

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CERTIFICATE OF
EDUCATION – 23 July, 2008**

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Taylor) (11:12): *I move:*

That the 27th report of the committee, on an inquiry into the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), be noted.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:26): I commend the member for Taylor's remarks. This inquiry came to us via a member in another place (the Hon. Stephen Wade) in regard to the SACE in South Australia. A broad range of presentations was made to the Social Development Committee. Certainly, there was some criticism about changing the system we now have. There were some perceptions by people involved in the tertiary sector—in our universities, etc.—who were concerned that perhaps the new SACE would mean a dumbing-down of the system. As long as the recommendations are taken on board, it will make sure that we do not have a dumbing-down of our education system.

There is nothing more vital in our society than education. It has been found that people have gone right through the school system but they cannot even spell. This is supposed to get picked up in primary years but it beggars belief how people can get right through secondary education, to perhaps year 11 or year 12, and they can barely string a sentence together on paper. I think there are some real difficulties that need to be addressed there.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: No worries! The Attorney puts out a challenge—at any time, Attorney.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, I am sorry I do not have a pair of skis and boots to go with you next week. Be that as it may, the educational standards of our children are not something to be trivialised. They need to be taken into account to make sure that young people can meet an adequate standard to complete their SACE requirements successfully and can go on to lead a broader life, perhaps doing a full university course.

The recommendations include vocational education and training courses in this program and that is a major plus, because not everyone is bound for a full academic career. In the past I think we have let students in the state down—those who are more aligned to technical education than academic—and it has only just been realised that there has been a really big gap in the last 20 years of education in that regard.

Overall, there are 26 recommendations. I hope that the SACE, as it is rolled out from next year, is monitored by the appropriate authorities to see that it is kept up to speed and gives the best education to students in this state that it can. Otherwise, if it does not work, the matter will just have to come back and be reviewed again.

I acknowledge that a huge body of work has gone into this issue. I hope that the universities do not find a problem or find that there is a dumbing-down of skills across the state, that entry requirements meet international standards, and that we can supply the best students, not just from our state and this country, but also from around the world. With those few remarks, I commend the report.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Taylor) (11:30): I thank the member for Hammond for his contribution to this debate and his valuable contribution to the work of the committee. An extensive review was conducted by government, involving a large number of submissions to the Crafter review. Since then the proposal has evolved. One thing I did neglect to mention is that there have been trials in at least 40 schools—probably more by now—on certain aspects of the new SACE. The committee did have confidence that there was a good process in taking what is a 20-year old certificate into the 21st century.

Motion carried.