

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 15TH MARCH 2012

INTERSTATE MIGRATION

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:55): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I think that was a fantastic ruling you just made. I rise to support the member for Morialta's motion that this house condemns the state government for its 10 years of failure to stem the extraordinary flow of young people leaving South Australia for study, career and lifestyle opportunities interstate.

The simple fact is that you have to promote the right business environment so that businesses have a reason to keep young people in this state and employ young people in this state. So often we see major contracts go out of this state, whether they be roadworks projects, desalination plant projects or even things that affect one of the operators in my electorate, Moore Engineering, with the building of emergency service vehicles in the form of fire trucks.

We see contracts continually given to interstate based companies. In the case of fire trucks, many of these are defective. I know of two that were built in the last couple of years that had to go to Moore Engineering in Murray Bridge to be completely redone. They were just a mess: brand-new trucks; one delivered to the West Coast and one to Meningie had to go in for a complete revamp to tidy up lockers that would not shut and things falling off. They were just completely unsafe for our CFS volunteers to operate. This is where Moore Engineering keeps picking up work. Some of the only work they pick up from the state government is fixing up all the messes from other contracts.

It is to be noted that this company picks up work from mining sites in Western Australia for emergency services vehicles and from other interstate government or private bodies to make their vehicles because it is recognised for its fine workmanship. However, once again, this government will not promote local business in this state even when we have a company that could employ more young people and keep them in this state and have a high level of employment.

Another thing that does not help in keeping young people in this state, and it affects an electorate like mine, is that there is no public housing for people like police officers, schoolteachers or other public occupations within 100 kilometres of the city. What incentive is there for these people to come out to those areas?

Being a country person, I look at 100 kilometres as being nothing. In fact, I have often said about the distance from Coomandook where I live (which is about 140 kilometres from Adelaide) that it is always further from Adelaide to Coomandook

than Coomandook to Adelaide. I say that because people in Adelaide seem to think it is so far to come out to where I live. As other country members know, it is just something we do. We drive those distances.

Here we are again with this government not encouraging people to come and work in the regions, because there is no housing. This goes right out to Tailem Bend, and it affects the education sector in my electorate, like the schools in Coomandook which my boys attend, and also Coonalpyn a little further down the road, because teachers want to come and live in a place like Tailem Bend but they cannot get housing.

There is no incentive. It is not just young people; I was talking to a member of the police force last night about who is going to head up the local service area when the new Murray Bridge police station is built. I do acknowledge that that police station is being built under this government, but where will the head of the local service area be based? Well, they cannot offer them housing so they could be based at Henley Beach. Who knows. How ridiculous is that, when you want to have these people on call.

This reflects on what I call our fairly close electorates—this 100-kilometre limit. It affects the areas of the member for Goyder and the member for Schubert—I am sure it also affects his electorate. There is absolutely no incentive for people to come out into our areas. This is a major factor in depopulating regional areas of this state. Certainly I acknowledge the member for Morialta's motion. People are not just leaving the city but they are also leaving the country in droves because they are given no incentive to stay or to be attracted to what I call the virtual suburban regional areas.

We end up with schools battling to get staff, we end up with healthcare needs that are not met, and we also end up with issues like the safety of our citizens and being able to get the appropriate police numbers in place. A lot of this is because we do live in the highest taxed state in the nation. People do not want to invest here, whether it be in property or business, and it is a fact. There are plenty of stories I keep hearing day by day where people have decided it is just too hard.

They do not want to pay all the stamp duties, the property taxes, the payroll taxes and land tax. They just go and invest somewhere else. They go to Queensland. They are out of here, and they are out of here in droves and taking millions of dollars with them and reinvesting them elsewhere. If you do not have these kinds of people who have the ability to invest in not just private property but also in business you drive the youth away, because these people would employ the youth if they thought it was the right state to operate in and the right business environment—just the total package that gave them an incentive to stay here.

But these people see the light. They say, 'How can we put up with this 10 years of Labor mess?' They say, 'No. We've had enough. We're out of here,' and I do not blame them. I agree with the member for Morialta and condemn the state government for what it has done to the youth of this state in not doing anything for them in the last 10 years.