

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
TUESDAY 26TH JULY 2016
APPROPRIATION BILL 2016

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:29): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2016 and note that we are dealing with a sum of around \$18 billion in this year's funding for our state budget. Treasury figures indicate that jobs growth in this state will be only 0.75 per cent in 2016-17. That is less than half the national jobs growth figures, which are at 1.8 per cent. I note that in June South Australia's unemployment rate was 7 per cent, and that is the worst in the nation, with youth unemployment at 14 per cent.

The net operating balance for 2015-16 was a \$258 million surplus, but this was written down by \$97 million since the Mid-Year Budget Review. The MAC is being privatised over three years, which this government has done after their many years of saying that they would not be privatising assets. The Motor Accident Commission is being privatised to the tune of around \$2 billion and this is the only reason this state Labor government have managed to get a surplus. That is the only way this surplus has eventuated. Non-financial public sector debt is now forecast to peak at \$14.2 billion in 2017-18, up from \$13.5 billion as previously forecast in the 2015-16 Mid-Year Budget Review.

In this budget there is no cost-of-living relief for already struggling South Australians. On this side of the house, with our emergency services levy relief, we have committed to \$360 million to provide South Australians with that relief. If we look at what this government is doing as far as funding its so-called environmental outcomes, we have had an increase in the solid waste levy from \$62 per tonne to \$103 per tonne by 2019-20, yet there are tens of millions of dollars already in the Zero Waste fund. This government is looking at introducing a wagering tax of 15 per cent, with the estimated revenue expected to generate \$10 million.

Let's look at health, which covers about a third of the state budget. There has been a \$274 million budget blowout. What have we got to blame for this? We can look at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital. Will it ever be completed? Will it ever have a patient go through the door? That is the question.

The Hon. S.E. Close: Yes.

Mr PEDERICK: I hear a yes in the distance. Somewhere in the wilderness I hear yes. Will it happen? It will not happen until the tramline is

extended down East Terrace so that it can be a ferry service for patients and equipment from the old Royal Adelaide Hospital up to the new Royal Adelaide Hospital. What a bungle of bungles this build has been. It is the third most expensive build in history—not in this state, not in this country, but in the world.

It is the third most expensive build yet, as I have learned, the building will not be heavy enough to hold the paper documents because EPAS, the electronic management of patient records, does not work. There has been a blowout of hundreds of millions of dollars over its budgeted figure of somewhere over \$200 million to run EPAS. At least up to \$463 million is the current funding that is going into EPAS and the hospital will not be able to take the weight of paper files.

I fear for the patients who are going into this hospital, patients like me. I am slightly heavier than the average weight. Am I going to fall through the floor if I am on one of the upper levels? It is just ridiculous that this has gone on. You hear of building bungles of light switches being put in behind doors and the emergency services fitout of piping not being put in the right place and then having to be ripped out. Then you hear of \$50 million to correct the bungled system of trying to get hot water at tap at a certain temperature within 15 seconds. The amount of money being blown at the Royal Adelaide Hospital is just outrageous. It is not to fix up an old hospital; no, this is to repair something being built from the ground up.

Ms Redmond: Before it is even open.

Mr PEDERICK: That's it, 'Before it is even open,' says the member for Heysen. It is totally out of control, and this goes with the shutting down of the Daw Park Repatriation Hospital. We saw the veterans make their protest out in front of this place for many, many nights, and they make their protest every week on a Monday. They certainly need to be mad against the local member, the member for Waite, who is a former soldier himself, yet he turns on his fellow man, as he has done in this house, and decides that we will close down their health services.

I do note that the federal government is assisting South Australia, as they have had to do over many years. We are going to receive an extra \$528 million in GST funding in 2016-17 in comparison with 2015-16. Certainly I note that our federal colleagues will also be contributing an extra \$187 million towards health over three years, and I commend them for that.

We note that in the transport sector there is expected to be a \$1 levy on all Metro tickets, taxis and chauffeur rides and that kind of thing, and there will also be an additional \$2 fee for peak periods on weekends. Compulsory third-party insurance is increasing by 2.9 per cent, and registration of a six-cylinder vehicle will be up by 1.6 per cent. Driver's

licence renewals for 10 years will increase by 2.4 per cent, to a whopping \$420.

I note that in education we see some money going throughout the state, though I note that in my electorate I only have two schools, and I guess I should be grateful for that. Murray Bridge High and Murray Bridge North School are getting science, technology, engineering and mathematics buildings as part of \$250 million over three years in primary and secondary schools throughout the state in the public system. The other \$250 million out of the \$500 million will be a low-interest loan facility for non-government schools. What this means is that about 370 schools do not receive this funding, so there is not equity across the board, but there is more to watch in this space.

An issue that will certainly affect my electorate is this Labor government, at the behest of their union masters, introducing specific school fees targeting those holding a temporary work (skilled) visa 457. This fee will apply from term 1 in 2017 for dependents of new visa holders who arrive on or after 1 January 2017, and it will extend to existing enrolments of children of current visa holders from term 1 in 2018. A per annum index fee of \$5,100 will be charged for primary students and a fee of \$6,100 for secondary students. So, here we go again.

Only today—and the words must have stuck in his mouth—we heard the Treasurer talking about how good agriculture was going for this state. Do you know why we have these 457 visa holder workers? Because we do not have the numbers of people who are either willing or able to work in all these jobs, especially in my electorate, whether it be at the mushroom farm, whether it be at Thomas Foods at the meatworks, or whether it be at Swanport Harvest.

Before Labor keep listening to their union masters, and I have had this conversation with several ministers, they should go out into the real world and see the people who are putting the extra value in value-added industries, mainly in my electorate but they are in other electorates as well. We also have the backpackers, and if we did not have those 30,000-odd backpackers coming through this country every year a lot of our rural industries would just shut down.

I note the federal government are doing a review of the so-called backpacker tax, and I hope they have a darn good look at it because, unless they get that right and come to a sensible outcome, we will be left with fruit literally withering on the vine. These 457 workers are absolutely needed, and I hear so much rot about them being paid less and that the companies get away with doing this and that.

Actually, it costs these companies more to hire these people, and the government needs to be aware of that. Not only that, but they now want

these people to pay a tax. They have turned up to contribute to the wellbeing of this state, and yet here we have a government that just wants to tax them out of business. They can get cheaper fees at some of the private schools and they may end up sending their children there. They are a vital part of our society, as are the local employees of those companies.

I note that in regard to prisons, 70 extra beds are to be implemented within the prison system, with 26 of them being placed at Mobilong. We are just in the middle of seeing 72 more beds being built at Mobilong. From talking to the people that work there, such as the correctional officers, I know there are concerns at Mobilong. Mat O'Brien, who was federal Labor candidate for Barker, works in Mobilong and he has concerns about the security arrangements of the prison.

They have built out on the available space around most of the buildings and are now encroaching on the greenspace. There are serious concerns when you have a prison that was built for 160 inmates and after these builds will house up to something like 460 inmates. There are concerns about how secure it will be, and the government really need to have a good hard look at what they are actually doing at Mobilong. They also need to look after the welfare and the working conditions of the staff.

Under the Attorney-General's section in this year's budget, the government are looking at legislative administration and compliance targets, and the implementation of the Statutes Amendment (Rights of Foster Parents, Guardians and Kinship Carers) Act 2016. I was very pleased to get this through after nearly two years of negotiations in this place. I note that one of Education and Child Development's 2016-17 targets is to 'increase the number of other person guardianship carers, and therefore increase the placement stability for children in foster or kinship care'. I do applaud that, because that was a private member's bill I brought to this place and which finally received support.

We note that the government has finally realised that they need to actually supply some blackspot funding seed money so that we can attract money from the federal government for more phone towers in this state. There is \$1 million coming from the Regional Development Fund to contribute to that. I also look at a topic dear to my heart, the Lakes and Coorong Fishery. I note that in the Primary and Regions section, it highlights for the last year that it has finalised and implemented a new management plan for the Lakes and Coorong Fishery.

It is to be noted that, for the second year running, the government have had to forgive licence fees because of the impact of New Zealand fur seals not just on the fishery but also on the native wildlife and ecology. You will not see DEWNR and the natural resources management group admit that. They are doing all they can in reports to say, 'There's nothing to see

here,' because they are getting that directive from the minister down. They say, 'No, there's no problem here. We don't know why that pelican has lost its head. We don't know why that pelican has been ripped to bits. We don't know why there are dead pelicans laying on the Tauwitchere barrage.'

It is interesting that one of the measures costing \$260,000 was funded between DEWNR and PIRSA. Tauwitchere barrage on the Coorong and Lakes is 3.6 kilometres long. The government, in all their wisdom, put up a fence that I think was around 80 metres to try to keep the seals out. I come off the land. When you build a fence, you build it from one end to the other. That is what I always do. If my contractor only built an 80-metre fence when I had a 3.6 kilometre line, I would expect it to go all the way. But, no, this was the state government in all their glory. They need to help these people. They are having severe mental health issues, they are having severe health issues, and they need to have a look at what is happening in the real world instead of blatantly saying, 'There is nothing to see here,' not just with the fishing industry but with the native ecology and wildlife.

We notice with agriculture that \$100 million is disappearing because the South Australian River Murray Sustainability scheme is running out and the government has not lobbied any federal funds to replace that. We note that the government is cutting \$1 million out of the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics. There is our research and development, one of the last vestiges of research and development we have left in the budget.

I want to talk a bit about what I have done in trying to get some information from the families and communities department. I have lodged two freedom of information requests with them. One still to this day did not get acknowledged, and an extension was asked for this freedom of information request three times. On the last time, I did not grant permission; however, the documents were still not provided by the due date, which was 18 July this year, and still have not been provided.

The second FOI request was rejected as they advised no submissions were made in relation to those requested. However, upon lodging a secondary FOI, I attached a copy of a document detailing all the submissions made which allegedly were not. I was hoping, with how specific my request was, that the documents would be relatively easy to locate—how wrong that was—and I named all the people who made submissions. I recently received a letter of determination from the Freedom of Information unit, which advised, and I quote:

It is not clear from your application what you intended by your reference to 'submissions'. Generally, a reference to 'submissions' refers to submissions made by legal counsel on behalf of their client during

proceedings , or to some form of written submission. I understand that no submissions were made in these terms before the Commission during these dates. I note that the evidence provided by witnesses will not ordinarily be referred to as ' submissions ' . I t is therefore not clear to the A gency what documents you are referring to in your application.

Just for the department, and I will try to help them out a bit here, the definition of 'submission' is:

The action of presenting a proposal, application, or other document for consideration or judgement.

It could have been an oral submission, which I assume a lot of them were, but will I ever find out? If the word 'submission' did not suffice, you would think a copy of the document specifying all the documents I was requesting would have made it clear.

There are so many other things I could speak about but I am running out of time. This is the obfuscation that this department is putting in front of me when attempting to get some reasonable information. You get this balderdash sent back to you (and the FOI officer can look up that word to see what it means) by a department that is out of control, out of its league and out of step with reality and working with real people. It wants to put things in the way of people. It does not know how to deal properly with foster carers. When you simply ask for a freedom of information submission, it comes up with these ridiculous statements.

In the closing few seconds, I want to concur with my colleagues in regard to the ridiculous power prices that we put up with in this state. And do you know why? Because now we do not have a coalmine in South Australia. All it is about is making sure we get more interconnectors so that we can import that coal-fired power from Victoria. That is what it is about and that is the only way, at the moment, that we will get stable electricity in this state. I really fear for the people of this state, who are being shafted, quite frankly, for the price they have to pay for power, especially when you look across the border where you can get it for about half the price. It is a disgrace, and this government should hang its head in shame, and with the talk which came from the Treasurer today—