

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
THURSDAY 14TH MAY 2015
FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:18): Sometimes I wonder if I live in the same universe as members opposite. I too want to make some comments in regard to the federal government and the great things they have done with their federal budget that was handed down on Tuesday night.

I particularly note the allocation of \$403 million towards farmers and business incentives. An amount of \$333 million will also help with financial counsellors and drought-concessional loans, and in light of that, farmers can fully claim new fencing, new water facilities, troughs, tanks, pipelines, etc., and fodder storage. I can see far greater investment by farmers in their properties with those sorts of fast-tracked rebates through the taxation system where you can fully claim the benefits of those purchases in the year of purchase.

Going further down the line to other great announcements in the federal budget, there is the 19 per cent increase in health funding, or \$208 million more over four years—\$208 million more. There is a 26 per cent increase for education—or \$200 million more over four years. What we do not hear from the other side is that there is \$2 billion more of infrastructure funding for South Australia, which is \$1.5 billion more federal funding over four years, than there was in the 2014-15 budget.

The problem we have with infrastructure funding in this state is that the Labor government has not put forward any proposals. The Treasurer in this place (I think it was yesterday) said that no-one else knew where the Strzelecki Track was apart from the member for Stuart. Well, there are a lot more of us who know where the Strzelecki Track is and if he was paying more attention to it we would have it fast-tracked for an upgrade and bitumising. There is bitumen from the Queensland border, 24 kilometres east of Innamincka, all the way to Brisbane. South Australian businesses, as the member for Stuart indicated the other day, are going at least 1,000 kilometres out of their way so they do not have to go up the Strzelecki Track to the Cooper Basin.

What is also in this budget is unallocated GST funding of almost \$1 billion that is coming to this state. That is fantastic news for this state. The problem is, if it goes anything like the record of this Labor government in the early years since 2002 when it was getting quite often (nearly all the time) \$500 million extra in unfunded GST, which was just blown.

We have the member for Reynell talking about the defence of our region. In the federal budget there is \$1.2 billion more in our defence budget. I

salute our troops, our people in the Air Force, our sailors, our Navy personnel, for the great work they do. I note that my brother served for 23 years in the Army and served overseas on two deployments. These people are keeping us safe. I note our special forces troops, our training troops in the Middle East and the great work of our air defence personnel and the things they have to do on their missions, like refuelling in flight, and I think it is great practical experience for these people.

I turn to the cost of living and the pensioner concessions we have seen rolled out by the Labor government. The Labor government has fought back against pensioner concessions for well over a year, holding pensioners to ransom, sending misleading information out to pensioners, confusing the most vulnerable of our society about what is going on, paying for television advertisements out of taxpayer money for well over \$1 million, and climbing, and the blatant mistruths about what was happening with pensioner concessions.

There are a lot of job seekers out there. I have an issue in my electorate in that there are high levels of unemployment in spots but we have to rely on 457 visa holders and 417 visa holders to take a lot of those jobs. There would be at least a thousand of those in the Murray Bridge area, yet we have over 10 per cent unemployment. So, that is something that needs to be addressed, but I praise those workers for taking those spots that others will not do.

Time expired.