



Adrian Pederick MP
Member for Hammond

House of Assembly
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WILDERNESS PROTECTION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (17:11): I too support the Wilderness Protection (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill 2012, and note that it was tabled by the minister last November. This had to do with the future proclaiming of the Nullarbor Wilderness Protection Area, which I believe will bring the area in South Australia covered under wilderness legislation up to about 1.8 million hectares. There just needed to be some amendments to the old Wilderness Protection Act to bring everything into line, and obviously there was no capacity in the existing legislation to provide for existing leases; for example, the Nullarbor Roadhouse.

I have stopped there several times on trips across to Perth and back, and I must say that the member for Flinders quite accurately described how beautiful the country is around there. You talk to some people about the Nullarbor and going across South Australia and then through Western Australia, and you just think of desert scenes, but it is beautiful country that changes all the time. There are almost 100 miles near Balladonia in Western Australia that is nearly a straight road all the way—it is a straight road for about 90 miles in the old language—and it is great country. I remember taking my wife-to-be over there in, I think, early 1999—

Mr Treloar interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: I will not respond to interjections.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Pre-honeymoon, yes; that's the one. I was wondering how she would handle the trip, and it surprised me how much Sally enjoyed driving across there and seeing the flora. Thankfully we did not run into too much fauna, although I must say there is plenty of capacity to do that on that road. What this bill does is allow for co-management; working with the local Indigenous people so that native title claims are more easily resolved, and letting them have co-management, as there can be under the national parks act.

There are some things that I am concerned about and, obviously, there will be retention of the existing licences for radio communication towers and the like, and there are plenty of them across there. There is infrastructure for the government radio network and other purposes that will need to be retained and licensed into the future. The only concern that I have with this part of the bill is: what will happen into the future if, for some reason, we need to have more telephone infrastructure or radio infrastructure put in? I wonder if the minister will be able to give us an explanation, or whether we will find out in committee, about whether there is any chance that that is needed.

I am not talking about wholesale changes through the Wilderness Protection Area, I am talking about infrastructure to make communication better across that patch of our great state. Certainly, going across the Nullarbor now, there are areas where you can get mobile phone coverage, and I cannot remember exactly where they are offhand, but I know at Border Village you can get mobile coverage now. I am sure into the future there will be demand for more communication through that area, because years ago it used to be a dusty track, and people had to be fairly brave to cross the Nullarbor 50 or 60 years ago, but now you can basically ride a bike if you are that keen.

Mr Whetstone: No.

Mr PEDERICK: I am not that keen, no, member for Chaffey. I have certainly seen people riding bikes across the Nullarbor.

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, exactly. I am concerned about and interested in that, and I believe there is still access for mining, so there is potential for tracks to be opened up, so I would appreciate an explanation of how that would be managed. I appreciate the need to manage this country to pre-European settlement, but I think we also have to be realistic about the demands for technology and the demands that we humans have in furthering the needs of the community. I am not discounting the aims of the bill, and certainly not the aims of the act, but we cannot just have things locked up in perpetuity without having access if we need it, whether it is road access, or whether it is to set up more communication options into the future.

As I said, I note that the roadhouse proprietor has had his area identified and he will be excised and that this bill is consistent with the recommendation from the Wilderness Advisory Committee and has the support of other environmental groups. So, I certainly agree with the legislation but, as I said, I do have some concerns about access, if for reasons of mainly technology there is further access needed, and I will be interested in the minister's response in that regard.

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