

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 05TH SEPTEMBER 2012

SHACK LEASES

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:22): I presented to the South Australian parliament today the second offering of a petition with a further 1,481 signatures from concerned South Australians regarding the life tenure shacks which are on crown land, following the introduction of the Crown Land Management (Life Lease Sites) Amendment Bill. With the 1,481 signatures today, there will be a total of 3,431 signatures for this petition showing tremendous support for the Hon. Michelle Lensink's bill which amends the Crown Land Management Act. Firstly, Michelle has been fantastic in the work she has done preparing the draft bill for the shacks right across the state from Glenelg River through to the Coorong, Milang, Fisherman's Bay and other places so that people have the ability to have tenure.

As I represent the electorate of Hammond, I represent the shack owners of Milang, and I must admit that those shacks are absolutely fantastic down there, and the Alexandrina Council has been extremely proactive, including providing sewerage facilities to the Milang shacks in the early 2000s. I will read the petition's argument to the House of Assembly:

We draw the attention of your honourable house to the current arrangement for the management of shack leases. The current life tenure shack lessees feel that the current plan for shack leases provides a high level of uncertainty, will have a negative impact on the environment and will potentially remove access to assets that have been used by families for generations. The government needs to work cohesively with lessees to ensure that both environments and lifestyles are preserved.

The request states:

Your petitioners are calling on the government to enable councils to take effective care, control and management of shack sites such as Glenelg River, Milang and other locations so that people can justify investing in these shacks by gaining tenure. We ask that the government enable shack lessees to sub lease from the local government authority rather than leasing directly from the South Australian government.

The Liberal Party introduced a bill for an act to amend the Crown Land Management Act. This Crown Land Management (Life Lease Sites) Amendment Bill was before the South Australian parliament in a slightly different form in 2005, and I must acknowledge there has been a number of dedicated shack owners who have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to gather support and make their issues known.

This bill, which this petition supports, impacts the life tenure shacks which are on crown land. We do realise and recognise that not all shacks are on crown land, with some shacks found in national parks such as the Innes National Park, and the Liberal Party has been working with these particular shack owners in order to support their cause also.

Many of the life tenure shacks across the state are in various states of repair or disrepair, and it is likely that a number of them will deteriorate further because the owners have no incentive to improve or maintain them. Some of the shacks date back as far as 80 years and many require a facelift; the problem is that they are at the end of the line. When the current tenure holders pass on, the tenure returns to the crown and the shack must be pulled down at the expense of the estate, leaving no incentive for lessees to invest or upgrade.

The Liberal Party thinks this is an unnecessary loss and the aim of this bill is to provide the incentive for owners to perform a facelift of their shacks. Shacks in our nation have a strong tradition, with links to the beach or river, escaping with your family and friends on a long weekend, school or Christmas holidays and, if the shacks are allowed to deteriorate and disappear, local towns will lose tourist opportunities and seasonal income.

'Shackies', as the lessees are more fondly known, take pride in their particular sites, many of which have generational ties to their 'patch'. The amendments in this bill aim to encourage shack owners to maintain their shacks to a higher standard not only for their use but also to improve the general environment for all users and provide a long-term assurance to shack site owners.

We are not talking about multimillion dollar shacks that resemble a second home; we are talking about simple yet effective shacks which have been used by families for generations, and they are an icon—especially the ones I have in my electorate in Milang. It should also be mentioned that shack owners pay very high fees and rates—in the vicinity of \$2,000 and \$3,000 yearly—for the privilege of having those sites, and those fees are continually raised by local and state government.

Credit for initiating the bill really does need to be given to the district councils of Alexandrina and Grant in the early 2000s, and I will make mention of the Alexandrina Council's proposal, tabled to the old DEH, called 'Port Milang shack sites: proposed change of land tenure', in which Alexandrina agreed to provide the care, control and management of the shack precincts under a heads of agreement signed by shack owners and council.

I must thank Mr Keith Parks, councillor of the Alexandrina Council; Mr Keith Turner, President of the Port Milang Shack Owners Association; Mr Geoff Galasch, Vice President of the Coorong Shack Owners Association; a number of other

representatives of shack owners associations across the state, including the Pondalowie Shack Owners Association; and, of course, all those who distributed the petition and chased signatures.