

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER 2012

PETROLEUM AND GEOTHERMAL ENERGY (TRANSITIONAL LICENCES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 September 2012.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:37): I rise to make a contribution to the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy (Transitional Licences) Amendment Bill 2012. I note that on this side of the house we will be seeking more information on this bill, and I note that it seems that there has been an oversight with the traditional provisions of the principal act. It seems that some existing licences which have been granted, renewed or consolidated may now be subject to the right to negotiate provisions in subdivision P of the commonwealth Native Title Act 1993.

This issue has come to light as a result of the South Australian Native Title Services instituting a case on behalf of some native title claimants seeking a declaration in the federal court in relation to certain licences granted to Santos in South Australia. It is said that the unintended consequence may well impinge upon a number of licences granted, renewed or consolidated, the important point being that the renewal confers no additional rights to the licensee and in no way derogates the rights of the native title holders or claimants.

There is proposed retrospective legislation to reaffirm that existing transitional petroleum production licences granted, renewed or consolidated remain consistent with the aforementioned subdivision 1 and that that is not subject to the right to negotiate. This could potentially impact a number of production licences in the Cooper Basin, and I note the government's wish to ensure that the original intent of the Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Act 2000 is upheld. As I indicated earlier, it is noted that the proposed retrospectivity of this bill will neither confer additional rights on licences nor detract from the pre-existing rights of the native title claimant holders but merely reconfirms the status quo. I will make a few additional comments in this regard, especially as the word 'geothermal' is in the title.

Notwithstanding that, as I have indicated before in this place, I worked in the Cooper Basin myself 30 years ago for a couple of years. I was up there in the last couple of months and I had a quick look as I went past the geothermal activity just outside Innamincka. It is a huge project and I was talking to some locals up there. It could

have a great outlook for South Australia as far as renewable energy is concerned. From what I understand and was told, \$400 million has been spent on that project, and there are not too many people, especially in the Innamincka region, raising hopes that there will ever be anything other than limited energy coming out of that well.

They are struggling to control the high temperatures and depth of the well. It is causing some significant issues, and I know that a lot of federal money as well as some state money has gone toward that project. I note that the powerline is being built back towards the Innamincka township only a few kilometres down the road—I think it about 15 kilometres from memory. I would like the project to be successful, as there have been significant amounts of funding poured into it. With those few words, I note that we support the bill and seek further information.