

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2015**  
**SUPPLY BILL 2015**

*Supply Grievances*

Debate resumed.

**Mr PEDERICK ( Hammond ) ( 12:16 ):** I rise to speak to the Supply Bill once again with my grievance contribution. I want to add a couple of points, after the member for Chaffey's discussion about the lack of action by this state Labor government in regard to the regional diversification fund for the River Murray and the loss of \$25 million that this government is quite happy to just walk away from. In the worst-case scenario—and I think it was a complete furphy—this government said we would receive only \$4 million. In the worst-case scenario, this Labor government has turned its back on at least \$4 million, and I believe a lot more, because it is not their constituency. It is \$25 million; \$25 million is the real figure. The government just wants this money for other things—in city electorates, in marginal seats. It does not want to look after the Riverland or the Murraylands. As I said in a contribution last week, it was alright when the government was shoring up a former Labor minister, who was the member for Chaffey at the time.

I am extremely disappointed that the regional development minister did not have any influence at all, which just shows their worth to this government. Look at what has happened in the last couple of weeks in this state: 100 jobs have disappeared from our dairy manufacturing sector, from United Dairy Power in Murray Bridge and Jervois. We have seen 60 jobs go at JBS, the meat processing plant in Bordertown. It is an absolute disgrace how this government treats regional South Australia. And in the words from the Premier down, it will not get any better because it is not their natural constituency. They go out and have their so-called regional cabinet meetings, but it is all just flip-flop and talk—nothing happens, nothing at all.

What I would also like to talk about is a problem at a school that I attended for most of my years of education, and that is Coomandook Area School. The kids and staff there have a problem with accessing the internet. I was talking with one parent who informed me that internet access is so bad for the kids who have to do distance education that some of them are kept at home by their parents so they can do their work from home. The parents only do that because it is the only place they can get reliable internet access. In this day and age it is just not good enough. The problem for these children is that they are formally recognised as being truant from school. Work that out! They stay at home so they can

do their work, but they are on the truancy list. It just keeps getting worse.

Many years ago a tower was put up on the western side of the silos at Coomandook—I guess the south-western side to a degree—to access internet for the school, and it is suppose to shoot the signal over the top of the silo. The school believes that the location of the Viterra silos, which are now owned by Glencore, block out the signal. It is just a real problem. It is about whoever owns the silos at the time—it was Viterra when they were in their Canadian mode, and now they are in Swiss mode under Glencore—whether they want to have a change of heart and put those transmitter boosters on top of the standing structure. It is something I will follow up, because it was something done in early days at Coonalpyn and Tintinara with a leasing arrangement to use a structure that is over 130 feet high in the old language. That is certainly something I will be chasing up.

As I stated, no-one in Coomandook is able to access the internet through Internode. At the same time as the tower that I talked about earlier was put in place, Internode put an antennae on the school, which they thought would fix the problem. However, because of its placement (it is in the wrong place), the tower and the antennae do not talk to each other, which means that it is of no value. Internode is completely frustrated and has walked away. Other providers have come and looked at the situation, but they have also looked at where the tower is and said that they cannot help.

When the students can access the internet it is very weak and drops out constantly, causing much frustration for teachers and students in the classroom. It makes delivering much needed open access subjects impossible. It is severely restricting the types of lessons Coomandook Area School students can access, and limits their chances of completing the core prerequisite subjects required for certain university degrees, like physics.

Just the other day they were trying to log four wired computers onto the internet so that some of the junior school children could access a program called Reading Eggs. They spent the lesson trying to log on, without success. However, sitting next to them in the library was a group of senior school students who were pulling in a weak signal on their laptops. When the bell went the senior school kids closed their laptops, and all of a sudden the junior school children could access the Reading Eggs program. Too late!

This shows that the bottleneck is not with the Coomandook school system but with the internet coming into the school. I note that the principal has taken this issue to the district office and the department of education head office, which do not appear to have the funds or the inclination—and

I think that is a disgrace—to get this tower moved and get proper access so that these children can have a decent education out in the bush.

The information is that the department put a single booster on the admin office at Coomandook Area School so that staff could use their mobile phones. This was a crucial need, as mobile phones are used to notify parents of important information, whether it be changes with bus breakdowns or changes to schedule, etc. I will be taking up this issue with Glencore (or Viterra, as they are branded) about whether something can be done with a tower movement or to use the top of the silo as a base.

Another option that has been put to me by a parent is that a fibre optic cable runs right past the school; however, the node is about six kilometres away at Yumali. To run the cable back, Coomandook requires running cable through existing copper lines. However, the information is that this is not possible because the copper lines are so old and it would be a total waste of time. The preferred solution would be for a new node to be installed at Coomandook, which would allow the whole town and school to access the fibre optic NBN that runs straight past the school.

It certainly baffles me, as it baffles this parent, why this has to be so hard. I certainly will be working with all parents and the school to make sure we get this resolved, because it has a heavy impact on people making decisions about whether they keep their children at Coomandook. It is something the education minister should be picking up and getting on with the job, so that there is more equality in education across the regions.

In the last couple of minutes I have left I want to talk on something else that affects the lower end of my electorate, namely, the wish for members of that community to have a connector between Lake Albert and the Coorong. The minister keeps saying, 'No, it can't happen; it won't happen,' and all these kinds of things. I have a few quotes from a Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources document entitled 'Cost benefit analysis of proposed Lake Albert Management actions'. There are some interesting quotes, including:

1. During drought periods, the Coorong Connector reduces the time for salinity levels to fall from very high drought levels back to (or beyond) historical salinity levels. The Coorong Connector would therefore result in some environmental benefit in the event of major drought in future, by reducing the length of drought events.

2. The discharge of fresher water from Lake Albert to the Coorong may result in an environmental improvement in the Coorong (which is substantially more saline than Lake Albert at the proposed discharge point). This potential

environmental benefit is complicated by several other factors which have not yet been fully investigated (in particular, such as the impact on the salinity profile in the Coorong, and the impact of turbidity and other discharged water from Lake Albert). This potential impact should be investigated in more detail at a later date.

The minister in the other place keeps saying, 'No, this isn't going to happen; this won't happen,' even though the potential impact is huge for the region, huge for the economy and certainly huge for the outcomes of the community as a whole around Meningie and the Narrung Peninsula. We need this government to get more on board and have a look at these issues, including the Lake Albert connector; the diversification plan for the River Murray, which the government has walked away from; and certainly to deliver high-class education to regional students in this state.