

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL****Tuesday, 2 September 2025**

**The PRESIDENT (Hon. T.J. Stephens)** took the chair at 14:16 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.

*Bills***DEFAMATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL***Assent*

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy assented to the bill.

**CRIMINAL LAW (FORENSIC PROCEDURES) (BLOOD TESTING) AMENDMENT BILL***Assent*

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy assented to the bill.

*Parliamentary Committees***SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**The Hon. I.K. HUNTER (14:18):** I bring up the report of the committee on Petition No. 60, 2024, on the South Australian Museum.

Report received and ordered to be published.

*Parliamentary Procedure***PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Regulations under Acts—

Single-use and Other Plastic Products (Waste Avoidance) Act 2020—  
Plastic Barrier Bags and Produce Stickers

By the Attorney-General (Hon. K.J. Maher)—

Rules of Court—

District Court Act 1991—

Joint Criminal—No. 9

Uniform Special Statutory—No. 8

Environment, Resources and Development Court Act 1993—

Joint Criminal—No. 9

Uniform Special Statutory—No. 8

Magistrates Court Act 1991—

Joint Criminal—No. 9

Uniform Special Statutory—No. 8

Supreme Court Act 1935—

Joint Criminal—No. 9

Uniform Special Statutory—No. 8

Youth Court Act 1993—

Joint Criminal—No. 9

Uniform Special Statutory—No. 8

By the Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector (Hon. K.J. Maher)—

Regulations under Acts—  
Public Sector Act 2009—General

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

By Laws under Acts—

Adelaide Hills—

- No. 1— Permits and Penalties
- No. 2— Moveable Signs
- No. 3— Local Government Land
- No. 5— Dogs
- No. 6— Cats

City of Burnside—

- No. 1— Permits and Penalties
- No. 2— Moveable Signs
- No. 3— Local Government Land
- No. 4— Roads
- No. 5— Dogs
- No. 6— Waste Management
- No. 7— Lodging Houses

District Council of Cleve—

- No. 1— Permits and Penalties
- No. 2— Moveable Signs
- No. 3— Roads
- No. 4— Local Government Land
- No. 5— Dogs
- No. 6— Cats

Mid Murray Council—

- No. 1— Permits and Penalties
- No. 2— Moveable Signs
- No. 3— Roads
- No. 4— Local Government Land
- No. 5— Dogs
- No. 6— Cats
- No. 7— Camping and Mooring

Updated data relating to K. mikimotoi, from the item tabled on 19 August 2025, has been incorporated into the Plankton Counts SA Shellfish Quality Assurance Program

Regulations under Acts—

Fisheries Management—

- Demerit Points—Miscellaneous
- Miscellaneous Broodstock and Seedstock Fishery
- Miscellaneous Exploratory and Developmental Fishery
- Miscellaneous Research Fishery

### VISITORS

**The PRESIDENT:** I welcome Father Olek Stirret and Monsignor Minh-Tam Nguyen from the Croydon parish at the behest of the Hon. Tung Ngo.

### ANSWERS TABLED

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

*Question Time***SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:29):** My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development regarding the harmful algal bloom. What is the current scientific advice as to when the algal bloom will dissipate, and will the minister table that advice?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:29):** I thank the honourable member for her question. Every week we have the Harmful Algal Bloom Taskforce where we are updated on the current information. The Premier then does a media conference where that information is shared. The algal bloom website, [algalbloom.sa.gov.au](http://algalbloom.sa.gov.au), is available with as much information as possible.

Those opposite should be aware that there is no specific date when we can guarantee that the harmful algal bloom will end. We know the reasons for the harmful algal bloom. Professor Mike Steer has been doing an admirable job in terms of communicating across the state in regard to the harmful algal bloom, as well as a number of other people from various departments.

We know what has caused the bloom: it is a marine heatwave where we have had temperatures that are about 2½° higher than the average temperatures in the ocean; we have had an increase in nutrients due to both the extended upwelling as well as the River Murray floods; and we have had weather that is conducive to the bloom continuing. Where we have lots of sunshine, where we do not have lots of rain and lots of storms and heavy weather, then the bloom is also more likely to continue.

We continue to work with the science group, the industry reference group, and of course all of those who can provide information to better understand the bloom. What has been important is that we are able to provide assistance where possible to impacted industries, which includes of course the fishing and aquaculture industries but also so many others, such as tourism industries and others in beachside locations. We will continue to work with industry and to inform South Australians as this harmful algal bloom continues.

**SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:31):** Supplementary: what contingencies are in place or organised for the fishing and aquaculture industries that the minister represents, should this not dissipate before summer?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:31):** Our government has talked about the development of the summer plan, which we hope to be able to announce in October. We continue to refine the industry assistance packages that we have announced. We continue to engage with industry, both at an industry association level as well as talking with individual businesses in terms of how the assistance package can continue to provide support and continue to be refined where necessary.

**SOUTH COAST ALGAL BLOOM**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:32):** Supplementary: can the minister, given she was on radio recently suggesting that recent weather may dissipate the algal bloom, inform the chamber who gave her that specific advice?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:32):** If the honourable member had listened to the full interview—because I think she is referring to the one on Nikolai Beilharz's show yesterday afternoon—I was actually at the Royal Adelaide Show in person giving that interview to him and he asked a question and I outlined three different scenarios. One was that obviously we would hope that the recent weather, which has been rougher and with more rain, may help to dissipate the bloom. The second possibility is that it continues into spring and summer. The third is that it might dissipate somewhat and then return.

Those are the three alternatives, any of which may come to fruition. Our government has been very clear that we are working on plans for each of those scenarios. Obviously, we would all hope that the harmful algal bloom will dissipate. That will obviously be the best outcome, but it's not something that we can make happen. We would hope for that, but we are aware that there are other scenarios and we are planning for each of those scenarios.

#### **ADELAIDE BEACH MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:33):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General as the minister responsible for the Beach Management Review.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI:** Previously in this place, the Attorney was asked questions by the Hon. Frank Pangallo about the investigative report on mortalities in finfish and shellfish hatcheries at the South Australian Aquatic Sciences Centre. When questioned about missing data in the report, the Attorney stated, and I quote:

I am advised that during the dredging operation, water quality monitoring was undertaken by the EPA and DEW in accordance with approved dredge management plans. I am also advised that at no time during the operation did this monitoring identify any anomalies in the water based on EPA benchmarks.

Section 2.3.5 of the Dredge Management Plan outlines the commitment to monitoring water quality as follows:

In the event of failure of the monitoring equipment during dredging, the following will be undertaken...

The plan then specifies measures that will be taken to preserve the safety and integrity of the dredging process. Sonde 433 was being used to monitor water quality during the trial, which failed, and the failure went undetected for 22 days. The opposition is not aware of any secondary mechanism for monitoring the dredging trial. If there was, then that data should have been part of the water quality data compiled in the SARDI report. My questions to the Attorney are:

1. Has the Attorney read the Dredge Management Plan that was approved by the EPA?
2. Has the Attorney read the investigative report on mortalities in finfish and shellfish hatcheries at the South Australian Aquatic Sciences Centre and, if not, why not, given he is the minister responsible for the dredging trial conducted as part of the Beach Management Review?
3. If indeed he has read the report, does the Attorney still stand by his statement that water quality monitoring was undertaken by the EPA and DEW in accordance with the approved dredge management plans?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:35):** I thank the honourable member for her questions. I have read a large number of reports and information in relation to dredging and dredging operations. My advice is it has been done in accordance with the dredge management plans, but I am happy to take on the specifics of the question and bring back a reply.

#### **ADELAIDE BEACH MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:36):** Supplementary: has the Attorney specifically read the investigative report on the mortalities of the finfish and shellfish hatcheries in the South Australian Aquatic Sciences Centre and the Dredge Management Plan that was approved by the EPA for the dredging trial?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:36):** As I said, I have read a large number of reports in relation to dredging.

#### **ADELAIDE BEACH MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:36):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General as the minister responsible for the Beach Management Review.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI:** On the government's own Adelaide Beach Management Review website, it states:

As part of the state government's commitment to combat coastal erosion along Adelaide's coastline, an operational dredging trial was conducted between October and November 2024.

And:

The Department for Environment and Water is currently undertaking monitoring and evaluation of the dredging trial data and will report its findings to the government in the coming months.

My questions to the Attorney-General are:

1. Has the government received any reports on the findings of the dredging trial and, if so, will the government be making this report public?
2. If indeed the government hasn't received any reports, when is the government expected to receive the report on the dredging trial findings?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:37):** I thank the member for her question. With reports and advice on possible options, work continues within the Department for Environment and Water. In due course, the government expects to receive that formal advice. What the honourable member will no doubt be very appreciative and understandably happy about is, in the 2024-25 financial year, I am advised, there has been the largest volume of sand in living memory that has been deposited on West Beach in order to combat coastal erosion.

#### **ADELAIDE BEACH MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:38):** Supplementary: is the dredging still occurring, or has the dredging occurred at any point around West Beach post the operational dredging trial?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:38):** I am not aware of dredging occurring after the dredging trial but, again, I am happy to double-check that and report back to the honourable member.

#### **SA NATIVE TITLE SERVICES GALA DINNER**

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (14:38):** My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. Can the minister tell the council about the SA Native Title Services gala dinner held at the Adelaide Convention Centre?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:39):** I thank the honourable member and former Chair of the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee for his question in relation to native title in South Australia. Indeed, it was a pleasure to attend a celebration of the work of South Australian Native Title Services over 30 years and the operation of the Native Title Act in South Australia.

I will acknowledge the presence of shadow Aboriginal affairs minister, Josh Teague, member for Heysen, who I will pay respect to as a person who turns up to quite a lot of things in Aboriginal affairs and takes a genuine interest. I appreciate the constructive working relationship we have had in Aboriginal affairs for a very long time in South Australia. As a general rule, Aboriginal affairs has been a bipartisan endeavour, and I appreciate that it continues in that respect during this term of government generally.

It was an opportunity to celebrate the fact that it has been more than 30 years since the Native Title Act was passed federally and, within that, to celebrate the extraordinary and enduring legacy of South Australian Native Title Services (SANTS) and its predecessors. The foundational work began with the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, whose native title unit laid the groundwork.

Then, in 2008, SANTS was established as a standalone entity, delivering a focused and effective approach.

Since then, SANTS has been a cornerstone in advocating for the recognition and protection of native title rights and interests in South Australia. Over many years, SANTS has worked tirelessly, providing essential services including administration, research, legal, finance, corporate and community development, human resources, media, and public relations. Since its inception, SANTS has helped facilitate determinations, with more than 40 determinations of native title in South Australia, which is an outstanding achievement that demonstrates their expertise and commitment to bringing about these outcomes. What is even more remarkable is that the majority of these determinations have been determined through consent and agreement, showcasing the ability for collaboration.

This celebration was not only a celebration of SANTS' achievements across the 30 years but the broader legacy of native title in South Australia. It was heartening to see the sense of pride shared by everyone in attendance. The event included a great panel discussion, featuring Clyde Rigney Snr of the Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Corporation, Rob Singleton of Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka Aboriginal Corporation, and Susan Dodd of the Dieri Aboriginal Corporation, each of who offered insights into the work and challenges that face traditional owners.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to everyone at SANTS for their outstanding achievements. The success of this evening was a reflection of the dedication, commitment and passion that SANTS has demonstrated over the years. I would particularly like to acknowledge its chief executive, Keith Thomas, who started in the very early days at the native title unit in the ALRM and has continued this great work for many, many years.

#### VOTING AGE

**The Hon. S.L. GAME (14:42):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before directing a question to the Attorney-General regarding calls to lower the voting age in South Australia.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. S.L. GAME:** The British government recently announced plans to give 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote in all UK elections. Here in South Australia, the South Australian Greens have called on the state government to lower the voting age for state and local government elections, arguing that these teenagers 'deserve a real say over the decisions that shape their future'.

Meanwhile, late last year *The Australian* newspaper reported that South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas, together with his NSW Labor colleague Chris Minns, backed the introduction of a social media age limit and wanted that limit to be as high as we can make it. My questions to the Attorney-General are:

1. If the government is re-elected in March, can it categorically rule out any move to lower the voting age in South Australia?
2. If it cannot provide that watertight guarantee today, can it explain how leaving that possibility open fits coherently with the Premier's desire of lifting the age that teenagers can access social media? Is having South Australian teenagers being able to vote but unable to access social media a foreseeable situation for South Australians under this government?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:43):** I thank the honourable member for her question. I think we were all distressed for a moment that One Nation and the Greens might be on a unity ticket on a particular issue in this chamber. But fortunately in the latter half of the question I think the chamber breathed a collective sigh of relief—that in fact they were taking opposing positions, the natural order of things restored.

In relation to raising the voting age, we have looked with interest at what is happening around the world in the UK, but I can confirm that is not something we are pursuing in South Australia—raising the age. What we are particularly interested in is making sure that civics, democracy and how government works is better understood by younger people. I know that led by my colleague the Hon.

Blair Boyer, Minister for Education, there is a determined effort to make sure that in South Australian schools that is better understood and better taught.

Just in the last couple of weeks, I was down at Adelaide Oval, where there were some significant forums running as part of that civics and democracy education piece, and there were quite a few members from right across the parties and Independents, from both houses of the South Australian parliament, who were there interacting with—I think they were largely year 10s and 11s. I think that is an exceptionally healthy thing for our democracy. But in terms of raising the voting age, no, that is not something we are pursuing.

#### VOTING AGE

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:45):** Supplementary: the Attorney has spoken about not raising the age of voting. Can the Attorney talk about not lowering the age of voting?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:45):** I think I have been used to questions from the Hon. Robert Simms about raising the age of criminal responsibility. Sorry, I have misspoken and, because they are so close together on some things in this chamber, I have transposed two different issues. No, we are not pursuing lowering the age of voting and, in relation to questions I get from the Hon. Robert Simms, we also are not pursuing raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility. But I had confused those two things.

**The PRESIDENT:** Attorney-General, please use the Hon. Blair Boyer's name sparingly in this chamber this week, given his allegiance to the Collingwood Football Club. It could be ruled out of order.

#### APY LANDS GENERAL MANAGER

**The Hon. C. BONAROS (14:46):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney in his capacity as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, or both, a question regarding the APY lands.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. C. BONAROS:** There have been media reports that the minister is considering appointing an administrator for the APY lands. Can the minister confirm if that has occurred and, if so, the reasons for such an appointment?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:47):** I thank the honourable member for her question and her interest in this area. I know that over the years the honourable member has asked a lot of questions and has been very interested about people living in very remote Aboriginal communities.

I can confirm that I have commenced the process to appoint an administrator pursuant to the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act. Recently in parliament I tabled a report by a conciliator that looked at the appointment process of Richard King as general manager in late 2024. That conciliator's report provided, at the end, a number of determinations and directions in relation to striking out that appointment. Upon the conciliator's reflection, it was constitutionally invalid. It went into—and it is 60-odd paragraphs—a number of concerns about the process that led up to that.

Having reflected on the conciliator's report and having spoken to and received the views of a number of Anangu who are current or former members of the executive board, as well as others, I have determined that it is necessary to appoint an administrator. I commenced the process that is contemplated in the legislation last Wednesday by writing a letter to the chair of the board that I intended in seven days to appoint an administrator, as is contemplated in the act.

That process of looking at who that administrator may be is well underway. The intention is to appoint an administrator for a three-month period, which would mean the executive board would effectively be suspended for those three months and would allow for that recruitment process, as directed by the conciliator's report, to take place. Then the board could be reinstated after that occurs. So yes, in short, in relation to the honourable member's question, having reflected on the conciliator's

report, having received advice and having reflected on the views of a number of Anangu—some who have been and currently are members of the executive board—I have decided to make sure the conciliator's report is implemented to appoint an administrator for that three-month period.

#### **APY LANDS GENERAL MANAGER**

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO (14:49):** Supplementary: considering the Attorney's close cultural connections to the APY lands, should he consider recusing himself from making the decision and to leave the appointment to another minister?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:50):** No.

#### **DROUGHT ASSISTANCE**

**The PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Ben Hood, you will be watched closely this week, too, being a Collingwood supporter. Be very careful with your behaviour this week.

**The Hon. B.R. HOOD (14:50):** I will take that on notice, to look after myself, Mr President. I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question to the quasi member for Mount Gambier and Minister for Primary Industries regarding drought.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. K.J. Maher:** One quasi to another quasi.

**The Hon. B.R. HOOD:** One quasi to another! During the Budget and Finance meeting, the department, when asked whether they had provided advice to the minister around no or low-concession loans, the Chief Executive of PIRSA stated, and I quote:

We have been asked to provide advice. We have worked with our colleagues in Queensland and New South Wales to understand some of the processes they have, and the rest of that would be a consideration for the government minister.

Mr Brett Bartel, Director of Emergency Management, Drought and Resistance, then added, and I quote:

We probably provided in the last two to four weeks details around, as Mehdi described, how schemes are run interstate, and what some options would be.

So my question to the minister is: when will the minister release that advice and the government's decision?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:51):** I thank the honourable member, and quasi member, for his question.

*The Hon. B.R. Hood interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN:** Been there, done that. In terms of seeking advice from my department, I of course, throughout the situation with the drought, have been seeking advice from the department on a variety of matters, including what sorts of approaches have occurred in other jurisdictions. We continue to get that advice and to consider its applicability to South Australia. Of course, one of the things that has become clear is that the \$73 million drought support package by the Malinauskas Labor government is the biggest drought support package ever put out by a South Australian government. That was one of the things that we have learned through the comparison with other states.

#### **DROUGHT ASSISTANCE**

**The Hon. B.R. HOOD (14:52):** Supplementary: I will ask the minister again. When will the minister release the advice on no and low-concession loans that has been received by her department and on what the department's decision on those will be?

**The PRESIDENT:** The minister didn't actually touch on that.

*Members interjecting:*



**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Order! The Hon. Mr Hunter, thank you; I don't need your help.

*The Hon. I.K. Hunter interjecting:*

**The PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Mr Hunter! No, no supplementary question.

### **DROUGHT ASSISTANCE**

**The Hon. J.E. HANSON (14:53):** My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister speak to the chamber about the hay recently received by farmers in the Riverland and Murray Mallee through the fantastic work of the rapid relief team supported by the SA government's donated fodder transport subsidy scheme?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:53):** I thank the honourable member for his question. Members will recall that last November the Premier and I announced the first iteration of our government drought support package. The donated fodder transport subsidy scheme was part of that original package, supporting charities who were delivering donated hay to farmers in need. Initially, \$2 million was committed to this scheme. It was so successful that in April, when we announced our extended drought support package, totalling \$73 million in measures to assist farmers, we allocated a further \$4 million to the donated fodder transport subsidy scheme.

Just recently, we announced that a further \$1 million has been allocated for additional fodder deliveries and a free technical advisory service for drought-affected farmers. This next round of funding will be very targeted to farmers who remain in need due to the prolonged drought conditions. The technical advisory service will give priority access to farmers who are accessing the fodder scheme to provide professional advice on livestock, agronomy and soil management. This is being provided based on feedback that we have had from industry and from producers directly in respect of the need for support in decision-making as the season continues to evolve.

Livestock SA is also being provided with \$50,000 in funding to coordinate livestock-related technical events. These technical events and the technical advisory service will also be able to play a key role in assisting farmers feeding livestock, particularly in being able to get the most out of donated fodder or, indeed, other fodder. Last Friday, over 600 tonnes of donated fodder was delivered to 131 Riverland and Murray Mallee farmers through the state government's donated fodder transport subsidy scheme. This was done in partnership with the Rapid Relief Team, delivering fodder to Paruna, south-east of Loxton.

This is in direct contradiction to the misinformation being spread by the member for Barker in federal parliament and on his social media. Tony Pasin has posted on his Facebook page about the fantastic work of the Rapid Relief Team at Browns Well last Friday—so far, so good. However, he then falsely states that:

...the Rapid Relief Team is not waiting for Government and is delivering much needed free fodder, thank God for them!

I am very thankful for the Rapid Relief Team and the great work that they are doing, but it is simply untrue, obviously, that this government is not part of that. The hay run spoken about by Mr Pasin in his self-aggrandising speech in federal parliament last week is the very hay run that this state government enabled to happen through funding for the transport costs of the Rapid Relief Team, but I am sure it does not surprise anyone in this chamber to see the member for Barker deliberately spreading misinformation for self-promotional purposes and for political gain.

Mr Pasin also references in his Facebook post other free fodder deliveries by the Rapid Relief Team in Streaky Bay and Jamestown, which I have also spoken about here in parliament because of course they, too, were funded by the state government for the transport costs. Now we see the member for Barker wanting to benefit from the desperation of farmers, who are facing some of the worst conditions that we have ever seen in terms of drought in the Riverland and Murray Mallee, and trying to do it to boost his own political profile.

While he is doing that, this government is doing the work, partnering with charities, including the Rapid Relief Team, and getting support out to farmers where we can. To date, the state government has funded the transport costs of charities to deliver more than 16,000 tonnes of fodder

to around 2,000 South Australian farmers. I know this is having a real impact on farmers across the state as they continue to deal with this ongoing drought. I am very pleased that our government is supporting this initiative, and we will continue to work closely with industry and with charities to get support out to those farmers most in need.

#### **DROUGHT ASSISTANCE**

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (14:57):** Supplementary: in partnering with the charities, can the government inform whether all of the truck drivers have been paid for their freight?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (14:57):** I thank the honourable member for her supplementary question. There are some drivers who are volunteers; there are others who are paid. They make their contracts or their relationships with the charities, and those charities are responsible for paying them.

#### **ANTIRACISM**

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (14:58):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before addressing a question without notice to the Leader of the Government in this place on the question of antiracism.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS:** Is the minister concerned about the anti-immigration rally that occurred in the CBD on Sunday, and what action is his government taking to combat racism and to promote multiculturalism in the South Australian community?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (14:58):** I thank the member for his question. Am I concerned if there is anything that seeks to foster division and racism in South Australia? Absolutely, yes, that concerns me, and I think it concerns all of us in here. I think some of the views that we have seen expressed at events, particularly on the weekend but recently in Australia, do not reflect properly who we are as Australians, particularly South Australians. We are a very proud multicultural society in South Australia that has benefited greatly from multiculturalism and from what that brings to us as a state and who we are as South Australians.

Those who seek to foster hate and division I don't think have any place in public discourse in the manner and fashion that we have seen it in some incidents recently. Absolutely, the government as a whole does what it can do to make sure we are a more tolerant society. We have an antiracism strategy in the public sector, we have a Minister for Multicultural Affairs who fosters that inclusiveness and we have members of this parliament—I would like to specifically mention the Hon. Jing Lee.

You can rarely go to an event in our multicultural community without Jing Lee being a part of that event and promoting multiculturalism in South Australia, as I know so many in this room and across our parliament do. So in response, no, some of the actions, some of the views put forward, have no place in South Australia.

#### **PUBLIC POOL USE**

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:00):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking questions of the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing regarding public pool use in South Australia.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD:** Recently, on ABC radio during an interview, the Mayor of Burnside stated that there is potential for added pressure on public pools this summer due to the algal bloom problem that we are experiencing in South Australia. When referring to the possibility of the need to increase opening hours of public pools in particular, she stated, and I quote:

It's been very busy [at the local pool]...The last few weeks I've really seen an increase in the number of people. I have had people ask me...[if we] are likely to look at bringing forward the date and time of our summer

season...but I know it took a lot of long-term negotiation with the State Government last time [and several hours needed to be changed]...We can't just say we're going to extend it, there's the cost of staff.

Then there is the cost of heating the pool, etc. It is expensive. My questions to the minister are:

1. Is she aware whether public pool hours are considered to be extended to accommodate the additional demand due to concerns with effects of the algal bloom here in South Australia over the coming summer and warmer months?

2. If so, will the minister commit to providing funding to assist with operational costs associated with extending the opening hours of these public pools across the state, especially in light of suggestions from people that are running the pool that the federal government's \$4 million grant to do so may not be adequate to cover the costs involved?

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:02):** I thank the honourable member for his question. As a bit of background I guess, in regard to extended hours for swimming pools at the moment in South Australia, because of the construction of the Adelaide Aquatic Centre hours at pools like Unley and Burnside have been extended. For the first time, particularly with Unley, the pool has been open in winter, which has provided a unique opportunity for that community to be able to head to the pool and enjoy swimming all year round, and that's something we hope the council looks to and when thinking about what they could be doing differently.

The community has obviously shown interest, and my understanding is that it has been well received. I guess having the Adelaide Aquatic Centre come online in the near future has also provided an opportunity for councils to explore new ideas and how to utilise their facilities all year round. So that is a good thing that has come out of that.

In regard to access of swimming pools and the algal bloom, I know that VACSWIM opened yesterday and that is going ahead. It is really important to come back to the facts here, because we don't want misinformation getting out there. We don't want fear starting to come into the space of what we are doing in summer.

I am advised by the Chief Public Health Officer and our public health experts that it has been clear that the algal species that we are seeing predominantly in our areas, affecting our beaches, is not toxic and is not harmful to humans. Some people might experience mild and temporary symptoms from exposure to algal particles in the water or in the air, but I am advised that these go away quickly once leaving the water or beach and have no long-term impacts. SA Health has advised that people can continue to visit and swim at the beach and it is only recommended, if there is discoloured water or foam, to have a rinse in clean water.

We are encouraging people to continue to go to the beach. I mentioned in the last sitting week that we were bringing Surf Life Saving together. We are continuing to work with them. They are the provider of the VACSWIM program. We are keeping them up to date.

A forum that we held last week with the Premier was a really good reminder of the invaluable knowledge and experience that Surf Life Saving bring to this discussion. That is why the government have included them very early on. They bring simple ideas that really build on what they stand for as an organisation, and that's a mission to have zero deaths that are preventable in our waters.

The reason this is a really simple solution that they came up with is we all want to respect and understand when we see the flags on the beach of best locations to swim, and this will in some ways put more emphasis and power behind Surf Life Saving to remind us about listening to their advice, swimming where the flags are, and following their safety guidance as well. Surf Life Saving have played a pivotal role in where we have been able to build our knowledge as a government, and we look forward to continuing to work with them, not only with our beaches but also with our pools, where they do VACSWIM programs, as well.

#### **PUBLIC POOL USE**

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:05):** Supplementary: I thank the minister for her answer. With respect to the extended hours that were mentioned for Burnside and Unley, I think it was, is the cost of that being borne by local government or by state government?

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:05):** I am happy to look into that further, but my understanding is by state government.

#### VACSWIM

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:05):** Supplementary: is the minister confirming that VACSWIM will be going ahead at all beach locations?

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:06):** As stated, VACSWIM opened yesterday.

#### PUBLIC POOL USE

**The Hon. B.R. HOOD (15:06):** Supplementary: can the minister confirm that the new Adelaide Aquatic Centre will be open for this summer 2025-26 season?

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:06):** I am happy to confirm, and I have been advised, that the Aquatic Centre for Adelaide will be open in the 2025-26 summer.

#### SUMMIT AQUATIC AND LEISURE CENTRE

**The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (15:06):** My question is to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing. Will the minister inform the council on the new Summit Aquatic and Leisure Centre in Mount Barker?

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:06):** I thank the honourable member for the question. It is with great pride that I provide an update on the official opening of the new Summit Aquatic and Leisure Centre at Mount Barker, a \$52 million landmark project that delivers not only a state-of-the-art facility but also a symbol of community vision, collaboration and investment in health and wellbeing.

This facility replaces the outdated and undersized Mountain Pool, which had served the community for more than six decades, and it is remarkable that this was an outdoor pool in Mount Barker that people used to use all year round.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE:** Very brave. The new centre ensures that one of our most rapidly expanding regions has access to facilities that will support healthy, active and connected lifestyles. The centre offers a wide range of facilities: a 25-metre, 10-lane competition pool; a dedicated learn-to-swim pool; a shallow-entry splash area with water play; and a warm water therapy pool as well. In addition, there are modern gym and fitness rooms, a community meeting space and a creche to support families.

Accessibility has also been built into the design from the very outset, with wide walking areas, disability-friendly change rooms and a Changing Places facility, ensuring that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy what is on offer. Already, the response from the community has been overwhelming. More than 1,000 memberships have been taken up, with hundreds of enrolments in swimming lessons, underscoring the strong demand for inclusive aquatic fitness activities and services. The centre is also expected to employ up to 100 staff, boosting local jobs, supporting families and contributing to the region's economy by attracting more visitors to the Hills.

This project has only been possible through a strong partnership approach. Funding included \$7.3 million from the South Australian government, \$15 million from the Australian government's Community Development Grants Programme, alongside the contribution of the Mount Barker District Council. The centre is managed by Belgravia Leisure on behalf of the council, ensuring it remains responsive to local needs while drawing on professional expertise.

Importantly, this centre is not just about bricks and mortar; it is about creating a safe and welcoming place where children can learn to swim, families can spend time together, seniors can

maintain active lifestyles and people with a disability can participate with dignity and confidence. It is a facility that reflects our government's broader commitment to inclusion and to promoting healthier communities.

I would also like to acknowledge the tireless advocacy of local leaders, community sporting clubs and residents who have pushed for this project for many, many years, including the local member for Kavel, Dan Cregan. Their determination has ensured that Mount Barker now has a facility that will serve generations to come. In conclusion, the Summit Aquatic and Leisure Centre is more than a building; it is an investment in community wellbeing, social connection and long-term sustainability. It demonstrates what can be achieved when governments at all levels work hand-in-hand with local communities and councils. Congratulations to everyone who was involved.

#### RSPCA

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:10):** My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Does her department have a current MOU with the RSPCA? If it does, when was that signed? If it does not, how long has it been lapsed?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:10):** I thank the honourable member for her question. I am happy to take that on notice and bring back a response.

#### RSPCA

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (15:10):** Supplementary.

**The PRESIDENT:** I will listen intently, the Hon. Ms Franks.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS:** Given the chief executive gave evidence in Budget and Finance that he was unsure, why is the minister now still unsure a week later?

**The PRESIDENT:** I can't really get that out of the minister's answer, the Hon. Ms Franks.

#### LIV GOLF

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO (15:11):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Attorney-General and the Premier in another place a question about the LIV Golf redevelopment.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. F. PANGALLO:** It has been quite an eventful week for the Premier's *Caddyshack* project with a worried government sending Greg Norman's design team into a panic to rework their plans after the likely extent of tree losses was revealed to make the championship-size golf course fit on the existing footprint. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet also revealed last week that the Greg Norman team will now scrap the plan for the driving range at Possum Park, which also has a par 3 course and where hundreds of remains and artifacts of the Kaurna are buried. It follows the front-page article in *The Australian* where elders were enraged that their sacred site would be disturbed and desecrated in excavations.

The Premier still refuses to come clean on the full cost of this project, which he claims will be \$45 million. Experts dispute this and say it will be at least \$135 million with a new clubhouse in the mix. For a typical championship-level course with the Greg Norman brand, a developer—in this case the state government—needs to budget for, in US dollars, a one-off design fee of between \$US2 million and \$US4 million, and construction costs of \$US40 million-plus, which on today's exchange rate is about \$A68.8 million.

Millions more will need to be spent on maintenance and associated costs, and notably an obligatory annual licensing fee paid to Mr Norman for the ongoing use of his name. This is par for the course in contracts signed with celebrity golfers who design courses, like Mr Norman, Gary Player, Nick Faldo and of course the great Jack Nicklaus. It is my understanding that the Shark charges anywhere between \$US100,000 and \$US500,000 a year. My questions are:

1. Will the government have to pay an ongoing licensing fee to Greg Norman for the use of his name once the course is completed? If yes, how much, and frequency of payment, monthly or annually, and is it an obligatory fee?

2. What is the amount for the naming rights fee which has been negotiated?
3. Where will the driving range now be located and what works will be needed to create this facility?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:14):** I think answers have been given to many questions that have been raised by the Hon. Frank Pangallo, and I think many of the answers have been that it hasn't been finalised yet. So the Hon. Frank Pangallo either has some sort of crystal ball through which he can see into the future and he is magically transporting himself into the future and coming back with answers, or he is just plucking things out of thin air. I will pass those questions on to the Premier in another place, but I am not going to commit to bringing back a reply because, quite frankly, I am just not sure there is one.

#### **FORENSIC SCIENCE SOUTH AUSTRALIA AWARDS**

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (15:14):** My question is to the Attorney-General. Can the minister tell the council about the winners of the 2025 Forensic Science Awards?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:14):** I thank the honourable member for his important question. In the middle of last month, I had the honour of attending, once again, the annual Forensic Science South Australia Awards, which recognise the outstanding achievements in innovation across the forensic science community in South Australia.

These awards recognise the dedication, scientific rigour and integrity of those who play a crucial role in supporting our justice system, from crime scene to courtroom, and coronial inquests. Neil Langlois was awarded the Justice Ted Mullighan Outstanding Case Award for his expert testimony in a manslaughter and criminal neglect case in which Neil was commended by the judge in that case for his exceptionally clear and helpful explanations of his evidence.

Kahli Murton received the Foundation Award for developing and implementing an electronic ordering system for FSSA's laboratory supplies. The new system Kahli developed has been described as a game changer for efficiency for the science support team. The Customer Service and Public Relations Award was awarded to the mortuary technical team for the important work they do in providing dignity and care for unclaimed deceased persons.

The Professor Hilton Kobus Research Award was given to Emma Partridge, Peter Stockham, Michaela Kenneally, Andrew Luong and Chris Kostakis for their paper regarding the recent detection of a highly unusual and dangerous combination of novel psychoactive drugs. Their work will alert scientists in other jurisdictions here in Australia and around the world to be on the lookout for this combination of drugs in their own work.

Danielle Butzbach received a special award for her investigative work and development of a new test method to identify new psychoactive substances. Danielle developed a new method to accurately measure the quantity of extremely low concentrations of this particular drug in blood. This new method is capable of detecting concentrations as low as the equivalent of a small pinch of salt dissolved in an Olympic-size swimming pool.

Claire Jeanes also received a special award for developing a new system for prioritising, monitoring and advancing research and development projects in the biology team. The award for the highest achieving student in the Flinders University Bachelor of Forensic and Analytical Science degree was awarded to Mackenzie Walter.

I would also like to acknowledge Senior Specialist Forensic Pathologist Dr Roger Byard for his recognition in this year's King's Birthday Honours List. Dr Byard was awarded the Companion of the Order of Australia for 'eminent service to medicine, to forensic pathology, to tertiary education as an academic and researcher, and to the community'—an exceptional achievement and very well deserved.

The state government is committed to supporting the exceptional work done by Forensic Science SA. Work is now in motion on the new South Australian forensic science facility, with work well underway and, importantly, staff playing a crucial role in the design process. I want to

congratulate the recipients of the awards for their achievements and all those who have contributed to this excellent work.

### EMERGENCY MEDICAL ACCESS IN REMOTE SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (15:18):** I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking a question of the Attorney-General, representing the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, regarding emergency medical access in remote South Australia.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.S. LEE:** On 27 August, an 85-year-old volunteer suffered a suspected cardiac arrest in Innamincka, more than a thousand kilometres from Adelaide. Despite the presence of off-duty paramedics and, later, Royal Flying Doctor Service staff from New South Wales, access to the local RFDS clinic and ambulance were denied due to staffing issues. The patient was initially treated by the off-duty paramedics at the Innamincka Hotel before being transported to the airstrip on a mattress in the back of a ute. He was then flown to the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

The incident has prompted an internal review by RFDS SA/NT and raised serious concerns about emergency preparedness and access in remote communities. My questions to the minister are:

1. What support is being provided to communities like Innamincka to strengthen local emergency response capacity and avoid similar incidents?
2. Can the minister indicate whether any recent review was done about disaster management protocols or infrastructure investment to improve emergency health services in remote regions?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (15:19):** I thank the honourable member for her question. Certainly, there are challenges in a state like South Australia that is a very, very large state, often in areas with very sparse populations like, as the honourable member has pointed out, Innamincka, which is an amazing part of South Australia. I haven't been for a number of years but I would gladly be taken back to Innamincka again.

In relation to the particular incident the honourable member has referred to and the general questions, I will be happy to pass them along to the health minister in another place and bring back a reply—who is an avid Crows supporter, I might add.

### ADELAIDE REMAND CENTRE

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:20):** I seek leave to give a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services questions regarding the Adelaide Remand Centre.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO:** According to *The Advertiser*, on 17 July this year a former nurse has alleged that the Adelaide Remand Centre is a toxic and negligent workplace where prisoners' medical concerns are routinely dismissed and whistleblowers are punished. These claims follow the death of a man at the centre's showers and raise serious concerns about inmate care and internal reporting failures. My questions to the Minister for Correctional Services are:

1. How does the minister justify ongoing reports of neglect, unsafe working conditions and suppression of whistleblowers at the Adelaide Remand Centre?
2. What protections currently exist for whistleblowers in South Australia's correctional system, and will the minister commit to strengthening these to ensure staff can report misconduct without fear of retaliation?
3. Given mounting evidence of systematic failure, will the minister commit to a full independent inquiry into the operations of the Adelaide Remand Centre?

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:21):** I thank the member for her question. The member might not be aware of this, but the Adelaide Remand Centre was privatised by those opposite. In regard to the safety of our prisons, obviously safety is always paramount of not only our prisoners but our workforce. I am happy to look into the particular incident that you are raising. Obviously, there are reporting procedures and this is something I am happy to look into further in regard to this particular matter.

In regard to safety in our prisons, this is something the government does take seriously. That is why at the last budget we committed a substantial amount of funding to provide security upgrades in our prisons that could look at not only perimeter fencing but also the screening of people in our prisons to make sure that we are keeping contraband out. My understanding is that we are finding more contraband because we are increasing those screening measures because we want to keep our prisons as safe as possible.

As a government, we are investing in this. We have made record amounts of investments in our prison systems, not only from beds but also security measures. Just in the 3½ years now that we have been in government we have either opened or invested in over 700 beds across the system. That is a significant investment and one that goes to increasing the safety of our prisons but also the safety of our community.

#### **ADELAIDE REMAND CENTRE**

**The Hon. C. BONAROS (15:23):** Supplementary: do those record investments include resourcing for answering calls from family, friends and lawyers to individuals who are on remand in the Remand Centre, given the previously very low number of people working in that space?

**The Hon. E.S. BOURKE (Minister for Emergency Services and Correctional Services, Minister for Autism, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:23):** I am happy to take that on notice and look into it further.

#### **ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM**

**The Hon. J.E. HANSON (15:24):** My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development. Will the minister update the chamber on the new round of funding through the Enabling Infrastructure Program and its new guidelines?

**The Hon. C.M. SCRIVEN (Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Minister for Forest Industries) (15:24):** I thank the honourable member for his question. This week I was delighted to announce the latest round of funding opportunities for the popular Enabling Infrastructure Program. The Malinauskas government's \$5 million program is a key component of the Thriving Regions Fund supporting regional communities, with grants of up to \$1 million available for shovel-ready projects.

We have also listened to feedback from past rounds and to help get more projects investment ready and into the pipeline for future funding for regional communities we are now extending the guidelines to include planning grants. The Enabling Infrastructure Program is about enabling communities to develop and deliver projects to make a real difference into the future and to grow, diversify and thrive through targeted investment.

This year, the Enabling Infrastructure Program is being offered with two distinct streams. The first one, stream 1, is infrastructure for investment-ready projects, with grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$1 million, which is consistent on the whole with previous rounds. But we have also introduced stream 2, planning to support needs assessments, feasibility studies, risk and cost-benefit analyses, stakeholder engagement, business case development and implementation planning, with grants available between \$10,000 and \$75,000. This change to the guidelines will ensure that more projects are investment ready and can contribute to delivering lasting benefits to our regional communities.

When I became minister about 3½ years ago, I was very conscious of the barriers for small organisations and small councils in applying for grants. Most grant programs require a 50 per cent co-contribution, and that can be a significant barrier for smaller organisations. Because of that, in the



earlier rounds those smaller organisations, local governments, charities, incorporated bodies, etc., needed to provide only a 30 per cent co-contribution, and that was very well received.

However, it became clear that there were also opportunities to further lift opportunities for smaller organisations because sometimes they haven't had the resources to invest in the planning and feasibility studies that would actually make them competitive for grants, whether it be these Enabling Infrastructure grants or other grant programs from federal or state governments or elsewhere. So, as a result, we have now introduced stream 2.

I encourage applications for projects that address key regional challenges. That might include child care, aged care, key worker accommodation and digital connectivity, as well as other proposals that enhance regional outcomes. The Enabling Infrastructure Program has provided funding to 17 projects across South Australia's regional areas over three funding rounds. Previous funded projects include accommodation for workers in critical seasonal roles, expansion of childcare facilities, health and education centres, and upgrades to community facilities.

I would particularly like to thank Tony Piccolo, member for Light and the candidate for Ngadjuri, who was instrumental in providing some of that feedback on behalf of his communities in regard to the barriers for smaller organisations and small councils. Being able to access grant funding for community groups that do not necessarily have the funds available to get past that first hurdle of project planning is really key to how we are now continuing to strengthen this program.

The Thriving Regions Fund is a \$15 million commitment per annum to support projects that enable regional industries to grow jobs and to strengthen regional communities more broadly. It has demonstrated outcomes that improve quality of life for regional communities, sustains regional communities that attract and retain people to live and work, and acts as a pipeline for regional leaders, providing a voice for their regions and creating job opportunities and improved career options by capitalising on regional growth potential and stronger regional economies.

Applications are open now for the Enabling Infrastructure Program and they close on Monday 13 October at 5pm. Further information and instructions on how to apply can be found on the PIRSA website. I am excited to see what projects this new funding round will bring. I also encourage people to get in contact with PIRSA's regional advisers. They are people who are on the ground in our regional communities. They are able to provide advice and information on things such as these grant programs and they are also, I think, a really important resource to both those who might be potential applicants and also to the government because they are able to provide advice on the sorts of things that might be creating barriers.

In this case, we have been able to address some that have been raised by people such as the member for Light, as well as give information back to those communities, back to individual organisations that may perhaps not be able to be successful in grant programs without that additional advice. We really do appreciate the hard work that they do. They are spread across the state within PIRSA offices. I look forward to seeing the range of applications that we might get through in this next round of the Thriving Regions Fund, the Enabling Infrastructure stream, and I am sure they will continue to benefit areas across our state.

### *Bills*

## **APPROPRIATION BILL 2025**

### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 20 August 2025.)

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:29):** I rise today to speak on the Appropriation Bill, and I indicate that I am the lead speaker for the opposition on this bill. This bill allows for the government of the day to appropriate funds to implement its budget priorities. It is an opportunity to assess not only how money is being spent but whether it reflects the real needs and concerns of South Australians.

We have seen \$1.6 billion in budget blowouts across departments by this government: over \$700 million in health, \$150 million in child protection and millions more across human services and the environment. This is no longer a one-off budget blowout but appears to have become a pattern of financial mismanagement.

Once again, I highlight that cost-of-living pressures for South Australians have not eased. Energy prices are up by nearly \$800 a year, and the costs of grocery staples are rising faster than wages. This government, boasting of receiving record stamp duty and GST revenue, has failed to provide real and meaningful relief. They appear to be benefiting from inflation.

The people in our state, especially young families, retirees and those in the regions, are paying the price. Adelaide is now the second least affordable housing market in the country, yet we see no new vision to address the housing crisis, just more red tape and delays and a serious lack of water infrastructure.

This government also promised to fix ramping, but instead we have seen the worst ramping on record. Then there is their so-called Hydrogen Jobs Plan, a \$593 million promise that is now dead in the water. Over \$250 million has already been spent and not a single kilowatt of power to show for it. We now know it truly should be known as the hydrogen hoax. South Australian taxpayers have had to pay the ultimate price and have not saved anything on their power bills.

Regional South Australians, once again, have been neglected. There is still no clear strategy to support regional health or to deliver critical infrastructure across our regions. For years, the opposition has called on the government to take community safety seriously. This government has consistently denied that South Australia has a crime problem to address, and yet this year's budget is suddenly focused on targeting crime. This contradiction speaks volumes.

This government is more focused on taking selfies than delivering. The mismanagement of key projects is hugely concerning, particularly around hydrogen and health. This budget reflects a government more focused on managing its message than managing our money. As debt continues to rise, it is clear this government has no plan to manage its debt or to deliver positive outcomes to South Australians. South Australians deserve better.

**The Hon. N.J. CENTOFANTI (Leader of the Opposition) (15:33):** I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill before us. As my honourable colleague has pointed out, in accordance with the convention of this chamber, we on this side will be supporting it. But I have to be honest: today, this week, I am finding that support rather difficult. We are finding it hard to place our confidence in a government that has clearly forgotten to place its confidence in the people of South Australia.

We will support supply for government—that is our duty—but how can we continue to support that supply when the government continues to ignore the people who quite literally keep our state going: our farmers, our fishers, our winemakers, our growers and the regional communities that support them? I feel like I say this every time I have the chance, and every time my calls, my letters, and our suggestions—here is an opposition for bipartisan support—are met with indifference and with bureaucratic responses, rarely are they met with any meaningful action.

Not only are these industries being left behind; they are being left out. While this government asks us to back in its spending, it refuses to deliver practical, serious cashflow support to the very people who keep our economy alive. Where are the no and low-interest concessional loans to help our farmers through an extended drought? Where is the expanded support for our fishing industry and the coastal communities that rely on it? Where is the partnership with our world-renowned wine sector, a sector that exports globally, employs locally and showcases South Australia to the world?

Instead, we see more red tape and less confidence and we hear a primary industries minister who, just weeks ago, apparently told some of our producers that their wine was, and I quote, substandard. It is not just insulting; it is wrong, and it tells the entire industry that this government is not in their corner.

Instead, we have a government pouring hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars into event management. Yes, we all enjoy events. Who would not, especially when someone else is footing the bill? But events do not drive the economy. A responsible government must focus on the fundamentals, the very basics that it promised to fix and won an election on, such as ramping. Time

and time again, this government has shown that it cannot get the basics right. They have failed at the basics, they continue to fail at the basics, and South Australians deserve better.

Let's be very clear about what these industries mean to our state. Primary industries in South Australia generate more than \$18.5 billion in annual revenue and support over 78,000 jobs. Agriculture, forestry and fishery alone contributed nearly \$8 billion to our economy last year. These industries are not just nice to have, they are essential. They fill supermarket shelves, they put food on people's tables and they support our budget, create jobs and power our exports. Without them, the state's bottom line and the budget that this government relies on would look very different.

If we fail to get this right now—if we fail to provide the support, the cashflow and the vision our producers need—we are condemning ourselves to years of rebuilding, years of lost export markets, decimated regional communities, weakened supply chains and lost jobs.

Meanwhile, I have farmers calling me in my office every day. They share their hardships, and they are pleading for support—a hand up, not a handout—and yet they continue to show the grit and determination that defines country South Australia. I have fishers asking whether anyone in this government is listening. They are desperate to protect their livelihoods and hand their businesses on to the next generation. Every day I receive photos of failed crops, of livestock being sent interstate to find feed, and of dead fish washed up on the beaches along our coast. This is not some abstract concern. This is not about symbolic gestures. This is about the survival of the very industries that feed our people and support our economy.

Will we on this side of the chamber support the supply of government? Of course we will, as a matter of convention and as a matter of commitment, but will the government show us—and, more importantly, South Australians, particularly country South Australians—that it shares our confidence in the people who deliver this state's prosperity? That remains to be seen.

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (15:37):** I also rise to speak to this bill. Of course, as longstanding tradition holds, the opposition will support its passage, which is fundamental in enabling the state government to fund its various services and projects. Notably however, as my two esteemed colleagues have pointed out—highly esteemed colleagues perhaps; sorry, I did not mean to undersell them—I think there are many shortfalls in this budget and I will identify a number of them as I make my relatively brief contribution this afternoon. I would say at the outset that, if the opposition has the privilege of being elected to the governing benches in March next year, we will certainly set out to do things somewhat differently.

The budget delivered by the state government in June was calculated to have required a somewhat staggering \$6.7 million a day, on average, in interest payments by the end of the forward estimates. This is an extraordinary amount which equates to over a billion dollars each year. It is an enormous amount of money that could have been allocated to providing better essential services and implementing measures that offer much-needed financial relief to South Australians who are struggling in what I think most people are now labelling a cost-of-living crisis.

As I have mentioned in this place previously, not only is South Australia suffering under this enormous debt burden but we also have one of the most expensive housing markets in the entire world. It is a travesty that the enviable lifestyle that South Australians have traditionally been known for is set to become a distant memory for younger generations if urgent action is not taken. This is the sort of stuff that changes societies, in my view. It is the sort of thing that as a parliament we need to act upon, and indeed it is ultimately at the feet of the government to do something to make this go away or at least, perhaps more accurately, to improve what is a very difficult situation.

For that reason, a Tarzia Liberal government, if elected in March next year, will abolish stamp duty for first-home buyers for established homes up to \$1 million—completely abolish it if elected to power. Aspiring home owners are barely able to afford rent, let alone simultaneously save enough money whilst renting to enter the housing market. We all know this to be true. We have all met people, constituents or otherwise, who have told us stories of just how difficult it is to rent and save. So one thing that I think clearly we can do, and that a Tarzia Liberal government would do, is abolish stamp duty completely for homes up to the value of \$1 million. This would make it substantially more affordable for people to buy their first home, saving something in the order of just under \$50,000.

When a particular person or couple, as it may be, decides to purchase a house up to the value of \$1 million, the price, of course, is not \$1 million: it is \$1 million plus stamp duty, and that stamp duty is just under \$50,000 on a \$1 million home—\$48,600, if I am not mistaken. It is something in that order anyway, very close to that. The bill for the house buyer is actually \$1,048,000 or thereabouts rather than it just being \$1 million. There is some 5 per cent added burden that should not be there. That 5 per cent removed from the cost of the home for a first-home buyer will be a significant fill-up to their prospects of buying a home and, of course, will mean they will need a lower deposit as well, so there is a dual effect.

The government stamp duty exemption for all newly built homes is a step in the right direction. We acknowledge that, but clearly it does not go far enough as many South Australians, as I said, just simply cannot afford to build a house. They may be seeking something more modest, maybe a unit or a townhome or something in that order, which normally would be substantially less expensive than a brand-new dwelling. For that reason, we think it is wise, we think it is prudent and we think it is actually important and urgent to abolish all stamp duty on first homes, saving, as I said, in the order of just under \$50,000, which will make it more affordable for first-home buyers wishing to buy their own homes.

I think the important point to make here is that this is the sort of thing that changes societies. If we have a continual reduction in home ownership levels in our society, then people do not have that sort of rock-solid base on which to build their lives, grow their families or whatever it may be. It is something that I think is a genuine, serious issue for our society to tackle. Governments must, absolutely must, eliminate barriers to home ownership. That is exactly what the Liberal Party will be doing for homes to the value of \$1 million, which of course is above the median price in South Australia, although only just; it seems to be creeping up all the time. I have said enough about this issue, but it is very important that we acknowledge it because home ownership is the bedrock of society.

I would like to turn to something else. As the newly appointed shadow minister for training and skills, I have met with various stakeholders over the last couple of weeks. One of the things that stood out to me or has been raised and brought to my attention a number of times is a really significant skills shortage that we have in South Australia. To be fair, it is a national problem as well; it is not necessarily unique to South Australia, although certainly it has been raised with me as an issue of significant—indeed, I would even say immense—concern by those who have raised it with me.

That is why I am pleased that the Labor government chose to adopt a key Liberal policy to fast-track apprenticeships, which we announced late last year. That would create a situation where we will make it easier for people to engage in apprenticeships. One of the measures we have specifically announced would be to adopt three-year apprenticeships where possible, not the current four years, which it has been for some time. That has been well received by some sectors of the industry. They see that as a good step in the right direction.

It would, of course, add to the pipeline of increasing those with the skills necessary to build our houses, our roads, etc, whatever it may be, whatever particular skill they bring to the table. If it can be done in three years, the Liberal Party says it should be done in three years, and largely the industry has been quite supportive of that depending on the particular industry involved. We would also boost group training. We would also guarantee funding for construction training. We would introduce programs for mentors, for apprenticeships particularly, and also supervisors for those apprentices as well.

We could have a situation where all that process was fast-tracked, where support was put in place to make sure that completion rates are the highest they can possibly be, which of course is another concern. Completion rates are not at the level they should be and, if a Liberal government was elected, we would do everything we could to ensure that was the case. We would also introduce, as we have said publicly, payroll tax exemptions for trainees and apprentices and we would lift the status of apprenticeships by bringing world skills to Adelaide, which of course is something that we have announced publicly as well.

We would also introduce better career counselling and VET programs in all our schools. This would be a full and comprehensive approach that would at least go part of the way to addressing the skills crisis that we have, again, not just here in South Australia, to be fair—it is a national problem—but we certainly have it here, and more needs to be done to counter that problem. It should be one of the government's highest priorities, in my view. It all feeds into each other, of course, as we know.

One of the reasons we have very expensive housing is that we have a low housing supply. Why? Because we have skills problems as well—we do not have enough people with the right skills to build houses, for example. All these things feed into each other, and they need to be tackled in multiple ways.

Likewise, the Liberals are intent on developing strategies to assist South Australians struggling in small business amidst the surging cost of doing business, which we hear about almost every day. We implored the state government to increase the payroll tax threshold from \$1.5 million to \$2.1 million, but they have not done that in the latest budget. We ask why not, and we recommit to the fact that, if we were fortunate enough to be elected to the government benches in 2026, in March next year, we would install that policy.

We would have a policy where payroll tax was not paid below \$2.1 million, which again takes a little bit of pressure off business, reduces their cost base, allows them to employ more people, etc. Again, all this stuff feeds into each other and we need to take a proactive and multipronged approach as a parliament and as a government, and that is certainly what the opposition would do if we were fortunate enough to be on the government benches.

In addition, we are all well aware that South Australians are now paying more for electricity than those living in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. This is a travesty. Another important cost-of-living boost our state is missing out on is the subsidies for home solar batteries, which the opposition has also announced. The state opposition has called on the Malinauskas government to reinstate the Liberal's home battery rebate scheme, which could save thousands for each household in up-front costs and ultimately slash their power bills, because when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine they can draw on their batteries for cheaper power.

It would also assist in decreasing peak demand, which is when the highest prices are paid. Why on earth would we not look to subsidise these batteries, as the Liberals have announced? It is regrettable that the only energy-related policy the current government had was its hydrogen power project, which of course, as we know, has been shelved.

Only a Liberal government will make home ownership more accessible, cut red tape, lower taxes for business, lower the cost of bills and overall reduce the cost of living for everyday South Australians. Our state deserves more than the rocketing debt that I have mentioned, the broken promises, the outrageously expensive housing and the tax on housing and misguided priorities. We look forward to the next election and I support the Appropriation Bill.

**The Hon. R.A. SIMMS (15:48):** I rise to speak in favour of the Appropriation Bill. This provides an opportunity to reflect on the recent Malinauskas government budget, which I think really does represent some missed opportunities for our state.

One of the areas of significant concern to the Greens is the failure of the Malinauskas government to seriously tackle the cost-of-living crisis engulfing our state. Several months ago, ahead of the budget, this council passed a motion calling on the Malinauskas government to commit to 50¢ public transport fares. This is an approach that has been taken in Queensland and it has resulted in a significant surge in people using public transport.

Despite that, the Malinauskas government has refused to take action. We know that cheaper public transport fares will not only save commuters thousands of dollars but will also reduce congestion on our streets and deliver some really good outcomes for our environment. Yet, once again, we have not seen any action from the government on that. In fact, what they have done is increase public transport fares for most South Australians, and that is really disappointing.

The government has also refused to take any action on skyrocketing rent prices. I have been campaigning during this term of parliament to implement some rent controls, so that rent increases are tied to CPI. Again, the government has failed to take action, and so we are seeing renters being

at the mercy of the market. For the Greens, we believe that housing should be a fundamental human right. Our housing system should be focused on people rather than the profit margins of vested interests and yet, sadly, we are just not seeing that leadership from the government.

The Hon. Dennis Hood touched on energy prices, and indeed the Greens are concerned about the Malinauskas government's failure to tackle skyrocketing energy prices. We want to see electricity put back into public hands, and that means bringing back ETSA. We should have a commission of inquiry into examining how we can do that. As the honourable member reflected, we also need to see a state-based battery storage rebate scheme, and we need to see a state-based solar rebate scheme. These were things that had the support of all sides of politics.

I was not a fan of the former Marshall government, but they did commit to retaining these schemes, as did the Labor opposition, and all parties supported those schemes. The moment the Labor Party came into office they cut these schemes, and that has been really disappointing. It is a bad outcome for the environment and it is a bad outcome for the hip pocket of most South Australians. The government said at the time, 'This is middle class welfare.' The minister, the Hon. Tom Koutsantonis in the other place, said this money is being misdirected. If that is the government's view, why did they not recalibrate these programs so that they were tailored towards low income South Australians instead? Instead, they have taken no action.

We are also concerned about the failure to take the leadership that we need on climate change. We have a situation where our state is being ravaged by climate change. We are seeing the effects of that on our oceans at the moment. Many of our oceans are, sadly, resembling graveyards, and we are seeing dead marine life washing up on our shores. That has not just happened by accident. It has happened because of climate change. We know that climate change is heating our waters and is creating the environment where this toxic algal bloom can spread and grow.

What is the Malinauskas government doing? We know that they have been asleep at the wheel over the winter break but, worse than that, they are continuing to give millions and millions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies to the fossil fuel industry that is driving this crisis; we are seeing this in their budget. We need to see them change course and we need to see some vision from the government in terms of dealing with that.

The other area where the government has been found wanting in this budget is, of course, on health. This chamber also passed a resolution urging the Malinauskas government to make ambulance cover free for seniors, to slash ambulance call-out fees for pensioners. Again, we have not seen any leadership from the government in that regard, and so South Australians pay the highest ambulance fees in the country.

If you are in the unfortunate position of being somebody who has an insecure income or you are experiencing economic hardship and you call an ambulance, you are going to face some real problems because you are not being provided with affordable ambulance services in our state, and that is a real failure of leadership from this government, not to mention, of course, their failure to get ramping under control, and that is an issue that the Greens are going to continue to advocate for action on as well.

Speaking of vulnerable South Australians, I was very concerned to see at the last financial year for the first time ever in our state that South Australians have lost more than a billion dollars to pokies—more than a billion dollars to pokies. That is money that could be spent elsewhere in our economy.

We know that pokies literally destroy lives and rip communities apart. Many of my colleagues, I am sure, would have had this experience as well: over the last few years, I have had the opportunity to speak to many constituents who have lost their livelihoods as a result of gambling addiction, and yet the Malinauskas government seems to be addicted to pokies. They are relying significantly on pokies revenue as part of their budget. The Greens are saying that we need to phase out pokies by 2030, have a moratorium on all new machines, and let's provide a support package to our pubs and clubs so they are no longer reliant on that revenue.

There are a few other areas too where I feel the Labor Party could have shown more leadership in their budget. Scrapping school fees is one where really the government should have

stepped up. It is a real shame that parents of children who go to public schools are still shelling out a huge amount of money in school costs. That needs to change.

Might I also say it is particularly galling that the government has not put this money into cost-of-living relief when they are spending so much money on government advertising. I mean, the Malinauskas government were very critical of the Marshall government's advertising spend. When the Labor Party were in opposition, they were very critical of the Malinauskas government's advertising spend, and they were right to be critical because some of it was quite outrageous.

But what did they do when they found themselves on the Treasury benches? They spent almost \$100 million in just the first two years alone of their administration. We do not have the most recent spending, but we do know that they are going to be spending millions and millions of dollars in the lead-up to the next state election, slapping themselves on the back and telling us all how great they are.

I think South Australians who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis will find that to be pretty outrageous. Rather than spending so much money on PR campaigns and rather than spending so much money on telling us all how great you are, surely the government should be building the housing that we need, investing in the hospital beds that we need, investing in the public transport infrastructure that we need, rather than engaging in backslapping exercises. So, again, that is a failure of leadership from the Malinauskas government.

As we head towards the next election, the Greens will be out there campaigning for action on all of these things. I feel very excited about the next election and in particular our lead candidate, Melanie Selwood, who I think will be a really good addition to this place. Really, this Appropriation Bill demonstrates why we need Greens in this parliament so that we can continue to advocate for action on the areas that have been neglected by the Labor Party. So with that, I support the bill, but it does provide an opportunity to reflect on some of the missed opportunities, and I hope that whomever forms government after the next election will take these matters seriously.

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (15:58):** I rise today to speak on the Appropriation Bill. It is convention, like many honourable members have mentioned, to support the Appropriation Bill; however, I want to put some remarks on the public record. I feel that the 2025-26 budget was a missed opportunity to address the significant issues facing families, individuals, businesses and communities across South Australia.

The state's net debt is projected to almost double in five years, raising concerns about future South Australians inheriting a significant financial burden. I fear that our children and their children will have to pay that debt. Cost-of-living pressures remain one of the greatest challenges facing our state, with charities reporting unprecedented demand for support from people who never thought they would have to seek help to put food on their table or to keep a roof over their heads.

I was at the Australian Malaysian Business Council charity dinner last Saturday and their chosen charity was OzHarvest. The OzHarvest presenters had highlighted major problems in so many families not being able to access food and so much food being wasted. They are in a position to rescue that food and put it on the table for so many disadvantaged families.

Back to this Appropriation Bill. I feel that there was little in this bill to relieve the ongoing pressures on household budgets, with some continued programs such as the subsidy for school materials and only one new concession—only one—for cheaper public transport for school children. It was disappointing to see that the government did not implement the budget measures recommended by the Select Committee on Grocery Pricing in South Australia. I was a member of that select committee, chaired by the Hon. Robert Simms.

The recommendation from that report called for the government to provide additional cost-of-living relief, additional support to charities and support agencies that provide access to low-cost food and the potential for a payroll tax exemption for fresh produce businesses and primary production food businesses to reduce costs to industry and encourage competition. None of those recommendations were implemented and taken up by the state government. Easing the cost-of-living burden is an issue that is continually raised with me by community members across our state and must remain a priority for government and for all members in this place.

Just as families are feeling the pinch, so are the small and family businesses that form the backbone of our economy. This budget misses the opportunity for serious reform that would help address the significant concerns for small and family business owners across South Australia. There was no review of the state's unfair payroll tax system and no measures to reduce the burdens of compliance, regulation and red tape that stifle productivity and growth.

Productivity is very much a hot topic at the moment, with the federal Economic Reform Roundtable taking place in Canberra last month. But it is more than just a buzzword; it is a vital component of raising living standards and growing our economy. Businesses have long been crying out for reductions in unnecessary red tape, with the latest survey of business expectations for the 2025 March quarter released by the South Australian Business Chamber finding that one of the biggest challenges for business is the sheer amount of red tape.

One respondent to the survey highlighted the issue succinctly when they stated that 'every dollar spent on red tape is at the expense of an hour spent on innovation'. That is why I will continue to advocate for tangible action to streamline compliance and reduce red tape to help support and encourage business growth, job creation, productivity and prosperity.

I have spoken numerous times in this place about the crippling impact of payroll tax on small and medium-size businesses. Countless business owners have told me directly that payroll tax is a key consideration when deciding whether they should take on more staff and that it seriously hinders their ability and ambition to grow and contribute to our state's economy. Raising the payroll tax threshold for small business will free thousands of businesses from this excessive tax burden, enabling reinvestment in staff, wages and innovation, and yet this government continues to ignore this call to change the payroll tax regime.

Supporting business growth also means ensuring that we have a skilled workforce to meet future demand, especially in sectors like construction and infrastructure. We will need an estimated 15,000 extra workers in the building and construction industry within three years to meet demand for housing and infrastructure projects. I am deeply disappointed that there are no new measures in this budget to attract and retain apprentices and no real investment in addressing skills shortages across our state.

Just as we face skills shortages in construction, our health system is under immense strain, another area where this budget falls short. More than three years after Labor's election promise to fix the ramping crisis, ambulance ramping hours in our state in July were the worst on record. In fact, we have seen the worst 36 months of ramping on record and a Code Yellow that shut down essential planned surgery for weeks on end.

The response we saw announced by the Labor government last week was to double the capacity of the transitional hotel health service at the Pullman Adelaide Hotel from 24 to 48 beds in an effort to alleviate pressure on hospitals. As the Australian Medical Association has pointed out, this is not a long-term solution to our state health crisis, and they stated that hotels are not hospitals.

Of course, the federal government has a role to play by increasing investment in aged care to reduce wait times for federal aged-care beds and reduce bed block in our hospitals, but we need a concerted effort at the state level to increase hospital and rehab centre capacity and fund primary and community health care so that more people can see their GPs when they need to. This budget was sadly lacking in serious sustained investment in these key areas. The government maintains its illogical stance on GP payroll tax, a tax that only makes health care more expensive and increases pressure on our health system, leading to worse outcomes for patients.

Finally, I want to speak about a topic that is never easy to discuss but simply cannot be ignored. The Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence report was recently released, 'With courage: South Australia's vision beyond violence', outlining 136 recommendations to address what Commissioner Natasha Stott Despoja labelled a statewide crisis. One in 5,000 community members bravely shared their experiences with the commission, which received more than 380 written submissions.

We must listen to the voices of the courageous victim survivors who have shared their stories and the service providers who are on the frontline supporting them every day. We must take this



opportunity to make generational change and tackle gender-based violence. While it is encouraging that the state government has committed to seven out of the 136 recommendations, it has only budgeted \$3.5 million over the next two years to coordinate its response to the royal commission.

The report revealed an overwhelmed domestic violence sector where one in five calls to domestic violence services are going unanswered, a court system that accuses mothers of making false claims and police attending an average of 100 domestic violence incidents per day. As was made very clear in the report, there are many women and families who face additional challenges in accessing the support they need due to their backgrounds and where they live.

Culturally and linguistically diverse community members can experience specific and unique forms of violence and abuse, often compounded by the trauma of war or disaster, visa insecurity, language barriers and isolation. I believe the government can do more in investing in culturally appropriate support services for our culturally and linguistically diverse communities and in ensuring that women in regional areas can access the support and services they need, no matter where they live. We need to see a serious commitment in this space to ensure the royal commission does not become a box-ticking exercise. To see just \$3.5 million allocated for public sector staffing is disappointing when urgent on-the-ground reform is much needed.

Whether it is economic reform, health investment or social justice, our community deserves more than piecemeal responses. They deserve lasting change and lasting reform. That is why I will continue to take every opportunity to call on the government to act. I will always advocate for sustainable and serious investment initiatives that will help us to build a safe, inclusive and more resilient community. If we are committed to ending gender-based violence, there must be investment in the services and reforms that build a better community, one where safety, dignity and support are not privileges but guarantees. We need government to do more to support families and businesses in South Australia. With those remarks, I commend the bill.

**The Hon. T.T. NGO (16:09):** The 2025-26 budget continues Labor's long-term focus on the welfare and wellbeing of South Australians. We are delivering more houses, a stronger health system and support to ease cost-of-living pressures. Close to \$1 billion has been invested over four budgets to support South Australians with cost-of-living expenses, including \$118.3 million in this budget alone.

Key measures include \$20.7 million over four years to permanently cut the 28-day student Metro pass to \$10, saving families up to \$240 per student per year. The reduced fare has been a big win for primary and high school students, who can now travel to and from school for as little as 25¢ per trip. Families with two school-aged children could save about \$1,084 in the 2025-26 year from cheaper travel, fee cuts and bigger sports vouchers. When this support is combined with the commonwealth government's tax cuts, energy bill relief and the continuation of the sports voucher program that now includes music lessons, the same family on a combined income of \$150,000 could save over \$4,300 during the 2025-26 year. Also \$96 million will ensure the \$200 material and services discount continues for around 120,000 students.

Compulsory third-party insurance remains below 2019 levels, with registration capped at 1.7 per cent. Drivers of an average four-cylinder vehicle will save almost \$150 a year compared to when the scheme was first introduced in 2019. This equates to a saving of 36 per cent. Further, \$1.6 million will offset higher fuel costs for remote towns. Other cost-of-living support in this budget will enable 225,000 households to receive the Cost of Living Concession, 50,000 more than last year. Seniors and Health Care Card holders continue to access free public transport at any time.

For our small and medium businesses and not-for-profit organisations, our state government will provide \$20 million over two years to help them invest in energy efficiency equipment or improvements to reduce and manage energy use and costs. Eligible businesses and organisations will be able to apply for a grant ranging from \$2,500 up to \$75,000. I know that when I am out and about many organisations have inquired regarding this scheme. Drought-affected farmers will also receive cost-of-living support through 12-month rebates on the emergency services levy and registration for up to three vehicles.

The Labor government knows tough times can worsen our mental health. This budget provides \$117 million in new mental health funding, part of a \$1.9 billion five-year health package.

More than 130 new mental health beds will be rolled out across South Australia, including 72 rehabilitation beds at three dedicated units at Modbury, Queen Elizabeth and Noarlunga hospitals.

An amount of \$1.5 million will extend the Embrace Collective programs in schools and communities to promote resilience among children and young people. Regional South Australians facing the drought will see \$2.5 million for on-the-ground mental health support, delivered alongside the broader drought relief I have already mentioned. Another initiative is that \$13.9 million will extend the Mental Health Co-Responder program statewide, along with workforce strengthening and new psychiatry training positions.

As well as health, housing must and does remain a priority for this government. This budget delivers \$552.4 million for approximately 2,935 new homes, including \$270.1 million for the Playford Alive East project over nine years. This will deliver 1,300 new residential allotments, including a minimum of 30 per cent affordable housing. Another initiative is \$104.7 million for the Southwark Grounds project over six years to deliver the Southwark Grounds master plan project, providing up to 1,300 new dwellings, including 20 per cent affordable housing and over 15 per cent new public open space. This will revitalise a key city fringe site that formerly housed the West End Brewery.

Another initiative is \$30.5 million for Onkaparinga Heights over six years to deliver a project that forms part of the Malinauskas Labor government's Housing Roadmap. This is a site expected to provide at least 2,000 residential housing lots.

This government is committed to doing all we can to move renters off the rental roundabout and into home ownership and has introduced the rent-to-buy scheme. Eligible South Australians will be able to rent a home at a discounted 75 per cent of market rents for up to three years, after which they can buy that home at a locked-in price. As part of the Malinauskas Labor government's Housing Roadmap this initiative will create a pathway for eligible long-term renters to buy one of 100 homes currently under construction by the South Australian Housing Trust.

A partnership with the federal government has budgeted \$135.1 million over three years for a range of social housing projects to support round 2 of the commonwealth's Housing Australia Future Fund program. With more housing being built, the government has plans to position our roads and infrastructure to cope with increasing population growth. Over five years, \$80 million of works will be delivered in a fifty-fifty partnership with the Albanese federal government. This will upgrade Main South Road between Myponga and Yankalilla, adding overtaking lines, wider shoulders and safer sightlines.

Another fifty-fifty partnership with the federal government is that the Malinauskas government will invest \$250 million to remove the Curtis Road rail crossing bottleneck. I used to work around that area and waiting in the morning to get to the office can be very frustrating. Another initiative is \$655.3 million to upgrade heavy vehicle routes between Swanport Bridge and Truro, diverting trucks from the South Eastern Freeway and Portrush Road corridor. Diverting heavy trucks from our metropolitan roads reduces the risk of accidents and brings shorter travel times for other road users.

Many of us have experienced that travelling in and around metropolitan Adelaide often results in much longer travel times due to more traffic on our roads. A greater uptake of public transport use will offer some help to the growing problems of longer travel times. Following a successful trial period, the Mount Barker bus service will be integrated into the Hills metropolitan contract, ensuring the future of a convenient public transport mode for Mount Barker, Nairne and Littlehampton residents.

This budget does not lose sight of the big picture and positions South Australia for future industries in space, clean energy, cybersecurity, defence, health and AI (artificial intelligence). We are the only state that has a dedicated assistant minister for artificial intelligence. With the Hon. Michael Brown MP being appointed and working in this sector, and the Australian Institute for Machine Learning based in Adelaide, SA is building its national leadership role: \$28 million over four years will develop an AI program across government sectors, and \$50 million will be co-invested with the private sector to help SA startups scale nationally and globally.

Importantly, this budget will also sustain Labor's education initiative. It includes \$70 million for a new northern suburbs preschool and primary school, \$40 million for school upgrades as well as

\$171 million in loans for not-for-profit early childhood providers. Central to these reforms is the \$1.25 billion Gonski Better and Fairer Schools Agreement, which the Malinauskas government signed with the Albanese government.

This is just a snapshot of the 2025-26 budget as Labor continues to improve health and housing, support rising cost-of-living pressures, build infrastructure, and invest in future industries and education. I am proud to be a member of a government that continues to drive long-term progress and prosperity. I commend the Malinauskas government for another budget that will steer us towards this outcome, as mentioned.

**The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (16:22):** I am proud to be able to stand here today and speak about this government's ongoing initiatives to improve South Australia's way of life and consolidate its future. Those objectives are met squarely in this budget.

In the great Labor tradition of striving towards the light on the hill, this is a budget of hope and opportunity for all South Australians. From those people struggling to pay their rent, to the farmers doing it hard on the land and to the workers, the business owners, the students and everyone else in between, we have strived to create a fair budget for all. More than just a fair budget, though, we are delivering one that continues to build new and stronger foundations for a prosperous future. While the major infrastructure projects continue—the ones that of course only came out of a Labor government, such as the \$15 billion north-south corridor and the new \$3.2 billion Women's and Children's Hospital—we have continued to factor in the needs of everyday South Australians.

In the four budgets so far, this government has invested almost \$1 billion in cost-of-living relief. We are continuing that with a further \$118 million this year to bring down basic daily needs like the cost of school materials and public transport. We have invested \$550 million in getting almost 3,000 new homes built to help vulnerable South Australians get a permanent roof over their heads. From Playford Alive in the north to Southwark close to the city and Onkaparinga Heights in the south, families in need will have a chance to live well in the knowledge that they have a safe and secure future. First-home owners will get stamp duty relief, and we are introducing an affordable rent-to-buy housing initiative to eventually get people out of the endless rent cycle.

We are pumping \$1.8 billion into new measures for regional South Australia. This is a sector that those on the other side are supposed to protect but one we support, regardless of where the votes come from. From the steelworks in Whyalla to the farms on the drought-stricken West Coast, we are here to back them.

We are providing a \$55 million drought package to support primary producers and rural communities. We have allocated \$13 million for on-farm infrastructure rebates so producers can invest in water security and suitable irrigation systems. We are providing rural business relief grants and rebates where applicable for the emergency services levy and vehicle registration, and we are investing in mental health support for rural communities.

Health in general is a big winner in this budget. Among almost \$2 billion in health initiatives, we have allocated \$77 million to cancer care and \$14 million over five years for the Mental Health Co-Responder program. Established under Labor as a trial in 2022, this program is achieving outstanding results as it teams up mental health experts and police to respond to 000 call-outs. The hospitals are being improved and expanded. Almost \$500 million has been poured into the Flinders Medical Centre upgrade and expansion, which started last November. It is on track to be completed in 2028. We are investing \$45 million over three years to ensure the delivery of the new Mount Barker hospital, complete with 102 beds and mental health capabilities of its own.

More than \$120 million goes to creating new ambulance headquarters on the city fringe at Mile End. It is part of the \$310 million commitment over four years to establish new ambulance stations at Marion, Whyalla and Two Wells as well as upgrade existing stations. In a four-year partnership with the federal government, we are committing \$43 million to a geriatric outreach service. This will help older people who have become or are likely to become long-term hospital patients to transition to residential care facilities. An extra \$21 million has been added to the emergency services budget. This will include \$5.9 million over four years to improve training for CFS volunteers.

Education is another big winner in this budget. We have allocated \$70 million for a new primary school and preschool for Adelaide's north and the upgrading of several other schools. The new school will accommodate 400 reception to year 6 students, and the preschool will have an extra 60 spaces. A further \$40 million will allow heating and air conditioning to be upgraded at many public schools. Schools at Banksia Park, Mitcham, East Torrens, Kilkenny, Hewett, Flagstaff Hill, Underdale, Renmark, Coromandel Valley and Goodwood are among those to benefit from the upgrades.

The budget is making important funds available to private schools. It also includes a \$171 million expansion of the non-government school loan scheme for preschool infrastructure projects. The low-interest loans between \$500,000 and \$10 million will help private schools increase enrolment capacity, refurbish infrastructure and support student retention. Labor has always respected the right and the need of our kids to seek different paths for their education journeys, and it has served us well as we help create the tradies of tomorrow. With that in mind, we have put more than \$130 million towards creating new technical colleges.

Labor has always been the party of the worker, and in recent years we have recognised the advantages of supporting large and small businesses. The more prosperous our businesses become, the better off the workers will become. We are providing more than \$10 million to Business Events Adelaide. This is a proven investment, the type that keeps on giving. Business Events Adelaide is on track to pump \$117 million into the state's economy this winter alone courtesy of 39 events likely to attract 20,000 delegates.

The Labor government is investing strongly in law and order to keep South Australia one of the safest places on earth, but we do not take it for granted and have provided the largest boost to police funding in South Australia's history. We have allocated \$172 million delivered over six years to increase the number of police officers to 5,000. Of that sum, \$17.8 million will be provided to add a further 33 motorcycle officers to the force. These officers are vital in a range of situations because of their ability to access emergency situations.

We are also putting \$110 million into road safety measures, which are essential for the protection of everyone who uses our roads. Almost \$90 million will be invested into the prison system to increase capacity and improve security. We are providing almost \$7 million to improve security at our prisons. The improvements will include new high-tech security scanners at prisons across the state and the installation of new perimeter barriers at the Adelaide Women's Prison to address recent incidents of contraband being hurled over fences to prisoners. These initiatives are good news for all concerned. They improve safety not just for staff and the community at large but also for the prisons themselves.

We have allocated \$8 million to help Adelaide win the right to host the coveted COP31 climate change conference late next year. I detailed the benefits of hosting this conference here in Adelaide a couple of months ago. The closer it gets to becoming a reality, the more obvious those benefits become. We have seen the odd short-sighted criticism from the other side that we cannot afford to spend this money. Nothing could be more wrong, and it shows just how inept they are when it comes to basic economics.

We have also spent money campaigning for Gather Round, and look how that has turned out. Economically, from a marketing perspective, and for the sheer enjoyment South Australians get from it, how it has worked out, in a word, is brilliant. The COP31 investment is money very well spent on an event that will deliver a potential \$500 million windfall for the state. It will do more than that, though; it will bring in tens of thousands of visitors who may not have otherwise visited South Australia. It will reinforce our position as a state that cares about the global environment and it will put the world spotlight firmly on Adelaide.

In the same vein we have set aside \$5 million for programs to support those South Australian businesses trading in new and growing overseas markets. Considering our exporters have achieved a record \$127 billion in merchandise exports over the past two years, that is the definition of money well earned and well spent.

Grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$75,000 will be available to SA businesses wanting to invest in energy efficient equipment through a \$20 million fund. Meanwhile, the big infrastructure projects

continue. They have taken Adelaide from what was once referred to as a big country town to an international city, without losing its charm. While work increases on the north-south corridor, we have committed \$601 million to the Princess Highway corridor, \$400 million to the Marion Road upgrade between Anzac Highway and Cross Road, and \$350 million to upgrade the South Eastern Freeway. The freeway has long been a credit to the state as a stunning entrance to a city that has no equal in Australia, and this will make it even better and safer.

In the driest state in Australia, we have always been aware of the need for water security. As such, we are spending \$155 million this year on building the desalination plant at Billy Lights Point on Eyre Peninsula. Turning saltwater into drinking water is now a proven water security method, despite the past protests of those who just did not understand or refused to understand the science. This plant will be producing that drinking water by the middle of next year. This budget is being delivered while the Malinauskas Labor government maintains a commitment to no new taxes or tax increases.

If we look back to 2018 and the campaign of the former Premier from the other house, the Hon. Mr Steve Marshall, they promised GlobeLink. We heard the Hon. David Ridgway in this house go on and on about GlobeLink and what a great benefit it was going to be to the state. They then came up with the idea of a right-hand tram turn onto North Terrace, even though they knew for a fact that logistically this would never work. They misled the public. They had really nothing else.

They achieved Lot Fourteen, which was there as a result of previous Labor governments moving the new Royal Adelaide Hospital up to the other end of North Terrace. The Liberals opposed that from the very start. Their idea was to knock out a few walls and give it a paint job. That was their idea of a new hospital. Mr President, I know that you are fascinated with the amount of work done by Labor governments. In the true Labor tradition, it is a sweeping, big-picture budget, but it does not lose sight of the small things that affect every one of us.

**The PRESIDENT:** Attorney-General, bring some common sense back to this debate and conclude, please.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (16:35):** I thank honourable members for some quite remarkable speeches that have been given during this debate. I look forward to the passing of this important piece of legislation for the people of South Australia.

Bill read a second time.

*Committee Stage*

In committee.

Clause 1.

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO:** Just a quick question: will ramping be fixed by the end of this term?

*Members interjecting:*

**The CHAIR:** Everybody calm down.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (2 to 8), schedule and title passed.

Bill reported 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) (16:37):** I move:

That this bill now be read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**MENTAL HEALTH (COMMUNITY VISITOR SCHEME) AMENDMENT BILL***Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 20 August 2025.)

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD (16:38):** I rise to make the opposition's contribution on the Mental Health (Community Visitor Scheme) Amendment Bill 2025. The Community Visitor Scheme is a cornerstone of our mental health system. It is an independent safeguard designed to ensure that some of the most vulnerable people in our community, specifically those receiving treatment for severe mental illness, have their voices heard and their rights protected. Community visitors provide oversight, advocacy, and reassurance for consumers and their families and, of course, it goes without saying that their work is invaluable.

This bill makes targeted amendments specifically to sections 50, 51, and 52 of the Mental Health Act 2009. It does not attempt a wholesale reform, if you like, of the act, and we know that the minister has indicated that a broader rewrite is still to come, but it does address some pressing operational issues that have been raised by the Public Advocate and the Principal Community Visitor in recent times. Specifically, these changes include:

- establishing a Principal Community Visitor appointed by the Governor for a period of up to five years;
- giving the minister the authority to appoint, suspend or remove community visitors; and
- allowing the Principal Community Visitor to delegate functions to other visitors or designated individuals, improving flexibility in regional and remote areas.

Additionally, one of the other things I think is most significant is that it allows the frequency of visits to be adjusted; that is, treatment centres will continue to be visited every two months, but there will be changes to the residential community facilities, which will now be visited at least once every four months, and outpatient facilities will be visited at least once every six months. The opposition views this as appropriate.

These amendments respond directly to problems that have been identified in practice, as I said, raised before by the Public Advocate and the Principal Community Visitor and others. For example, we know that in 2022-23, almost one in five scheduled visits had to be cancelled because of volunteer unavailability, and we know that in some outpatient facilities bimonthly visits were simply not effective because consumers were often not present. A more targeted approach was needed and what is adopted by this bill is, in the opposition's view, quite sensible,

The Liberal Party has long supported the Community Visitor Scheme. Indeed, under the former Liberal government, the scope of the scheme was expanded to cover community facilities for the first time, and we backed the statutory review process through SALRI. That review made it clear that some urgent reforms could not wait, something the Public Advocate underlined and called for expiated legislative action on, which we are seeing here today.

We acknowledge that this bill was brought forward at the urging of the Public Advocate and the Principal Community Visitor. It is about ensuring the scheme remains workable, transparent and responsive until the more comprehensive reforms are implemented, we expect later this year. It is for that reason that the opposition will support this bill. It strengthens oversight, eases administrative pressure on volunteers, and ensures the scheme remains sustainable until the more comprehensive reforms are introduced.

The Community Visitor Scheme is not just about compliance; it is about dignity, rights and the confidence that families have in knowing their loved ones are safe and secure in the most difficult of times and circumstances. These amendments, while somewhat technical in nature, create some degree of real change, and we believe that it is essential to progress this legislation for the benefit of people in these circumstances. With those brief remarks, we support the bill.

**The Hon. C. BONAROS (16:41):** I rise to indicate my support for the Mental Health (Community Visitor Scheme) Amendment Bill 2025, and to associate myself with the comments just

made by the Hon. Dennis Hood, and those that have been made by the government previously in relation to the need for this piece of legislation.

I think the honourable member just did an exceptional job of summing up why it is that this piece of legislation is necessary and, importantly, touched on the fact that there is obviously a bigger body of work that is currently underway, which I know will be the subject of much more extensive consultation and discussion, and probably very lively debate in this place. But, for the time being, we have a bill before us that, as has been referred to by other members, is addressing some of the issues that will result in more efficiencies for the scheme overall and for the visitor, and that is, I think, something that should be welcomed by all of us.

It is on that very short note that I indicate my support for this, noting of course—and I am sure all of us here have had the opportunity to be briefed by our Chief Psychiatrist, Dr John Brayley—the work that has gone into this to ensure that those efficiencies are just that, and there is not anything here that should be concerning to any of us, but rather all the changes are intended to make the scheme run more efficiently and effectively than it does now. It is on that basis that I indicate my support for this bill.

**The Hon. S.L. GAME (16:43):** I rise to speak on the government's Mental Health (Community Visitor Scheme) Amendment Bill 2025. According to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing, these amendments will improve the practicality and flexibility of the Community Visitor Scheme, which requires visits and inspections of community mental health facilities. It has been put forward that this proposal will enable inspections and visits to focus more on risk rather than directing limited resources to ticking boxes, low-risk facilities, and potentially missing legitimate issues or concerns.

It should be noted that there will be no changes to the frequency of inspections of treatment centres and only minor changes to visits required for residential and outpatient facilities. These appear to be reasonable and proportionate measures, allowing for the appropriate allocation of resources to meet the greatest need. However, the centralisation of ministerial powers, combined with the enabling powers of the Principal Community Visitor, should not go unnoticed. Any expansion in executive power, as well as any increase in the force of prescribed regulations, should not pass this place without comment, especially when it concerns the care of our most vulnerable South Australians.

Under the previous regime, it was the Governor who could remove or suspend a community visitor, with some parliamentary oversight required; however, under this proposal, clause 50A(3), the minister, on their own initiative or after consultation with the Principal Community Visitor, may suspend or remove a person from a position of community visitor for any reason the minister thinks fit.

This is a broad power, indeed, which goes well beyond any justified need for improvement to operational efficiency. While the prompt removal of visitors for legitimate reasons may well be necessary and the previous regime may have made it more difficult for removal to occur, it is questionable whether all of the measures binding the Governor's power should be replaced with 'any reason the minister thinks fit'.

The need for flexibility and efficiency may well require a tweaking of transparency and accountability measures; however, when it comes to the provision of care for our most vulnerable, we should all be concerned when the scales tip too heavily in favour of broadening and expanding the powers of the minister.

This bill also proposes to remove the requirement for two community visitors to attend visits and inspections, which is, no doubt, a better use of resources, but, once again, raises concerns about accountability, as we all know that two sets of eyes are much better than one. In the end, the rights of our most vulnerable people deserve our full attention and while these proposals appear to be minor, there remain legitimate concerns about the increasing power given to the executive and the reliance on regulatory authority.

Unfortunately, the increasing need for efficiency and flexibility often results in a reduction of individual rights protection, which remains an ongoing issue for public policy in this state.

Nevertheless, as legislation concerning mental health in South Australia continues to evolve, our mental health services will need to confront the challenges associated with providing an effective and efficient service, whilst also ensuring that appropriate safeguards for clients and checks and balances on executive power are not compromised.

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (16:45):** I rise today to speak on the Mental Health (Community Visitor Scheme) Amendment Bill 2025. The Community Visitor Scheme is a volunteer-led scheme that plays a central role in promoting the wellbeing, dignity, safety and rights of people receiving care from a mental health service in South Australia. Led by Principal Community Visitor, Anne Gale, experienced, skilled and independent volunteers from all walks of life conduct frequent visits and inspections of mental health treatment facilities across our state.

Community visitors engage with clients and their families to ensure that they have adequate information regarding their treatment, care and rights, and are supported to achieve better outcomes. The scheme also upholds the rights of people with disability who receive state-run disability services; however, the bill before us today focuses solely on amendments to the Mental Health Act 2009. I understand that amendments proposed by this bill were requested by the Principal Community Visitor and that targeted stakeholder consultation has been undertaken with lived experience groups and professional bodies by the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist.

The bill seeks to make practical changes that will offer the Community Visitor Scheme greater flexibility to conduct visitation by streamlining appointment processes. It will authorise the minister to appoint, remove or suspend a community visitor, while the Principal Community Visitor will continue to be appointed by the Governor.

The bill will also enable the Principal Community Visitor to delegate powers and functions to a particular person or body. I understand that this is primarily intended to allow for the paid staff of the Community Visitor Scheme to fill in if required when volunteer community visitors are unexpectedly unavailable, to ensure that the visits can take place as planned and ensure the smooth operation of the scheme.

Currently, all treatment sites must be visited and inspected at least once in every two-month period, and I am advised that the Principal Community Visitor has questioned the value in having such frequent visits to lower risk sites, such as outpatient community mental health facilities. While stakeholder feedback made it clear that the visitation schedule should remain embedded within legislation for transparency, changing the visitation frequency for residential community mental health facilities to at least once every four months and outpatient facilities to once every six months is a sensible change. Visits may still be conducted more frequently if required and if requested by a client, their family, friends or others supporting the person.

It is important to note that visits to high-risk sites, such as hospital wards and the neurobehavioural units at the Repat and Northgate House, will continue to occur at least once every two months due to the complex nature of care provided at these treatment centres. The amendments proposed are practical changes intended to reduce the administrative burden and increase the operational efficiency of the Community Visitor Scheme.

Thank you to Dr John Brayley, the Chief Psychiatrist, for providing a detailed briefing to my office, and to Anne Gale, the Principal Community Visitor, for her significant contributions to this bill and the supporting strategies that she has developed for increasing client participation and engagement. Finally, I wish to extend a very special thank you to all the wonderful volunteer community visitors who are dedicated to promoting the wellbeing of those accessing mental health services in South Australia. I would encourage anyone interested to consider becoming a community visitor, particularly those with diverse backgrounds. With those comments, I commend the bill.

**The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (16:51):** The Community Visitor Scheme plays an important role as an independent oversight body visiting mental health and disability services in South Australia. The Mental Health Act 2009 aims to safeguard the rights of persons interacting with mental health services, including via the Community Visitor Scheme, while outlining the treatment, care and rehabilitation of persons with severe mental illness, with the goal of bringing about their recovery as far as is possible.



The government and the mental health system values the role of community visitors, who volunteer their time and expertise for the scheme to succeed, under the guidance of the Principal Community Visitor, Anne Gale. The Principal Community Visitor and community visitors are independent statutory appointments established under the Mental Health Act 2009. Their independence is vital to the scheme. The role involves listening to clients about their experience, care and treatment, reviewing the environment and client records, understanding the work of the service, and clients' engagement in community and activities.

The role goes beyond a social visit and requires considerable inquiry and report writing skills. The reports, with observations and issues noted, are forwarded to the services and escalated where appropriate. Community visitors provide a valuable and critical role in independent safeguarding. Mental health care is a universal human right. Community visitors support and promote the rights of people at every visit while advocating for improvements to services.

Over the last reporting period, 753 community visits were undertaken, with 506 reports completed. The Mental Health (Community Visitor Scheme) Amendment Bill 2025 seeks to amend the Mental Health Act to:

- authorise the minister to appoint, remove or suspend a community visitor, rather than the current Governor appointments;
- enable the Principal Community Visitor to delegate powers and functions, ensuring more visits can go ahead when there are volunteers unable to attend at the last minute;
- allow for visits and inspections of residential community mental health facilities to occur at least once in every four-month period, unless specified by regulation; and
- allow for visits and inspections at least once in every six-month period for outpatient authorised community mental health facilities.

These amendments will provide greater flexibility for the scheme as more community services are gazetted by the Chief Psychiatrist, while ensuring the current legislative requirement to visit and inspect treatment centres, being higher acuity services, at least once in every two-month period is not affected. I urge the house to support the legislation.

**The Hon. T.A. FRANKS (16:54):** I rise to speak in support of the Mental Health (Community Visitor Scheme) Amendment Bill. This bill, of course, seeks to introduce a series of amendments to the Mental Health Act that will improve the operations of the Community Visitor Scheme, including changes to the frequency of visits and inspections of community mental health facilities; authorising the minister to appoint, suspend or remove a community visitor; and allowing for the delegation of powers and functions of the Principal Community Visitor.

The Community Visitor Scheme, of course, plays a really crucial role in the functioning of our Mental Health Act, bringing in a really important human rights component and promoting the wellbeing, dignity, safety and rights of those mental health consumers in our state. A volunteer-led scheme, the Community Visitor Scheme conducts visits and inspections of facilities. It engages with clients and their families to ensure they are informed and supported during their care.

Under these amendments that the government proposes with this bill, inspections of treatment centres will remain at a frequency of at least every two months, residential authorised community mental health facilities will move to four months, and outpatient authorised community mental health facilities will move to six months. This will ensure that the visits are effective, as currently some facilities, particularly those in regional areas, do not always have consumers present for bimonthly visits.

In line with recommendations from the South Australian Law Reform Institute (SALRI), this bill, of course, creates provisions for the minister to appoint, suspend or remove community visitors. This will provide for better efficiency than the current provisions, which require the appointment, suspension or removal to be done by the Governor.

I would like to particularly thank the Chief Psychiatrist, Dr John Brayley, along with Sally Cunningham and Gabrielle Karas, for taking the time to provide me and my office with a briefing

on these amendments. I associate myself with the so far wholehearted support of the bill and look forward to its speedy passage.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (16:56):** I thank everyone who spoke for their contributions and their indications of support for this bill and look forward to the committee stage.

Bill read a second time.

*Committee Stage*

In committee.

Clause 1.

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD:** I have a quick question for the minister. Minister, can you just inform the chamber of the process of who was consulted, how that went and who was involved?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** I thank the honourable member for his question. I am advised that the amendment bill was provided to stakeholders for comments and briefings. Stakeholders were provided time to respond and make comments on the bill. I am advised that the stakeholders ranged from health groups to legal groups to those with lived experience, such as the Lived Experience Advisory Group.

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD:** Just finally, was there any negative feedback from any of the stakeholder groups?

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER:** There was a range of views. One thing that did come up was in terms of the frequency of review. There were some submissions that it could be put in legislation rather than regulation.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (2 to 6), schedule and title passed.

Bill reported 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) (17:00):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**GUARDIANSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION (TRIBUNAL PROCEEDINGS) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 21 August 2025.)

**The Hon. H.M. GIROLAMO (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (17:00):** I rise as the speaker for the opposition on the Guardianship and Administration (Tribunal Proceedings) Amendment Bill 2025. This bill makes important and practical amendments to the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993. Its central purpose is to improve the way our system responds to vulnerable South Australians, particularly those in hospital, by ensuring timely and effective tribunal hearings.

The bill introduces a new mechanism for hearings where a person is an inpatient of an incorporated hospital. Under the new section 65A the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal will be required to hear such matters as a priority and in any event within 14 days of an application being made and preliminary steps being completed. This is a sensible and compassionate reform. It means that families, health professionals and the individuals concerned will not be left waiting in limbo at a critical time in their lives.

Importantly, the bill also recognises the need for flexibility in notice provisions. SACAT will have discretion in these expedited cases to dispense with notice to certain other interested persons, particularly where the individual is being discharged to their home, into aged care or to live with an applicant. At the same time the bill balances this efficiency with fairness by allowing persons who were not notified to later apply to vary or revoke an order without the usual requirement of proving a change in circumstances. This strikes an appropriate balance between natural justice and the need for timely decision-making.

The bill also makes changes to the review periods for guardianship and administration orders. For those in detention the maximum period before a first review will increase from six months to one year, with subsequent reviews able to be set up to three years apart. For other protected persons the maximum interval will extend from three to five years. These changes will reduce unnecessary reviews in uncontentious matters, allowing SACAT to focus its resources on cases where real concerns exist, while still retaining the discretion to bring forward reviews when needed.

Taken together, these reforms will make our guardianship and administration framework more responsive, more efficient and better balanced. On behalf of the opposition I confirm our support of the bill. We believe it represents a practical improvement to the act and that it will deliver real benefits both to the individuals affected and to the operations of SACAT. I commend the bill to the chamber.

**The Hon. J.S. LEE (17:03):** I rise today to speak in support of the Guardianship and Administration (Tribunal Proceedings) Amendment Bill 2025. This bill represents a pragmatic and compassionate step forward in improving the efficiency of our health and legal systems, particularly for some of the most vulnerable members of our community: hospital inpatients with impaired decision-making capacity. At the heart of this bill is a simple but important goal: to reduce unnecessary delays in discharging patients from hospital by streamlining the process of appointing guardians or administrators through SACAT.

These delays are not just bureaucratic inconveniences; they have real human consequences. Prolonged hospital stays can negatively impact a patient's wellbeing, increase stress on families and place avoidable strain on our already stretched health system.

The introduction of section 65A, which requires SACAT to prioritise applications for hospital inpatients and hear them within 14 days, is a welcome reform. While SACAT already aims for this benchmark, enshrining it in legislation alongside increased funding will help ensure consistency and accountability. It is important to note, however, that this is specifically addressing hearings, not decisions. My trust is that SACAT will continue to make decisions at the first hearing to ensure that this change has its intended effect.

The bill also allows SACAT to shorten or dispense with notice requirements in appropriate circumstances. This is a commonsense provision, especially where decisions are easily reversible, such as short-term respite care. It is still extremely important that hospitals continue to make reasonable efforts to contact all interested persons and that SACAT applies these powers judiciously. The right to be heard must not be compromised. I commend the inclusion of a safeguard allowing interested persons who were not notified of expedited proceedings to apply to vary or revoke orders without needing to prove a change in circumstances. This is a fair and balanced approach that respects procedural justice while enabling timely action.

The bill also proposes longer review periods for SACAT orders: up to 12 months for initial reviews of detained persons, three years for subsequent reviews and five years for other cases. This will reduce administrative burden and allow SACAT to focus its resources where they are most needed. Importantly, SACAT retains discretion to set shorter review periods where appropriate. This bill aligns with the broader health system reforms and aged-care transition strategies.

It is encouraging that the additional funding of \$3.8 million over two years and \$1.7 million annually from 2027-28 shows a strong signal of the government's commitment. But funding alone is not enough. Implementation must be robust and hospitals must be supported to submit complete applications without delay. I believe this bill is a sensible and necessary reform. It balances urgency with fairness, and compassion with practicality. With those remarks, I commend the bill.

**The Hon. S.L. GAME (17:07):** I rise to speak on the government's Guardianship and Administration (Tribunal Proceedings) Amendment Bill 2025. This proposal seeks to amend the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993 to expedite guardianship and administration proceedings in the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

According to the Attorney-General, these amendments will help facilitate the timely discharge of hospital patients with impaired decision-making capacity. However, even the Attorney-General acknowledges that there are limited commonwealth-funded aged-care places into which these patients can be discharged. Nevertheless, the government is determined to pursue these measures, despite receiving concerns from stakeholders such as Dementia Australia, Council on the Ageing, Aged Rights Advocacy Service as well as the Law Society, and no doubt many others.

We can all agree that hospital patients should be discharged upon completion of their treatment or when they are well enough to reside in some other form of accommodation. However, in cases where a patient suffers from mental impairment, there are often very complex decisions to be made that require considerable thought, input, assessment and, most importantly, appropriate advocacy for the patient, who is extremely vulnerable given their difficulty in making important decisions about their own care and accommodation.

This proposal to expedite proceedings so that SACAT can deal with applications within 14 days will add further significant pressure to hospital patients and their families, who are forced to make difficult decisions about care and accommodation. What about vulnerable individuals without supportive families or partners? What will happen to them? Where will they go? Who will be looking out for them? Given the rise of elder abuse in our community, we should not forget patients with abusive partners or manipulative relatives or friends who might seize the opportunity to take control of the vulnerable person's life.

This is why the proposed removal of the tribunal's obligation to give notice to other interested persons in relation to expedited proceedings is highly concerning. Input from all interested persons regarding the future care and accommodation of a vulnerable patient should be valued by the tribunal, not bypassed in the rush to discharge a patient from hospital.

All stakeholders have raised this removal of notifying interested persons as a significant concern, with the Law Society stating that, if other persons do not receive notice of an application, a family member who is not best placed to make decisions for the protected person may be appointed to a position of formal control. It is important to note that upon application to SACAT, a substituted decision-maker or guardian can be granted special powers to direct someone to live in a particular place, authorise someone to be detained in a particular place or authorise the use of force so that medical or dental treatment can be given.

Once in place, these and other similar orders are difficult to revoke. In its submission to the Attorney-General's office, the Aged Rights Advocacy Service stated:

...the proposed amendments undermine the autonomy and self-determination of older persons...the proposed provisions suggest a procedural urgency that may come at the expense of safeguards necessary to protect vulnerable individuals from being lost in the system. This is especially concerning considering the Federal and South Australian Governments' current contemplation of Human Rights legislation...We urge that any reform to the Act be guided by a balanced, rights-based approach that upholds the dignity, autonomy, and preference of the individual in all stages of decision-making.

Unfortunately, the Aged Rights Advocacy Service stated to our office that they did not receive a response from the Attorney-General's office. In communications with my office, they also expressed concern about the tight timeframe and overall tone of the government's approach regarding the consultation process. Dementia Australia expressed similar concerns about the bill's failure to uphold the rights of the aged:

Dementia Australia recommends...that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the rights of the person living with dementia to make their own decisions, including the provision of appropriate supports for decision-making. This aligns with the rights-based principles of the new Federal Aged Care Act.

There is clearly a fundamental inconsistency with this bill's intent to uphold the health and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals and the removal of important procedural safeguards despite widespread concerns from a range of stakeholders. It is disappointing that the government did not fully engage

with stakeholders to construct a bill that sought to balance procedural urgency with some form of commitment to supported decision-making.

**The Hon. R.P. WORTLEY (17:11):** This bill will amend the Guardianship and Administration Act 1993 to reform SACAT proceedings under the act to help facilitate the timely discharge out of hospitals of patients with impaired decision-making capacity in three main ways. It will:

- require SACAT to hear guardianship and administration applications in respect of hospital inpatients within 14 days of receipt of a complete application;
- provide for expedited SACAT hearings of hospital applications by allowing SACAT to dispense with the requirement to notify all interested persons or to shorten the usual notification period of a hospital application in appropriate circumstances; and
- amend the mandatory review periods of SACAT orders: G&A orders every five years (it was originally three years), and special powers orders every 12 months for first review (it was every six months) and every three years for subsequent review (it was every 12 months). SACAT maintains discretion to review earlier, which is made explicit in the bill.

There are circumstances when SACAT can determine not to notify interested persons. The bill gives examples of what could be considered appropriate circumstances, including:

- where the application is for appointment of the Public Advocate or Public Trustee as guardian or administrator respectively and hospital staff have not identified, after reasonable inquiries, any other suitable appointee or interested person;
- where the hospital has identified a willing and available relative or supporter of the patient for appointment as guardian and/or administrator but not identified, after reasonable inquiries, any other interested person; and/or
- where discharge decisions are required that are not long term or difficult to reverse, such as discharge into short-term respite or transition care, back to the patient's home or to reside with the guardian.

Further, the bill will relax restrictions on interested persons making applications so that an interested person who was not notified of an expedited hearing does not need to demonstrate to SACAT that there has been a change of circumstances in order to make an application to SACAT at any time to vary or revoke an order.

There was targeted public consultation on the draft bill to a broad range of stakeholders, including hospitals, legal bodies, aged-care providers and organisations that promote and/or advocate for aged and disabled persons' rights, and invited comment on the bill. The SACAT Act already allows SACAT to make urgent interim orders without notice if satisfied that urgent action is required, for example, where a person is at imminent risk of personal or financial harm.

The government is providing an increase in ongoing funding and resources for SACAT to support these reforms, adding additional funding of \$3.8 million over two years and \$1.7 million per annum indexed from 2027-28.

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State) (17:15):** I thank honourable members for their contributions on this bill. The Guardianship and Administration Scheme is often a difficult and very personal one, a time when someone loses the ability to make decisions, whether financial or lifestyle, for themselves. This is a last resort when someone steps in essentially as a substitute decision-maker to make those decisions. It is often a time in people's lives and in those of their loved ones that is extraordinarily difficult to navigate. It often comes with a lot of emotion and feeling.

In this bill we are seeking to make it more efficient and effective in the way people navigate these systems, particularly, as I read out in my second reading contribution, when someone may be better off in an aged-care facility. A hospital, most agree, is worse for that person's wellbeing, as well as being worse for the hospital system, than an appropriate place in an aged-care facility.

In relation to the amendments filed by the Hon. Sarah Game, the government will not support those amendments. The amendments do a range of things; a number of the amendments do what is already required to be done by SACAT. Whilst I can understand and appreciate that they are well intentioned, they do not do anything different from what SACAT already does.

Then there are other amendments: the very first amendment would require SACAT to obtain an independent assessment of the ability of the person to look after their own health, safety and welfare and manage their own affairs before making a decision. That is exactly what SACAT does. The effect of that amendment would be to have a step before SACAT that assesses all the things SACAT already does and essentially put families through a second almost identical process that SACAT does. In our view, that is not good for the people going through the system who may have lost capacity and is not good for their family and loved ones to have two very similar if not identical processes to navigate. For those two reasons, we will not support the range of amendments put forward by the Hon. Sarah Game.

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) (17:19):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**FINES ENFORCEMENT AND DEBT RECOVERY (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

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

At 17:21 the council adjourned until Wednesday 3 September 2025 at 14:15.

*Answers to Questions***MASSAGE THERAPISTS**

In reply to **the Hon. J.S. LEE** (4 February 2025).

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State):** I have been advised:

Massage therapy is a self-regulated profession in Australia as the profession is not regulated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

South Australia has implemented the Code of Conduct for Certain Health Care Workers, for unregistered and self-regulated health professionals not covered by AHPRA, requiring these health professionals to comply with the code and display certain information within their practice. The code establishes minimum standards for unregistered health professionals and provides additional powers to the Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner (HCSCC) if an unregistered health professional is found to have breached the code.

Consumers can also report unprofessional behaviour directly to the HCSCC who acts to protect public health and safety by resolving, investigating, and prosecuting healthcare-related complaints.

Consumers concerned with potential criminal conduct are encouraged to report those matters to South Australia Police.

**RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION**

In reply to **the Hon. S.L. GAME** (6 March 2025).

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State):** I have been advised:

South Australia is participating in the national plan of action being progressed by the Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) directed at increasing protections against antisemitism and hate crimes more broadly.

On 15 August 2025, the SCAG reaffirmed this national plan of action, with work continuing under SCAG to identify best practice legislative and non-legislative responses to address antisemitism.

These initiatives include the development of a National Hate Crimes and Incidents Database, to respond to the critical need to provide a more accurate picture of the prevalence of hate crimes in Australia. Work to date has included consultation with a wide range of affected community groups about their experiences with hate crimes and incidents.

**DUST-BORNE DISEASES**

In reply to **the Hon. C. BONAROS** (18 March 2025).

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State):** I have been advised:

In response to question 1:

- On 1 September 2024, South Australia amended the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA) to strengthen controls about the processing of materials containing silica. Specifically, regulation 529A(1)(e) now governs tunnelling through crystalline silica substances.
- SafeWork SA enforces compliance with these regulations and is actively engaged with the River Torrens to Darlington (T2D) alliance project as part of its major projects campaign for 2025-26.
- While preliminary works have commenced, tunnelling operations using boring machines are not expected to begin until May/June 2026.
- The tunnelling method proposed for South Australia differs significantly from that used in New South Wales. South Australia will employ a wet cutting method at the boring machine's face, which significantly reduces the risk of airborne dust exposure.
- Additionally, South Australian soil profiles generally contain significantly lower silica quartz content compared to Sydney's, further reducing potential exposure risks.

In response to question 2:

- SafeWork SA has implemented a range of measures aimed at mitigating exposure to dust-borne diseases, particularly those associated with crystalline silica.
- As part of the 2025-25 construction industry targeted campaigns, SafeWork SA is currently conducting a crystalline silica substances campaign to monitor compliance with recent amendments to the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA).

- In addition to proactive compliance monitoring, SafeWork SA responds to silica-related complaints and notifiable incidents.
- SafeWork SA also provides education support through its advisory service, offering guidance and information to businesses and undertakings working with silica and engineered stone.
- Further to this, I also receive advice from the Mining and Quarrying Occupational Health and Safety Committee (MAQOHSC), established under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA). MAQOHSC has a longstanding history of supporting dust exposure controls in the quarry and mining sectors and has expressed interest in sharing its expertise with tunnelling projects, particularly in relation to dust control technologies.
- MAQOHSC continues to support worker education and offers lung screening for at-risk workers.
- MAQOHSC's five-year strategy, published on its website, outlines its commitment to supporting smaller persons conducting a business or undertaking with silica exposure risks.
- Several MAQOHSC members also participate in the newly established State Silica Working Group coordinated by SafeWork SA. This ensures strong cross-sectoral collaboration and support for workplaces where dust exposure risks may occur, including those involved in tunnelling operations.

In response to question 3:

- Over the past five years, 33 workers in South Australia have had accepted silicosis claims.
- These workers were primarily engaged across multiple industry sectors involving the use of engineered stone products, with no specific projects identified as being directly linked to their diagnoses.

#### **PUBLIC HOUSING, ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

In reply to **the Hon. J.M.A. LENSINK** (30 April 2025).

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State):** I have been advised:

As an independent tribunal, South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) receives applications from the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) for the termination of tenancy agreements. SACAT applies the law as set out in the Residential Tenancies Act 1995 (SA) in the context of the facts of each case when determining whether to terminate a tenancy agreement and make an order for vacant possession.

There has been a steady increase in the number of total orders made across SACAT over the 10 years since its establishment in 2015. In the first year there were approximately 22,000 orders made and in the 10th year of SACAT, March 2024 to March 2025, the number of orders made was approximately 37,070.

#### **RICHERS, MR M.**

In reply to **the Hon. F. PANGALLO** (4 June 2025).

**The Hon. K.J. MAHER (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Attorney-General, Minister for Industrial Relations and Public Sector, Special Minister of State):** I have been advised:

The member seeks details of reports or allegations made to an independent statutory body. It is important that the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) remains independent from ministers and members of parliament. I do not consider it would be appropriate for me to request such information from the ICAC, nor can I compel it as Attorney-General.

Complaints about police are dealt with under the Police Complaints and Discipline Act 2016 and are the responsibility of the South Australia Police Internal Investigation Section. There are strict confidentiality provisions that apply under that act. Release of such information is a matter for the Commissioner of Police.