

**The Hon. T.J. STEPHENS:** I speak today on a matter of very great concern to me, and that is the wellbeing of the people of Coober Pedy and the potential loss of services that may occur as a result of the government's handling of the power supply problems to that town. As you would be aware, Mr President, Coober Pedy is quite an isolated community and it does not rely on the power grid that the rest of the state uses. I have been contacted by a number of very distressed individuals who have informed me of the critical state of the council's finances and the government's reluctance to offer any meaningful assistance. I will outline the situation so that the council fully appreciates the problems that the people of Coober Pedy are experiencing.

For a substantial time, there have been serious electricity supply problems in Coober Pedy, the town being in the unique situation of trying to supply its own power. Periodically, the generation needs to be upgraded, and it certainly needs quite a bit of maintenance. Currently the existing supply is inadequate for Coober Pedy. In just one 24-hour period, there were no fewer than 20 outages of power, which is quite unacceptable. Apparently the council has been begging the government to assist it to organise loans for new generators, but the government has not been forthcoming with a letter of comfort to allow council the necessary funds. As a result, the council has had to pay out of its own pocket for temporary generators for a period of six months. That has nearly sent the council broke.

The council is now on the verge of insolvency in order to provide what the people themselves call a short-term solution. It is all because the government has told the council, as I understand it, that the government is not in the business of power generation. My understanding is that the state government does have a responsibility to provide for electricity, even to remote communities like Coober Pedy. The Minister for Energy has apparently instructed the council that, if it wants a letter of comfort to apply for a line of credit, it will have to raise commercial tariffs on electricity in the order of 10 per cent. The line of credit is worth approximately \$1.5 million, just to keep the council solvent. The situation is so dire that vehicles that are desperately needed for other services have not been purchased because of a lack of money.

I am informed that senior council people saw the Minister for Energy last year and were basically given the run-around when it came to getting any definitive answer or commitment from the minister. This is unacceptable. In a modern civilised country, communities are basically being held to ransom against the impending threat of lack of electricity. I register my disgust at this and I will be pursuing this matter with a great deal of interest. I hope that the member for Giles is pursuing this issue just a vigorously.

#### **STATE SUPPLY (PROCUREMENT OF SOFTWARE) AMENDMENT BILL**

**The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN** obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the State Supply Act 1985. Read a first time.

**The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In spite of its rather ponderous title, the bill is about the use of open source software by the government of South Australia. Open source software is an unusual concept and one that will take a little time to explain. I will deal first with ordinary products. When we buy something, we usually buy the right to use that thing in any way we see fit. For example, if you buy a car, you can add roof racks or a tow bar and you can even paint the car a different colour. The key thing about buying something is that it becomes your property and you can do with it as you will, even to the point of selling it on to someone else. You can even break up a car into pieces and sell the pieces to different people.

Software: somehow we have been tricked into believing that software is a different kind of thing and many have accepted the idea that we do not own a piece of software once we buy it. In fact, some of the major suppliers of software have moved to a revenue model whereby it is necessary to continually pay rent for the right to use a product that has been purchased. Even stranger, we are not allowed to see the workings of the software so that we can check to make sure that it is doing what we expect or want it to do. If I continue with the car example, this would be equivalent to buying a car but never being allowed to look under the bonnet to see what is inside. It is indeed a very strange situation where people are paying astonishingly large amounts of money on an on-going basis for very few rights. In many cases people are not even allowed to talk about their experiences with using a piece of software because of the narrow terms of the licence agreement that comes with that software.

The open source movement: in response to this and many other problems in the computer software industry, a worldwide movement of people has developed a set of competing software products that do not have restrictive licence agreements. In fact, the most common clause associated with open source software is that you can use the software in any way and modify it as you see fit, provided you include a full copy of the source code every time you sell the software to another party. As the source code of this software is available for anyone to see at any time, this code is robust and secure.

In South Australia this open source software movement is a vast opportunity for us. Our universities could be teaching computer science around open source products, allowing students to examine in intimate detail the workings of established products. Every student assignment has the potential to contribute to the body of functioning open source systems. Simply by forwarding their completed work to the relevant open source project, their code could become part of a greater work in publication. It is worth noting that some of the most widely used and recognised pieces of open source software have been developed here in Australia. As an example, the Samba project, which allows Linux computers to seamlessly integrate with windows networks, was developed by a team primarily based in Canberra.

Because the open source paradigm uses a different business model, it is possible for student computers to be fully programmed with operating systems, development tools and working application software at no cost to the student. I emphasise 'at no cost to the student' as a lot of open source software is also free software. This factor alone has the potential to save the education sector millions of dollars in licence fees. South Australia's information technology industry is ideally placed to develop and maintain open source systems. Every government development project could leverage the efforts of previous projects by standing on the shoulders of the work that has been done before. Open source code is

inherently portable and can be compiled to run on any computer architecture or be customised to suit any department's specific needs. Thus, work developed for one agency can easily be carried over to another under this paradigm.

I hasten to point out that some international IT houses that develop work here in South Australia—DMR, a division of Fujitsu, for example—already make it their standard practice to supply source code with any delivered product. Changing the licensing conditions to make these products open source would not be a significant imposition on businesses that operate in this fashion. Where this would be significant is in the enormous amounts of money currently being channelled into the hands of a very few large American companies. It is common in the computer industry to hear frustrated IT specialists talking about the Microsoft tax—the extra charge paid to Microsoft every time a computer is purchased, no matter how that computer is being used.

**The Hon. Sandra Kanck:** Is this the death of Microsoft bill?

**The Hon. IAN GILFILLAN:** I am not sure that I will quote that in *Hansard*. If we develop software locally under the open source paradigm we allow our IT specialists to make quality products they can sell to the wider world, along with support and training for their customers. By encouraging our departments and agencies to use open source software we support a local development environment that can open the door to international sales. Bear in mind that South Australia already has a history of developing IT products sold overseas, so this bill is seeding what is already fertile ground.

Finally, this bill is a simple one, yet it has the potential to do great things for our state. It requires procurement people in public authorities to consider the alternative of using open source software and, wherever practical, using open source in preference to proprietary software. I commend the bill to the house.

**The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO** secured the adjournment of the debate.

## PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

Order of the Day, Private Business, No. 3: Hon. A.J. Redford to move:

That this council authorises the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation to attend and be examined before the Privileges Committee of the House of Assembly.

**The Hon. A.J. REDFORD:** I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried.

## GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.I. Lucas:

That this council notes recent appointments made since the state government was installed in March 2002.

(Continued from 26 March. Page 1982.)

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS (Leader of the Opposition):** In January this year I issued a media statement expressing concern about appointments being made by the Rann government. In that report I indicated that I welcomed further information in relation to key Labor appointments being made and indicated that the Liberal Party would continue to monitor those appointments and, on an on-going basis, we would issue updated reports in relation to the appointment process.

In January 2003 we issued the first of the Rann government appointments survey and in that press statement I listed a number of appointments, such as: Frank Blevins (a former Labor minister) to the South Australian Water Corporation Board; Greg Crafter (a former Labor minister) to the Racing Industry Advisory Council; Sam Crafter (Greg Crafter's son) as ministerial adviser to minister Jane Lomax-Smith; Steve Georganas (an ex-Labor candidate) as ministerial adviser to Jay Weatherill; Wendy Georganas (the wife of Steve Georganas) as personal assistant to minister Steph Key; Robyn Layton (the ex-wife of John Bannon) to review child protection laws, and also on the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal; Jeremy Moore (ex-Labor Party candidate) to the Aquaculture Tenure Allocation Board; and Susanne Cole (wife of Tim Stanley, ex-Labor Party candidate) as first judge of the District Court.

Brian Stanley (the father of Tim Stanley) was appointed to review workers compensation and OH&S laws. Mark Hancock (an ex-Labor candidate) was a ministerial adviser to minister Pat Conlon. Lindsay Simmons (an ex-Labor Party candidate) was appointed Chief of Staff to minister Trish White, and Justin Jarvis (an ex-Labor candidate) as ministerial adviser to minister Terry Roberts. Greg Stevens (an ex-union official and Labor Party president) was appointed to review the industrial relations system. Chris White (an ex-UTLC secretary) was appointed to the Housing Trust Board. Janet Giles (UTLC secretary) was appointed to the Women's Advisory Board, and Les Birch (union official) to the Boundary Adjustment Facilitation Panel. Rosemary Clancy (ex-Labor candidate) was also appointed to the Boundary Adjustment Facilitation Panel.

**The Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins:** That's one of the ones he wants to get rid of.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** Yes.

**The Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins:** That will be a short-lived appointment!

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** I am sure they will find another home. Judith Brine was appointed to chair the review of public housing, and Greg Mackie (ALP-backed city councillor) was appointed to the Adelaide Festival Centre Trust.

**The Hon. Diana Laidlaw:** And the State Library.

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** My colleague says the State Library as well. Angus Storey (an ex-AEU officer) was appointed Chief of Staff to minister Steph Key, and Cathy King (the daughter of former Labor minister Len King) as Chief of Staff to Patrick Conlon.

**The Hon. Diana Laidlaw:** What about Carolyn Pickles to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra?

**The Hon. R.I. LUCAS:** And, evidently, Carolyn Pickles to the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. I am sure that is an appointment you would have been very supportive of, Mr President, as you nod wisely and sagely. The essential point I made in the January release was that the Rann government had tried to be clever in relation to appointments, strategically