LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 18 June 2025

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

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

Parliamentary Procedure

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

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

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable petitions, the tabling of papers, ministerial statements, questions without notice, the giving of notices of motion, matters of interest and orders of the day to be taken into consideration at 2.15pm.

Motion carried.

The PRESIDENT: I note the absolute majority.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

That Notices of Motion and Orders of the Day: Private Business, be postponed and taken into consideration after Orders of the Day: Government Business.

Motion carried.

Bills

DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT (BREEDER REFORMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 June 2025.)

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (11:03): The government made an election commitment to ban puppy factories and prevent any such operations from setting up in South Australia. The bill introduces a new breeder licensing scheme that will require breeders to adhere to strict standards for breeding, adhere to limits on the number of female animals per breeding program, and adhere to limits on the number of litters that may be bred by a licence holder.

Mandatory reporting of each litter will be introduced. We are banning large-scale inhumane puppy farms that increase the risk of animal cruelty. The provisions of this bill provide the ability to set up a cap on breeding animals, with numbers and conditions set by regulation and policy for issuing licences. This is in line with the government's commitment to being equal to the strictest in the nation to disincentivise unscrupulous breeders moving from states with stricter laws to establish puppy factories in South Australia.

Having the numbers set by regulation and policy enables flexibility to amend this number more easily in the future, ensuring that South Australia can respond effectively and address any changes adopted by other states. We have also, sadly, seen a number of dog attacks in recent times. There are examples from across the state of dogs that have attacked other dogs or people. This bill increases the fines and penalties for offences associated with dogs wandering at large, dog attacks and other safety offences.

If a dog attacks a person or another animal causing serious injury or death, the owner will face a maximum fine of $25,000 instead of the current $2,500 penalty. The fine would be up to $50,000 if the attacking dog was already the subject of a dangerous dog order—an increase from

$10,000. All other fines and expiations for dog attacks will be increased under the changes. The bill also introduces subclauses regarding a new wandering dog order to manage dogs which continually escape. The new order will stipulate reasonable steps be taken by the owner to prevent the dog escaping and to attend training, where appropriate.

The changes also further allow for the recognition of certain interstate orders, allowing the minister, on application, to recognise interstate dangerous dog orders or prohibition orders. This amendment aims to manage the risk identified in other jurisdictions without having to wait for an attack or incident to occur in South Australia.

Since the bill passed the lower house, further engagement was undertaken with councils and the Local Government Association in response to a spate of prominent dog attacks. Further amendments have been launched to support councils in their compliance and enforcement actions under the act. The amendments are focused in particular on mechanisms to reduce dog attack risk and promote community safety.

Consultation in 2024 also identified that barriers exist to feral cat management in South Australia and should be addressed as soon as possible. The government amendments also include an amendment to section 63 of the Dog and Cat Management Act, to better enable feral cat management programs and support the implementation of the updated threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats and biodiversity in South Australia.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (11:06): I thank all members who have made contributions on this important piece of legislation. This bill takes significant steps towards preventing what are known as puppy farms from setting up in South Australia and will assist councils in their responsibilities to promote and enforce responsible dog ownership.

Several members have raised during their second reading speeches the issue of cat management, and I take this opportunity to highlight some of the action that the government has taken in this regard. Members may be aware that the government separately consulted on draft legislation this year on the Dog and Cat Management (Cat Management) Amendment Bill 2024. During the consultation on this separate piece of legislation, our responses strongly advocated first for the development of a statewide cat management strategy to provide a framework for the future management of owned, unowned and feral cats.

The Department for Environment and Water is leading the development of the cat management strategy. The department has brought together stakeholders with an interest in cat management, including the LGA and members from individual councils, the Dog and Cat Management Board, PIRSA, landscape boards, veterinarians, conservation organisations, the RSPCA, the AWL and other animal shelters and rescue organisations. These stakeholders have been contributing to the development of a statewide cat management strategy over the previous months, which is anticipated to be ready for public consultation in the third quarter of this year.

I thank honourable members for their contributions thus far to the debate and for their indication of support for this bill. I also thank the public servants who have supported the development of this bill, including extensive stakeholder and community management. As previously stated, the government will be introducing several further amendments, and I will expand on these further during the committee stage.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 passed.

Clause 5.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: In relation to the composition of the board, can the Attorney outline why they are reducing the number of board members from nine to seven and what benefit that will bring to the act?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that it is a recommendation of the department to increase the efficiency, and my advice is that it was not opposed by stakeholders.

Clause passed.

Clauses 6 to 19 passed.

Clause 20.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Noting that there are increased penalties specifically for dog attacks laid out in this provision, what evidence is there that increased financial penalties deter offences of this nature?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I can answer as a general proposition in the application of many areas in criminal law and offence provisions: the idea of deterrence is that a monetary penalty or, in some cases, jail time acts as a disincentive to commit offences but also assists in education and information about what sort of behaviours we expect from the community. Having particular penalties in terms of dollars or jail time can act as a useful way to educate the community about behaviours that are expected.

Clause passed.

Clause 21.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Noting that in this clause there is a new penalty for persons who own and are responsible for the control of a dog and are guilty of an offence if the dog defecates in a private place, is the Attorney able to indicate to the chamber how this will be policed and enforced?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that this was a request from the local government sector—there is already an offence for it occurring in a public place and the local government sector requested it in a private place. Of course, it necessarily means that those who enforce it become aware of it occurring.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Supplementary: is the Attorney indicating that local government will be the enforcement agent of that provision?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: That is correct.

Clause passed.

Clauses 22 to 24 passed.

New clauses 24A and 24B.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 1 [AG–1]—

Page 10, after line 25—Insert:

24A—Amendment of section 47—Court's power to make orders in criminal proceedings

Section 47(3), penalty provision—delete '$5,000.' and substitute '$10,000'

24B—Insertion of Part 5 Division 2

After section 47 insert:

Division 2—Directions relating to management of dogs

48—Authorised officers may give directions

(1) An authorised officer may, by notice in writing, give a person who owns or is responsible for the control of a dog or dogs such directions as the authorised officer considers necessary or appropriate—

(a) to prevent the commission of an offence against Division 1, or any other offence prescribed by the regulations; or

(b) to prevent or manage behaviour of the dog or dogs that would, if the behaviour continues or is repeated, constitute grounds on which an order under Division 3 may be made.

(2) Without limiting the matters that may be the subject of a direction under this section, a direction may require a person to take, or to cease, such action as may be specified in the direction.

(3) A direction under this section—

(a) must be made in the manner and form required by the Board; and

(b) must be recorded by the authorised officer in a manner and form approved by the Board; and

(c) takes effect when the authorised officer first gives the written notice to the person; and

(d) may be conditional or unconditional; and

(e) may relate to 1 or more dogs; and

(f) must comply with any other requirements set out in the regulations.

(4) A direction under this section may be revoked by an authorised officer by written notice to the person to whom the direction was given.

(5) A person who contravenes a direction under this section is guilty of an offence.

Maximum penalty: $5,000.

Expiation fee: $500.

(6) If a direction under this section is contravened, an authorised officer, or a person authorised by the relevant council for the purpose, may take any action required under the direction.

(7) The reasonable costs and expenses incurred in taking action under subsection (6) may be recovered by the relevant council as a debt from the person who contravened the direction.

Following a spate of separate dog attacks, the government committed to undertaking additional engagement with councils and the Local Government Association. We sought feedback on further amendments that would support councils in their compliance with and enforcement of the act to reduce dog attack risk and promote community safety, and that is what these amendments aim to do.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I rise to indicate that the opposition will be supporting the Attorney-General's amendments. They are sensible amendments that, in my understanding, are in response to the Local Government Association and landscape boards consultation.

I would like to ask the Attorney a question in regard to the amendment, around adequate support and training and potential reimbursement costs for authorised officers specifically employed by councils, particularly in regional areas.

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Well, will there be any government reimbursement for reasonable costs that are borne out through training and adequate support for the authorised officers who are employed by the council?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that the Dog and Cat Management Board have a significant role in providing advice, policy guidelines and training in relation to these laws. This is a function that is, to an extent, already undertaken by local councils, and this is something they have requested further to their functions.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Perhaps as a supplementary to that: so there will not be any additional training costs that will be put on councils in terms of additional requirements that they need?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: We are not aware of any, but my advice is that the Dog and Cat Management Board provide significant advice and support.

New clauses inserted.

Clause 25 passed.

Clause 26.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 2 [AG–1]—

Page 10, line 36 to page 11, line 5—Delete clause 26 and substitute:

26—Amendment of section 51—Grounds on which orders may be made

(1) Section 51(a)(ii)—delete 'in circumstances that would constitute an offence against this Act' and substitute:

(whether or not actual injury is caused)

(2) Section 51(b)(i)(B)—delete ', in circumstances that would constitute an offence against this or any other Act' and substitute:

(whether or not actual injury is caused)

(3) Section 51(c)(i)(B)—delete ', in circumstances that would constitute an offence against this or any other Act' and substitute:

(whether or not actual injury is caused)

(4) Section 51(d)(i)(B)—delete ', in circumstances that would constitute an offence against this or any other Act' and substitute:

(whether or not actual injury is caused)

(5) Section 51(e)(ii)—delete 'noise by barking or otherwise in circumstances that would constitute an offence against this or any other Act' and substitute:

an unreasonable amount of noise by barking

(6) Section 51—after paragraph (e) insert:

or

(f) in the case of a Control (Wandering Dog) Order—

(i) the dog has, on at least 3 occasions, wandered at large; or

(ii) the dog is subject to an order made under a law of another jurisdiction that corresponds with a Control (Wandering Dog) Order.

(7) Section 51—after its present contents (now to be designated as subsection (1)) insert:

(2) To avoid doubt, a council or the Board may make an order in relation to a dog under this Division—

(a) whether or not a person has been charged with an offence against this or any other Act in relation to the behaviour of the dog to which the order relates; or

(b) in circumstances where a person has been charged with an offence against this or any other Act in relation to the behaviour of the dog to which the order relates but is found not guilty of the offence (except where the court has made a finding that the dog did not, in fact, engage in the behaviour to which the order relates).

This amendment further supports councils in their compliance and enforcement to reduce dog attack risk and promote community safety, for the reasons that I explained in speaking to the aforementioned amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

New clauses 26A and 26B.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 3 [AG–1]—

Page 11, after line 5—Insert:

26A—Repeal of section 53

Section 53—delete the section

26B—Amendment of section 54—Application of orders and directions

(1) Heading to section 54—delete 'and directions'

(2) Section 54(3)—delete subsection (3)

These amendments are consequential to amendment No. 1 [AG-1].

New clauses inserted.

Clauses 27 to 29 passed.

New clause 29A.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 4 [AG–1]—

Page 11, after line 23—Insert:

29A—Insertion of Part 5 Division 3AA

After section 59 insert:

Division 3AA—Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order

59AA—Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order

(1) A council or the Board may, in accordance with this Division, make a Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order in relation to specified premises.

(2) A Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order requires—

(a) all reasonable steps to be taken to prevent any dogs on the premises repeating the behaviour that gave rise to the order; and

(b) any dogs on the premises or each occupier of the premises or both to undertake such approved training courses as may be specified in the order.

(3) A council or the Board may make a Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order if satisfied that—

(a) 1 or more dogs on the premises are a nuisance; and

(b) 1 or more dogs on the premises has created noise by barking or otherwise in circumstances that would constitute an offence against this or any other Act.

(4) In making a Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order, it is not necessary for the council or Board to—

(a) be satisfied that more than 1 dog on the relevant premises is creating or has created the noise; or

(b) identify a particular dog on the relevant premises that is creating or has created the noise; or

(c) if more than 1 dog on the relevant premises is creating or has created the noise—apportion an amount of noise to each dog.

(5) A Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order binds each occupier of the premises subject to the order.

59AB—Procedure for making and revoking orders

(1) A council or the Board may make an order under this Division on its own initiative or on an application made in a manner and form determined by the council or the Board (as the case requires).

(2) Before making an order under this Division, the council or the Board (as the case requires) must give the occupier of the premises at least 7 days written notice—

(a) setting out the terms of the proposed order; and

(b) inviting the occupier to make submissions to the council or the Board in respect of the matter within 7 days or such longer period as is allowed by the council or the Board (as the case requires).

(3) An order made by a council—

(a) must be made in the manner and form required by the Board; and

(b) must be recorded by the council in a manner and form approved by the Board; and

(c) takes effect when the council first gives a copy of the order to the occupier of the premises to which the order relates.

(4) An order made by a council may be revoked by the council by written notice to the occupier of the premises to which the order relates.

(5) A note of the revocation must be entered in the register kept by the council under this Act.

(6) An order made by the Board—

(a) takes effect when the Board first gives a copy of the order to the occupier of the premises to which the order relates; and

(b) may be revoked by the Board by written notice to the occupier of the premises to which the order relates; and

(c) must be recorded in a manner and form determined by the Board.

59AC—Contravention of order

(1) If a Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order is contravened, each occupier of the premises subject to the order is guilty of an offence.

Maximum penalty: $2,500.

Expiation fee: $500.

(2) It is a defence to a charge of an offence against this section if it is proved that the defendant was not, at the time of the alleged offence, aware that the order was in force.

This amendment is included following suggestions made by the local government sector to defer the support compliance activities undertaken by councils. It introduces a new order-making power where barking is arising from multiple dogs on the property.

New clause inserted.

Clauses 30 and 31 passed.

Clause 32.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 6 [AG–1]—

Page 13, after line 7 [clause 32, after inserted paragraph (g)]—Insert:

(ga) if the dog is kept at premises that are the subject of a Control (Barking Dogs on Premises) Order under Part 5 Division 3AA and the authorised person reasonably suspects that an occupier of the premises has contravened the order;

This amendment is consequential on amendment No. 4 [AG-1] in relation to barking.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 33 and 34 passed.

Clause 35.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 5 [AG–1]—

Page 13, lines 34 to 37—Delete clause 35 and substitute:

35—Substitution of section 63

Section 63—delete section 63 and substitute:

63—Power to destroy cats

(1) A person may lawfully destroy or injure a cat in the following circumstances:

(a) if the person is performing functions under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* or the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992* and the cat is in a reserve or sanctuary (within the meaning of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*) or a wilderness protection area or zone (within the meaning of the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992*);

(b) if the person is performing functions under the *Crown Land Management Act 2009* and the cat is found in an area in respect of which the person is authorised to exercise powers under that Act;

(c) if the person is performing functions under the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019* and the cat is found while the person is performing those functions;

(d) if the person is the owner or occupier of a designated area, or a person authorised for the purpose by the owner or occupier of a designated area and the cat is found in the designated area;

(e) if the cat is found in a place that is more than the prescribed distance from any genuine place of residence (not including a place owned or occupied by the person);

(f) if—

(i) the cat is unidentified; and

(ii) the person—

(A) is a veterinarian acting in the ordinary course of their profession; or

(B) is acting for or on behalf of 1 of the following bodies or persons in respect of a cat that has been delivered to a facility operated by the person or body:

- the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (South Australia) Incorporated;
- the Animal Welfare League of South Australia, Incorporated;
- a body or person specified by the regulations;

(g) any other circumstances prescribed by the regulations.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), an authorised person may lawfully destroy or injure a cat in the circumstances prescribed by the regulations.

(3) Nothing in this section limits the operation of section 65 of the *Animal Welfare Act 2025*.

(4) The Governor may, by proclamation made on the recommendation of the Board, declare land to be a designated area for the purposes of this section.

(5) A proclamation under this section may be varied or revoked by further proclamation made on the recommendation of the Board.

(6) In this section—

prescribed distance, from a place of residence, means—

(a) if the regulations prescribe a distance for the purposes of this paragraph—that distance; or

(b) if the regulations do not prescribe a distance for the purposes of this paragraph—1 kilometre.

This amendment came about as a result of consultation on the cat management amendment bill 2024 that occurred in July 2024. Stakeholder and public feedback raised two main points. Firstly, key industry stakeholders advocated for a statewide cat management strategy, which I referred to in my second reading speech.

Secondly, feedback highlighted the urgent need for legislative amendment to better support feral cat management programs to protect biodiversity in South Australia and the implementation of the updated threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats to address concerns, particularly by landscape boards but also by other stakeholders. These amendments clarify the powers and circumstances where such cats may be lawfully destroyed.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 36 passed.

Clause 37.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 7 [AG–1]—

Page 14, lines 4 to 8—Delete clause 37 and substitute:

8—Amendment of section 64D—Notification to owner of dog or cat destroyed etc under Part

(1) Section 64D(3), definition of *prescribed person*, (b), (c) and (d)—delete the paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) and substitute:

(b) a person performing functions under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972,* the *Wilderness Protection Act 1992*, the *Crown Land Management Act 2009* or the *Landscape South Australia Act 2019*; or

(2) Section 64D(3), definition of *prescribed person*, (f)—delete 'registered veterinary surgeon' and substitute 'veterinarian'

We consider this amendment consequential on the update of the previous amendments in relation to feral cats.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 38.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: I move:

Amendment No 1 [Franks–1]—

Page 15, after line 12 [clause 38, inserted section 69]—Insert:

(1a) The Board must, before publishing or adopting, or varying or revoking, standards and guidelines under subsection (1)—

(a) call for public submissions in accordance with a scheme determined by the Board; and

(b) have regard to any submissions received during the period specified in the scheme; and

(c) undertake such other consultation as may be required by the regulations.

(1b) The Board must, at least once in each 5 year period, undertake a complete review of any standards and guidelines published or adopted under subsection (1) to ensure they satisfy community expectations in relation to the breeding of dogs and cats.

This is quite simply a clause pushing for more community consultation and transparency around ensuring that the act is kept up to date. I understand the government has some nuance to their position.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: We do, and I might explain it for the benefit of the committee. We broadly support what the honourable member's intent here is, as we do with a number of things in here. In particular, we are supportive and will be supporting the first part, that is (1a), of the amendment, that the board must, before publishing or adopting or varying or revoking standards and guidelines, do certain things like call for public submissions, have regard to those submissions and

undertake any other consultation prescribed by regulations, but we are not supportive of the second part of it, that is (1b), that the board must, at least once in each five-year period, undertake a complete review of any standards and guidelines.

It is our view that that is unnecessary and that the board regularly reviews its current policies to ensure they are fit for purpose. I seek your guidance, sir. Are we capable, from the floor, of seeking to amend the amendment to remove (1b)?

The CHAIR: Yes.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: In that case, I move:

That amendment No. 1. [Franks-1] be amended to remove subsection (1b).

Subsection (1b) provides:

The Board must, at least once in each 5 year period, undertake a complete review of any standards and guidelines published or adopted under subsection (1) to ensure they satisfy community expectations in relation to the breeding of dogs and cats.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Just to clarify for the sake of the committee, this was negotiated with myself by the government some weeks ago now. I understand their concerns about the overburden, if you like, of including (1b) and I was happy to drop (1b), and also about the lack of definition around community expectations. I did take on board their feedback on that. I am certainly happy to proceed, noting that (1b) will most likely be removed.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Despite in my second reading speech saying that we will not be supporting the Hon. Tammy Franks' amendments, certainly the opposition is happy to not oppose this amendment. I think it is fairly reasonable.

Amendment to amendment carried; amendment as amended carried.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: I move:

Amendment No 2 [Franks–1]—

Page 16, line 33 [clause 38, inserted section 71A(2)(b)]—After 'number' insert '(not exceeding 10)'

This, after 'number', inserts 'not exceeding 10' instead of 50. I think most members of the community would be horrified to discover that this bill that purports to ban puppy factories allows puppy factories of up to 50 breeding dogs at any one time. That, by anyone's definition in the community, is a puppy factory. To limit that highest level number to 10 dogs I think would satisfy community expectations about this Malinauskas government actually banning puppy factories in this state.

It is a little bit of a sleight of hand, because the government promise that was made in opposition was to have the least worst laws in the country. We could have the best laws in the country and actually ban puppy factories by supporting a cap on the limit of breeding dogs here to 10 rather than the government's proposed 50.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for her amendment. Again, I acknowledge the honourable member's very longstanding advocacy, not just for this particular area but in terms of animal welfare very generally, but the government will not be supporting the amendment and I will briefly outline why.

The bill has been drafted to allow a limit of females to be set in regulations or board policy. This will allow the limit to be adjusted easily if required, such as where other jurisdictions may change their limits. The bill does not propose a particular limit. It does not propose 50; it does not propose 10; it does not propose anything else. Instead, it would be a limit that would be considered by the public, with the matter to be consulted upon, and in the drafting of regulations.

The bill does not specify an amount in the legislation itself. It anticipates there will be further consultation, and that will be done by regulation. So whilst I absolutely understand the intent of the honourable member's desire to put a number into legislation, it is the government's view that this is better done after consultation and in regulation.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Does the government legislation as it stands in this bill being debated before us allow 60 dogs to be bred by a breeder at any one stage?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that the intention is that in the lead-up to this act coming into force there will be that consultation and, by regulation, a limit set.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Does the bill that we are debating before us today allow 60 dogs to be bred at any one time by a breeder in South Australia?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I thank the honourable member for her question. My advice is the bill does not prescribe any amount in the bill itself but anticipates that will be done in consultation by regulation.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: Can the government explain how this bill keeps their election promise to ban puppy factories then?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I am happy to repeat that it is anticipated there will be consultation before this bill comes into effect to set that limit.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Just for the record, the opposition will not be supporting the Hon. Tammy Franks' amendment.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: I move:

Amendment No 3 [Franks–1]—

Page 16, line 36 [clause 38, inserted section 71A(2)(c)]—After 'number' insert '(not exceeding 4)'

This amendment—after 'number' insert '(not exceeding 4)'—limits the number of litters a breeding dog or other animal may have from five down to four. According to animal welfare advice and those in the sector, the cruelty of puppy factories is in the lack of socialisation of the puppies but also the treatment of the animal being bred. To force an animal to have multiple litters over their lifetime and to be designed to be used simply for breeding is something that this bill purports to address. So limiting those litters to four would seem a good way forward in actually banning puppy factories.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Once again the government appreciates the intent of this amendment and acknowledges the desire, which I think the Hon. Tammy Franks has had since she has been a member of this place, to protect the welfare of animals. It is the government's view that some nuances is likely to be required when setting breeding parameters—maximum age, veterinary input, caesarean section limits and so forth—and it is the intention that there will be, very similar to the last amendment, consultation on this before it is set down and before this comes into operation.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I rise to indicate the opposition will not be supporting this amendment. Although I acknowledge where the honourable member is coming from, certainly my experience working with many breeders over a number of years is that the vast majority of breeders manage their bitches well during their lifetime of breeding capacity. We therefore do not feel that this amendment is required.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: I move:

Amendment No 4 [Franks–1]—

Page 16, after line 39 [clause 38, inserted section 71A(2)]—After paragraph (c) insert:

(d) a condition prohibiting the use of surgical artificial insemination in breeding dogs or cats pursuant to the licence,

This amendment seeks to prohibit the use of surgical artificial insemination in breeding dogs or cats pursuant to the licence. In my second reading contribution I did go over the cruelty of surgical artificial insemination, used purportedly because people believe it will create greater numbers of puppies or kittens in the litter. It is a cruel practice and, under the Ashton review, there has been a recommendation for its banning in the greyhound industry.

I understand the greyhound industry is looking pretty positively to banning this. I also understand that it is used in certain other areas, particularly dogs that are commonly known to be the types of dogs that are bred for puppy factories. It would seem an appropriate point, if the

government is seeking to ban puppy factories, to ban a cruel practice that seeks to actually create puppy factories.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: Whilst the government will not be supporting this amendment, the government will commit to looking further into the management of surgical artificial insemination, whether through this or through other legislative framework or, alternatively, non-legislative mechanisms through standards and guidelines.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I rise to indicate that the opposition will not be supporting this amendment. Echoing the comments of the Attorney-General, we feel that surgical artificial insemination fits probably more appropriately under the Veterinary Services Act 2023 and should be addressed by that piece of legislation.

Amendment negatived; clause as amended passed.

Clause 39.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 8 [AG–1]—

Page 21, after line 15—Insert:

(1) Section 72(4), definition of *reviewable decision*, (a)—delete 'or 3A' and substitute ', 3AA or 3A'

This amendment is consequential on amendment No. 4 [AG-1].

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 40 passed.

New clause 40A.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 9 [AG–1]—

Page 22, after line 14—Insert:

40A—Amendment of section 81A—Interference with dog or cat in lawful custody

Section 81A, penalty provision—delete '$5,000.' and substitute '$10,000'

By way of explanation, this amendment is included following suggestions made by local government to further support compliance activities undertaken by councils. The amendment increases the maximum penalty for interference with dogs or cats in lawful custody to $10,000, consistent with other penalty increases in this legislation.

New clause inserted.

Clauses 41 to 44 passed.

Clause 45.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

Amendment No 10 [AG–1]—

Page 23, after line 24 [clause 45, inserted section 88]—Insert:

(aa) a specified animal was a dog or cat (as the case requires); or

This amendment is also included following engagement with councils and the Local Government Association. This clause amends the evidentiary provisions to provide that, in proceedings for an offence against this act where it is alleged that a specified animal is a cat or a dog, this will be accepted as proved in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 46 to 48 passed.

Schedule 1.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Can the Attorney indicate what sort of community education will be undertaken to ensure breeders and prospective breeders are aware of the changes to licensing?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that will be done by the Dog and Cat Management Board, but my advice is there will be significant consultation, particularly in relation to a number of things we have traversed during the committee stage that will need consultation before regulations are promulgated. My advice is that there will be significant education consultation with the sector after that is done to make sure, as best as we can, that people know their responsibilities.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Perhaps as a follow-on, does the Attorney think that the prescribed day for a category A breeder is realistic for that education process to have occurred, that being 31 January 2026?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is, although that is the prescribed day set down there, it can specify a different day if there is notice in the *Gazette*. The 31 January 2026 date, I am advised, is likely to change to something later to do exactly what the honourable member is suggesting.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I understand that currently a mum-and-dad owner can apply for a breeder's licence, if they find that their animal is pregnant, to allow the litter to be registered and transferred to a new owner. For a mum-and-dad owner not necessarily intending to breed, what will the cost be to them and how can they deal with the impending litter under these new amendments?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: My advice is that will be a matter for the Dog and Cat Management Board to set down the fees. My further advice is there is scope for different fees, depending on the purpose and whether it is essentially for profit—I think as the honourable member has talked about, a mum-and-dad owner with perhaps an accidental litter. So there is that scope and expectation that will be recognised in the fees that the Dog and Cat Management Board set.

Schedule passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (11:43): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (HERITAGE) BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 June 2025.)

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (11:44): I rise to speak on the Statutes Amendment (Heritage) Bill 2025. This bill proposes amendments to the Heritage Places Act and the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act to introduce new procedural requirements for the proposed demolition of state heritage places. Specifically, it mandates that when an application is made to demolish such a place it must first be referred to the South Australian Heritage Council, subjected to a period of public consultation and followed by a report, which must be tabled in parliament—which is ironic, given that this is exactly the process that the Liberal Party sought to amend when the Labor Party decided to demolish the police barracks for the Women's and Children's Hospital and which was rejected by them at the time.

At a high level, these provisions are aimed at increasing transparency and community confidence in decisions that may impact South Australia's most significant heritage assets. The Liberal Party shares the community view that decisions about the demolition of heritage places should not occur behind closed doors. While we support the general objective of a different process,

this bill has been a long time coming, like many things with this government. The government first signalled its intention to legislate in this area several years ago, and yet this bill has only arrived here this year. During that time, there has been ongoing concern in the community about whether existing mechanisms are adequate to protect heritage places from loss by neglect or other pressures.

This bill is also limited in its scope. It applies only to demolition of a whole of a state heritage place, which is potentially open to interpretation, and there may also be circumstances where substantial demolition or degradation occurs that does not technically meet the threshold of 'whole demolition', so we are concerned about whether this is going to be applied consistently. Furthermore, the bill does not provide the Heritage Council with any binding veto or power to stop the demolition proceeding, nor does the requirement to table a report in parliament come with any associated obligation on the minister to act in any way. You could say that this is just a fairly tokenistic piece of legislation for the purposes of the Labor Party sticking it on a DL.

We are also mindful of the potential for delay and uncertainty, so how that plays out we shall see. However, some level of public consultation, expert input and parliamentary oversight do improve the system. So we support the bill, but believe that it is potentially quite tokenistic in its application. It has taken a very long time to get here, and the Labor Party did not think it was good enough to recognise the significant value of the Thebarton barracks. With those comments, I look forward to the committee stage.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (11:48): I rise to speak about the Statutes Amendment (Heritage) Bill 2025 with a measured perspective. This bill represents a significant step towards improving how we manage and protect South Australia's state heritage places, but it is not without its challenges. At its core, the bill seeks to provide greater transparency and public accountability regarding decisions about the demolition of heritage-listed sites. It does this by requiring the South Australian Heritage Council to access any proposed demolition, publish a draft report and invite public submissions before finalising its advice. That final report must then be tabled in parliament.

These are welcome reforms. They respond to a growing public expectation that heritage decisions should not be made behind closed doors or behind any secret plans, and that communities should have a voice in shaping the future of places that they value. However, while the intent is commendable, the implementation will require careful attention.

The timelines imposed on the Heritage Council are tight: 10 weeks for a draft report, four weeks for consultation and four more for finalisation. Without additional resources, there is a real risk that the council may struggle to meet these timelines, particularly if multiple applications are lodged at the same time, or if assessments are of a complex nature. If this process is to work as intended, it must be properly supported with a robust framework.

There is also the matter of clarity. The bill refers to the demolition of the whole of a state heritage place, but it does not define what 'whole' means. In practice, this could lead to confusion: does it refer to the principal structure only, or does it include outbuildings, landscapes or associated features? Is leaving only a cornerstone enough to not require this particular process? These are not trivial questions, and I would encourage the government to consider providing further guidance, either through regulations or amendments, to ensure consistent interpretation.

We must be mindful that heritage protection and urban growth are not mutually exclusive. The goal should be to strike a balance, one that respects our past while allowing for thoughtful, sustainable change to meet the contemporary needs of our community. This bill moves us in the right direction, but will require ongoing monitoring to ensure it does not become a barrier to progress. As I have mentioned before, I believe the bill is a step in the right direction and will introduce a more democratic process, one that gives weight to expert advice and community sentiment. It does not prevent demolition outright, but it ensures that such decisions are made with greater care, transparency and public accountability.

In doing so, it helps restore public confidence and integrity in our planning and heritage system. Heritage is not just about preserving old buildings per se; it is about recognising stories, values, identities and legacies—those places that are held dear to the hearts of our community. This bill acknowledges that and, whilst not perfect, it is a constructive foundation on which we can build. I support the bill and look forward to seeing how it is implemented and refined in practice.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (11:52): I rise to speak in favour of the Statutes Amendment (Heritage) Bill. This bill will require the proposed demolition of state heritage places to be subject to full consultation and a public report from the SA Heritage Council, which will be tabled in the parliament. The SA Heritage Council will have a 10-week period to prepare the report to assess the heritage significance of a place.

The bill also requires the application for consent to or approval of demolition to be accompanied by the SA Heritage Council report. The Greens support these amendments to the Heritage Places Act and the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act. I do see these as being an advancement on the status quo, and I welcome the government taking action in this regard. I will say that I do share some of the concerns, however, of the Hon. Michelle Lensink that this Labor government and, might I say, previous Labor governments do not have a good track record when it comes to heritage protection in South Australia. We have seen the way in which Labor has wilfully flouted heritage protection laws when it suits them.

We see the complete disregard that they have for national heritage protection laws. Indeed, this very parliament is protected under national heritage laws, yet they are salivating at the prospect of the Walker Corporation building a gargantuan tower overshadowing it and destroying that heritage value. Of course, the Thebarton barracks were protected under state heritage laws, but the Labor Party was very happy to swing the bulldozers into it, without regard for those heritage protections. So I welcome them taking action, but they do need to do more to demonstrate their bona fides in this regard.

The Greens believe that South Australia's natural and built cultural heritage is a precious asset and resource to be respected and protected for current and future generations. Unfortunately, a slow and steady stream of important architectural buildings are still being demolished or severely compromised here in Adelaide, despite planning protections and heritage listings. One of the recent egregious examples of this is, of course, the demolition of the Thebarton Police Barracks that I mentioned earlier. New laws were passed to get around heritage legislation first enacted in 1978 and updated in 1993. In the decades before we saw those laws introduced, many significant buildings were lost here in our state. Indeed, I think a lot of South Australians lament the loss of the public bars in the festival area that is now going to be turned into the plaything of developers, thanks to the Labor Party.

In 1962, the Theatre Royal on Hindley Street, which featured stars including Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier, was replaced by a car park. In 1971, the South Australian Hotel, where the Beatles stayed in 1964 during their famous visit to Adelaide—I was far too young to have been around to witness that; others here may be more familiar with it—was demolished to make way for the construction of the Stamford hotel. The Brookman Building on Grenfell Street was knocked over in the late 1970s and replaced by the Grenfell Centre, also known as the 'Black Stump' because of its dark exterior. In 1986, Adelaide Steamship Company's distinctive building on Currie Street, complete with a ship's hull on its roof, went down for the RAA Tower, which until recently was known as Westpac House.

The Grand Central Hotel, on the corner of Pulteney and Rundle streets, hosted The Kinks and author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who wrote the Sherlock Holmes series, and Mark Twain, who wrote *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In 1976 it, too, was demolished in favour of another car park. Probably the most tragic loss was the demolition of the Jubilee Exhibition Building in 1887, built to celebrate the 50th anniversary of South Australia's founding and named in honour of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. That building was demolished in 1962 and replaced by the hideous Napier Building in Adelaide University. It is one of the more grotesque buildings in our city.

The most famous lost building would of course be the Aurora Hotel of 1859. That was demolished in 1983 and replaced by a heavy-set, low-rise office building. It was the fight to prevent the demolition of this building that spurred on the newly formed heritage fraternity to push for heritage surveys and heritage listings of important buildings in the city and, indeed, the rest of the state.

There is still an incremental loss of our built heritage buildings today. Some of it is overt and some of it is more subtle and disguised by clever marketing and other forms of justification. The Adelaide Oval redevelopment is, of course, a case in point. The greater future good seems to justify

the demolition of most of the three heritage-listed grandstands. Curiously, they are still on the state register.

Generally, the demolition of heritage-listed buildings is due to pressure from developers and rising land values in the city and inner suburban areas. At this stage in Adelaide's development, it appears to be our government and the developers that have a major say in what is deemed important to our heritage. This bill we hope, from a Greens' perspective, will go some way to ameliorating the status quo and will give the public a greater say in planning decisions. The Greens believe the public has a right to genuine participation in planning decisions, including the right to access all relevant information, to participate in decision-making and to insist on all proper processes being followed.

I have pointed out some of the deficiencies in Labor's record when it comes to heritage protection, but I should also acknowledge one of the areas where we have collaborated with the Labor government during this term. It is in the area of demolition by neglect, and I welcome their support for my private member's bill which significantly increases the penalties for buildings that are falling into disrepair. I really thank the minister and her office for collaborating with the Greens on that issue. I think the bill that we are dealing with today is a positive step in the right direction in terms of adding further protections to some of our state's iconic buildings.

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (11:59): I rise today to speak on this bill that will achieve the South Australian government's somewhat oxymoronically named 'Heritage for the Future' election commitment to legislate a requirement that a proposed demolition of the whole of a state heritage place is subject to a public report from the South Australian Heritage Council, public consultation and the laying of the report into this parliament. The proposed amendments to the Heritage Places Act will ensure a transparent process is in place to protect heritage places from demolition in the future. The Statutes Amendment (Heritage) Bill 2024 achieves a few things and I am going to go few through a few of them.

Firstly, is the requirement that the South Australian Heritage Council prepares a report on an application by a person to demolish a whole State Heritage Place which assesses the heritage significance of the place in accordance with section 16(1) of the Heritage Places Act and includes other information prescribed by regulation. Secondly, is the requirement that the South Australian Heritage Council (SAHC) publishes a copy of the report and invites a public submission on the report over a four-week period.

Thirdly, is the requirement that the SAHC finalises the report within four weeks of the end of consultation and provides a copy of the report to the minister responsible for the administration of the Heritage Places Act. Fourthly, is the requirement that the report is laid before parliament within five sitting days from receipt by the minister. Another aspect is the replacement of references to the repealed Development Act 1993 and wording therein, as well as the addition of references to the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 and the Planning and Design Code and wording therein.

Lastly, is the requirement that the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016 include a provision requiring an application for consent to, or approval of, a development involving the demolition of the whole of a State Heritage Place to be accompanied by a finalised report prepared by the council.

The South Australian government's heritage for the future election commitments provide foundational provisions to uphold the state heritage protection and conservation system. Committing to and investing in the heritage reform agenda, particularly around protecting State Heritage Places from demolition, will increase the community's confidence in the state government's commitment to heritage conservation. The amendments in the Heritage Places Act will encourage adaptive reuse of State Heritage Places, allowing for greater retention and reuse of these spaces.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (12:02): I thank all honourable members for their very impassioned and genuine contributions and look forward to the passing of this bill.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

Bill taken through committee without amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (12:04): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Motions

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

The Hon. J.S. LEE (12:06): I move:

That this council—

1. Recognises the growing financial pressure on small and medium-sized businesses, due to compounding statutory costs including payroll tax and WorkCover insurance.

2. Notes that these costs are calculated on total payroll, including superannuation, and are significantly impacted by federally mandated wage increases such as those recently handed down by the Fair Work Commission.

3. Acknowledges that many small businesses are now facing substantial increases in weekly payroll costs, forcing difficult decisions around pricing, staffing, and service delivery.

4. Observes that the current payroll tax framework does not adequately account for the cumulative effect of national wage policy on small business operations.

5. Calls on the government to urgently review the state's payroll tax system, with a view to:

   (a) raising the payroll tax threshold for small businesses;

   (b) introducing temporary relief or exemptions during periods of mandated wage increases.

6. Affirms the need for a fairer, more responsive system that supports both decent wages for workers and the sustainability of small businesses across South Australia.

It was reported recently that more than 650 businesses became insolvent in South Australia last year. Of those, the hospitality sector was among the hardest hit, with 148 cafes, restaurants and takeaway services going into liquidation, administration or being restructured. In addition, in the construction industry 102 companies are facing the same scenario. Therefore, I rise today to speak on behalf of thousands of small and medium-sized businesses across South Australia that are doing it tough, not because they do not want to pay fair wages but because the system they operate in is no longer fair to them.

On 3 June 2025, the Fair Work Commission handed down its annual wage review decision. It awarded a 3.5 per cent increase in the national minimum wage and all modern wages, alongside a legislated 0.5 per cent increase to the superannuation guarantee. This decision will benefit around 2.6 million Australian workers, a long overdue real-wage increase after years of inflationary pressure.

It is a win for workers. I support the principle behind it and I support those increases. For small businesses, however, especially those in hospitality, retail, health care and community services, this increase is not just a wage adjustment, it is a trigger for a cascade of additional costs that many simply cannot afford or absorb.

Let me be clear: this is not just about a 3.5 per cent wage rise. Every dollar added to base wages also increases payroll tax at 4.95 per cent in South Australia; WorkCover insurance premiums of around 2.4 per cent; and superannuation contributions, currently 11.5 per cent, rising to 12 per cent from 1 July. These are statutory obligations, with tax and insurance calculated on total payroll, not just base wages. When wages go up, so too does the tax on those wages. It is a compounding effect that hits small businesses the hardest.

Let me share a real-world example. A small hospitality group operating two venues in Adelaide recently calculated the weekly impact of the wage and superannuation increases,

incorporating the statutory obligations of payroll tax and WorkCover. One venue saw its weekly payroll rise by over $1,700, the other by more than $1,200. To maintain margins, they will need to raise the price of the standard pub schnitzel from $27.70 to $28.81.

This is not to increase profits or pad the till, just to stand still. But for this operator a latte will go from $5 to $5.20 and a pint of beer from $10.50 to $10.92. This may be seen as small increases, but they all add up, and in a cost-of-living crisis they risk driving their customers away or reducing the frequency of patronage to those venues.

This is not just a hospitality issue. According to recent reporting, the industries most affected by the wage increase are accommodation and food services, retail trade, the healthcare and social assistance services industry, and administrative and support services. These sectors are highly award dependent, meaning they are directly impacted by the Fair Work Commission's decision. They also tend to operate on thin margins, with limited capacity to pass on costs.

In health care and aged care, for example, providers are already grappling with workforce shortages and rising compliance costs. In retail, businesses are competing with online giants and struggling to maintain foot traffic. In every case the payroll tax burden is making a difficult situation worse.

I have been contacted by professionals who work closely with small businesses, including accountants, who have highlighted a critical flaw in the current payroll tax system. They have pointed out that two businesses with the same annual turnover can pay vastly different amounts in payroll tax simply because of the nature of their operations. Service-based businesses, which are inherently more labour intensive, carry higher payroll costs. As a result, they are taxed more heavily than capital intensive businesses even when their revenue is identical. This creates a structural disadvantage for industries like hospitality, health care and education, sectors that rely on people—the human capital—not machines to deliver value. Payroll tax is a tax on employment, and it penalises the very businesses that are doing the most to create local jobs in our state.

The Fair Work Commission's decision is a federal one—I acknowledge that—but the payroll tax system is within the control of this state government, and it is time we ask the question: is it fair to tax small businesses more every time they pay their staff more? Is it fair for the businesses doing the right thing—by paying award wages, contributing to super, insuring their workers, investing in their workers through training and providing job security—to be hit with a higher tax bill simply for being compliant?

It is not a new conversation that we are having in this chamber. In fact, concerns about the structure and impact of payroll tax have been raised in parliament for many years. According to the most recent budget papers, payroll tax revenue is projected to rise from an estimated $1.95 billion in 2024-25 to over $2 billion in 2025-26. That is more than $5.6 million a day in payroll tax collected from South Australian businesses.

Speeches delivered in this chamber in 2024 from both the crossbench and the opposition highlighted the lack of indexation in the payroll tax threshold. While the threshold was increased from $600,000 to $1.5 million under the previous government, it has remained unchanged for six years. During that time the minimum wage has risen by over 28 per cent and superannuation has increased from 9.5 per cent to 11.5 per cent, with a further rise to 12 per cent. This stagnation means more businesses are being dragged into paying payroll tax. It has a net effect each year. It is not because they are expanding but because the system is failing to keep pace with economic reality.

The voices of businesses are clear. The South Australian Business Chamber has collected testimonials from across the state. Some of the sentiments expressed include:

> Payroll tax inhibits our ability to pay higher wages to low-income earners.
>
> It is the single largest factor limiting our ability to invest, to employ, and to grow.
>
> We are always just above the threshold—it's a constant penalty for success.
>
> We are now looking to downsize just to avoid the tax.

These are not just isolated complaints. There is a chorus of concerns from every sector, from hospitality to health care and from mining to real estate. We have already seen this government

acknowledge the unintended consequences of payroll tax policy, most notably in the case of general practitioners.

In 2024, following a controversial reinterpretation of payroll tax law stemming from a New South Wales tribunal decision, GP clinics across South Australia were suddenly deemed liable for payroll tax on payments made to doctors, even when those doctors were engaged as independent contractors. This change sent shockwaves through the healthcare sector. Clinics warned that they would be forced to pass the cost on to patients, threatening the viability of bulk-billing and putting further pressure on our already very stretched hospital system.

In response, the government rightly acted. It introduced a permanent payroll tax exemption for wages earned by GPs providing bulk-billed services. This was a welcome and necessary step, one that protected access to primary care and acknowledged the unique pressures facing medical practices, but it does not seem to have gone far enough. It also set a precedent.

If the government can recognise the disproportionate impact of payroll tax on one sector and act to mitigate it, then surely it can do the same for others, because the pressures facing GPs are not unique. Small businesses in hospitality, retail, aged care and community services are facing the same compounding costs, the same viability issues and the same risk of passing those costs on to the public.

The principle is the same: when a tax undermines the delivery of essential services or survival of small businesses, it must be reviewed. That is why I am calling on the government to urgently review South Australia's payroll tax framework with a view to raising the payroll tax threshold for small and medium-sized businesses and introducing temporary relief or exemptions during the period of mandated wage increases. This is not about cutting taxes on big corporations. It is about giving small businesses a fighting chance to stay afloat, keep people employed and continue contributing to our communities.

Let me be clear, I support people getting rewarded for the jobs that they are doing, I support fair pay, I support decent wages and I support superannuation and safe workplaces. However, I also support small businesses, and I believe we can have both: fair pay for workers and a fair system for employers, because when small businesses thrive, communities thrive, jobs are created, services are delivered, local economies grow, and all of them will add enormous benefits for a better and more resilient community. However, when small businesses are burdened by unfair taxes and taxed into the ground, everyone loses. The time for action is now.

The wage increases take effect from 1 July 2025. Businesses are already recalculating their rosters, their menus, their prices and, in some cases, their future, whether to stay open or shut the doors. We have heard in this chamber before that payroll tax is a tax on jobs. It applies regardless of whether a business makes a profit, breaks even or operates at a loss. It punishes employment and discourages growth.

Across South Australia, business owners, from cafes to clinics and from trades to tech, are telling us the same thing: payroll tax is the single biggest factor holding them back from hiring, investing and growing. They are not asking the government for handouts, they are asking for fairness, for a system that keeps pace with rising wages and superannuation and a system that does not penalise them for employing South Australians.

Let's not forget that taxes are usually used to discourage behaviour, not encourage it. We tax cigarettes to discourage smoking, we tax alcohol to reduce harm, but here we are taxing employment. This is a tax on jobs. It discourages employers from hiring more people or offering pay rises. It is fundamentally at odds with our goals for economic growth and for job creation.

That is why I brought forward this motion to call on the government to urgently review the state's payroll tax system and raise the payroll tax threshold for small businesses. While I believe a threshold of above $2 million would be a fair and reasonable benchmark, I welcome a broader conversation with my colleagues, with industry and stakeholders to determine the most effective path forward.

South Australia's current threshold of $1.5 million is no longer competitive. Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory all offer higher thresholds, and Victoria also provides

significant regional discounts. Raising our threshold to above $2 million will allow South Australia to lead the way to support small business growth and job creation.

Let's not wait until more doors are closed, more jobs are lost and more communities are left behind. Let's support small businesses with policies that work, and let's ensure that fair pay does not come at the cost of business survival. With those remarks, I commend the motion to the chamber.

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

FESTIVAL PLAZA

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (12:21): I move:

That this council—

1. Notes that on 11 June 2025 the state planning commission assessment panel granted planning consent for the 38-storey Festival Plaza Tower 2;

2. Recognises that over 125 eminent South Australians, including former Premier Reverend Hon. Dr Lynn Arnold AO and former President of the Legislative Council, the Hon Anne Levy AO, have signed an open letter calling on the Premier and this parliament to stop the construction of Festival Plaza Tower 2, protect Festival Plaza as an open, civic space, and retain it as public land;

3. Acknowledges that the construction of the Festival Plaza Tower 2 would incur a major loss of open, civic space and negatively impact on the heritage values of the Parliament House complex and the Adelaide Parklands; and

4. Calls on the Malinauskas government to intervene to prevent the construction of Festival Plaza Tower 2.

The motion that I am moving today notes that, on 11 June 2025, the state planning commission assessment panel granted planning consent for a 38-storey Festival Plaza Tower 2. It recognises that over 125 eminent South Australians, including former Premier the Reverend Hon. Dr Lynn Arnold AO and former President of the Legislative Council, the Hon. Anne Levy AO, have signed an open letter calling on the Premier and this parliament to stop the construction of Festival Plaza Tower 2, protect Festival Plaza as an open civic space, and retain it as public land.

The motion acknowledges that the construction of the Festival Plaza Tower 2 would incur a major loss of open civic space and negatively impact on the heritage values of the Parliament House complex and the Adelaide Parklands, and it calls on the government to intervene to prevent the construction of Festival Plaza Tower 2.

This motion will be important to any South Australian who cares about the character and heritage of the City of Adelaide. The skyscraper that is being proposed will overshadow North Terrace and our historic Parliament House, and obscure the view for the public. It will prevent the public from being able to enjoy Festival Plaza, which is an iconic civic space.

This 160-metre-tall skyscraper will be the tallest commercial building in Adelaide and it will feature an outdoor dining area, retail tenancies on the ground floor, an elevated plaza space on level 1, and it will include commercial office space from levels 6 to 16 and 19 to 35, and I understand also a restaurant on level 36.

The planning minister, the Hon. Nick Champion, has said that SCAP approval was 'unambiguously good news for the state', adding that the Festival Plaza will be 'vibrant and teeming with people' once the tower is finished. 'We want to activate the plaza,' he says, 'and office workers will do that.'

Just how many office workers will be brought to this Labor-Walker tower? In February of this year, InDaily reported that the office vacancy rate in the Adelaide CBD was over 16.4 per cent. So why is the government building yet another colossal office tower? Are office buildings really the limit of this government's imagination when it comes to our public green space?

This skyscraper risks turning one of Adelaide's most iconic open public spaces into just another soulless commercial precinct. I am not against skyscrapers, and, in fact, I think skyscrapers make sense for the CBD. But you do not put it on the best piece of real estate we have in our state. You do not put a skyscraper right next to our Parliament House.

Let me say, if ever there was a symbol of the power of developers in our democracy, this is it. We are going to have two giant Walker towers literally overshadowing the people's Parliament House, reminding all South Australians who really run the show. It is like Sauron out of *Lord of the Rings*. It is totally inappropriate.

The Labor Party have shown themselves to be devoid of any imagination when it comes to this Festival Plaza. That whole precinct has been a total dog's breakfast. Really, the original sin was surely John Rau and the approach that he took to the Riverbank Precinct. It is a cross between a maze and an obstacle course trying to get around that area, and this giant tower is just going to further complicate the picture. It was outrageous that the Walker Corporation were granted exclusive use of this Parklands site in the first place. The existing tower overshadowing Parliament House is surely monstrous enough.

A number of concerns have been raised by the government's own heritage agency, Heritage SA, about the impact of this tower on our Parliament House and on the listing as a national heritage place. In a submission to the SCAP, Heritage SA raised concerns that the visual dominance of the proposed tower would leave views of parliament's northern facade compromised. Indeed, Heritage SA's principal architect, Michael Queale wrote, and I quote from his submission:

> The currently open setting to the north of Parliament House will be enclosed by the tower, compromising the historic landmark scale of Parliament House along the North Terrace boulevard. While the tower will be set back behind Parliament House, its scale will still dominate views of the setting of Parliament House when seen from the city.

It is not just the Greens who are up in arms about this. Respected members of the community from across the political divide have been speaking out against this as well. Indeed, more than 120 prominent South Australians have signed an open letter demanding an immediate halt to the proposed tower, including many people who have served the Labor Party over many years with distinction, like the Reverend Dr Lynn Arnold AO, former Premier of our state; the Hon. Anne Levy AO, former President of our Legislative Council; the Hon. Peter Duncan, former Attorney-General in the Dunstan Labor government; Archdeacon Peter Sandeman AM, former CEO of Anglicare; and Dr Christel Mex from the City of Norwood Payneham & St Peters. In this open letter, which has been published, they say:

> We believe the proposal to allow this highly significant public site to have a speculative, commercial tower built on it, directly overshadowing the SA Parliament, is wrong on multiple counts:
>
> It places private corporate profit ahead of public purpose.
>
> The Code Amendment, that changed the zoning law, was rushed through without following the government's own community engagement charter, or due planning process.
>
> It erodes the adjacent Park Lands, already under constant threat from commercial overreach, and the vistas from the Park Lands through Parliament House.

When this issue was raised on the radio last week, the argument seemed to be put by the government that, 'Well, this was advertised on YourSAy.' Might I say, YourSAy is a totally inadequate consultation mechanism. When I was on the city council, I used to rail against the use of YourSAy; it is a highly ineffective engagement model. Very few people are normally aware of what is being posted on YourSAy, and it generally gets very few respondents.

One would have thought that a project such as this, that is so significant for our state, would be subject to a significant consultation process. You do not just stick it on a website and expect members of the community to be engaging with it. That is a cop-out. These developments that we are seeing from the government are chipping away at public land. Indeed, just this week we saw the Malinauskas government announce that it wants to seize more of the Parklands for its LIV Golf tournament redevelopment. Once these spaces are gone, we will not get them back. It is very clear that the development sector are looking on at the Parklands, and our public green space, and really salivating at the prospect of being able to sink their teeth into this space.

Just this morning, Bruce Djite of the Property Council was on the radio talking about his view that the city council should be stripped of all of its authority over planning decisions. That is a very disturbing development. That clearly is in the sights of the Property Council and it will be incumbent on the Malinauskas government to rule that out in coming days, because the Property Council is very

clear to see these sorts of developments imposed on the community, despite the lack of public consent.

The Malinauskas government has also said that they do not have any authority over this decision: that is a cop out. They made it very clear that they wanted to see this project get the green light. We saw some months ago they responded to strong community pressure from the Greens and a range of community groups to step in and save the Crown and Anchor from destruction. They should be doing the same thing when it comes to the Festival Plaza site.

The government will say, 'Oh well, the previous Liberal government was committed to three storeys; three storeys would be a poor outcome, let's go to 38.' I find that one of the most ridiculous arguments I have heard in this debate. I do not understand how three storeys would be a worse outcome than 38 storeys in terms of the impact on public space. The government says this will be a key civic and community space: it is an office tower. It is an office tower that may well end up being a ghost tower because of the significant vacancy rates that we already have when it comes to office space in our city.

This is also endemic of a planning system that serves vested interests, that serves the big end of town at the expense of ordinary South Australians. I urge the government to rein in their instinct to go after public space. The Parklands are not a land bank, and our Festival Plaza should not be a plaything for developers. This really is the wrong direction for our state, so I urge them to step in and do something, because this proposal for the Riverbank Precinct and the Festival Plaza absolutely stinks to high heaven.

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

Bills

DROUGHT RESPONSE AND RECOVERY COORDINATOR BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 4 June 2025.)

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (12:33): Drought is devastating our state; there is no area that has not been impacted. Even areas of relatively high rainfall, reliably so in previous years, such as the Limestone Coast, are experiencing drought. The government is keen to do everything it can to support drought-affected farmers and their regional communities on the ground. Unfortunately, this bill does not deliver either of those goals and, therefore, we cannot support it, because the government is interested in real practical support for our primary producers.

Over the last two weeks, since this bill was introduced, the government has reviewed the bill, sought advice from industry and carefully considered the implications of the opposition's proposal. This bill provides no support to farmers and instead increases red tape around accessing drought support. The bill brings back outdated drought policy, which has been rejected nationally through consecutive reviews of the effectiveness of drought policy in historic droughts.

This bill abandons the principles of the National Drought Agreement. That agreement provides a consistent and collaborative policy framework for commonwealth, state and territory governments in managing and responding to drought.

Finally, one of the main stated purposes of the bill—to establish a position that the opposition has termed the 'drought response and recovery coordinator'—is redundant. Last Friday, following many weeks of discussions and advocacy with industry, the government announced the much more senior role of Commissioner for Drought Support and announced the appointment of Mr Alex Zimmerman. Mr Zimmerman has already been important in regional engagement activities in other impactful circumstances around the state. Most recently, he held the role of community recovery coordinator, following the River Murray floods.

Given the severity of the drought and the impacts on farmers and regional communities, the government has recognised the benefit of appointing a Commissioner for Drought Support whose

experience and knowledge will prove invaluable in engaging with regional communities and stakeholders. The opposition's legislation is not required to establish this role. It has already been done.

The Commissioner for Drought Support's role will be to advise the government and maintain effective communication processes between government, industry and stakeholders. He will monitor the progress of the drought support initiatives, address barriers for people and businesses affected by drought, work closely with the executive director of drought support in PIRSA, and report to me to inform the delivery of drought support measures.

Critically, this bill proposes to bring back drought declarations, which is inconsistent with national policy directions provided by the National Drought Agreement and inconsistent with actually helping farmers. The national drought policy has been developed over years of review of consecutive government drought policies, culminating in the commonwealth, state and territory governments agreeing to no longer make formal drought declarations—for very good reasons. Support should be provided based on need. It should not need to wait to be delivered through a formal drought declaration. Therefore, the national drought policy provides a simpler, fairer and more proactive approach to providing drought support.

This means that drought no longer needs to be declared in a region for farmers to be eligible for assistance. Farmers can take action early and access support when they need it, without waiting for a declaration. That is important because drought is affecting different areas of the state differently. It is fair to say that the whole state is in drought, apart perhaps from the very Far North where they are experiencing floods. But it means that the impacts are different around the state. The proposal in this bill would have more lines on a map, and I will go into that a little further later in my contribution.

Given the National Drought Agreement establishes the principle of providing for a drought response but operates outside of emergency management frameworks, it enables ongoing support when needed. I am particularly concerned that this bill would walk away from the principles of the National Drought Agreement and leave South Australia as an outlier from the rest of the nation. I do not believe this course of action would benefit our farmers. Abandoning policy that has been carefully developed with reference to years of historic drought policy to revert to outdated policy is inequitable and ineffective and, therefore, in the government's view, unwise.

That is not to say that the National Drought Agreement is perfect. It may well be that it needs to be changed, but that is a discussion that needs to happen among state, territory and federal governments for a coordinated adjustment, if that indeed is the preferred action. Ms Gillian Fennell, the chair of Livestock SA, was in the media in recent weeks, talking about the fact that changing the National Drought Agreement in the middle of a drought is the worst time to do it. I do not have her exact words in front of me, so I hope I am not putting words into her mouth, but certainly that was the message that she was sending: that there needs to be a considered discussion around the National Drought Agreement.

Importantly, the changes that are proposed in this bill that would abandon the National Drought Agreement will provide no extra assistance to farmers—none whatsoever. The idea that some declaration would free up assistance that is sitting there waiting to be accessed is simply untrue. This government, if you like, declared drought when we made our first drought package available back in November. This government, if you like, declared drought in April when we made the second package available. A drought declaration is no longer needed in terms of that formal mechanism, and what is proposed in this bill would have no tangible benefits for South Australian farmers.

Until 2012, the Australian government made exceptional circumstances declarations, or ECs. The decision to close the EC program was based on successive reviews of drought policy that found that such assistance was ineffective and could result in farm businesses being adversely impacted because they were shown to be inequitable. Eligibility was determined by lines on a map. Some farmers who experienced the same drought as their neighbours—the same drought—were located on the other side of a boundary line and therefore could not access support.

These findings were reflected in the 2013 Intergovernmental Agreement on National Drought Program Reform, where the decision was made to abandon those inequitable exceptional

circumstances declarations or arrangements. This approach was reflected in the National Drought Agreement in 2018, when the commonwealth, states and territories agreed to the principle that there should no longer be declarations that were based on lines on maps.

Further, the opposition's bill seeks to implement cumbersome and lengthy processes to draft a drought plan to apparently guide the supports available, but it would actually slow it down significantly. The Australian Government Drought Plan was prepared in parallel with the National Drought Agreement and, like the NDA, covers the period, in the most recent signing, from 2024 to 2029. Clear processes are in place to inform drought response and recovery, consistent with national policy. To begin drafting a drought plan, a process which would take weeks or months, while in the middle of the drought would significantly delay drought response.

Furthermore, the fund that the opposition seeks to establish, apparently through this bill, would be a fund with no clear plan on their mechanisms by which funds would be appropriated, and I will have more to say on this in the committee stage if this bill is passed to the next stage.

It is clear that the state government is very conscious of the seriousness of the current drought conditions and the impact on primary producers and the flow-on effects to regional communities. That is why we are implementing our $73 million drought support package, which I am advised is the largest state government drought support package in South Australia's history. The last thing farmers need now is a cumbersome bureaucratic process filled with red tape to access support and yet that is what is proposed in this bill.

Assistance is available now through the government's $73 million drought support package. Our support package was developed in concert with advice we received from extensive consultation with industry bodies, drought-affected farmers and community representatives. It included a series of regional drought round tables, ongoing discussions with the Drought Advisory Group and a round table hosted by the Premier with farmers and key industry bodies. Recommendations and feedback from this engagement directly informed the government's response.

The package provides practical, wideranging support and addresses a range of areas including financial support, mental health, donated fodder, subsidies for livestock, pest management, drought preparedness and resilience, funding for community events, and support for small businesses.

The new support schemes are comprehensive and include financial relief for those in most need, support for regional communities, programs to address a number of water needs, funding for pest animal management, and funding for drought preparedness and resilience programs.

It is worth going through a list of the various programs that are available. Announced in April this year, there was a further $13 million, going to a total of $18 million, for on-farm drought infrastructure grants for rebates that assist with projects to manage drought conditions and strengthen drought preparedness. The original grants required a 25 per cent co-contribution from the primary producer, with grants being up to $5,000. Following feedback from industry, the second package of grants retains that option but also includes an option for up to $20,000 with a fifty-fifty contribution.

The package included an additional $4 million, taking it to a total of $6 million, to assist charities with freight costs for the transport of donated fodder to assist farmers with feeding livestock. It included immediate financial relief by providing rebates for the emergency services levy and commercial vehicle registration fees for primary producers receiving the commonwealth's Farm Household Allowance; $2.5 million for a strategy to boost mental health and resilience in drought affected areas; $1 million for rural financial counselling support; and $3.5 million in additional supports for rural small businesses.

It included $3.1 million to assist with culling pests and managing kangaroo populations, which are competing for feed with livestock; $4.5 million to support producers with the implementation of electronic identification for sheep and farmed goats; $1.4 million to co-invest with councils in the upgrade of regional standpipes; and $500,000 to make bulk water available from Bundaleer and Beetaloo reservoirs.

It included $2 million to assist sport and recreation clubs in drought-affected areas through the Active Club Program; $400,000 to develop and encourage new regional events in drought-affected areas through the Regional Event Fund; $250,000 to provide financial support for country students affected by drought to attend camps and excursions; and a further $250,000 for grants of up to $5,000 for the Connecting Communities Events program, for groups to host events that foster social connections and provide support.

Many of these have been done in conjunction with, for example, Grain Producers SA and Livestock SA. Finally, $17.4 million was provided for Future Drought Fund preparedness and resilience programs. These were able to be rolled out as soon as they were developed and announced. They did not require a drought declaration before they could be implemented. They did not require potentially months—months—of bureaucratic red tape before they could commence being rolled out, and that is what would be required if this bill were to be successful.

The package was carefully designed to complement existing support from the commonwealth, which includes concessional loans, income and other financial supports through the Farm Household Allowance; the Farm Management Deposit scheme; and ATO measures, such as payment plans, tax deductions and small business tax concessions.

I do not for a moment consider that the commonwealth support is perfect. I and the Premier, and others in our government, have been advocating to the commonwealth government for additional support. That advocacy will continue, but it is worth mentioning that those commonwealth support measures are always available, thanks to the current national drought policy, without which farmers would be required to show that they are in a drought-declared area to qualify for support, which goes back to the problems of that approach in decades past.

A drought cross-government implementation group has also been established to assist with timely, effective and coordinated delivery of the drought support package. Delivery of the package is being led by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions, in close collaboration with other agencies responsible for support measures within the package. Significant progress has been made on delivering the support package, noting that some initiatives will be delivered over multiple years.

In addition, the government made a second recent significant appointment when, on 30 May, the Chief Executive of PIRSA appointed a dedicated executive director to the delivery of the drought support package, with a key role of assisting in coordinating initiatives across government. We have worked closely with affected primary producers, industry and communities, including the round table which I co-hosted with farmers and key industry bodies, the ongoing discussions of the Drought Advisory Committee and the regional drought round tables that I mentioned earlier.

It is also important to get an understanding of where industry sits in regard to this bill. I quote from a letter from Primary Producers SA, which is the peak body and has as its members Grain Producers SA, Livestock SA, the South Australian Dairyfarmers' Association, the South Australian Forest Products Association, the Horticulture Coalition and the Wine Grape Council of South Australia. I think it is fair to say that the PPSA correspondence is very balanced. It certainly commends the opposition for wanting to assist. It also commends the government on the actions that we have taken so far and the $73 million package. But now I will quote some specifics from the letter:

> While we strongly agree the scale and persistence of this drought requires both formal coordination and partnership with industry to deliver a truly integrated response across government, we acknowledge state-enacted measures should be consistent with the National Drought Agreement (NDA). The NDA establishes the principle that drought response remains outside of the formalities of emergency management frameworks, with ongoing support based on need rather than formal emergency declarations.
>
> We acknowledge the effectiveness of this approach continues to be a topic of public and political debate, and we are actively engaged in this discourse through the National Farmers Federation.
>
> PPSA acknowledges the urgency surrounding current parliamentary deliberations and the intention to bring the bill to a vote in the Legislative Council on Wednesday, 18th of June. For the avoidance of doubt, the Policy Council has not reached a consensus to support the bill in its current form or within the proposed time frame.

I think that is particularly important. PPSA is not necessarily saying that everything in the bill is not agreed with, but they certainly cannot support at this time the bill as it stands, and they also referred to the timeframes.

I think it is important that we engage constantly with industry. Sometimes that will be one-on-one with individual farmers and landholders, as I of course have been involved in, but it will also be with peak bodies, the peak bodies who those farmers have determined will be their representatives.

Our government support has been responsive to feedback both from individual farmers and from those peak bodies. We will continue to work closely with industry bodies and those affected by the drought to ensure that support remains tailored and effective and, where necessary, changes and expands. For all of the reasons outlined above, including the fact that peak industry bodies, representing so many of our primary producers, cannot support the bill at this time, the government will therefore not be supporting it at this time either.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (12:52): I rise to speak in support of the Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator Bill 2025. This bill represents a critical step forward in how we respond to and recover from drought in South Australia. As the Hon. Nicola Centofanti outlined in her second reading speech, this bill recognises that drought is not a one-off event; it is a recurring and intensifying challenge that demands a coordinated, strategic and compassionate response. It is not enough to rely on fragmented programs or ad hoc support. We need a framework that brings together government, community and industry in a unified effort and a coordinated approach.

Some honourable members, including the minister, have suggested that formal drought declarations are no longer necessary. They point to the existence of programs like the Farm Business Resilience Program and the Drought Hub as evidence that we are already doing enough. Respectfully, this view overlooks a critical reality. Formal drought declarations are not just symbolic; they are functional. They are often a trigger for external support from banks, insurers and federal agencies like the ATO. These institutions frequently require formal recognition of drought before they can offer relief such as loan deferrals, tax concessions or hardship assistance.

I note that Grain Producers SA in their press release have indicated that their survey has revealed that one in two South Australian grain producers are currently facing difficulties accessing finance or credit during the drought. They also pointed out that almost 10 per cent have actually said that their bank requires a formal drought declaration before assistance will be considered. So without a declaration, many of these supports remain out of reach for those who need them the most. This bill provides a legal and administrative framework to make those declarations in a timely, transparent and evidence-based way. It ensures that we can activate not just state support but also unlock the broader ecosystem of assistance that our communities rely on.

In response to growing pressures, I note that the government has taken some steps and appointed a Commissioner for Drought Support, Mr Alex Zimmerman, to assist with managing the drought response. While this is a welcome acknowledgement of the seriousness of the situation, it is important to recognise that this role is not underpinned by legislation. It does not come with the statutory authority, transparency or accountability mechanisms that this bill provides.

This bill goes further. It establishes a legally defined role with clear responsibilities, oversight and the power to coordinate across government and community. It ensures that drought declarations are made transparently and that support is delivered efficiently, not just through goodwill but through a structural and enduring framework. It also recognises the importance of the supply chain in drought response.

From hay deliveries to water carting and mental health services to concessional loans, the bill enables a coordinated approach that supports not just farmers but the entire network of people and organisations who keep our rural communities functioning. It allows for charities and community groups, those on the frontlines of drought relief, to be supported in delivering aid when it is needed most, in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Crucially, this bill establishes a state drought response and recovery fund, a dedicated pool of resources that support drought-affected communities. This fund must be accessible to all farmers in need, regardless of their size, location or sector. Whether it is freight subsidies, concessional loans or mental health support, the fund should be a lifeline, not just more red tape. It must be administered with fairness, transparency and urgency.

I acknowledge that there are existing programs, such as the On-farm Drought Infrastructure Rebate Scheme and the Rural Business Support Relief Fund that the minister has mentioned. These are well intentioned, but they fall short of what is needed right now. The rebate scheme requires farmers to spend money up front, funds they may simply lack, before they can claim a portion back. It is a long-term resilience tool, not a short-term cash flow solution.

The Rural Business Support relief program offers only up to $1,500 per family, which may help with utility bills or a grocery run, but it is not going to keep a farm business afloat or a supply chain moving. While every bit of support helps, the scale of need across our state far exceeds what small one-off grants can address.

I also want to address the Regional Drought Resilience Planning Program. It is a valuable initiative when we are planning—planning—for drought, but we are way past preparing. Our entire state is in drought. The minister acknowledged that in her opening statement early in her speech. Our farmers and the supply chains that they are part of need ongoing relief and support to recover, not just more paperwork.

This bill delivers that more comprehensive support, with the structure and authority to act decisively. This is a bill about supporting our farmers, ensuring centralised coordination and prioritising compassion. It give us a tool to act not just for when the crisis hits but before it deepens. With those remarks, I support the bill and believe that it will support our farming communities who are in deep crisis.

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

Sitting suspended from 12:58 to 14:18.

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the President—

Report of the Auditor-General—Report 4 of 2025:
Contract Management in Local Management

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

South Australian Abortion Reporting Committee, Report—2024
Deputy Premier's Travel Report 13 April to 19 April 2025 prepared pursuant to the Public Sector Act 2009
Minister Boyer's Travel Report 21 March to 29 March 2025 prepared pursuant to the Public Sector Act 2009
Minister Szakacs' Travel Report 13 April to 19 April 2025 prepared pursuant to the Public Sector Act 2009
Premier's Travel Report 23 March to 29 April 2025 prepared pursuant to the Public Sector Act 2009
South Australian Maternal and Perinatal Mortality Committee Maternal and Perinatal Mortality in South Australia 2022

Parliamentary Committees

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:19): I bring up the 65th report of the committee, 2022-25.

Report received.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I bring up the 66th report of the committee, 2022-25.

Report received and read.

Parliamentary Procedure

ANSWERS TABLED

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

Question Time

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries on the topic of the South Australian Donated Fodder Transport Drought Assistance Scheme.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: The opposition has received advice this morning from a charity engaged in the coordination and distribution of fodder into South Australia, that farmers who have already been assisted by a charity fodder and hay delivery, regardless of the amount of hay or fodder that was received by that farmer, are now technically ineligible for any future hay or fodder deliveries regardless of need.

We have been advised that this is a criteria under the MOU that was signed by charities with the South Australian government, and that charities can be audited on this at any given time. My questions to the minister are:

1. Is she aware of this?

2. Can she confirm that once a farmer has received a charity hay or fodder donation they are unable to receive future donations regardless of need?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:25): I thank the honourable member for her question. I can certainly check the details of what she has put forward in her question, but I do think it's also particularly relevant that, following the first $2 million assisted fodder transport scheme, feedback we had from across the state was taken on board. Some of that feedback was around the fact that some farmers were missing out altogether on donated fodder, whereas others were receiving multiple loads of donated fodder.

I think that is something that most would agree we don't want anyone to be missing out. If people are putting their hands up for donated fodder and the government is able to assist with those transport costs out of the $6 million subsidy for donated fodder, we want that assistance to be spread as far as possible. I can't imagine the Leader of the Opposition in this place is suggesting that one farmer should receive possibly many loads where other farmers who might be in equal need are receiving none.

My understanding is that there were discussions with PIRSA and the charities that are involved in the current subsidy for transport for donated fodder around how it could be better coordinated. Again, what was occurring was that one area might receive a hay run from several charities, whereas another area may not, even though there might also be great need in that area. My understanding was that there was to be better coordination. In terms of the specifics of that query I am happy to take it on notice and bring back a response.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:28): Supplementary: how is the minister determining the need of farmers for specific hay and fodder donations, and will the South Australian government consider the use of a coordinated central database for the need of farmers for the hay and fodder coming into South Australia?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:28): I thank the honourable member for her question. I don't, as minister, determine need. The farmers are able to register their interest directly with the charities that are engaged in the current hay runs. It was certainly discussed as to whether a central database,

as has been suggested here by the member opposite, would be beneficial. I will have to check with my department but, from my recollection, charities were not supportive of that, given that primary producers are providing their details direct to that charity, but I do know that there were moves for better coordination.

As I say, in terms of the detail, I am happy to check that with the department, but I think the overall principle needs to be remembered: the government's package is to provide a transport subsidy for donated fodder. There are five charities involved in that and the department is working closely with them to get the best outcomes that are feasible. No-one is suggesting that all farmers' feed needs for their animals would be met through donated fodder—we know that is not the way that it works—but where government is able to provide assistance, in this case for the transport costs, then that is something that we have been very pleased to partner with various charities to enable to occur.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:30): Final supplementary: is the minister concerned that the present policy may have unintended consequences, given that it doesn't appear to be based on need and that farmers, after one hay drop, are deemed ineligible for future donations?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:30): Firstly, the member opposite is making assumptions. That is not what I said. I said that I would check the detail with the department around that. Secondly, obviously there is need across the state, which is why the Malinauskas government has provided a $73 million drought assistant package, the biggest state-based drought support package, I am advised, in the history of the state. That is an important part of being able to provide the support to farmers and the subsidy assistance is an important component of that. As I mentioned, it is $6 million in terms of that transport component, and five different charities have been very generous with their time, their coordination and their cooperation in terms of delivering this assistance to farmers.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:31): I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to asking a question of the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development on drought.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: *The Advertiser* reported today that a survey of more than 130 farmers has revealed that one in two farmers are struggling to convince their banks to lend them money. The opposition has been calling on the government to offer no-interest and low-interest concessional loans to drought-affected farmers for some months now. Alarmingly, one in two grain producers are struggling to access financial credit, with banks tightening conditions and. in some cases, refusing support altogether unless a formal drought declaration is in place.

As one grain producer put it, and I quote, 'Our bank advised that if a drought declaration is made, then it gives them more scope for hardship lending.' I think that single comment captures the crux of the issue. My question to the minister is: what actions, if any, is the government taking to ensure drought-stricken farmers have access to finance?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:33): I thank the honourable member for her question. First of all, I might refer to some comments made on ABC's *Country Hour* on 5 June with Gillian Fennell, the chair of Livestock SA. She says:

> There's been a lot of producers who are asking for drought declarations to be reintroduced because they believe it will treat certain elements of things, especially dealing with the likes of ATO and banks. I'd like to advise producers, if your banks tell you that they are waiting for an official drought declaration that they are actually very incorrect.

That is true. I had a forum that I co-hosted with Primary Producers SA at the end of last year with pretty much all of the major financial institutions, and I am very concerned to hear that despite the

undertakings they gave that all of their staff are aware that drought declarations do not happen, and because they do not happen they are not a prerequisite for hardship assistance from financial institutions, this is still occurring.

I believe it was Grain Producers SA who ran the survey that is being referred to by the member opposite. I will be asking Grain Producers SA if they are able to provide details of those who have completed the survey with this sort of response—and de-identify it—so that we can find out who these banks are and who was telling them this information, because it is wrong. It is the wrong information. If some members in the banking community are continuing to say this, I would like to be able to provide that information to the banking institutions because they have said they are telling all their staff that this is not required because drought declarations no longer occur.

So I am very happy if I have the details of which institution, which branch and, ideally, which staff member so that we can actually get that fixed, because that is incorrect and it's very unfortunate if that is still continuing to happen.

In terms of the other question around no-interest and low-interest loans, it was interesting at the forum, the round table, that I had with the Premier in the South-East last Friday with drought-affected farmers from the Mallee down to the Lower Limestone Coast and throughout that area. There were mixed views around whether that was actually the right approach—whether it is something that governments should be involved in.

We are all aware, I think, of the RIC loans provided by the federal government. The Premier and I have both been advocating to the federal government to look at those provisions, particularly the interest that is currently being charged. I can recognise that the interest charged is certainly lower than some rates that people have been quoting to me. I remember one farmer who said that the commercial rate being charged to him was 12 per cent. So for him the I think 5.2 per cent from the RIC loans, if I remember correctly, was certainly a benefit, and he had availed himself of that. But those who are able to access finance at rates that are closer to that discounted rate obviously won't see the benefit of a particular gap.

So it's something that is certainly within the remit of the federal government, more easily than the state government, and I do acknowledge that there are a variety of views around this, including within industry.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:36): Supplementary: what formal communication is being provided to the banking sector from the minister herself on this issue, and when were those communications provided?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:37): As I mentioned, we had a forum with the leaders of all the financial institutions that operate in regional South Australia, according to our information.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:37): Supplementary: what formal communication?

The PRESIDENT: You have just asked that question.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:37): I think, as you say, it's not actually, strictly speaking, a supplementary, but I think that talking directly in a public forum co-hosted with Primary Producers SA is pretty formal.

The Hon. N.J. Centofanti interjecting:

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

FISH DEATHS

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:37): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Primary Industries a question regarding the significant hatchery mortalities at the South Australian Aquatic Sciences Centre and at the Robarra barramundi hatchery.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: The SARDI report released in March this year investigated large-scale mortalities in finfish and shellfish at SARDI, but it also included barramundi mortalities at Robarra's barramundi hatchery, where approximately 183,000 fingerlings and 11 brood stock were lost. While the report examined multiple potential causes, it was ultimately inconclusive due to the lack of water quality data given at the time of the event. Notably, it was unable to rule out the possibility that dissolved contaminants linked to nearby dredging activities may have contributed to the losses.

Given this, my questions to the minister are: will the government provide full compensation to Robarra for the significant commercial losses incurred, given that the official investigation could not rule out dredging activity conducted under a government-managed program?

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Absolutely, Attorney. When will the government commit to an independent investigation into the deaths at SARDI, West Beach and Robarra, considering—

The Hon. K.J. Maher interjecting:

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: He doesn't like this question.

The PRESIDENT: The Attorney is going to answer the question when the time comes, but can you conclude your question so we can get an answer.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I will try to; thank you, Mr President. When will the government commit to an independent investigation into the deaths at SARDI, West Beach and Robarra, considering their own governmental report into the mortality event was inconclusive?

The PRESIDENT: Attorney, did you want to have a go at this one?

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order! Do you want an answer? Stop talking to the Attorney.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:39): The SARDI report was independently peer reviewed by Professor Michael Goodsite, an expert in civil and environmental engineering, with its findings supported by that peer review. The Leader of the Opposition in this place appears to be suggesting that, because one thing cannot be ruled out, government must take responsibility for that. It is a bizarre type of argument and it is quite fascinating. I must say I find it quite fascinating—

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I find it quite fascinating how I have heard the Leader of the Opposition in other forums talk about how their party is the party of small government, of less government, and yet here in this place, day after day, week after week, month after month, they want government to expand. They want government to expand day after day, week after week, month after month. What is their solution? More government intervention, that is what they say time and time again and it just shows their hypocrisy.

The PRESIDENT: Okay, that's enough. I have had enough.

PLANTATION FORESTRY

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (14:41): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister update the council about the recent event to celebrate 150 years of plantation forestry in our state?

The Hon. R.P. Wortley: Finally, a good question.

The PRESIDENT: I think the Hon. Mr Wortley wants to answer the question.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development will be heard in silence.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:41): The South Australian forestry industry is currently celebrating a special milestone this year—150 years of renewable plantation forestry. The first plantation occurred in 1875 in the Bundaleer Forest in the Mid North and since that time the industry has grown significantly into the powerhouse it is today.

Of course, today we see the vast majority of the plantation forest industry occurring in the Green Triangle in the state's South-East. On Friday evening, the South Australian Forest Products Association held a 150-year celebratory dinner to acknowledge the significant milestone the industry has reached and it was pleasing to see so many people from both industry and government attend.

I was joined at the dinner by the Premier, who has long been a big supporter of the forest industry across our state; the federal Assistant Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Anthony Chisholm; the leader of the state opposition; state MPs and MLCs, including Troy Bell, Adrian Pederick, Ben Hood, Nicola Centofanti and Nick McBride; CEOs of the Australian Forest Products Association and the South Australian Forest Products Association, along with the chief executive officer of Primary Producers SA; the CEO of OneFortyOne; and also a table of workforce, the direct workers within the industry, which was particularly good to see.

The South Australian forest industry, according to SAFPA's figures, directly contributes $3 billion to the South Australian economy each year, while employing 21,000 people directly and indirectly. The total plantation estate size is an impressive 165,000 hectares, with the majority of the plantation made up of softwood timber. Thirty-five per cent of Australia's locally produced house framing and interior sawn wood comes from South Australia, while the state also provides 48 per cent of Australia's packing and industrial grade timber, along with 60 per cent of Australia's agricultural timbers such as poles, posts and fencing products coming directly out of our sustainable forests.

The radiata pine trees that will be harvested this year were planted in 1993. To put that in context, it was the same time as the great Paul Keating was Prime Minister and the first known human-to-human SMS message was sent in Finland, so that is how long ago we are talking. An incredible amount of time and effort goes into each rotation.

I often mention in this place about the forest industry being the ultimate renewable and at a time when governments around Australia and the world are seeking to decarbonise their economies forestry has a key role to play. Each year in our state, our forests sequester 4.64 million tonnes of CO_2 from the atmosphere, which helps to create a cleaner and greener environment. South Australia's forests are foundational to our state, from timber for house frames to particle board for cabinetry and pallets to move our food and other products from the farm gate to supermarket shelves, along with posts and poles supporting other agricultural sectors.

I would challenge members in this place to think of a single day that goes by where they do not use a product that has come directly from our forest industry. From plantation to harvest and haulage to the manufacture of timber products, the industry plays a key role in supporting many regional and rural jobs in our state. It is for this reason that the South Australian government, the Malinauskas government, has a specific portfolio for the Minister for Forest Industries in South Australia, and I am very privileged to hold that portfolio.

Friday evening was a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the critical role the forest industry plays in South Australia. I understand a range of individuals from the forest industry donated products and their time to highlight at the 150th anniversary dinner. It was wonderful to see a contingent from the Mid North, from Bundaleer, coming to the dinner, as well as others from the industry within the Adelaide Hills and, of course, in the Limestone Coast.

I want to thank Tammy Auld, Cam MacDonald, Adrian Flowers and Jessica Douglas for the wall frame that was on display that evening, Simon Angove from Timberlink for the CLT woodwork provided, Ben Edser from AAM for the roundwood and pallets, and Stephen Van Schaik and Emma Daly from Bio Gro.

Finally, I want to thank the South Australian Forest Products Association for hosting this significant event in the calendar of the forest industry. I understand a great deal of time and effort went into hosting it. I congratulate their CEO, Nathan Payne, along with staff members Haley Welch and Shayla Platt, for all of their very valuable efforts. Here is to another 150 years of sustainable plantation forestry in South Australia.

VICTIMS OF CRIME FUND

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:46): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General a question about the Victims of Crime Fund.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Last week, it was reported that an innocent victim who was repeatedly and persistently raped by two men has had to reimburse the state government $100,000 before being compensated for its alleged failure to protect her from harm. Five years ago, the victim received $100,000 from the Victims of Crime Fund for abuse inflicted on her by her stepfather and step-uncle. She subsequently sued the Department for Education, alleging it failed to fulfil its obligations to protect her.

The government is said to have made an offer of $200,000 to this victim to settle her claim, but in so doing required her to sign a deed agreeing to pay back $100,000 that had already been paid to her from the Victims of Crime Fund, on the basis that she has already been compensated for her emotional harm and suffering. My questions to the Attorney are:

1. Does the Attorney acknowledge and accept that the payments in question in this matter are in fact the subject of two separate legal matters, and that the actions that resulted in a payment from the Victims of Crime Fund were not connected in any way to any alleged departmental inaction which was the subject of the second matter?

2. Can the Attorney confirm the deed the victim signed required a repayment to the VOC Fund as part of the second legal action against the Department for Education?

3. Why didn't the Attorney use his discretion to overcome any legal barriers to being compensated for the same injury, loss or grief, albeit as a result of separate actions?

4. Given the public sentiment, does the Attorney believe that these laws need reviewing in terms of having to make that sort of payback of compensation that has already been received from the Victims of Crime Fund when there is a subsequent unrelated claim?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:49): I thank the honourable member for her question and for her passionate advocacy for victims of crime in South Australia. There have been quite a number of pieces of legislation and policy issues that the honourable member and the government have worked on very closely together that recognise the suffering that particularly victims of sexual abuse face.

I will not go into individual circumstances: individual deeds or legal action is not something that I tend to go into, and nor have any of my predecessors. It is a general principle that where it arises from that one criminal offence the Victims of Crime Fund is a scheme of last resort. In fact, I know that the current iteration, the Victims of Crime Act that was introduced in 2001, the then Attorney-General, the widely respected Trevor Griffin, made clear that the Victims of Crime Fund

was such a scheme of last resort. I think the quote from the second reading speech was, 'Finally, as under present law, criminal injuries compensation is intended be the last resort.' Later the then Attorney-General said:

> Because the fund is intended to be a last resort, the law seeks to discourage claims being made where, because other compensation has been paid or is available, the claim will result in no benefit to the victim, because there will be no net payment from the fund.

I am advised that it does occur that in some circumstances where a payment has been made from the Victims of Crime Fund and then arising from that same behaviour there is a civil action that can be and is taken against the government. I want to be clear, though, in the circumstances where that civil action is taken against the government, my advice is there are no circumstances where that victim of crime is asked to actually hand back the money that has already been paid.

Certainly, my advice is it is the case that whenever these sorts of circumstances happen any further amount paid in relation to that set of circumstances takes into account the previous payment from the Victims of Crime Fund, because as I said, as with that excerpt from the Hon. Trevor Griffin from over 20 years ago, it is intended as a scheme of last resort.

I think in many cases where there is a deed of settlement that recognises any funds that have previously been paid—and again I want to make it clear that there is not a request to pay back funds that have already been paid but to take into account that funds have already been paid. My advice is that often in those circumstances that person is legally represented, obviously takes advice about the appropriateness of the settlement deed that is proposed and then signs it on that basis after having had the benefit of that legal advice.

VICTIMS OF CRIME FUND

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:52): Supplementary: the minister does acknowledge though, that regardless of whether it is paid back or deducted from in effect what we are doing is saying that somebody does not have an entitlement to that because they have already had that taken into account.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:52): I thank the honourable member for the supplementary. I think it is a very important distinction, though. I don't want to leave any impression that victims of crime are asked to actually refund money that has already been paid. Any money for further settlement of a civil action is paid on top of the money that has already been paid, but it certainly does, because it is intended as a scheme of last resort, take into account if money has already been paid out of the Victims of Crime Fund.

VICTIMS OF CRIME FUND

The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:52): Final supplementary: given the public sentiment that has now been raised in relation to a number of matters that have fallen within this basket, does the Attorney intend to revisit this issue of a fund of last resort?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:53): I thank the honourable for her question. I am happy to continue to receive legal advice, but, as I have said, the Victims of Crime Fund as it is currently constituted under the Victims of Crime legislation now and in the predecessor scheme had always been and still is intended as a fund of last resort. There are many instances where there is not a course of action of negligence or another civil claim that a victim can make and where tens of millions of dollars each year are paid out to victims of crime and with the right of recovery for the state from those perpetrators.

VICTIMS OF CRIME FUND

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (14:53): Supplementary: Attorney, are you aware of the approximate balance of the Victims of Crime Fund as it presently stands, or maybe at the last measurement period? You may want to take that on notice.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:53): I thank the honourable

member for his question. Approximately, as of 31 May, it was I believe $248 million, the balance in the Victims of Crime Fund. It is a substantial amount in the balance, but I do note that regularly there are significant calls on the Victims of Crime Fund. I do not have the figures on me right now—in fact I do. As part of the 2024-25 Mid-Year Budget Review, for example, there was an announcement of $135 million from the Victims of Crime Fund to be paid towards the National Redress Scheme for Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

I note that in recent years, in terms of the money that comes into that fund from the victims of crime levies that are charged on offenders—certainly I think last year but I am happy to go and check if that is correct—the amount that was paid out was more than was received in from the Victims of Crime Levy. I think the interest accrued made it so that the total amount in the fund was bigger than the year before, but there are those significant calls on the fund that happen from time to time.

Although, as I said, $248 million is a significant balance, it needs to be taken into account that there are things like the $135 million in one year on top of the tens of millions that is paid out or that is called on for one-off things like the National Redress Scheme.

REGIONAL TELEVISION

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:55): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question without notice to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development on the topic of regional television.

The Hon. K.J. Maher: What is this, *Landline* or something?

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Wrong network. The ABC reported today, or indeed yesterday, that the WIN network will cease broadcasting Seven Network channels to parts of regional SA from 1 July this year. Residents of Mount Gambier, Loxton and the Riverland will not be able to access free-to-air sports except through streaming services. The Seven Network have indicated that regional communities will still be able to access some service through a level of online streaming. However, digital connectivity is an ongoing issue in some regional areas, as noted in April by the District Council of Loxton Waikerie. I quote from their statement:

> Council is continuing to voice its frustration over the ongoing issue of poor digital connectivity and black spots across the district, highlighting how this issue is affecting local communities.

My question to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development therefore is: is the minister concerned about the lack of access to free-to-air sports for people living in regional communities, and what action is she taking to protect these free-to-air services?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:57): I thank the honourable member for his question. I did hear media reports, I think it was yesterday or maybe a couple of days ago, in regard to this matter. I was also listening to 5GTR FM, a local radio station in Mount Gambier, where they were discussing it.

As I think the announcer said, 'It's a bit rich when you can't even watch a game of footy on TV'—free-to-air TV obviously being the relevant point. I have heard WIN speak in very measured terms about this matter, indicating that they respect—I think they said words to the effect of—their negotiations with the Seven Network, which perhaps suggests that there are ongoing discussions happening around this, and obviously it is a private commercial matter.

I am not aware of any opportunity for government to have a role in that, but I will certainly speak to my colleagues in the other place if there is any opportunity to do so, but I am not currently aware of such a measure.

ADELAIDE REMAND CENTRE

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (14:58): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking questions of the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services regarding prison policies and procedures.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD: Just recently it was reported that only a few weeks ago a young female guard had been violently sexually assaulted at the Adelaide Remand Centre. The victim alleged that a prisoner used a makeshift knife hidden in his clothing to threaten her if she told anyone, or that he would hurt her family if she pressed the duress alarm during the incident.

The woman claims that, after reporting the incident, I think surprisingly, she was asked to return to work the very next day, despite the fact that she suffered bruising and was obviously traumatised by such a significant and awful event. Despite these circumstances, the Adelaide Remand Centre spokesperson stated publicly:

> We take seriously any reported incident involving an alleged assault on one of our officers...The wellbeing and safety of our staff remain our priority, and the officer involved is currently receiving the care and support they need.

My questions to the minister are:

1. When was the minister made aware of this incident? Did she investigate the victim's claim that she was asked to return to her duties the very next day after being subjected to such a violent sexual assault and, if so, what is her view on that situation?

2. In light of the spokesperson's comment that the wellbeing and safety of the staff remain a priority at the Adelaide Remand Centre, does the minister concede that this should not include requesting victims of assault to return the very next day to work after an attempted rape?

3. Is the minister aware of any other cases of sexual assault against prison staff at either the Remand Centre or elsewhere in the last 12 months?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:59): I thank the member for his question and, rightfully, his concern regarding this issue. As I have mentioned many times in this chamber before, safety is of paramount importance to not only our correctional facilities but the staff members and anyone within those facilities, and hearing stories like this is unacceptable.

I have been advised that following the assaults at the Adelaide Remand Centre, the private operator, Serco, reported the matter to SAPOL. I have further been advised that the staff member in question is receiving appropriate supports from Serco, and I have been advised that, since the incident, the prisoner in question has been charged by SAPOL, who are now investigating. I have been further advised that the staff member has been notified that charges have been laid.

ADELAIDE REMAND CENTRE

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:00): Supplementary: did the minister intervene in order to instruct the Remand Centre that it may not be appropriate for an individual to be required to return to work the next day after such a traumatic event?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:01): As I said before, this is now being investigated. It is a private organisation. I have had discussions, but this needs to be investigated and looked into fully.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:01): My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services. Will the minister inform the council about the Enfield SES and Prospect SES units' 60th anniversaries?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:01): Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the celebrations for two SES units that were both celebrating their 60th anniversaries, Enfield and Prospect. Enfield unit is a busy metropolitan unit with 45 members. In the last 12 months, I am told, Enfield received 293 requests for assistance, with trees down, severe weather, flood damage, general rescue, and building impacts accounting for the highest number of callouts.

Enfield SES has strong ties to the local community, providing a presence that is valued by the community throughout the year, including the Bay to Birdwood, Port Adelaide Christmas Pageant,

the Adelaide 500, WOMAD, the Royal Adelaide Show and many more other community events. SES community engagement volunteers play an important part in educating their local community members and conduct presentations at Neighbourhood Watch events and various community safety forums.

The Prospect SES unit started as a civil defence unit back in 1965 during the Cold War when it was thought that one of the greatest risks to Australia, and indeed South Australia, was nuclear war. The first Prospect civil defence unit was headquartered in the basement of the Prospect Town Hall in 1965, with rescue equipment stored under the grandstand at Prospect Oval.

Over the years, the unit has had a few other homes, including the Prospect council work depot and a factory in Regency Park, and a temporary move to its current location, Dudley Park, while members eagerly awaited the completion of the brand new premises at Angle Park. Since those very early times, Prospect SES unit has grown to one of the largest and busiest units in the state. It currently has 74 active members and has responded to an average of 316 requests for assistance per year over the last three years.

This increased capacity is largely due to the outstanding commitment of volunteer members, with a very special mention of Ross or Roscoe Johnston who joined the service some 50 years ago, and Bryan Kirchner, who has also been there for over 40 years of service. Roscoe has seen the Prospect unit evolve with his own eyes. He was around when the unit went through its ice cream van era in the 1960s, where he spent hours with fellow volunteers working on a donated van to ensure it was fit for purpose. But as Roscoe recalls, he was not there when SES volunteers wore white uniforms.

There are many different reasons why people get involved in the SES, whether it is because their own homes have been flooded and they want to pay it forward by providing others the support they so generously received, or whether it is people like Amber from the Enfield SES unit, who is a young person who just recently joined the SES because she wanted to challenge herself through learning practical skills. All these volunteers can feel proud to be part of the orange uniform family. It is because of the dedication of people like Bryan, Roscoe and Amber, and their commitment to serving the community, that South Australians are able to rely on the SES to come to their aid in times of crisis.

As I have spoken about before, the SES has led the emergency response for floods in our state's Far North, but not just in South Australia. SES volunteers regularly step up and help other communities in need. We recently saw the largest single South Australian storm and flood deployment in more than a decade travel to Queensland to assist in the ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred response.

For volunteers spending time away from their families and friends, pausing their day-to-day jobs and putting the safety of others ahead of their own, we are truly grateful for your service. To all the current volunteers, and everyone who has been a member of the Enfield and Prospect units over their 60 years of existence, I extend a sincere thanks on behalf of the South Australian community and government.

TRAFFIC INFRINGEMENT NOTICES

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:05): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Police in the other place, a question about traffic infringement notices issued by police.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I have been contacted by a very distressed constituent, Mr Allan Kelson, who was shocked to receive a $500 fine from police after being involved in an alleged hit-and-run incident in the city on 7 February involving a senior police officer, Detective Brevet Sergeant Darrell Mundy, who at the time was deputy president of the Police Association and campaigning, with elections taking place a few days later.

It's alleged the large utility with distinctive numberplates driven by Mr Mundy collided with the rear of Mr Kelson's stationary car in the right-hand lane of Morphett Street near Whitmore Square,

and that Mr Mundy failed to stop and provide details to Mr Kelson and/or report the matter to police. Mr Kelson reported the incident to Netley police the same day. He showed photographs of the damage and supporting dash cam footage with audio. The police officer allegedly told Mr Kelson he did nothing wrong. The footage—which I have seen—doesn't lie. An enraged Mr Mundy pulls up in the left lane alongside Mr Kelson's still stationary car, loudly abusing a stunned Mr Kelson and his wife, Heather Smith, before driving off.

The Netley police officer who searched the numberplate immediately would have known the identity of the owner, but it would be another four weeks before police looked at the matter, telling Mr Kelson the other driver was known to police and his aggressive behaviour was out of character. It would take several more weeks before Mr Kelson learned the actual identity of the driver. On 7 March, a Sergeant David Williams from Netley called a flabbergasted Mr Kelson, allegedly telling him he had viewed the footage, knew the road laws, had come to the conclusion that both he and Mr Mundy were at fault and, astonishingly, proceeded to inform Mr Kelson he would be issued with a fine for breaching section 148s of the Australian Road Rules for failing to give way.

After I viewed the footage several times, read this section of the Road Rules and sought an opinion from an experienced road traffic lawyer, not only does Mr Kelson have a rock-solid defence, but Sergeant Williams appears to have made an error of judgement. I am uneasy with how this has been handled by SAPOL, particularly as the tables are now turned on the victim of an alleged crime. Mr Kelson has refused to pay the fine. My questions to the police minister are:

1. Can he now write as a matter of urgency to the Commissioner of Police and request that a full independent review of this matter is conducted to rule out any suggestion of police bias and whether or not there was any connection to the controversial Police Association elections?

2. Has Detective Sergeant Mundy been issued with a similar 'fail to give way' fine?

3. Has Detective Sergeant Mundy taken stress leave related to this incident?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:09): I thank the honourable member for his questions, and I will pass them on to the minister concerned in another place and seek to bring back a reply.

MOUNT GAMBIER AND DISTRICT SALEYARDS

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (15:09): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development regarding the Mount Gambier saleyards:

1. During the Premier's and the minister's recent trip to Mount Gambier, did the Premier and the minister meet with the District Council of Grant to discuss, among other things, the Mount Gambier saleyards upgrade project?

2. Given that this project has been overlooked for funding by the federal government, is the state government willing to consider funding the $7.2 million shortfall to ensure this vital upgrade for the South-East can proceed?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:10): I thank the honourable member for his question. The issue of the upgrade of the Mount Gambier saleyards of course has been ongoing for a little while now. Prior to the 2022 election, the then Labor opposition made a commitment to provide some state government funding if we were fortunate enough to be elected at the following state election, in order to help Grant district council to progress this important initiative.

It was of course in tandem with their request for federal funding. I understand they have made several applications to federal grant programs. The first was under the former federal Liberal government and it did not progress under that government. I understand there have been two rounds since from the current federal government and, although they have had positive feedback on the project, they have not yet been successful in gaining federal funds. I recall that following the then Labor opposition's commitment to provide funds, the then Marshall Liberal government matched that commitment.

I have met with the Grant district council on quite a number of occasions about this matter. At the most recent meeting they said that they were intending to have further internal discussions about how they may be able to rescope that project and would come back to me when that had occurred. As yet, they have not done so.

RECONCILIATION WEEK

The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:11): My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Can the minister tell the council about Westport Primary School's Fringedigenous event?

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:12): I thank the honourable member for his question on Westport Primary School's Fringedigenous event, and his interest in Aboriginal affairs as a long-time Chair of the former Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee.

On Friday 6 June, I had the privilege of attending the Fringedigenous event at Westport Primary School, a vibrant community celebration to mark the end of Reconciliation Week. Now into its third iteration, having started in 2021, Fringedigenous has grown into a major community event, estimated to have drawn some 2,000 attendees and showcasing the power of community, culture and creative arts.

Although the event coincided with a very heavy forecast of rain, the atmosphere was certainly one of warmth and pride. The significance of this event is demonstrated through the attendance of, as I said, a crowd of some 2,000 people, including Her Excellency the Hon. Frances Adamson AC; the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Susan Close, the member for Port Adelaide; and the education minister, the Hon. Blair Boyer, the member for Wright.

The event kicked off with a welcome to country by Uncle Moogy Sumner, and was expertly MC'd by South Australia's internationally acclaimed Aboriginal comedian, Kevin Kropinyeri, whose energy and humour set the tone for an evening filled with stand-out performances from preschoolers and students right up until year 6. Headline acts in addition to the students were Ngarrindjeri/Gunditjmara woman Katie Aspel and Arabana man Nathan May. However, the Westport students featured as the stars of the evening's program, with classes performing with confidence and pride, highlighting the school's commitment to cultural learning and engagement.

The sense of community was evident throughout with families, staff, students, elders and visitors joining together to enjoy all the performances that the students had worked so hard to present. Local indigenous businesses and artists filled the grounds with market stalls and food, creating a festival-like atmosphere. Westport Primary School has positioned this event as part of its broader commitment to cultural engagement.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is integrated into the school community through regular programming, including the Nunga Club, which I am advised is one of the school's most popular clubs, attended by many students. The Fringedigenous event aligns with Westport's stated focus on inclusion, student wellbeing and academic participation. It also provides an opportunity to bring together education, local culture and community involvement. I acknowledge Westport Primary School for organising such a fantastic event, and congratulate them on another successful Fringedigenous evening and look forward to attending in the future.

SEAGRASS TRIALS

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:15): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development on the topic of seagrass trials.

Leave granted.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS: What in previous times was called seagrass is currently often referred to as seaweed. While it is a minor difference, the change clearly demonstrates the value that we as humans attach to this marine plant. This pejorative term of 'weed' for a plant growing where it is unwanted is dismissive of the reality of how important it is. Happily though, more recently we seem to be evolving in our understanding of the invaluable role played by seagrasses, and we

better appreciate the benefits they bring to our coastal ecosystems and to human life along the coast and beyond.

Not only do they oxygenate water, reduce acidification and provide both habitat and food for numerous marine species, they also stabilise sand, minimise or even prevent coastal erosion and can provide better results than emissions-intensive hard infrastructure or sand carting as responses to sand drift. While terrestrial forests bind carbon for decades and their survival is often at the whim of bushfires, seagrass meadows can bind carbon for millennia.

Trials such as those that the South Australian government is currently undertaking through SARDI and the University of Adelaide show just how important this is. The trial, which began in winter 2022, saw approximately 100,000 naturally biodegradable hessian sandbags planted out, with the plan being to allow wire weed seagrass seedlings to naturally attach to them. Can the minister please provide the council with an update on the seagrass trials that are being undertaken by SARDI and the University of Adelaide off the South Australian coast at Port Gawler?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:17): I thank the honourable member for her question. I am particularly appreciative of it because it recognises some of the important work that is being done at the South Australian Research and Development Institute, usually in partnership with other bodies which are equally committed to improving our environment, improving our knowledge about the benefits of such things as seagrasses, as well as the other variety of research that occurs. I am happy to take the specifics of the question on notice and bring back a response.

SASI HOCKEY PROGRAM

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (15:17): I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing questions to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing regarding SASI's hockey program.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK: It was reported in the media on the weekend that SASI's hockey program has been 'restructured amidst allegations of harassment and concerns about the culture within the organisation'. An anonymous source detailed allegations of bullying among SASI hockey players, as well as the mismanagement of the players by its leadership. The source also claimed players were not reprimanded when they were being disrespectful and that athletes were attending or leaving training in tears, with one player's car having an insulting slur written across it.

The source also alleged the needs of players were not properly accommodated, with one player apparently leaving as they almost needed surgery on their hip due to being pressured to play with stress fractures. According to SASI documents, the program did have up to five coaches in 2023, but is now managed by one part-time coach, with elite players being forced to train individually rather than in a team environment. The Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing confirmed in September last year that it was investigating a complaint. It is understood the department completed its investigation and determined that none of the allegations could be substantiated, and therefore no further action was taken. So my questions to the minister are:

1. Will the minister provide details about her department's methods and the findings of its investigation into the allegations of bullying and mismanagement within SASI's hockey program? If not, why not?

2. Can the minister categorically confirm that the restructure of SASI's hockey program had nothing to do with any of the complaints made against its leadership? If so, what then was the catalyst for this change?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:19): I thank the honourable member for her question. I am advised that the South Australian Sports Institute (SASI) has supported over 1,400 hockey athletes through sports scholarships since 1982.

I am advised that all sports programs at SASI are reviewed at the end of each Olympic-Paralympic cycle. I understand that SASI and Hockey Australia met with athletes and parents on 15 April 2025 to outline their respective commitments for the LA 2028 Olympics cycle. I

am also advised that there is a finalised agreement between SASI and Hockey Australia, with clear roles within the high-performance pathway to ensure that talented South Australian hockey players receive the support they require. I am further advised that SASI also provides these hockey athletes with access to other services, including health care, sports science and world-class strength and conditioning gym and recovery facilities.

As you have highlighted in your question, there were media reports recently. The department has confirmed through those reports, and I can confirm in this chamber, that an investigation into the claims has been completed and has implemented additional training sessions for staff and players. As has already been reported in the media, the department found that the allegations could not be substantiated and therefore no further action has been taken.

SASI HOCKEY PROGRAM

The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:21): Supplementary: will additional training sessions for staff be sufficient to address the issues that were raised in the report?

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:21): I appreciate the member raising the concerns that were in those reports; they are concerning reports that have been made. I think that SASI and Hockey SA have worked together to try to find an appropriate path forward here. The training sessions that will be put in place for the staff and players will be able to be provided to make sure that those issues can be addressed. We know that this needs to be a safe environment for everyone involved.

AG TOWN OF THE YEAR

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (15:22): My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister speak to the chamber about her recent visit to Penola, which was announced as the Agricultural Town of the Year 2024, for its celebration event?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:22): I thank the honourable member for his question and for the strong interest that I am receiving from the rest of my colleagues here. I know that we share a commitment to regional areas, and I am delighted to see the Ag Town of the Year events continue.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: The government benches—please!

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I was very proud to join the Penola Ag Town of the Year celebration two weeks ago. There was a really good turnout, and it was clear that the chilly weather and rain didn't deter people from attending the celebrations. Being from the South-East myself, I am sure that Penola residents are very used to those chilly temperatures, and the event organisers were well prepared, too, with a number of fire pits around for attendees to warm up at.

The Ag Town of the Year celebration coincided with Penola's inaugural winter cattle show event, which was held on Sunday 8 June. I am advised that this event was a fantastic success and provided an opportunity to get more young people involved in agriculture. One of the interesting events on show at the celebrations was the hobby horsing competition. This is the first time, I must admit, that I have heard of hobby horsing, but it was quite entertaining to watch and apparently there is a whole movement of hobby horsing around the country and around the globe.

The competition was run in various age groups, all the way up to age 18. It involved the children simulating equestrian activities while using a hobby horse—that being a stick with a horse's head. The judges considered various factors in their assessment, including costume, the design of the hobby horse, where the children had actually made their own, and the skill in completing the routine, which included showjumping and dressage. I was asked to participate in the competition, but I did decline on this occasion. I did find that very suddenly I had a back injury that would prevent me from participating in the hobby horsing!

However, it was very, very popular and I think it really did speak to the vibe, the feeling of people there, at the celebration.

The government of South Australia, through my department, the Department of Primary Industries and Regions, is proud to present the Agricultural Town of the Year program, in partnership with Solstice Media and InDaily. The program celebrates towns that excel in agricultural practices and are great places to live and work. It recognises the enterprising nature of regional communities, such as Penola, that evolve and innovate to create an environment and culture where agriculture can thrive.

I want to share some of the feedback from the ag town judges about Penola and why they chose the town to win the award in 2024. They commented on the sheer variety of agricultural pursuits undertaken in Penola, including dairy, beef, lamb, grains, potatoes, forestry, wine and more. As one of the judges put it, Penola offers ag upon ag upon ag. They were also very impressed by Penola's commitment to agricultural education, from the local ag teacher, Corey O'Connor, who also was a Rural Ambassador of the Year state finalist last year—and I was pleased to talk to him at that event—and has inspired an impressive uptake of the school agricultural program, to George the Farmer, who is sharing Australian agriculture with the world.

The judges commended the creative and strategic collaboration between community, council and local business groups to propel the town forward. The judges praised the genuine community spirit and joyful pride displayed by Penola's residents, which was highlighted to the judges through an extensive agriculture showcase. Lastly, Penola demonstrated a deep understanding of local conditions and how to leverage them, such as pivoting from hemp seed production to hemp fibre production.

I was pleased to be joined at the cutting of the ribbon for the sign for the Ag Town of the Year by Mayor Des Noll, Mayor of Wattle Range Council; Kelly-Anne Saffin, the Cross Border Commissioner; and indeed the Hon. Ben Hood from this place.

I must admit that Penola does hold a special place in my heart, as I lived in the town as a child. On my way to the ag town celebrations, I was able to stop at my old house, which is now called Naomi's Villa, on Riddoch Street. A plaque out the front shows that it was built around 1904—I know I am old, but I was not one of the first residents—by local stonemason William Blight.

The home has a long history of ownership by various members of the Penola community over the last 100 years, becoming a bed and breakfast in 1992 and reverting to a private residence in 2002. The house is named after Naomi Temple, the daughter of a previous owner Francis Redfern Temple, who conducted Penola's first hairdressing business in the front room of the house in the 1950s and 1960s. It was very pleasant to be able to have that little detour and to see that house.

I think the Ag Town of the Year celebrations were particularly important this year, given how many people are directly affected by the devastating drought at the moment. I commend Penola on its efforts in supporting and promoting agriculture and I look forward to hearing about how the town continues to evolve and respond to opportunities and challenges so that agricultural activities continue to thrive. Congratulations again to Penola for being named South Australia's Agricultural Town of the Year for 2024.

Parliamentary Committees

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:28): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable me to move a motion without notice concerning the appointment of a member to the Social Development Committee.

Motion carried.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER: I move:

That pursuant to section 21(3) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991 the Hon. R.P. Wortley be appointed to the Social Development Committee in place of the Hon. M. El Dannawi (resigned).

Motion carried.

Matters of Interest

GLOBAL LIVEABILITY INDEX

The Hon. C. BONAROS (15:29): Adelaide has officially cracked the top 10 most liveable cities in the world, this time claiming ninth place on the Economist Intelligent Unit's 2025 Global Liveability Index. We have seen a dramatic climb from 30th place in 2022 to 11th last year and now ninth. According to the EIU, Adelaide scored an impressive 95.9 per cent overall, with only slightly lower marks in the category of culture and environment compared to Melbourne and Sydney.

I think all of us who live in the Greater Adelaide area can agree that we are very lucky. We are very fortunate to call our beautiful city home. While I do not want to be the one to crash the government's celebration—because yes, it is a good headline and yes, we do love this city—that liveability might mean very different things, depending on who you ask.

In fact, it means different things for many people in South Australia, because while Adelaide might look fantastic in articles by prestigious news organisations listing the world's most liveable cities, we know it is a very different story on the ground. The continued appearance of Adelaide on influential lists such as the EIU Global Liveability Index and the applause such a feature generates point to a paradox in terms of how we assess the health of our state.

Try telling our ranking to the mum who has advised that she is living in a tent because her disabled child could not get priority for public housing; or to the thousands waiting for access to public health care; or to the young people and families who are working but have been priced out of rentals, home ownership and basic living expenses.

A city is not truly liveable if your postcode determines your access to a GP. It is not liveable if your rent—if you can afford to rent—absorbs more than half your income, and it is certainly not liveable if people are left behind by systems that should protect them. Liveability should mean the freedom to thrive, not just for the fortunate but for everyone. Whilst our leaders in parliament toast their champagne flutes for cracking the top 10, there exists an abundance of crises that just do not touch their lives; they touch the lives of Adelaide's most vulnerable.

Data from SA Health's July 2024 drug statistics in Adelaide, monitored by a wastewater analysis project commissioned by Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA) reveals some trends seemingly contrary to the paradise narrative that we have heard about: the highest average nicotine use since 2017, highest methamphetamine level use since 2017, MDMA highest since 2020, cocaine highest since the report began, cannabis highest since the report began, ketamine a sharp increase in use, and an increase in the use of fentanyl.

This whilst crime at the heart of the city continues unabated. How liveable is a city if you cannot walk down the mall without seeing crime? I have put together what I call 'A tale of Alice's stories'. She works in the mall. She has worked there for years, and every day when she gets home she rings me and tells me what happened in the mall today. It is an ugly picture that confronts workers who are in Rundle Mall each and every day, and this idea that this is only happening out in our lower socio-economic areas—far north and far south and wherever in between—is very misplaced.

Last week, I visited a number of households in the Port Adelaide area, where people are living desperately below the poverty line. It was a sad day to see the sorts of issues that people are dealing with on a daily basis. It is a confronting one that we do not take into account when we look at things like a liveability index.

Cost-of-living expenses as well as rental and housing rates have skyrocketed, we know. Economic pressures are hitting everybody. Try asking someone who is sleeping rough on the streets of Adelaide what their thoughts of our city placement on that index is, and I think it is very different from the one we hear celebrated in here so often. It is a liveability I think being assessed here that is very loose in terms of its use of the word 'liveable'.

I could go on and on and list the factors impacting liveability in this state, but I will end by saying that we need to get real about people who are doing it really tough in South Australia. This is a great headline, but that is all it is: a headline.

HOUSING AVAILABILITY

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (15:35): I am speaking today about the trickiness of this government and particularly the Minister for Housing in relation to transparency in housing and the need for supporting infrastructure in South Australia, including various government announcements and the like. You have to be living under a media rock not to have seen the evidence that came out of Budget and Finance last week in relation to the historic land release sites of Onkaparinga Heights, Sellicks, Dry Creek and Concordia in relation to the fact that only one of those has trunk mains available.

I have spoken many times about the poor practice of the Malinauskas government in rushing around to make announcements and discovering these sites—for example, doing an announcement on 12 February 2023 without having checked whether the supporting infrastructure was available. But it came as a surprise to everyone, including the media, because I think it ran on most of the TV stations, and certainly there was huge interest from *The Advertiser* and both the ABC and commercial radio stations about this fact, which had been effectively buried in the Housing Roadmap.

When the Minister for Housing did the presser in 2023, he talked about how the housing was expected to begin within two years, with foundations to be laid within one year. Construction on the first 100 was expected to begin the following year. That clearly has not happened, and that is the only site where trunk mains are available. But with the other four sites it was in effect buried on pages 61 and 62 of the Housing Roadmap where it talks about the code amendment process, land division application, other approvals and things, and, in code understood only to those who work in the sector, 'Water and wastewater infrastructure supply has been agreed between government and industry.'

That does not refer to any trunk mains that anyone is aware of, and the fact that there was so much interest in this issue I think speaks volumes. We have asked the minister about this in question time and received the typical patronising responses about, 'Well, didn't you realise that's where it was?' and how we all should have known. Nobody emerged from the Convention Centre 12 months ago to say, 'Oh my goodness, did you know that there are no trunk mains available?' because clearly it was not there. We are also aware that there are a number of developments where tankering has to take place, which is also a huge concern to people because there is a lack of transparency I think in that for the South Australian community.

I would also like to speak about a response that the minister gave about the case of Jakki Abernatt, who has done media—a very brave lady to speak about her situation. She is in the private rental sector. She has been seeking that the housing rules for affordable housing, which is 75 per cent of market rent, be relaxed in this current housing crisis, where someone who is a single person in the private sector can be paying north of $400 a week, and an affordable property would be well within her reach.

The minister has talked about how the 30 per cent rule, which yes, admittedly, we applied—it was a very different housing market then—is to make sure that housing is designed to go to families, which is just such a bizarre response because that is not the housing which Jakki is seeking to enter. It has nothing to do with it. She said that she is looking for a one-bedroom apartment, not a two or three-bedroom place. She says:

> If…the rule is purely designed to enable families affordable rentals, then [the minister] should have his department do their due diligence in ensuring that the 30% mandate is not applied to accommodation designed for single occupants.
>
> Plus, I doubt he'd find a family anywhere…where both parents/carers aren't working (often holding down multiple jobs between them), and hence most likely still earning more than someone single-handedly managing rent on a low income.

I understand that she has an appointment with him. We wish her the best of luck and I hope he changes his mind.

OPERATION BABYLIFT

The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:40): I rise to speak about the evacuation of thousands of Vietnamese children during the fall of Saigon in April 1975. The evacuation plan was called Operation Babylift, involving thousands of orphaned infants being flown out of Vietnam to adoptive parents

overseas, including 250 children and babies destined for Australia. On 3 April 1975, when the fall of Saigon was imminent, three South Australian women, Rosemary Taylor, Margaret Moses and Gyoparka Makk, also known as Lee Makk, were there ready to help evacuate children to safety.

The women had all attended St Aloysius College in Adelaide and were united by a strong sense of social justice that led them to care for abandoned children in Vietnam. Rosemary attended St Aloysius College from 1951 to 1955, then joined the Sisters of Mercy, a religious order for Catholic women. In 1967, she left the Sisters of Mercy for humanitarian work in Vietnam. Margaret, her close friend, graduated from the same college in 1956 and also joined the Sisters of Mercy. She then became a teacher before leaving in 1971 for Vietnam to support Rosemary's work with orphans.

Another former St Aloysius student, Lee or Gyoparka Makk, as I mentioned, who was born in Hungary, worked as a mental health nurse at Hillcrest Hospital in Adelaide. Lee took leave from work to volunteer with Rosemary and Margaret shortly before Saigon fell. On 4 April 1975, Margaret and Lee had originally been rostered to escort children bound for Australia, but when an American flight was short of adult escorts they stepped in to help on the American-bound flight.

Twelve minutes after take-off, the plane suffered a rear cargo door failure and crashed, killing 138 of the 314 on board, including 78 children, as well as Margaret and Lee. Not long before Lee died, she had sent an audio cassette to her family in Adelaide speaking of her admiration for the local girls she worked with, praising their diligence and love for the orphans.

A former student of Margaret's, Mary Cashmore, has written a biography about her former teacher, describing Margaret as witty, kind and clever. Mary said that Margaret lived her tragically short life with integrity, passion and courage. The week that Margaret and Lee died, the remaining St Aloysius College student, Rosemary Taylor, continued to help evacuate children with help from Sister Doreen Beckett and Ilse Ewald, a German nurse.

The women evacuated nearly 1,500 children to Canada, France, West Germany, the US and Australia before escaping themselves by scaling the embassy wall and boarding a rooftop helicopter to a refugee ship. Rosemary spent many years in Saigon establishing nurseries and the adoption agency Friends For All Children. In 1976, she was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for her dedication and work.

As recently shown on ABC's *Australian Story*, Operation Babylift began a lifelong cross-cultural journey for hundreds of infants who are now turning 50. Many Babylift adoptees raised in Western families are using DNA tests and support networks to reconnect with their roots and explore questions of identity and loss.

St Aloysius College held a memorial marking 50 years since the fall of Saigon, honouring Operation Babylift and the heroism of their former students who saved thousands of children. Margaret's sister, Miriam Morrison, and Sister Ruth Edgar, who also worked in orphanages, attended the memorial. I thank all these remarkable women for their dedication, especially the St Aloysius College students who made the ultimate sacrifice.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER TRADING HOURS

The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:45): As members would no doubt be aware, yesterday the opposition made an important policy announcement and that is that the Tarzia Liberal government will make it easier for South Australians to see their general practitioners by supporting GPs to stay open for longer hours. Our GP after hours increased access trial would support GP clinics to extend their opening hours during the week and also to open on Sundays.

Specifically, this two-year trial, worth some $24 million, would provide more South Australians with the opportunity to access routine and preventative GP care outside of traditional business hours, including till 8pm Monday to Friday, and from 9am to 1pm on Sundays. Under the proposal, up to 80 GP practices could apply to receive a grant of up to $150,000 per practice per annum to meet additional costs of operating after hours, such as wages, on-call allowances, facility costs, energy costs, etc.

By extending the time a GP can open, it will allow for more appointments and give families flexibility to manage their health and medical needs at a time that suits them. This, of course, will

greatly reduce the day-to-day pressures on families and allow them the opportunity for, typically, their children, or of course themselves, their loved ones, to be seen in a timely manner and at a time more suited to them.

By extending the time a GP can open, it will allow for more appointments and give families flexibility to manage their health and medical needs, as I have outlined. As it stands, scheduling a routine GP appointment around work, school and other social activities that is also within a clinic's opening hours can be challenging, as no doubt all of us have experienced, and indeed our constituents experience, and it can hinder preventative health checks due to the inconvenience that it may cause.

This is of course something that we want to discourage and enabling these clinics to be open more hours would enable more such checks to be made. Having the ability to see a local doctor for reasons such as vaccines and just regular health checks in general will have the potential to keep South Australians healthier in the long term and ultimately prevent additional strain on our already overstretched health system. This is a positive initiative and one which I am sure South Australians will receive very well.

Indeed, this plan is not just about providing flexibility for families but also keeping people out of our emergency departments, if it can be possibly avoided. Our local GPs are an essential workforce and essential service in keeping our communities healthy, happy and ideally out of hospitals, which of course not only is more convenient and a more desirable outcome but has significant savings to the taxpayer as well.

The Liberals are committed to removing any barriers that could deter people from accessing primary health care, which is why we have announced this policy alongside our longstanding promise now to eradicate the state Labor government's GP payroll tax. We will abolish that if elected. The Liberals believe we need to develop and implement policies in line with what professionals in our health sector are advocating, and we are determined to do so in the lead-up to the next state election and beyond.

This is a positive initiative, which I think will generally be well received by families right across the board, by people who have to visit GPs frequently, and also of course by the GPs and the health profession itself.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:48): It is no good having wealth if we do not have a world in which to spend it. That is a common argument made in a variety of ways by those who know we need to do something about climate change and support renewable energy. But for many, it is just a throwaway line that is easily forgotten as the burdens of day-to-day life take over. The trick is to preserve the environment while ensuring that our day-to-day needs are also met. Only it is not a trick, as South Australian Labor has been proving for well over a decade. It is just a matter of creating achievable goals in generating renewable energy.

South Australia is the leading mainland state in Australia for renewable energy, second only overall to Tasmania. More than three-quarters of our energy is acquired from renewable sources. That virtually doubles the percentage achieved by either Victoria or New South Wales. That number is set to increase to 85 per cent in the next 12 months.

Not prepared to be content with their already impressive energy achievements, the Malinauskas government is determined to power the state with 100 per cent renewable energy by 2027, and we are on track to do that. We are also already the leading state, overall, in installed wind and solar capacity. Our unparalleled renewable energy record started under the Rann Labor government when the Premier of the day became the nation's first ever climate change minister, and we have achieved these outcomes in just over 20 years. The International Energy Agency has described South Australia's move towards renewable energy—which is 8 per cent ahead of recognised international leader, Denmark—as remarkable.

With respect to the opposition, their bipartisan support of renewable energy has created a secure and stable climate for change. This government has also brought forward the former Liberal government's 100 per cent renewable target. But unlike other former conservative governments

around Australia, and the current federal opposition, at least they set one. They set a date for 2030, we brought it forward three years and, with a great deal more confidence, that will be achieved. In both cases, South Australia is a long way ahead of our eastern neighbours.

At our current rate of moving over to renewable energy, we are already on track to meet our new target. Since Labor came into office, just over three years ago, we have introduced a raft of initiatives to accelerate our move to renewable energy. We have promoted the use and storage of wind power, solar PV, solar thermal batteries and thermal storage. We have put additional focus on low-carbon technologies, and we have promoted zero-emission vehicles by investing in charging and refuelling infrastructure. It will allow excess renewable energy generated from large-scale wind and solar farms to be stored and utilised to provide consistency to supply output.

South Australia will become a net exporter of energy to the Eastern States, which will be an economic windfall for the state. The target of 100 per cent renewable energy cannot be achieved by one action or one energy source. This is a comprehensive commitment that involves the multifaceted approach to our current and future energy supply. South Australia can be proud of what it has achieved in the face of ill-founded criticism after blackouts and cynicism that renewable energy could become so reliable. The proof is in the output already being achieved.

In years to come, thanks to forward thinking—when other jurisdictions around Australia and the world buried their heads in the sand—South Australia will have all the energy it needs. We will also have an energised powerful economy and a clear conscience about how we achieved it.

Bills

DROUGHT RESPONSE AND RECOVERY COORDINATOR BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (15:53): I rise to speak on the Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator Bill. I recognise that this legislation is being advanced by the opposition on the basis that they consider it necessary in terms of being a step towards ensuring that South Australia is better prepared for the increasing threat of drought, an issue that is no longer seasonal or cyclical but increasingly chronic, and driven by the exhilarating impacts of climate change.

The bill establishes a drought response and recovery coordinator, a role that will be critical in ensuring that drought conditions are recognised early, that responses are swift and effective, and that recovery efforts are coordinated across government, industry and community. It also provides for the development of a drought response and recovery plan and the establishment of a dedicated fund to support those affected.

The Greens support this bill, but we also believe that it should go further. That is why the Greens are moving amendments to ensure the coordinator's work is aligned with South Australia's climate change targets under the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act. Our amendments will embed climate change as a core consideration in drought response and recovery planning because the science is clear: droughts are becoming more frequent, more severe and more prolonged due to a warming climate.

According to the Climate Council, South Australia has already warmed by nearly 1º over the past century. The last decade was our hottest on record. By 2030, the number of extremely hot days, those above 35º, is projected to rise significantly, increasing the risk of heat-related illness, crop failure and water stress.

Rainfall patterns are also changing. Southern South Australia has experienced a clear decline in rainfall since the 1970s, and the trend is expected to continue. The Murray-Darling Basin, a lifeline for our state's agriculture and communities, is drying. During the Millennium Drought river flows dropped to less than half the long-term average. These are not just anomalies, they are previews of a new normal.

Let's be clear: drought is not just a rural issue, it affects food security, water supply, mental health and economic resilience across the state. It impacts First Nations communities, small

businesses and urban households. It places enormous pressure on our emergency services, our health systems and our environment.

That is why our amendments are so important. They ensure the coordinator's plans and actions are not just reactive but proactive, guided by climate science, aligned with emissions reduction goals and focused on building long-term resilience. We must not treat drought as an isolated emergency; it is a symptom of a broader climate crisis, and our response must reflect that reality.

This bill provides a strong foundation, it establishes a clear framework for declaring drought emergencies, coordinating responses and supporting recovery. It ensures transparency and accountability through reporting requirements and oversight mechanisms, but without a clear mandate to consider climate change we risk missing the mark by treating the symptoms without addressing the causes.

Our amendments would ensure the coordinator's work is future focused, that drought response plans are informed by climate projections and that recovery efforts support not just rebuilding but adaptation. I understand the sector has expressed some concerns regarding some elements of the bill, and I also note the views the government has expressed. I am still inclined to support the bill on the basis that it sends a clear message around the importance of managing drought, but I will, of course, closely monitor the committee stage.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:57): I rise very briefly to support this bill, noting that I might start coughing if I speak for too long. This is a welcome demonstration of leadership from the Hon. Nicola Centofanti. I certainly understand the principle of what she has brought here to be debated as one that is really important to those communities currently doing it pretty damn tough, and the recognition of those circumstances is incredibly important.

I note that it has been described as an outdated policy by the government in terms of a drought declaration and that references have been made to the national agreement, but I note that parts of New South Wales have been declared in drought, and as someone whose family lives in those parts of New South Wales I know that that means quite a lot to them. Regardless of the bureaucracy of who can apply for funding and when and where, that is actually something that is more of a communications issue rather than an issue that should be created by this bill in and of itself.

I also welcome the government's announcement last week of a drought commissioner. I hope Commissioner Zimmerman will have the tools he needs to do a really important job. The fact that we would have had, under this bill, a coordinator goes some way to show that this bill did identify an issue that needed to be addressed, and it is now within the government's hands, hopefully, to listen to this parliament, to listen to the people who are affected by the drought, and to ensure that there are no wrong doors when they ask for help.

That, to me, is the most important thing that we are addressing here today. I note that I have written to the government with regard to the impact on communities under this drought—watching animals starving, seeking assistance and to receive correspondence that refers them to their local GP is not what I would hope to see.

I hope the commissioner will be that 'no wrong door' approach and will identify issues on the ground, regardless of whether or not they are funding streams, and we will see a real effort made to support those who are doing it so tough. I also indicate that I will be supporting the Greens' climate change amendments, unsurprisingly, and look forward to those being debated as well.

I understand from the government that this is not a perfect bill in their estimation, and it is not a bill that they would have brought forward, but it is the first time this council is properly debating this issue in regard to the role of a coordinator, a 'no wrong doors' approach, and with the announcement of the commissioner I would hope that the government will see fit to take this debate and craft it in its own liking. Should they have amendments they wish to make, should it pass this council, certainly I will be open to listening to those as well.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (16:00): I thank members for their contribution. I thank the minister, the Hon. Robert Simms, the Hon. Jing Lee and the Hon.

Tammy Franks. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Hon. Robert Simms and thank him for his ongoing engagement with the Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator Bill 2025. I think his amendments reflect a genuine commitment to long-term sustainability and climate resilience, which is an important policy conversation in its own right.

It is important to note, however, that the Future Drought Fund, which is a billion dollar federal and state fund, is designed predominantly for that purpose. It is designed for preparedness, it is designed for resilience and it is designed for sustainability. The one thing in recent times that has shown it does not account for as well as it should is exceptional circumstances like we are currently facing in South Australia, and that is being able to ensure acute response to support delivery for our farmers and farming communities during this period of time.

I would encourage the government to reassess its position on this bill for the sake of our farmers and farming communities, because if this bill does pass this chamber today, the only thing that is standing between practical support is the government's political will. The minister spoke about assistance being based on need and the importance of farmers not needing to wait for support. The irony is that we are here today debating this bill because our farmers have not been supported. They are still waiting for support and they are on their knees.

The reality is that the National Drought Agreement is not working, but farmers and farming communities do not have time for bureaucracy to review this agreement. They need support now; in fact, they needed support months ago. We are here because we need this government to show the same political will that they rightfully showed with Whyalla. We need them to show the same political will as they did for Whyalla for our primary producers in South Australia.

This legislation acknowledges the reality and responds with structure, coordination and urgency, and it ensures that drought is no longer treated as an administrative afterthought but as a disaster worthy of a clear and coordinated response. With that, I commend the bill to the council.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clause 1.

The CHAIR: Before I ask for contributions to clause 1, I will call the Hon. Ms Bonaros.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Thank you, Chair, and I apologise once again. It has been a big juggling act this week. I rise to indicate my in-principle support for this bill. At the outset, can I thank the mover and the Leader of the Opposition for introducing this bill. I get that this is a difficult issue. Regardless of which side of the benches you are sitting on, it is a difficult issue for government, for the opposition and for the rest of us as well.

It is my belief that the mover's intentions here are not politically motivated and that this bill comes from a very good place. I am trying to think who it was that I just had a conversation with before the lunchbreak, somebody who actually said to me, 'My son lives in the regions and we see Nicola all the time. Good on her for going out and doing the things that she's doing.' That is not to say that others are not doing it, but there were conversations—and I think I have just worked out who it was.

The Hon. T.A. Franks interjecting:

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Yes. I could not remember, but there you go. It was not one of my family members. I do not say that flippantly: we have seen what you are doing. I think that this is genuine care that we all have about the drought and frustration we have at the processes. They are frustrations that, when you hear about them day in and day out, you feel these people are hitting their heads against a wall and not getting much outcome. Of course, we know that the worst outcome of all of that is when people take their lives. That is the sad reality for people who find themselves confronted with these sorts of situations. It is out of sight and out of mind for all of us here in the city who just cannot wrap our heads around the impact that the drought is having on our communities in our regions in particular.

I acknowledge also the points that the minister has made. This is measured. I acknowledge also the points that the minister has made. I think it is fair. I know that there are things that are happening, and the announcement that the minister referred to earlier today, about the most recent appointment, is a good thing. It is not something about which any of us should say that it is not warranted and it is not necessary. It is necessary, but I guess the question is: is it enough? Do we have this ongoing frustration about the way we deal with this at a state and at a federal level? Has there been buck-passing and all the rest of it? All those points are worthy of discussion.

I do not know whether this model can actually achieve what the mover would like, and I take on board the concerns that the minister has raised about its interactions with the National Drought Agreement and potentially leaving things in limbo. The reason I am supporting this is that I think we need to show that we are standing with the mover in terms of saying that something has to give and something has to change. There are people doing it really tough, and that is not okay. If more needs to be done, then tell us what that is. If this structure needs to change, then show us what that looks like. We might not have that intel or that knowledge, but somebody must. If there is a way to make these things live together, side-by-side, with any national agreements, then make that happen.

Since the weekend, I have received a number of calls about this bill—and the Biodiversity Bill—and they have all touched on similar issues in terms of what we could be doing. I have seen the letter from Primary Producers SA and I acknowledge the frustration on both parts. There are lots of ideas about the things that we can be doing or should be doing. Someone called me and said that we should establish a fund where we tuck away supply for times of need—and we were talking about this specifically—so there is something to access. Whether it is a levy that is paid in like other industries or whatever it is, we need to be looking at all of these different options.

The truth is that we do need to be looking at all of these different options and I know that everyone is going to have a different opinion on what the best outcome is. I think the bottom line is that, from where I sit, I agree with the mover and echo the sentiments of other speakers who have spoken in support of this bill that we owe it to those communities who are actually doing it really tough to put this on the agenda, pass this bill today and show that we stand with them, not against them, in terms of trying to find some sort of outcome.

And I say again that I think we can move beyond the political pointscoring. I do not think that that is the issue that has driven this. The mover said that this is about ensuring our farmers and our regions are not left to shoulder the burden alone. They are not asking for a handout—we always hear that. They are asking for fair, timely and practical support to help them weather the storm and to rebuild and that is what we all want to see. If we need to do something else or make changes to make that happen, I am signalling my support for this bill to say let's get on with the job of making that happen.

So, whilst I take on board the concerns that have been raised by government—and they are genuine concerns, I get it, and we have this National Drought Agreement that we cannot ignore that we are part of—we need to look practically at the things we can do. The mover is quite right: it does not solve every challenge. There are going to continue to be challenges, but I think she is also quite right when she says that it sets the foundation for a response that is coordinated, credible and, most importantly, compassionate and I think that is what people expect of us.

It is on that basis that I am indicating my support for this bill, in the hope that it will deliver something that is much needed by our communities who are really feeling the brunt of the drought and I think are feeling really alone. At a time when you are feeling that alone, I guess that is when we are supposed to step up and that is, I hope, what we are doing—stepping up and showing them they are not alone and we are willing to do all we can to address that.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I have some questions for the mover of the bill. Could the mover advise what immediate, tangible assistance would be provided through this bill that is not currently available?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Specifically, I think, it is going to the provision in regard to clause 17, State Drought Response and Recovery Fund, noting in there specifically that that clause refers to payments from a fund considered appropriate for the purposes of drought relief and recovery establishing the granting of concessional loans.

I understand that the minister, when she is repeatedly asked about concessional loans, talks about the current federal government RIC loans. The feedback I hear time and time again from farmers who have looked to access those RIC loans is that the interest rate being 5.18 per cent and variable is not in their eyes an interest rate they are willing to risk stepping into.

I note that in other states, such as in Queensland under their authority, QRIDA, they produce no and low concessional loans, as do NSW through their authority, the RAA. So I think that there is an ability. Certainly, I know that there is a desire from many farmers and farming communities out there for there to be a similar fund, a similar concessional loan program, in South Australia. I think that is absolutely one thing that is missing here and one thing that the government can do.

If they do not require this piece of legislation to do that, then I would say absolutely go and do it, but at the moment, when we are asking for no and low concessional loans, and indeed when the farming community is asking for no and low concessional loans, we are repeatedly hearing from this state government that they need to refer themselves to a federal government loans program.

That is one thing that this bill certainly, I think, would absolutely fast-track, but again, passing this bill actually also needs political will. It takes the government to want to stand up and help our farmers. What I hope comes out of this bill is that there is some recognition that there are things that can be done. No and low concessional loans to provide much-needed cashflow for our farmers, who are doing it incredibly tough, to access food and fodder and water carting and the like, is one of the support services or support packages that could be rolled out through this bill.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: How would this fund be appropriated, and how is it different to the cabinet approval of funding for programs and measures, such as the $73 million that has already been announced?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Mr Chairman, I might just ask you to clarify whether or not we are allowed questions. I have been given some advice as to whether or not this is a money clause. I am happy to answer.

The CHAIR: Questions can certainly be asked about that particular clause. However, it will only be a suggestion that goes to the House of Assembly, and I will be telling the committee when the time comes that this clause, being a money clause, will be printed in erased type in a numbered bill to be transferred to the House of Assembly.

Standing Order 298 provides that no question shall be put in committee upon such clause. That means that we will not be putting the question when it comes to that clause. The message transmitting the bill to the House Assembly is required to indicate that this clause is deemed necessary to the bill. But you can certainly ask questions, and you can certainly answer questions.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Thank you for that guidance, Mr Chairman. It is outlined in the bill that the fund will consist of any moneys received by the state and any money appropriated by the parliament for such purposes. Ultimately, I would have thought that that is up to the government of the day. I am certainly not suggesting that I need to be dictating that, but certainly I would have thought there would be some sensible conversations with the commonwealth.

Also noting, obviously, that we have just been through a budget process. Perhaps some of the funds of the $73-odd million package that the government has announced—we are yet to actually get an answer in this chamber as to how much of the funds in that package have actually hit the ground. If the minister is looking at how funds can be appropriated, one of my suggestions would be perhaps looking into some of those funds that are yet to hit the ground.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I reiterate the question: how is this different to funding being approved by cabinet, as has already occurred?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think this fund potentially can be utilised as a longer term fund so that, something like what we are seeing in Queensland with the QRIDA, their authority, or in NSW with the RAA, there is money kept in this fund for times when a drought is declared and therefore those funds can then be utilised for support for our primary producers.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I appreciate that could be a potential for the future, but given my questions were about what immediate, practical, on-the-ground support this bill will provide, that would appear to imply that there would be none. Is that the member's understanding?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: No, that is not my understanding, and I think I have already answered the minister's question previously.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: The honourable member has said that there would be the existing fund—the $73 million that has already been supplied by the government—and then referred to the future, so it really does seem to suggest that there would be no immediate tangible benefit to people on the ground who are experiencing this drought. My next question to the member is: which peak bodies did you consult with in developing this bill?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: In terms of consultation, obviously the minister is aware of the consultation that I have had with peak industry bodies: PPSA and various other industry bodies such as GPSA, Livestock SA, SA Dairyfarmers' Association and the like. The minister during her second reading contribution outlined some comments from a letter from PPSA, and I too would like to read from that correspondence. In that letter to myself as the mover of this bill, PPSA state:

> For the avoidance of doubt, PPSA appreciates both the policy intent behind the objectives of this Bill, informed by your engagement with individual primary producers, and personal desire to improve access to the support package currently on offer to drought affected farms and regional communities.
>
> We sincerely welcome your ongoing engagement with our sector to improve the current drought response across the South Australian government, noting your commitment to foster a multipartisan approach in responding to the current event.

Can I just state for the record that it is absolutely my desire for this to be a multipartisan approach. In fact, I wrote to both the Premier and the minister herself seeking a multipartisan approach when I tabled this bill. Unfortunately, I have not had a response from either the minister or the Premier, which is incredibly disappointing.

In terms of consultation, aside from those peak industry bodies, I have also liaised with the Local Government Association of South Australia and they have certainly provided me with some very positive feedback. Their position is supportive of this bill and in fact they state that:

> LGA welcomes the introduction of the Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator Bill 2025 as a constructive step toward establishing a mechanism for a timely, effective and coordinated whole-of-government response and recovery to drought…
>
> It is acknowledged that the Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator Bill introduced by the Hon Nicola Centofanti MLC, calls for drought to be declared an emergency in parts of the state, ensuring a timely and effective response.

They go on to say:

> Acknowledging the urgency of the drought, it is critical to ensure that appropriate responses are implemented in a timely and effective manner…As an example, this year freight subsidies were activated too late, after hay and grain had become scarce and unaffordable, despite early warnings from local councils and farmers.

The LGA have also suggested some minor amendments to the bill which, due to the immediate nature of this bill and the fact that our farmers and our farming communities really cannot wait, we are still working through. I note again that, with multipartisan support, it could easily be worked through between the chambers.

I also want to place on the record that the District Council of Mount Remarkable wrote to me just this morning to say that they were absolutely supportive of this bill and that the council unanimously endorsed a motion supporting Dr Centofanti's work around the drought and the proposed bill. That motion went through, obviously, yesterday, 17 June.

I would also like to place on the record that the Coorong District Council declared a drought in their council area at their council meeting this week. In declaring a drought within their specific council area, because of course the state government are not doing it, that has enabled affected residents to defer council rates for 12 months without penalty. That also has enabled authorised roadside grazing and free access to council standpipes for water until the end of September. Their

actions demonstrate, I think, alignment with this bill and they certainly understand the need for a declaration and for some immediate support on the ground.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: First of all, I would like to correct what the honourable member has said, in that our government clearly declared there was a drought when we announced the first drought package back in November, and we have continued to say that there is a drought in the second package. I want to clarify what the honourable member has just said. Is she saying that Grain Producers SA was involved in the development of this bill?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: What I am saying is Grain Producers SA was consulted on this bill.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Was Grain Producers SA consulted on this bill before it was introduced into parliament and, if so, how much before?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think I have answered the question. Grain Producers SA, as were all industry bodies, was consulted on this bill.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: So why will the honourable member not say whether that was before the bill was introduced or within a day or two of the bill being introduced, or were they involved in the development of the bill?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think the minister can appreciate that time is of the essence here.

The Hon. C.M. Scriven: So is that no? Is the answer no?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Again, if the minister can stop interrupting. I think the minister can appreciate that time is of the essence and that all of the peak industries have been consulted on this bill.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Is the honourable member saying that she consulted, prior to the introduction of this bill, with Livestock SA? Was Livestock SA involved in the development of this bill?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I have already answered the question.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Is the honourable member saying that she consulted with the Dairyfarmers' Association in the development of this bill and, if so, when?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I have already answered the question.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I am just going to ask the mover—and the minister can confirm this as well—the policy council from PPSA has just said they have not reached a consensus on this particular bill. Obviously, they have raised a lot of the same concerns that have been addressed today, but they have said that they have not reached a consensus.

However, if I go back to one of the points that was made earlier about the $73 million or $74 million in the fund, is not one of the other points that has been raised and one of the uses that could be used today, if a fund like that existed—we have heard things like, and I mentioned one, for instance, during my speech. There is a fund that you could use to fund things that would help alleviate strain. It might not be a loan and it might not be one of those things, but it could be things like what PPSA has suggested in terms of fodder transport. It could be things like helping with feed and water sources, which are becoming increasingly scarce. It could be other assistance programs that do not necessarily fit neatly in anything now.

So rather than saying we cannot use that, the fund is sitting there and it can be used. It is really about broadening the scope and allowing for those things that potentially do not sit within the current frameworks of what can and cannot happen or that people are putting their hands up and saying, 'Actually, this is something we need,' and indeed the transport support for fodder, livestock and water is something that PPSA has pointed to as something that needs addressing at a state level. That could come from the fund.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: The honourable member is absolutely right: that is what this fund is for and some of those things are actually stipulated within the bill—establishing the freight subsidies, the granting of those no and low concessional loans, and also things like reimbursement

of fees and charges that would otherwise be payable by a person. Those could be fees and charges associated with land use, associated with stock movement or water licensing and indeed any other direct assistance measures that the coordinator would think appropriate.

So the Hon. Ms Bonaros is absolutely correct, and, yes, I do want to again place on the record, in regard to Primary Producers South Australia, they have stated—and I think the minister may have even touched on it in her second reading speech—that they note the sense of urgency. I think they appreciate the sense of urgency in this policy to bring forward the bill to a vote in the Legislative Council today and that regrettably the policy council has not reached consensus.

That is not to say that everyone is against it or everyone is for it; they just have not reached consensus to support the bill in its current form and within the timeframe obviously required, which is bringing it to a vote in this chamber today.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I am noting that we are fast approaching the winter break. We are talking about alleviating financial burdens and so forth, but are the sorts of things that are canvassed in this bill something that the mover is willing to have discussions with the government on over the winter break in the hope that, perhaps when we come back, those issues that we say are in limbo or need to be ironed out or further addressed or we can deal with elsewhere, can indeed happen? If there is somewhere that we can all land on this issue, then is the idea that you debate it now and have that window to actually do the hard yards if you like, something the mover is open to?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: The honourable member is absolutely right: the reason why I have brought this bill to a vote in this chamber today is that I am hoping that there is going to be multipartisan support for this bill. Bringing this bill to a vote in this chamber today allows us, with, again, the multipartisan political will, to be able to get this bill through both chambers before the winter break so that we can sit down and work out what it is that is required, what is it that is going to best deliver for these communities.

In fact, again, I have written to both the Premier and the minister about a multipartisan approach to this bill, but on top of that as well, I have reached out to the minister's office seeking a meeting with the newly appointed drought commissioner because I think it is absolutely critical that we are communicating. If I can be of assistance in any way in terms of delivering real and tangible support for these farmers and these farming communities, that is what needs to happen today. So we are very, very open to working together. As I have said publicly, and I will say today and I will continue to say: this needs to be above politics.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I ask the mover: why did she not consult with peak bodies that are representatives of our livestock industry, our dairy industry, our grains industry and so on? Why did she not consult with them in developing this bill?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the honourable member for her question. She keeps asking the same question. I think even PPSA note in their submission that, actually, this policy is urgent, so I think that they can appreciate that that is why I have not gone and done a whole eight-week consultation process because, quite frankly, our farmers and our farming communities do not have eight weeks. That is where we are at the moment.

I appreciate that this probably is not the ideal way of bringing this bill to this chamber, but what I can say is that those peak bodies have been consulted with. They have stated not that they do not support the bill, but that they have been unable to reach a consensus around their table. Again, I am very open to the government and to industry. In fact, the LGA have provided some suggested amendments. I am very, very happy to work with the government between this house and the next house to draft any amendments that need to be put forward for the government to be able to support this bill, so long as it does not gut what is the intent of this bill.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: To the mover's knowledge, is she confident that those interest groups and peak bodies that she has referred to would be willing to sit at that same table to have those discussions around what this could look like going forward so that it is truly a multipartisan, multirepresentative approach to this issue bearing in mind that there may be differences, but in the hope of landing on some sort of middle ground?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think, ultimately, that is a question for those peak bodies but, given the relationship that I have with those peak bodies and given the letter that is before us from Primary Producers SA, what I know is that that these peak bodies are doing everything they can in terms of advocacy for their communities—for their farming communities and for their farmers—and I have no doubt that they will continue to do that into the future.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Given that the honourable member has referred to her relationship with the peak bodies, why would it have taken eight weeks to consult? Surely, when you are putting together drafting instructions, discussing with parliamentary counsel, it would make sense to consult on the development of a bill through a few phone calls or a meeting, through the peak bodies who represent so many of our regional communities? Were they not important enough to the opposition to actually give them the respect to do that?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: This is probably the last time I am going to stand up, because I feel like I am repeatedly getting the same question. I absolutely respect our peak bodies. They have done a sensational job in advocating, and they always do an excellent job in advocating for their industries, so I will not have the minister stand up and accuse me of not appreciating them enough to consult with them on the drafting of the bill when, as I have outlined in this chamber, this bill needed to be brought with urgency.

It became clear that time and time again announcements were made by those opposite that sounded good. Farmers are talking to me. They are calling my office, they are writing to my office and they are writing to my colleagues. It is not just my office, my colleagues; they are actually also speaking to the media, because it is that bad at the moment. The packages are not hitting the ground. They are not getting the support that they need. They are not getting the practical support on the ground. That is the reason why we are here today. As I outlined in my summing-up speech, that is the reason why we are debating that bill. I make no apology for that. As I have outlined previously, these peak bodies, and the LGA, have been consulted with about this bill.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Given that the member has suggested that there are programs within the $73 million state government drought support package that should be redirected into a fund, and given that those packages were developed with peak bodies, which programs does she propose—those in the current $73 million drought support package which has over 20 different programs within it—should be scrapped?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: That is not my suggestion of the only way this fund is able to get appropriations. That is ultimately up to the government of the day, as to what money they want to put into this fund, and how they do so. I will say, though, given the fact that I have repeatedly asked the minister, and a number of my colleagues have repeatedly asked the minister, in terms of what actual funding has hit the ground with a number of these programs—and I note recently with the mental health program, the $2.5 million announced for mental health in our regional communities and for our farming communities, and the other day the minister had to take that on notice, and has yet to bring back a reply to the chamber, as to how much of that funding has actually been utilised, has actually hit the ground in those farming communities.

I think it is a strange question coming from the minister given the fact that she is actually the one with all the information as to where the funds are and where they have not gone to. For that purpose all I would suggest to the minister is that ultimately she is the minister and it is up to her at the end of the day, but all I would ask is that there be some political will in terms of ensuring that things like no and low concessional loans, things like reimbursement of fees and charges for things like land use, stock movement and water licences, are part of this funding and part of these programs that can really provide tangible support and cash flow to our farmers and our farming communities.

That is what they are crying out for. They do not want a handout, they just need time to breathe. They need cash flow to enable them to be able to pay those interest bills and to be able to pay the taxation office, and also to be able to not only do that but be able to buy food, to be able to buy water, to be able to buy fodder, to be able to pay those bills that are mounting up without any relief.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I asked the question because the honourable member specifically referred to redirecting funds from the $73 million into the fund that she was proposing. What consultation has occurred with financial institutions?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I have already outlined the stakeholders that I have consulted with on this bill. If this bill passes, I would again really invite a multipartisan approach on this for us to then do consultation with the wider industry, including the banking institutions. I do note that I am not necessarily sure specifically how this bill would affect what the banking institutions are or are not doing, except that it allows them the trigger to be able to provide exceptional circumstances when it comes to interest, loans and the like.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: From where has the information come that it allows some trigger, given that the banking institutions themselves have said that no drought declaration is needed to trigger hardship assistance? I refer, for example, to comments made by Gillian Fennell, the chair of Livestock SA, in regard to this bill, where she said:

> There's been a lot of producers who are asking for drought declarations to be reintroduced because they believe it will treat certain elements of things, especially dealing with the likes of ATO and banks. I'd just like to advise producers, if your banks tell you they are waiting for an official drought declaration that they are actually very incorrect.

Clearly, no trigger is required. I would note the survey from Grain Producers SA, which has said that a number of farmers are still hearing—I think it was 5 per cent of the respondents said—that their banks wanted a drought declaration, which is clearly incorrect. I suppose one could look at it that that means 95 per cent of the institutions are aware (or the staff within those institutions are aware) that a drought declaration is not needed. I am wanting to know from where the information has come that the banks require such a trigger.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the minister for her question. The information has come from farmers and farming communities. Farmers are saying to me, 'This is what my bank is saying to me.' Within the GPSA survey, a grain producer said that their bank advised that, if a drought declaration is made, that gives them more scope for hardship lending. I appreciate that that is incorrect under the National Drought Agreement, but the problem is that is the reality on the ground, whether we like it or not. That is the reality on the ground, and that is what farmers are telling me. I ask the question of the minister: what is the risk in declaring it?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Is the mover proposing that South Australia withdrawals from the National Drought Agreement?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the minister for her question. That is absolutely not what I am suggesting we do. The Hon. Tammy Franks spoke to New South Wales declaring a drought. Just because you declare a drought I do not believe means that you are going against the National Drought Agreement. There needs to be some conversation going into the future around drought declarations, and I hope that the federal government, along with the state ministers, does reassess the National Drought Agreement.

The problem we have at the moment is that we do not have the time. As I outlined in my summing-up speech, our farmers and our farming communities do not have the time to wait for bureaucrats to take the next two years to look into the National Drought Agreement. I am suggesting to the minister that we in South Australia can lead this discussion and this debate and we can lead the support for our farming communities which are doing it so incredibly tough in South Australia at the moment.

I am not suggesting that we are pulling out of the National Drought Agreement. I just note as well that the National Drought Agreement is an agreement, it is a policy agreement—it is not legislation, we are not going to be breaking the law by doing this. It is an agreement, it is policy, but governments of all persuasions change policy from time to time, particularly if it is not working. I again put to the minister that, if this is done in a multipartisan fashion, how about we lead the nation and we enact change where change is needed?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: How can we remain in the National Drought Agreement if South Australia enacts legislation that directly contravenes it?

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Can I ask a question of the minister on this particular question?

The CHAIR: Well, we are having a conversation.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: The minister has raised the issue of the National Drought Agreement. How confident are we that these two cannot coexist? What advice have we had that says that this bill cannot coexist with the National Drought Agreement? What formal advice around that limbo have we had that says that these two cannot coexist?

The CHAIR: Just to be clear: minister, when you ask a question, other members can seek clarification on the question that you ask. So it is in order and you can answer it if you wish.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: But I have already asked the mover a question, specifically.

The CHAIR: Yes, and that is fine; however, somebody else has asked you a question about the question you asked. I am told that this is in order.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: For clarity, there are a number of items in this bill that directly contravene the National Drought Agreement. One example is drought declarations—that is one of the most obvious examples—and there are several others. So my question to the mover is: how can South Australia remain part of the National Drought Agreement if we have legislation that directly contravenes it?

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Chair, I apologise, but before the mover comes in—

The Hon. J.E. Hanson interjecting:

The Hon. C. BONAROS: —I think this is important if we are going to dig out who was in, Mr Hanson. My question was: what formal advice has the minister had, if any, that indicates that this is indeed a direct contravention and that these two things cannot coexist? That is the question: what formal advice have we had that they cannot coexist?

The CHAIR: Minister, you have attempted to provide an answer to that question.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: If one reads the National Drought Agreement, one can see that various things within this legislation directly contravene the National Drought Agreement. So I reiterate my question to the mover.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: This will be my final one: has the minister sought any formal advice about whether these two things can coexist?

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Is the member asking whether I have read the National Drought Agreement—I mean, honestly. Yes, I have had discussions with my department—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: —I have had discussions with my department, of course I have, about the interaction between the National Drought Agreement and the bill that is before us. So I ask again: how can we remain in the National Drought Agreement if we have legislation that directly contravenes it?

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I would like to know if there is evidence that we should all know about, and advice that we should know about, which says that our supporting this puts us out of step with the National Drought Agreement because it cannot coexist with the bill. Will that be provided to us so that we can make an informed decision when we are voting on this bill? Is there something that can be provided to us that shows that these two things cannot coexist? If that is the advice that has been given, will that be shared with us so that we can make an informed decision when voting on this bill?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the honourable member for her question. I would argue that the Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator Bill is not inconsistent with the National Drought Agreement but rather reinforces its key priorities. The National Drought Agreement establishes a collaborative whole-of-government approach, including the states, to drought across preparation, response and recovery. It does so by clarifying roles and promoting needs-based support.

I would argue that, in doing so and in promoting needs-based support, this bill is absolutely consistent with that priority. Again, by creating a dedicated coordinator role this bill enhances those principles by improving coordination, timely delivery and clearer accountability. So, far from introducing conflicting objectives, I would argue that it builds on the commitment to shared monitoring and reporting and to improved sustained coordination, as per what is written under the National Drought Agreement.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: In the event that there are provisions in this bill which are found to be inconsistent, is the mover open to changes around those to ensure that, in the event—because there is no advice before us that suggests we are—there are inconsistencies, she is willing to address those to ensure consistency?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the honourable member for her question. In the event that we have—and I would particularly like to see some independent—some independent legal advice that says that absolutely these cannot coexist, I would absolutely be open to amending this piece of legislation.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I am quoting here from the National Drought Agreement:

> Support provided should avoid market distortions and eligibility should be based on need, not activated by drought declarations.

How could this bill not be in contradiction with the NDA in that respect?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the honourable member for her question because this piece of legislation is all about being needs based.

The Hon. C.M. Scriven interjecting:

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: The minister's claims that declaring a drought—and she said this in her second reading speech on this bill—would result in lines being drawn on the map and farmers missing out on support I think is really a poor excuse for inaction, to be honest.

The reality is that often, without a formal drought declaration, it is difficult to coordinate those frameworks for assistance. It is difficult to coordinate the communication, as we have seen in the GPSA survey recently, where one in two grain producers are struggling to access finance or credit. So I do not accept the minister's preface that a drought declaration is not on a needs basis and is not about exclusion.

It is about recognition and I note the Hon. Tammy Franks' comment on that in her second reading speech. It is about recognition of the scale and severity of the crisis that is currently facing our regional communities and our farmers, and it enables a structured response and sends a clear signal to all levels of government, to industry, to the banking sector and to the Australian Taxation Office that those who need help most receive it—not fewer, but more. It sends a clear signal that help is needed and exceptional circumstances are needed. Again, I do not believe that by us having a piece of legislation that declares the drought within this state it cannot fit alongside the National Drought Agreement.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I think, first of all, it is important for us to recognise where we do agree and that is the strong desire to assist farmers, to assist primary producers, across our state who are dealing with one of the worst droughts that many of them have ever seen. We know that there are farmers who are seeing the lowest rainfalls on record. I think it is fair to say that we are all united in wanting to see them supported.

But this is a piece of legislation. This is a piece of law, if it passes. We can all agree on the desire to assist and our government has put in place what I believe is the biggest state-based drought support package in history. We are obviously still open to talking and engaging, as we have done now for at least a year, on the matter of drought, which resulted in the package announced in November and then the further package announced in April.

But we are here as legislators. We need to understand the legislation that we are passing. I have already alluded to the National Drought Agreement and that it specifically refers to not having drought declarations as a trigger. The bill talks about establishing freight subsidies, and yet that is also referred to in terms of market distortions in the National Drought Agreement. I ask the question

again: how can specific provisions in this bill, if passed, be consistent with South Australia remaining in the National Drought Agreement?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I have already answered the question. I am not sure how I can answer the question in any more detail.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Has the member sought any advice on the impacts of withdrawing from the National Drought Agreement?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I am not suggesting that we withdraw from the National Drought Agreement, so I am not sure why we need to seek advice on the implications of that.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Given what I have read out from the National Drought Agreement, I am not sure how the member could arrive at that conclusion. However, we will have to leave that, as no advice has been sought. In terms of the fund that the honourable member has suggested in the bill, is she proposing some sort of levy to provide for that long-term fund?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: What I am not suggesting is for this to be coming out of the pockets of farmers who already cannot afford to pay for fodder, for water and the like. So no, I am not proposing a levy. Again, the minister is in charge. She is the one in government. The state government—and, I am sure, their colleagues, or their mates, in Canberra with enough political will—as we saw in Whyalla, can actually manage to find some funds themselves.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: On that point, I would really like to credit the various peak bodies that have been joining with the state government in terms of advocating for additional assistance from the federal government. I know that the Prime Minister refers to the $1 billion investment in the Future Drought Fund, and whilst obviously the Future Drought Fund is an important component of drought assistance it certainly is the situation that both the Premier and myself, and potentially others from our government, have been advocating to the federal government.

What is the reason why the honourable member, the mover of this bill, considers that returning to lines on the map is the right approach, given all of the discussions and reviews of the national drought approach over many years came to the opposite conclusion?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think I have answered this in a previous question. In terms of the minister claiming that declaring a drought will result in lines being drawn on the map and farmers missing out on support, I do not accept that premise. As I said, a formal drought declaration is about sending a signal to all levels of government, to industry and to financial institutions that support is necessary and, more importantly, support is urgent.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I refer the member to clause 14, where it specifically states that a declaration would identify the geographical area that the drought emergency declaration applies to, so I ask the question again.

The CHAIR: Minister, when we get to clause 14, we will deal with that.

Clause passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 passed.

Clause 4.

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

Amendment No 1 [Simms–1]—

Page 4, after line 23—After paragraph (c) insert 'and'

(d) to align the State's drought response and recovery with the State's target of zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 pursuant to the *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007*.

This amendment inserts a new object into the act, which is to align the state's drought response and recovery with the state's target of zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 pursuant to the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007. As I indicated from the outset I think the honourable member's bill has a lot of merit, but one of the areas that is missing is the

acknowledgement of the effects of climate change as a driver of drought, and this really puts that front and centre of this Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator Bill.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: As I indicated in my summing-up speech, we certainly appreciate where the honourable member is coming from. Suffice to say that the minister has spoken, as indeed I have, about that $1 billion Future Drought Fund, which is basically designed for just that—it is about resilience; it is about preparedness, including climate resilience; and it is about sustainability. So whilst I appreciate the member's amendments to this bill, I think introducing the broader climate and preparedness objectives, whilst well intentioned, risks undermining the bill's purpose, which is really about delivering urgently needed support in a response and recovery. That is not to take away the importance of preparedness and resilience, but that is what the Future Drought Fund is for.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: The government will be supporting the amendment. I guess my question to the mover of the bill would be: how does including this in any way slow down assistance that might be provided to farmers?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I did not in any way say that I thought it would slow it down. What I did say was that while the Hon. Mr Simms' amendments are well intentioned, I think that that is not what this bill's purpose is. We have a Future Drought Fund already—that $1 billion from federal and state governments, predominantly federal—looking into preparedness, resilience and sustainability. This bill is purely about response and recovery and delivering urgently needed support for our farmers and farming communities.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 5 passed.

Clause 6.

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

Amendment No 2 [Simms–1]—

Page 5, line 2 [clause 6(3)(a)]—After 'relevant to' insert 'climate change and'

This amendment deals with the appointment of the drought response and recovery coordinator. The clause notes that the person appointed as the coordinator should have a range of experience. One of the areas where they should also have relevant experience is in relation to climate change. This is in keeping with the previous amendment I moved.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: As I have previously indicated, in my second reading speech, I indicate that we will not be supporting Hon. Mr Simms' amendments.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: We will be supporting the amendment. I do have a question of the mover of the bill, though, in relation to this clause. Should I ask that now or after the amendment has been considered?

The CHAIR: You can ask the question now.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Could the member indicate why she thinks that a legislated drought response and recovery coordinator is required when, as has been obviously demonstrated in recent weeks, a commissioner can be appointed without going through this legislative process?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: When this bill was tabled we did not have a commissioner in place. In fact, the government only just announced the commissioner after the tabling of this bill, which I certainly welcome. Whether you call it a coordinator or a commissioner, I think it is a similar role. If this bill does pass, I do not see any issue with having a coordinator role, unless the minister is suggesting that the newly appointed drought commissioner will be present on a full-time basis going forward, even when we are not in drought or if there are not any parts of South Australia in drought.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Is the member suggesting that the coordinator role should be there in perpetuity? My reading of the bill is that it would only be after there was a drought declaration.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: That is correct.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: If this bill were to pass, a coordinator could not be appointed until there had been a formal drought declaration, and there are a number of steps involved in making that declaration. How would that not slow down the delivery of effective assistance to farmers?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: In the appointment of the drought response and recovery coordinator, clause 6 provides:

(1) The minister must, as soon as practicable after making a declaration…appoint a Drought Response and Recovery Coordinator…

So I am not sure what the minister is alluding to in terms of slowing down. I cannot see that it would be any different to appointing a drought commissioner, as the minister has done recently.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Because there are a number of steps that are outlined in this bill that must occur before a declaration can occur. That is why it would appear to me that it would slow it down.

The committee divided on the amendment:

Ayes 10
Noes.....7
Majority 3

AYES

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

NOES

Centofanti, N.J. (teller)	Girolamo, H.M.	Hood, B.R.
Hood, D.G.E.	Lee, J.S.	Lensink, J.M.A.
Pangallo, F.		

PAIRS

El Dannawi, M.	Game, S.L.
Martin, R.B.	Henderson, L.A.

Amendment thus carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 7 passed.

Clause 8.

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

Amendment No 3 [Simms–1]—

Page 6, after line 4 [clause 8(d)]—After subparagraph (iii) insert 'and'

(iv) the effects of climate change on drought conditions;

This amendment relates to the functions of the coordinator that are set out in the bill. It adds an addition to 8(d) under 'to monitor, evaluate and report on'. It includes the words 'and the effects of climate change on drought conditions'.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I rise to put on the record, as I have previously, that the opposition will not be supporting the Hon. Rob Simms' amendments. So I put that on the record, but I will not be dividing further, given the fact that the government have indicated their support and the Hon. Tammy Franks has indicated her support. We can all do the math, so I indicate that I will not be dividing.

Amendment carried.

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

Amendment No 4 [Simms–1]—

Page 6, after line 4—After paragraph (d) insert:

(da) to provide advice to the Minister about the effects of climate change on drought conditions, and on potential mitigation or resilience measures relating to climate change; and

This is an addition under the functions. It includes a new paragraph. I have already explained the rationale for this, but really this is just to ensure that this new drought response and recovery coordinator has a focus on climate change, given that is one of the key drivers of drought.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 9.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Clause 9(1) refers to the drought coordinator requiring state authority or council to provide certain information. The mover referred to consultation with the LGA. What was their view on this requirement for councils to provide that information?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: This is one that the LGA have suggested an amendment to. They are concerned, in particular, about excessive bureaucracy in terms of the information to be provided to the coordinator. As I have indicated in previous questions, I am certainly happy to work through those amendments between the houses if and when this bill passes.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: So just to clarify, the LGA did not support this but the member has not proposed an amendment; is that a correct understanding?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: As I outlined in a previous answer speaking about consultation, they understood the immediate nature of the bill, but I have acknowledged that there are amendments that need to be done in between the houses and this is most likely one of those amendments. I will continue to work with the Local Government Association on these amendments, as I said, between the houses.

Clause passed.

Clauses 10 to 13 passed.

Clause 14.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Clause 14 refers to a declaration. Could the member outline, in terms of clause 14(1), what kinds of things does she envisage would be the basis on which drought conditions would be assessed? What sort of basis would she be envisaging?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: This is outlined earlier on in the bill. It absolutely needs to be done in consultation with our peak industry bodies, with primary producers on the ground and also with other bodies, such as local government associations as well. I think that a declaration that is backed by local data and has flexible criteria is best to ensure that those who need help most receive it.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Could the member clarify what she means by 'flexible criteria'?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: In terms of flexible criteria, what I mean by that is that if there is communication coming back on the ground in terms of, perhaps, if an area has not been declared that is in need to be declared, that there is constant communication and that there are no arbitrary lines and boundaries, that working with local communities, working with farmers, working with farming communities and with industry peak bodies, who understand where things are at on the ground—as well as working with associations like the Local Government Association—is really key to ensuring that help gets to where it is most needed.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I am going to have to ask for further clarification, because it refers to the minister creating a report not more than three months from the commencement of this section outlining the basis on which drought conditions will be assessed for the purposes of making declarations, and then if the minister is satisfied—based on an assessment undertaken in

accordance with the report; that is, the assessment of conditions—then a drought emergency can be declared.

It is not clear to me how that flexibility—and the member is referring to arbitrary conditions—works. Is she thinking that it would be the number of millimetres of rainfall for the year? What sort of things does she envisage would be the criteria for assessment? If there are criteria, what does she mean then by them being flexible? I heard her discussion around communication and that, of course, is important, but the legislation says there will be criteria by which it will be assessed. Can she clarify this uncertainty?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the honourable member for her question. In terms of criteria, that really needs to be, I would have thought, done in consultation, again, with the minister's department. Obviously, millimetres of rainfall, I would have thought, would be one criteria that is a pretty commonsense approach in this, but there would be other criteria that the minister would need to work through with her department, in consultation with peak industries and local authorities like the LGA that are on the ground.

I am not going to profess to go through an exhaustive list of criteria. I do not think that is up to me to decide; that is up the minister and her department, in consultation with industry and with farmers and farming communities and local government and the like, as to what criteria there should be in terms of that declaration.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I thank the honourable member for her comments. The criteria needs to be worked on and then be consulted on in conjunction with peak bodies, with the LGA and so on. Then, according to the bill, these drought conditions must be declared—sorry, that is probably the wrong word to use—these drought conditions must be outlined within three months of the commencement of this section. How can this possibly deliver immediate support to farmers, given even the criteria by which a supposed drought declaration would occur is likely to take such a long period of time?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the honourable member for her question. The clause says not more than three months. I am not suggesting it needs to take three months. In fact, I would implore the minister to not take three months if we are in a drought as serious as what we are in now. The practical reality is that if the minister is consulting with her department and (probably not more importantly but just as importantly) with farmers and faming communities and industry peak bodies, they will be a great source of information as to the criteria that needs to be spelt out to declare these areas of drought.

I think we can all agree that the reality is that most people can identify when drought conditions are in place, through a range of criteria, to enable the minister to declare the drought and to then provide the conditions on which that has been assessed. By no means does that mean that the assistance needs to wait three months. Nowhere in the bill does it stipulate that, so I do not agree with the minister's premise that this is going to slow anything down in terms of assistance for drought for farmers and farming communities in those drought-affected areas.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I think the answer that we have just heard from the honourable member really speaks to the whole reason that the National Drought Agreement came into place. She says that most people can identify drought conditions and yet cannot actually identify what sort of conditions they might be.

I suggested perhaps it would be the millimetre of rainfall for the year. No doubt someone else would say, 'Hardly, because in the South-East they are used to far more rainfall. If they have an 80 per cent drop that might still be more than the Far North, but they are not going to be unaffected by drought.' That really speaks to the whole reasoning around the National Drought Agreement, that these things are very difficult to specify, and that is why assistance needs to be available all the time without a drought declaration.

I refer to comments by Gillian Fennell, the chair of Livestock SA, on the *Country Hour* on 5 June, where she says:

> Once you start to meddle with or unpick the existing drought policy framework we may end up with something that is actually a lot worse, and this goes to any disaster. The worst time to make a policy about something is while

you're in the midst of dealing with it because emotions are high, people are stressed, everyone wants to help as best they possibly can, but I'm not sure that now is the right time to start proposing legislative amendments to something as complex and as critical as drought policy.

That also leads in to clause 14(3)(b)(i)—this comes back to my question at clause 1. It says that a declaration must be accompanied by a statement identifying the geographical area that the drought emergency declaration applies to. So, it is lines on a map. How can the member justify one side of the road being in drought and getting assistance and the opposite side of the road not getting that assistance?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think I have answered this question previously. Again, the minister's claim that declaring a drought would result in farmers missing out on support I think is a bit of a poor excuse for inaction. If the minister is concerned about arbitrary boundaries, then we should be looking to fix that system, and I am open to that, but I do not think we should be abandoning the declaration altogether because, again, this is about signals and about an acknowledgement of how tough it is for our farmers and our farming communities, particularly with the current significant drought that we are in at the moment.

Also, suggesting that lines on a map are the problem ignores the fact that right now many farmers are falling through the cracks precisely because there is no clear eligibility framework and too much bureaucracy in place. Again, we should always be looking at a system and be trying in this place to be as responsive as we can to those situations on the ground.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: In light of that, but also in light of the honourable member's comment a few minutes ago that assistance would not be held up before making a drought declaration, that is simply not reflected in the bill. There is a provision that the drought response plan has no force or effect until approved by the Governor, and the plan is one that allows money from this supposed fund to be released.

This entire bill is actually adding bureaucracy and red tape—it is adding a layer—whereas at the moment if people are eligible because of the types of assistance that have been provided, they are eligible not based on lines of a map. Again, why does the honourable member think that identifying the geographical area that the drought emergency declaration applies to—that is, drawing lines on a map—will work now when over many reviews over many years, nationally, it was determined that was counterproductive and inequitable?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think I have already answered the minister's question. I am not sure how I can answer it in a different manner.

Clause passed.

Clause 15.

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

Amendment No 5 [Simms–1]—

Page 8, after line 31 [Clause 15(1)]—After paragraph (b) insert 'and'

(c) strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience in relation to climate change.

This amendment relates to the drought response and recovery plan and, in particular, the preparation of drought response and recovery plan amendments. The clause requires that the coordinator must, as soon as practicable after being appointed in relation to a drought emergency declaration, prepare a drought response and recovery plan in relation to the declared drought emergency, and sets out a range of things. My amendment includes a new paragraph:

(c) strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience in relation to climate change.

So, on top of us now adding in some new objectives to the bill that would ensure that we move towards net zero, this would also require the coordinator role to really focus on developing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to improve resilience to climate change. Again, I see that as being critical in terms of being able to get drought under control and to deal with what is going on.

Amendment carried.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Clause 15 outlines the preparation of the drought response and recovery plan. It indicates that a coordinator will not be appointed until after a declaration of drought, and, as we have already seen, at least in this initial phase, that would take some many weeks, given that there needs to be criteria developed and those then consulted on. So the coordinator is appointed after a declaration.

The coordinator must then prepare a draft. That draft is approved by the Governor. Later in the clause it refers to the draft being on the website and inviting interested persons to make written representations within a specified period. Before adopting the plan, they must consider all representations made in writing.

Could the mover indicate what she anticipates would be the minimum time in which all that could occur, with the best of political will, given that none of the assistance can flow until that has occurred?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: As I have outlined in a previous answer, I do not accept from the minister that it is going to take weeks. Again, it is about political will. It simply says here that the minister must not take more than three months. The minister can take two days or take one week, if she likes, in terms of that, but this is just simply saying that she certainly needs to do it within three months. Again, we always want to do these things as quickly as possible, so we need to have a deadline as to the very minimum time in which it needs to be done by. But that is certainly not suggesting that it cannot—and more so not suggesting that it should not—be done sooner.

In regard to public consultation on any drought plan, I think public consultation is certainly a vital component of any democratic accountability, in particular in terms of local buy-in, especially when measures will affect land use, water access and the like. I think that, importantly, the bill permits amendments to the plan to be made swiftly, and the requirement for consultation can be both proportional and flexible. It certainly is not supposed to apply during the emergency deployment. I do not think that the consultation needs to be an eight-week set of consultation, etc., but there does need to be a level of local buy-in, as I have already spoken about, in terms of consultation with peak bodies, local government, farmers, farming communities and the like on the ground.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: How can consultation with councils, peak bodies and the LGA on something as important as a drought plan, which also needs to have written representations within a specified period, be done within one day or one week, as the member suggested?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the honourable member for her question. I am not suggesting that the consultation take one day or one week. I am talking about the report outlining the basis of the drought conditions, so it is different to the public consultation on a drought plan. I just want to correct that for the record. Other than that, I refer to my previous answer.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: No, the question was about the drought plan, because that is the clause that we are currently on, so my question remains: how can a valid, robust consultation be done in one day or one week, as the member indicated?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I refer to my previous answer: that is not what I was referring to in terms of the one day to one week.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: What was the member referring to with the one day or one week?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I was referring to the minister's comments on the declaration.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: So how long does the member think is the minimum time, with the political will, that the drought plan could be developed, approved and put into place based on what she has outlined in this legislation?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think that consultation should always be happening on the ground. We should always be engaging in our regional communities, in our local communities, on the ground to know that the support they are getting is actually reaching the ground. So, in terms in terms of consultation, I think it should always be occurring and, if things are not working in a response and recovery plan, there needs to be the flexibility to change and I make no apologies for that. Otherwise, again, I refer the minister to my previous answer in terms of consultation. I am not suggesting there needs to be a YourSAy, if that is what the minister is asking.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I am sorry to have to labour this point but I do have to because what we are discussing is what processes are outlined in this bill that will either enable or be a barrier to farmers accessing assistance. The bill says that the drought response and recovery plan has no force or effect until approved by the Governor. If we are going to consult on the plan, obviously it is going to take some time because there are a number of specific items outlined in this bill that must occur—must occur—for it to be a valid plan. So what I am asking is: based on the processes in this, what is the minimum time that the plan could be approved given that the assistance cannot flow until that plan has been put in place?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I thank the honourable member for her question. I would be more than willing to work with the minister in terms of potentially moving an amendment on this if this is a barrier. I certainly do not want any barriers to our farmers and our farming communities so, if the minister would like to work with me on an amendment in between the houses to fix the so-called barrier that the minister thinks could be a problem in terms of it being approved by indeed the Governor, my door is always open.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I am happy to hear that, given that any amendment would need to strike out this added level of bureaucracy. If the member is open to that, that would be a positive thing.

Clause as amended passed.

Clause 16 passed.

Clause 17.

The CHAIR: We are at clause 17, which is a money clause, so I need to read out to the committee that this clause, being a money clause, will be printed in erased type in the numbered bill to be transmitted to the House of Assembly. Standing order 298 provides that no question shall be put in committee upon such clause. The message transmitting the bill to the House of Assembly is required to indicate that this clause is deemed necessary to the bill. You can ask a question about clause 17, of course, but I am not going to put clause 17 in any way.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Could the mover indicate why drought assistance funds cannot be expended until the plan is in place?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: I think it is always good to ensure that we have a plan. However, in a situation like we are currently experiencing, where there is significant urgency, I am happy to look at amending this so that the plan does not have to be in place for these funds to go out the door. If the minister is proposing that that might be a good way of getting those funds, those no and low concessional loans, and certainly, potentially, reimbursements of government fees and charges, then I would welcome an amendment between the houses of that nature.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: I can indicate that a number of assistance measures, as announced in our $73 million package, are already out the door, which indicates why it is not necessary to have the added level of bureaucracy that is being proposed in this bill.

Clause 18 passed.

Clause 19.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Clause 19 refers to intergovernmental collaboration and the minister taking all reasonable steps to collaborate, or facilitate collaboration, with the commonwealth government and with commonwealth government agencies for the purposes of ensuring effective drought response and recovery operations throughout the state. How can this sort of collaboration occur if we are having legislation in South Australia which is in direct conflict with the National Drought Agreement?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: This clause is about ensuring that there is cooperation with the commonwealth. I am sure the minister has quite a number of good relationships with her federal colleagues. I do not agree with the minister's assertions that this is against the National Drought Agreement and so I do not really agree with the premise of the minister's question.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: Has the honourable member read the National Drought Agreement?

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI: Yes, I have.

The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN: You did not understand it.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (20 and 21) and title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (17:50): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

Motions

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SHELLFISH QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

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

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.

(Continued from 4 June 2025.)

The Hon. C. BONAROS (17:51): I rise to speak in support of the motion and thank the mover for bringing it to this place. This has now been the subject of some discussion in this place. I have asked questions; other members have asked questions; there are motions on the *Notice Paper*. There is a level of concern in the community and also a level of angst. I understand specifically the level of angst on the part of the government in particular and industry when it comes to issues to do with trade and investment and the fear that discussions around the algal bloom outbreak may impact on our seafood industry. By the same token, we have to counter that against the issues that are being raised, mainly publicly, with respect to this issue.

The Hon. T.A. Franks interjecting:

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Yes, I noted that—mainly publicly by a lot of frustrated people who I suppose are trying to deal with this on the ground. We have seen a lot of commentary by scientists, by people who are eminent in their field, talking about this. I understand that this is one of those things that we cannot control, but there are certainly things that we can do to understand it and to allay many of those concerns.

The last thing we want to be doing in this place—and I know that when it comes to oysters in particular we are concerned about the impacts of discussions in this place and in public about that particular industry. We are concerned about what that might do to investment or sales in our state, because it is only 5 per cent of the industry that is subject to quarantine and closures at the moment. The reality is that there is 5 per cent of the market that has been effectively shutdown due to quarantine reasons, and they need to be also heard in these discussions loud and clear. Having your business shut with no end in sight and not knowing what is going to come for the next week, month, two months—how long this thing is going to last for—does not provide them with any level of certainty at all.

I am glad that the minister, I think, came round to this idea that we do not have to wait for associations to contact us in order to engage in discussions with people who are impacted. When 95 per cent of an industry is not impacted it might not be something they put on the radar of the minister, but that does not mean we do not go in to check on the other 5 per cent to ensure that they are coping okay, and we have heard publicly that they are not.

I have read from day one the headlines around this issue with a lot of concern, and of course there are concerns from both sides. There are concerns that everyone is going to stop eating seafood and everyone is going to stop consuming fish because of misinformation. I do not think that this motion or anything else in here is intended to feed that misinformation; in fact, I think it is quite the opposite.

However, by the same token, there are genuine concerns about how we actually reach the people who need to be reached. For instance, it should not take the RACGP lobbying the health department to get the appropriate health advice that GPs need to be able to pass on to patients who have been impacted by the algal bloom. We know it is not just that there are quarantine measures in place. We know that there are physical attributes to this as well. We know that there are financial attributes as well for those people who have been impacted.

The long and short of it is that we do not know. We were hoping with this weather that things will improve, but it is a slow burn, and in the meantime it is there and we need to deal with it. I think the headline that I have grasped onto the most is the bushfire headline that we have seen, that it is out of sight and out of mind for most of us because it is happening underwater. It is actually quite scary. It is something that we need to get our heads around and be able to respond to appropriately without putting the fear of life into people in the community and thinking that it is in every region. We know it is contained but we know it is an issue that we need to address.

Given the time, I am not going to speak long on this motion. I understand that I have lots to say about the algal bloom but I am not going to do it today. Given one of the issues that has been raised, I am going to seek to amend the motion. I think we have had some collaborative discussions amongst ourselves in terms of what we are actually trying to get in terms of the data sets that we want, without necessarily creeping into areas that are commercially sensitive—not necessarily commercially confidential but sensitive in nature.

We know that in this particular space it is actually industry that funds the science that goes into this. It is an arrangement between government and industry, and there are good reasons why some of that information may be commercially sensitive, from a seafood and fishing industry perspective, and we need to measure that against the need to have an appropriate data set. It is on that basis that I am actually seeking to insert the reference specifically to plankton counts, because that is really what we want to be able to identify here.

The PRESIDENT: That is what you are moving, the Hon. Ms Bonaros.

The Hon. C. BONAROS: I can move the amendment now. I move to amend the motion as follows:

After 'all documents' insert 'referencing plankton counts' and

After '1 January 2025' leave out 'regarding testing'

I think there is consensus amongst all of us. As I said, the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Tammy Franks, the Minister for Primary Industries and I have had those discussions and we think that meets the objective of what the mover is trying to achieve without getting into, for want of a better term, murky waters in relation to the information that we actually do disclose. I have moved that amendment and when we have more time to talk about algal bloom, I will talk about algal bloom.

Sitting suspended from 17:59 to 19:46.

The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (19:46): The South Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program is a joint government-industry funded program that monitors water quality in shellfish harvesting areas around the state, including oysters, mussels, cockles and scallops. Established in 1994 as a joint initiative between PIRSA and shellfish industries, it has a longstanding history of providing public health protection by way of a range of regular water and shellfish testing, further enhancing South Australia's reputation for clean, high-quality and safe seafood.

Shellfish growers operate right across our state's vast coastline, separated in growing areas that include Central Yorke, Coffin Bay, Coobowie, Denial Bay, Franklin Harbour, Haslam, Louth Bay, Nepean Bay, Port Lincoln, Smoky Bay, Stansbury, Streaky Bay, the Coorong, and Venus Bay. As such, testing covers an extensive area where shellfish growing and harvesting activities occur.

At anytime, there may be a number of closures in place for various reasons. Often these are precautionary and only last a short period of time. Closures in relation to SASQAP (South Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program) testing are not unusual for shellfish growers and harvesters and are an important safeguard in ensuring high-quality safe produce.

In the interest of transparency, information on all growing areas' current status, I am advised, is regularly updated and available on PIRSA's website. There has been ongoing communication with industry and regular updates provided to the public and the media about the algal bloom and its impacts. PIRSA has been providing the South Australian Research Development Institute (SARDI) harmful algal bloom situation updates to the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sectors, as well as RecFish since April.

These updates, I am advised, along with other information about the algal bloom, are also made publicly available every week on the PIRSA website. There are also regular updates posted on the DEW website with a long list of frequently asked questions. South Australian and federal scientific agencies, academics and other experts have worked hard over recent months to identify and determine the cause of the *Karenia mikimotoi* algal bloom, providing regular updates to the public, to industry and to the opposition. SA Water undertakes routine water quality testing across several South Australian sites and water quality alerts are available at the SA Health website.

One of the challenges in releasing algal counts without interpretation is it is only one part of an explanation as to why a shellfish harvesting area may be closed or indeed opened. It is why, to date, algal count data from the South Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program, a joint state government and shellfish industry program, has not been released generally to the public. All accredited producers, which includes producers in the closed areas, are receiving a weekly update of areas closed due to brevetoxins, I am advised, which includes any changes to phytoplankton (algae) levels from the previous week.

At the start of this month, SARDI hosted an algal bloom workshop, bringing together more than 80 marine and environmental experts from around Australia to discuss the impacts of the unprecedented algal bloom. The Harmful Algal Bloom Sites Forum was held at the SA Aquatic Sciences Centre in West Beach on 3 June. To assist in preparing for future incidents, participants reviewed the latest scientific findings, shared operational insights, identified knowledge gaps and suggested priority actions for ongoing and future research and monitoring. This will assist to understand the broad impacts of the current algal bloom and mitigate and manage future events for the marine ecosystem, coastal industries and public health.

The government is able to supply information on Fishwatch hotline calls regarding marine and non-marine species deaths from the timeline specified in the motion, I am advised. Often, the Fishwatch hotline receives multiple calls on the same or similar incidents, such as fish kills. There may not be information related to plankton counts and water quality assessments at all locations of fish kills as referred to in the honourable member's motion; however, I am advised that PIRSA will work to supply the information on the reports from the public made to the Fishwatch hotline.

Accordingly, the government will be supporting the amendment proposed by the Hon. Connie Bonaros, and thanks her for bringing it forward. We look forward to a speedy conclusion to this debate.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (19:51): I rise today to speak in support of this motion—indeed, in support of the amended motion that it now is—which calls for the production of documents referencing plankton counts related to South Australia's Shellfish Quality Assurance Program, along with additional data concerning reports to Fishwatch of marine and non-marine species deaths, plankton counts and water quality assessments. This is not a political stunt: this is a pretty straightforward call for transparency, something that should not be controversial in any modern democracy.

Over the past seven months, South Australians, particularly in coastal communities, have witnessed some troubling scenes—unexplained fish deaths, shellfish mortality events and recurring algal blooms—and these patterns are not isolated nor have they been insignificant. They point to a broader pattern that has prompted concerns from fishers, aquaculture operators, conservation groups, scientists and, indeed, from the general public alike. That is why the opposition has

repeatedly called for an independent inquiry into those widespread fish and shellfish deaths and the algal bloom. We believe such an investigation is necessary to properly assess the cause, evaluate the government's response and rebuild public confidence.

An inquiry would allow for rigorous arm's-length scrutiny of the science, the response mechanisms and the sufficiency of the current environmental protections, and would also ensure the concerns of affected communities that at this point in time continue to be left in the dark. The public has a right to understand the state of our waters, and commercial fishers and the aquaculture industry have a right to know if the ecosystems that they depend on are under threat.

This motion simply seeks to release testing data and reports from the start of 2025 that pertain to plankton counts, as well as any follow-up investigations triggered by calls to the Fishwatch hotline, including those related to marine and non-marine species deaths. It also covers data on plankton counts and water quality at known fish kill locations. It is not about finger pointing, it is simply about facts. We need to understand what is being collected, what the government knows and what assessments have been made. This will allow the parliament and the public to draw informed conclusions and hold government agencies to account, where appropriate. Our coastal ecosystems are too important to be treated with indifference and our seafood industry too valuable to be put at risk by complacency. I commend the motion to the council.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (19:54): I thank those who have made a contribution tonight: the Hon. Nicola Centofanti, the Hon. Ian Hunter and the Hon. Connie Bonaros. I note that the Hon. Connie Bonaros has moved an amendment, which restricts the information with regard to the SA Shellfish Quality Assurance Program to that referencing plankton counts. Certainly I am open to that and supportive of that amendment—it was a compromise reached between the opposition, the government, myself and the Hon. Connie Bonaros earlier today in a discussion, understanding the sensitivities around commercial protections for those in the industry.

The intent of this motion tonight is pretty much what the Hon. Nicola Centofanti just said: to assess what has been collected, what we know and then to inform what we can do from the broadest possible scope. I do know that there has been frustration, for example, from GPs, who did not have access to public health information in a way that they would have preferred earlier on as we address what is somewhat of an unprecedented issue with the current toxic algal bloom and the impact that it is having right across South Australia's shores.

I note and remind members of this council as well that this is not something, in calling for this information, that is out of the ordinary in other jurisdictions. I refer members of the council to the *Tasmanian Biotoxin News*, which comes out every week. I look at the summary of results for the week commencing Monday 26 March 2025, published by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania as part of the Shellfish Market Access Program. In that, it notes that:

> Boomer Bay, Maria Zone, Little Taylors Bay, and Adventure Bay PST levels have been above the regulatory limit of 0.8 mg/kg in recent weeks (see results in red below). Based on the toxin profiles and available phytoplankton data, we believe that all these exceedances have been caused by *Gymnodinium catenatum* blooms.

Very helpfully, those amounts that do exceed the limits are in red in this document. This comes out every week in Tasmania. Similar documents come out in New South Wales; similar documents come out right across the world. The thing is, when you create a system where information is released more regularly, hopefully that will lead to a situation where conspiracy theories do not abound and good science is able to be practised, particularly because good science by its very nature should not be secretive, and that is the point of this motion. I commend it to the council.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HARASSMENT

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. C Bonaros:

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.

(Continued from 4 June 2025.)

The Hon. C. BONAROS (19:58): I rise today to conclude my remarks in relation to this motion, which members will recall deals with the request to have the equal opportunity commissioner inquire into local government. I am glad I took that opportunity to seek leave to conclude my remarks, because it has certainly given rise to a lot of important public discussion and context to many of the issues that I attempted to summarise in the previous session.

I note in particular, of course, the opinion piece in InDaily by Mayor Robert Bria. I did speak to Mayor Bria and said to him, 'Gee, I hope you don't mind, Robert, but it was you I was referring to when I talked about things never being as toxic as they are.' He said, 'I am glad you did.' I also said, 'I may have also mentioned your name in those conversations,' and he was more than pleased to hear that, so I am really pleased that he has come out and made the comments that he has made. I think it is worth reflecting on his opinion piece around the dream of serving the community, which he sees, as many others have seen, has truly turned into a nightmare across so many councils. He says:

Whatever your thoughts are about local government, the recent spate of resignations by mayors and councillors should alarm us all.

It certainly has alarmed us all. He goes on to say:

It is tragic that over time, the dream of serving your community turned into a nightmare.

For those of us who remain, if the biggest challenge facing councils in South Australia is financial sustainability, then elected member behaviour comes in as a photo-finish second place.

He also says that it is alarming that:

In the…three years since the 2022…elections, there have been enough examples of elected members behaving badly to fill a heavy coffee table book.

I think he is mindful of the fact that he may be critical of other councils when things may not be perfect in his own council, but I certainly think the point that Mayor Bria tried to make in that article is that the increasing number of allegations about bullying and harassment against elected members and, in some cases, against staff has been the worst that he has seen, certainly during his 20 years as mayor, and that the majority of the alleged victims of that behaviour are women and, in many cases, women holding the office of mayor. He noted, quite importantly, that over the last 12 months he had actually attended, along with many others:

…several forums for mayors where the issue of bullying and harassment has dominated the discussion, only to leave deeply unsettled, having watched fellow mayors become distressed and in tears as they talk about the lack of respect and toxic atmosphere at council meetings.

He says:

The reality is that bullying and harassment in councils is a scourge that is impacting the reputation of our sector as a trusted level of government, undermining community confidence in decision-making, our ability to deliver services and infrastructure, and costing ratepayers millions of dollars in legal fees.

Equally alarming is that it is also posing a serious threat to gender equity in local government by potentially putting off talented women from serving on council and thereby creating a leadership vacuum that communities cannot afford.

In terms of how widespread the problem is, I agree with Mayor Bria that:

It is no longer acceptable to brush off this behaviour as the wayward antics of a few ego-driven rebels looking for a cause.

A quiet 'fireside chat' over a cup of tea to smooth things over doesn’t cut it.

> People's personal lives and professional reputations are being destroyed [while we take those approaches].

He talks about the need to look at the environment:

> …which appears to embolden perpetrators of bullying and harassment, intimidates victims, and demoralises council staff.

He also talks about the fact that the Behavioural Standards Panel has not been the panacea that some thought and hoped it would be. I guess all that points to even more reason—and is in fact the precise reason—why I say the equal opportunity commissioner should actually step into this realm. He goes on to talk about the issue of sanctions against those people who are in breach being like:

> …a wet lettuce leaf, leaving victims frustrated and losing faith in a system supposedly designed to protect them…

I have to say that in some respects he is somewhat critical, I think, in a very respectful way, of the ways that we have tried to address this issue. He mentioned that the Local Government Association:

> …needs to step up to the plate and make its voice heard that it not only realises that this is a serious problem, but it is also doing something about it.

That is not to say that there are not people who are trying to do something about it. Indeed, I will go on now to just canvas very quickly the work of ALGWA in this space. I am sure many members in this place would have received correspondence from the president of ALGWA, who has taken the time to send correspondence outlining what attempts have been made.

We know there has been a taskforce established. We know there are draft guidelines. A lot of people have invested a lot of work into this and certainly when Ms Lewis stood for president I think one of her main drivers was to ensure—and this is, I think, made clear to all of us—that she did not want any other person to go through what she had gone through when she served as an elected member of Alexandrina Council.

In spite of the mental health toll, physical toll and financial toll this has taken on a lot of individuals, I see a lot of brave people putting their names to a piece of paper and saying that they would like to see this issue addressed. I was joined earlier this evening by a number of mayors and councillors—Mayor Bria could not be here this evening—who are very keen to see this go through: Mayor Wisdom, Mayor Monceaux, Mayor Holmes-Ross, Councillor Hoffmann, former Councillor Pascale and of course Ms Lewis from ALGWA, and I think that is just a demonstration. There is a letter that I think has been circulated to members that is also signed by those mayors and a number of others as well to show that this is a real issue that needs to be addressed.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of them for speaking up. I know it has taken us a while to get here, but certainly what I have seen between February and now is strength in numbers, if you like, and when one person breaks that ice it makes it a lot easier for others to come forward and do the same. My genuine hope is that the equal opportunity commissioner undertaking this inquiry will be able to multiply that effect by many times over what we have seen already.

Before closing, I would like to take the opportunity to read just one letter onto the record that I received and the reason I chose this letter is because it is from the very first person who raised this issue with me. I think she is somebody who is known in these corridors in terms of the roles that she has held in other places as well. It was really a discussion with Ms Louise Pascale earlier in the year that prompted all of this and I think a lot of work on Louise's part was in terms of getting people to be more vocal around the extent of the problem and things that people were not necessarily comfortable talking about either publicly or indeed amongst themselves, so I do thank Louise for doing that.

Even though she starts by thanking me for championing an investigation into the experience of women in local government, before I read this letter I would like to thank her for putting this on our radar as strongly and as passionately as she did and bringing everyone along with her on that journey, which I think is an amazing thing. That letter reads:

> Thank you for championing an investigation into the experiences of women in Local Government in the Upper House. It is long overdue. As you know I have now resigned from Adelaide Hills Council because I believe my community can no longer be served adequately by a Council which chooses to spend $400,000 of ratepayers' money on lawyers charged with managing internal complaints with Councillors.

My community of Woodforde is in desperate need of footpaths, maintenance of open spaces, traffic management and lighting. Due to the Hamilton Hill development which has seen 400 new residential dwellings in just 5 years we have grown exponentially and need attention.

When I first raised my behavioural complaints against the conduct of another Elected Member they were dismissed. What followed were 8 countercomplaints against me over 18 months. I cannot tell you what they were for because Adelaide Hills Council have kept them all confidential, but I can confidently say they weren't serious enough to pay lawyers $50,000 to investigate them.

In one case a LinkedIn Post was sent out for investigation at the cost of $10,000.

I requested mediation with the male Councillor who was sending in all these complaints as I wanted the excessive spend of ratepayers money stopped. My first request directly to him was declined, my multiple requests after that through my lawyer to Adelaide Hills Council were never responded to.

This Councillor who raised behavioural complaints against me used the behavioural standards policy in a way that felt punitive and I believe leveraged it in a manner that contributed to a hostile environment.

I had to engage a lawyer to help me manage the barrage of emails I would get from Adelaide Hills Council lawyers or staff on a Friday afternoon around 5pm—just before the weekend.

The personal toll this took on me meant I had to take stress leave twice, the second time I made it clear that these complaints were taking a toll on my wellbeing and safety and presented the Council with a medical certificate.

However the CEO said he could not recognise the certificate, nor halt the investigations while I was on stress leave, this was up to the Councillors who were in charge of the investigations, (because by now the Mayor had been stripped of all her powers under the same policy)—so in essence I could take stress leave but not leave from the thing that was causing my distress in the first place.

It is worth noting that under new provisions of the Work Health and Safety Act, the CEO is actually charged with mitigating risk of psychosocial safety in Councils.

Being an Elected Member in Local Government is not my full time job. It is what I juggled in my life because I have a genuine passion for representing my community through a boundary realignment which is causing conflict and stress with residents—my neighbours.

I'm also a single mother, running my own business to pay my mortgage and raise my son.

It was not uncommon for me to be driving home from Council meetings down the freeway in deep distress—so upset I would just pray I make it home alive to kiss my son good night. I know that sounds dramatic, but Adelaide Hills Council is a half hour drive from my home and I would often drive home either down the freeway or through unlit hills roads home late at night.

I stopped feeling safe in meetings or around the CEO and this male Councillor. I struggled with a constant sense of fear and discomfort.

I could not have dinner with my colleagues prior to meetings because I did not feel safe, I could not socialise with them at the pub after meetings and workshops because of how ostracising this had become.

I was told twice by an Elected Member that the Stirling Pub after council meetings and workshops was where Councillors would gather to bond and workshop ideas. I found out at one of those drinking sessions after an Ordinary Council Meeting a colleague sat with a group of Councillors and the CEO and remarked how well I handled a difficult debate that evening. For which the male Councillor who was lodging complaints against me told his colleagues—including the CEO—the steps you can take through the Behavioural Standard policy to make sure I am kept silent and behaving…

In order to be an Elected Member in the Adelaide Hills Council I had to make a personal safety plan and take blood pressure medication in order to show up and do my job. When I raised with the Acting Mayor all this, my letter was sent out to lawyers—once again. And all I was offered was for him to chaperone me at meetings.

This is a political environment and I acknowledge we will not always get along but I took steps under the Local Government Act to try and resolve issues with the complainant. Instead what prevailed was tens of thousands of ratepayers dollars being spent on lawyers and staff resources being taken away from the community. And with nothing resolved.

Unfortunately even after resigning the Adelaide Hills Council is still spending money on lawyers to send me threatening correspondence and staff resources are being used to canvas journalists against me.

Here is what my mother wrote on the weekend:

'Are you OK? I have just read the Sunday Mail and seen another article on the Adelaide Hills Council. Is there any way this can stop now that you are out? It is really starting to concern me at where this is going to end. Please look after yourself'—and of course, lots of kisses, because it is from mum—'and I am here if you need me.'

Louise does end that by saying:

When does this stop Connie?

And I do not blame her for what she said. It is a story that many of us have heard too often. There is not one part that should not concern any of us that Louise has not covered in her letter. If you do not necessarily buy into the whole—and I am sorry to say it this crassly, but if you do not buy into the whole bullying and harassment thing, $10,000 to investigate a LinkedIn post; $400,000 at one council; if that is not enough to get our support for this then I do not know what is.

It is not hard to see the toll that this takes on people, and I do not think we should underestimate that toll. We have firsthand experience at dealing with that in this place, and the legal profession certainly has firsthand experience at dealing with it in its place and many other workplaces do. But as I said when I first spoke on this issue, this is our third tier of government. And quite rightly, as Louise said in her letter and as Mayor Bria has said in his article, people serve on local council out of the goodness of their hearts. They do not do it because they have to; they do it because they want to give back to their communities, and they want to see their communities thrive.

But this is not what people sign up for. This is not the sort of environment people sign up for, it is not the sort of toxicity people sign up for, and whichever way you look at it and whichever way you spin it, it is just not acceptable.

We have an opportunity here tonight. I am quietly confident—I think I am very confident, but I will remain quietly confident—that the chamber will support this motion. As I said at the outset when I spoke on this issue, there is nothing for the LGA or anyone else to fear here. This is not coming in and pointing the finger at anybody and telling them that they have done the wrong thing. This is about ripping that band-aid off, lifting the lid, looking underneath, identifying the problems and identifying the mechanisms to help local government address what has become, as Mayor Bria said, a very, very toxic workplace.

We should not tolerate that. We do not tolerate it here. I know we always have our ups and downs and there are always issues. Parliamentarians, judges and members of councils have for reasons that go back in time, which we did discuss this evening, historically been held to a different standard, but the bottom line is we do set the standards as well. So I think this is a critical role not just for us in here, not just for the judiciary, which we have already seen well underway in terms of being addressed, but also for the good people who do put up their hands in local government to continue to serve their local communities.

At the end of the day, as Louise said, that is where people want to see their councillors spend their energy and time, and that is where they want council to spend their resources. With those words, I commend this motion to the chamber and look forward to contributions by other members.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (20:18): I rise to speak in favour of the motion. In so doing, I reflect on the fact that I think I am one of three members of this chamber that have had experience on a local council. I know the Hon. Justin Hanson has and the Hon. Tung Ngo. I am certainly a key—and yourself, Mr President, apologies. I am certainly a fan of local councils, and I recognise the important role that they play. I see local government as being the level of government that is most closely connected to the community, and it plays a really important role in terms of representing the voice of the local community. So I am sorry to hear about the experiences that the Hon. Connie Bonaros has shared in the chamber and sorry to hear about the loss of good people from the local government sector.

I thought it might be useful for me to reflect a little bit on my observations from my brief time on the Adelaide City Council. I was on the council between 2014 and 2015. I went into federal parliament and then returned between 2018 and 2021, before I had the privilege of coming into this place. It was really interesting to me to observe the significant change that happened in local government within those four years, and I have wondered over the last few years what has driven that.

I think it is fair to say there has been a significant shift in global politics over the last decade. I hate to say the T word, but I do think Trumpism and the coarseness that has been brought to politics has not helped. I think that local government is particularly vulnerable to the effects of that because it does not have the conventions and the processes in place to manage conflict that we have here in a chamber like ours, which is set up as a very adversarial environment. We have conventions and

processes that help us manage that conflict. I often worry that local government does not have those same traditions in place.

I saw in particular that change happen in Town Hall. During my first period on council, between 2014 and 2015, I thought the council was very collegial and effective, but the latter council, which was controlled by the Team Adelaide factional grouping, really seemed to lead to a huge amount of acrimony and dysfunction. Whilst within the parliament we operate on a political party system, and we have our structures and processes in place to manage that, local councils do not. I do think we need to think a little bit about what we can do to better equip councils to manage some of those conflicts at a time when conflict in politics is becoming more prevalent and our constituency is becoming more fractured.

I think there are a few issues here, and I support the investigation that the honourable member has proposed, but there are a few structural problems with local government that I would encourage the state government to consider. We need to look at remuneration for local councillors, which is significantly below par in terms of the expectations and what we ask of our elected members, particularly with some suburban councils where people are required to do a huge amount of work and do not get much reimbursement. I think that significantly reduces the number of people who are able to put themselves forward to represent their community, particularly when you are looking at people who might have child care or family obligations and the like, or younger people who might be working as well and struggling to make being on council financially viable.

As part of that there needs to be a discussion around sitting times. We have talked a lot within this chamber about the effect of having late-night sittings on behaviour and temperament. I do think it is a problem that local councillors are expected to finish a full working day, in many cases, and go well into the night debating complex matters that impact on their community. That might have suited 30 or 40 years ago when councillors may have been more likely to be people who were retired from the workforce—and I do not say that with any disrespect—but over time the profile and the make-up of council has changed and councillors are more likely to be juggling other work priorities, so I do not think it is fair to expect councillors to go along at the end of a full workday and go to a meeting that is late in the night; that is not conducive for good behaviour.

I wonder also whether the low turnout in local government elections is contributing to some of the factional and personality-based problems that we have at a local level, because when you have so few people voting and participating in local councils there can be a propensity for a small group of individuals or a clique to get control of a council in a way that we do not see happen within our broader parliament.

I have been on a long journey around compulsory voting for local councils. I was against it for many years because I did not want to see strong, independent community voices being shut out of council, but I have started to think in recent years that maybe we need to have a discussion around compulsory voting within our local council sector because that may be a way of weeding out particularly problematic personalities. We know also that the political party system itself applies a level of probity sometimes to candidate selection, which might also play a role in terms of weeding out some difficult personalities, not to say that you cannot be a difficult person and still come from a political party. I just make the point that there are a few other layers that might be in place.

I do support the Hon. Connie Bonaros' referral to the commission. I note that the government have an amendment. I am not sure what value that adds, but I am open minded in that regard and I will listen to the debate. If there is a good reason to support it, I am open to it, but I am not sure what that really adds at this level.

My final point would be that I think the previous Liberal government, under the leadership of Vickie Chapman, did do quite a bit of work on this area in terms of trying to set up a standards panel and look at how we manage behaviour. Clearly, those changes have not satisfied community expectations in terms of delivering the kind of outcomes that we want. I think it is time for us to have a bigger debate around the structure of local government and the expectations of local government within our democracy.

I see it as being a really vital sector. It should be resourced appropriately and elected representatives at that level should be respected for the work that they do. As part of this referral to

the equal opportunity commissioner, I hope the government also considers some of the other structural barriers that might be contributing to some of the behavioural problems that have been observed, particularly within the local government sector.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (20:26): I rise to contribute to the debate on the motion moved by the Hon. Connie Bonaros. This motion calls for an independent inquiry into the prevalence and handling of harassment, including sexual harassment, in South Australia's local government sector. That is a serious issue and one that warrants proper attention and action, so the opposition will be supporting this motion.

The adequacy of current laws, policies and complaints processes and whether improvements can be made are legitimate and necessary questions. We support the involvement of the equal opportunity commissioner in leading this inquiry and reporting back to the parliament. However, we do take serious issue with the government's proposed amendment, which I believe is going to be moved by the Hon. Russell Wortley, who wants the local government sector to provide appropriate resourcing to the equal opportunity commissioner to undertake such an inquiry.

We believe that proposal is somewhat outrageous, given the fact that the equal opportunity commissioner is a statutory office holder funded by the state government. This is proposed to be a state-led inquiry into matters of serious public interest, triggered by concerns raised in this parliament and endorsed certainly by a number of its members. For the government to now shift the cost of that inquiry onto councils is an abdication of responsibility, we believe.

I suspect many people in the local government sector would feel rightly insulted and somewhat let down by the government's amendment, because I think it also undermines the spirit of the motion. It sends a message that the government is willing to be seen to act but not carry the responsibility for it. While the opposition supports the motion, I do want to make it abundantly clear that we do not support the amendment that shifts the cost of a government inquiry onto local councils.

We firmly believe that the government should fund this inquiry through the normal mechanisms that support the Equal Opportunity Commission and that would preserve its independence, protect its credibility and ensure that victims of harassment and the community more broadly can have confidence in the process. I commend the motion in its original form.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (20:29): I rise in full support of this motion and I thank the Hon. Connie Bonaros for moving this motion which calls for an independent inquiry into the prevalence of harassment, including sexual harassment, in South Australia's local government sector.

This motion builds on the precedent set by this Legislative Council in 2020, when we passed a motion that led to a comprehensive inquiry into harassment in the legal profession. That inquiry was a turning point. It uncovered systemic issues, gave voice to those who had long been silenced, and laid the foundation for reform.

The recommendations from that inquiry have been captured in the Statutes Amendment (Legal Profession Review Recommendations) Bill 2025. I believe that important reforms can be achieved when we listen, investigate and act. Now we must extend the same commitment to make an inquiry into local government.

In March, *The Advertiser* reported that several councillors, many female elected members, raised concerns about behavioural policies being misused to silence dissent and to intimidate. This is not just poor governance, it is a matter of workplace safety and democratic integrity. We only have to look to recent events in the City of Burnside to understand the urgency of this motion.

As reported by InDaily in February 2025, internal disputes within the council have escalated to what was described as ridiculous proportions. Council meetings have become entangled in personal grievances, procedural gamesmanship and a culture of hostility that undermines not only good governance but also public trust. It also derails the roles of wise decision-making for constituents at the local government level.

This is not an issue confined to smaller or regional councils. Even in the Adelaide City Council, the Lord Mayor recently issued a formal reminder to councillors about acceptable standards of behaviour. As reported in *The Advertiser*, this followed a series of tense and disruptive meetings

that raised serious questions about professionalism and respect within the chamber. Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents. As the mover and other members have mentioned, they reflect a broader cultural problem across the sector.

At this point I want to acknowledge Bronwyn Lewis, the President of the Australian Local Government Women's Association South Australia for sending me a letter in support of this inquiry. I also note that in her remarks, she outlined that in March, ALGWA SA hosted a session for mayors and elected members, which clearly demonstrates the scale and seriousness of the issues being faced. These include a sharp rise in resignations and departure of capable, community-focused elected members due to the weaponisation of the compliance process and its impact on their mental health. The letter also mentioned that the associations invested significant effort into increasing female representation in local government, aiming for gender parity.

While progress has been made, this fragile momentum is at risk. The current climate also jeopardises efforts to engage candidates from diverse backgrounds, which would be a loss for democratic representation and community leadership across South Australia. I totally agree with those sentiments.

Local government is where many South Australians first engage with public life, yet we continue to hear reports of bullying, harassment, and unsafe workplace cultures. While mechanisms exist through the Ombudsman, the Office for Public Integrity and the Local Government Act, they are largely reactive. They address harm after it has occurred. What this motion proposes is a proactive, systematic approach, an independent inquiry led by the equal opportunity commissioner to assess the adequacy of our current laws and structures and to recommend improvements.

This is not about casting blame or pointing fingers: it is about creating safer, more respectful workplaces where people are able to contribute meaningfully. It is about ensuring that every council worker, every elected member and every community volunteer can participate in public life without the fear of harassment, intimidation or bullying. We have seen what is possible: the legal profession inquiry led to legislative reform. Let us apply the same model to local government. I will not be supporting the government's amendments. I am wholeheartedly supporting this motion in its original form.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (20:35): I would like to move an amendment to this motion:

Leave out paragraph 2 and insert new paragraph as follows:

2. That the local government sector provide appropriate resourcing to the equal opportunity commissioner to undertake such an inquiry.

I rise to speak on behalf of the government in relation to the Hon. Connie Bonaros's motion for an independent inquiry into harassment in the South Australian local government sector. Any form of harassment, particularly sexual harassment, is unacceptable in a workplace environment and, to be quite honest, unacceptable in any environment. South Australians also have a right to expect high standards of behaviour from their elected officials, whether they are state members, federal parliamentarians or local councils.

It is for these reasons that the government supports the intent of the honourable member's motion. The motion particularly seeks to have the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity undertake the review. This follows a similar inquiry into harassment in the legal profession undertaken by the commissioner in 2021. That 2021 inquiry was preceded by a motion from the Hon. Connie Bonaros. More recently, the Attorney-General commissioned the equal opportunity commissioner to undertake a further review of harassment in the legal profession, the report of which was published in February this year, three years on from the 2021 review.

This 2024 report was received by the government in December last year and published publicly in January. Recommendation 1 of that review was that the courts' Respectful Behaviours Working Group be reconvened and adequately resourced to do so. The Attorney-General's Department recently provided $100,000 in funding to the Courts Administration Authority to facilitate this recommendation. The government continues to work closely with the courts and with legal sector stakeholders in working through the report's recommendations.

The issue of harassment in the local government sector is an important one that the sector itself must bear some responsibility for addressing. It is therefore proposed that the local government sector provide support for such a review to be held. Of course, the state already provides significant resourcing to the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity and her office, which would also support such a review. In the event the motion is successful today, I understand the Attorney-General intends to work with the commissioner and the local government sector, as well as with relevant unions and other stakeholders, on how such a review might operate.

I note also that the Local Government Act 1999 provides an existing framework for managing council member conduct. Council members are required to comply with the Behavioural Standards for Council Members and any behavioural support policies adopted by the council. Councils have the primary responsibility for managing complaints about breaches of these standards. This reflects the longstanding approach that councils are best placed to deal with these matters.

Where a council member's behaviour is alleged to be a repeated or serious behaviour, complaints may be referred to the Behavioural Standards Panel by the mayor, by a resolution of the council, by three elected members or, in specific circumstances, by the chief executive officer. Complaints of alleged breaches of the integrity provisions under the act, such as alleged breaches of conflict-of-interest requirements or disclosure of confidential information, are dealt with by the Ombudsman.

In closing, I wish to thank the Hon. Ms Bonaros for bringing this important motion to the council. I commend my amendments to the members.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (20:39): I rise to support this motion. I indicate I will be supporting the government amendment and thank them for explaining it, which is what I had hoped to happen before I made my contribution. I start my speech to this motion with some words that have been sent to me, urging me to support this motion, from a female mayor who states to me:

> For nearly two years my life has been an ongoing nightmare due to bullying, harassment, misinformation, disinformation, allegations and counter allegations. Every agency I have liaised with to report this behaviour has either failed me or not had the jurisdiction to help me. These include, among others, my own Council, the Local Government Association, Local Government Risk Services, SafeWork SA, legal firms, and State Government agencies.
>
> I have had to spend $75,000 of my personal income on legal fees to put my position and seek to defend my reputation, and further expenditure on associated mental and physical health issues. This is more than my yearly income. No democratically elected member—Mayors or Councillors—should have to resort to expending such monies against Councils or other Councillors who use ratepayers money to fund their factional agendas.
>
> This is not sustainable for the sector or the communities they serve who face increased rates as a result.
>
> Despite efforts for reform the current Behavioural Complaints system is broken, open to abuse and weaponisation. I have done my best to support other Elected Members across the sector but everyone has their limits as the spate of recent resignations indicates. I too have almost reached my limit.
>
> Please support Connie Bonaros's motion to start the process of recovery.
>
> This is workplace violence against both women and men, but affecting women disproportionately. It is also an assault on local democracy. As the Mayor of Norwood recently said: 'The dream of serving our communities has turned into a nightmare'.

I also reflect on the contribution made by the Hon. Frank Pangallo in this place in question time yesterday, who raised the issue of the Whyalla situation where a Facebook post attracted the ire of a mayor of that council when it was posted by the deputy mayor of that council. I thank the Hon. Frank Pangallo for tabling those documents, because I have availed myself of the supposedly offending Facebook post today and the response from the Mayor of Whyalla. That Facebook post reads:

> This is a very uncertain time for our community and although as an elected member I don't have the authority to make changes to private industries, I can be available to listen to the struggles our community are facing and be a voice/advocate wherever possible.
>
> If anyone would like to talk about their current experiences or even just send me an email with your personal account of any issues, then I am here to listen and advocate for you.
>
> I am also connected to a lot of community groups that can help people if they need support. Please reach out either by email—

giving her email address—

or phone—

giving her phone number. It continues:

> I am also happy to meet with people 1:1 or as a group.
>
> We are all in this together and as an individual I am passionate about helping and fighting for our community.

That Facebook post saw a response from the mayor that, 'I need to raise an urgent matter.' The response reads, in part:

> Your Facebook Post uploaded earlier today, and which has been shared on various community Facebook pages has been brought to the attention of both myself and the Council Executive as potentially breaching Council policy and procedures. That concern will be addressed next week.
>
> Under the heading of a Councillor, you have been answering questions and making comments that may contradict and/or be in conflict with current or future Council decisions and/or positions. You have expressed opinions that, while they may be your personal view, have been made as an Elected Member and may, therefore, similarly contradict the official view of the Mayor (as spokesperson) and/or Whyalla City Council.
>
> The nature of the comments on the Facebook pages have, as to be expected, received a range of strong, negative comments directed at Council, which can not and should not be answered.

I ask you how a Facebook post from a deputy mayor to a city in crisis, offering to listen to her community, can attract such a response? Welcome to councils in 2025.

As Norwood Mayor Robert Bria has very articulately put in his recent InDaily article, there are serious issues here that need to be addressed, and I commend the Hon. Connie Bonaros for bringing this motion before this place to move forward with this issue. The equal opportunity commissioner is an appropriate person to address it and, as she says, rip the bandaid off, take a look and hopefully start the healing.

Mayor Bria has stated that during his nearly 20 years as mayor he has never seen things so bad. He writes in InDaily:

> Disturbingly, but not surprisingly, it appears the majority of alleged victims of this poor behaviour are women and, in many cases, women holding the office of mayor.
>
> Over the past 12 months, I have attended several forums for mayors where the issue of bullying and harassment has dominated the discussion, only to leave deeply unsettled, having watched fellow mayors become distressed and in tears as they talk about the lack of respect and toxic atmosphere at council meetings.
>
> The reality is that bullying and harassment in councils is a scourge that is impacting the reputation of our sector as a trusted level of government, undermining community confidence in decision-making, our ability to deliver services and infrastructure, and costing ratepayers millions of dollars in legal fees.

That is why I do believe that the government's amendment is actually appropriate. I think it is quite appropriate that the equal opportunity commissioner, as a respected independent body here, takes on this job, but it is also the responsibility of the Local Government Association to ensure that it is paid for.

The reality is these small issues such as Facebook posts have seen, and certainly in the Adelaide Hills Council there is a situation of a LinkedIn post, some $10,000 in council fees expended. The LinkedIn post was about women's participation in politics. The LinkedIn post itself, which breached no community standards according to LinkedIn or any other social media platform but certainly raised the concern of other councillors as somehow offending what they saw as the standards that should be upheld, was then also the subject of complaints to the media that, when the author of that LinkedIn post made an apology, she did not do so in a forum in a way, at a time and in a manner that they approved of. She did so at a council meeting when she was requested to do so. They did not like the timing of her apology, so they pursued that in the media as well.

I ask you, in that particular case, about the merit of spending $10,000 on a LinkedIn post, no doubt possibly some tens of thousands of dollars to come on Facebook posts for the Whyalla council unless this sort of behaviour is somehow addressed in a much more productive way than it is currently being done.

I have spoken to many people involved in local council about the current situation of how, if you like, in some ways the thought police—the processes that are meant to protect democracy are

actually being weaponized to shut down democracy in our state. It is incredibly important that this is funded appropriately. I am supportive of the government amendment. I do think we need to get on with having an independent body and a respected body such as the equal opportunity commissioner take a look at this issue.

Otherwise, we are going to not only lose good people from councils, we are going to continue to see tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars of good money going after bad for pathetic reasons such as Facebook or LinkedIn posts that offend somebody's sensibilities, but where they have a tool at their disposal that can be weaponised to go after the person who has offended them, even though most people in the community—and I certainly read out that entire Facebook post, and I cannot see what the issue was with a councillor saying that she was there and willing and ready to listen to her community, a community in distress.

We have councils in distress. We have people who are good councillors and mayors in distress. We are losing good councillors and mayors. This cannot go on. I urge you to support the motion.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (20:50): I start by thanking honourable members for their contributions this evening: the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Dr Centofanti; the Hon. Jing Lee; the Hon. Rob Simms; the Hon. Mr Wortley; and the Hon. Tammy Franks. I think, in all, we have summarised the issue that we are trying to address.

The only point that I will raise in closing is the issue of the amendment. I acknowledge the concerns that have been raised by the Leader of the Opposition and I particularly acknowledge, in so doing, her concern around regional councils and them having to bear the brunt of some of that cost—if indeed the amendment is agreed to. I guess my conversations have been based around getting this motion through. We have had discussions around how it is going to be paid for. I do not say this flippantly when some people say to me, 'Well, if we can spend $400,000 on legal fees, we can afford to have an inquiry into something that is very necessary,' nor do I attribute that to a single individual either, in so saying, but the ultimate objective here is to get this amendment up.

What I can say from my discussions with the Attorney on this particular point—and I note the Hon. Mr Wortley's contribution—is what we did see from the legal profession inquiry was a labour-intensive inquiry that did put a strain on the equal opportunity commissioner. I think if we are to ask the equal opportunity commissioner today to do this without anything, that strain would be compounded.

We are dealing with local government. While I accept the concerns that have been raised—and they are valid ones—I remain of the view that we do have the opportunity and we should take the opportunity tonight to pass this motion, albeit with an amendment, with a view to how this review might operate and what it will entail, and that in and of itself will entail engagement between the Attorney-General, local government and the Equal Opportunity Commission. I think between those three bodies they would be well placed to work out what needs to be done, how much it is going to cost and how it is going to be funded.

The only other point that I would make in relation to that, if it serves as any comfort to the Leader of the Opposition also, is: we have been down this path before. We have done this with the legal profession, so we are not necessarily starting from scratch. We do not have to reinvent the wheel. The EO Commission will have a lot of the things—I think, and I might be completely wrong, but I am assuming that a lot of the sorts of processes that they will be thinking would apply to this have already been created, so we will not necessarily have to go through that process.

That might be one of the things that alleviates some of the initial costs that we have seen in other inquiries, but that is not to say that there is size and scale here as well. I think the people who are best placed to actually make those determinations are the three bodies that are going to be involved: the Attorney-General, the equal opportunity commissioner and the local government sector. It is on that basis that I am willing to accept the government's amendment on the understanding that they actually, as the Hon. Mr Wortley said, engage in those discussions with those sectors and with the commissioner to work out what needs to happen from here to make it happen.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

KODOMO NO HI JAPAN FESTIVAL

The Hon. J.S. LEE (20:55): I move:

That this council—

1. Congratulates the Japan Australia Friendship Association for celebrating the milestone 30th anniversary of the Adelaide Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival in 2025;

2. Notes that Kodomo no Hi, meaning 'Children's Day,' is a Japanese national holiday celebrated on 5 May, dedicated to respecting children's personalities and celebrating their happiness and commends the outstanding Japanese students who were presented with awards for their ATAR at this year's event as part of the festival's commitment to recognising and nurturing young talent;

3. Recognises that the Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival is Adelaide's longest running celebration of Japanese culture, strengthening cultural and social links between Japan and Australia through music, performances, craft, food, and workshops;

4. Acknowledges the President of the Japan Australia Friendship Association, Mr Mike Dunphy, the committee, volunteers and supporters for their dedication and hard work in making the festival a success over the past three decades; and

5. Commends the Japan Australia Friendship Association for its longstanding contributions to supporting the Japanese community, fostering friendship and cultural exchange and for enriching our vibrant and diverse multicultural community in South Australia.

It is a great honour today to acknowledge the Japan Australia Friendship Association and congratulate them on celebrating the milestone 30th anniversary of the Adelaide Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival in 2025. The Japan Australia Friendship Association, known affectionately as JAFA, was established in 1998 as a social and cultural volunteer organisation to promote friendship and cultural exchange between Australia and Japan.

Strong leadership is a driving force behind JAFA. I simply cannot talk about JAFA without talking about its passionate and dedicated president, Mr Mike Dunphy. Mike has been involved with JAFA from the very beginning and is an integral part of JAFA's legacy and story. Mike lived in Japan for almost 20 years before moving to Adelaide with his family in 1994.

At the time, there was very little happening in Adelaide in connection with Japan and Mike's passion for Japanese culture and heritage led him to establish the festival as a way of showcasing Japanese culture to Australians and creating the opportunity for the Japanese community to come together and celebrate their rich heritage. Mike is an enduring figure at the helm of JAFA and is ably assisted by a hardworking committee and many volunteers and supporters who contribute greatly to the association and the festival's success.

While JAFA itself was officially founded in 1998, the Kodomo no Hi Festival was first held in 1995, providing a unique platform in Adelaide, the first of its kind and one of its kind, to share traditional Japanese music, performances, craft, food, martial arts and more with the wider Australian community.

Kodomo no Hi means 'Children's Day' in Japanese and is a national holiday celebrating Japan on 5 May every year. It is a day dedicated to respecting children's personalities and celebrating their happiness, with elders, parents and the community coming together to harness good wishes for good health and good fortune for all children.

The Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival is the oldest and largest Japanese festival in South Australia and has maintained its family-friendly atmosphere for three decades, with organisers and volunteers always going the extra mile to provide a variety of entertainment, activities and customer service for people of all ages to enjoy.

As part of the festival's commitment to recognising and nurturing young talent, each year outstanding Japanese students are presented with awards for their ATAR achievements. I wish to commend all the students who received an award this year and wish them good luck with their future studies and endeavours.

This year not only marked the significant milestone of the 30th anniversary of the much loved and popular Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival, it also sadly marked the festival's grand finale. It was an emotional day for all the attendees, including Her Excellency the Governor and Mr Bunten, and

everyone involved as Mike announced that the festival would be staged for the last time in South Australia this year, due to the changing needs of the community.

It has been a privilege to serve our multicultural community throughout my parliamentary career for more than 15 years, so I do have a very long association with JAFA. Over that time I have been honoured to attend the Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival on almost all occasions and it has been a true delight to see the festival grow and witness the impact it has on the South Australian community.

While the Japanese community in South Australia may be modest in size, its cultural and civic contribution is extraordinary. From language and arts education to festivals like this, Japanese Australians greatly enrich the multicultural identity of our state and also help to build the bilateral relationship between Japan and South Australia.

Over the years, JAFA has delivered a range a programs and initiatives designed to support the Japanese community in South Australia. I would like to take a moment to highlight a number of the key milestones and contributions over the last three decades. JAFA also has a long, enduring, respectful relationship with the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia. I know that Helena Kyriazopoulos, the CEO, has spoken very highly about JAFA and her involvement with JAFA, particularly with Mike Dunphy.

In 1999, JAFA established a children's playgroup as a social support network for Japanese partners of Australians to provide opportunity for Japanese Australian children to play in a Japanese-speaking environment. In 2002, JAFA instituted its annual award for excellence for year 12 students who achieve outstanding results and award for outstanding achievements for students of Japanese at the School of Languages.

JAFA proudly hosted the inaugural conference of the National Federation of Australia Japan Societies in 2003, and in 2007 participated in the inaugural OzAsia Festival's Moon Lantern Festival. In 2011, JAFA donated $10,000 to Japan Red Cross for disaster relief and recruited volunteers to go to Japan to assist on the ground following the devastating earthquake and tsunami. I recall that I bought a painting from the fundraiser and this particular painting hangs proudly in my staff office in Parliament House.

The Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival was named the Australia Day Council of South Australia Community Event of the Year in 2014 and again in 2018 by the City of West Torrens, which shows a longstanding relationship with the City of West Torrens.

In 2016, the very popular and exciting AnimeGO! Japan Pop Culture Festival was launched for lovers of all things anime and manga. JAFA president, Mike Dunphy, was appointed to the University of Adelaide Bachelor of Languages and Diploma in Languages advisory board in 2019. In 2021, JAFA established a community social welfare program to support Japanese community members suffering from mental health issues as a result of COVID isolation.

JAFA proudly co-hosted the National Federation of Australia Japan Societies' conference again in 2023. In addition to JAFA's incredible donation and volunteering support following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, JAFA has also made generous donations to various disaster relief efforts, including the Australian Red Cross bushfire appeal in 2020, and the Australian Red Cross flood appeal in 2022.

The Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival has been the main fundraising venture for these philanthropic efforts, enabling JAFA to raise more than $50,000 in donations to support relief appeals in Australia, in Japan and abroad since 2011. JAFA will be turning its focus to its many other endeavours that support the communities, such as administering the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, providing language and culture classes, origami and calligraphy workshops, supporting international students and exchange students, and running regular social events for members.

JAFA will also be expanding social welfare programs to continue to serve the community of other initiatives and activities that cater for the contemporary needs of members who require different service and support.

I can also reassure fans of anime that JAFA's other wonderful festival, the AnimeGo! Japan Pop Culture Festival, is here to stay, with planning well underway for the 2025 edition to be held later this year. JAFA launched the AnimeGo! Japan Pop Culture Festival 2016 as a film festival showcasing old and new anime films and it has since grown into a celebration of all aspects of Japanese pop culture, including art, fashion, food, games and more. AnimeGo! features bookshops, demonstrations and panel talks by industry professionals, but it is not just a convention, it showcases modern cultural elements of Japan with a pop culture twist.

It is very sad that the Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival has reached its grand finale this year. It will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by fans, supporters and volunteers for 30 years. This amazing lasting legacy for strengthening cultural and social links between Australia and Japan will always be remembered by all of us who have cherished that relationship.

Once again, I thank and congratulate President Mike Dunphy, the JAFA committee and all the volunteers for their great contribution to the Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival and for building upon the fabric of our multicultural society over the past three decades. I commend JAFA for their longstanding contribution and support for the Japanese-Australian community and for fostering a bilateral relationship. While it is bittersweet to say farewell to Kodomo no Hi Japan Festival, it is also an exciting time as we wish JAFA every success in this new chapter for the future. With those remarks, I commend the motion.

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

Parliamentary Committees

SELECT COMMITTEE ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE TIMBER INDUSTRY IN THE LIMESTONE COAST AND OTHER REGIONS OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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

That the report of the select committee be noted.

(Continued from 5 February 2025.)

The Hon. T.T. NGO (21:07): As a member of this select committee, I rise to speak briefly on the report, titled Matters Relating to the Timber Industry in the Limestone Coast and Other Regions of South Australia. This select committee was established on 16 November 2022, picking up the unfinished work of its predecessor from the Fifty-Fourth Parliament. It kept the same terms of reference, added a new one on environmental impacts and, in March 2023, broadened its brief beyond the Limestone Coast.

The Limestone Coast, stretching to the Victorian border, produces 87 per cent of South Australia's forestry and logging output. It is split into the upper and lower Limestone Coast districts. Most plantations lie within the Green Triangle, Australia's biggest and most productive plantation region. The triangle is defined by lines linking Mount Gambier in the north-west of South Australia, Portland on the Victorian coast and Hamilton to the north-east of inland Victoria. The region covers roughly six million hectares and includes towns such as Millicent, Penola, Naracoorte, Heywood and Coleraine.

The three main growers that control about 95 per cent of South Australia's plantation supply include Green Triangle Forest Products, OneFortyOne Plantations and New Forests. Our key processing hubs are clustered around Mount Gambier and nearby towns, such as Millicent, Nangwarry and Kalangadoo. The committee examined how the broader regulatory environment affects regional economies, competition, environmental outcomes and community interest.

The state government understands the forest industry is an enormous contributor to the South Australian economy. Our state's forest industry employs both directly and indirectly 21,000 South Australians and contributes $3 billion to the South Australian economy each year. For example, 60 per cent of Australia's agriculture timbers, such as poles, posts and fencing, and 48 per cent of the packaging and industrial grade timber come from the South Australian forest industry; 25 per cent of the nation's particle board is sourced from South Australia and each year 4.64 million tonnes of carbon dioxide is captured and stored, cleaning the air and helping the state cut its carbon footprint.

The state government intends to consider all the recommendations in the report, along with further consulting with the industry about these before considering the next steps. A positive outcome is that many recommendations the committee proposed are actions that the Malinauskas Labor government is already addressing. These include the committee's recommendations for:

- an increase in funding for research and development for the forest industry;
- continued investment in tree breeding; and
- for South Australia to advocate for a national forest industry code of conduct to improve transparency of trade between foresters and processors.

The state government has also committed $17 million over 10 years for the establishment of a forestry centre of excellence for research and development in the forest industry. Minister Scriven has appointed Professor Jeff Morrell as director, who commenced in the role in January this year. The building is due to be completed in January 2026.

Other recommendations that have been addressed by the government through the following action include:

- $2.346 million for the purchase of AI fire-detection cameras, which are now guarding 130,000 hectares of Green Triangle plantations;
- $1.8 million for the ongoing response to protect forests in the South-East, following the giant pine scale outbreak in Adelaide; and
- $450,000 for a Tree Breeding Australia facility in Mount Gambier.

The government has also provided funding of $2 million for the development of the South Australian Wood Fibre and Timber Industry Master Plan, which has already funded a range of projects. An example of some of these projects are:

- $300,000 for a workforce development program;
- $250,000 for the This is Wood Work Campaign;
- $260,000 for the standardisation of firefighter training;
- $140,000 for the Monarto fibre precinct;
- $200,000 for the electric log truck trial;
- $200,000 for the CCA timber product stewardship; and
- $70,000 for the State of the Industry report.

The downturn in supply of timber for processors in South Australia that we experienced when this committee was established in 2020 has evolved during the past five years. It is good to hear that in 2025 the supply of timber is stabilising across the industry. With this report we welcome the conclusion of the committee.

Finally, I would like to extend a big thankyou to the committee secretary, Ms Emma Johnston, and research officers Mr Bernard O'Neill and Dr Merry Brown. Thank you also to the committee Chair, the Hon. Nicola Centofanti, and to my fellow committee members, the Hon. Heidi Girolamo, the Hon. Ben Hood, the Hon. Frank Pangallo and the Hon. Russell Wortley.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (21:15): I would like to thank the Hon. Tung Ngo for his contribution to this report. It is an important report. I think the select committee's work reflects the significance of the forestry sector to South Australia, and the unanimous support across party lines reinforces, I think, the shared understanding of its economic, environmental and regional importance.

It has now been four months since the report was tabled, and we are keenly awaiting the minister's formal response to the committee's recommendations. The industry is looking for clear direction and leadership, and we urge the government to give these recommendations the

consideration, and indeed the action, that they deserve. The ball is now firmly in the government's court. With that, I commend the report to the chamber.

Motion carried.

Motions

BIOSECURITY

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

That this council—

1. Recognises the importance of biosecurity to South Australia, in particular with regard to the state's primary industries, and the potential impact on production.

2. Acknowledges the significant and ongoing concerns from industry sectors regarding Biosecurity SA's preparedness and response capability.

3. Calls on the Minister for Primary Industries to:

   (a) establish an independent review into the Department of Primary Industry and Regional South Australia's response to the tomato brown rugose virus incursion, and its capacity and capability to deal with future pest and disease incursions; and

   (b) table the report of the review as well as the government's response upon completion.

(Continued from 5 February 2025.)

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (21:17): I rise to support this motion and indicate I will not be supporting the amendments.

The Hon. J.E. HANSON (21:17): I have a proposal to change the motion, and I will move that ahead of commencing my speech. I move:

Leave out paragraphs 2 and 3 and insert new paragraphs as follows:

2. Acknowledges the importance of a bipartisan approach to biosecurity as a matter of state importance, rather than political opportunism that undermines confidence.

3. Recognises that a national review occurs after any national disease incursion and that this will occur once the tomato brown rugose virus (ToBRV) response in South Australia has been completed and eradication is achieved; and

4. Acknowledges that both the national review and PIRSA input to the review will be used for continuous improvement for responses to the many exotic pests and diseases that are creating increasing risks to Australian primary production.

The motion would now read:

That this council—

1. Recognises the importance of biosecurity to South Australia, in particular with regard to the state's primary industries, and the potential impact on production.

2. Acknowledges the importance of a bipartisan approach to biosecurity as a matter of state importance, rather than political opportunism that undermines confidence.

3. Recognises that a national review occurs after any national disease incursion and that this will occur once the tomato brown rugose virus (ToBRV) response in South Australia has been completed and eradication is achieved and

4. Acknowledges that both the national review and PIRSA input to the review will be used for continuous improvement for responses to the many exotic pests and diseases that are creating increasing risks to Australian primary production.

I am advised that, as a signatory to the national Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, the state government is obliged to respond to exotic diseases like tomato brown rugose virus under a national agreement. The Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed is a formal, legally binding agreement between Plant Health Australia, the Australian government, all state and territory governments, and national plant industry bodies. As a government-industry partnership, the deed outlines national governance and investment in responding to and eradicating emergency plant pests and has

provided the consistent and agreed national approach for managing incursions since it was ratified in 2005.

The South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions is leading the nationally coordinated and funded response to tomato brown rugose fruit virus under an agreed national response plan to eradicate the disease. The Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus Eradication Response Plan was approved in November 2024 by the National Management Group, which is comprised of all Australian governments and affected industries who are signatories to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed.

The response plan includes agreed measures including ongoing testing, surveillance and monitoring to achieve eradication and support a pathway back to the production and trade of tomatoes. The National Management Group has committed $5 million to achieve the response objectives. Clause 11.5.1 of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed states that:

> Plant Health Australia must monitor and report to its members on:
>
> (a) resource usage in the implementation of a Response Plan;
>
> (b) Deed policy issues;
>
> (c) the implementation of Biosecurity measures; and
>
> (d) the implementation of the provisions of this Deed relating to Owner Reimbursement Costs.

In order to fulfil this obligation, I am advised that Plant Health Australia holds debriefs in order to gather, analyse and report on information arising from incidents and response plans. These debriefs are conducted in accordance with the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR) Lessons Management Handbook. In addition, PLANTPLAN, which is part of schedule 5 to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, guides activities under the deed and states on page 32, part 1, the following:

> Incident debriefs are a critical component of the stand down phase as they provide an opportunity for participants to highlight areas requiring improvement as well as positive outcomes.
>
> Incident debriefs will be held at local, state and national levels following termination of the EPP response. It is essential that relevant personnel involved in the response are included in the debriefing process.
>
> [Plant Health Australia] and the [Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer] will coordinate a debriefing in regard to the operation of the [Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed] and PLANTPLAN to help inform any appropriate changes to PLANTPLAN or the [deed].

Debrief reports contain confidential information under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed and for this reason cannot be made public without contravening clause 29 of that deed. The government is satisfied that the independent oversight provided by Plant Health Australia and the Australian Chief Plant Protection Officer through this debriefing and reporting process is sufficient and appropriate for identifying any areas requiring improvements and positive outcomes of the incident responses and will update its processes as required to incorporate new information or address gaps identified by the outcomes of the relevant incident debriefs.

In addition and in response to any requests from industry nationally, the requirement for an efficiency order has been built into the Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus Eradication Response Plan and agreed by all parties. This is a routine independent assessment applied to a national response to ensure that they are being applied as efficiently as they can be. It should be noted that PIRSA undertakes after-action reviews of all its incident responses as part of its ongoing commitment to continuous improvement in emergency management.

It is for these reasons that we seek to amend the motion being moved by the Hon. Nicola Centofanti. It is disappointing that the opposition has changed its approach to biosecurity in South Australia. Whereby previously bipartisan support has been offered from all sides of politics in the event of a major biosecurity incursion, this is not the case with the current opposition. We have seen constant attempts by the shadow minister and other Liberal MPs to score cheap political points, despite the very real risk of spooking interstate and overseas trade markets. We have seen the opposition deliberately take actions that divert much needed resources away from the response.

Members interjecting:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J.E. HANSON: We have seen the opposition take up valuable time at growers' meetings, meetings designed for growers to ask questions and to be provided with critical information. Instead they found themselves having to share that time with grandstanding opposition members trying to stoke more fear in what is already an extremely stressful time for producers impacted by this virus.

It is critically important that we have a bipartisan approach to matters relating to biosecurity, and we once again urge members of the opposition to engage in a more productive and bipartisan manner. The state government agrees and supports the independent review being conducted into this matter at the time once the ongoing response has concluded.

It is important to note that the response to the tomato brown rugose fruit virus is still ongoing and complete eradication has yet to be achieved. We are confident that the spread of the virus has been contained, but now is not the time to take away precious resources from the ongoing response and instead be tied up in a review that will mean less time being able to be devoted to the response to these eradication efforts.

The Hon. J.S. LEE (21:24): I rise today to speak in support of the Hon. Nicola Centofanti's motion to recognise the importance of biosecurity to South Australia. Effective biosecurity measures are essential to prevent the spread of animal and plant diseases, pests and pathogens, to protect community health and to maintain the productivity of primary industries. The importance of biosecurity has been highlighted by the tomato brown rugose fruit virus incursion which has crippled South Australia's tomato industry since it was first detected at a Two Wells tomato farm in August 2024.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regions' (PIRSA) response and management of the virus has raised significant and ongoing concerns about Biosecurity SA's preparedness and response capabilities. Attempting to eradicate and exclude a virus that was globally widespread and already present in imported seed came at a significant cost to the industry.

The discovery of the virus in South Australia threw the industry into a meltdown. Three South Australian tomato producers were forced to close and destroy millions of dollars' worth of tomatoes, resulting in job losses and immense financial and mental toll. It is truly heartbreaking, and I want to highlight the devastating impact on one of the growers. South Australian tomato grower Peter Petsios said he was $4 million in debt and his physical and mental health had nosedived, forcing the closure of his 65-year-old business.

'This has taken a toll on me,' he said. 'This is the worst thing that's happened to me—it's like a death in the family. How the hell am I going to come up with $4 million? How am I ever going to recover from this?' He continued to say, 'I could have had a heart attack. I could have been dead. I have been to the doctor lots of times. My chest hurts. I've got a permanent headache, vision loss, things like that. Just enormous grief, enormous anxiety.'

It was not just the growers themselves who were affected, but the nurseries supplying the farms and the suppliers and markets at the other end of the supply chain who have also been greatly impacted over the last year. In November 2024, I joined parliamentary colleagues, including the Hon. Nicola Centofanti, to stand with tomato growers and primary producers on the steps of Parliament House at a rally in protest of the national response that attempted to eradicate the virus.

We have now seen the National Management Group announce that it is no longer feasible to eradicate the virus in Australia and that it will move to a management approach in line with international best practice. Growers in Australia now need clear, timely guidance on managing the virus effectively under the new national guidelines. Some local tomato producers have said that this change comes too late. It does little to boost their confidence in PIRSA's response capability.

An independent inquiry into the government's response to this virus incursion is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability and to learn lessons to help improve future responses. I once again extend my support and empathy to everyone who has been impacted by the tomato brown rugose fruit virus and join their calls for an independent inquiry to ensure that government does better to safeguard both plant and animal health and the economic stability and viability of our

primary producers. With those words, I indicate that I fully support the motion and will oppose the amendments by the government.

The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (21:28): I thank all members who have contributed to the debate on this motion: the Hon. Tammy Franks, the Hon. Justin Hanson and the Hon. Jing Lee. Whilst I welcome engagement from the government benches, we will not be supporting the amendment moved by the Hon. Mr Hanson. The government's amendment significantly alters the intent of the original motion. Rather than supporting transparency and accountability through an independent review, it attempts to deflect responsibility yet again, pushing everything into a future national process, which the minister knows will be government-driven. This is not leadership. It is just another example of a government more interested in spin than substance.

We stand by the original motion, and we call on the government to do the right thing: commission an independent review, table it in the council and demonstrate the transparency that South Australians expect and deserve. With that, I commend the motion to the chamber.

Amendment negatived; motion carried.

GAMBLING ADVERTISING

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. C. Bonaros:

That this council—

1. Notes the Malinauskas government has returned train services to public ownership;

2. Recognises that public trains, buses, and trams are key spaces where children, young people, and other vulnerable individuals are regularly exposed to advertising;

3 Recognises that the availability, exposure and accessibility of gambling products can either exacerbate or mitigate gambling harm, and that restricting advertising can help minimise this risk;

4. Notes the recent commitment of the New South Wales government to ban gambling advertising on state-owned and controlled assets, including internal and external advertising on trains, buses, trams and associated infrastructure, following a broader ban introduced by the Victorian government in 2017;

5. Acknowledges that reducing gambling advertising would have positive social and economic benefits for the South Australian community; and

6. Calls on the Malinauskas government to take decisive action to reduce gambling harm by banning gambling advertising on public transport spaces across South Australia.

(Continued from 5 February 2025.)

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (21:30): I would like to thank the Hon. Connie Bonaros for her advocacy on this. The government supports the intent of the honourable member's motion, and I understand that the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and his department would also like to say thank you—thank you—and are currently investigating options relating to the intent of the member's motion.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (21:31): I rise to indicate my support for this motion from the Hon. Connie Bonaros. I want to recognise her work on this issue of phasing out pokies over many years. We did have a discussion about this on the radio recently where—

The Hon. C. Bonaros: We seem to have been doing a lot of that lately.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: We do—where I indicated my intention on behalf of the Greens to campaign heading into the next election to phase out pokies by 2030.

The Hon. C. Bonaros: Pokie machines.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS: Pokie machines—thank you—poker machines, and I am disappointed that the Labor government have delivered yet another budget that is predicated on pokies revenue. One of the areas that we need to address is the advertising of gambling, which is what the motion from the Hon. Connie Bonaros is seeking to address.

This motion builds on the approach that the Malinauskas government has taken recently with respect to banning junk food advertising on public transport. Indeed, members may recall that I had

a bill before parliament to ban junk food advertising on public transport and other public infrastructure. The bill was not supported by the government, but they did indicate that they would look into the issue, and I welcomed the fact that they took action.

Back in January, the Minister for Health, the Hon. Chris Picton, announced that the Malinauskas government would be banning junk food advertising on all public transport. I think that is a really good outcome. In particular, one of my concerns was around the exposure of children to junk food advertising, and this is a really good way of limiting that exposure.

I do agree with the Hon. Connie Bonaros that the missing piece of the puzzle is, of course, gambling advertising. It is appalling that we could see gambling being promoted on public transport and indeed I think on other forms of public infrastructure as well, so I am certainly supportive of this motion. I see this as being an important step in reducing some of the harm associated with gambling.

But, of course, we will continue to campaign to go further—to end pokie machines here in our state. I think this will be a key issue heading into the next state election.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (21:34): I rise to indicate the opposition's support for this motion brought forward by the Hon. Connie Bonaros. Our public transport system is a space that is used—

The Hon. C. Bonaros: Support?

The Hon. B.R. HOOD: Yes. Our public transport system is a space that is used by children, by teenagers and vulnerable South Australians everyday. These are very highly visible public assets, and what appears on them does matter. We know that gambling harm is serious, and it is a growing issue in this country. Nationally, around 30 per cent of children aged between 12 and 17 report having gambled in the past year. By the age of 18 and 19, that figure jumps to nearly 50 per cent. Australians lose over $31 billion to gambling every year.

Young people are more likely to be exposed to gambling advertising and more likely to engage in impulsive or risky gambling behaviour as a result. There is clear evidence that advertising does normalise gambling and contributes to harm, especially among young people. That is why both Victoria and NSW have taken steps to ban gambling advertising across their public transport networks. With this motion brought by the honourable member, South Australia now has the ability to do the same.

The government has already moved on a ban for so-called junk food advertising on public transport. That ban also extended to items as specific as ham sandwiches. I remember a bit of a discussion on FIVEaa with the minister and Penbo talking about deli meats and how we are going to keep them off public transport advertising. If we are prepared to block ads for deli meats, then maybe we should be prepared to block ads for gambling.

This motion asks the government to take the same approach to gambling advertising as it has done with junk food. It is a consistent step. We think it is based on public health evidence and aligned to actions already taken in other jurisdictions. The government owns the assets, it has the authority, and we think that there is a strong public case for this reform, so we support the motion.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (21:37): I rise to support the Hon. Connie Bonaros' attempt to ban gambling ads on our public transport in this state. I think it is highly commendable. We have done it with other areas that cause harm. You would not contemplate in this day and age seeing a smoking ad on the side of our public transport, and you should not be able to contemplate seeing gambling advertising either. I welcome the fact that she has brought this debate before this place, so that the parliament may have its views heard and hopefully understood by government.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (21:37): I am a bit nervous that something is going to come tonight, because it all seems to be going very smoothly up until now. I am very grateful to all speakers, to the government, for their support. I would like to thank the Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, who I have worked with closely on this particular issue, but I would like, via the Hon. Russell Wortley, to send a special thanks to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport for seeing the light and the benefits of healthy advertising over revenue.

I would also like to thank the Hon. Rob Simms, the Hon. Jing Lee—because I know she supports it—and the Hon. Ben Hood. I feel like common sense has prevailed tonight, and that is a

good thing. When I moved this motion, in all seriousness, I did say that you could literally pick up the words of the Malinauskas government release on junk food bans and replace the words 'junk food' with 'gambling' and the exact same message would apply. It made sense to me, and I do acknowledge the work that the Hon. Rob Simms did in that space when it came to junk food advertising.

It made sense to me that we should be doing what the other states are doing—NSW and Victoria in particular—and banning gambling advertising for all the reasons the Hon. Ben Hood has outlined tonight, and that other honourable members have outlined tonight as well. There is no place for it.

We do not need to see trams going up and down North Terrace with great big gambling advertisements wrapped around them, or any public infrastructure for that matter, whether it is a tram or otherwise. When it comes to our transport services, we have better things to advertise on them than gambling, especially given the impact that they have on kids each and every day. There were some reports done just recently in terms of the number of ads that kids see on TV when it comes to online betting, sports betting and whatnot.

I remind honourable members while I am on this winning streak that there is another bill before parliament that seeks to address that specific issue, as well as one that seeks to address the issue of poker machines. However, it is not just those ads that they are seeing on TV. They catch transport to and from school each day and they get that constant reminder, and that is how you normalise gambling.

I have had lots of online debates while I have been working through this with members of the public, but all these things are geared towards one thing and one thing only: it is getting young kids from that age accustomed to and normalising gambling so that when they turn 18 they can legally put their money in a poker machine or another form of gambling, and we make it mainstream. We do not want kids to be doing that. We do not want to be normalising that sort of behaviour.

In Australia, and particularly in South Australia, we have the highest rate of gamblers in the world on a per capita basis. That is not anything to be proud of. I think that this is a very sensible measure aimed specifically at children. I am very grateful to all honourable members for their support and I look forward to its implementation by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport very soon.

Motion carried.

BANGLADESHI COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

The Hon. J.S. LEE (21:42): I move:

That this council—

1. Congratulates the South Australian Bangladeshi Community Association (SABCA) for celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2024;

2. Notes that SABCA was established in 2004 and is the largest community organisation for Australians with Bangladeshi heritage and Bangladeshis in South Australia;

3. Acknowledges the important work of founding members, current and past presidents, committee members and volunteers of SABCA for their hard work, dedication and contributions in delivering 20 years of outstanding community service in South Australia;

4. Commends SABCA for their essential role to organise cultural and social events and also to provide information and practical assistance, such as airport welcome services, accommodation assistance and information seminars to new Bangladeshi migrants, permanent or temporary residents, international students, humanitarian visa holders and working visa holders;

5. Recognises SABCA's Bangladeshi Community School is a member of Community Language Schools SA with two campuses (namely Goodwood and Elizabeth) and commends the school principals and teachers for providing educational support to South Australian Bangladeshi children to learn Bangla language and promote cultural development; and

6. Commends SABCA for their commitment to developing awareness of Bangladeshi culture, language, tradition and lifestyle among the wider community to build an inclusive and harmonious multicultural South Australian society.

It is a privilege to rise today to acknowledge 20th anniversary of the South Australian Bangladeshi Community Association, fondly known as SABCA. It was established in 2004 and is the largest Bangladeshi community organisation in our state and is actively engaged in volunteer community activities. The association has been passionately dedicated to promoting and preserving Bangladesh's unique culture, language and traditions and building intercultural connections with the wider South Australian community for two decades.

I would like to first extend my heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to SABCA's current chairperson, the very energetic Mr Mohammad Tarik, and the hardworking executive committee, many volunteers, sponsors, supporters and their families who are the backbone of the association. I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the founding members, past chairpersons and past committee members, who from the very beginning were committed to doing all they could to help build and promote multiculturalism and support Bangladeshi migrants to meaningfully contribute to our peaceful, democratic and respectful society in South Australia.

In addition to thanking Mohammad Tarik, the current SABCA chairperson, I would like to highlight the immediate past chairperson, Mohammad Asaduzzaman, and past chairperson Mr Mahbub Siraz Tuhin, who has also served as chief editor of the SABCA annual magazine for a number of years. I was proud to attend SABCA's Bengali New Year celebration. It was also great to see the Hon. Russell Wortley, along with the member for Torrens, Dana Wortley, who were also at the function.

On Saturday 10 May, Mr Mahbub Siraz Tuhin was presented with a very special award of recognition, a very well deserved acknowledgement for his outstanding contributions to the Bangladeshi community over so many years. Mahbub has received a number of awards in recognition for his community service work, including a City of West Torrens 2021 Australia Day Award for Community Service, which particularly highlighted his efforts to raise funds and support the Bangladeshi community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While SABCA is renowned for hosting wonderful cultural and social events such as the cherished annual Bengali New Year celebrations, the association also does so much more for the community. I commend the SABCA Association for the important role they play in providing information and practical assistance to new Bangladeshi migrants to support their smooth transition into life in South Australia.

From airport welcome services to accommodation assistance and information seminars, the SABCA new migrant advisory service is an invaluable resource for new Bangladeshi migrants, permanent and temporary residents, international students, humanitarian visa holders and working visa holders. Under chairperson Mohammad Tarik's strong leadership, SABCA has also focused in recent years on hosting career expos to provide essential support and guidance to newly arrived students and immigrants as to how to navigate the Australian job market and hosting seminars to raise awareness and share important health information on topics such as cervical cancer and bowel cancer.

SABCA also manages the Bangladeshi Community School to promote the cultural development education of young South Australian Bangladeshi students. Established by. SABCA, the Bangladeshi Community School has its own elected management committee led by principal Mohammad Azmul Hoq (Pappu) and a team of enthusiastic and talented teachers.

With two campuses located in Goodwood and Elizabeth, the school certainly educated many young students, supporting them to learn Bangla language and gain a greater understanding of their unique cultural heritage. For Bangladeshi people Bangla is not just a language but also an important aspect of their ethnic identity. In fact, the idea for International Mother Language Day was initiated by Bangladesh, in part to commemorate those who tragically lost their lives fighting for recognition of the Bangla language as the official central state language on 21 February 1952.

International Mother Language Day is a national holiday in Bangladesh, highlighting the important role that language plays in preserving and developing tangible and intangible heritage. Founded with a vision to bridging the gap between generations growing up in Adelaide with Bangladeshi heritage, the Bangladeshi Community School has become a foundation of cultural preservation and education in the community.

I would like to take a moment to highlight the contributions of Mr Mostak Ahmed Chowdhury, who served for more than 12 years as a principal of the Bangladeshi Community School and still offers his guidance and wisdom to the school community. In Mr Chowdhury's words:

> The benefits of exposing children and community members to their own and other languages are twofold—they are learning, maintaining and thriving in their own cultures, and at the same time they are appreciating, respecting and learning wider Australian cultures too. Our activities stimulate the young community members to grow as globally and socially responsible Australian citizens.

This commitment to embracing and enhancing our multicultural community and building bridges between generations and cultures is something that is deeply embedded in everything that SABCA does. I am always impressed and inspired by the Bangladeshi community's selfless contributions to our society and their positive approach to life.

Once again, I express my sincere thanks to everyone involved in SABCA for their many achievements and wonderful contributions to enrich our vibrant multicultural state over the past 20 years. Congratulations to all the committee for their wonderful leadership. On the celebration of their 20th anniversary I wish the South Australian Bangladeshi community continued success and growth into the future. With those remarks, I commend the motion.

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

UNMET NEEDS REPORT

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. C. Bonaros:

That this council—

1. Recognises the final report commissioned by the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist on 'Unmet mental health service need in South Australia that could be met by the NGO sector' (Unmet Needs report), dated February 2023.

2. Acknowledges the findings and recommendations of the Unmet Needs report, including:

   (a) 19,000 South Australians with severe mental illness require psychosocial support services each year but are not having their needs met;

   (b) an estimated $125 million per annum is required to address the shortfall; and

   (c) addressing the unmet needs in the South Australian mental health system would significantly reduce the demand for hospital-based emergency services related to mental distress and lead to reduced ramping and wait times.

3. Recognises the 19,000 South Australians identified in the Unmet Needs report represent a substantial increase compared to the Productivity Commission's estimated 11,000 South Australians in 2020, highlighting the results of years of mental health policy failure from successive governments.

4. Notes the 2023-24 state budget provided no additional investment in psychosocial support, with the state government indicating it was awaiting the findings of the Unmet Needs report before making any decisions.

5. Notes the 2024-25 state budget similarly did not provide the necessary increase in funding towards psychosocial support.

6. Notes there has been no formal state government response to the findings and recommendations of the Unmet Needs report.

7. Calls on the Malinauskas Labor government to provide a formal response to the findings and recommendations of the Unmet Needs report by no later than 1 September 2024.

(Continued from 19 June 2024.)

The Hon. J.S. LEE (21:49): I rise today in strong support of this motion, which acknowledges the findings of the 2023 Unmet Needs report commissioned by the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist. The report confirmed what many of us already know: our mental health system is under pressure, and too many South Australians are slipping through the cracks. This report conservatively estimated that 26,000 people with severe mental illness required psychosocial support in 2021-22, yet only 3,200 were supported through the NDIS and 4,489 through other programs, leaving nearly

19,000 people without services. That was 75 per cent of those in need back in 2021-22. How many more have slipped through the cracks in the three years that have passed since then?

As I highlighted in my matter of interest speech relating to the Mental Health Coalition in August 2023, psychosocial supports are not just about clinical care, they are about helping people live. They help individuals manage daily tasks, connect with their communities and avoid crisis care. They are essential to recovery and wellbeing. However, the rollout of the NDIS has unintentionally created a dangerous gap. Many programs lost funding under the assumption that the NDIS would cover all needs.

It is clear from the report that a significant proportion of people with severe and persistent mental illness are not eligible for the NDIS, yet they still require ongoing psychosocial support. The current system does not adequately meet their needs. Without targeted investment, these individuals will continue to fall through the cracks. This is not just a policy oversight, it is a systemic failure, and it is one that continues today. Despite the clear evidence and urgent recommendations, the 2025-26 state budget has failed to deliver the necessary investment.

In 2023, the government stated that they were waiting for the findings of this report before making decisions. The report was released over two years ago. There has been no meaningful increase in funding for community-based mental health services, no dedicated strategy to empower NGOs and no plan to address the tens of thousands of South Australians left in limbo. The report called for $125 million per year to close the gap. I recognise that this funding obligation is not just for the state but is also a federal responsibility, but that was three years ago. What has the Malinauskas government done since then?

While I welcome the recognition that psychosocial support is a shared responsibility between state and federal governments, I am deeply disappointed that the Malinauskas government has once again failed to provide necessary funding in the recently released 2025-26 state budget. The amendments proposed by the Hon. Tung Ngo remove key references to the scale of unmet need, the $125 million funding shortfall and the lack of state action to date. These omissions risk downplaying the urgency of the crisis and the responsibility of this government to act.

South Australians living with severe mental illness cannot wait for another round of national negotiations. They need support now. As we consider who is most impacted by these gaps, we must not overlook the unique challenges faced by culturally and linguistically diverse communities. As highlighted by Embrace Multicultural Mental Health, barriers such as stigma, language and a lack of culturally appropriate care continue to prevent many from accessing the support they need.

Any investment in psychosocial services must include a commitment to culturally responsive care, ensuring that all South Australians, regardless of background, can access services that respect and reflect their lived experience. The government cannot continue to ignore this. They must act on the recommendations. These services that keep people well and out of crisis need urgent funding. Earlier today, when I was speaking to another motion, I spoke about the drought and also the impact of viruses on primary producers and farmers. The impacts of mental health also need to be addressed in regional South Australia.

We need services that meet vulnerable members of society where they are at, in their homes and in their communities. It is up to us here in this place to ensure that no-one is left behind simply because they do not fit neatly into the funding model. I commend the motion and I thank the Hon. Connie Bonaros for her leadership in bringing this motion to the Legislative Council.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (21:54): I rise to speak in support of this motion, which calls for recognition of the findings contained in the unmet needs report commissioned by the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist and finalised in February 2023. The facts, as stated in the report, are that 19,000 South Australians who live with severe mental illness are going without the psychosocial supports they need to live safely and with dignity and stability in their communities.

These are not abstract figures; they are individuals who face daily challenges without community-based care, rehabilitation services, care supports or home-based programs, which are the building blocks of a functioning mental health system. They are often the first to be neglected when governments fail to act.

The report estimates that $125 million per year is needed to close this service gap, based on a fifty-fifty cost share with the commonwealth. Yet despite repeated promises to consider the findings, the Malinauskas Labor government has failed to deliver any meaningful funding response in either the 2023-24 or 2024-25 state budgets. In fact, the government's record to date amounts to tokenistic investment in narrow initiatives while thousands of people remain without the support they need.

On this side of the chamber, we remember why this report was commissioned. It came from the former Liberal government's commitment to evidence-based reform and follows national findings by the Productivity Commission that exposed systemic gaps in psychosocial services and gaps that fall outside the scope of the NDIS, which are growing year by year.

Since that time, peak bodies such as the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia have amplified the call for funding, even resorting to public campaigns to draw attention to the silence from this government. We have joined every state and territory in calling for bilateral action, yet no formal response has been issued. No timeline has been given.

Mental health care does not end in the hospitals, and nor should it. Acute beds are necessary but they are not sufficient. Without psychosocial support, patients cycle in and out of emergency departments and put growing pressure on our hospitals, ambulance services and community. This motion is timely and grounded in evidence. We support it and we will be opposing the government's amendments. I commend the motion to the house.

The Hon. T.T. NGO (21:57): I move the following amendments, as tabled and circulated:

Paragraph 1:

Leave out 'dated February 2023' and insert 'publicly released on 25 July 2024'

Paragraph 2:

Leave out 'including'

Leave out subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c)

Leave out paragraphs 3 to 7 and insert new paragraphs as follows:

3. Recognises the commonwealth 'Analysis of unmet need for psychosocial supports outside of the NDIS' released on 16 August 2024 which highlighted this as a national concern;

4. Acknowledges that the provision of psychosocial supports is a shared responsibility between the commonwealth and state and territory governments;

5. Recognises that state, territory and commonwealth ministers have agreed that addressing unmet psychosocial needs will be one of the central priorities in consideration of the next National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement; and

6. Recognises that state, territory and commonwealth ministers have agreed to consult with lived experience and sector representatives in their jurisdiction, to inform negotiations of the next National Agreement, and report back at the next Health and Mental Health Ministers meeting, to determine shared priorities and investment plans.

Mental health funding was sharply reduced under the former Liberal government. This unmet needs report was commissioned by the former Liberal government, basically to assess their own cuts. From 2018-19 to 2020-21, the funding for psychosocial services delivered by NGOs fell by 19.2 per cent. Once inflation is considered, this cut is even deeper.

The Malinauskas Labor government has reversed this course with a generational reinvestment. Since taking office, this government has lifted state-commissioned psychosocial funding by 24 per cent from 2021-22 to 2024-25 and through the 2023-24 Mid-Year Budget Review. This added a further $6 million over four years, increasing funding to an extra $2 million a year. This boost in funding, along with redesigned NGO contracts, will enable more than 1,000 extra South Australians each year to receive one-to-one psychosocial support.

The South Australian Unmet Needs report aligns with the commonwealth's national report released on 16 August 2024, confirming that unmet psychosocial need is a national issue. In response to these findings, the federal government has set up a cross-jurisdictional working group to identify service gaps not covered by the NDIS and to help guide future funding decisions. At last

week's meeting for state, territory and commonwealth health ministers, on 30 June 2024, all ministers committed to the following:

- reaffirmed their shared responsibility for psychosocial care;
- made unmet need a central priority for the next National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement;
- pledged to maintain at least current psychosocial funding to safeguard service continuity; and
- guaranteed to consult people with lived experience and sector experts before finalising joint priorities and investments.

Running alongside these commitments is a new Foundational Supports Strategy and a key NDIS review recommendation. This aims to create additional psychosocial services that are jointly commissioned by the commonwealth and the states. These services will be delivered through existing systems and phased in over time.

This report highlights that when NGO psychosocial services are properly funded they can step in early, keeping people connected to work, school and family, which in turn reduces homelessness, hospital stays and run-ins with the justice system. The state government is committed to the delivery of short-term, one-to-one NGO psychosocial services so we can better support South Australians in distress. The Labor government supports the amended form of this motion.

The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (22:01): I rise to support this motion, which calls on better South Australian government action on the unmet needs with regard to mental ill-health in this state. I have to reflect as well that the Hon. Tung Ngo's contribution just ascribed the commissioning of this report by the former health minister, Stephen Wade, as somehow done, and I quote him, 'basically to assess their own cuts under the Liberal government'. I would reject that assertion. This Unmet Needs study was done at the behest of the sector, asking governments, of whatever colour, to assess the unmet needs when it comes to mental health. What then happened under the Malinauskas government and this current minister was for years they kept the report hidden from South Australians.

Back then in 2020, there was an estimated—the Hon. Tung Ngo, you should not look so encouragingly at me as I say this—110,000 people affected by this unmet needs gap in our mental health and psychosocial services that should be there for all South Australians when they are in need, and now over 190,000 South Australians fall into that gap. We have to stop passing the buck to Canberra and start acting to ensure that we address the gap and we give South Australians the good mental health they need they need to live well and live well in recovery or not fall into acute need.

It is now the two-year anniversary of the final, eventual report. After great public campaigning, particularly by groups such as the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia, calling for this report to actually be released to the public, we are now about to see the two-year anniversary of that report and still there is no actual addressing of the needs, no putting money where it is needed. While sadly this will probably be a massive election issue politically, particularly for those who advocate for good mental health supports in this state for those who need it, for it to be given to them when they need it and accessed by them in the way that keeps them well and living a good life, it should actually be something that is cross-party and not politicised. But that is going to be through the failure of this government to act, even to address the problem by releasing the report in the first place and then to actually respond to the report once they were forced to release it. To somehow play politics and blame Stephen Wade, as the former minister, as somehow responsible for this is extraordinary and I reject it, as I reject the government amendments to this motion.

The Hon. C. BONAROS (22:05): I start by thanking the Hon. Jing Lee, the Hon. Michelle Lensink, the Hon. Tung Ngo and the Hon. Tammy Franks for their contributions. It should come as no surprise that I will not be supporting—and I am grateful to hear that other honourable members will not be supporting—the amendments to this motion. I thank the Hon. Tammy Franks for that summary in relation to how this report came about and how it unfolded, and in so doing I also acknowledge and thank the persistence and work of the Mental Health Coalition in this.

It has been nearly two years, as we have heard, that we have been waiting for a response to this. As the Hon. Tammy Franks has articulated, we want to know what South Australia is doing in relation to this. It is now four years since the Productivity Commission inquiry into mental health recommended addressing unmet needs, 30 years since the Burdekin report, 30 years since this was an important issue to address in mental health reform and 40 years since it was formally recognised in the Richmond report.

In this year's budget, the state budget continued with unsustainable health investment. We saw an extra $2 billion, but mostly focused on crisis points and business as usual. This does not deal with crisis; this is all about being proactive and preventing crisis in the first place. A key part of the solution in terms of addressing the unsustainable approach to mental health is addressing the unmet needs for psychosocial supports. We know what the cost is: it is $125 million to enable those 190,000 South Australians with severe mental illness to get the support they need to live better lives and reduce their reliance on an already overstretched crisis and emergency system. It is nearly two years since the report was released and so far we have allocated something like 2 per cent of what is required to address this gap.

The communiqué the Hon. Tung Ngo refers to is important. It was issued on 13 June and it is important given that I think it is this Friday that the mental health ministers' meeting is happening, the new Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement and bilateral agreement are currently being negotiated, and of course, as we have mentioned now about four times this evening, we have an election coming up next year.

The Hon. E.S. Bourke interjecting:

The Hon. C. BONAROS: Next year. Is it next year? I think last week I may have referred to this year as 2026 because I got a bit ahead of myself, but now I am firmly placed in 2025. That communiqué from 13 June says:

> Psychosocial Supports
>
> Ministers reaffirmed Commonwealth, state and territory governments' shared responsibility and acknowledged the importance of investing in and delivering psychosocial supports to better meet need in the community.
>
> Ministers agreed that addressing unmet psychosocial needs will be one of the central priorities in consideration of the next National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement. Ministers also agreed to at least maintain—

at least maintain—

> …funding for psychosocial support services delivered through the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments—

at a state level, that is 2 per cent that we got in additional money in the budget announcements that just occurred—

> to ensure service continuity for the community
>
> All Ministers agree to consult with lived experience and sector representatives in their Jurisdiction, to inform negotiations of the next National Agreement, and report back at the next Health and Mental Health Ministers meeting, to determine shared priorities and investment plans.

I read that out because it is important in this context. What we have had now is a cost-shifting exercise between the states and the feds, and we are not going to budge here—that is what we hear from this government—until the feds budge, and the feds are saying, 'Well, you need to do your bit as well.'

We just keep passing this baton back and forth between state and federal and in the meantime the 190,000 South Australians suffering from mental health are going to increase. It is not going to do anything to improve our health crisis. It is not useful pointing to the figure that we have put in because that is money that is going towards crisis services. This is about being proactive, not reactive, and getting in before a person gets to that crisis point. That was the point of the report insofar as addressing the needs and what we need to do and what it will take to address that unmet need. We have all those answers now. The Chief Psychiatrist has given us the answers we need. We just need to get on and do it.

I am disappointed that the government has sought to rip the guts out of this because we know that those figures are not figures any of us in here came up with or any parliamentary inquiry came up with. They are fact and they are the facts we have to come to terms with and we have to address. We cannot go to this next meeting and pat each other on the back and say, 'We are committed to at least doing what we have been doing up until now,' because what we have been doing up until now simply is not working and it has failed us. We need to do more.

In closing, I thank honourable members for their support. I thank in particular the Mental Health Coalition for its ongoing advocacy in this area. I hope that we will see the light.

Amendments negatived; motion carried.

Bills

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (RENT FREEZE) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 4 June 2025.)

The Hon. J.S. LEE (22:11): I rise to speak on the Residential Tenancies (Rent Freeze) Amendment Bill 2024. While the bill by the Hon. Robert Simms is well intentioned, aiming to provide relief to renters facing escalating costs, I indicate that I will not be supporting the bill.

My opposition comes from a deep concern for the long-term consequences that this bill may have on our housing market and the broader economy. I spent a lot of time meeting with members of our community. Many of these community members are renters, and I have heard countless stories from renters struggling to make ends meet and I empathise with all of them. I recognise that this bill is born out of genuine concern by the Hon. Robert Simms for renters, and rightly so. The cost of living is rising and many are struggling. However, it is uncertain whether or not the proposed solutions are sustainable and will inadvertently exacerbate the problem.

The bill proposes a two-year rent freeze followed by annual caps based on CPI. The proposed rent freeze, while offering short-term relief, poses significant risks that could undermine our housing market and hurt renters in the long run. Experts warn that such measures can reduce rental supply, discourage investment and lead to underinvestment in property maintenance. As economist Brendan Coates of the Grattan Institute puts it:

> Rent control has a seductive, intuitive appeal…but it also potentially has some big costs in the long run. If you do have rent control in place, then you are limiting the ability of the market to tell investors, developers, everyone else that we need more housing…and you can have a situation where basically the existing housing stock isn't maintained very well.

This insight underscores the danger of well-meaning policies that fail to account for long-term market dynamics. It has been documented that rent freezes can discourage investment in rental properties, leading landlords to exit the market or convert properties to owner-occupied dwellings. This reduction in rental supply can tighten availability and make it even harder for new renters to find housing. We must consider the long-term implications of such policies and ensure that our housing stock remains well maintained and liveable.

Rent controls can distort market signals, reducing housing mobility and entrenching inequality between existing and prospective tenants. We have seen this play out before in Berlin and New York and the results were far from ideal. Rent controls in these cities have shown that rent freezes can lead to black market rentals and reduced turnover, ultimately worsening housing outcomes. While this approach aims to provide stability, it fails to address the underlying issues of housing supply and affordability.

Even without intervention, we are already seeing signs of market correction. Data released by PropTrack in January showed that rents had begun to decline in over 100 South Australian suburbs. Considering this, market forces may very well be recalibrating without any legislative intervention.

We must pay attention to all the factors and consider alternative solutions that address the root causes of the housing crisis. While this bill attempts to address a real and urgent issue and may offer temporary relief, its approach may be economically risky and potentially counterproductive.

I believe that we can take on all the arguments presented for this bill tonight and use them to call on both state and federal governments to pursue more targeted and sustainable solutions, such as expanding rental assistance, increasing investment in social and affordable housing, and reforming planning laws. With those remarks, I indicate that I will not be supporting the bill.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (22:15): I rise to give the government's position on the Residential Tenancies (Rent Freeze) Amendment Bill 2024, and it is with deep regret that I must inform the mover, the Hon. Mr Simms, that the government will be opposing his bill.

The Hon. R.A. Simms: Here we go again!

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr Simms, that's enough.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY: On 3 August 2022, Minister Michaels hosted a Residential Tenancies Act review forum to hear firsthand the issues impacting the residential tenancy sector. In attendance at the forum were key interested parties and stakeholders. Following the forum, CBS engaged in discussions with other state and territorial residential tenancy authorities to consider the practicalities of implementing the proposed reforms before developing a discussion paper that was then released as part of public consultation.

Initiatives put forward were directly influenced by the public consultation, with feedback received from more than 5,500 participants, a significant number of which were written submissions received from stakeholder groups. The intent of these proposed initiatives was to strike the right balance between protecting both tenant and landlord interests while addressing issues of rent affordability.

On 29 November 2023, the Parliament of South Australia passed the most significant updates to residential tenancy laws in almost 30 years through changes detailed in the Residential Tenancies (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act 2023. On 1 May 2024, the Hon. Robert Simms MLC introduced the Residential Tenancies (Rent Freeze) Amendment Bill 2024 to the Legislative Council, proposing a range of measures to amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1995.

The bill included proposed changes that would freeze the maximum amount of rent payable for a premises under a residential tenancy agreement for a period of two years. It then makes further proposals to:

- limit rental increases to the consumer price index perpetually, once the rent freeze period ends;
- mandate the maximum rent payable for residential premises and rooming houses accommodation by backdating to the amount indicated in a residential tenancy or rooming house agreement as of 1 January 2024;
- prohibit landlords and proprietors and their agents from offering premises or accepting payment greater than the maximum rent payable under the agreement, noting that premises under the residential tenancy agreement on or after 1 January 2024 will be prohibited from entering short-term letting arrangements to overcome the maximum rent secured;
- require the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs to keep a register of rents under an agreement and publish the median rent amount for comparable residential and rooming house premises by postcode; and
- empower the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) to determine and order the maximum rent payable for premises, including any increases under the agreement for tenants, landlords and proprietors.

During the forum held for residential tenancies sector stakeholders, it was the overall view of the parties in attendance that rent control measures were not a viable solution to rental affordability

issues and may, in fact, cause an upsurge in rental prices. Economists have long argued that rent control disadvantages both landlords and tenants, exacerbating housing shortages and inequality. For landlords and investors, incentives to build or invest in real estate in South Australia are drastically reduced if there is the likelihood they will receive a lower return for an investment than they would elsewhere.

Restrictions also risk encouraging landlords to sell, to earn market price for their property, or take dwellings off the long-term private market and, instead, enter the short-term rental market, e.g. Airbnb, which is currently less restricted. The potential impact of this scenario would mean the availability of rentals in high-demand areas, e.g. the inner city, particularly those close to public transport, and with significant tourism appeal, would be greatly reduced. This then forces displaced tenants to re-enter an increasingly competitive rental market where the current supply does not meet the demand and increases the risk of homelessness.

Further, restrictions on rent are likely to lead to disrepair of rental housing stock. If they are unable to recoup their costs through associated increases, landlords may be less inclined to invest in discretionary maintenance of their properties or, in some instances, maintenance that meets the minimum legislative standards. Deterioration directly disadvantages tenants who then risk finding themselves in rental properties that are not safe and/or fit for purpose. They would have limited options to move elsewhere, and therefore remain in housing that is not suited to them.

Tenants remaining in housing that is not suitable for them also exacerbates the mismatch between housing size and household size; for example, the space and/or bedrooms required in comparison to the number of people living in the property. Reduced rental housing turnover due to limited supply can mean larger families, for example with multiple children, are not able to access a property that appropriately houses all members because single or double occupancy households may remain in larger properties due to the inability and reluctance to source a tenancy in a more suitably sized property elsewhere.

The proposed bill also looks to require the commissioner to keep and maintain an up-to-date register of rents for all residential tenancies, with failure to comply resulting in a penalty to the landlord or agent. This proposal would require a substantial increase in resources within CBS, particularly at the time where the proposed rent freeze ends, when many landlords would presumably look to increase the rent amounts and would then need to do so via a formal notification of the commissioner. Likely bond increases and the enforcement of any proposed penalties would also create further resourcing pressures.

An inconsistency might also arise between the proposed legislation and the recently released reforms if a landlord were to apply to SACAT and have an order granted increasing the maximum rent payable—whether during the rent freeze period afterwards—if the rent had previously been increased within the last 12 months, with the recently commenced provisions preventing that from occurring.

The proposed bill does not acknowledge that the act currently allows tenants who believe that an increase to their rent is excessive to apply to SACAT for a decision about whether their rent should be reduced for a fixed period. The factors that SACAT must have regard to in deciding if the rent is excessive already include things like the general level of rents for comparable premises in the same or similar localities, and the state of repair and general condition of the premises. Once the new rental laws commence later this year, changes to this section of the act will require SACAT to also consider if a rent increase was disproportionate, considering the amount of rent payable.

The Real Estate Institute of South Australia have expressed their strong opposition to the freezing of rents in any shape or form, labelling the issue of rental affordability as one of supply, combined with the fact that more people are renting due to high interest rates. Further concern was expressed that the freezing of rents would simply drive landlords out of the market and artificially create an unfair ecosystem of property management. The Real Estate Institute of South Australia conveyed their confidence that the reforms already introduced by the government, and those soon to commence, will address many of the fundamental issues of tenant longevity in properties and reinforce that rent increases must be proportionate to the current rent.

Taking into consideration discussions at the forum, economic implications and the potential risk to both tenants and landlords, it is the government's view that the bill should be opposed. While freezing rents would appear to be a simple method to increase rental housing affordability, the unintended consequences of any such move would likely have a long-term negative impact on the total availability of rental housing stock in South Australia and drastically reduce its quality. In consideration of this, and the current vacancy rate of less than 1 per cent, the risks associated with the Greens proposed bill are deemed too great. So, I would just like to re-inform the Hon. Mr Simms that the government will oppose your bill.

The Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK (22:25): I rise to speak to the Residential Tenancies (Rent Freeze) Amendment Bill 2024 and also indicate that we will not be supporting this piece of legislation. I think everybody recognises the serious rental affordability challenges in South Australia, with rents in Adelaide surging by over 50 per cent since 2020. However, this bill is not actually the solution. What is being proposed is well intentioned but, as a number of other speakers have also similarly stated, is actually counterproductive. The bill proposes a two-year rent freeze, followed by a permanent cap on future rent increases at CPI. It imposes a new rent register, gives the tribunal authority to determine maximum rents and restricts initial rent levels on new tenancies based on historical formulas. It is actually a comprehensive regime of rent control which is unprecedented for South Australia.

These measures do not address the real problem, which is the lack of housing supply. Instead, they threaten to make that problem worse. Freezing rents and capping increases deters new investment and current investment, which is the way that we will get ourselves out of this issue. This bill would reduce rental stock and disincentivise the construction of new homes that we desperately all need.

There is an abundance of evidence from jurisdictions that have tried similar schemes which demonstrate that rent control leads to housing shortages. Investors who would otherwise produce new stock flee the market and there is an actual deterioration in housing quality, which is not something I think anybody would support.

The Reserve Bank Governor has warned that the only long-term solution is to build more homes, yet this bill would do the opposite. A range of stakeholders with vast experience in this space, including the Real Estate Institute of South Australia, have very strong objections. Landlords, particularly smaller investors, face rising costs and they may be forced to reduce spending on maintenance or exit the market altogether, which would result in fewer rentals, while those that would remain in the system would likely deteriorate in quality. According to REISA, investor sentiment in South Australia is already fragile, and something such as this bill would drive more landlords out of the sector which would be a devastating outcome for renters in the long run.

This bill also creates a dangerous precedence of state interference in private contracts and property rights, although the Labor Party has done a bit of that itself. It treats all renters the same, regardless of income or need, and places the entire burden of the housing crisis on landlords, many of whom are not wealthy but rely on rental income for their own stability or to build their nest eggs. Particularly, it asks mum and dad investors to foot the bill for existing problems with our housing market.

We have already seen the consequences of poorly designed rent controls in other jurisdictions, such as the favourite jurisdiction of the mover of the bill, the state of Victoria, where the introduction of rent caps has coincided—is that a bit too pejorative or is it true (sorry, I apologise, I should withdraw that)—with a decline in private rental listings and a contraction in supply. Internationally, measures in Berlin and San Francisco have led to housing market distortions, black market leasing and worsening rental access for those who need it most.

The Liberal Party supports genuine action which will assist in supplying the market, but we believe in evidence-based solutions which are sustainable, such as through bond support, targeted subsidies and planning reform, which will assist us to get out of this housing crisis that we find ourselves in. As I have already stated, we are unable to support this bill.

The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (22:30): I thank honourable members for their contribution: the Hon. Jing Lee, the Hon. Russell Wortley and the Hon. Michelle Lensink. It does not appear as if the

numbers are in my favour tonight, although I would like to call a division, so if someone wants to come in and provide me with a second voice, now is the opportunity.

It is disappointing to me that this parliament seems reluctant to take action on rent prices. I want to acknowledge the leadership of the Malinauskas government on rental reform, and the Hon. Russell Wortley is right to acknowledge the work of the minister in that regard. The Malinauskas government has embarked on the most significant changes to the Residential Tenancies Act in 25 years. The Greens were very proud to work with the government to secure some really important amendments that have strengthened the rights of renters in our state. But the one area where we could not get agreement was on rent prices, and consequently rents have continued to soar in South Australia. They have continue to skyrocket, and we do need to take some action on that.

I must take issue with some of the comments that have been made by the Hon. Michelle Lensink and the Hon. Russell Wortley, where they seem to imply that such a scheme is without precedent. Let's not forget that the Menzies government implemented rent controls. The Curtin government implemented rent controls and, indeed, the radical left-wing government, the Marshall government, during the COVID years implemented a moratorium on rent increases, which the Greens supported and we worked with the then Attorney-General Vickie Chapman to extend.

We are in the middle of an economic crisis, we are in the middle of the worst housing crisis in generations, so surely now is the time to provide some relief to renters who are struggling. All this bill would do is freeze rent prices for two years, and it would cap future increases in line with inflation. Over in the ACT, for many years they have had a model where rent prices are capped in line with inflation. It seems to me to be a pretty sensible proposition, at a time when some landlords have been able to rake in massive profits, that there should be some limit placed on the profits that landlords can make.

We have to move beyond this approach to housing where we regard it simply as a commodity, where some people are able to make a huge amount of money and meanwhile we have other South Australians who are struggling, who are sleeping on the street, who are sleeping in tents and who are sleeping in caravans. I urge members of this place to turn their attention to those vulnerable South Australians. If they are not going to support this bill then it is incumbent on members of this place to come to the parliament armed with alternatives, because no political party, other than the Greens, has been talking about what we can do to deal with rent prices.

I think the time has come for our state to take some action on this. We could not get the Malinauskas government over the line when we were dealing with the rental reforms a few years ago. We got some good changes in place and we made some positive progress, but we could not deal with the issue of rent prices. But the people of South Australia want this parliament to take action.

It is very easy for members of this place to come into the chamber and say, 'The Greens don't know what they are talking about,' and, 'This isn't the answer,' and yet none of them have come with their own proposals to deal with this crisis, other than the capitulation to developers, which we know is not going to deliver real change for South Australians who are struggling. With that, I conclude my remarks.

Second reading negatived.

ROAD TRAFFIC (PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN OFFENCES WITH CHILD IN VEHICLE) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 30 October 2024.)

The Hon. J.S. LEE (22:35): I rise today to support the Road Traffic (Penalties for Certain Offences with Child in Vehicle) Amendment Bill 2024. This bill aims to address a critical issue affecting the safety of children: the proposed amendment to the Road Traffic Act to increase penalties for offences committed with a child under the age of 16 in the vehicle. I thank the Hon. Frank Pangallo for introducing this bill.

The safety of children should be a focus of our society. We have a responsibility to protect our young people from harm under all circumstances, whether they are at home, at school, in the playground, including when they are passengers in vehicles. All too often, drivers are making decisions on our roads that put children and young people at risk. The proposed amendments to the Road Traffic Act respond to alarming statistics: close to 500 incidents have been before the courts since January 2022 involving drug or drink driving with a child under 16 present. Almost half of these were for drink driving.

We all know the effects of alcohol on decision-making and response time. Alcohol interferes with the brain's ability to process information and make sound judgments. It lowers inhibitions, leading individuals to take more risks. Additionally, response times can be up to 25 per cent slower when a driver is under the influence. Similarly, driving under the influence of illicit drugs poses significant risks. The effects of drugs on driving ability varied, but it is well documented that both drugs and alcohol impair driver ability. Cannabis can slow reaction times and alter perception, amphetamines can decrease impulse control and coordination, and drugs like MDMA can impair information processing and increase risk taking.

In addition to these offences, this bill also seeks to increase penalties for excessive speeding and reckless and dangerous driving when a child under 16 is present. These activities are already illegal, with existing penalties including fines, demerit points and incarceration. What this bill seeks to do is to give the courts the ability to impose even higher penalties when it is clear that the driver's actions have purposefully increased the risk of harm or death to a young person by having them in the vehicle.

Passing these amendments will help demonstrate our commitment to road safety and, more importantly, ensure the safety and protection of children and young people. It is crucial that we continue to prioritise and act swiftly on all matters concerning child protection, acting in the best interest of a child in all circumstances. Children are precious cargo in vehicles and we have a duty of care to ensure that those who commit the offence will have higher penalties. With those remarks, I support the bill.

The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (22:39): I stand to give the government's position on the Road Traffic (Penalties for Certain Offences with Child in Vehicle) Amendment Bill 2024, introduced by the Hon. Frank Pangallo MLC. The government's position is that it does not support the Road Traffic (Penalties for Certain Offences with Child in Vehicle) Amendment Bill 2024. Currently, there are several specific drink and drug driving offences that attract an additional penalty if they occur with a child in the vehicle. A range of factors are taken into account when setting the penalties for specific traffic offences, including the road safety risk, the risk to passengers and parity with other penalties in South Australia and other jurisdictions.

The bill seeks to increase the monetary penalties and imprisonment terms for those who engage in reckless and dangerous driving behaviour on the roads with a child under 16 present in or on the vehicle. While the intent of the bill is well-guided, a more considered and holistic approach is required to road safety, taking into account the existing legislative framework and penalty structure applying to road traffic offences.

While research shows that a multifaceted approach around the composition of appropriate penalties to create effective deterrence is beneficial, the optimal mix of penalties is not known. From a road safety perspective, it is unclear whether the slight increase in penalties proposed in the bill would change a driver's behaviour and make them less likely to commit the offence in the first place. For these reasons, it is proposed that the government does not support the bill.

The Hon. B.R. HOOD (22:40): I rise as the lead speaker on this amendment bill and indicate that the opposition will be supporting the Hon. Frank Pangallo. This bill introduces a series of amendments to the Road Traffic Act to increase penalties for certain driving offences when committed with a child under the age of 16 in the vehicle. It specifically targets excessive speeding, reckless or dangerous driving, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

This bill is based on a principle that these behaviours pose an elevated risk to the child passenger and therefore should attract stronger penalties and act as a deterrent. From January 2022 to July 2024, SAPOL and the Attorney-General's Department finalised 449 cases involving drink or

drug driving where a child was present in the vehicle. Of those cases, 46 per cent involved alcohol, 28 per cent involved methamphetamine and 15 per cent involved cannabis. That equates to nearly 200 alcohol-related cases and more than 125 cases involving illicit drugs, all with children present in a vehicle at the time of the offence.

This bill proposes to amend sections 45A, 46, 47, 47B and 47BA of the Road Traffic Act to increase penalties in cases where the child is under the age of 16 and is a passenger. Under section 45A, the maximum penalty for excessive speed increases from two years' to three years' imprisonment where the child is present. Under section 46, a similar increase applies to reckless and dangerous driving.

Section 47 introduces a fine range from $1,900 to $2,900 for driving under the influence, with a maximum prison term of six months. Section 47B introduces fines between $1,500 and $2,900 for prescribed alcohol concentration offences, and section 47BA establishes fines between $1,500 and $2,200 for drug-impaired driving.

The bill also introduces the presence of a child under 16 in the vehicle as a legislated aggravated factor. This ensures that the courts are required to consider the heightened risk of child passengers when sentencing. It is consistent with how other aggravated factors, such as proximity to school or prior offences, are treated under the existing law.

There have been recent incidents that demonstrate the real-world implications of the behaviours that this bill seeks to deter. In Glenelg, a driver recorded a blood alcohol content of 0.282 while driving with a child. In Murray Bridge, a driver with a blood alcohol reading of 0.148 was involved in a crash with two children as passengers requiring hospitalisation. In Mitcham, a driver recorded a BAC of 0.333, six times over the legal limit, with two unrestrained children in the vehicle.

These are not hypothetical risks. They are documented incidents that put children in direct danger. This is a narrow but focused amendment to the existing law. It does not create new offences or powers, but adjusts the penalty framework in recognition of the increased risks to child passengers. It is a proportionate response to a clearly demonstrated issue, and the opposition supports the bill.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (22:44): I would like to thank the honourable members who have contributed to this debate: the Hon. Jing Lee, the Hon. Russell Wortley and also the Hon. Ben Hood. I must say I am just totally flabbergasted that Labor would oppose this bill that seeks to protect the interests of children when they are travelling in cars being driven by reckless adults. It is extraordinary, particularly when you see the statistics the Hon. Jing Lee has pointed out tonight, showing that it is clearly a problem out in our community.

I think the Malinauskas government's attitude here is just totally disingenuous. This is a party that keeps telling everybody it is tough on crime. Well, it should also be tough on road safety, and that is what this bill is really all about. It is about protecting the interests of children when they are in the care of adults—and adults who behave recklessly behind the wheel, endangering the life of those kids and also others on the road. To oppose a measure like this totally defies belief, and I think Labor and the Premier should hang their heads in shame that they have opted to oppose this and have come up with arguments that really just do not stack up. With that, I commend the bill to the chamber.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

Bill taken through committee without amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (22:47): 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 4 June 2025.)

The Hon. F. PANGALLO (22:48): I thank all the members who have stayed on tonight. I do not want to keep you all long, but this is an important issue. In continuing my speech on this motion, I would like to now draw attention to a matter that has been canvassed in this chamber and by a parliamentary committee as well as in the media.

It deals with a fraud committed by a publicly listed company with the knowledge of the South Australian government, which provides this company with funding without proper due diligence and then the abject failure of various agencies within the government, including SAPOL, the Ombudsman, ICAC and the Auditor-General to investigate and correct the egregious reputational harm and financial losses caused to the victim, a bright and entrepreneurial game designer by the name of Justin Daley, even when police had acknowledged that a fraud had been committed. However, what is most puzzling and disturbing about this is that not one entity wants to accept what took place nor make those responsible accountable, from the granting of the dubious government funding through to the lies and cover-ups at the highest levels.

Mr Daley, as late as last month, continued to bring his fraud to the attention of the Department of State Development's Head of Commercial and Governance, the Department for Infrastructure and Transport Minister Tom Koutsantonis, the Premier, Minister Andrea Michaels and Paul Featherstone, the police officer who had been leading the investigation and believed there was fraud, only to mysteriously drop it because he is alleged to have told Justin he was pressured from above. Interesting. Justin has not had one response, bar one from Featherstone, who said it would be interesting to see where his latest complaint went. This is an unacceptable cover up of corruption in government. It is a hornet's nest, a scandal, one that I had hoped would be followed up by inquisitive investigative media reporters.

The company at the centre of this scandal is Mighty Kingdom, and it has a notorious corporate governance history. At the heart of this disturbing white collar crime is Mr Daley, a young man who refused to give up his quest to correct the injustice he endured and which has cost him a considerable amount of money through the company's dishonest conduct, estimated to be more than $600,000 in lost game revenues, and his own expenses in seeking justice.

Anyone else trying to fight government and corporate corruption would have given up a long time ago, but not Justin, and all credit to his resilient perseverance. Members in this chamber, the Hon. Dennis Hood, the Acting President, and the Hon Tammy Franks, know Justin, and we have all advocated on his behalf, seeking answers over several years, only to be met with the usual bureaucratic and government stonewalls of resistance.

Justin has been refused access to all documentation he was seeking through freedom of information from the Department of State Development. They were counting on the weight of government power to intimidate him and that nobody would take his claims seriously and he would go away. He is not going anywhere until his fight is finally settled. He is getting closer. He now has all the documentary evidence to support what he has been pleading over the past seven years. I am highly impressed by his excellent investigative skills and I admire his perseverance and courage.

Let's go to the start of this saga in February 2018. Mighty Kingdom had a close association with the Weatherill Labor government and the Department of State Development. The company commits fraud by wilfully deceiving the government, claiming they owned something they did not to receive a government grant—taxpayers' money of $480,000. It was to be used to further develop and bring to market a clever game app developed by Mr Daley called Kitty Keeper.

January 2019—and all this is documented—the government is notified of that deception. The government requests the grant recipient, Mighty Kingdom, prove with evidence their ownership, but the recipient does not, and the government does not bother to follow up the request. Again, this is documented. June 2020—documented again—the government is notified again of the fraud, this time by another government agency, SASBC, which has bothered to look into the matter. The government requests evidence of their Mighty Kingdom ownership a second time, but the recipient deceptively withholds the evidence the government has asked for.

This is also documented: the government, DSD, knowing the recipient is withholding evidence, does not bother to follow up that either. Instead, the government drop the matter and say it is impossible and inappropriate for them to look into the alleged fraud, the government having to investigate itself. It begs the question: why, with all the knowledge the DSD possessed about the fraud, was this matter not referred to SAPOL? It was reported in *The Advertiser* that DSD have a protocol for this very situation, and I quote:

> In cases where potentially fraudulent applications are identified, those matters are referred to SA Police for further investigation and potential prosecution.

It is documentation that now shows Mighty Kingdom lied about their ownership of the intellectual property in the Kitty Keeper game to secure a $480,000 grant. Documents also show the department that awarded the grant should have known that Mighty Kingdom had been untruthful. Mr Daley contends that the media and the Small Business Commissioner were misled in the process to minimise any media reporting on the matter.

This from ABC media in 2021: there was a statement quoting a state government spokesperson as saying that the investigation by the department concluded all aspects of the contract had been complied with and no further action was required. That was false. Firstly, there are still missing reports. Secondly, the matter was not investigated, as acknowledged in DSD Chief Executive Officer Adam Reid's letter to Mr Daley on 28 September 2020, stating it was 'not possible or appropriate' for him to adjudicate on the matter.

ABC media, again in 2021, reported that Minister David Pisoni had referred Mr Daley's concerns to the department for investigation. Mr Daley had taken this matter to every department, written to every politician and sought help from anyone he could reach out to over the past seven years. Why had this not been investigated you might ask. Supposedly, it had.

SAPOL investigated the fraud allegations after the Hon. Tammy Franks requested they do so in 2022. SAPOL said they could see fraud, but the matter would be referred to the Ombudsman and ICAC for further investigation since it seemed the government was involved. Neither bothered to respond. Then earlier this year, when the new evidence became available, Mr Daley returned to SAPOL hoping they would reopen the matter.

It was explained to Mr Daley that the victim in this matter was the South Australian government and that the government would be 'uncooperative'. Mr Daley asked, 'Wouldn't you proceed with the investigation based on the evidence and see how it progressed rather than assuming they would be uncooperative?' According to Mr Daley, the SAPOL detective who investigated the fraud for six months responded with:

> Well no because the very first thing is to secure a victim's statement. The Govt would NOT comply as it is bad for their reputation. Can you imagine the government admitting that they didn't even attempt to do their due diligence on a significant grant and that it was a total waste of tax-payers money? If any investigation was attempted, it would be a non-event in the first week.

That was from a SAPOL detective. Let that sink in. *The Advertiser* recently reported on a grant fraud that was picked up by the Department of State Development. The matter was immediately reported to SAPOL for further investigation as per the department's protocol. SAPOL went on to prosecute a South Australian woman over a $16,000 grant fraud, yet Mr Daley had reported the $480,000 Kitty Keeper grant fraud to the Department of State Development. First, in 2019, they did nothing. In September 2020, Mr Reid contacted Mr Daley to tell him that:

> I do not consider it appropriate for me to adjudicate on what appears to be a genuine dispute between you and Mighty Kingdom as to the ownership of the intellectual property in the game.

They did nothing again. In fact, totally missing the point. In a statement provided to me, Mr Daley says:

> The department has again been looking at this matter since October last year. Still nothing.
>
> The department and Mr Reid knew there are contracts showing Mr Daleys ownership of the Kitty Keeper Game.
>
> Contracts Mighty Kingdom had but refused to present to the department when requested in the grant breach notice they received in 2020.
>
> The department knows there are two sets of financial reports for the Kitty Keeper game, with a difference between the two of approximately $1.4 million. The department has not followed protocol and referred documented fraud to SAPOL.
>
> SAPOL has acknowledged the evidence of a $480,000 grant fraud, but it will not do anything because it will, at best, make the government look bad and at worst proves maladministration and the cover-up of the grant fraud by the Department for State Development.
>
> SAPOL have alluded that the current Attorney-General is also the minister who signed off on the $480,000 grant to Mighty Kingdom, and that alone would present a problem to the investigation.
>
> SAPOL have a duty to investigate the fraud Mighty Kingdom perpetrated against the Department for State Development and South Australian taxpayers. If there is a greater fraud uncovered, it should then be referred to another agency for further investigation.
>
> SAPOL should act without fear or favour, but clearly they are not.
>
> Premier Malinauskas and Minister Koutsantonis are aware of this new information but will not respond to the dozens of emails sent.

That statement was sent to me by Justin Daley. Mr Daley took Mighty Kingdom to the Magistrates Court in March this year because they had stolen revenue from the Kitty Keeper game. Judgement was made in his favour when Mighty Kingdom failed to show up. This victory in court also proved his ownership of the Kitty Keeper game at a time Mighty Kingdom were telling the government they owned it. Mr Daley has written to the Auditor-General seeking they investigate the matter, given the court's decision. They are yet to respond.

Mr Daley has just filed another matter with the court against Mighty Kingdom, seeking the return of his game as per the contracted agreement and damages. He maintains Mighty Kingdom remains in breach of the agreement they had with him for the return of the game. He says Mighty Kingdom is also in breach of the financial conditions for the Kitty Keeper grant. Mighty Kingdom has been continually disingenuous and deceptive towards Mr Daley and show no interest in fulfilling their contracted obligations.

Their most recent ex-chair, Duncan Gordon, a disgraced company director, tried to coerce Mr Daley by offering the return of the game if he dropped all legal matters and did a media statement around an amicable conclusion. He acknowledged Justin had been wronged. This is supported by a series of emails and text messages, which I will seek to table later on. The return of the game is contracted and unconditional. Duncan Gordon is just the most recent in a long line of board chairs and members at Mighty Kingdom that, while having been fully briefed and aware of the lack of the game ownership, have failed to correct the associated crimes and perform their fiduciary duty, which is paramount for a publicly owned and listed company.

Gordon remains as a director on the board, even though he was recently disgraced. In February this year, the Federal Court granted a default judgement of almost $1 million to the liquidators of AE Charter and Rossair against Mr Gordon, who was a director of those companies, finding that he either was aware or should have been aware that the companies were trading insolvently. There has been a litany of departures at board level—11 in less than two years, which is quite concerning. Among them, former ABC head Michelle Guthrie, who resigned soon after telling a meeting of shareholders that Mighty Kingdom had burned through almost $30 million of investors' money, but had nothing to show for it.

No games developed to market because the gaming industry in South Australia, long-touted by the Weatherill government as being part of his GigCity digital economy revolution, has all but collapsed and with it, tens of millions of dollars in investments and government grants. Mighty Kingdom has benefited from overly generous state and federal digital offset tax claims of up to 40 per cent. It continues to make share offers, further diluting the shareholding of investors, but for what? It actually has nothing to show for it.

Where has all the money gone? What is really going on with this public company? Why is Mighty Kingdom not under investigation by financial regulators as well as integrity agencies? Is it any wonder nobody in government wants to lift the lid and peer under it for fear of what may be found? This matter demands to be investigated fully, without fear or favour. I also have a large bundle of indexed documents and emails in support of Mr Daley's search and research for the truth and for justice, which I have referenced in this address. They provide the necessary and accurate information to justify the need for an investigation, and I seek leave to table them.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. PANGALLO: I now conclude my remarks.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. B.R. Hood.

Bills

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (23:07): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation and explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading them.

Leave granted.

I am very pleased to introduce the *Emergency Management (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2024*. This important Bill proposes amendments to the *Emergency Management Act 2004* to implement the recommendations of the 2024 Independent Review of the Emergency Management Act 2004.

The Review identified opportunities to improve the Act to ensure it remains fit for purpose to meet evolving challenges in emergency management. The Final Report of the Review made 28 recommendations, which the Government accepted or accepted in principle.

This Bill gives effect to the Review's recommendations for changes to the Emergency Management Act.

The proposed amendments strengthen the Emergency Management Act. The amendments clarify and strengthen roles and responsibilities for emergency management in South Australia and introduce legislative provisions to support the response to and recovery from future emergencies and natural disasters.

The Emergency Management Act was promulgated 21 years ago, superseding the *State of Disaster Act 1980*. The Act sets out South Australia's legislative framework for emergency management. It establishes the framework and principles for the State's emergency management arrangements, assigns key roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for emergency management, and empowers response and recovery operations.

Over the last two decades the EM Act has provided a solid foundation for South Australia's emergency planning, mitigation, preparedness, response, relief and recovery activities.

This is the first full-scale review of the EM Act in 21 years. Previous amendments to the Act included updates to provisions for the State Emergency Management Committee and the State Emergency Management Plan. The Act was also amended after the state-wide blackout in 2016 to enable an effective response to significant electricity supply emergencies. Most recently, the Act was amended in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent years, South Australia has experienced some of the most devastating emergencies and natural disasters in its history: the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the 2022-23 River Murray Flood.

The COVI0-19 pandemic tested the operation of the EM Act and its interaction with other legislation like no other emergency before it. There have been only 10 declarations under the EM Act since it came into operation. Three of these declarations were made in the last five years alone. The Major Emergency declaration in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was in place for a record 793 days and extended 25 times between March 2020 and May 2022. The emergency declaration in response to the 2022-23 River Murray Flood was in place for 118 days.

Before COVID, the longest declaration was in place for only four days and were most commonly for bushfire events.

These amendments are, therefore, timely to ensure that the legislative framework empowers South Australia to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emerging risks and hazards such as cyber terrorism and the unique challenges presented by climate change, driving increasingly complex, prolonged, concurrent and compounding natural disasters.

The Bill proposes two significant amendments worth highlighting.

The first substantial change is the introduction of a declaration of a State of Alert. This new category of emergency declaration is modelled on the mechanisms employed in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. It allows the State Co-ordinator to use their powers under the EM Act to scale up or scale down activities, including public messaging, before or after a major emergency or disaster.

The State of Alert would allow for a more flexible coordinated response to a prolonged and complex emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 emergency had several peaks and troughs instead of a linear trajectory through the four emergency management phases of response, relief, and recovery. In such circumstances, a State of Alert would enable scaling up and down emergency public messaging.

The second significant change is the establishment of a separate and permanent State Recovery Co-ordinator with clearly defined responsibilities and powers to support recovery efforts.

The 2022-23 River Murray flood underscored the growing complexity and extended timelines of recovery amid disasters of increasing frequency, intensity and duration. The State Government—supported by the Commonwealth—committed over $194 million to a comprehensive recovery assistance package. This included emergency accommodation, grants for affected individuals, small businesses and primary producers, an extensive waste clean-up program, tourism support, financial counselling, legal assistance, and mental health support.

The State Recovery Co-ordinator will be responsible for leading and coordinating consistent state-level recovery planning and operations. The State Recovery Coordinator will report to the State Co-ordinator when a declaration is in force to ensure clear lines of accountability.

The Bill also amends the EM Act to permanently integrate elements of the *COV/0-19 Emergency Response Act* 2020, reinstating the temporary powers under that Act to allow for a comprehensive and flexible framework for managing declared emergencies.

The Bill also proposes empowering Ministers to modify, or dispense with, procedural requirements of other legislation during a declaration period. It is recognised that directions issued during a declaration may have consequences on other government operations and it appropriate for a Minister to have flexibility to adjust their legislative requirements if a direction may result in an unintended breach of law. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions on movement impacted the ability to sign and witness documents as required by legislation.

The Bill introduces important limitations and checks on this power including the exclusion of certain specified Acts, a requirement that procedures relating to a court can only be modified at the request of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and a sunsetting clause. This mirrors the approach in the *National Emergency Declaration Act 2020* for Commonwealth legislation.

The Bill also implements the recommendation of the Review to amend the EM Act's objectives and guiding principles to recognise the importance of mitigation as a shared responsibility, the key role of volunteers as key contributors to emergency management efforts, and requiring specific planning for vulnerable people.

Finally, to ensure that the EM Act remains fit for purpose and responsive to the dynamic and changing nature of emergencies and disasters, the Bill inserts a statutory review clause requiring a review of the Act within six years of commencement.

This Bill is our response to an emergency management landscape that is continually evolving. It draws on lessons learned from those events to ensure South Australia has the most effective legislative framework for coordinating government action when disaster strikes.

Importantly, the proposed amendments retain the core strengths of the existing Act—its familiarity within the sector and its built-in flexibility to manage a wide range of hazards—so that we can continue to adapt without losing what works.

I conclude by acknowledging the extraordinary dedication of our emergency management personnel across all levels of government, non-government organisations and the volunteer sector. They work around the clock to protect South Australians, often putting their own safety on the line, and I thank them wholeheartedly.

I also pay tribute to the strength and resilience shown by our community in the face of recent disasters, from the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022-23 River Murray Flood, and the ongoing Inland River Flood Event.

I commend the Emergency Management (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill to the Council and look forward to members' contributions on this important piece of legislation during the debate.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Emergency Management Act 2004*

3—Amendment of section 2—Objects and guiding principles

This implements recommendation 1 in the Independent Review of the *Emergency Management Act 2004* (the *Review*) and adds a reference to the State Recovery Co-ordinator.

4—Amendment of section 3—Interpretation

This implements recommendation 14 of the Review and makes consequential changes to various definitions.

5—Amendment of section 5—Interaction with other Acts

This helps to clarify the extent of new information gathering powers under Part 4 of the Act.

6—Amendment of section 6—Establishment of State Emergency Management Committee

7—Repeal of section 8

These clauses implement recommendation 4 of the Review.

8—Amendment of section 9—Functions and powers of SEMC

Subclause (1) implements recommendation 5 of the Review and subclause (2) is consequential to clause 18.

9—Repeal of section 10

This clause also implements recommendation 4 of the Review.

10—Amendment of section 15—Functions and powers of State Co-ordinator

This clause corrects a minor error and makes an amendment that is consequential to clause 18.

11—Amendment of section 16—Assistant State Co-ordinators

This clause is consequential to the creation of the new State Recovery Co-ordinator role.

12—Amendment of section 17—Authorised officers

This clause removes gendered language.

13—Amendment of section 18—Delegation

This clause removes gendered language and makes an amendment that is consequential to the creation of the new State Recovery Co-ordinator role.

14—Insertion of Part 3A

This clause inserts a new Part to implement recommendation 13 of the Review.

Part 3A—The State Recovery Co-ordinator

18A—Appointment of State Recovery Co-ordinator

This provides for appointment of the State Recovery Co-ordinator.

18B—Functions of State Recovery Co-ordinator

This sets out the functions of the State Recovery Co-ordinator.

15—Amendment of section 19—Co-ordinating agency

This implements recommendation 3 of the Review.

16—Substitution of heading to Part 4 Division 3

This clause makes a consequential amendment.

17—Amendment of section 21—Publication of guidelines

This clause makes a consequential amendment.

18—Insertion of section 21A

This clause inserts a new section as follows:

21A—State of alert

This implements recommendation 6 of the Review.

19—Amendment of section 23—Major emergencies

This clause makes a consequential amendment.

20—Amendment of section 24—Disasters

This clause makes a consequential amendment and implements recommendation 7 of the Review.

21—Amendment of section 24A—Public health incidents and emergencies

This clause makes a consequential amendment.

22—Amendment of heading to Part 4 Division 4

This clause makes a consequential amendment.

23—Insertion of section 24B

This clause inserts a new section as follows:

24B—Power to require information or documents

This section implements recommendation 10 of the Review.

24—Amendment of section 25—Powers of State Co-ordinator and authorised officers

This clause implements recommendations 8, 9 and 18 of the Review.

25—Insertion of sections 26AB and 26AC

This clause inserts new sections as follows:

26AB—Modification of procedural requirements

This proposed section implements recommendation 11 of the Review but imposes some limitations on the ability to dispense with procedural requirements where they relate to courts or to Parliamentary matters.

26AC—Public sector mobilisation

This proposed section implements recommendation 12 of the Review.

26—Amendment of section 26B—No obligation on persons to maintain secrecy

This clause makes a consequential amendment.

27—Substitution of section 27

This clause substitutes a new section 27 as follows:

27—Recovery operations

This proposed new section implements recommendations 2, 15 and 16 of the Review. Recommendation 17 of the Review would be implemented in regulations made under proposed new section 27.

28—Amendment of section 27A—Interpretation

This clause makes consequential amendments.

29—Amendment of section 27B—Minister may declare electricity supply emergency

This clause implements recommendation 20 of the Review.

30—Amendment of section 27C—Minister's power to give directions

This clause implements recommendation 19 of the Review.

31—Substitution of section 27D

This clause substitutes a new section 27D as follows:

27D—Minister's power to use or require information

This proposed new section implements recommendation 21 of the Review.

32—Amendment of section 27E—Obligation to preserve confidentiality

This clause implements recommendations 22 and 23 of the Review.

33—Amendment of section 27F—Manner of giving directions or requirements

This clause makes consequential amendments.

34—Amendment of section 28—Failure to comply with directions

This clause removes gendered language and makes a consequential amendment.

35—Amendment of section 30—Impersonating an authorised officer etc

This clause removes gendered language.

36—Amendment of section 31A—Confidentiality

This clause implements recommendations 24 and 25 of the Review.

37—Amendment of section 32—Protection from liability

38—Amendment of section 32A—Protection from liability—COVID-19

These clause implement recommendation 26 of the Review.

39—Insertion of section 33A

This clause inserts a new section as follows

33A—Victimisation

This proposed new section implements recommendation 27 of the Review.

40—Amendment of section 36—Insurance policies to cover damage

This implements recommendation 3 of the Review.

41—Amendment of section 38—Regulations

This clause increases the maximum penalty for an offence against the regulations and provides for offences against the regulations to be expiable.

Schedule 1—Transitional provision and review

1—Transitional provision

This clause ensures the amendments in clauses 37 and 38 will apply in relation to acts and omissions whether occurring before or after the commencement of those clauses.

2—Review of *Emergency Management Act 2004*

This clause implements recommendation 28 of the Review.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. B.R. Hood.

NORTH ADELAIDE PUBLIC GOLF COURSE BILL

Introduction and First Reading

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

Second Reading

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (23:08): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation and explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading them.

Leave granted.

LIV Golf Adelaide has delivered major economic benefits to South Australia, contributing 136 million dollars to the economy in its first two years alone. LIV Golf has served as a vehicle to showcase South Australia to a global audience, with a broadcast reach of more than 500 million viewers across 80 countries.

The inaugural event in 2023 attracted over 77,000 attendees, with 43,000 international visitors to Australia from 37 countries. The 2024 tournament drew more than 94,000 attendees and generated over 79,000 visitor nights. During this event, approximately 40% of ticket holders came from outside South Australia.

Proving the event's popularity, 2025 delivered bigger and better impacts for the State with a record 102,000 attendees.

Adelaide has hosted the Australian fixture at The Grange Golf Club since the first event 2023. The initial agreement to host LIV Golf in Adelaide was for 2 years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years up to 2026.

The State has secured an extension of the LIV Golf Agreement for a period to 2031. The North Adelaide Golf Course will be the exclusive home of LIV Golf in Australia following a redevelopment by Greg Norman Course Design. This firm has delivered more than one hundred iconic courses across 34 countries and six continents.

The redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course is necessary to provide the required facilities and amenities to accommodate year-round use for the public, world-best tournaments, and tourism to South Australia.

Our National Heritage Listed Park Lands has had a Golf Links since the late 19th Century. As part of the evolution of the precinct, the North Adelaide Golf Course was developed in the early 20th century and is the most centrally located golf course complex in any Australian capital city.

The necessary redevelopment the North Adelaide Golf Course carries arguably the greatest potential of any public owned golf facility in the country. The development will make it a world class, landmark venue to secure major tournaments, as well as drive national and international visitation and tourism to South Australia.

Considering its unique location within the Adelaide Parklands and sightlines to the Adelaide CBD and River Torrens a new North Adelaide Golf Course is an amazing platform on which to showcase our state to the rest of the world.

The economic potential of golf tourism is significant, with the average domestic and international golf traveller spending significantly more per trip than non-golf travellers in Australia.

When a round of golf is played there is a 43% increase in spend on international trips. The average spend increases by 38% on interstate travel and 72% on intrastate trips. This is an economic multiplier which adds to our multibillion-dollar tourism industry.

The redevelopment will create one of the world's best public golf courses for year-round use for all South Australians. No matter who you are, or your background, this will remain a public golf course, in public hands.

Golf has seen unprecedented growth across Australia in the past 5 years. Emerging is an increasingly younger and more diverse player base. Off-course and alternative format golf also tends to attract a younger audience due to the reduced barriers to entry such as time constraints. Off-course golf often acts as a feeder to more formal participation and future growth within the sport.

The existing North Adelaide Golf Course is currently comprised of two 18-Hole Courses on approximately 75 hectares of Park Lands, together with one Par 3 course. The current golf course does not contain a dedicated driving range facility or the amenities and infrastructure for the development of the sport at the scale required. This is also about getting more people, more active, more often.

The City of Adelaide has through successive Councils have investigated options for the redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course but this has never progressed. The operations of the existing golf course are also limited by restrictions on current permitted uses.

It is essential that we respond to the economic opportunity which has presented itself. A new North Adelaide Golf Course will create an accessible, high-quality public golf venue encouraging expanded accessibility that caters to golfers of every age and skill level.

The redevelopment will enhance the Adelaide Parklands for both non-golfers and golfers alike. The upgrades will connect spaces to improve public access and movement in and out of the city through the Parklands. This is incredibly important due to the increase in development at key areas such as Southwark and Bowden.

This legislation will ensure the redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course can go ahead as soon as possible to host the LIV Golf Adelaide Tournament in 2028. This will not occur at the expense of the Adelaide Parkland's public amenity, environmental importance or character.

The State Government and the City of Adelaide have already been working together on the initial design and planning activities for the redevelopment works. The legislation commits a positive duty to consult with Council on the development and to resolve the future ownership and operating structure of the North Adelaide Golf Course.

The redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course will be constructed on what is defined in the legislation as the 'project site'. The 'project site' will include the area currently operating as the North Adelaide Golf Course as well as the intention to include Park 27A—also known as John E Brown Park. The use of Park 27A will see the transformation of an underutilised area of the parklands to provide more useable space and will reduce the impact on trees.

The legislation has outlined a significant protection of trees within the Golf Course precinct. For every tree removed, no less than 3 new trees, or seedlings must be planted within the project site or support zones. This policy for vegetation management will provide significant visual and environmental enhancements to the Parklands and Golf Course.

The legislation also ensures that the future operations and maintenance of the golf course are not restricted and allows the staging of tournaments and other events as required.

Under the *Planning Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*, the redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course will be classified by the Planning and Design Code as 'deemed-to-satisfy'

This approach will ensure that planning controls will still remain and building rules consent will be required, mandating the quality, safety and integrity of any facilities constructed.

It is important to highlight the cultural significance of the Adelaide Parklands for the Kaurna people. The application of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* is not affected by this legislation. No ground disturbing works will proceed without consultation with Traditional Owners and relevant approvals under the Act.

The legislation establishes safeguards and limitations on various components of the site and its surroundings. To avoid environmental impact, it defines the project site and support zones which will be utilised to facilitate construction but with clear limits about what can occur in these zones.

The support zones are explicitly for developing facilities and amenities for the golf course and the future staging of events. Additionally, the legislation imposes an ongoing obligation for those areas to be made good once their use is complete.

This is a project that will facilitate the redevelopment of the North Adelaide Golf Course to be a world-class facility which will support world-class events. The Golf Course will remain as a public golf course, for anyone and everyone to enjoy.

The redevelopment will enhance and protect the environmental features of the Adelaide Parklands and builds on South Australia's presence on the global stage. This is a project which builds and drives economic, social and community benefits for generations of South Australians to come.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

This clause is formal.

2—Commencement

The measure will commence on assent.

3—Interpretation

This clause inserts definitions for the purposes of the measure.

4—Effect of Act

The measure has effect despite any other Act or law of the State. It applies to land notwithstanding the provisions of the *Real Property Act 1886* and the *Land Acquisition Act 1969* does not apply to a vesting of land under the measure.

Part 2—Project site

5—Project site

The project site will be delineated in a plan or plans to be deposited in the GRO and identified by the Minister by notice in the Gazette but is to include the area currently operating as the North Adelaide Golf Course as well as Park 27A in the North Adelaide parklands and certain road reserve areas in the vicinity of such land.

6—Cancellation of leases and licences

All leases and licences existing in relation to the project site are to be cancelled in accordance with this clause.

7—Preparations for handover of project site

This clause requires the Minister to consult with Adelaide City Council in relation to the handover day. The Council must vacate and handover possession of the site to the Minister on or before the designated handover day and the Minister is able to issue directions to the Council to ensure an orderly handover.

8—Vesting and care, control etc of project site

On handover day the project site vests in the designated Minister in an estate in fee simple, free from all dedications, encumbrances, estates and interests other than those indicated in the plan or plans deposited under clause 5. The Minister to whom administration of the Act is committed is vested with care, control, management and use of the site.

Part 3—Carrying out the project

9—Consultation requirements and protocol

This clause requires certain consultation to be undertaken by the Minister with the Adelaide City Counsel and the development of a consultation protocol.

10—Application of *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*

The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* applies in relation to any Aboriginal sites, objects or remains found in the course of the carrying out of the project on the project site or the support zones.

11—Application of *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* etc

This clause specifies requirements of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* the are to apply to a development proposed to be undertaken, for the purposes of the project, on the project site or the support zones and that such development will be taken to be classified by the Planning and Design Code as deemed-to-satisfy development for the purposes of that Act (and that the State Planning Commission will be taken to be the relevant authority for all purposes under that Act).

12—Application of other State laws to project

Except as is specified in clauses 10 and 11 or as may be determined by the Minister by notice in the Gazette, no assessment, decision, consent, approval, authorisation, certificate, licence, permit or permission and no consultation, inquiry, notification, process or other procedural step is required under a State law in connection with the project or the performance of functions under the measure.

13—Requirements relating to trees

The Minister must ensure that for every tree that is removed during the project not less than 3 new trees are planted within the project site and support zones.

14—Support zones

Support zones and support services and facilities are defined. Specified powers are conferred on the Minister for the purposes of the provision of support services and facilities in support zones in connection with the development on the project site. Provision is also made in relation to the exercise of those powers.

15—Roads

The Minister is authorised to open or close any roads in connection with the development on the project site (both temporarily and on an ongoing basis).

16—Minister may make provision in relation to vesting etc of project land, structures or property

This clause allows the Minister to make provision in relation to land, structures and property by instrument in writing, in order to implement leasing or other arrangements that may be agreed between the Minister and the Adelaide City Council or for any other purpose connected with the operation of the measure that the Minister thinks fit.

Part 4—Operation of golf course

17—Interpretation

This clause defines certain terms used in the Part. The Part applies to the North Adelaide Golf Course as in operation following the completion of the project.

18—General operation of golf course

Subject to this Part, following the project the North Adelaide Golf Course must continue to operate as a public golf course and must not have permanent fencing around its perimeter for the purpose of excluding members of the public from the course (subject to subclause (2)).

19—Use of golf course for approved events

The Minister can, by notice in the Gazette, approve an event, specify a *declared period* for the event and temporarily close any roads as needed.

20—Minister to have care, control etc of golf course for declared period

The care, control, management and use of the land comprising the North Adelaide Golf Course vests in the Minister (to the extent that it is not already so vested) for the declared period for an approved event and the rights or interests of any other person in or in relation to the land are suspended.

21—Approved event support zones

Support zones may be created for an approved event in accordance with this clause. No permanent buildings may be constructed pursuant to this clause and the Minister must, after the end of the declared period for the approved event, ensure that the public amenity of the approved event support zones is restored.

22—Temporary fencing of land by Minister

This clause deals with fencing for the purposes of an event.

23—Application of *Major Events Act 2013*

This clause allows the regulations to modify the application of the *Major Events Act 2013* in respect of an approved event.

24—Application of certain laws to events and activities

Various laws do not apply during an approved event and an activity carried on by or with the permission of the Minister on the North Adelaide Golf Course will not constitute a nuisance.

25—Application of *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*

Future development on the North Adelaide Golf Course land will be taken to be classified by the Planning and Design Code as deemed-to-satisfy development for the purposes of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*. The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* does not, however, apply to or in relation to any works within the North Adelaide Golf Course or an approved event support zone that are certified by the Minister as being necessary or desirable in connection with the conduct of an approved event.

Part 5—Miscellaneous

26—Other actions to give effect to Act etc

This clause provides for the making of alterations to the Planning and Design Code (or other instruments), that are, in the opinion of the Minister, necessary or desirable to give effect to this Act or for the ongoing operation of any facilities on the project site or support zones. The clause also provides for the grant of a statutory authorisation at the request of the Minister if that is, in the opinion of the Minister, necessary or desirable to give effect to this Act, for the ongoing operation of any facilities on the project site or in connection with an approved event (whether on the project site or an approved event support zone).

27—Delegation

This is a delegation power for the Minister.

28—Duties of Registrar-General

The Registrar-General may be required to take certain steps for or in connection with action taken under the Act.

29—Evidentiary provision

This clause provides for facilitation of proof of certain matters by evidentiary certificate of the Minister.

30—Certain fees etc not payable

Fees and charges are not payable to the Adelaide City Council in respect of the exercise of functions under the measure.

31—Regulations

Regulations contemplated by, or that are necessary or desirable for the purposes of, the measure may be made by the Governor.

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

BIODIVERSITY BILL

Final Stages

The House of Assembly agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Council without any amendment; and agreed to the suggested amendments without any amendment and amended the bill accordingly.

DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT (BREEDER REFORMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

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

APPROPRIATION BILL 2025

Estimates Committees

The House of Assembly requested that the Attorney-General, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State (Hon. K.J. Maher), the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries (Hon. C.M. Scriven) and the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing (Hon. E.S. Bourke), members of the Legislative Council, attend and give evidence before the estimates committees of the House of Assembly on the Appropriation Bill.

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (23:10): With a degree of reluctance, and putting it solely at the discretion and in the hands of this chamber, I move:

That the Attorney-General, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations and the Public Sector, Special Minister of State (Hon. K.J. Maher), the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries (Hon. C.M. Scriven) and the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing (Hon. E.S. Bourke) have leave to attend and give evidence before the estimates committees of the House of Assembly on the Appropriation Bill, if they think fit.

Motion carried.

At 23:11 the council adjourned until Thursday 26 June 2025 at 11:00.

Answers to Questions

WHYALLA DRY ZONE PROPOSAL

In reply to **the Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** (4 March 2025).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State):

The Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs has advised:

1. An application to establish a city-wide dry area in Whyalla has not been made by the Whyalla city council to the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner at this time.

2. The Liquor and Gambling Commissioner has introduced a three-month trial restricting the sale of four-litre casks, five-litre casks and all fortified wine and port casks commencing on 14 April 2025.

The trial will see if the restrictions have an impact on antisocial behaviour and alcohol-related harm in Whyalla and surrounding areas.

Data from liquor licences and authorities will be reviewed to determine the next steps.'

The Minister for Human Services has advised:

Whyalla city council recently joined the Safety and Wellbeing Taskforce (the task force)—a multi-agency committee supporting the needs of remote Aboriginal people and the communities they are visiting. Task force members identify and discuss matters with a view to developing strategies and place-based responses that support mobility, safety and wellbeing.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is continuing to work with stakeholders, including task force agencies, through the Whyalla Services Leadership Group (WSLG) which includes representatives from:

SAPOL Whyalla City Council	Plaza Youth Centre
SA Health (Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network)	National Indigenous Australians Agency
Nunyara Aboriginal Health Service	Services Australia
SA Ambulance Service	Mission Australia
Department of Child Protection	Centacare Catholic Community Services

The task force will continue to oversee responses in Whyalla.

DHS is working closely with Aboriginal tenancies in the area and supporting people who are visiting Whyalla to return to community.

The Minister for Police has advised:

1. SAPOL has met with council on several occasions in addition to monthly attendance at the Whyalla Services Leadership Group.

Council has been offered guidance regarding crime prevention through environmental design, as well as advice on contacting police when incidents occur; and further communicating this to members of the community to provide police the opportunity to attend incidents.

2. South Australia Police (SAPOL) and Consumer and Business Affairs have previously trialled liquor licensing restrictions. Further local liquor licensing accord meetings are scheduled where current licensing conditions will be discussed with all licensees in Whyalla. Whyalla city council representatives will also be present.

A police operation has recently commenced (until 17 April 2025) with a focus on reducing instances of antisocial behaviour in public places within Whyalla. This operation will see further SAPOL resources deployed into Whyalla to proactively monitor and effectively respond to intoxicated individuals engaged in antisocial behaviours.

SAPOL has also engaged with Department of Human Services and SA Housing Trust to assist in the repatriation of residents back to remote Indigenous communities.

PUBERTY BLOCKERS

In reply to **the Hon. S.L. GAME** (5 March 2025).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State): The Minister for Health and Wellbeing has advised:

The state government supports the announcement of the federal Minister for Health and Ageing that the national medical experts, the National Health and Medical Research Council, will undertake a review of the Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines for Trans and Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents.

Care for youth with gender dysphoria is provided by a multidisciplinary team in a tertiary care level setting in accordance with evidence-based guidelines.

METHAMPHETAMINE USE IN THE WORKPLACE

In reply to **the Hon. C. BONAROS** (20 March 2025).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State): The Minister for Health and Wellbeing has advised:

The Malinauskas Labor government is continuing with its $25.1 million investment to deliver more drug and alcohol rehabilitation and detox services.

This includes:

- 12 extra rehabilitation beds in metropolitan Adelaide—operational and located in Glenelg.
- four extra rehabilitation beds in Port Augusta—operational.
- Six extra rehabilitation beds in Mount Gambier, which is two more than the original commitment—operational.
- $4.6 million to fit-out and operate two dedicated drug and alcohol detox beds in the Mount Gambier Hospital—under construction.

The location for a 12-bed purpose-built residential rehabilitation unit is now locked in for the northern suburbs. Land has been secured near the corner of Phillip Highway and John Rice Avenue in Elizabeth Vale, near other health services.

Since the new rehabilitation beds have opened in Mount Gambier, Glenelg, and Port Augusta, 35 people have received specialised care provided over an intensive three-to-six-month period.

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

In reply to **the Hon. T.A. FRANKS** (3 April 2025).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State): The Minister for Health and Wellbeing has advised:

1. The Malinauskas Labor government has introduced a comprehensive assistance package that includes significant support for mental health services, particularly targeting drought-affected areas.

This package includes a $2.4 million funding allocation aimed at boosting mental health and resilience among those impacted by drought.

The package includes farmer-led initiatives, flexible funding which can be tailored to community need, and ensures that services are available to all ages.

2. This package was developed following extensive consultations with farmers and industry experts, including those who participated in round tables led by Grain Producers SA. Key components of the package include:

- Mental Wellbeing Access Hubs: establishing central points in 12 significantly drought-affected areas to provide targeted information, resources, and activities.
- Farmer and Primary Producer Mental Health Tools: promoting tools and resources developed by and for farmers and primary producers.
- Men's Tables: coordinating the establishment of Men's Tables to support high-risk populations.
- Multicultural Partnerships: partnering with a multicultural peak body to deliver mental health initiatives for farming communities affected by drought, including budget for interpreting services.
- Aboriginal-Community Controlled Health Organisations: providing grant funding to these organisations to deliver mental health initiatives for communities whose lands are affected by drought.
- Enhanced NGO Mental Health Services: allocating $1.2 million to six service providers to enhance mental health services in drought-affected regions.
- Targeted social media to the local community so they are aware how and what services they can access for assistance and support.

These initiatives aim to provide comprehensive support to various communities impacted by drought, addressing their unique needs and promoting mental wellbeing.

3. The extension of funding to NGOs already active and working in drought-affected regions will ensure that services will be quickly available, providing timely support to those in need.

This funding also guarantees ongoing continuity of care through existing mental health support programs and referral pathways, both during and following the immediate drought, and extending for several years thereafter.

DISTRICT POLICING MODEL

In reply to **the Hon. J.S. LEE** (29 April 2024).

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

The Commissioner of Police has initiated an independent inquiry into the South Australia Police (SAPOL) District Policing Model (DPM) to ensure he can provide a work environment that can effectively support employees while meeting community needs.

The review will assess how current policing demands have impacted the DPM's original design and explore potential adjustments within SAPOL's existing resources to maximise benefits for employees.

To ensure full objectivity and transparency, an external party will be engaged to conduct the review, including an evaluation of the benefits of reverting to the pre 2018 model.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

In reply to **the Hon. S.L. GAME** (29 April 2025).

The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State):

The Minister for Workforce and Population Strategy has advised:

1. The South Australian government has been investing in subsidised Course in Electrician—Minimum Australian Context Gap places for electrical skilled migrants since 2012.

PEER is committed to delivering the course and is currently awaiting Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) approval of scope for the new version of the course to continue delivery.

An individual that has not completed the gap training can apply for a restricted electrical workers registration using an offshore technical skills record. This will enable them to work under supervised conditions. A person who has a restricted electrical workers registration can perform any electrical work under the direct supervision of a registered electrical worker.

A workers' registration is valid for three years from the date that the licence is granted. The holder can renew the registration to maintain its currency every three years.

There is no prescribed timeframe that an individual must complete the gap training. Completing the gap training allows for the registration holder to upgrade the conditions and remove the restriction of working under supervision.

2. Table 1: General skilled migration nominations to electricians (*), by program year:

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (to 9 May)
2	24	39	46	60

(*) Includes the occupations of Electrician (General) and Electrician (Special Class).

Latest publicly available data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) indicates that for the period 2015 to 2023 there were 210 Course in Electrician—Minimum Australian Context Gap program enrolments in South Australia (Source: NCVER National VET Provider Collection 2023 – Total VET Activity Program enrolments).

The most recent tranche of electricians completed their course in February 2025.

3. No.

The South Australian government's policy for the general skilled migration program is that applicants must be able to demonstrate skilled employment in their nominated or closely related occupation to be eligible for state nomination. Nominated skilled migrant electrical workers can commence work in skilled jobs in their field of expertise under supervised conditions with a restricted electrical workers registration.

4. Questions regarding the cost of the Deloitte Access Economics report should be directed to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

5. Yes. Since March 2022, the South Australian government has implemented a series of actions and initiatives to support the local building and construction industry through skilled migration. This includes:

- Developing a partnership with Master Builders SA through the Build Connect program, to connect skilled migrants with employers in the building and construction industry. □

- Negotiating with the Australian government for the addition of 27 new construction and trades occupations to the South Australian regional workforce DAMA.
- Prioritising construction trades workers through the state nominated general skilled migration program and negotiating priority visa processing with the Australian government.
- Increasing the supply of skilled tradespeople from overseas through international webinars and visits to key markets such as the United Kingdom.

STATE DEBT

In reply to **the Hon. S.L. GAME** (13 May 2025).

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

1. As at 16 May 2025, the South Australian Government Financing Authority (SAFA) had circa $33.2 billion of sustainability bonds on issue. The proceeds raised from the issue of sustainability bonds are applied in a notional way to a pool of public sector assets and are not used to fund specific projects.

2. The government has not borrowed money to specifically fund energy rebates to South Australian taxpayers.

3. As indicated above, the proceeds raised from the issue of sustainability bonds are applied in a notional way to a pool of public sector assets and are not used to fund specific projects.

Coupon payments made by SAFA on its sustainability bonds are paid to the investor holding the sustainability bond on the bond's coupon payment date.

SAFA's Sustainability Bond Framework Annual Report is publicly available and presents a range of output, outcomes and impacts supported by the funds notionally allocated towards the pool of eligible expenditures.

The annual report is available on SAFA's website.

POLICE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

In reply to **the Hon. F. PANGALLO** (13 May 2025).

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

South Australia Police confirm an investigation into this matter is ongoing. Several witnesses have been spoken to and inquiries are continuing. No further information can be provided at this time.