



Adrian Pederick MP
Member for Hammond

House of Assembly
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Murray River

Mr PEDERICK: I acknowledge the motion moved by the member for Chaffey, that this house recognises the importance of the River Murray to South Australia, acknowledges the contribution from irrigated agriculture to the economy, values the important role of the River Murray in sustaining the environment, and commends the introduction and the rollout of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

I acknowledge the attempted amendment of the member for Reynell, inasmuch as I was very pleased to hear the acknowledgement of the diversification fund, the \$100 million fund across the four states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. It is interesting to note that the three other states have got on with this funding program, as far as I am aware, yet here in South Australia we have not seen that \$25 million rolled out. However, what I was pleased to hear in the member for Reynell's contribution is the fact that she mentioned that Gifford Hill at Murray Bridge was still to get that \$5 million. I am pleased to hear that, because I have been hearing so many rumours about that \$5 million.

I would like to acknowledge our federal government, in particular the minister and member for Mayo, Jamie Briggs, in announcing that that money would be made available to Murray Bridge, and especially to the racing club development. That was made before the state election this year. In line with that, those of us on this side of the house, as far as the state Liberals go, had paired another \$5 million as a grant and \$10 million as a loan to that project. I believe that project, over 30 to 40 years, will stimulate at least \$1 billion in investment in the local region around Murray Bridge.

Some people have asked me why I support racing so much, but it is not so much about the racing industry, with this project, but about getting the racing club out to a track—the actual new track is being developed—and there is also going to be a 3,500-allotment housing development there over time as well as a school, and potentially a tavern. It will be like a major suburb of Murray Bridge. So it is about regional development, and I would like to know whether the regional development minister has been making any comment about this with his Labor friends.

It is a big project, and it is in limbo at the moment because it is still awaiting these federal funds. I am fairly hopeful that the state government will match the

funding commitments that we made in opposition, going into the last election, because this is something that will be a dynamic proposal if it can just get a little help to get going. There has been about \$50 million already expended on the site, the track is in place, there is a tunnel to get the horses through the centre of the track, and there is the potential for an artificial track so that racing can be held when other places are rained out. That is all in the planning stage to go there, and the built facilities—the grandstand and club house facilities—need to be built as well.

So there is a lot of potential there, and I just want to see the government look at a project like this and see what it can do as far as contributing to a regional economy that has really suffered during the drought. I can assure members that the period from 2006 to when the drought broke in about September 2010 was a very, very trying time not just for the state but also for river communities like mine and like those in the seat of Hammond, which were heavily impacted when the river dropped by about two metres. I thank you for your protection today, Deputy Speaker, and seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debated adjourned.