not supporting this bill because they believe in it. They are not supporting it because they have concerns about the integrity of the elections otherwise they would have done so earlier. They are supporting it in the hope that this sordid political saga will just go away.

We have before us a mess that includes the use of foreign nationals to influence a local election in South Australia; allegations of a foreign power being enlisted to assist in this election; allegations of senior members of government being available to participate in activities on the verges of this scheme—all orchestrated by a member of the Labor Party who has enough pull internally to call upon the Premier's right-hand man and deploy cabinet ministers en masse to support his political goals.

So we have our answers: the Labor Party and the Labor government are up to their elbows in this mess and they should take responsibility for it and submit to a comprehensive investigation as to how far this rot goes within the government. By restricting voter rights to Australian citizens, we can close this loophole, this rot, to prevent further abuse and restore confidence in our democratic process. The case for restricting voter rights to Australian citizens is a strong one and the opposition supports this part of the bill.

The second aspect of this bill seeks to introduce compulsory voting in local government elections, bringing South Australia in line with four other states. Currently, only SA and Western Australia maintain the voluntary system. In the last local government elections in 2022, voter turnout sat at just 33 per cent. Last year, the Voice referendum, which was also voluntary in South Australia, saw similarly low participation rates. Low voter turnout raises legitimate concerns about democratic representation.

Critics argue that low engagement means a small, motivated minority can wield disproportionate influence, leading to poor governance outcomes. Others suggest that compulsory voting would force greater accountability on candidates, making elections more reflective of the broader community. However, there are significant issues with applying the compulsory voting model to local government elections. Unlike state and federal elections, which require in-person voting, South Australian council elections are conducted by postal ballot. This creates accessibility issues, particularly for regional and rural voters who often receive and return their ballots outside of voting deadlines.

Moreover, local government campaigns typically receive less media attention and much fewer resources, leading to lower levels of voter turnout. There is also the fundamental issue of choice. Many South Australians feel that compulsory voting is undemocratic, that the right to vote should also include the right to abstain.

While state and federal elections have compulsory attendance, no-one is forced to cast a formal vote, but in local government elections where candidates often have limited policy platforms and minimal public scrutiny, forcing people to participate risks increasing informal votes rather than genuine democratic engagement.

The bill introduced by the Hon. Frank Pangallo does represent two separate issues: one is that the restriction of voting rights for Australian citizens is a necessary reform that strengthens the integrity of our electoral system; the other is that the introduction of compulsory voting for local councils is a far more contentious proposal, one that many in the community oppose.

The opposition will move an amendment to this bill to remove the compulsory voting provision. We believe that forcing participation with low voter engagement and logistical challenges will not necessarily lead to better democratic outcomes. However, we recognise that this is an issue that the government would rather avoid debating. If this bill proceeds to the House of Assembly, it will force the government to take a position on the issue that is of significant interest to voters. Our focus remains on ensuring South Australians have a fair and transparent electoral system, one that protects the voter against manipulation while respecting the individual freedoms. I commend the bill to the council with our proposed amendment.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (17:57): I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Hon. Jing Lee, the Hon. Robert Simms, the Hon. Justin Hanson, the Hon. Sarah Game and the Hon. Ben Hood. I will note the local government experience of three of those members—the Hon. Justin Hanson, the Hon. Robert Simms and the Hon. Ben Hood—who understand what happens in local government. I appreciate their contributions in this debate.

I am disappointed and surprised that Liberal members in this place could not bring themselves to support compulsory voting as it applies in the federal and state sphere. Quite simply, it actually encourages integrity and transparency—that is what it is all about—and I cannot accept their reasoning, nor that of the Hon. Sarah Game.

It is important that we seek ways to boost community participation in local government elections. Thirty-two per cent turnouts are far too low considering the responsibilities, fiscal and in provision of services, council have today compared to previous decades. They are a bigger business with more staff and revenues to manage. There is no point in ratepayers whinging about their council decisions if they do not make the effort to go out on polling day and exercise their democratic right at the ballot box.

This is all about achieving efficient and responsible democracy in our community and I am sure this will eventuate—probably after my time in this place. Tasmania already also has implemented this measure and it has resulted in a significant increase in voter participation. I thank the members for the support of the eligibility-to-vote provision that all natural persons must be an Australian citizen when enrolling.

As has already been pointed out by members in their second reading speeches, this could not have been more timely, given the recent Court of Disputed Returns decision that there had been illegal practices with ballot papers in Central Ward of the 2022 Adelaide City Council elections and evidence that was given in the court that ballot papers were tampered with and were linked to foreign

Chinese students who were eligible for the supplementary roll after only being in residence for 30 days or more. This was a disturbing precedent, but one which I had warned about in this chamber several times over the years I have been a member. This is an integrity measure and one that relates directly to our national security, a warning that had actually been issued by ASIO in one of its bulletins regarding foreign influences.

Prominent Adelaide developer Theo Maras called me to express his support, pointing out that he only has one vote in the City of Adelaide but makes far more significant contributions to the welfare and the economic situation of the city and the state than a group of foreign students. I congratulate former Adelaide City Council member Alex Hyde on his perseverance in taking the legal action which has seen the election of members declared void in that ward. As I said, it was unprecedented and it was coming. I was surprised that the Electoral Commission of South Australia was stridently opposed to that action.

This bill will protect local government elections from branch stacking or vote harvesting behaviours such as those we saw at the 2022 Adelaide City Council elections. Finally, I want to thank and pay tribute to a long-serving Naracoorte Lucindale councillor, Ken Grundy, who first alerted me to this issue in 2018, the year I was elected. It has been a long road, but I am gratified that this reform has been supported by the majority of members in this place.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clause 1.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: I move:

Amendment No 1 [Hood-1]—

Page 2, lines 4 and 5—Delete 'and Compulsory Voting'

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I wish to indicate that the Greens will not be supporting these amendments. I find them very curious amendments. If people are serious about trying to improve the integrity in our council elections, I would have thought that compulsory voting was a pretty effective way of doing that, so, no, the Greens will not be supportive of the amendments.

The Hon. J.E. HANSON: Consistent with what is occurring, obviously the government's position, as stated in the speech that we put forward, was that we are supporting it in its current format and will not be supporting any amendments.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: I indicate that I will not be supporting the amendment.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I will not be supporting the amendment.

Amendment negated; clause passed.

Remaining clauses (2 to 5), schedule and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (18:05): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Motions

WINE INDUSTRY

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

That this council—

1. Recognises the importance of South Australia's wine industry to the state's domestic and international export economy;
2. Acknowledges the resilience of our wine grapegrowers through a time of uncertainty and the need to explore structural adjustments on-farm going forward;
3. Urges the Malinauskas Labor government to enable more diverse global partnerships for South Australian wine exporters by facilitating a higher trade presence in both traditional and emerging trading countries; and
4. Calls on the wine industry bodies to unite as one to rebuild our global reputation.

(Continued from 10 April 2024.)

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (18:06): I thank my colleagues for allowing me to give this speech today. I will be brief; I am aware I am the last speaker of the evening. I rise to speak in support of the Hon. Nicola Centofanti's motion requesting that this council recognise the importance of South Australia's wine industry to the state's domestic and international export economy and acknowledge the resilience of our wine industry and grapegrowers through this difficult time of uncertainty.

South Australian wines are, of course, among the best in the world and many of us can attest to that. They are renowned for their quality, character and craftsmanship. Our state alone produces 50 per cent of our entire nation's wine and approximately 80 per cent of its premium wine exports, which I do not think is advertised sufficiently. Our wine industry generated almost \$2 billion in revenue for our state in 2022-23 and directly employs some 9,000 South Australians in grapegrowing and winemaking. We export some 377 million litres of wine worth \$1.85 billion per annum, which equates to over 60 per cent of Australia's total wine exports. Again, I do not think that is promoted sufficiently.

Regions like the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, the Clare Valley, Coonawarra, Langhorne Creek, Padthaway and the Adelaide Hills are internationally recognised for their exceptional wines. Their success translates into significant economic benefits for our state, including investment into regional infrastructure, support for local businesses and the creation of high-skilled jobs.

Beyond direct economic contributions, our wine industry plays a crucial role in attracting visitors to our state, with wine tourism generating millions of dollars annually through tourists patronising our exemplary cellar doors, restaurants and wine festivals. Events like the Crush Festival, Tasting Australia and myriad others showcase the best of what South Australia has to offer, in an effort to promote and reinforce our reputation as a leading worldwide wine destination.

Despite its strength, our wine industry has unfortunately faced considerable challenges in recent times. The tariffs imposed by China in 2020 had a significant impact on our wine exports, crippling our wine sales in that nation with Australian wine dropping from more than 27 per cent of the market share to only 0.14 per cent of China's imported wine market—a devastating drop. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in the seven months following China's lifting of import tariffs in March last year, half a billion dollars worth of South Australian wine alone was exported to China. However, although this was a welcome development, the total volume of the Chinese market is not on its own sufficient to solve the issue of profitability within our wine sector.

The South Australian wine industry is contending with the issue of an ongoing surplus of wine and wine grapes, which is affecting many regions throughout our country, particularly those inland. This is compounded by a global reduction in wine consumption overall, with more people either abstaining from drinking alcohol or consuming less in volume and more of higher value, with wine losing market share to other premium drinks, including spirits. In addition, there are also issues of excess stock, which is reducing demand for wine grapes for wine production, placing pressure on wine grape purchases for the coming vintages. This situation has in turn led to a downturn and downward pressure on prices, and many if not most growers are being offered prices in some cases below the cost of production.

With growers already dealing with market uncertainty due to these conditions, there is also the added pressure on the price and availability of irrigation to water the grapes and to enable growing wine grapes in the irrigated regions due to the significant drought that South Australia is currently experiencing. Higher value crops such as almonds are able to outcompete wine growers in the purchase of water, and many growers are feeling compelled to sell permanent water allocations in order to pay down debt, which is of course adding further pain to their situation.

South Australia's wine industry is immensely valuable to our culture, economy and, might I say, our reputation. It is indeed a great source of pride not only to the regions in which our wines are produced but to our entire state. Every effort by our state and federal government should be made to ensure the industry is well supported and equipped to thrive as best as possible amidst any current and future challenges. I strongly commend the motion to the council.

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

Bills

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS REDUCTION (MISCELLANEOUS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Final Stages

The House of Assembly agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Council without any amendment.

CRIMINAL ASSETS CONFISCATION (REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

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

At 18:11 the council adjourned until Thursday 20 March 2025 at 14:15.