



**Adrian Pederick MP**  
Member for Hammond

**House of Assembly**  
**6<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

**Regional Impact Assessment Statements**

**Mr PEDERICK ( Hammond ) ( 11:36 :10 ):** I rise to support the motion by the member for Goyder:

That this house—

(a) supports the referral to the Economic and Finance Committee of all regional impact assessment statements, with the ability to call witnesses, and

(b) urges the Minister for Regional Development to ensure the state government—

(i) guarantees full compliance by all state government departments, agencies and statutory authorities of the regional impact assessment statement policy and process to ensure the government undertakes effective consultation with regional communities before decisions which impact community services and standards are implemented; and

(ii) makes public the results of all regional impact assessment statements undertaken prior to any change to a service or services in regional South Australia.

I commend all members who have spoken before me regarding this motion. Obviously on this side of the house we have a very deep feel for the regions. The regions are the core of our state and the production hub for a lot of our exports, and a production hub for a lot of the materials that are used internally in this state. However, sadly, the Labor government continues to neglect the regions.

I have mentioned in this house before how the new regional development minister, minister Brock, only asked the Premier for \$39 million in his trade-off for giving Labor government. I am sure that he could have asked for the \$139 million of regional development policies that we had in our policies coming into the 2014 state election this year, that he would have been made that promise as well and our regions would have been far better off. However, sadly, the member for Frome was too focused on his own electorate and his own desire to be a minister that he did not even return the phone calls to our leader, the member for Dunstan.

I will give a little bit of history of where things have been neglected regarding consultation. I think the biggest one for me was, in the year I was elected in 2006, in regard to the budget

that was announced that year. On the front page of *The Advertiser* on budget day there was a big story about a proposed major expansion at the Mobilong Prison just on the outskirts of Murray Bridge. It was going to be a \$411 million expansion: a 760-cell men's prison and a 150-cell women's prison.

From what I understand, this was to replace Yatala, which is obviously ageing. I would be interested to visit Yatala one day, voluntarily of course. I have been through Mobilong several times as a medium security prison, voluntarily of course.

**Mr Pengilly:** At this stage.

**Mr PEDERICK:** At this stage—enough of you!

From what I am told by people who have been out there on parliamentary business, it probably has not got that much of a life left, and I am assuming that is why the government came up with this idea of building a high-security prison complex at Mobilong. The sad thing is the first time my community heard about this project was when the paper came out that morning. I was on my way in here to sit for budget day and I get a call from the local mayor, Mayor Allan Arbon, and he is wondering what was going on. I said, 'Well, you tell me. All I know is what's in the paper.' That was the level of consultation.

The day of the budget announcement, we get an article in *The Advertiser* about an infrastructure issue that was going to have a huge impact on my community in Murray Bridge and surrounding districts. It is not just Murray Bridge that is being impacted; it would be the surrounding districts and it certainly impacted on the union members of the Public Service Association. I went to several meetings that they had down there. They obviously had not been consulted before it had been put in the budget. They did not want to work at a prison at Murray Bridge, so they had not been consulted.

Sadly, the local council had not been consulted and the local community had not been consulted about the various needs of transport and the various health requirements that would have been needed in the area. I have talked in this place many times about the lack of Metro-ticketed public transport to Murray Bridge. If this ever came up again in negotiations—and I am a realist and I know the land is still there, so I know that one day a government may put up this proposal again—we do need full Metro-ticketed public transport to Murray Bridge and we do need infrastructure upgrades on the road, like Bremer Road, to access Mobilong Prison if ever this idea was mooted again.

We also need an upgrade to our local health facilities, because as we know, prisoners in our prisons are getting older and older and prisons are essentially having to have their own aged-care facilities. I appreciate that, potentially, with this building that was proposed in 2006, there would have been an infirmary, but it would not have been enough. It would not have been enough. This was going to be a massive influx of population of nearly 1,000 people—by the time you take the staff into account, it would have been over 1,000 people—to a rural city that only has a population of about 20,000.

This is one of the stumbling blocks, and it is not just this project, but I am highlighting this project today that this government has. It has been an 'announce and defend' policy and let's see how we go with this one. It is just a matter of seeing who can stand up and fight for their community to get the best outcome. As with all things, because there was not an appropriate consultation done and the work was not done before we had an announcement on budget day, the whole thing fell over. The whole project fell over, and I am not too unhappy about that, I must say.

Sadly, because of the lack of business acumen by the Labor government of this state, it cost this state \$10 million in taxpayer money, and it is taxpayer money, not government money; it is money that everyone who pays taxes in this state has to come up with—

**Mr Griffiths:** From people's pockets.

**Mr PEDERICK:** Yes. It was paid to the three consortiums that put in bids. This is just really poor planning—well, it is no planning—and it is just crazy stuff when projects are not taken out to the community so that people can see how they will affect them. I refer to the comments by the member for Stuart about the Cadell ferry. A proposal has been spinning around local government circles for a while about the replacement of five ageing ferries right up and down the river. This is vital infrastructure that the government should just be funding—

**The Hon. S.C. Mullighan:** We are.

**Mr PEDERICK:** —because these are roads. Not all of them; you are doing three. So, the councils are put under all this pressure with all this consultation because the government, again, want to get away from their responsibilities in regards to funding the road work, which is a vital service in all our regional communities. What the government does not realise, and they soon learnt with the Cadell ferry debacle, is that not just regional people use these ferries.

I look at the Wellington ferry on a public holiday. I know that, on certain days and at certain times, there is no point. I am better off heading to Murray Bridge and going across the Swanport Bridge because of the amount of people using that ferry.

I would love to know the amount of money that the government transport department has spent on all this discussion they forced on the local government sector in regards to them finding a way to fund these ferries. It is just disgraceful. It should be par for the course for a government to fund our road network. It is certainly a lot cheaper than building bridges and, at most of these crossings, bridges would be impossible anyway.

In the broader sphere, whether it affects our education facilities, our health facilities, our corrections facilities, our ferries or our roads, we should have the opportunity for the regional impact assessment statement to be taken to the Economic and Finance Committee, so that people can ask questions, locals can ask questions and we can get the right outcomes for our regional communities.