



Adrian Pederick MP
Member for Hammond

House of Assembly
2nd July 2014

Appropriation Bill 2014

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (20:36 :12): I rise to give a grievance to the Appropriation Bill. That was a very interesting speech we have just heard. Members on this side do stand up for their electorates, and the minister would be well aware in communication we have had over several months now—since November last year—of the school where I spent most of my education, Coomandook Area School. It is no accident that, out of an enrolment of about 160, 12 left after last year because of the debacle of funding in bush education. It is just an absolute debacle.

The Hon. J.M. Rankine interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: You had your go and I kept quiet. It is an absolute disgrace when a local area school—

The Hon. J.M. Rankine interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Education to order.

Mr PEDERICK: It is an absolute disgrace when a country area school cannot even hold their in-house sports carnival on their own oval and they have to travel 50 kilometres to Meningie to do it because there is not the money in the budget to water that oval. They have a swimming pool that has been out of action for 12 months, yet the education department hired the failed contractor that did the job last time.

The Hon. J.M. Rankine interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: They hired a failed—

The Hon. J.M. Rankine interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: You had your go. Mr Speaker, I seek your protection.

The SPEAKER: I did not have a go, actually.

Mr PEDERICK: I was speaking to the member for Wright, Mr Speaker.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Point of order, sir: he is standing there shouting at me and pointing his finger at me, and he has the gall to ask for your protection.

The SPEAKER: That is an entirely bogus point of order, and I—

Members interjecting:

Mr Pisoni: She's a bogus minister.

The SPEAKER: The member for Unley has been called to order and is on two warnings. The Minister for Education is warned for taking a bogus point of order. Member for Hammond.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection. I am a quiet, unassuming member. Mr Speaker, for the Minister for Education to make the comments that she did in this house tonight, when I see the school that I love, the school I went to, being torn down through lack of funding and lack of appropriate maintenance, is an absolute disgrace. For the minister to come into this place and make out they are doing such a good job for education when 12 of those children have left that education facility to go elsewhere, is an absolute disgrace and really hits at the heart of regional communities.

What I would also like to refer to is the funding cuts to agriculture spending in this budget. We have a government trying to ride on the back of agriculture in this state because the Olympic Dam expansion has not happened, sadly. Suddenly, we see the Premier decide that agriculture is going to be the saviour. As I mentioned in my earlier speech in regard to the Appropriation Bill, we are down to the lowest budget spend in agriculture for over a decade at \$59.8 million. It is an absolute disgrace.

I refer now to the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics. It is having a severe cutback and the Chief Executive Officer Michael Gilbert outlined these cuts. In 2013, the South Australian government advised that it was reducing its annual investment to \$260,000, down from \$1.8 million. The GRDC has now advised that due to this drop in equity funding it will from 2015 withdraw core equity investment and only fund the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics on a project basis. This means that the ACPFG will lose the financial base to protect and generate value from the intellectual property it has developed over the past 11 years. We are also in danger of losing key scientific staff and the essence which has made ACPFG unusually successful.

Without this funding it will lose the protection of its IP, lose the capacity to grow the international research contracts, lose the capacity for further business development from its IP and lose world-class capacity to grow the future local grains industry. These budget cuts will result in significant research capacity being lost from an industry that will be central to South Australia's economic future.

Agriculture is a vital component of our state's economy. There needs to be more support for our farmers and regional towns. Our farmers are one of the biggest earners in the state and need to be supported to assist growth. There needs to be more significant investment in growing our exports as this industry has the ability to significantly grow our state's economy.

I will now state a few facts around what has been happening: food exports from South Australia have only grown by an average of 1 per cent annually in the past decade—what an abysmal performance that reflects the lack of state government assistance; livestock exports have decreased by 10 per cent; dairy exports have decreased by 10 per cent; and seafood exports have decreased by 5 per cent. Even with all these cuts, the food industry is still the main driver of the state's economy and employs nearly 20 per cent of the workforce.

There is a lack of any strategic long-term plan for agriculture in this state. Agriculture has been asking for a long-term plan for years but the Labor Party continues to ignore them. The Liberals promised a plan at the last state election which was well received by industry. Regional South Australia, I believe, will be the future gateway for the state's prosperity and growth but the Labor Party continues to abuse it.

River Murray funding has been cut once again. The government will spend \$4.3 million less on the River Murray, the Lower Lakes and the Coorong environmental programs. A lot of these programs involved community engagement with community volunteers doing their bit to shore up acidic shorelines and doing what they could to make sure that there was some environmental health in the lower reaches of the Murray.

Natural resources management has been stripped right across the board of \$1 million in annual funding across the state. What we will see is that these NRM cuts will most likely be transferred to farmers who will be hit with more levies and more costs. With regard to the regions, we need the Minister for Regional Development to stand up for our farmers in the regions.

I will just make a point about job losses in this state. In May 2014 there were 2,500 South Australian jobs lost in Adelaide but 1,400 jobs were lost in regional South Australia and there were 4,000 more unemployed in regional South Australia in May 2014. The regional unemployment rate increased from 6.1 per cent to 8 per cent in May 2014. It is the worst jobless rate of all the regions in the nation. It is an absolute shame. The unemployment rate for the Mid North of South Australia, where the Minister for Regional Development resides, is now at 9.3 per cent. That is in Geoff Brock's own electorate.

I want to close my remarks by talking about marine parks. What a flawed policy; what a disgraceful policy coming into play on 1 October this year. We will see a massive impact not just on fishermen but on whole communities, especially seaside communities. It is a whole service community to fishermen: people who service boats, holidaymakers, caravan parks—there is a whole range of impacts that will be felt right downstream from where the fish are caught offshore. Sadly, what we see is an environment department with some misguided view of the world; they want to take over the fishing industry from the primary industries department. We have the Fisheries Management Act, which is world recognised as being some of the best—if not the best—legislative framework to manage our fisheries, yet, no, the green zealots in the Labor Party think there is a better way.

Because there is about only one person on that side now who has ever run any sort of business, they have no idea what impact this is having. I know that the Ferguson family on

Kangaroo Island is already shifting out one-third of their boats; they are gone. They have made that decision, those boats are going. All that regional input is lost to this state because of this flawed policy. It is going to hurt communities all the way from the Far West Coast right down to the South-East of this state, the impacts of these no take zones. They have not been planned at all; they have just been put in by zealots where they think it is a good spot to have no-take zone, when it has been perfectly well managed under the Fisheries Management Act.

I note that in the last couple of days the head of the environment department, Allan Holmes, when asked on radio about how this will be policed—because the environment budget has been cut by millions—said 'Oh, it will be self-policed.' Well, good luck with that. It is a very sad budget, and it is a very sad budget with regard to agriculture and regional South Australia. Let us hope this government is not here for too much longer.