

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2012

### PASTORAL SECTOR

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:59):** As the member for Hammond and the spokesman for agriculture on this side of the house, I certainly support the member for Stuart's motion that this house calls on the Pastoral Board to reform the rent review committee over its decision to increase pastoral rents by up to 230 per cent; condemns the Weatherill Labor government for once again failing to consult with those affected; and notes the important contribution of South Australia's pastoral sector to primary production.

I think members on this side of the house have made very good contributions in regard to this motion. I commend the member for Stuart for bringing it forward. I note that the Hon. Michelle Lensink has made a contribution in the other place.

It is interesting that just when you see areas like the pastoral areas of this state have a couple of good seasons, they suddenly get belted with rent rises of up to 230 per cent. What I would compare that to is, say, if members on the other side in this place had their council rates come in and they had suddenly gone up 230 per cent. I reckon you would be making a noise. I reckon you would be making a lot of noise.

**Mr Griffiths:** You'd get lots of telephone calls.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Yes, and I think there would be quite a bit of correspondence into your electorate office if a rate rise of 230 per cent was placed on people's homes. It would be outrageous, as this is outrageous, so it is exactly the same process that has happened here. We have had these people in the pastoral areas who live through droughts and flooding rains, and they do a great job. They live in isolated conditions but they enjoy what they do. However, the thing is they always seem to get taxed out of existence. It is interesting when you go through these areas and these are the outer areas where a lot of these people are, so out of council areas, and the services that these people get are quite limited at times. You only have to drive out of South Australia and drive into Queensland and you see straight away the improvements of having money spent right up to the boundary.

There is a real issue here. Where is the fairness and equity? These people are up there producing wool and meat, whether it is lamb or beef, and doing a great job for this state's production. We have a Premier who indicates that agriculture is going to be the great saviour now that Olympic Dam has fallen over for another 46 months. We certainly hope that Olympic Dam gets going in the future, but suddenly that has fallen over and the Premier and the Labor government had banked everything on

that mine cranking up now, yet it has not. So, suddenly, there is a big economic hole in the budget and a big flaw in the credibility of the government of this state.

You also see the sixth point—of the seven points the Premier said are the main themes of how they are going to govern this state—is about promoting clean green food. How does increasing pastoral rents by up to 230 per cent promote clean green food? This is some of the greenest food you can get from some of these stations. I know that a lot of them are branded as organic lamb or organic beef and they are in just the right environment to do that. They obviously can farm without using some of the chemicals or drenches or whatever that are needed in some of the wetter areas of the state so that you can keep your stock in good health.

I can fully understand why our pastoral people, who make such a valuable contribution to this state and who cover the largest percentage of land mass in this state, would be upset. Certainly I acknowledge their contribution. It should be acknowledged by the government as well but, no, they see it as an easy tax grab. I note that once again people were not consulted about the rent, so they just got the notices in the mail and away you go, that is what you have to pay if you want to be involved in the industry, and away you go. It is just like another place in the member for Stuart's electorate with the Cadell ferry—a short-sighted affair where the government thought they would save \$400,000, which barely did up minister Conlon's office and I do not think that amount did, by shutting down a ferry. The community got on board and said, 'No, we're not going to live with that', and the member for Stuart and other members from this place campaigned long and loud and got a great result for Cadell, the people of this state and tourists from interstate and overseas, who can still have access to that ferry, as well as the primary producers of that area.

One day, Premier Weatherill will realise that there is a place north of Gepps Cross and realise the economic boom that these people give to this state. They suffer during the droughts but they survive. They pull through. They know what it is like to have tough times and get on with the job, and they do not need the imposition of having to pay these great rent increases. They put up with not only the floods and droughts, but the fluctuations in primary industry production and prices. Obviously, they can have great differences in their wool or meat production, but they still have to be up there with sometimes only themselves and sometimes a limited amount of staff to run these vast properties.

As I indicated earlier, they do a very good job, they contribute tens of millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, to the state's economy and they should be helped along and promoted, instead of having this high impost of tax in the case of a pastoral rent imposed on them. Otherwise, what we may see, down the track, are vast tracts of this country just being left. I note that some of these properties are being bought out by green groups and locked away from production, when we are

concerned about food production in the future. I know members on this side of the house are, and members on the other side of the house should also be concerned, because we all want to eat, as the member for Finniss rightly said. If we do not promote production, we will not get on with it.

I note that a lot of people from the pastoral areas, certainly in the Far North, Northern Territory and from our pastoral areas, support the live cattle and live sheep trade. I note someone wrote in the *Stock Journal* today asking Lyn White from Animals Australia whether they want us all eating lentils. I certainly do not want to. These people make a vital contribution to the state and they need to be supported. As we saw with the debate over the live cattle trade for our landowners in the north, there were hasty decisions made which have upset the trade, upset the income, lost hundreds of jobs, and the turnaround was that slow that we have upset our Indonesian neighbours, and it is going to take a long time to get that trade back on track appropriately.

In closing, I indicate that I firmly support the pastoral producers in this state. They do a great job under very hard and difficult conditions, at times. I fully commend the motion of the member for Stuart.