

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 4 June 2025

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

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

Parliamentary Committees

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:18): I bring up the 63rd report of the committee, 2022-25.

Report received.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I bring up the 64th report of the committee, 2022-25.

Report received and read.

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table:

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

Lifetime Support Authority of South Australia Participant Service Standards

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I acknowledge and welcome the year 11 students from Pinnacle College who are in the visitors' gallery and guests of the Hon. Ms El Dannawi.

Question Time

METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:25): I seek leave to provide a brief explanation before asking questions of the Minister for Emergency Services regarding wage theft.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: On Tuesday 13 May in this place, the minister made a personal explanation regarding the payment of travel allowances by the Metropolitan Fire Service. In that statement the minister said:

I am advised that following the orders of the South Australian Employment Tribunal all outstanding travel allowance payments have now been processed by the MFS. Further, I understand that payments are scheduled to be paid by Shared Services in tomorrow's pay cycle.

Yesterday on ABC radio, Max Adlam, the United Firefighters Union of South Australia's secretary, revealed that:

We were fortunate in April to get orders requiring the employer to make the payments...and after...breaking the law the government now is in breach of those orders with approximately 845 claims not having been processed.

Given the discrepancy of the minister's statement made in this place some three weeks ago that all outstanding travel allowance payments had been processed and the comments made by Ms Adlam on radio yesterday and indeed again this morning, my questions to the minister are:

1. Does the minister stand by her previous statement on this matter?

2. Will she table the advice that she was given?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:26): I thank the member for her question. As has been highlighted, previous statements have been made in the parliament and a personal statement was made in the last sitting week to update the chamber on how that process was undertaken. As I have mentioned previously, we as a government unreservedly apologise and are deeply regretful that firefighters were delayed in receiving payments of their travel allowance.

Every worker in South Australia deserves to have their wages and entitlements paid in full and on time. I have been advised that an administrative error has occurred within Shared Services which saw some payments not being paid appropriately. However, I am further advised that urgent EFT payments for these claims were completed on Monday.

METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:27): Supplementary: so can the minister confirm that all outstanding payments have been processed as of right this minute?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:28): I am advised the error in payments that the member is referring to relates to Shared Services. As such, I direct the member to the Treasurer in regard to this matter, but as I have just highlighted I am advised that the urgent EFT payments were made regarding these payments.

METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:28): Supplementary: what was the error identified by Shared Services, and what is being done to ensure that these sorts of issues don't continue to happen?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:28): As I advised, this is a Shared Services matter and falls within the Treasurer's portfolio.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE: In regard to steps that have been taken, this is not good enough, and that is why on Sunday night I brought together the Treasurer, the CE of the MFS and the head of the United Firefighters Union, and I was advised Shared Services will complete the urgent EFT payments for these claims at the earliest opportunity. I also met yesterday with Shared Services and the MFS to get to the bottom of how these errors occurred to help ensure this does not happen again. I understand from this that Shared Services will implement a robust process with the MFS moving forward. As Shared Services sits within the responsibility of the Treasurer, any further questions regarding Shared Services will need to be directed as such.

METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE TRAVEL ALLOWANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:29): Final supplementary: will the minister table the advice she has been given? You keep saying you have been advised. Can you table that advice?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:29): We get advised in varying ways, and I will take on that advice that is given to me in regard to how things can be improved in the future.

JBS FOODS AUSTRALIA

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:30): I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to addressing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries regarding the Seven Point Pork abattoir.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: It was reported in *The Advertiser* yesterday that at least 270 workers are set to lose their jobs when JBS Australia ceases operations at the Seven Point Pork abattoir at Port Wakefield. Given that it is our understanding 160 of those workers are local, and given that a portion of employees are farmers relying on off-farm income during severe drought conditions currently facing the state, my question to the Minister for Regional Development and Primary Industries is: what action is the government taking to keep these employees in regional South Australia?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:31): I thank the honourable member for her question. JBS Foods Australia (JBS) is the country's largest meat and food processing company with 73 locations Australia-wide and two in South Australia, including the Seven Point Pork processing facility at Port Wakefield and a sheep processing facility in Bordertown. Seven Point Pork is one of only two export-accredited pork abattoirs in South Australia and one of seven nationally.

According to my advice, following the decision of one of JBS's strategic partners, fewer pigs will be processed at Port Wakefield, making the facility no longer viable in the short term. As a result, JBS will suspend operations at the site from early January next year. Operations will continue until that time as remaining orders are processed. JBS notified workers of this decision on Monday 2 June. Of the 270 employees at the site, approximately 50 per cent are employer-sponsored 482 visa holders and PALM scheme workers. The 46 PALM workers are scheduled to return home in October of this year. JBS will explore business opportunities that may support the recommencement of operations at the facility in the future.

I am further advised that JBS is also committed to working with and providing support to its employees during this period, including exploring opportunities for redeployment across other JBS sites at Bordertown and in Victoria and New South Wales. The South Australian government will work closely with JBS and the Australian government Department of Home Affairs and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations to provide information and advice to enable the company to support its workers as required, including providing support and services to impacted workers. The South Australian government will also seek to assist JBS to identify opportunities that support the Port Wakefield facility to reopen.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations Transition Support Network is an on-the-ground network that supports retrenched workers and people at risk of job loss to access local services, explore new opportunities, build their skills and capabilities, and transition to new employment. The network facilitates access to training, employment services, financial information and wellbeing support tailored to workers' needs.

Workers facing retrenchment and their partners have immediate access to Workforce Australia provider services under the Early Access initiative, regardless of their eligibility for income support payments. If they have a legal right to work in Australia, they can register with a provider. Impacted workers and their partners can contact the local job coordinator, Lisa Brock, if they need assistance.

JBS FOODS AUSTRALIA

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:33): Supplementary: I appreciate the minister's response. Is the minister able to outline whether there will be any supports for those farmers who will now lose their off-farm income?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:34): As I outlined, JBS is staying operational until January of next year. If the honourable member has referred to employees, as employees they would be entitled to the assistance that we have just outlined.

PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISE AGREEMENTS

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (14:34): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector regarding upcoming enterprise bargaining negotiations across the public sector.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: Within the next 12 months there are multiple essential services and medical public sector enterprise bargaining agreements that will expire. These include nursing and midwifery, SA Ambulance Service and the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service. My questions to the minister are:

1. Has the government begun negotiations with these groups, and if so, when?
2. What are the government's contingency plans, if any, for these workforces should the negotiations be prolonged and industrial action is taken?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:35): There are, as the honourable member points out, a number of industrial agreements that are up for negotiation during the course of this year. I think for nearly all of those some form of negotiation has started. There are a number of officials within the industrial relations and policy branch of government who conduct these negotiations on behalf of government and who are the lead for the negotiations in the parameters that are set down by government in those negotiations.

One thing that we certainly are doing is negotiating in a genuine, open and bona fide way. We don't have any preconceived constraints. I think the last government had policies that they set down, such as no back pay, so even when agreements had expired it was a stated non-negotiable of the former government that—as happened with the Ambulance Employees Association agreement which was some years past the last increase in pay—the former government refused any possibility of back pay for all those years that back pay was missed.

That is certainly not something that we have taken as a policy position in this government. One of the first industrial agreements that we negotiated and settled on coming to government was with the very hardworking ambulance officers in South Australia, and that included back pay for the years that they were denied that by the former government. So we will continue to have those good faith negotiations with unions.

As I have said, there are officers within the department who conduct negotiations, but certainly I know that myself, the Premier and in health areas the Minister for Health and Wellbeing have our doors open and regularly meet and speak with union officials who represent many of these hardworking public sector employees.

PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISE AGREEMENTS

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (14:37): Supplementary: in the discussions with the Premier and the health minister, has the minister discussed contingency plans, should negotiations be prolonged and industrial action taken?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:37): In relation to industrial action that any union seeks to take, I don't think anybody, including unions, wishes to put any possibility of the safety of South Australians at risk. If there is industrial action taken or foreshadowed, that will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

PREMIER'S HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

The Hon. T.T. NGO (14:38): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Can the minister update the council about the recent AUSVEG SA Premier's Horticulture Industry Awards for Excellence?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:38): I thank the honourable member for his question. I am

delighted to be able to provide an update to members in this place about the 2025 AUSVEG SA Premier's Horticulture Industry Awards for Excellence. This is an annual event that the state government proudly sponsors and I am pleased that it was once again a sold-out event that continues to grow every year.

I also acknowledge that the dinner was attended by many parliamentary colleagues, including the Deputy Premier, the member for Light and the member for Hammond, along with the Hon. Frank Pangallo, the Hon. Tung Ngo—who has always been a great supporter of the horticulture industry—and the Hon. Nicola Centofanti, as well as a number of others. If there is anyone I have missed who is in the chamber today, please shout out; great, I haven't missed anyone.

The event is run by AUSVEG SA and is an opportunity for South Australia's leading horticulture growers, researchers and industry leaders to come together and recognise excellence in the industry and celebrate the significant contribution the state's horticulture sector makes. The industry has demonstrated remarkable resilience and growth, despite facing significant challenges, from biosecurity to drought, over the last 12 months. Despite these challenges, South Australian producers continue to respond with innovation and investment to ensure long-term sustainability of the industry.

In 2023-24, the state's horticulture industry hit a new record, generating \$2.08 billion in revenue. This was an increase of 15 per cent from the previous year, and the highest on record. The state government is committed to continuing to work closely with this critical industry, not just to address challenges but also to drive opportunities. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the winners of the 2025 Premier's Awards for Excellence. Seven award categories were presented:

- Darren Rathjen, from Delta Produce, was awarded Grower of the Year;
- Paul Cafcakis, from Cafcakis Nominees was awarded the Young Grower of the Year;
- Peter Wadewitz, from Peats Soil and Garden, was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award. I would like to particularly pay tribute to Peter for the amazing contribution he has made pretty much throughout his life to the industry;
- LawrieCo Next Generation Fertiliser received the Industry Impact Award;
- Austin Reid from Rural Business Support was awarded Researcher or Advisor of the Year;
- Lam Phan of H&L Hydroponics won the Women in Horticulture Award; and
- Dominic Cavallaro, from Cavallaro Horticultural Services, was awarded the Biosecurity Award.

This year's winners will now represent South Australia as the official state nominees at the national Horticulture Awards for Excellence during Hort Connections in Brisbane this month. I am sure all members in this place will join me in wishing all winners the best of luck at these awards.

While the majority of horticulture production is for local consumption, there are increased export opportunities that our local producers are also exploring. Last year, we saw \$492 million in horticulture exports, representing an increase of 9 per cent. Major overseas export markets included China at 28 per cent, Japan at 11 per cent, Türkiye at 7 per cent, Germany at 6 per cent and 5 per cent for New Zealand.

I know many people in the horticulture sector that I speak to have been reassured by the way that federal and state Labor governments have worked to rebuild relationships with some of Australia's largest trade partners after significant breakdown in some relationships under the previous federal Liberal government. The calm approach by both state and federal Labor governments has meant we have been able to regain important export markets for South Australian horticulture businesses.

I again congratulate award winners along with all nominees for your commitment and passion for the horticulture industry. You are exceptional ambassadors and role models for the industry.

Thank you, also, to AUSVEG SA for once again putting on an exceptional event, and the opportunity to promote the ongoing importance and success of the entire horticulture industry. Well done to Jordan Brooke-Barnett and his team for putting on this excellent event.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE

The Hon. J.S. LEE (14:42): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Police, about a SAPOL incident.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.S. LEE: On 2 June 2025, 9news reported that Gaurav Kundi—a 42-year-old Indian Australian man—is on life support following a violent arrest by South Australia Police on Payneham Road. Video footage shows Mr Kundi being forced to the ground as he and his partner pleaded that he had done nothing wrong and stated that he has ongoing health concerns. His partner alleges that an officer pressed a knee into his neck, after which he lost consciousness. Mr Kundi remains in a critical condition.

While the police commissioner has now announced a commission of inquiry in addition to internal and major crime investigations, the officers involved remain on active duty. The acting assistant commissioner has stated publicly that the officers acted in line with their training; however, serious concerns remain not only about the use of force but about the possibility that racial bias may have played a part in the escalation of the incident. A number of Indian community leaders have contacted my office seeking support and also an explanation from the government. My questions for the Attorney-General are:

1. Will the terms of reference for the commission of inquiry explicitly include any racial bias in police interactions and use of force?
2. Why have the officers involved not been stood down pending the outcome of multiple investigations, given the severity of the incident?
3. Does the Attorney-General accept that public confidence in police accountability is at risk and, if so, what immediate steps will the government take to ensure transparency, justice and community trust?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:44): I will be happy, as the honourable member requested at the start of her question, to refer those to the police minister in another place and bring back a reply for the honourable member.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The Hon. S.L. GAME (14:45): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing a question to the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, representing the Minister for Education, concerning educational outcomes.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.L. GAME: The Productivity Commission's inquiry last year, entitled 'Positioning all South Australians to share in the Benefits of Economic Growth', found that we are failing our young people in their transition from school to work or study. The report concluded that South Australia does a much worse job than the national average at giving our young people the skills and support they need to successfully transition out of school into work or education.

One of the report's findings was the huge disparity in educational outcomes for children, depending on where they live. According to the report, a child growing up in Walkerville is more than seven times as likely to attend university than a child growing up in Berri or Morphett Vale West. Further, a young person growing up in Elizabeth is almost nine times as likely to not be engaged in study or work as someone who grew up in Burnside. My questions to the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, representing the Minister for Education, are:

1. What is the government doing in the next 12 months to level the playing field for young people in poorer socio-economic regions of the state so that they have the same opportunities as other young people in South Australia?

2. Given that South Australia has the highest rate for people aged 21 to 24 not in employment, not in education and not in training, what will the government do to improve productivity among the state's young people?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:46): I am happy to take that question on notice and redirect it to the minister in the other place. I am mindful that the minister has worked tirelessly in the area of investing more in TAFE and finding ways to have people engaged through the education system, but I am happy to take that question on notice and direct it to him.

MEDICAL SPECIALISTS, ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (14:47): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking questions of the Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector regarding ongoing enterprise bargaining negotiations across the public sector.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: As part of negotiations of the SA Health Salaried Medical Officers Enterprise Agreement, which expired on 2 February 2025, the government has yet to answer calls by the sector to create a standalone agreement for psychologists. The opposition is speaking to psychologists, who report a workforce in crisis. There are few senior psychologists left in the public sector workforce, which means fewer to supervise and attract younger psychologists, who are normally enticed by the opportunity to learn and be trained by some of the best. Many are turning to private practice, and they are then often lost to the public sector for the remainder of their career.

Those psychologists who stay in the public sector are having to work part time in the private sector to supplement their incomes because, despite many studying for up to 12 years, they are still only being paid roughly \$49 per hour. There are no incentives for these psychologists to continue in the public sector, with no retention policies or recognition of their level of training in the current agreement.

My question to the minister is: will the government acknowledge the public psychology workforce crisis and commit to negotiating a standalone EBA for psychologists that includes proper pay progression, retention incentives and recognition of the advanced training that they have so they no longer will be the worst paid in the country?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:48): I thank the honourable member for his question. It is slightly bemusing that there would be a suggestion that we wouldn't consider a standalone agreement for a group of very important workers that include psychologists, when through processes we have had to file in the South Australian Employment Tribunal that is exactly what we are doing currently.

For allied health professionals within the public sector we are negotiating a separate agreement, not the salaried agreement that covers some tens of thousands of workers, but a separate agreement with the Health Services Union that covers allied health professionals, one of the most important aspects of those being psychologists. We are doing exactly that, recognising the very good work that allied health professionals play in the public health sector.

WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services. Will the minister inform the council about the State Emergency Services Wear Orange Wednesday celebrations?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:49): Thank you to the honourable member for his question. On 21 May we proudly celebrated WOW Day, Wear Orange

Wednesday, a national day of thanks dedicated to recognising the remarkable dedication and selflessness of our State Emergency Services volunteers.

Wear Orange Wednesday is an opportunity as a community, as a state, to come together and to say a heartfelt thankyou to the men and women in orange who give so much of themselves to keep us safe. Across South Australia, more than 1,700 SES volunteers stand ready to respond not just in times of crisis but every day of the year.

These incredible individuals provide 24/7 support, 365 days of the year, responding to thousands of emergency incidents, often in challenging and dangerous conditions. They willingly put their own lives, their families, their work, their time on hold to help others and they do so with extraordinary professionalism, compassion and skill. Their commitment goes beyond the frontlines. SES volunteers undertake regular and ongoing training to keep their skills up to date so that they are ready when they are most needed.

This year has been an especially busy one for the SES. Not only have they managed extreme weather events here in South Australia but they have also supported our interstate counterparts in times of great need. Their recent efforts include:

- responding to the Wilmington fires with both incident management and ground support, with 42 SES members deployed;
- supporting operations at the Grampian fire, including staging and base camp coordination;
- multiple deployments to Queensland, to assist with the flood and storm damage following ex Tropical Cyclone Alfred;
- sending teams to WA for cyclone response and incident management; and
- establishing base camps to support the South-East fires also here in South Australia.

Closer to home, the SES continues to support Innamincka and surrounding communities during ongoing inland flooding in the state's far northeast. I had the privilege of travelling to Innamincka where I got to see firsthand the record-breaking floodwaters impacting the local community.

A massive shoutout to the SES who supported, I believe, what has been a 50-day activation. A DefenCell flood barrier was constructed to help support this community. More than 10 additional volunteers were embedded in the incident management team at Emergency Services at Keswick with, I believe, over 30 SES volunteers rotating through the deployments in Innamincka.

To every SES volunteer who has contributed to this response, we recognise the sacrifice, the long hours, the travel, and time away from loved ones. Your efforts in Innamincka, across our state and interstate, have not gone unnoticed.

Thank you also to Mel and Rachel, who were integral in organising the Wear Orange celebrations this year. It was a pleasure to attend the Rundle Mall activation and both the Enfield and western Adelaide celebrations with their volunteers.

Thank you to the many who did wear orange. It is a hard colour to find in the wardrobe. Hello, you are wearing orange today! The Hon. Connie Bonaros has lots of orange too, and the Hon. Ian Hunter's tie. It is the wrong Wednesday, though, I would just like to highlight. You are carrying it on to the following Wednesday. I am the only one not wearing orange. Thank you to everyone wearing orange last week and this Wednesday to show your support and gratitude to the ongoing services and to say what we never say enough and that is thank you.

SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:54): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. With respect to the answers that she gave in this place yesterday on algal bloom, my questions are:

1. What discussions have taken place with the 5 per cent of the oyster industry impacted by quarantine closures?

2. Has compensation been discussed with any of them directly?
3. Does the minister accept she doesn't need to wait to be contacted by the oyster association to enter into such discussions regarding relief for farmers impacted?
4. Does the minister acknowledge that telling us the bleeding obvious—that they are closed—does nothing to alleviate their dire financial stress for businesses in Stansbury, Port Vincent and American River, nor does it give us any updates regarding the status of their closure and what is being done to assist them? Can she please address those questions.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:55): I thank the honourable member for her question. If she has specific information that she would like put on the record, she is more than welcome to contact me prior to question time so that a full answer can be available if she is keen for that to occur.

In terms of the answer I gave yesterday, I think I refer back to that in terms of the information currently available. When there are closures—and closures do occur for a number of different reasons—it is usual that the industry body that represents a particular sector will generally be speaking on behalf of individual businesses, in this case individual fishers. They are more than welcome to discuss their needs with us.

I think at the outset, PIRSA attempts to communicate with all licence holders or known industry members about things such as closures and of course what they are particularly keen to understand in the majority of cases is all the information we have available to inform when a closure might be able to be lifted. Sometimes that information, of course, is part of an evolving situation and therefore simply is not available. In terms of financial assistance, I would encourage oyster farmers to contact the department for additional information or to reach out for assistance where that might be available.

SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:57): Supplementary: there are individual businesses that have spoken out quite publicly about the impacts on them. Has the government reached out to any of them with respect to the quarantine closures?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:57): If the honourable member would like to provide the details of whom she is referring to when she says they have spoken out publicly, I am more than happy to be able to bring back an answer for her.

SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (14:57): Supplementary: has PIRSA provided all relevant details about the closures to other agencies, such as the EPA?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:57): In terms of information and sharing of information around algal bloom, I know there has been a lot of work cross agency. Obviously, this is something that has impacts not only on fisheries but also through the EPA and so on.

According to our advice, the human health impact of the algal bloom is that there is nothing long term, which is a very positive thing, but there can certainly be reactions to the algal bloom, particularly for people who are susceptible to respiratory illnesses and so on. We are advised, and the public health advice has been out there, that, if people, for example, have been walking along the beach where there is the foam and they have an allergic reaction on their skin, as long as they wash it off quickly it generally will not last for a long period of time. So the short answer is that there has been cross-sector work on all the aspects of algal bloom that we have information on.

SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:59): Supplementary: will the minister waive or defer PIRSA fees for those impacted by the harmful algal blooms in the commercial fishing industry and the aquaculture industry?

The PRESIDENT: I never heard any mention of fees, but you can answer if you wish.

SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:59): What, if any, consideration has been given to compensation by government for those impacted and, in the alternative, has consideration been given to waiving any fees that may be payable to PIRSA?

The PRESIDENT: Again, it has to come from the original answer.

The Hon. C. Bonaros interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The fees thing was not in the original answer.

The Hon. C. Bonaros interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: That's okay. Is it okay if I rule that way without your guidance? Minister, if you could answer the first part of the supplementary question, and then we are going to move on.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:00): As I responded yesterday, as at that time, to my knowledge, no-one had reached out seeking compensation. As I say, closures do happen from time to time. I would point out that fishers would likely be eligible for assistance through the Rural Business Support grants, the \$1,500 grants, because obviously the algal bloom appears to be linked to the drought issue, so they are welcome to inquire and see if they will be eligible for that.

SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM

The Hon. C. BONAROS (15:00): Final supplementary: notwithstanding that nobody may have reached out, has the government had discussions about the possibility of paying compensation to those impacted by closures? That was my first question—the very first question I asked; the one that we ignored.

The PRESIDENT: Again, yes, it was your first question, but it is not arising from the original answer.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PRISONS

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:01): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking questions of the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services regarding the South Australian prison system.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: It has been reported that Mr Edwin James Hinrichsen, one of the convicted murderers who killed Mr Michael Purse, was detained in the low-security Cadell Training Centre and, not surprisingly, this has outraged his family. It's understood Mr Hinrichsen has since been moved to a medium-security facility after this matter was made public and it was discovered his detention was in a low-security facility. I note the minister in response to this issue told the media at the time that this matter will be 'subject to thorough review'. My questions to the minister are:

1. Has the minister made inquiries as to how and why Mr Hinrichsen was placed in a low-security facility and, if so, what was the reasoning behind that extraordinary decision?
2. Will the outcome of the review into this case that she has promised be made public?
3. Will the minister publicly call out this inexplicable decision?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:02): Community safety and the rights and needs of victims are of paramount importance to this government. When I heard of this incident, particularly regarding Jeffrey Purse's concerns that were being raised, I telephoned him in the evening of 22 May, and we had a good conversation, one that I valued deeply.

I also invited him to meet with me and the Deputy Chief Executive of the Department for Correctional Services the following morning on 23 May, where he once again shared his story with the Department for Correctional Services and other members as well. I am grateful to Jeffrey for

raising this issue. My sincere condolences obviously go to him and his family for the tragic loss of Michael.

I am advised the prisoner in question has been moved to a higher security prison while a review is undertaken. I am advised that the review is expected to be completed by the end of June, and I will also be seeking input from Jeffrey and his family.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PRISONS

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:03): I thank the minister for her answer. In exploring this matter, minister, have you been able to determine if other convicted murderers have been placed into low-security facilities?

The PRESIDENT: It is not really a supplementary question, but you can choose to answer it.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Well, you can disagree all you want, but it is not a supplementary question.

WALK FOR JUSTICE

The Hon. M. EL DANNAWI (15:04): My question is to the Attorney-General. Will the Attorney-General inform the council about this year's JusticeNet fundraising event, Walk for Justice?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:04): It was a great honour, again, to walk alongside hundreds of members of the broader legal community recently at the annual fundraising event for JusticeNet, the Walk for Justice. I have been privileged to attend the Walk for Justice for many years now, and it is always heartening to see so many from the legal profession, including students, members and members of the judiciary amongst many others, come out in large numbers, cold on an early morning, to raise funds in support of the pro bono legal service that is JusticeNet.

Yet again breaking their own records, the Walk for Justice this year raised a massive \$201,784, which all goes directly to JusticeNet in their invaluable legal service provision for those in the community who need it most. That hugely impressive sum was also the highest amount raised amongst all of the National Pro Bono Day walks that happened around the country, so very well done to all the South Australians who participated and donated to the worthy cause.

I was proud, once again, to be walking as part of the Attorney-General's Department team, who were very easily identified by their matching beanies branded by the scales of justice, each hand-knitted by Jillian Dellit, the mother of our very own Assistant Crown Solicitor, Katherine Dellit. It was Jillian's generosity and craftsmanship of these wonderful beanies that won the AGD's team the best dressed award on the walk.

I believe it is the very first time in my life I have ever been part of a team that has been judged best dressed, so it was a great thrill. Thank you to Jillian for her efforts and the suggestions. It might even be that we implore her to knit more and to sell them as a fundraiser for JusticeNet one year as well. They are a very, very sought-after item.

As well as being warm and fashionable wearing our justice beanies, the AGD team also managed to raise over \$14,000 as the third highest team fundraiser overall, so a big thankyou to everyone in the Attorney-General's Department who contributed to this impressive sum. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Rebecca Ross, the CEO of JusticeNet, and the whole JusticeNet team for the work they do every day, coordinating not just this fantastic annual event but the pro bono legal service that JusticeNet provides to thousands of South Australians every year.

Thank you once again to all who participated and all who donated for making sure that the JusticeNet Walk for Justice was another very worthy event. I want to thank, as I look around the chamber, a number of members of this chamber who I have seen out in years gone by as well.

PILL TESTING

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (15:07): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question without notice to the Attorney-General on the topic of pill testing.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Recently, the New South Wales government announced a second pill testing site at a music festival this year. The free and anonymous drug-checking service allowed festival goers to bring a small sample of substances to be analysed before consumption. New South Wales Health and the New South Wales police force have been working together to enable the trial, which I understand will run for 12 months and be independently evaluated. Up to 10 additional festivals will be included in this trial.

The New South Wales Minister for Health has said that this trial is about helping festival goers make more informed decisions about drug use, with the goal of reducing harm and saving lives. My question to the Attorney-General is: does the government acknowledge that drug-checking services reduce harm and save lives, and will the government commit to a trial here in South Australia, as other Labor governments across the country have done?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:08): I thank the honourable member for his question. I do acknowledge his passion in this area. He has brought this issue to the Legislative Council a number of times previously. I think in his question the honourable member mentioned the health department in New South Wales. Whilst this is a policy matter that sits within the area of the Minister for Health, I am able to let the honourable member know that we do not have a policy in relation to a trial for drug testing.

PILL TESTING

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (15:09): Supplementary: will the government be revisiting this area in the lead-up to the next election, and will it be announcing a policy?

The PRESIDENT: You did mention policy.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:09): As I said, I can confirm that we don't have a policy in relation to a trial for pill testing.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (15:09): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General regarding the South Australian Employment Tribunal.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: On 27 March, it was gazetted that one Leah Watkins, former General Secretary of the Ambulance Employees Association (AEA), has been appointed to a five-year term as a commissioner of the South Australian Employment Tribunal. This comes after Ms Watkins lost a ballot to continue as General Secretary of the AEA in October last year. My questions for the Attorney are:

1. What qualifications does Ms Watkins hold to be appointed to this position?
2. Was she appointed through an open process including other applicants?
3. Did the president of the tribunal request the appointment of an additional commissioner?
4. What is Ms Watkins' full remuneration over five years?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:10): In terms of remuneration I do not have those details with me at the moment. I am happy to go away and find out what those details are. Just to put aside a misapprehension I think the honourable member is labouring under, this was not an additional commissioner; this was to fill a vacancy that arose in the

tribunal when a member of the tribunal was appointed to the federal Fair Work Commission, creating a vacancy.

Traditionally, on the SAET commissioners have a range of experiences from both the employer and employee representative side. There are those who have worked in larger corporations or in bodies representing employers but also a balance that I think governments of both persuasions over the years have sought to ensure is that there are those that represent the experience and have in the past represented the interests of employees, so from employers and from the union side.

With the appointment of a former person with union experience to the federal Fair Work Commission, Ms Watkins, who has significant industrial experience working for the Ambulance Employees Association, as the honourable member pointed out, was appointed to the SAET.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (15:11): Supplementary question: I am assuming that the minister is actually going to take those questions he hasn't directly responded to on notice.

The PRESIDENT: I am just waiting for the supplementary question.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: What are the generally considered minimum qualifications for appointment to the tribunal?

The PRESIDENT: I think you did talk about the—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Excuse me. You did talk about qualifications.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:12): Yes, I am happy to answer that. As I said, governments of both persuasions have appointed people as commissioners to the SAET from a range of experiences, typically representing a balance of people with experience for both employees and employers.

FISHCARE

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:12): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister inform the chamber about the celebrations marking 30 years of Fishcare in South Australia?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:12): I thank the honourable member for his question. It was a real pleasure to attend the 30-year celebration of the Fishcare volunteer program at West Beach a few Sundays ago. It was a great opportunity to thank many of the current and past volunteers who have made Fishcare an indispensable part of our state's fisheries.

Fishcare volunteers are often found at boat ramps, jetties and other fishing spots informing the public about fishing rules and regulations and boat and bag limits and assisting to communicate changes in any of these matters. They also attend things such as field days and shows right across the state to keep the fishing public informed. Many are knowledgeable fishers themselves and are no doubt great for a fishing tip and a chat. Fishcare volunteers come from all walks of life and are located right across South Australia. There were a number who had travelled to the celebration from the Riverland, Yorke Peninsula and the South-East.

It was an important opportunity to recognise the service of some of the longstanding volunteers, with a number having completed well over 15 years and more than 4,000 hours of voluntary service. Of particular note I congratulate Brian Smith, with 20 years and 5,300 hours of service; Michael Koch, with 21 years and 1,500 hours of service; Joan and John Zilm, with 21 years and 2,000 hours of service each; and Chris Coulson, with 13 years and 4,000 hours of service.

There were also a number of newer volunteers in attendance, and I think that goes to show the community understanding of the important role of Fishcare volunteers, which in turn encourages a steady flow of new volunteers, young and old, to join.

The Fishcare volunteer team has a dedicated coordinator, Ms Toni Crosbie, in place within the fisheries and aquaculture team at PIRSA, and she does a fantastic job in managing the Fishcare resources and ensuring volunteers are well trained, well placed and, indeed, well dressed in their resplendent blue Fishcare uniforms.

Once again, I thank our state's Fishcare volunteers and hope that they enjoyed the celebration in their honour. Many South Australians have contributed to its success over many years, and with a great mix of experience and enthusiasm, youth and wisdom that continues in the group, it will continue to play an important role for many years to come. Thank you again to all our Fishcare volunteers.

RICHERS, MR M.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:15): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General a question about former South Australian ICAC deputy commissioner Michael Riches.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Mr Riches resigned in disgrace last month as the Northern Territory's ICAC commissioner after a year-long investigation into allegations of inappropriate behaviour, including that he gave unwelcome attention to female office workers. The report described his leadership style as 'erratic, micromanaging, controlling, distrustful, awkward socially and disproportionate', with one staff member claiming Mr Riches 'had a thing for pretty girls in the office'. The investigation was launched after it was revealed Mr Riches had offered his estranged wife \$20,000 to stop her domestic violence order application against him reaching court.

Prior to being appointed the Territory's ICAC commissioner in 2021, Mr Riches was ICAC's deputy commissioner here in South Australia for three years, after initially being appointed chief executive officer of the ICAC and the OPI in December 2016. During his tenure, Riches was an important member of the executive ICAC team. In his report into the John Hanlon fiasco, former ICAC inspector Philip Strickland gently described the egregious level of mismanagement at ICAC as 'systemic maladministration', without apportioning blame to any individuals. My questions to the Attorney-General are:

1. Can he come back to the chamber and answer whether there were any similar reports or allegations made about Mr Riches' behaviour while he was employed at ICAC? If so, when, and what was the extent of the allegations?
2. Were any similar reports made about Mr Riches' behaviour while he was a serving police officer? If so, when, and what was the extent of the allegations?
3. Did Northern Territory investigators conduct inquiries with South Australian authorities about any reports of inappropriate behaviour while he was a South Australian public servant?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:17): I thank the honourable member for his question and his very well-known interest in ICAC and how it operates. In relation to the individual the honourable member asked about, I note that the individual has not served in a role in South Australia, as I understand it, during the course of this government, so I am not aware of anything that has been raised. I may not be aware because I think it was 2021 when that individual last served a role in South Australia and, of course, the election was after that in March 2022. I guess I can answer it by saying: I am not aware of anything that has been raised.

RICHERS, MR M.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:18): Supplementary: just to reiterate, I ask the Attorney if he could come back with those answers to questions that I put to him.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:18): I am happy to take

that on notice to the extent that there is any information available. If there is any such information that I am privy to, I am happy to bring back an answer.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNAL

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:18): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General regarding the South Australian Employment Tribunal.

Leave granted.

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO: On 1 April 2022, InDaily reported that during the 2022 state election campaign Leah Watkins, as general secretary of the AEA, authorised a sustained and targeted media campaign against the former Marshall government, spending around \$400,000. Ms Watkins has now been appointed as a commissioner of the SAET. My questions to the Attorney are:

1. Is the Attorney concerned that this appointment of Ms Watkins may be perceived by some as a general political payback and reward?
2. Did the Attorney discuss the appointment of Ms Watkins with any of his colleagues, including but not limited to the Premier?
3. Has the Attorney received any complaints about the appointment of Ms Watkins?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:19): I can answer the question of whether there was any discussion with any of my colleagues about the appointment of Ms Watkins. I do understand that the honourable member hasn't served in any executive positions before and it is only the Hon. Michelle Lensink who has done that, but for the honourable member's benefit, the appointment is gazetted.

For an appointment to be gazetted, it needs to be recommended to Executive Council. To be recommended to Executive Council, it needs a cabinet decision. So was any discussion held with anyone for an appointment that necessarily needs to go through a cabinet process? The answer is obviously and necessarily yes, because it goes through a cabinet process and it goes through Executive Council and it is gazetted.

In relation to the repeat of the Hon. Michelle Lensink's question that the honourable member has asked, I understand they have gone off script and haven't concentrated on one minister today, and maybe that's where it has fallen through the cracks and they are repeating themselves over and over and over again, but I am happy to repeat—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Sir, they don't wish to listen to the answer, so I will refer the honourable member to the *Hansard* in relation to the answer to the Hon. Michelle Lensink's question, given that the question was almost identical.

TRY BEFORE YOU FLY

The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:21): My question is to the Minister for Autism. Can the minister tell the council about the recent launch of the Try Before You Fly program?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:21): I thank the honourable member for his interest in this space and this portfolio. When it comes to autism and inclusion, South Australia continues to lead the way. In a nation first, the Try Before You Fly program was officially launched on Saturday 31 May right here in South Australia at the Adelaide Airport.

This program provides participants with the chance to experience each step of the flying process, from booking and checking in, to security, boarding and settling into the seats on the aircraft, all without the plane ever leaving the tarmac. It is my understanding that all staff and volunteers in

the program have undergone access and inclusion training provided by What Ability, including practical scenario-based experiences.

This experience has been designed to help ease anxiety or uncertainty about flying, something I am sure many can relate to. It is about providing confidence and comfort, not just for participants but for their families too. The design of the program means success isn't about completing every step; it is about progress, however big or small. This initiative aligns with our government's vision as the autism inclusive state and it clearly demonstrates how inclusive design and thoughtful collaboration can break down barriers and open up possibilities.

Virgin Australia and Adelaide Airport have partnered together to launch this nation-leading program. In the two successful trials of this program almost half the participants have gone on to fly for the first time—people like Kerry, who provided this feedback:

We participated in the very first trial...changed our lives as a family. We then went on our daughter's first flight to Melbourne...such a successful trip. Never would have happened without this experience first!

At the official launch on the weekend, the Try Before You Fly program welcomed their 200th guest, marking a significant step in making air travel more accessible to all Australians. Adelaide Airport is also a member of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program, where airport staff are trained to recognise the sunflower lanyard and provide extra help, guidance or time when the airport process is a little overwhelming for an individual.

The Malinauskas Labor government is proud to see this program build on what we have already been able to achieve as a government. We want to build more knowledge and create more accessible spaces so that people can experience an inclusive state. Saturday's launch was not just a celebration of new initiatives, it was a celebration of belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to explore the world. To everyone who played a part—thank you—and to those considering joining the program in the future, please reach out to Adelaide Airport to register for the next session.

This incredible program enabled us to see a demonstration of what happens when you make accessible spaces. The government has already seen and heard firsthand when you have family members who are unable to participate as a family unit because someone needs to stay at home while the rest of the family go off on an adventure: it could be going to the football or going on a plane and travelling to see family and friends or to seek employment opportunities. What we were seeing is that barriers were in place because of the unknown.

The Try Before You Fly program is really important because it takes away those barriers. It takes away those uncertainties so that people can learn more about what they can expect, because we want families to be able to go as a unit to travel interstate, we want members to be able to go and see friends, but we also want to make sure that people can have employment opportunities because the fear of flying is no longer there.

Matters of Interest

COP31

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:25): When the South Australian government announced its bid to host a major international conference in 2026, we knew Adelaide was well and truly equipped to handle an event of such magnitude. Just 20 years ago, Adelaide could not have dreamed of hosting the Conference of the Parties (COP31). We simply would not have had the infrastructure. We would have missed out on the opportunity to bring 30,000 visitors and important decision-makers from all around the world.

A climate conference is a very appropriate event for South Australia under a Labor government. Our record in this field of renewable energy and carbon reduction is world-class. Three-quarters of all the state's energy comes from wind and solar, with South Australia on target to make that figure 100 per cent by 2027. If any city anywhere deserves to host the United Nations annual climate summit, it is Adelaide. Nonetheless, wanting to host and being able to host such a major event are two separate matters.

This government undertook a feasibility study to confirm our belief that we were well placed to accommodate such an event, and the confidence was corroborated. The study found we have

sufficient accommodation for the numbers required, not just the delegates but also the entourage of support staff, media and others who will be attending. The study determined we could provide a safe and secure experience for the tens of thousands of people the conference will attract.

The study found that the Adelaide Convention Centre and its broader precinct could have the necessary security zone, as well as the accompanying public event area to make everything run smoothly. It is just as well that in our time in office over the past 20 years, Labor has had the vision to develop our international-standard riverfront area. That riverfront area, complete with its convention zone, is ideal for events such as this.

It would have been easier to cut corners and make the zone adequate for state and national events, but that would limit our possibilities and potential. The fact that our riverfront area offers world-class facilities means that we can bid and win the right to host world-class events. Often, advancements in our infrastructure have been made while the Liberal opposition has made headlines saying that we could not afford such things.

We all remember how it goes: we could not afford the Convention Centre in the first place, we did not need its size increased, we did not need to spend so much on the Adelaide Oval redevelopment and we did not need that bridge over the Torrens that everybody uses—the list goes on and on. It is the same sort of thinking that suggests that we do not need to look for more sustainable ways of producing energy.

That leads us back to COP31, which just happens to be the United Nations' major conference for the decision-making body on this vital subject. It is an event that brings together representatives from 197 nations around the world to discuss perhaps the most important matter in the world today: the health of the planet and of our very future.

The numbers associated with hosting COP31 can be understood by even the naysayers who thought we should not have invested so strongly in our beautiful city. Even the Liberal number-crunchers, who too often put figures ahead of the future, can understand the math.

In simple mathematical terms, hosting the international climate conference would mean an injection of more than \$500 million into the South Australian economy. But it is a lot more than just money this time around; it allows us to take world centre stage on the climate debate. It promotes our position on that debate and gives us real credibility on matters of such global significance. It puts Adelaide and South Australia on the map as an international city capable of hosting such events and, like the conference itself, it reinforces Adelaide's future as a city to be taken seriously.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:30): Until recent years, Adelaide was renowned for its affordable housing, but sadly this is no longer the case. As members in this place would be well aware, our city is now becoming notorious for its rising costs in housing and indeed many other rising costs as well. Not only does Adelaide have the second most expensive housing market in the nation after Sydney—and that is according to relative income considerations—but according to the new Demographia International Housing Affordability Report released on 21 May, just a few weeks ago, Adelaide is in fact now, according to their data, the sixth most expensive city in which to purchase a home in the world, behind the likes of Hong Kong, Sydney, San Jose, Vancouver, Los Angeles, etc.

It is quite staggering to think that purchasing a home in London or New York is now more achievable for the population than it is for those living in Adelaide. Adelaide is consequently experiencing a significant housing crisis, with unaffordable housing leading to a tight rental market due to low vacancy rates, with an increasing number of people facing homelessness, which of course in itself is tragic. It is deeply concerning that, according to the ANZ CoreLogic Housing Affordability Report, Adelaide is the least affordable capital city in which to rent—the least affordable—and yet it is of course one of the smaller capital cities. This situation is naturally impacting younger people and lower income households in particular, who are both renters and, in many cases, aspirational buyers.

I am sure I am not alone in this place when I say that I have received contact from many constituents from across the state expressing the hopelessness they feel in not having the opportunity to enter the housing market or even find a rental that they can comfortably afford. This is a serious problem for our city, for our state and for our society. This is unfortunately not surprising,

given the Australian Bureau of Statistics has calculated that South Australia is in fact the poorest state in the country on a household income basis per person. These are difficult problems that will take serious consideration to remedy.

However, it is not only younger people and those with lower incomes who are struggling to find a home or provide themselves with some adequate shelter but also South Australians who have what we would normally consider decent, steady incomes over an extended period of time, and even those from two-income families are also finding it difficult.

I note the Property Council of Australia's report released in March, entitled *Beyond Reach*, found that for many key workers Adelaide suburbs are priced well above the 'affordable' 30 per cent threshold of household income required to service a mortgage. It notes that, according to samples studied in the report, accessing home ownership in suburbs across Adelaide often requires five to nine times the average key worker's household income, and only a household income of \$150,000 per year or more can provide access to new entry-level housing across the suburbs that were surveyed. This is becoming a crisis.

According to the Housing Industry Association, \$237,000 of the cost to purchase a new home and land package is directed to state fees and taxes alone, which only serves as a further blow to those trying desperately to get ahead. South Australian Executive Director of the Property Council, Mr Bruce Djite, said:

This report is a wake-up call to government to slash the cost of developing housing...The research contains damning case studies quantifying that housing in Adelaide is simply beyond reach for everyday South Australians...Across a variety of households, workers from both blue and white-collar industries are priced out of the market...If action is not taken this will worsen out to 2030.

Just last month, the opposition attempted to take action by introducing sensible amendments to legislation that would have unlocked additional areas for housing development throughout South Australia. Our amendments to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (Environment and Food Production Areas) Amendment Bill would have seen additional land that was not suitable for productive farming opened up for development.

In my strong opinion the amendments put forward by the opposition struck the right balance between increasing housing supply and protecting our vital agricultural industries. It is certainly disappointing that more South Australians have been denied the opportunity to access land that is currently well serviced with existing water and electricity infrastructure to realise their dream of home ownership because those amendments proposed by the opposition were not accepted.

The enviable lifestyle many of us have become accustomed to here in our state is sadly at risk of becoming a distant memory for future generations. If our parliament fails to work in a bipartisan or multipartisan manner to solve this housing crisis, then I think we are truly in for some very difficult times. It is my hope that, going forward, the government works in cooperation with the opposition and other parties when it comes to implementing reasonable measures in the best interests of South Australians. Housing is a necessity.

KICKSTART FOR KIDS

The Hon. C. BONAROS (15:35): I rise today to speak about KickStart for Kids and to congratulate them for their amazing advocacy and support for South Aussie kids. KickStart provides something like 60,000 breakfasts and 10,000 lunches each week to kids in SA. Over 360 schools form part of their program and they have a team of about 1,000 volunteers who assist them in that cause.

Since commencing their Period Poverty campaign in 2021, they have also managed to reach schools that are in need of period products, delivering something like 2,000 packets of period products to those schools each and every month. Acting President, last week, we celebrated World Menstrual Hygiene Day and I thank you again for your contribution to that. In the lead-up to that, there were a number of events that I took part in and key announcements which I will canvas today.

I want to start with KickStart's amazing event last Friday: its annual fundraiser, an annual fundraiser that we say we wish we did not need to have. In so doing, I want to start by thanking Ian and Georgie; Oli and Billie; KickStart's chair, David; the ambassadors, Rebecca Morse, Jenna with

the Pink and Matilda Scholz; Belinda, Claudia and Kiara; and National Pharmacies, the major sponsor. There are collection boxes in 37 National Pharmacies across the state collecting products for KickStart.

I want to thank Libby and her team, who hosted an amazing event and, of course, my special guest to that event, the Minister for Education, the Hon. Blair Boyer, for his support and attendance at that event with me. It was a sensational event with a very serious message and we managed to raise a lot of money to support KickStart and the amazing work they do in period poverty.

We are also really lucky to now have 10 of Adelaide's private schools on board: Walford, Wilderness, Loreto, St Paul's, Westminster, Seymour, Cabra, St Dominic's, St Michael's and Rostrevor College. I have been visiting those schools with the other ambassadors, and with Ian, and talking to their students not only about the need to address period poverty, and in my case gender equality and universal access, but bringing home to those kids how many of their peers in their communities do not have access to things that we take for granted each and every day. That started from one school in 2021 and we now have about 10 on board, which is amazing.

In relation to the work that KickStart does—and I guess this is how I started last week—nobody asked Ian and his family to do what they do. He did not need to do what they do, but they saw a need amongst our South Aussie kids and they acted. That is the kind of person Ian is and he has done exactly the same in relation to period poverty as he has done previously in relation to making sure that kids get the meals they need at breakfast and lunchtime.

On the same day, I was really pleased and proud to stand with Minister Boyer and make an announcement about TAFE SA and their commitment to ensuring that period products will be universally accessible across their campuses and the government's contribution of \$300,000 to contribute towards dispensing machines and the products that will go with those machines to ensure universal access across those schools. There is a lot of work that has been going into this behind the scenes. It also comes off the back of a very quiet announcement that was made by Minister Picton in relation to accessibility to period products in our hospitals for those who are visiting.

These are all small steps but really significant and important steps towards universal access to period products in South Australia. We have seen it being done elsewhere. We know we can do it here. There is a bill in this place which seeks to address that, but I just want to take this opportunity from the bottom of my heart sincerely to say I love everyone at KickStart. I love what you do and thank you sincerely on behalf of all of us for looking after so many kids in SA.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (15:40): Yesterday marked the end of National Reconciliation Week 2025. I used to look forward to it, and I guess I still do, but lately even just the word 'reconciliation' has brought up a lot of feelings for many people. The last couple of years have been very difficult for many Aboriginal South Australians and indeed First Nations people right across the nation. It has also been a difficult time, I think, for many non-Aboriginal Australians who care deeply about the advancement of rights for First Nations people and who care deeply about reconciliation.

Speaking for myself, the referendum result was a pretty bitter pill to swallow because those of us who were on the yes side were asking for something that I think is pretty heartbreakingly simple: let First Nations voices be heard; that is all, just let them be heard.

When Australia said no, it felt like a pretty deep rejection. It felt like an erasure, if you like, of tens of thousands of years of human history that had unfolded before any European boots were on this soil. It felt like a repudiation of the value of the world's oldest living culture and the value they bring to this nation. It felt like a very heavy door closed on those of us who hold aspirations of making meaningful progress towards reconciliation that can bring, I hope, real change. It was a pretty hard moment and, like many, I suspect I am probably not over it. My yes corflute is still very much in my kitchen window, facing outwards to the busy thoroughfare next to my home. I do not think I am ready to take it down.

It is no wonder then that I felt such trepidation and, I guess, a few times pretty genuine dread during the federal election campaign. If I was feeling that way, as a non-Aboriginal person, I cannot

imagine the excruciating tenterhooks that many of our First Nations people had been on for months and maybe years surrounding the election and the referendum vote.

But after voting no in the referendum, Australians had another big chance to vote and to leap backwards on reconciliation: the federal election. They had a chance to vote for a Coalition led by the man who walked out on the apology to the stolen generations, the man who would decline to engage in the simplest possible gesture of respect that I can think of and that is standing in front of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. He was basically the godfather of not giving a stuff, and there was a repudiation, alright, a pretty massive one, but it was probably not the repudiation that the Liberal Party suspected or perhaps hoped for.

If Australians had a strong appetite for disrespecting and denigrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Peter Dutton, with the enthusiastic support of people like Senators Liddle and Price, gave them a golden opportunity and the nation, in pretty truly remarkable unison, made a wise, I think, collective decision in choosing to give that opportunity a huge miss.

I choose to believe that Australia did not vote against moving forward. Instead, I choose to believe that, amid a truly repugnant campaign from the other side, we simply voted against constitutional change and when the same repugnant attitude was rolled out in the federal election—and it was—this time the constitution was not part of that discussion.

The referendum was a big chance to do good, but it was not our only chance. Reconciliation has come so very far in the last half a century or so. We have done things in this parliament that have, I think, really mattered, and our next step is to just keep doing them.

I am so proud that I was here in this place to listen to Mr Bilney deliver the first annual address of South Australia's First Nations Voice to Parliament. We have so much left to do. As we mark another National Reconciliation Week and another anniversary of the Mabo decision, all we can do really is to keep taking steps forward, one foot after the other. We are very fortunate to have incredible leadership from Aboriginal people in this state, inviting us to walk with them together on that positive and hopeful journey and showing us the way to do it.

REGIONAL EDUCATION

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:45): Every child in South Australia deserves a quality education regardless of where they live. However, this is not the reality. Under the Malinauskas Labor government, challenges in regional education have largely been ignored or have been pushed to the sidelines. The regions are not a priority for this government. Despite repeated warnings raised over time from educators, parents and local communities, this government has allowed the problems to spiral.

Currently, there are around 500 pre-service teachers teaching in our government schools—that is, students who have not yet completed their university degrees teaching in our classrooms. Many of them are placed in regional and remote schools not by choice but out of necessity. These future educators are passionate and committed, but they were never intended to be a long-term solution. The classrooms need fully qualified teachers, not bandaid fixes, while experienced educators continue to leave the profession in droves.

The teacher shortage across our state is real, and nowhere is it more desperately felt than in regional South Australia. Our students need experienced specialist teachers, particularly in core areas such as maths, science and STEM. This is not just a staffing issue; it is a skills crisis in the making. How can we prepare regional students for the jobs of tomorrow if they are missing out on foundational learning today?

Another pressing concern is the lack of mental health support in regional South Australia. In drought-affected and remote communities, the emotional toll of hardship, isolation and trauma is real, yet it is our teachers, not trained psychologists, who are often left to manage complex mental health issues, often without the tools or support they need. Teachers are not mental health professionals, they are educators, and we cannot continue to expect them to carry this burden.

Behavioural issues are escalating in our regions and across our state. A recent survey found that over 65 per cent of teachers in regional areas are spending more time managing disruptive

behaviour than teaching. This is unacceptable. Our teachers are being stretched to the limit, buried under red tape and an administrative overload, when their focus should be on delivering quality learning experiences.

Alarmingly, we are seeing schools increasingly turn to security guards to maintain safety. It is shocking that teachers and principals are being forced to make this decision to keep classrooms safe. Schools should be a place of learning, not conflict zones where safety is uncertain. Our students should be greeted by role models in the schoolyard, including teachers who guide and inspire, not security guards responding to yet another crisis.

Critical incidents in our schools increased by nearly 1,000 in 2024 compared to previous years. While we saw a decrease in secondary schools, concerningly, we saw a major increase in our primary schools. The rise in violence, bullying, drugs and even weapons in our schools is not just concerning; it is deeply distressing. These incidents are pulling teachers away from their core role and placing them in vulnerable positions that they are not always trained for.

This is a system under strain. Each day the government fails to act, students risk falling further behind. Behavioural management in our schools needs major reform. We need to be looking at what best practice suggests and implement change fast for the benefit of our next generation. It is not a failure of our teachers; it is a failure of the system that is supposed to be there to support them. We need to fix this, and we need to see real, regionally-specific educational solutions delivered so that teachers can return to teaching.

Above all, it requires leadership. This government must do more than just talk about education; it must prioritise it and put solutions into motion. Addressing teacher shortages, improving mental health and behavioural support, and restoring safe learning environments must be core priorities.

To our regional teachers, students and families, we hear you and we thank you. We see the challenges you are facing and we are fighting for you. It is time to invest in the future of our children. It is time to restore confidence in our education system, starting with the communities that need us most.

JENKINS, MRS A.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:49): The devoted family of murdered Adelaide grandmother Annapurane (Anna) Jenkins has had a significant win in the Penang High Court recently, giving them hope that justice might one day be served on those responsible for her tragic death. Penang High Court judge Rofiah Mohamad upheld the open verdict finding by the original coroner's court and also ruled that there was no proper police investigation into Anna's death. She further ruled the coroner responsible for conducting an inquest into Anna's death had 'a premeditated decision that lacked any basis of evidence'.

Crucially for Anna's children, Greg Jenkins and Jen Bowen, who have been fighting for justice since their beloved mother disappeared without a trace in December 2017, the High Court judge stated that she could not rule out homicide. The judge said the deputy public prosecutor has the discretion under the criminal procedure code to issue further instructions on how the investigation should proceed, particularly in the area where the deceased body was found, to determine where the origin of the crime scene existed and hopefully provide the family with answers to the questions they have been asking for nearly seven years: who murdered their wife, mother and grandmother, and why? Judge Mohamad said:

It cannot be denied that homicide is a serious accusation that the coroner must consider. Although there may be involvement by other parties, it remains speculative.

She stated that the court also considered that the initial investigation was conducted under the framework of a missing persons case, not a criminal investigation like kidnapping or murder. Describing the situation as 'most unfortunate' she said:

The facts will only be obtained through a serious and thorough investigation. It is very unfortunate that the investigation was conducted under the framework of a missing person, and the investigation never led to a kidnapping case or any other criminal elements.

This is because when human remains are found in an unreachable and unlikely location, it should give a new indication of a criminal element, that the victim did not just go missing but died at a very unusual location.

Interestingly, local Malaysian media are now taking an increasing interest in the case, including criticisms of the way local police totally botched the initial investigation. The findings are a glimmer of hope for Anna's amazing, determined and committed family, who have been hoping for justice since she vanished.

I have spoken in this place a number of times on Anna's murder and her family's courageous search, not only for her body but for the truth. Anna, a devoted wife, mum and grandmother, went missing without a trace in December 2017 while visiting her sick mother in Penang. The police investigation was nothing short of appalling, forcing Greg and Jen to initiate their own investigation. It was Greg, following an anonymous tip-off, who discovered his mother's partial remains on a building site three years later.

I take my hat off to the Jenkins family. They have never given up hope when many families would have years ago, given the countless hurdles and brick walls they have encountered along the way, not only by local authorities in Malaysia but also back here in Australia. The lack of support by successive federal governments has been nothing short of disgraceful. Together with Greg and Jen, I am utterly perplexed at how the Australian Federal Police can be called in to investigate the suspected murder of an Australian citizen in Bangladesh under an obscure commonwealth law but has steadfastly refused to exercise the very same law to investigate Anna's murder.

Earlier this month, Greg learned that AFP officers travelled to Bangladesh last November to help the investigation of the suspected murder of Australian Bangladeshi citizen Rehana Parvin. Ms Parvin's body was discovered in September, two months after she went missing, buried in a small village. Two months later, AFP officers were in the South-East Asian country assisting local authorities with the investigation.

Meanwhile, despite numerous attempts by Greg and Jen to both the federal government and the AFP, the AFP has steadfastly refused to even offer its expertise or support to the Royal Malaysia Police in its appalling botched investigation into their mother's death. It is nothing short of a disgrace. Greg Jenkins asks constantly: what did his mum do to deserve this?

VO DAI TON

The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:55): I stand to speak in honour of a real local hero of mine and many other people around the world, Colonel Vo Dai Ton, a man whose life was defined by courage, conviction, sacrifice and an unwavering commitment to human rights in Vietnam. His journey was not just a personal battle but a testament to the enduring struggle for freedom and justice.

Born in 1936 in Da Nang, Vietnam, Vo Dai Ton lived through some of the most turbulent periods of Vietnamese history. As a commando instructor in the South Vietnamese Army special forces, he trained intelligence units for operations in North Vietnam before the war's end in 1975. When South Vietnam fell he fled to Australia in late 1976, carrying with him an enduring determination to fight for democracy.

But exile did not silence his voice; it strengthened it. In 1981, Vo Dai Ton embarked on a daring mission to return to Vietnam and lead a resistance movement against the communist regime. His goal was clear: to fight for the rights and freedoms of the Vietnamese people. However, his mission was met with severe consequences. Captured at the Laos-Vietnam border, Vo Dai Ton endured over 10 years of solitary confinement in prison. Amazingly, while a prisoner he memorised about 1,000 poems under his pen name Hoang Phong Linh, preserving his vision for a free Vietnam.

In his memoir, Vo Dai Ton described the inhumane conditions he and other inmates had to endure. His feet were kept in chains and his mouth gagged with rubber so he could not cry out. Beatings left him with internal injuries designed to wear him down just enough to prepare him for the next round of abuse.

The worst torture of all was loneliness. Isolated in a small cell for 10 years with no contacts from the outside world, guards would show him pictures of his family only to take them away again, corrupting his mind with despair. But even in the depths of suffering, he never surrendered his ideals.

He endured the worst of solitary imprisonment, starvation and psychological manipulation, yet his spirit remained unbroken.

His resilience drew international attention, sparking global campaigns from human rights organisations demanding his freedom. After years of relentless advocacy from the Australian government Vo Dai Ton was finally freed in late 1991.

Upon his return to Australia he continued his fight for justice through speeches, writing and tireless activism. He reminded the world that freedom must always be defended. His courage and conviction strengthened the Vietnamese community around the world, empowering them to continue the fight for human rights in Vietnam and inspiring the next generations to follow in his footsteps.

On 23 May 2025, Vo Dai Ton passed away aged 90 in Sydney, leaving behind a legacy that will never be forgotten. His life reminds us that the fight for human rights is never easy but always necessary. His resilience, his sacrifices and his courage should inspire us all to stand for justice, to speak for those who cannot and to ensure that freedom is never taken for granted. May we honour Vo Dai Ton not just with words, but with actions.

It was a great privilege to have lunch with him and his wife, Tuyet Mai, in Bankstown a few years ago where his passion for justice left a lasting impression with me. My condolences to Mrs Tuyet Mai and his extended family. Rest in peace, Vo Dai Ton. Your courage will forever inspire us.

Motions

HAIGH'S CHOCOLATES

The Hon. J.S. LEE (16:01): I move:

That this council—

1. Congratulates South Australian icon Haigh's Chocolates on celebrating its 110th anniversary in 2025;
2. Acknowledges that Haigh's Chocolates remains a proudly family-owned business, led by fourth-generation family members, Alister and Simon Haigh, who are dedicated to maintaining the company's legacy of quality and innovation;
3. Celebrates the company's outstanding business success and its growth to a globally recognised brand, with 21 stores Australia-wide, a successful online store, and more than 950 staff members, that remains dedicated to manufacturing in South Australia;
4. Commends Haigh's Chocolates for its longstanding positive impact on the South Australian economy, local employment and its significant contributions to philanthropic community initiatives; and
5. Recognises that the new facility in Salisbury South set to officially open in late 2025 is the largest investment in the company's history, incorporating manufacturing, fulfilment, and warehousing, and is expected to provide additional employment opportunities along with capacity to double its chocolate production to 2,000 tonnes per year.

I rise today to move a motion in celebration of a true South Australian icon, Haigh's Chocolates, as it marks its 110th anniversary in 2025. Just imagine how much Haigh's chocolate would have been consumed in the 110 years by Australians and internationally. Honourable members may like to know a few interesting statistics. Australians consumed a total of 163,000 tonnes of chocolate in the 2023-24 financial year, which is more than three times the steel weight equivalent of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Not surprisingly, Australia is among the top global consumers of chocolate and Haigh's Chocolates certainly play a role in this success.

This anniversary is a significant milestone not only for Haigh's Chocolates, but the Haigh's family, and is also a powerful testament to South Australian entrepreneurship. For all the chocoholics out there, this is more than just a sweet story of success; it highlights our state's manufacturing excellence, the leadership shown by the private sector, and the confidence and resilience to invest in local industry.

Haigh's continued expansion creates valuable employment opportunities, drives economic development in the food and beverage sector, and positions the brand as a true Australian icon with

growing international recognition. I am certain that every member in this chamber has at some point enjoyed the unmistakable great taste of Haigh's Chocolates, a brand that has become a household name and part of the fabric of South Australian life.

Today, I want to reflect on the origins of this remarkable story. In the heart of Adelaide, a young entrepreneur named Alfred Haigh open a small chocolate shop that would go on to become a national treasure. The 1915 opening of the first Haigh's store, selling both chocolates and confectionery, located in the Beehive Corner building on the corner of Rundle Mall and King William Street, was the start of this great journey. This iconic building is still home to one of the many Haigh's stores in South Australia.

Not long after opening, Alfred experimented with local apricots, fondant and dark chocolate, creating what would become one of Haigh's most beloved treats: Haigh's apricot fruit. These are now recognised as a South Australian state heritage icon. As demand grew, Alfred expanded operations to Parkside where a modest factory was built beside the family home, a site that still welcomes visitors today. Continued growth meant that the original store became too small, prompting a move in 1923 to the current location within the Beehive Corner building.

By the 1920s, Haigh's had become a fixture in Adelaide life, from Easter celebrations to footy at the Oval, where their chocolates were a match-day staple for over 50 years. When Alfred passed, his son Claude—already a steady hand in the business—stepped up to lead Haigh's through the hardship of the Great Depression and wartime rationing. Under Claude's steady leadership, the business endured.

The next chapter began with Claude's son, John Haigh, Alfred's grandson, who brought fresh eyes and global inspiration to the family's brand and business. After training with the Swiss chocolatier Lindt & Sprüngli and travelling home through the United States, John studied retail innovation, returning home with a vision: to elevate Haigh's into a premium chocolate experience. As televisions ventured into our homes and cinemas filled with moviegoers, Haigh's found new ways to delight. Tray boys offered chocolates in theatres, and new stores opened across South Australia. By its 50th anniversary, Haigh's had crossed the border and opened its first Melbourne store, introducing Victoria to its signature sweetness.

The 1970s saw the fourth generation step into the fold. Simon and Alister Haigh joined the business, learning every aspect of the craft and culture. At the time, the company was still small—fewer than 50 employees—but the seeds of future growth were already being sown. This spirit of innovation and adaptability continues to this day and is reflected in the words of current CEO Alister Haigh. In a recent interview marking the company's 110th anniversary, Alister reflected on the company's enduring legacy and its ability to adapt through changing times. He said:

We've had to evolve with the times—television changed the way people shopped, so we moved from theatre stands to retail stores. And when refrigerated trucks didn't exist, we built our own to get chocolate to Melbourne.

These stories are a testament to the ingenuity and resilience that have defined Haigh's for over a century.

Even today the company faces challenges, such as the tripling of cocoa prices in recent years, yet they continue to innovate and grow, offering over 300 varieties of chocolate and keeping customers engaged with new flavours and experiences, including some of the most exquisite packaging to promote their brand. Some of the most enduring favourites include milk chocolate speckles, frogs and scorched almonds—may I say that they are actually my all-time favourite—products that have delighted generations and become synonymous with the Haigh's brand and the Haigh's name.

Building on this legacy of adaptation, the 1980s brought a wave of innovation. Haigh's began crafting seasonal collections, such as Valentine's Day hearts, Easter delights and indulgent truffles. These were not just chocolates: they were gifts, special moments shared among family and friends, gestures and traditions in the making. By the 1990s, Haigh's had become more than a chocolatier; it was a tourism destination. The Parkside visitor centre opened its doors, offering behind-the-scenes tours that quickly grew in popularity. What began with two tours a day soon became nine, and locals and tourists alike came to see the magic behind the chocolate-making.

As the new millennium unfolded, Haigh's continued to win hearts beyond South Australia. In 2005, Sydney welcomed its first Haigh's store, and with the launch of the online store in 2014 chocolate lovers across the country could enjoy their favourites with just a few clicks. The brand's reach expanded, but its heart remained firmly rooted in Adelaide. Although they do not have any offices overseas, every single traveller who loves the Australian brand has certainly bought Haigh's Chocolates for all their family and friends internationally, so the brand has become known internationally as well.

In 2018, Haigh's made a bold investment in its future, opening the largest cocoa bean processing plant in Australia, at Mile End. This facility allowed Haigh's to craft its chocolate from bean to bar, deepening its commitment to quality and setting a new standard for Australian chocolate-making. Today, Haigh's remains proudly family-owned, with fourth-generation custodians Alister and Simon Hague at the helm. Guided by an independent board, they honour the company's heritage while embracing sustainability and innovation, ensuring that Haigh's continues to thrive in a changing world.

Haigh's Chocolates have received numerous accolades, including being named the winner of the Consumer Choice Award at the 2024 South Australian Premier's Food and Beverage Industry Awards. They also received the Business Excellence Award at the same event in 2023. Additionally, Alister Haigh, CEO of Haigh's Chocolates, was awarded the Alfred Stauder Award for Excellence for his contribution to the confectionery sector in 2024. They have also been recognised for their customer care practices, being a finalist for the Inside Retail Customer Care Award in 2024.

From its humble beginnings, Haigh's now operates 21 stores across four states and territories, supported by an incredible online store. Haigh's is not just a business success story; it is a vital part of the South Australian economy and the South Australian food and beverage industry. Beyond its cultural significance, Haigh's has also played a vital role in South Australia's economy, employing over 800 people across its operations, with that number expected to exceed 950 as the company expands. Its commitment to local manufacturing, producing over a thousand tonnes of chocolate annually across its Mile End and Parkside sites, has long supported jobs, suppliers and regional development.

As Haigh's celebrates its 110th anniversary in 2025, it does so with its eyes on the future. The opening of a new facility in Salisbury South marks the largest investment in the company's history. Designed to integrate manufacturing, warehousing and fulfilment, it will double production capacity, ensuring that Haigh's can meet growing demand while staying true to its roots. With the opening of the new Salisbury South facility, production capacity will double to over 2,000 tonnes per year, further strengthening Haigh's role as a key player in the state's premium food and beverage sector.

I was honoured to attend the unveiling ceremony for Haigh's new \$130 million manufacturing facility, an event that marked the beginning of the largest infrastructure investment in the company's 110-year history. This state-of-the-art site will span 36,000 square metres and accommodate up to 400 employees during its growth phase, including the creation of 150 new jobs. It was a profound moment to witness firsthand the start of a project that not only reflects Haigh's continued success but also its deep commitment to South Australia's future.

The company's commitment to traditional chocolate-making techniques, combined with innovation, has ensured its ongoing popularity. But Haigh's is more than just chocolate; it is a company with a big heart. Since 1993, the Easter bilby has raised awareness for native wildlife through its partnership with Rabbit Free Australia. Today, Haigh's supports a range of environmental and community causes, including Variety Australia: The Children's Charity, demonstrating that generosity is as much a part of its identity as its signature truffles. Their significant contributions to philanthropic community initiatives are making a big difference and positively impacting our community.

From a single store in Adelaide to a beloved national brand, Haigh's Chocolates has remained true to its founding value: quality. That Haigh's has remained a proudly family-owned business for 110 years is a remarkable achievement in itself, one that speaks to the enduring values

of stewardship, integrity, family and long-term vision that have guided the company across four generations.

As we look back on this extraordinary journey, I commend Haigh's Chocolates for 110 years of business excellence, innovation and community spirit. It is a story of resilience, family legacy and unwavering commitment to South Australia. With those remarks, I wholeheartedly commend the motion with my deepest congratulations to Haigh's Chocolates.

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

Parliamentary Committees

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (16:15): I move:

That the corrigendum to the report of the committee on its inquiry into the Potential for a Human Rights Act for South Australia be noted.

The Social Development Committee tabled its 49th report and inquiry into the Potential for a Human Rights Act for South Australia on 29 April 2025. As I noted in the report, the committee received many submissions to its inquiry. Submission No. 112 discussed the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006. The submission advised the committee that a private member's bill, namely, the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Amendment (Protection from Torture and Slavery) Bill 2023, had amended the Victorian charter. On page 70, the report of the committee refers to that information on the Victorian charter, as provided to the committee in evidence received.

The committee subsequently discovered that the bill had not been passed and the Victorian charter had not been amended. The committee was provided with a corrected submission by the submitters and, accordingly, the committee substitutes the relevant passage on page 70 of the report with the corrigendum, as tabled on 3 June 2025. I commend the corrigendum to the committee and the council.

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

Motions

SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM

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

That this council—

1. Notes that the ongoing microalgae bloom (*Karenia mikimotoi*) has grown to more than 4,000 square kilometres.
2. Recognises the harm being caused by the algal bloom, including:
 - (a) significant marine wildlife deaths;
 - (b) health impacts for humans who come into contact with water or foam;
 - (c) loss of income for businesses in the tourism, primary industry and hospitality sectors.
3. Acknowledges that the Malinauskas government has conceded the algal bloom is caused by climate change.
4. Calls on the Malinauskas government to end fossil fuel subsidies and invest in funding for research and remediation.

In recent days in this place, we have discussed at some length the algal bloom. The algal bloom has been occurring in South Australian waters for some time now and has been devastating for our marine life. This form of algae (which I am not going to attempt to pronounce) is an algae that was first observed in the 1930s, I understand. It has caused mass fatalities of marine life in Japan, Norway, Ireland, New Zealand, China, the United States and of course now here in Australia.

The algal bloom in South Australia is estimated to be more than 4,000 square kilometres in size, which equates to 72 Sydney Harbours. It has impacted on Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, the Fleurieu and the South-East. Like many South Australians, I was horrified to

see pictures in the media of dead octopi, fish, cockles, leafy seadragons, sharks, stingrays and cuttlefish. Businesses have been impacted, from tourism to aquaculture. Locals have already lost income from the devastation, and that will continue until the ecosystems recover.

What have we seen from the Malinauskas government? Unfortunately, the government appears to be sitting on its hands and has taken a 'nothing we can do' approach. Rather than just hopes and prayers, rain dancing and hoping for the weather to change, we need the government to take some immediate action. The Greens are simply not satisfied with the argument that this is beyond the government's control. We cannot be bystanders to widespread ecological destruction.

Scientific literature has linked human interference in marine environments to blooms of this harmful algae, the *Mikimotoi* algae.

The Hon. I.K. Hunter: Well done.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Thank you, the Hon. Mr Hunter. The impacts of climate change in terms of changing water temperatures and shifting currents can result in blooms of this type.

Deputy Premier Susan Close has publicly stated that climate change is a cause of the algal bloom. Might I say, I have known the environment minister for many years. She is somebody who is very passionate about the need to take climate action and very passionate about the need to take all necessary steps to protect our environment. However, in this case we really need the government to put their money where their mouth is, put some more money in the coming state budget for remediation and research to deal with the consequences of the toxic algal bloom and also deal with the issues of subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. I will talk a little bit more about that in due course.

According to the EPA, the marine heatwave that has been experienced in South Australia is contributing to ocean temperatures approximately 2.5° hotter than usual. Indeed, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) there has already been a documented increase in the frequency and intensity of harmful algal blooms caused partly by warming, and there is evidence across the globe of impacts such as marine deaths, loss of local businesses and health impacts. The IPCC report with regard to climate change states:

Overall, the occurrence of harmful algal blooms, their toxicity and risk on natural and human systems are projected to increase with warming and rising CO₂ in the 21st century. The increasing likely occurrences of harmful algal blooms under climate change also elevates their risks on ecosystem services, such as fisheries, aquaculture and tourism, as well as public health.

Another human interference that has been found to be a factor is the eutrophication of our oceans, where there is an excessive richness of nutrients. Often these are a result of run-off from the land or from coastal development and industry.

In the early 2000s, the EPA found that there had been some forms of eutrophication as a result of ammonia presence in sites tested in Gulf St Vincent. For a good ecosystem, it is considered that there should be less than 0.05 milligrams per litre of ammonia present. Yet, of the eight sites that were tested by the EPA, I understand seven had a higher concentration of ammonia. High levels of nutrients such as ammonia have been found to play a critical role in the growth of these algal blooms. The EPA has stated that ammonia was being discharged into the gulf in the early 2000s from wastewater treatment plants and agricultural fertilisers. We cannot ignore the impacts of eutrophication as a factor.

There is consensus in the scientific literature that more research is needed to both prevent and remediate algal blooms like the one we are seeing in South Australia. It is for that reason that the IPCC is calling for sustained monitoring programs and early warning systems to allow for mitigation before the algal bloom gets out of control. The early warning signs with regard to this recent algal bloom appeared back in March this year when people suffered sore eyes, coughing and blurry vision after being in the water near Victor Harbor.

It would have been preferable to know about the potential effects of these algal blooms before we saw these adverse health impacts presenting and in particular before we saw dead fish washing up on our beaches, dead sharks and the like, a horror story unfolding before our very eyes in South Australia, something that has been described in *The Advertiser* by scientists as a bushfire in the ocean in terms of its destruction. What is the Malinauskas government doing? Waiting for rain.

The state government has recognised that climate change is a factor. Indeed, Minister Close, as the environment minister, has recognised that climate change is a factor driving the algal bloom. However, she made a point that I disagree with in her media commentary when she said that there is nothing that South Australia could do differently here, that this is not something that we have caused. The reality is that the Malinauskas government subsidises fossil fuels to the tune of \$37 million a year. Each year, we prop up the fossil fuel industry, which is driving climate change, driving these catastrophic climate events like the toxic algal bloom.

Rather than spending tens of millions of dollars on subsidies to the fossil fuel industry that is driving the climate crisis here in this state, the Greens are calling in tomorrow's state budget for this money to be redirected to research, analysis and mitigation of our waters and for establishing early warning systems, such as those recommended by the IPCC.

We also believe that some of that money could be used for a support package to assist impacted businesses. Aquatic instructor Lochie Cameron recently told the ABC that he expected a 'decades-long recovery' for some areas to allow impacted species to mature again. Affected businesses should not be forced to wait for decades before they can get back on track and we should not be waiting for decades for our marine life to be able to recover.

We need the Malinauskas government to step up. It is not enough to simply moan about climate change; they need to put their money where their mouth is and take action. Now is the time for them to axe subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. Now is the time for the Malinauskas government to stop rolling out the red carpet for Santos and bankrolling the fossil fuel industry and to really show some climate leadership because we have seen in recent weeks the horror story that is continuing to unfold in our oceans. It is being caused by the climate. The Malinauskas government knows this. Well, tomorrow they will have an opportunity to show some action.

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

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (16:27): I move:

That this council—

1. Calls on the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council to adopt similar rules to those in the House of Assembly regarding earlier commencement times for sittings; and
2. Calls on the government to adopt the recommendations of the Select Committee on Effectiveness of the System of Committees of the South Australian parliament to rationalise and streamline the current committee structure.

To begin, I will speak to the first part of the motion, which is in relation to adopting similar rules to those in the House of Assembly regarding earlier commencement times for sittings. I think for a lot of people here it is obvious why some of us consider that reform important. In fact, I will be making some comments in relation to this motion that will be fairly familiar for anybody who works as a member of the Legislative Council because we understand the system. I apologise to members present who may be listening. I do not expect them to listen. It is more, I think, just to explain to the broader world why I think it is important that the sitting hours for the Legislative Council change.

We all know that we start at 2.15, which, once question time has concluded, leaves approximately 2½ to three hours of debate. In comparison, the House of Assembly is scheduled to start in the mornings either at 10.30 or 11.00, which already provides it 2½ to three hours of debate before they even break for lunch at 1, so by the time they get to 6 o'clock they have completed twice as much business as this chamber has. By its nature of starting later, the Legislative Council is more likely to sit in the evenings and sometimes into the night, which certainly is not best practice.

I am particularly cognisant of the fact that one of our MLCs, the Hon. Laura Henderson, has just given birth, while another will be shortly going on maternity leave. My family is very important to me, so I have some personal reflections. There are a number of us who have primary school age children, and bringing forward the start time and therefore the finish time would mean we have more opportunities to spend valuable time with our kids.

My own experience of being the first serving MLC to have a baby, nearly 10 years ago now, was of being terrified that I did not know how Scott, my husband, and I would manage the juggle, given that he was also working full-time as a cameraman and was often called on to do overtime or late shifts. We managed to place our son into child care for four days, excluding Wednesdays. Scott had an arrangement with Channel 9, who he was working for at the time, that he would have every Wednesday off, which, from a new mother's point of view, was very wise on my part because he had daddy days all day Wednesdays, so he knew what it was like to look after a new baby full-time.

We had an arrangement in this place, which I am grateful for, that I was to be granted leave on Tuesday and Thursday sitting days, to leave at 4.45pm so that I could pick up Mitchell by childcare closure at 5.30pm. When I was appointed minister in 2018, Scott resigned to look after Mitchell full-time, but that was as much about the demands of the role as anything else and less to do with the Legislative Council.

I have spoken particularly with the Hon. Sarah Game, who has publicly expressed her challenges. Her kids are a similar age. The conversation we have all the time is how we are getting along with our kids and the challenges. She has three children, and I take my hat off to her for managing that as a single mum.

I have railed about this issue from time to time, because the way that we operate at the moment belongs to a bygone era. It is not family-friendly, and sitting late unnecessarily carries occupational health and safety risks. We should adhere to the practices that operate in other places and, where possible, we should amend the way we operate.

As we know, current practices still reflect that former members—none probably here—needed an additional 15 minutes to return from dining at the Adelaide Club either for lunch at 2.15pm or dinner. It always blows my mind that we recommence at 7.45pm rather than the House of Assembly's 7.30pm. Let's also put a shout-out to all the staff and Hansard who support us here, who are also subject to our ridiculous sitting hours. If anybody in the community is made aware of our sitting hours operating like this, they cannot understand it. Mr President, it is time for change.

I will now speak to the more mundane topic of the so-called committee on committees. Again, I apologise to honourable members who will be very familiar with this particular committee, which is formally known as—well, you can read it on the agenda; it is in the wording of the motion. Just to recap very quickly, it was appointed in 2019 and reported in 2021. It was chaired by the Hon. Connie Bonaros. Members included the Hon. Tammy Franks, the Hon. Justin Hanson, the Hon. Robert Lucas, the Hon. Irene Pnevmatikos and the Hon. Terry Stephens.

The purpose of the committee was to try to rationalise the topsy number of committees that we seem to have in the parliament. I note the Hon. Robert Simms is guilty of producing some of those. I will just read very quickly the introduction. I think it is worth repeating these arguments. It states:

As a result of the ad hoc evolution approach to the standing committee system established in the South Australian Parliament (and particularly the Legislative Council), and the consistently high number of select committees in the Legislative Council, the current committee system finds itself with an overabundance of committees performing overlapping roles. Staff and Members are struggling to keep up with the number of select committees being established in the Legislative Council...

There were a number of recommendations which I think were quite useful. It has been thoughtfully considered that there be three separate Legislative Council standing committees, several joint house standing committees and a separate range of House of Assembly standing committees. I believe that report is still current and that work should be progressed. It is indeed quite frustrating. We should seek to be as efficient as possible, set the standard for practices and not delay changes to our practice, because we make laws for others and we should adhere to best practice ourselves. With those comments, I commend the motion.

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

*Bills***DROUGHT RESPONSE AND RECOVERY COORDINATOR BILL***Introduction and First Reading*

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (16:35): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to provide for the declaration of a drought emergency in the state or in parts of the state, to ensure a timely and effective response to drought conditions in the state, to establish a drought response and recovery coordinator, to provide for the development and implementation of drought response and recovery plans, to provide appropriate oversight and reporting mechanisms, and for other purposes. Read a first time.

Second Reading

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (16:36): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator Bill 2025 is a bill born of a difficult but essential truth: South Australia can no longer afford to treat drought as an occasional inconvenience. It is a fundamental challenge to our state and it demands a structured, strategic and unified response. This is not just another dry season. It is a slow-moving crisis that is reshaping the social and economic fabric of our regions.

From the Mid North to the Mallee, from Eyre Peninsula to the South-East, the message is heartbreakingly consistent. I have stood on properties where families have been carting water for months to sustain stock and basic household needs, I have spoken with producers who have been forced to part with generations of carefully bred livestock because the feed has run out and the paddocks have turned to dust.

I have met farmers who have had to walk away from entire cropping programs, not because they wanted to but because there was simply no viable path forward. I have read heartbreaking letters from students in regional communities who have written to our leaders asking that they visit them to understand what drought means to them, their families and their communities.

These are not isolated anecdotes. They are evidence of communities in crisis, communities doing everything they can in their power to remain productive, to remain hopeful and to hold on. This bill recognises that in the face of such adversity we need more than fragmented programs and reactive support. We need a framework that is proactive, coordinated and equipped to respond at scale.

If the government of the day does not believe that the Emergency Management Act 2004 already provides that pathway—although we would argue that drought by any measure meets the definition of an emergency under that act, in that it threatens our communities, our economies and our environment—then this is the piece of legislation that clearly provides that pathway.

This bill before us seeks to give practical expression to that reality through four key reforms. Firstly, it allows for a formal declaration of a drought emergency, unlocking the tools, the coordination mechanisms and the institutional weight that only such a declaration can provide. Secondly, it establishes a drought response and recovery coordinator, a dedicated leader to bring government agencies, industry bodies and communities together, ensuring that support is not only well designed but well delivered.

Thirdly, the bill creates a state drought response and recovery fund. This will allow for rapid deployment of practical support: freight subsidies, concessional loans, mental health services and fee relief directly delivered where they are needed most. Importantly, every dollar will go towards relief, not bureaucracy.

I am fully aware that we in this place cannot initiate or amend money clauses, but without this fund this bill means nothing. That is why I urge the government to work with us in the spirit of cooperation. Let's be bipartisan. Let's be multipartisan. Let's put politics aside and deliver meaningful support to those who need it most.

This bill proposes the creation of a state drought response and recovery fund, an essential mechanism that would allow for the rapid deployment of practical, targeted assistance and ensure that it is delivered directly to where it is needed most. I would absolutely welcome the government taking carriage of this bill into the other place, provided that the integrity and intent of the fund are preserved, because this is not about who gets the credit. It is about getting help to South Australian farmers before it is too late.

Finally, this bill mandates transparency and accountability. Plans will be published, reports will be tabled, communities will be consulted and heard. This bill is about better systems. It is not about headlines. It is all about outcomes and, above that, it is about recognising that our regions deserve not just empathy but action.

We know other states have implemented robust models. Queensland's QRIDA program and the New South Wales Rural Assistance Authority both provide structured, consistent support in times of drought, and we can, and we must, do the same in South Australia. I acknowledge that the government have released their package, but what we have heard from the ground is that in too many cases the eligibility criteria are too narrow, the processes too complex and the delivery too slow. Support that is well intentioned must also be well targeted and readily accessible.

This is not about political pointscoreing. This is about ensuring our farmers and our regional communities are not left to shoulder this burden alone. They are not asking for a handout. They are asking for fair, timely and practical support to help them weather this storm and to rebuild. This bill does not claim to solve every challenge, but it sets the foundation for a response that is coordinated, credible and, most importantly, compassionate. In doing so it sends a clear signal to those doing it toughest: we see you, we hear you, we stand with you and we are prepared to act.

Rather than avoiding action because it is not accommodated within current processes, we should be changing the processes to enable the required action to take place so that we can save our farmers and our farming communities. So let us rise above politics today and do what is right by the people who put food on our tables and life into our economy. The drought is not waiting and nor should we.

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

Motions

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SHELLFISH QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:44): I move:

That there be laid upon the table of this council, by the Leader of the Government within 21 days of the passing of this resolution, all documents produced or dated from 1 January 2025 regarding testing related to the SA Shellfish Quality Assurance Program along with any additional data generated in response to 2025 calls or contact with the Fishwatch hotline, including marine and non-marine species deaths and including any related plankton counts and water quality assessments at locations of fish kills.

My speech will be brief, although this matter is of great importance. This motion asks that SA Shellfish Quality Assurance Program data, along with any additional data generated in response to phone calls to Fishwatch at the locations of fish kills which involve either marine or non-marine species, be made public. Preferably, this should be done through regular summaries as based in places like California, or indeed closer to home in Tasmania or New South Wales, as they do. In this case, I am bringing to this council an order for production of documents motion to see the parliament use its powers to start what hopefully will be a process of more transparency around these issues.

As we know, the algal bloom off our coast is seeing unbelievably challenging deaths and causing harm to human and other species alike. Unfortunately, conspiracy theories, unsupported theories, and a lack of information means that recreational fishers do not know where they stand, the community does not know where they stand, and when the public does not have the information they need to make good decisions those sorts of conspiracy theories can abound.

Tasmania, in particular, provides a model that this government should be following in terms of releasing biotoxin data on a regular basis. This motion, if passed, and I intend to bring it to a vote in the next week of sitting, will compel the government across all of the agencies that have been addressing what is a crisis to release that data for the certainty of industry, for the certainty of

community, for the certainty of public health, and for the good of our democracy. With that, I commend the motion.

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

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (16:47): I move:

That this council—

1. Recognises the outstanding role Ronald McDonald House in Melbourne St, North Adelaide, has played in South Australia for the past 25 years by providing a 'home away from home' for families with seriously ill or injured children who are receiving treatment at nearby hospitals;
2. Acknowledges the supportive, caring environment it offers where families dealing with significant trauma can stay together, close to the care their child needs;
3. Notes that each year Ronald McDonald House supports about 300 regional families with free, safe and friendly accommodation and support services, without any form of government funding;
4. Recognises the exceptional role volunteers play at Ronald McDonald House where they help create a warm, welcoming environment by cooking meals, maintaining the house, offering emotional support, and helping with daily operations, noting in the early years of the house, it was mostly run by volunteers, who generously gave their time and care to make it possible for families to focus on what matters most;
5. Acknowledges two very special volunteers who have been at Ronald McDonald House from the start, Mrs Jill Rowe and Mrs Colleen 'Nanna Cole' Billows; and
6. Calls on the state government to provide financial support to the wonderful charity as it prepares to relocate to a brand-new site closer to the new Women's and Children's Hospital at Thebarton.

I rise to speak on my motion to celebrate the 25th anniversary of a vital, yet somewhat unheralded, community service, Ronald McDonald House. I recently visited the premises on Melbourne Street at North Adelaide, meeting with board director Dr Shannon Schedlich and others, and I was most impressed by the level of care and community spirit there, as well as the live-in services it provides.

Many, like I, were surprised to learn that Ronald McDonald House receives no government support considering the extensive work it does to provide an affordable place for families and patients from mostly the regions to reside when they need to visit the Women's and Children's Hospital. I would hate to think what it all costs to keep this much-needed facility going and how much the volunteer organisation saves the government from providing a similar service.

They derive most of their operational funding from generous corporate donors in the community. Surprisingly, funding from the McDonald's fast-food chain is modest, even though it carries the name of the brand's promotional character. There is no branding advertising of McDonald's there. While I was there, ongoing building extensions to add more rooms were taking place. Accommodation is also provided in an apartment block on the opposite side of Melbourne Street.

Ronald McDonald House provides a home away from home for families with seriously ill or injured children who are receiving treatment at nearby hospitals. It offers a supportive, caring environment where families can stay together close to the care their child needs. The organisation's core objective is to keep families together during one of the most challenging times in their lives, ensuring they have access to comfort, stability and a supportive community when they need it most.

For the past 25 years, Ronald McDonald House has been a beacon of hope for regional families with sick or injured children. Over this time, it has supported thousands of families, some of whom are experiencing unimaginable challenges. Each year, Ronald McDonald House supports around 300 regional families with free and safe accommodation and support services. The average stay is 17 days, but families can stay for over a year. Last year, Ronald McDonald House had five families stay for over 300 days.

Ronald McDonald House officially opened 25 years ago, but the charity has a longer history in South Australia. Originally in the Allan Campbell Building of the Women's and Children's Hospital, the charity operated the Ronald McDonald Children's Clinic in the nineties. This oncology and

haematology day unit provided a vital service, allowing children to receive treatment without being admitted to hospital. In 2000, Ronald McDonald House in Melbourne Street was officially opened, providing 10 families with sanctuary each night. As demand for the service grew, so did Ronald McDonald House, and in 2013 the charity opened 10 two-bedroom apartments across the road from the original house.

More than just a house, the charity also launched an education program for children who have missed schooling due to illness or injury and their siblings, supporting over 60 students each year. Prolonged hospital stays and ongoing treatments can significantly disrupt a child's education and confidence. The learning program bridges this gap by providing tailored one-on-one tutoring that helps children catch up academically and re-engage with learning at their own pace. The Ronald McDonald Learning Program is more than just tutoring; it is a lifeline back to routine, confidence and success. It helps children rediscover their potential and empowers families to move forward together.

In the past two years, the charity launched hospitality carts at the Women's and Children's Hospital and the Lyell McEwin Hospital. These carts are a mobile care station stocked with free essential items for families, offering comfort bedside. The hospitality carts are a powerful example of how Ronald McDonald House Charities adapts its mission to meet families where they are—physically, emotionally and practically. By turning even hospital hallways into spaces of care, compassion, comfort and connection, the carts help to ease the burden on families during some of their most difficult moments.

In 2024, the charity expanded its geographical footprint to include Alice Springs, renaming to Ronald McDonald House Charities South and Central Australia, and is currently exploring expansion into Alice Springs to support regional and remote families. In 2025, the charity is again expanding and is about to embark on a five-room expansion on Melbourne Street to support 25 families each night. After, sadly, turning away 193 families in 2024, the expansion will ensure Ronald McDonald House can be there for regional families when they need it most.

The South Australian community has been a vital support to Ronald McDonald House. Receiving no government funding, they rely primarily on fundraising to run not only their operations but the growth of their house. In 2000, and again in 2013, the South Australian community provided the capital funding needed to expand. In the 2025 expansion, the South Australian community will again rally to support regional families to stay together.

Volunteers are the heart of Ronald McDonald House. They help create a warm, welcoming environment by cooking meals, maintaining the house, offering emotional support and helping with daily operations. In the early years of the house, it was mostly run by volunteers who generously gave their time and care to make it possible for families to focus on what matters most. Two very special volunteers have been there from the very start.

Jill Rowe stayed at a Ronald McDonald House in Melbourne in 1999 when her daughter gave birth to her granddaughter. When she returned to Adelaide and found out that they were currently constructing the house in Adelaide, she signed up there as a volunteer. Over the past 25 years, Jill has been a constant warmth in the house, travelling to volunteer all the way from Tailem Bend.

Colleen Billows, another volunteer celebrating 25 years, is affectionately known to all at Ronald McDonald House as Nanna Cole and is famous for her sausage rolls. She has been a warm maternal figure for thousands of families and has been there for every event, fundraiser and milestone of the house. In 2019, at 83 years of age, Colleen abseiled down the 33-storey Westpac building to raise money for Ronald McDonald House. In 2022, she was honoured with an Order of Australia medal for her volunteering at Ronald McDonald House.

Jill and Colleen were recently awarded 25 years' of service at an event hosted by the Governor at Government House. I would also like to mention the contribution made to the ongoing success of Ronald McDonald House by a former executive officer there, the mother of the Hon. Heidi Girolamo, Julie Black, who worked there from 2018 to 2022.

Ronald McDonald House is outgrowing its current premises. With a new hospital being built at Thebarton next to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the organisation is looking at moving to a new

nearby location. I sincerely hope the state government lends its support to this much-needed and vital community project to ensure that it continues its great work and to meet the needs of less advantaged members of our community. I commend the motion to the chamber.

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

Parliamentary Committees

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:58): I move:

That the time for bringing up the committee's report be extended until Wednesday 26 November 2025.

Motion carried.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH SERVICES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The Hon. C. BONAROS (16:58): I move:

That the time for bringing up the committee's report be extended until Wednesday 26 November 2025.

Motion carried.

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON DAMAGE, HARM OR ADVERSE OUTCOMES RESULTING FROM
ICAC INVESTIGATIONS**

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:58): I move:

That the time for bringing up the committee's report be extended until Wednesday 26 November 2025.

Motion carried.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON MANAGEMENT OF THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:59): I move:

That the time for bringing up the committee's report be extended until Wednesday 26 November 2025.

Motion carried.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON LOCAL AND LIVE CREATIVE VENUES

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:59): I move:

That the time for bringing up the committee's report be extended until Wednesday 26 November 2025.

Motion carried.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SHORT STAY ACCOMMODATION SECTOR

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (16:59): I move:

That the time for bringing up the committee's report be extended until Wednesday 26 November 2025.

Motion carried.

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (MINIMUM STANDARDS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (17:00): I move:

That the time for bringing up the committee's report be extended until Wednesday 26 November 2025.

Motion carried.

Motions

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HARASSMENT

The Hon. C. BONAROS (17:01): I move:

1. That this council calls on the Attorney-General, within three months of the passing of this motion, to instigate an independent inquiry by the equal opportunity commissioner into the prevalence of

harassment, including sexual harassment, in the local government sector in South Australia and to report to the parliament on the following matters:

- (a) the adequacy of existing laws, policies, structures, and complaint mechanisms relating to harassment, including sexual harassment;
- (b) improvements that may be made to existing laws, policies, structures, and complaint mechanisms relating to harassment, including sexual harassment; and
- (c) any other relevant matters.

2. That the equal opportunity commissioner is appropriately resourced to undertake such an inquiry.

I rise today to speak on this motion proposing referral of harassment in local government to the equal opportunity commissioner. It follows a proven and effective model, empowering the equal opportunity commissioner to investigate systemic issues within a professional workplace and provide insight and recommendations for meaningful and genuine change.

The words of this motion mirror the previously supported motion, one that I moved in 2020, into the legal profession. I have spoken at length in this place about that and the subsequent reports that have come about as a result of that and, importantly, the changes that have been brought about as a result of both of those inquiries. Change is clearly needed in local government. It was needed here in Parliament House, and we saw an inquiry in the same vein being undertaken by Equal Opportunity into this workplace.

This particular motion deals specifically with local government when it comes to all forms of harassment. Let me begin by acknowledging the existing mechanisms in place for managing conduct. The Local Government Act provides the minister with the power to publish behavioural standards, which all councils must adopt. These standards came into operation in November 2022, replacing the previous code of conduct as part of a broader local government reform package. Those reforms also introduced an independent statutory body, a three-person panel, to deal with difficult behavioural issues involving councils.

The panel considers referrals from councils or individuals within a council. To date it has published an interim report on a matter involving Salisbury council and a report following a referral from Yorke Peninsula Council. Other complaint pathways also exist through the Ombudsman, the Office for Public Integrity and the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, depending of course on the nature of the issue.

On the surface, it may seem that necessary frameworks are already in place, but I would say that these mechanisms are all reactive, not proactive. They respond after the fact, and often after the damage is done, and they certainly do nothing to address and fix culture. They are not designed to identify or prevent the systemic problems that continue to flourish in the shadows. If systemic change were not needed, I, frankly, would not have a queue of current and former councillors and mayors at my door describing their distress and the failures of the system to protect them from harassment in all its forms.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge those present today who have indicated their support for this motion and the desperate need for action in this space: Mayor Jan-Claire Wisdom; Mayor Anne Monceaux; President of the Local Government Association, Mayor Heather Holmes-Ross; Mayor Moira Jenkins; Mayor Jillian Whittaker; Councillor Jayne Hoffmann; and Councillor Davina Quirke.

They are five mayors and two elected members who have taken their time out to be here today for this motion, but they are only a handful compared with the number I have spoken with in recent months about this very issue. They are only a handful from across the state who have all spoken out in relation to this particular issue.

The PRESIDENT: You know that referring to people in the gallery is out of order, of course.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Yes, of course I do, but I have not mentioned the gallery. I have just mentioned their presence in Parliament House. On a very serious note, though, in this instance all these women are only a handful from across the state, can I say, of mayors and elected members who have contacted me. Even in the absence of those who have contacted me, it feels almost impossible today to open up a newspaper without finding a story of a mayor or an elected member

who wantingly or unwittingly has become embroiled in another legal dispute with another councillor, staff member or whatever the case may be, or a story of another resignation. We have had record numbers of resignations I think in the last few weeks.

Just today, we have had a mayor also announce her resignation. Overwhelmingly, it is women but it is not an issue that is isolated to women alone. I will get to that in a little while. I thank all those mayors and elected members who have indicated their support for this. As I said, the ones I have mentioned today are only a handful. There are many others.

I should acknowledge also that with many of the mayors and elected members I have spoken to, I have gone as far as I can. I have reached out to our mayor in the Adelaide City Council, I have been contacted by our mayor in the north-eastern suburbs. It is across the divide in South Australia. It is not isolated to one area. Some areas seem to have more problems than others, but it is certainly something that covers our regions, as is reflected by the presence of the people I have spoken of today, and metropolitan Adelaide. It is a big problem and it is not one that only covers mayors, it is not one that only covers elected members, it is not one that only covers or extends to staff. It is all encompassing, and it is worthy of further consideration in the context of why this is so rampant.

I acknowledge also that a lot of work has been done—and there are others I have not mentioned—to try to address this issue through the existing mechanisms, and nothing much has come of that. So again, we have people who are caught up in this who are trying to address it, but not much is coming of it.

The motion itself calls for an inquiry, but as I said not one confined solely to elected members because, as we know and as I have just articulated, harassment also exists between council workers and residents. I am going to give one example, because we often think of this in the context of issues between elected members, of a woman, a resident, who shared her story with me when she heard that I was proposing this motion. She did not file a complaint out of fear of retribution. A council staff member came to her house to discuss a minor gardening matter. In the course of that discussion, he said to her, 'If I took you home from a bar and woke up the next morning and saw the size of your house, I would say you could afford to pay for this gardening matter yourself.'

This particular man knew where she lived and he knew she was a single mum as they had just talked about the affordability of carrying out the said gardening work. He had told her that he knew someone who knew her from her children's school, and she said to me, 'I felt unsafe.' She said she did not call the council to make a complaint. She chose silence. She also said, 'How could a council staff member possibly think that was an acceptable thing to say?' This was when they were visiting somebody's home on official or unofficial—but, in this instance, official—business and discussing the issue of the gardening matter at her home. So the motion is for every person without a platform who carries the weight of a story that they are too afraid to tell.

I have been asked specifically why sexual harassment is referred to in this motion and the answer is really twofold. Firstly, we have a good, proven track record with the inquiries that have already taken place. It replicates word for word the previous motion proposing an inquiry into the legal profession and, whilst I acknowledge that the bulk of complaints in local government are centred on bullying and general harassment, that is not to say, as that example I just highlighted indicates, that sexual harassment does not exist within other areas, particularly when it comes to the sort of scenario I just outlined.

A common theme is that people are afraid to speak. That has been something that I have grappled with in terms of getting this motion together. They have spoken to me very openly and candidly off the record. They become very fearful when it comes to speaking on the record, so that is what we are attempting to achieve through this motion. As we have seen in other sectors, an inquiry led by the equal opportunity commissioner gives people the chance to speak safely and confidently. It gives them a voice and it gives us the information we need to change the system.

I will not use this chamber to litigate individual council cases, some of which are ongoing, but, as I said, it is hard to open a paper these days and not find an issue between councils. Some of them are more difficult to wrap your head around than others, but it is certainly a problem that we need to address.

It would be the role of the commissioner to consider these complaints, with a view to recommending positive change. That is the commissioner's job and that is what she has shown her office can do so effectively, particularly in the legal profession. However, I will share just a glimpse of the system-wide issues from the correspondence I have received, with the permission of those who have given me these and certainly not by identifying anybody. One has said:

The Hon. Bonaros' motion is the circuit breaker we desperately need. This is a systemic cultural problem that cannot be fixed by tweaking the Behavioural Standards.

It is a problem we need to investigate by allowing women to speak freely—not just about the abuse, but about the personal, physical and financial toll it is taking.

Another has said:

...Local government is where female leaders can thrive—where we can balance leadership with careers and family. But until the system changes, it is not a safe workplace for women.

Another has said:

Speaking personally, and not on behalf of any council...I think there is a growing epidemic of incivility in the Local Government sector, both inside the Council Chambers and in Council Administrations across our State and interstate.

Anyone challenging this incivility and seeking public accountability can find themselves vilified in public and victimised in private.

The effects of incivility in the Local Government workplace is that people get sick, go on stress leave, there is a loss of staff, and financial issues may occur within organisations.

I personally had cause to seek assistance from a psychologist last year who confided in me that I was the fourth female Mayor who had come to him with similar issues in as many months. This should be alarming to all in the sector given there are only 68 Councils in SA.

Another mayor has said to me:

Connie, in all my years of being mayor, and I have been a mayor for a very long time, never have I seen this issue as rampant as it is today.

He says that the culture that council works within is toxic, ugly and brutal, and he says the last two years in particular have been the worst he has seen in something like 25. That goes to the theme of this growing incivility that we have just heard about.

I will finish with one more quote about the group of female mayors in South Australia who have come together to share their collective experience and their shared ambition of improving civil behaviour in local government. There have been approaches to local government. As I said, one of the people who I have mentioned today is the president of the Local Government Association, but I think the Local Government Association now fully acknowledges that we have an issue here. I have spoken to the Local Government Association, and I have said, 'You have an issue here.'

I have also said there is nothing to fear, because that is not the role of the equal opportunity commissioner. The equal opportunity commissioner comes in with a job to do. She rips the bandaid off the problem and she exposes the faults and the systemic weaknesses that exist in the system. Then she makes recommendations for change, and she tells you, from an outsider's perspective, whose bread and butter it is to deal with these issues, what you need to do to improve. You cannot do that from within. Everybody has tried to do that from within, historically, and it simply does not work. That is why we have an equal opportunity commissioner in that role, and that is why we need her to undertake this inquiry, as she has others.

You have just heard a lot of powerful words from people who have provided them, and they reflect a broader pattern of a recurring theme of bullying and harassment, a rising toll on individuals and legal bills. In the Adelaide Hills Council just yesterday it was reported that legal fees have reached \$400,000. I am going to bring into that in a moment the fact that ratepayers are paying for these legal bills in many instances. I do not think it is the expectation of any mayor or elected member or of any of us that ratepayers should be footing the bill for these issues. What it points to is that the systems that they are relying on are broken or unsustainable.

Mediation, investigations, lawyers are all being brought into the fold. Time and energy is being diverted from the job of serving communities. By-elections seem to be triggered left, right and centre at the moment. SafeWork SA can be called in and, indeed, has been called in, but this issue is not isolated to one council. Whether it is Tea Tree Gully, Burnside, Mount Barker, Adelaide Hills, the list goes on and on.

I note also that there are many who have spoken to me who have said they do not have the problems that other councils have in their areas, but they are speaking in support of this because ultimately it impacts local government overall and it impacts, I guess, the faith that we have in local government overall to be able to undertake their duties.

I have been told that there are several councils, both current and recent, where dominant factions within council—sometimes supported by administration, sometimes not—create environments that foster the sort of behaviour that we have talked about. This has been described to me as 'the weaponisation of local government', that the atmosphere often leads to the exclusion and isolation of elected mayors. Mayors who speak out against misconduct then face complaints that appear to be aimed at silencing them.

They have said that under the current system, if a complaint is lodged, they can often secure the support of councillors or council, and this of course has a flow-on impact in terms of the other issues I have just talked about for ratepayers, but the person who is the subject of the complaint typically receives no assistance and has to pay for their own defence. Of course, in addition to the financial toll, we know that this has had—is having, continues to have and has had previously—a huge financial, physical, mental burden on not only individuals but the ones that we do not talk about often in these things, and that is the families that they go home to every day.

As I said before, this is not just about women, but many of the high-profile cases that I have pointed to today do centre around women who have reached their breaking point. They have done so silently. They have done so, in some cases, publicly, and they have done so, in others, behind closed doors to people who will listen to them. They have been left to navigate what they say are unsafe environments and an inadequate system.

I think it is important that we acknowledge each and every person who has a story and has found the courage to tell that story. They are, I think, deeply invested in improving the system, otherwise they would not do what they have done. These are intelligent, capable people. They are community leaders. We rely on them each and every day in our own respective areas, and they are telling us that something has to give.

They are telling us that they are not only afraid to speak out because of the consequences but also that they cannot tolerate not speaking out anymore. They are the stories that we have to be willing to listen to. It is not going to do us any good having them come in here and tell us all of this, but it will absolutely shine a spotlight on the issues if we hand that over to the equal opportunity commissioner and allow her, through the experience of her office and the authority and independence that she has, to undertake this role.

I want to refer to a story yesterday by Mike Smithson. He has referred to what is going on at the moment in local councils as 'a blood sport with a stench and hot air emanating' from particular councils. There is a council at the moment, we know, which has been very much in the headlines. I think he has hit the nail on the head from a ratepayer's perspective in his commentary, and that is that we have these cultural issues. I do not think personality clashes are necessarily always the case, but they may stem from those in the first instance.

The bottom line is that somebody is paying for all that, and the people who are paying for all that are not just the ratepayers. They are paying their rates towards legal fees that they would otherwise not want to be paying towards—they would rather put them towards things in the community that actually help their community thrive—but they are also paying at a personal level. Those councillors and elected members and staff are also paying at a very personal level, and I just do not think that is okay. I do not think that any of us reading this every day think it is okay. I certainly do not think the minister responsible thinks it is okay.

I have heard about the most recent spate of resignations, and let me be clear: all of the resignations are not for the same reason. Some people have just chosen to leave, and I think that is a very important point that I need to make. Some have chosen to leave, but others have said, 'I can't do this anymore,' and they are resigning. What our headlines are showing is that they are resigning in comparative droves compared to the number of councils that we have across the state and what they ought to be doing.

That diminishes our faith in local government. That is our third tier of government. We need to have faith that local government can undertake their jobs the way that we expect them to and provide the services to community the way that we expect them to, and right now they cannot. I am pleading with this place and with the government and the opposition to support this motion so that we can, as I said, rip that bandaid off and let someone who knows what they are doing come in—there is nothing to fear—and look into those systemic issues that are giving rise to the number of complaints that we are seeing and investigations that are undergoing and give us some positive tools to be able to deal with them. On that note, I seek leave to conclude my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICES

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

That this council—

1. Acknowledges that access to emergency ambulance services is a critical health service;
2. Notes that the cost of an emergency ambulance service is \$1,171, plus a per kilometre fee of \$6.70;
3. Recognises that the cost of an emergency ambulance service is more than the fortnightly rate for a single full age pension;
4. Acknowledges that South Australia is the only jurisdiction in the nation that does not provide free emergency ambulance services to people on the full age pension;
5. Notes that emergency ambulance services are free for all residents in Queensland and Tasmania;
6. Notes that COTA SA is calling on the state government to provide free emergency ambulance services for all older South Australians on a full age pension; and
7. Calls on the Malinauskas government to waive the cost of emergency ambulance services for all full age pensioners in their upcoming budget.

(Continued from 14 May 2025.)

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (17:24): On behalf of the opposition, I rise to speak in support of the Hon. Mr Simms' motion urging this council to acknowledge that access to emergency ambulance services is a critical health service; that the cost of an emergency ambulance service is more than the fortnightly rate for a single full age pension; that South Australia is the only jurisdiction in the nation that does not provide free emergency ambulance services to people on the full age pension, with emergency ambulance services free for all residents in Queensland and Tasmania; notes that the Council on the Ageing (COTA) is calling on the state government to provide free emergency ambulance services for all older South Australians on a full age pension; and calls on the Malinauskas government to waive the cost of emergency ambulance services for full age pensioners in their upcoming budget, which of course will be delivered tomorrow.

The Council on the Ageing SA serves as the peak organisation for older individuals in South Australia and focuses on the promotion, improvement and protection of their wellbeing. As part of their state budget submission the peak body is calling on the state government to address the cost-of-living-pressures, issues around access to health and wellbeing, social connections and older South Australians living in regional South Australia as well by providing free ambulances for all full age pensioners in South Australia.

The cost of an emergency ambulance service is extraordinary. It is actually \$1,171 in addition to a per kilometre fee of some \$6.70. It does not take a mathematical genius to work out that this exceeds the fortnightly rate for a single individual receiving a full age pension—that is, one trip in an ambulance can exceed their full pension. South Australia remains the only state in Australia that does not offer free emergency ambulance services to individuals on the full age pension, in contrast

to the provisions in Queensland and Tasmania where such services are provided at no cost to residents.

As the population ages many individuals face declining health and chronic conditions, leading to increased reliance on emergency medical services, so accessibility to ambulance services is increasingly imperative. In 2021-22, individuals aged 65 and over accounted for a significant proportion of hospitalisations and emergency department visits in Australia, and I am sure that is not surprising to any of us, but while the emergency treatment is free under Medicare at the ED, South Australia uniquely imposes substantial fees for ambulance services in order to get the patients to the ED. This financial burden disproportionately affects older residents, as they use the service more often, and many of these people live on fixed incomes and are struggling with the rise of the cost of living in our state, as are most of us.

A national survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that a significant percentage of age pensioners either lack private health insurance or face financial constraints that deter them from seeking necessary emergency care, and of course this can deter them from seeking ambulance services when they need them as well. Indeed, research indicates that fear of ambulance costs leads some older individuals to forgo calling for help via an ambulance at all, thus potentially compromising their own health outcome. This is a risk that we should not be taking.

COTA SA is therefore calling on the state Labor government to provide free ambulance services for older South Australians, aligning with practices in other Australian states, to ensure equitable access to emergency medical care during the cost-of-living crisis that we are currently experiencing, but beyond that just as a sense and principle of equitable access to what is an essential service. So it is with some eagerness that the opposition supports this motion.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (17:28): The government notes that ambulance fees can impact on all groups in our state. However, it is our view that a partial user-pays model is the fairest option for all residents. We also strongly believe that funding is better spent on preventative health programs, which help us limit ambulance usage in our community.

To understand ambulance fees, we need to take in a historical overview. Until 1993, ambulance services across the state were provided by private entities, notably the St John's Ambulance Brigade, with each provider establishing their own fees and subscription schemes independent of state government. In some cases these were operated with the funding assistance of local government.

With the establishment of Medicare by the federal government 41 years ago, it was decided that ambulance services, like dental services, would not be covered. In 1993, the then Arnold Labor government established what is now the South Australian Ambulance Service (SAAS), then known as the South Australian St John's Ambulance Service, a private entity co-owned by the Minister for Health, Family and Community Services and the Priory of St John in Australia. From this point onwards, fees have been set by the responsible minister, currently the Minister for Health and Wellbeing.

The obligation for SAAS to charge fees has been legislated and legislation will be required to change this. Fees are set each financial year and published in the *Government Gazette*. Concessions are provided to holders of a Services Australia Pension Concession Card. Services Australia indicates that all age pensioners are eligible for this card. This makes the fees 50 per cent cheaper than the \$1,171 as stated by the Council on the Ageing (COTA). It is important to note that consumers do not actually pay the full cost of the ambulance service they have received. The fee represents less than 50 per cent of the total cost of the service. The vast majority is funded by the government.

We acknowledge the financial burden that ambulance fees can place on individuals, especially older South Australians. While SAAS is required by the Health Care Act 2008 and respective Treasurer's Instructions to charge a fee for services rendered, there are policies in place to assess eligibility for special consideration due to financial hardship. SAAS has recently reviewed its hardship policy to align with government best practices, simplifying processes and paperwork for consumers.

SAAS also provides the community with a range of services which are provided free of charge to the consumer if clinically appropriate, such as telehealth services which can provide care over the phone or refer the patient to a more appropriate health service. Another is SAAS's Community Paramedics program, which provides primary care services in some communities. I know that the government is expanding this program to the Yorke Peninsula later this year.

Further, SAAS offers a low-cost ambulance cover membership subscription scheme, which is open to all South Australians, including the 59.7 per cent who already have private health coverage for ambulance services. For the annual cost of approximately \$60 per person, a pension concession card holder can receive an unlimited number of emergency ambulance services within South Australia at no further cost. There is a clear correlation between ambulance usage and a cost of service.

COTA SA raises the example of Tasmania and Queensland as two jurisdictions which do not charge residents at all. However, according to the federal Productivity Commission's annual Report on Government Services, those two states have over the last 10 financial years seen a combined increase of ambulance usage of 42.4 per cent compared to a combined 19.7 per cent in other states and territories. This correlation has been supported by academic research over a number of years. According to the last census, people aged 65 and upwards accounted for 20.1 per cent of South Australian residents; however, those aged 67 or older accounted for 47 per cent of SAAS's workload last financial year.

In three years, the Malinauskas government has added an additional \$7.1 billion to the health budget. This additional funding is enabling us to add more clinical staff and more hospital beds. The latest Report on Government Services released earlier this year also shows that South Australia has experienced the most significant improvements of any jurisdiction in ambulance response times in a year. Response times improved by 22 per cent in our first year of government, with SAAS responding to 90 per cent of all incidents within 55.6 minutes in metropolitan Adelaide.

The most recent report showed a further 38 per cent improvement in our second year, with 90 per cent of all incidents responded to within 34.3 minutes, a more than 21-minute improvement, and the biggest improvement in the nation. This is a marked improvement on ambulance response times compared to under the former Liberal government, when incidents were responded to within a whopping 71.3 minutes in 2021-22.

South Australia recorded its best April priority 2 lights and sirens ambulance response times in five years, with 2,511 more South Australians reached on time in April 2025 compared to March 2022 when we took office. In April 2025, ambulances reached 67.7 per cent of all P2 emergencies within the target time of 16 minutes, the best April P2 response times since 2020 and also a significant improvement on last month, which was 63.8 per cent.

The Malinauskas government has increased investment in SAAS, with over \$109 million in additional government funding in 2022-23. This compares to the previous government, which cut funding to SAAS by \$13 million in its first two years. Our government's investment in ambulance services includes 350 more ambos across the state, with 51 based in regional locations. Since being elected in 2022, our government has now delivered:

- more than 300 extra ambos to improve response times and help fix the ramping crisis;
- 36 additional ambulance vehicles, with 27 already on the road;
- the building and upgrading of 24 ambulance stations, including new stations already open at Norwood, Woodville, Edwardstown, Mount Barker, Victor Harbor and Golden Grove;
- a new team of 20 specialised ambulance officers now supporting the transfer of medically stable, low acuity patients requiring ambulance transport out of our public hospitals, getting them home sooner and freeing up beds for others; and
- \$120 million for a new ambulance headquarters, which will include a new city ambulance station and garage, a two-storey ambulance emergency operations centre and a state health coordination centre, due to be completed later this year.

We have also launched a life-saving smart app, GoodSAM, to help people with cardiac arrest access cardiopulmonary resuscitation sooner, potentially sending aid within seconds of a 000 call. We have invested \$23.5 million to enable SA Ambulance Service to introduce an electronic patient care records system to streamline workflows and communication between ambulance and hospital staff. We delivered \$10.7 million for SA Ambulance Service to expand one of its key hospital avoidance teams: a clinical telephone assessment service staffed by 15 highly skilled paramedic telehealth clinicians.

At the last state election, this government committed to taking preventive health seriously. Preventive health done well is, after all, the best way to keep our society healthy and not needing ambulance services. This is why we established Preventive Health SA as an agency in its own right with landmark legislation last year. Through Preventive Health SA, we are funding a range of evidence-based campaigns, including a statewide smoking and vaping cessation campaign that has shown effectiveness in reducing prevalence.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: Mr President, please. The Hon. Mr Hunter here would love to hear what I am saying, but he cannot.

The PRESIDENT: Order, the Hon. Ms Lensink and the Hon. Mr Simms!

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: These are the people who cut the living daylights out of our health services and opposed the new Royal Adelaide Hospital—they were prepared to give a paint job to the old Royal Adelaide Hospital—and you dare criticise the great work that the Malinauskas government has done to help this state.

We are funding the Get2It bowel screening campaign with the Cancer Council of South Australia and the Every Moment Matters alcohol in pregnancy campaign with the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education. We are also providing more than \$9 million in grant funding to community-based organisations to facilitate prevention and health promotion efforts.

The Malinauskas government is taking health very seriously. We have committed billions of dollars to making sure the people of South Australia are healthy. I know that those opposite do not like hearing this because of their abject failure when they were in government for four years, but the health system in this state under the Malinauskas government is on the way up.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (17:38): I rise today to support the Hon. Robert Simms' motion calling on the Malinauskas Labor government to waive the cost of emergency ambulance services for all full age pensioners in the 2025-26 budget. As someone with ageing family members who have underlying health issues, I understand the stress and anxiety that so many members of our community feel when they consider what might happen if they ever need to call for an ambulance in an emergency.

For too many South Australians, the cost of an emergency ambulance service makes them pause and weigh up whether they can afford to make that call when they need emergency medical attention. For older South Australians, who are more likely to require urgent medical attention and are also greatly impacted by ever-increasing cost-of-living pressures, the financial burden of paying for ambulance insurance or ambulance services is often simply too much.

I am grateful that my family members have private health insurance that covers ambulance services, but many of the most vulnerable people in our community are not in that position. Rising energy costs over the last decade, and the latest cost-of-living burden, escalating insurance premiums for home and car, all leave age pensioners on a fixed income with very little left over in their household budget.

Making ends meet on a fixed age pension is hard enough as it is, and an unexpected bill for an ambulance call-out that costs more than the fortnightly rate for a single full age pension would tip many over the edge into financial distress. It should not be this way. I note that other jurisdictions such as Queensland and Tasmania provide free emergency ambulance services for all residents, but in South Australia we have the second highest fees in the country and we are the only state that does not provide free emergency ambulance services for those on a full age pension.

Only yesterday, as was reported in *The Advertiser*, Reeve Brice, an 84-year-old age pensioner, had to pay a \$1,200 bill for a three-kilometre ambo ride after fainting. It demonstrated a real-life scenario of why this motion should be supported. I want to thank COTA SA for their strong advocacy on this issue and for highlighting the significant impact that free access to critical health services would have on vulnerable older South Australians.

The Malinauskas Labor government has the opportunity to make substantial difference in the lives and wellbeing of vulnerable older South Australians by waiving the cost of emergency ambulance services for all South Australians on a full age pension in line with the other Australian jurisdictions. I thank the honourable member for moving this motion and I fully commend it to the chamber.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (17:41): I was not listed to speak, but I just wish to make a brief contribution in favour of this motion. I am not going to rebut all the silly things that were said by the government about smoking cessation programs and a whole range of things that are completely irrelevant to this. Just to speak to personal experience, I will say at the outset that my parents are not pensioners; they are self-funded retirees who have full private health cover.

Sometimes people will assume that all of the ambulance fees are covered if you have private health insurance. You still do need an emergency transport to submit that. My experience dealing with rebates and the interaction between the private health system and the South Australian Ambulance Service is pretty unsatisfactory in that I had to go to a lot of trouble because I had made the mistake of assuming that we should pay for it up-front and then rebate it from our private health.

That is a bad idea, because all the health funds know that the South Australian Ambulance Service is notoriously slow and that you should submit it straight to your private health insurer and they will cover the emergency fee. However, they will not cover the transport back from the hospital to, in my parents' case, the aged-care facility because my parents are not mobile at all and therefore they have to return home via ambulance. I think the cost for that is some \$250 or \$300, so if that has to be borne by pensioners that is clearly a significant out-of-pocket cost.

We learnt our lesson early, so we have actually taken out the private health insurance cover, which I think is \$25 or \$30. A lot of people will get caught in that trap without realising it. But the SAAS—and I am very grateful to the staff who have attended to my parents in a timely manner, and for their professionalism—financial system is from I do not know what year. It certainly does not seem to have been dealt with in recent years and it needs a rocket. With those comments, I commend this motion.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (17:44): I was not listed to speak either, but I want to indicate my support for this and echo the sentiments that have just been expressed, because they were the points that I was also going to raise, particularly in relation to this. I know it is easy for us to say that you can get ambulance cover, but that will not cover the sorts of scenarios the Hon. Ms Lensink has just outlined. I have just pulled up the list: family cover \$198; single cover \$99.50; pensioner \$118; and pensioner concession single \$59.50. That might not seem like much to us, but for the cohort of people that we are speaking to and for many more it is a lot of money and they cannot find the money to be able to afford this.

When people let things go because they cannot afford them, it is these sorts of things they usually let go first. It is also the same group who are more likely to need the ambulance and end up with one of those hefty \$1,170-odd bills that you get when you have called out the ambulance. I got one of those last week for my son. Thankfully, I can afford private cover and I can deal with it, but I can tell you it smacks you in the face when you get it. I do not know how on earth you deal with that when you fall within the cohort that COTA is advocating for in the Hon. Rob Simms' motion. Whether it is \$59, \$118 or \$198, it is not sitting in your bank account and you cannot afford it. So it is with those words that I indicate my full support for the motion.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (17:46): I thank all members for their contributions: the Hon. Dennis Hood, the Hon. Jing Lee, the Hon. Michelle Lensink, the Hon. Connie Bonaros and the Hon. Russell Wortley. I thank crossbenchers and the Liberal opposition for their support of this sensible proposal. It is a modest proposal, but it is something that I think would deliver some tangible benefits for South

Australians who are struggling, when every other state is able to provide free emergency ambulance services to people receiving the full age pension—every other state than South Australia.

I want to reflect momentarily on the Hon. Russell Wortley's contribution, which I found extraordinary for many reasons. One of the things I found quite shocking in the Labor Party's talking points that he read from was the suggestion that the Labor Party supports a user-pays model when it comes to accessing an ambulance in our state. We have just come off the back of a federal election campaign where the Prime Minister made much of the need for Medicare to be protected and spent a lot of time brandishing his Medicare card, moving around the country.

Yet now it seems that in the state of South Australia the Malinauskas government is saying that when you turn up at an emergency department you need to bring your credit card with you. I do not think most South Australians will support the idea that accessing an ambulance should be based on your capacity to pay and that a user-pays model is appropriate when it comes to emergency services. I do not think most South Australians will support that.

Let us reflect on some of the costs associated with this. For a single emergency ambulance trip in South Australia an individual will pay \$1,171, plus a per kilometre fee of \$6.70. This is a charge that exceeds the fortnightly rate of the full age pension. It is bad enough that older South Australians are too scared to call an ambulance because they live in fear that they will be ramped for hours and hours, but now we have South Australians who are too scared to call an ambulance because we know they are going to be slugged with a bill of over \$1,000. It is not acceptable, in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, to see the Malinauskas government taking this position. I urge them in tomorrow's budget to send those talking points to the bin and instead show some leadership on this issue.

This is the third budget in a row when the Greens have argued for some action on this. The Council on the Ageing has been steadfast in arguing for this over many, many years. I think it will be a key issue for the Malinauskas government heading into the next state election. This is the last budget they are handing down before the state election and I urge them to show some leadership on this. User-pays is not the South Australian way when it comes to accessing emergency services.

Motion carried.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CRICKET TEAM

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.P. Wortley:

That this council—

1. Congratulates the South Australian Cricket Team on winning the 2024-25 Sheffield Shield;
2. Notes the win is South Australia's first in almost 30 years;
3. Acknowledges the historic nature of South Australia's double trophy after also winning the state's first One-Day Cup in 13 years;
4. Recognises the exceptional effort and performance of the entire squad; and
5. Acknowledges the efforts of the state government, Adelaide City Council and the South Australian Cricket Association in transforming Karen Rolton Oval, doubling its capacity for the event.

(Continued from 30 April 2025.)

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (17:50): I thank the government for their indulgence. I rise on behalf of the opposition to support the Hon. Mr Wortley's motion. It is a very good motion and one of which all South Australians can be proud.

The date of Saturday 29 March 2025 holds great significance for cricket enthusiasts and proud South Australians alike. Indeed, it was a day to be truly proud to be a South Australian. It was on this date, of course, that supporters rejoiced as South Australia triumphed over Queensland with a four-wicket victory during the Sheffield Shield final, a tournament held at Karen Rolton Oval. South Australia triumphed to win its first Sheffield Shield title in some three decades, an extraordinary length of time, making it a significant achievement for the team, and a sigh of relief for many of us, I can assure you.

I vividly recall the moment when South Australia won its last Sheffield Shield title, as I said, nearly three decades ago. I remember I was actually driving at the time, listening to the live radio commentary that broadcast every ball and every moment of the game. Indeed, I remember it really well. As the match drew to its conclusion, I actually had to pull over because I was concentrating more on the radio than I was on the road so I could listen to the last few balls. I wonder if anyone else in this chamber was so absorbed in it as I was. That is maybe the sad truth. I am a cricket tragic.

That match had the real nail-biting factor, with tailenders Peter McIntyre and Shane George, for those of you who remember them, securing victory for South Australia. Of course, this year, South Australia has finally done it again after what has been a very long wait.

On behalf of the opposition I would like to formally congratulate the South Australian cricket team on winning the 2024-25 Sheffield Shield. Well done to the players and the coaching staff. They showcased their skills, their dedication and perseverance throughout what has been a demanding season. It is, indeed, a memorable victory for so many reasons.

Coach Ryan Harris led South Australia to its first Sheffield Shield in 30 years as a new coach. Through his leadership and tactics, Harris was instrumental in shaping the South Australian cricket team to achieving this great success on the field. I congratulate him.

I congratulate player of the match, Brendan Doggett, for his sterling and best-ever Sheffield Shield 11-wicket bowling performance. It is not often that somebody is able to achieve 11 wickets in a game of cricket. He gave an exceptional performance and it was a great display of skill and courage and I commend him for it.

I also congratulate captain Nathan McSweeney and the entire squad on a successful and historic 2025 campaign. The teamwork and strength displayed by McSweeney, who, of course, has featured in the Australian cricket team in recent times, and the whole state team, has been truly of the highest calibre.

I should also note that, in a double display of cricketing dominance by the South Australian team, the team earlier in March claimed the one-day competition trophy, as members would no doubt be aware, the first time that South Australia has done so in some 13 years. I guess in a sense there are two reasons to celebrate.

The Sheffield Shield victory was not only marked by a great moment in the cricket history of South Australia but also highlighted the team's resilience and determination and it is one that South Australians can be truly proud of. We celebrate this victory and as the team already starts thinking about next year when, who knows, we may do it again and go back to back, I want to pass on from the opposition our sincere congratulations. It is a tremendous effort and something of which all South Australians can be proud.

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (17:54): I rise to support the motion and to reflect on the pride South Australians continue to feel following our state's historic Sheffield Shield victory, which I am sure is something that we very much all agree on in this chamber. While the celebrations have passed, the significance of this achievement remains front of mind, not only for what it represents on the field but for the way it brought our community together.

Firstly, I wish to acknowledge and congratulate the South Australian men's cricket team. To the players, coaches, staff and their families I want to say thank you. Your collective commitment, professionalism and determination delivered one of the most memorable seasons in our state's cricketing history. South Australia has not won the Sheffield Shield since 1995-96. That is almost three decades without lifting the prestigious prize and I can guarantee you it is a very heavy shield. This team believed, worked hard and wrote themselves into the record books and they did it in style.

As we heard already, stand-out performances from Brendan Doggett, Alex Carey, Jake Lehmann and Jason Sangha, under the leadership of coach Ryan Harris and captain Nathan McSweeney, showed us just how strong South Australian cricket has become. This team also claimed the One-Day Cup earlier in the season, a remarkable double that speaks volumes about the culture and capability being built within this squad.

It was a season defined by resilience, leadership and unity, and I am proud that the Malinauskas Labor government played a role in supporting the environment that allowed this success to flourish. That is why the government is proud to have backed South Australian cricket through the transformation of the Karen Rolton Oval, which looked incredible for the test, a facility that was made into a genuine high performance and community venue.

In partnership with the South Australian Cricket Association, led by Will and Charlie, and the City of Adelaide, we helped expand capacity to 10,000 people, installed tiered viewing areas and LED screens, improved spectator amenities and created a festival-style experience that welcomed fans of all ages.

Importantly, entry was free, and that matters. It meant school groups, families and grassroots clubs were able to witness this history firsthand and made them feel very much a part of every ball. It is a clear example of how we can make elite sport accessible and inspiring. We also saw this success brought into the heart of our city with a public reception in Rundle Mall to honour the team with a show of pride that went far beyond cricket.

This government believes deeply in the value of sport. We invest in our venues, we support our athletes, and we prioritise access and inclusion because when our communities can connect through sport we build stronger, healthier and more inclusive places to live. This season has shown that, with the right support and vision, South Australian sport can lead the nation and we intend to keep building on this momentum.

Congratulations once again to everyone involved. It will be a time that many will not forget. Many enjoyed the opportunity to run across the field and even take some of the white pickets afterwards and some of the signs. Thank you to everyone involved and congratulations to the team.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (17:57): I would like to thank the Hon. Emily Bourke and the Hon. Dennis Hood for their contributions to this motion. All of South Australia is very proud of the achievements of our South Australian cricket team. It is no easy feat to win a Sheffield Shield. It takes a lot of sacrifice, a lot of work and a lot of commitment from their families, so I urge all members to support the motion.

Motion carried.

Sitting suspended from 17:58 to 19:46.

Bills

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (RENT FREEZE) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 1 May 2024.)

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (19:46): Rent rises in Adelaide are out of control. According to real estate platform Domain, the Adelaide rental market experienced the largest quarterly change to the weekly median rents in the country during the first quarter of 2024, with rents for houses rising 5.4 per cent. Rents in Adelaide are rising twice as fast as wages. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the wage price index for SA rose 3.5 per cent in 2024, while rents shot up a whopping 10 per cent. In 2025, this trend has continued. Adelaide rents went up by 10 per cent on average last year, while wages grew at only 4 per cent. How are people supposed to keep a roof over their heads, let alone save for a home, when their rent is going up at twice the rate of wages year after year?

Housing in South Australia used to be affordable. Indeed, before the pandemic, SA used to be the second most affordable state to rent in in the country, but according to data from the REA Group and PropTrack, SA is now facing the toughest rental affordability crisis in the country, along with New South Wales. SA rental affordability is at its lowest level since at least 2008 when these records began. Relative to March 2020, rents in Adelaide have surged by a whopping 55 per cent.

In March 2024, PropTrack reported that SA rent prices soared by 10 to 30 per cent across 92 suburbs in just one year. From 2020 to 2024, the weekly median rent in Adelaide increased by a

staggering 54 per cent. That is an increase from \$375 per week to \$577 per week. That is a \$202 rent rise. In the same period, the official cash rate rose from 0.25 per cent to 4.35 per cent, a 4.1 per cent rise in the interest rate versus a 54 per cent rise in the weekly median rent. It is evident that landlords are more than just passing on the cost of interest rate rises to their tenants; there are some who are price gouging them.

We are in the midst of the worst housing crisis in generations. It is clear that tenants are at the mercy of the market and that that is simply not working. The skyrocketing costs mean that many tenants are forced to choose between buying food and facing eviction. It is morally wrong that we have more and more South Australians being plunged into poverty and homelessness while some landlords rake in record profits. In a developed country like Australia and in a state like ours, this is simply unacceptable.

Meanwhile, according to a Shelter SA report, the practice of rent bidding is still prevalent in South Australia, and that is despite changes to the Residential Tenancies Act that were enacted last year. Indeed, at the time the Greens moved amendments to that legislation to try to make it very clear that the situation of asking for a higher price was not just prohibited in South Australia but that accepting a price above the asking would also be prohibited, but again the Labor Party opposed that.

South Australians are horrified by the rent prices that they are seeing at the moment and they want to see their parliament finally take some action. We have a moral imperative to intervene in the market to provide renters with some reprieve from skyrocketing prices and insert some fairness back into our housing market. The bill that I speak to today seeks to do just that.

Under this bill, landlords will be prevented from increasing residential rent for a two-year period. After that period of two years, rent would only be allowed to increase in line with inflation. Tenants would be able to apply to the rental tribunal for a declaration of the maximum rent payable on a premises. Should a landlord be found to be charging more than the maximum rent payable as determined by the tribunal, they may be liable to reimburse their tenant the excess rent charged.

Under the bill, the maximum rent payable on a residential property during the two-year rent freeze would be the rent included in any residential tenancy agreement as of 1 January 2024. If the property was not the subject of a residential tenancies agreement at that time, it would be determined on factors including the most recent rent under a previous tenancy agreement entered after January 2023.

Rent freezes are not an extraordinary or novel idea. Indeed, South Australia froze rents for six months during the COVID-19 pandemic. I do recognise the leadership of the Marshall government in that regard, and in particular note my colleague the Hon. Michelle Lensink for her leadership in dealing with the pandemic and in managing vulnerable people who were experiencing homelessness at that time. I think that would have been a very challenging issue for the government to deal with and the honourable member dealt with that with great compassion and foresight, so I commend her for that.

Historically, rent freezes have been used in times of rampant inflation. In 1941, the federal government froze rents to deal with inflation caused by wartime shortages. Throughout the world, rent controls are used to protect tenants from punitive and excessive increases in rent pressure zones. From New York and California to Scotland and Ireland, action has been taken to limit increases in rents.

Indeed, Lord Mayor Sadiq Khan has called for powers to freeze rents for two years in London. The New Zealand Human Rights Commission has also called for a temporary rent freeze throughout the country to tackle the cost of living and rent crises. More recently, Spain has capped their rent increases in areas where rent is increasing significantly.

This bill is proposing real action for renters in a time of an unprecedented housing crisis. It is possible. This is not a fanciful idea. Over the last three decades of neoliberal economic policy, the role of government in housing has consistently been replaced by the private market, the real estate industry and other large-scale financial actors. Successive Liberal and Labor governments have been more interested in ensuring that the big banks, wealthy investors and property developers continue to rake in record profits at the expense of everyday people.

I recognise that this bill would not be a panacea, and we need to see action from the federal government as well. In particular, the Greens urge the Albanese government to finally take action on negative gearing and capital gains concessions that benefit wealthy landlords, but we can also take leadership here at a state level. This bill, which would freeze rents for two years and cap future increases in line with inflation, will put more money in the pockets of renters who are struggling in the middle of this financial crisis.

The Malinauskas government is going to be handing down its budget tomorrow. There is an opportunity for them to show some real leadership when it comes to supporting renters who are struggling. I suspect, unfortunately, that once again renters will be duded by the Malinauskas government's budget, but I urge the government to take some action. I want to indicate to members that I plan to bring this bill to a vote next sitting so that all members of the community will get to see where their members of parliament stand on this important question.

This bill would reverse the trend of skyrocketing rents by putting the interests of renters ahead of the big banks, developers and property moguls. Everyone needs a home. It is a fundamental right of each and every South Australian to have a roof over their head and a place to call home. Housing should be treated as a home and as a social good, not a speculative financial interest. People should not have to feel extremely lucky simply to have a roof over their head in this great state of ours. With that, I conclude my remarks.

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

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 19 March 2025.)

The Hon. T.T. NGO (19:56): I rise to speak on the Hon. Nicola Centofanti's motion and on behalf of the government to put forward the following amendment. I move:

Leave out paragraph 3 and insert new paragraphs as follows:

3. Notes the Malinauskas Labor government has announced a \$5 million boost in this week's budget for key sectors to respond to continuing challenges in the global trading environment, in addition to other supports for exports; and

We thank the honourable member for recognising our important wine industry. South Australia is undeniably the heartland of Australian wine, producing an impressive 80 per cent of the nation's premium wine and half of all bottled wine. I think we can proudly say that we are Australia's best wine state. South Australia's wine industry is not only a cultural hallmark but also a critical pillar of both our domestic economy and international trade.

In 2023-24, this sector generated a remarkable \$1.81 billion in revenue, with over 394 million litres of wine valued at \$1.55 billion and exported around the world. However, the grape and wine industry faces a number of significant challenges from market oversupply to reduced consumer demand due to healthier lifestyle choices and cost-of-living pressures. Other significant impacts include international trade barriers as well as the harsh impact of prolonged droughts across many parts of South Australia.

In response to these challenges, the South Australian government remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the sustainability and resilience of this vital industry through targeted initiatives and collaborative partnerships. This included forming a working group with members from state and federal government agencies and the wine industry, which commissioned an Adelaide University report. The report produced by Emeritus Professor Kym Anderson highlighted a need for better data, greater transparency, targeted marketing, and research and development. The report findings resulted in the following key responses:

- establishment of the South Australian Wine Recovery Program, which is an initiative developed with the SA Wine Industry Association and Wine Grape Council of SA, that aims to boost domestic demand and strengthen regional capability;
- a \$3.5 million grape and wine sector long-term viability support package was launched by the commonwealth in June 2024 in order to address the red wine oversupply and support industry sustainability;
- the establishment of trade funding to tap emerging markets;
- the formation of a National Vineyard Register for real-time planting and data collection, along with contracting and fair-trading reforms;
- following China's decision to remove all trade barriers on Australian wine, the Malinauskas government announced a further \$1.85 million China Re-Engagement Support Program to help South Australian wine businesses re-enter the China market in a risk-controlled way. This included two-way market activation and immersion activities for South Australian wine exporters to attend industry events in China during 2024 and 2025.

In addition to these initiatives, South Australia will also showcase its top-tier wines to Chinese importers and high-end consumers through coordinated marketing aligned to key trade events and celebrations.

The Minister for Trade and Investment, Joe Szakacs MP, announced this week that South Australian exporters will receive a \$5 million boost in next week's state budget. This will help further support our wine industry to respond to the continuing challenges in the global trading environment. With worldwide trading, the US happens to be Australia's second largest market for wine by volume, and the third largest market by value, so the 10 per cent tariff the US has put on all Australian goods entering the US impacts on the current uncertainty about our red wine oversupply.

To support the challenge of red wine oversupply, the Ethephon grant ran for a second year for growers who chose to rest their red wines in the 2024-25 growing season, offering them a saving of up to \$2,000 per hectare in input costs.

In June 2024, a \$260,000 grant was provided to the Riverland's Consolidated Cooperative Wineries Cooperative to encourage South Australian wine grapegrowers to consider diversifying to alternative crops by improving their access to information on options and revenue streams. Due to current drought conditions being faced by farmers, on 8 April 2025 the Malinauskas state Labor government announced a further \$55 million package to support drought-affected farmers and communities across South Australia, taking the total drought assistance available to \$73 million.

Labor has also recognised the emotional toll these challenging conditions are having on our growers in regional communities and has committed \$50,000 to help our statewide wine industry to hold community events that focus on mental health and wellbeing forums in their region. We have also recently made an additional \$250,000 available for grants of up to \$5,000 for drought-affected communities to host events that foster social connection and provide support through the Connecting Communities Events Grant program as part of its \$73 million drought assistance package.

South Australia's wine regions are the backbone of many regional economies. From the Barossa to McLaren Vale, the Clare Valley and Coonawarra, we are globally recognised for our exceptional wine experiences. The Malinauskas Labor government will continue to respond and support the grape and wine industry. We commend the amended version of this motion to the chamber.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (20:05): I take this opportunity to thank the Hon. Tung Ngo for his contribution to this motion. It may surprise the Hon. Tung Ngo to know that, despite the fact that his amendment was very late in the piece, we will not be opposing that amendment on this side of the house, noting the government has announced—apparently—\$5 million in tomorrow's budget to respond to challenges. I appreciate the honourable member's personal apology for the tardiness of the amendment, although I am sure it is not his fault. He is always dragged out by his side to face the music when best practice falls by the wayside.

I am glad to hear that this is what the government are doing, that they are putting some funding towards this situation. I note that announcement for what it seems to be on paper and I am happy to be bipartisan, multipartisan, in supporting our wine industry, but in doing so I implore the government to ensure that the funding and support reaches both the premium and the commercial sectors of the wine industry because this is absolutely critical.

The wine industry, like other parts of our primary production sector, is doing it very tough at present, and in particular the commercial segment is facing significant combined headwinds. The restructure taking place in competitor wine-producing regions overseas gives no reason to think that locally we can be immune, and we need to find supporting solutions. Finding new markets will take time and it is unlikely to be the only solution. There needs to be a genuine commitment to finding a way forward and that will be most effective through a combination of market development and supply adjustment.

It will be critical also that leaders in the wine industry bodies can collaborate and show leadership and are then supported by the wine sector—and indeed the government—to work together to build a better future. The sustainability of regional businesses and the ongoing socio-economic security of our wine-growing regions depend on this success, and I thank members for recognising and supporting this. I commend the motion to the chamber.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

Bills

PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (USE OF VACANT LAND) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 19 October 2022.)

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (20:09): I rise to place on the record some remarks in relation to this bill. It will come as little surprise, I think, that the Liberal Party will not be supporting this bill. I have not checked the record, but I am assuming that when it has been brought to this chamber in the past by the Hon. Mark Parnell, the Liberal Party did not support it then for similar reasons, which I will outline now.

This bill allows the designated entity, as prescribed in this bill, to take temporary control of privately owned, vacant, underutilised land for public purposes, notably for emergency and portable housing. Under the bill, landowners who are deemed unable or unwilling to develop their land can be subject to statutory leasing by the state or the council, depending on where, without their consent or compensation. The bill was inspired, I am advised, by a similar Victorian program—and Victorian programs or ideas should always be considered with caution. The socialist state of Victoria has taken a number of measures which have seen people, who would otherwise be able to build and supply housing, flee the market because of suggestions such as these.

While we appreciate that there is a significant need for housing, we certainly do not think that this is a good approach. Ninety-seven per cent—I think is the figure that industry uses—of housing is built by the private sector, so I think we need to bear that in mind and not make them some sort of bogey in this debate. If we do not make things easier for the private sector, they are not going to be able to build.

This bill effectively allows for occupation of private land without the consent of the landowner or payment of rent for it either, which is a fundamental breach of property rights that have operated in this state since settlement. It sets a precedent that would undermine confidence in secure land ownership, and that is very significant indeed. I think there would be a number of people who might otherwise operate in South Australia who would see that as a sovereign risk. We have concerns about key terms in this bill, such as 'public purpose' and 'underutilised land', and whether there is any appeal mechanism that would allow landowners to prevail against the designated entity's decisions. There is also a concern about politicisation.

The bill proposes an insertion into the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act of new section 243A, subsection (9) of which contains the definition of 'designated entity':

- (a) in relation to all land within the State (whether or not the land is situated within the area of a council)—the Minister; or
- (b) in relation to land within the area of a council—the council;

We did have significant changes to the PDI Act, which came into being in 2016 from the old Development Act. Through the new PDI Act, we have moved to a merit-based process which sought to depoliticise all planning decisions. Prior to that, councils of the whole had a huge amount of influence over development, and a number of councillors would make political decisions and not make decisions on merit. So we have certainly seen that shift; in the PDI Act it is section 82 that contains the relevant authorities.

We now see that there are council assessment panels, and in regions there are regional assessment panels, which at a local level have decisions about planning. This is a diversion from that to enable the council of the whole to make what could be potentially arbitrary decisions, which I think would certainly deter investment in South Australia.

We hold other specific concerns in subclause (1), which states that if a designated entity is satisfied that the owner of prescribed land is unwilling or unable to undertake development they can start to exert these powers. I have concerns about how this would be determined. How would the council determine that the owner is unwilling or unable? Council might suggest that they have not lodged an application process, but then they may have lodged an application process, but council says, 'Well, they're not taking it seriously.' Where is the opportunity for an owner to rebut this decision, an appeals process?

A developer may put in an ambit claim to say, 'Yes, I'm prepared to develop this.' For instance, if we are looking at a lot of places in Adelaide in which the general neighbourhood zone applies, the maximum building heights that apply in a general neighbourhood zone are two building levels up to a height of nine metres. Somebody who owns the land and says, 'I want to put five storeys' with a maximum height of whatever that is—it is usually five times 3.7 metres—they could put in an ambit claim. Does that protect them from this? In that case, I do not think the neighbours would be rightly pleased that somebody was seeking to go up much higher than that.

The corollary is that, if we had particular—he is not going to like this—green-leaning councils, and we use the Sydney planning system as an example, where a lot of councils have a bunch of green nimbys in charge of them, that is part of the reason they have not seen any development over the years. They have had a massive problem with housing supply for a number of years because—and I think this might also apply in Melbourne—in some council areas you will see some development take place because they are not controlled by green nimbys and others where they are controlled by green nimbys and nothing takes place.

I think, similarly, in this case, anyone who owns land in a green nimby council is going to be at very high risk of the local council deciding, based on determining somehow that the owner is unwilling or unable to undertake a development, to use their land against their will. I probably should not mention the EFPAs and the urban growth boundary, which is another great idea by the Greens, which has restricted supply and has certainly played some role in the increase in house prices in South Australia.

These may be well-meaning ideas, but I think if you talk to people in the know who are responsible and have been engaged in building for many years, you would probably see the whites of their eyes and see how horrified they would be by suggestions such as this. For those multiple reasons, we are unable to support this bill.

The Hon. M. EL DANNAWI (20:18): I rise to speak on behalf of the government to indicate that we do not oppose this planning, development and infrastructure bill in principle, but we do believe it needs more work. The government supports the intent of the bill and is open to discussing sensible reforms that see vital land that is being banked made available for housing.

The housing crisis is not going to be resolved by land remaining vacant for an extended period of time. Any proposed amendment to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act should be practical but ensure housing delivery as a cornerstone priority for the state. The government does not support the current form of the bill for a few reasons, which I will summarise.

Firstly, the tests allowing the government to seek lease over land are not clear and certain. They contain terms such as 'considered sufficient' and 'reasonable steps' and terms which carry a level of uncertainty. This means the use of the provisions may result in a legal challenge. Secondly, public money may be better spent on long-term public benefits such as purchase of land and housing that will be retained by the government. Establishing temporary public housing and other temporary public purposes, such as playgrounds, is a significant expense for government, with little certainty as to how long use rights would remain.

Thirdly, it is very difficult to remove public infrastructure, such as playgrounds, from a local community as local residents may not understand that the land is privately held and the use is temporary. Removal of this infrastructure, once it is in place, is likely to be upsetting and not received well by the community. Finally, it is considered that other mechanisms, such as increased rates or levies over vacant land, may be more effective, less controversial and require less government spending in order to reduce the amount of vacant or unused land within Greater Adelaide.

The government acknowledges the intent of the bill and is open to considering and progressing reforms in an alternative manner that would see vital land that is being land banked being made available for housing.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (20:21): I thank members for their contributions: the Hon. Michelle Lensink on behalf of the opposition and the Hon. Mira El Dannawi on behalf of the government. I want to thank the government for the constructive way in which they have engaged with me on this issue. I have had a number of constructive discussions with the Minister for Housing on this very question around what we do with vacant land.

Indeed, it is an issue that I raised just a few weeks ago in this chamber in the context of the planning reforms. I was very concerned around the opening up of farmland for new housing developments. It has long been my view that rather than us eating into our farmland, what we should be doing is activating long-term vacant land.

This bill draws on some of the work of my predecessor in this place, the Hon. Mark Parnell, and adds a few new elements. I think it is fair to say this is an issue I have been concerned about since my time on the Adelaide City Council. I remember the O'Connell Street saga, the old Le Cornu site that was vacant for more than 30 years. This is designed to try to incentivise owners of this kind of land.

It is my hope that if this bill passes the upper house tonight, I would be able to work constructively with the government to nut out an approach that might deal with this scenario.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I think I outlined some of my concerns in my second reading contribution, but I think particularly subclause (1), which I will have to restate so that the question makes sense, states that 'If a designated entity is satisfied that the owner of prescribed land is unwilling or unable to undertake development', then we understand the acquisition can then take place by council or the minister. In relation to some of the language, I would be interested if the mover of this bill could perhaps expand a little bit on an entity being 'satisfied' and also how on earth they would determine that an owner of prescribed land is unwilling or unable to undertake development on that land.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I think it is fair to say the bill has been deliberately not prescriptive in terms of what might inform some of those considerations. When this bill was first developed by my office, we were intending to deal with the scenario whereby someone did not have an active development application in train and that that would be assessed by the designated authority.

For instance, if someone was actively trying to develop land and had actively lodged a development application and that was being assessed, that would clearly demonstrate an intention to activate and develop the land, but if somebody was leaving the land vacant for a long period of time and demonstrating no intention to do anything with the land, there would be the potential for the minister or another designated authority, be it the local council, to step in and do something with the long-term vacant lot.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: I appreciate that explanation. I note that the mover of this bill referred to the Le Cornu saga and we are all familiar with that as something that sits well in the memories of most people in this state and it is probably an obvious example. Maybe I am just talking myself into reasons why I cannot come at this piece of legislation at all, but there is so much that is left in the open with this. Does the honourable member have in mind a specific period of time for which an application may not have been lodged? In the case of the owner deciding to keep the council at bay and leave them alone, they might just put in an ambit claim that they know is never going to be approved. How does he envisage scenarios like this may play out under his proposal?

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: As I said earlier, I have kept the bill deliberately broad and that is because I guess I envisaged that this would be an extra tool in the toolkit for the government to use. The intention here is to incentivise the development of long-term land and the fact that the minister or the designated entity has been given these new powers might have the effect of incentivising the owner of land to actually do something with it. I deliberately have not stipulated specific timeframes and the like, but, that said, if there are amendments in that regard, I would certainly be open to entertaining them.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: Just on a slightly separate issue, if there is one of these arrangements that council determine to place on land, is the honourable member able to provide some details about what appeal mechanisms they might be able to use, because clearly they might feel that they are aggrieved in some way or that it is an unfair imposition?

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: I am sorry, I could not advise what the appeal mechanisms are. I am actually not sure.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (20:29): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Motions

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN JUSTICE SYSTEM

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. F. Pangallo:

That this council—

1. Recognises the role the South Australian justice system plays in upholding law and order in this state by providing a system whereby those that break the law are suitably punished by legislation/laws set by this parliament;
2. Acknowledges the South Australian justice system has failings and injustices have, and continue, to occur;
3. Recognises the nature of our justice system enshrines a burden of proof on the prosecution of either beyond reasonable doubt or on the balance of probabilities that has the potential to result in miscarriages of justice;
4. Acknowledges there have been cases where these thresholds were thought to be satisfied, but later found to have been doubtful at best and unsound at worst; and
5. Calls on the establishment of an Independent Criminal Case Commissioner, to be appointed by the state government, where individuals who believe they have been victims of an injustice within the South Australian justice system can request their case be reviewed (or where a miscarriage of justice is demonstrated by a reasonable doubt of a sound verdict being delivered in the case).

(Continued from 14 May 2025.)

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (20:30): I rise to speak on my motion that will cover miscarriages of justice in this state, and there have been many. A miscarriage of justice occurs when a person is wrongfully convicted or treated unfairly by the legal system, resulting in a violation of their legal rights or liberties. It represents a fundamental failure in the administration of justice and undermines public confidence in the legal system. Such miscarriages can stem from a variety of sources, including prosecutorial misconduct; flawed, contaminated or mishandled forensic evidence; false confession; judicial bias or inadequate legal representation; or eyewitness misrepresentation.

When procedural fairness is denied, the risk of wrongful conviction increases significantly and the impact on the innocent individual can be devastating and lifelong. Innocent individuals who fall victim to miscarriages of justice suffer not only the loss of liberty but also the destruction of their reputations, personal relationships, careers and mental health. In many cases, even after exoneration, the stigma of a conviction or an adverse finding can remain. The court of public opinion does not always follow the verdict of a court of law, and the damage to an individual's name may never fully be repaired.

Take Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton, wrongfully convicted in 1982 of murdering her infant daughter, Azaria, at Ayers Rock. This was a case I followed as a journalist from the very day it happened, and it was constantly in the media. Here was a classic case of where the court of public opinion can influence a verdict even when the evidence, compiled by incompetent expert witnesses, biased and prejudiced police and then presented against her in court, was so fundamentally flawed.

There were people who simply refused to believe her story that a dingo snatched the baby from their campsite. Yet she was still convicted, was given a life sentence and her life irrevocably destroyed, even though she was released on an appeal after serving three years in jail. I met with Lindy's now adult children and her late husband, Michael Chamberlain, about 20 years ago when I was working with Channel 7 in Sydney. The pain and ignominy of what this did to them was so evident. It will never go away for them or their mother, who had to flee the country.

Another disturbing case is that of Andrew Mallard, who was wrongfully convicted in 1995 for the murder of Pamela Lawrence in Perth. Mallard, who suffered from a mental illness, was subjected to coercive police interviews, and his so-called confession was inconsistent and contradictory. There was no physical evidence linking him to the crime. Despite this, he was convicted and spent 12 years in prison. The High Court quashed the conviction in 2005. Mallard died in 2019, but his case remains a sobering reminder of the dire consequences of procedural failings.

The case of Cardinal George Pell, while more contentious, also illustrates the profound reputational impact of a wrongful conviction. Following a sustained media witch-hunt led by ABC journalist Louise Milligan, Pell was charged by Victorian police, ultimately convicted in 2018 and jailed for historical child sexual abuse charges. Being a Catholic, no less, did not help his defence. The conviction divided public opinion but was ultimately overturned by the High Court in 2020, which found that there was a significant possibility that an innocent person had been convicted. While the

court cleared him, the damage to his reputation was immeasurable. There are those who still believe Pell, who died two years ago, was guilty.

These examples underscore the critical importance of procedural fairness, which includes the right to a fair trial, impartial adjudication, access to competent legal counsel, and the ability to challenge evidence. When these elements are absent or compromised, the consequences can be tragic, not only for the wrongly accused but for the integrity of the justice system itself. Miscarriages of justice demand vigilance, transparency and a commitment to reform to ensure they are as rare as possible and swiftly remedied when they occur.

However, such is our society's ambivalence to these matters, once they have traversed the arduous and costly litigation journey there is no recourse available to the innocent to reclaim their ruined reputations, unless of course they have infinite financial resources to try to fight the wrongs through a judicial system which is so often reluctant to judge the mistakes made by their own, no matter how damaging a verdict was to those who stood accused.

It is not in the interests of the police nor of the legal authorities to publicly acknowledge that miscarriages of justice have occurred. Governments will always find ways to avoid responsibility and paying compensation. One of the more recent high-profile cases of a determined miscarriage in South Australia was Edward Charles Splatt, found to have been wrongly convicted of the murder of a pensioner. The detective work of *Advertiser* investigative journalist Stewart Cockburn led to a royal commission which exposed this travesty, resulting in an acquittal and payment of compensation. I met Ted years later. He was still suffering mentally. Money cannot make the deep scars of injustice disappear.

The list here also includes people I have often raised in this parliament. There is Henry Keogh, Adrian Drummond, Derek Bromley, Chief Superintendent Doug Barr, Trent Rusby, the police from Sturt Mantle, Jurgen Michaelis, John Hanlon, Georgina Vasilevski, and penniless Ian Lawton, now in his last days in a Glen Osmond nursing home, where he is still asking why the police refused to investigate a prima facie case of fraud involving millions of dollars. Once he has gone, who is going to care? This is why I strongly support and believe we need a criminal cases review commission, but I will leave that for another day.

The matters I intend to cover in this motion reveal the dire consequences when the presumption of innocence, procedural fairness and rule of law fail individuals. They are drawn from criminal matters here and overseas, civil cases where the outcomes were unforgivably biased and instances where there was clear evidence of blatant corruption and deliberate cover-up within a government agency which was not thoroughly investigated by South Australian police for reasons you will find disturbing.

I have often said in this place that corruption is the mortar that holds up our walls. Nothing has changed. What is disturbing is that it is tolerated. The more powerful you are, the more you are untouchable, yet the public of South Australia remain clueless. The matter I will elaborate on today bears remarkable similarities to the Pell case, except it was not in a criminal jurisdiction but a civil one surrounding an unsuccessful defamation action brought by a Catholic priest, Father John Fleming, against *The Sunday Mail* in 2014.

As I am about to reveal, the ongoing destruction of Father Fleming's reputation in the media and then through our biased justice system because of unsubstantiated claims of sexual abuse of a minor is so perverse and malicious that it is beyond comprehension.

First some background about him. He was at one time a married Anglican cleric with a family and later converted to Catholicism, being ordained a Catholic priest in the archdiocese of Adelaide in 1995. John Fleming had a high profile in the community through his qualifications in the field of bioethics, his pastoral work and as a media personality through radio programs he conducted and in newspaper opinion columns.

His CV is very impressive. He has academic degrees, was an adjunct professor of bioethics and held very senior professional positions. His opinions on bioethics were widely sought here and overseas, including at UNESCO. He has had numerous papers and submissions published here and overseas, and he has written three books.

It goes without saying that John Fleming is a highly educated, articulate intellectual, and being a Catholic priest made him the archetypal tall poppy, ripe for the media sickle. By the time of the damning published articles in 2008, the Catholic Church and other religious institutions were being shaken by egregious child sex abuse scandals. It was open season on Catholic priests, and so it seemed in John Fleming's case.

Without going into detail, *The Sunday Mail* articles centred around historic and uncorroborated accusations of a sexual encounter involving an underage young woman known only as Jane, a young Father Fleming and another young woman, Alison, who he would later marry and who is the mother of their three children.

The marriage has survived the turbulence and hurt which followed the publication and subsequent legal battles and is a credit to the love and support shown by Alison. Father Fleming was labelled a criminal child sex abuser, a paedophile, based on the unsubstantiated and implausible sexual encounter made by his accuser, Jane. South Australian police had investigated and dismissed her claims. However, *The Sunday Mail* chose to believe Jane's story ahead of the vehement denials by Father Fleming and the other key witness, his wife Alison.

With his career hanging by a thread and his reputation demolished beyond repair, he had no option but to seek justice through a defamation action in 2014. Yet during the proceedings it was the plaintiff, Father Fleming, who found himself on trial for a crime for which there was no evidence but for the word of an accuser.

In criminal cases the presumption of innocence beyond reasonable doubt applies, but not in civil cases where the burden of proof is of a lower standard and based on the balance of probabilities. But what happens when criminal accusations are levelled at someone in a civil jurisdiction, as they were against Father Fleming? This is where a rule or principle developed by the High Court in 1938, known as the Briginshaw rule, should be applied by the courts. Briginshaw sets a much higher bar in civil matters where exactness of proof for criminal offending was required.

Trial Judge Gray took an inexcusable one year to deliver his judgement in favour of the publisher. Father Fleming also lost an appeal to the Full Court of Appeal and failed to get leave to appeal to the High Court on two occasions. For reasons only known to all those judges involved, the Briginshaw rule was not applied, and it was wrongly stated that Briginshaw no longer applies in civil matters, although all other courts continue to apply Briginshaw.

A recent example in South Australia is *Poniatowska v Channel 7*, where the very same court which ruled against it in Fleming's actions then applied Briginshaw, restoring it to the status of being a principle. The principle was also applied in the *Geoffrey Rush v Nationwide News* case in which Mr Rush had been accused of sexual abuse, and he won. The High Court could have easily cleared up the confusion over Briginshaw that now exists in South Australia had it not twice rejected a review of the Fleming case.

Two of Australia's most eminent criminal law academics, Emeritus Professor Gabriel Moens AM from Queensland University and Professor Augusto Zimmermann, a former law reform commissioner in Western Australia, wrote a blistering article in *Quadrant* last year headed 'The judicial railroading of Father Fleming', and I will quote from it:

By denying Fr Fleming the application of Briginshaw, these judges basically admit that if it were applied then the presumption of innocence would be more carefully considered. However since they state erroneously that Briginshaw no longer applies in civil matters (although all other courts continue to apply Briginshaw) Fr Fleming was deprived of the presumption of innocence and therefore had to prove his own innocence. Accordingly, both the trial judge and the appeal judges proceeded on the basis that the complainant must be believed, even if her allegations are riddled with uncertainties, discrepancies, inconsistencies and contradictory statements. The 'I hear, I listen, I believe' mantra permeated the judicial proceedings and, inexcusably and irreparably, influenced the court's decision. The court's bizarre treatment of the concept of 'contextual truth' and its rejuvenation of an ancient and discredited view of a wife's role in giving evidence are also perplexing.

I seek leave to table that *Quadrant* article.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: The legal and financial setbacks have left Father Fleming's life, career, financial status and reputation in irreversible ruins. The Catholic Church also took away his

right to re-engage his ministry. The Archdiocese of Adelaide is too timid to review his status, fearing a media backlash no doubt. Father Fleming is retired but, nearing the age of 82, he has lost none of his scholarly drive and intellect, nor his steely pursuit to clear his name. As Ernest Hemingway once wrote: 'The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places.'

With no other avenue left for him to turn, Father Fleming has written an excoriating indictment about his unconscionable experience at the hands of the South Australian justice system and the media. Titled *Supreme Injustice: Guilty Until Proven Not Catholic?*, Father Fleming maintains that the presumption of innocence in his case was turned on its head because he was a Catholic priest, and his accuser was a female who had to be believed despite the absence of evidence. The book took him five years to write. It is a fascinating and intricate analysis and dissection of the legal process and the media hostility which brought him down. He only decided to publish it recently when the unrelenting attacks on his character resurfaced in the media.

I had not thought much of the case or about Father Fleming until I met him and his barrister, the respected King's Counsel Paul Heywood-Smith. On reading the book, I can now appreciate where he is coming from, and I felt he deserved to have his account told in proper context, which he was not afforded at the time—indeed, even now. I have now formed the view that Father Fleming is a good man wrongly smeared as a criminal and our justice system in this state can discriminate with bias and impunity. Father Fleming's harrowing story could happen to any of us.

I recently hosted the launch of the book by the Hon. Tony Abbott here at Parliament House—apt, as this is the home of our democracy, free speech and the rule of law. Mr Abbott spoke passionately about the right for justice and procedural fairness to be seen to be done to persons wrongly accused, and praised Father Fleming's resilience in the face of such adversity. Other guest speakers were Professor Gabriel Moens and Professor Augusto Zimmermann, who I mentioned earlier and who are amongst the most eminent legal academics and observers in this country. Allow me to read excerpts from their compelling and convincing arguments. This from Professor Moens:

His book documents the misdeeds of the depraved enemies of justice and decency. These misdeeds have smeared a person who, throughout his life, has served God, society, and his family. However, I should also like to say that the book is an uplifting story that celebrates the values of hard work, persistence, dedication, and a determination to succeed in unfamiliar, even hostile, environments. In this sense, it is a book about faith, freedom, and hope.

Hostility towards Christianity is now pervasive in every single aspect of our Australian society. Australia is now a majority non-Christian nation, and openly antagonistic to orthodox Christianity. The so-called progressive secular forces have converted Australia into a woke-infested politically correct society.

These zealots have developed a hostility to all forms of Christian religion but especially the Catholic Church. Fr Fleming's journey, described in *Supreme Injustice* provides convincing evidence of this regrettable societal development. Indeed, *Supreme Injustice* details Fr Fleming's abominable treatment by the Australian court system. The book is an eye-opening harrowing narrative that illustrates how uncorroborated allegations could so entirely and irretrievably trash an innocent person's reputation.

As the courts assumed that the allegations of alleged victims of sexual abuse must always be believed, the onus of proving that a person did not and could not have done the acts they are accused of was shifted to the plaintiff in the defamation case, namely Fr Fleming. Whilst the presumption of innocence prevails in criminal cases, in defamation cases, which are civil cases, the presumption did not appear to be applicable.

The shifting of the onus of proof to the plaintiff in a defamation case violates the Briginshaw rule—a rule developed by the High Court in 1938—which is applied inconsistently in Australia's jurisdictions, and indeed even in South Australia.

Fr Fleming was deprived of the presumption of innocence and therefore had to prove his innocence. His account of the litigation is riveting and reveals the extent to which the law may occasionally be commandeered to achieve a partisan outcome.

Accordingly, both the trial judge and the appeal judges proceeded on the basis that the complainant must always be believed, even if her allegations are riddled with uncertainties, discrepancies, inconsistencies, and contradictory statements. The 'I hear, I listen, I believe' mantra permeated the judicial proceedings, and inexcusably and irreparably influenced the courts' decision.

The harm done to Fr Fleming's reputation is irreversible and immeasurable. Being labelled with vile accusations due to a bungled court case results in permanent injury to a person's reputation and even societal ostracism.

Fr Fleming's detailed treatment of his brutal battle with a seriously biased media and politicised judiciary is a ubiquitous reminder of the brittleness of life.

Considering this insight, a reading of *Supreme Injustice* would benefit all those who are interested in the nurturing of the rule of law. It will especially appeal to people who still believe in the existence of common sense.

This book should become a classic in the literature that describes the perceptible deterioration in Australia of even the most elementary standards of justice and procedural fairness.

As the book provides evidence of a spectacular miscarriage of justice, it assists in the judicial and political review of his case that has compromised the life and reputation of an innocent individual.

To conclude, *Supreme Injustice* is about the disturbing treatment by the Australian justice system of an upstanding Australian.

This book provides a sober reminder of what might happen to any person living in this country when the system fails to uphold elementary principles of fairness and natural justice.

As such, I recommend the book to people of goodwill who believe in the power of truth, decency, and determination.

I seek leave to table the full speech by Professor Moens.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Professor Zimmerman stated, and again I quote:

The Fleming case reveals that there is something rotten with the state of South Australian justice, and, indeed, with Australian justice more broadly. There are three aspects to the Fleming case:

- The anti-Catholic bias of the justice system exhibited in the Fleming trial and the fact that priests are now 'fair game' in the era of moral panic about sex abuse against minors, the 'we believe you' of the #MeToo ideology embedded in the justice system and the legal and popular acceptance of 'guilt by accusation';
- The lack of procedural fairness in the trial and subsequent appeals; and
- The fatal shortcomings in legal reasoning of the judgement in the defamation trial and of subsequent appeals.

The errors in the Fleming judgement are many and significant, and a failure to address them has broader and continuing implications for the fairness of Australia's justice system. The legal errors to which John Fleming was exposed also remind us that it is not only juries that sometimes get it wrong.

The Fleming case is about the reliability of judges, and perhaps even more worrying than the understandable lapses of juries.

Here are five of the most significant legal errors of the Fleming judgement, delivered only after a lengthy and unjustified delay, and uncorrected by the higher courts. They relate to:

- Overturning the presumption of innocence, the standard of proof in civil cases and the application of the so-called Briginshaw principle.
- Faulty consideration of evidence.
- The treatment of the testimony of expert witnesses.
- The favouring of particular witnesses over others without reasons given.
- Reflexively believing complainants to be 'compelling' if they put on a good show in the witness box, irrespective of exculpatory evidence.

Justice Gray's wrongful interpretation of Briginshaw, indeed his dismissal of it, and the non-correction of this by higher courts, left the whole justice system hanging. Even though it was Fleming initiating the civil action here, it turned out that he was the one really in the dock.

Arguing the Briginshaw principle, but losing in the lower court, he appealed and lost again in the South Australian Supreme Court in 2016. The court surprisingly played down Briginshaw, claiming later High Court judgments do not import that presumption into the civil arena and that it was incorrect to raise it to an 'onus', 'standard' or 'principle'.

Other recent cases, including that involving published allegations of criminal behaviour demonstrate a very different interpretation of Briginshaw and the burden of proof. Not so in the case of John Fleming.

As it stands, it would seem that it is simply the luck of the draw that determines the burden of proof in civil cases involving allegations of criminal conduct.

In yet another Briginshaw type case, in South Australia no less, the same Supreme Court that found against John Fleming upheld the principle.

Such blatant inconsistencies in the application of the law require rectification as a matter of urgency. The complainant's contradictory and uncorroborated testimony was anything but compelling, as the trial transcript demonstrates.

There emerged no reason whatsoever during the trial for finding the complainant either reliable or compelling. The police hadn't believed her, at least to the extent that they didn't think her complaint could become the basis of a criminal prosecution.

These were all failures in relation to the evidence of the allegations, and strong suggestions of bias against one who was a Catholic priest. And there were many other problems during the trial and errors in the subsequent court decision. The judge had a preferred narrative, and nothing by way of evidence was going to budge him from this narrative.

It is alarming when judges who should know the law and dispense justice competently and wisely also get it wrong.

The judge overseeing the Fleming case made monumental blunders of legal reasoning. These were not reversed by two higher courts. There are two possible explanations for this outcome—bias or incompetence—to which might be added a third explanation, bias and incompetence.

Whichever explanation one chooses, the answer is grim news for Australian justice. While these questions remain unaddressed, a shadow will continue to be cast over John Fleming's reputation. His life remains in ruins. The harm done does not go away. Having vile accusations stick as a result of a bungled court case means that they stick forever.

Critics and enemies may continue to utter calumnies, knowing they have the protection of a legal judgement. There has been no final vindication. No reversal of the calumnies nor of the pain. There is also a shadow that has been cast over the whole justice system.

Professor Zimmerman then goes on to say that the question of the credibility of witnesses—that we believe you—needs to be addressed, that there should be support from this parliament for a fresh appeal by Father Fleming to the Supreme Court and a parliamentary inquiry into the application of the Briginshaw principle. I seek leave to table in full Professor Zimmerman's address.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: Any reasonable person cannot help but come to the same conclusions of those learned and highly credentialed legal academics after reading this book: how a good, decent and innocent family man of social and religious conviction was crucified and then failed by a justice system, which demonstrated unhealthy bias and then was reluctant to admit they got it horribly wrong in order to protect reputations. A total embarrassment was averted. The hanging party got what it wanted. A Catholic priest became the symbolic scapegoat for the sins of others.

I will rate this as one of the most shameful miscarriages of justice in a state that seems to be riddled with them. Father Fleming is here tonight. He is not out to make money from the book; in fact, he has relinquished copyright restrictions by allowing me to table the book so others can disseminate it. I seek leave to table that book.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I would recommend the book to members, my media colleagues, law students, practitioners and the judiciary. There are other important matters I intend to cover in our next sitting week. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

At 21:06 the council adjourned until Thursday 5 June 2025 at 11:00.