

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 03RD JUNE 2015

REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENTS

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:55): I rise to support the motion from the member for Goyder:

That this house—

1. Supports the referral to the Economic and Finance Committee of all regional impact statements, with the ability to call witnesses.
2. Urges the Minister for Regional Development to ensure the state government—

(a) 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

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

Nothing came to the fore more for me soon after entering this place than when the budget was laid down in September 2006—because it was an election year, the budget came in late—and the first I knew of a proposed major prison upgrade at Murray Bridge was in the newspaper that morning. I think it is an absolute disgrace to have that sort of proposal put out like that. I remember that the Mayor of Murray Bridge rang me on my way to parliament and I said, 'I don't know anything about it.'

This was going to have a huge impact on Murray Bridge and surrounding areas: a \$500 million men's prison with a separate women's prison. I do not know if the government had any idea how much this would impact on the local community. Since then there has been much discussion as to what was needed if this proposal was to get up not just as a piece of logistics for the state—and it is obvious that our prisons are bursting to overflowing at the moment—but also in terms of the social impact on our community. I know that that land is still there and perhaps one day in the future a government will have some consultation about whether an expanded prison will be built at Mobilong.

I am reasonably ambivalent on the issue but if an expanded Mobilong—a high security prison, a Yatala replacement—does come to Murray Bridge, it has to come with trade-offs. If public transport is not already coming to Murray Bridge, it has to come; Bremer Road needs to be extended and bitumenised; health services need to be expanded. Those are just the first three: there is so much more that needs to happen in terms of consultation with the community on a proposal like that.

When I look at the training services that are being altered at the moment, it is absolutely outrageous to think that TAFE can pick up all the slack from what the regional providers are providing at the moment. I look at Regional Skills Training from the Yorke Peninsula. I know Caroline Graham and her husband, Mark Graham, personally because they used to live down the road from me at Coomandook and she does a great job in her training across 56 schools, but here we have a government that, after years of gutting TAFE—and I mentioned this in the parliament yesterday—has almost stripped TAFE bare.

We have had cut down on cut down on cut down, certainly in Murray Bridge and in other centres across the state. I am not too sure how they are going to deliver the training, because all we have seen are staff cuts, resources cuts and financial cuts to these services. There is a lot of work to do, and I know the government should have a major rethink of that proposal.

In my final couple of seconds, I just want to talk quickly about the diversification funding that the government turned back—the \$25 million that was going to come to river communities from the Victorian border through to Goolwa. All those communities suffered during the drought, yet the government made a big decision, 'We will just turn our back on \$25 million,' but, thankfully, my friends in the federal government at least came up with \$5 million through the National Stronger Regions Fund to fund one of my projects in Murray Bridge, the Gifford Hill project, and I am truly thankful for that. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.