



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LEVIES

Balcony Room, Parliament House, Adelaide

Friday, 12 February 2016 at 9:50am

(OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT)
PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

WITNESSES—*continuing*

PEDERICK, ADRIAN, Member for Hammond83

MEMBERS:

Hon. S.W. Key MP (Presiding Member)
Hon. R.L. Brokenshire MLC
Hon. J.S.L. Dawkins MLC
Hon. G.A. Kandelaars MLC
Mr J.P. Gee MP
Mr C.J. Picton MP
Mr P.A. Treloar MP

WITNESS:

PEDERICK, ADRIAN, Member for Hammond

252 The PRESIDING MEMBER: Thank you for your attendance here today. The committee is a standing committee of the Parliament of South Australia. Its powers and functions are set out in the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991. Sections 28 and 31 of the Parliamentary Committees Act set out the privileges, immunities and powers of this committee and the protection afforded to witnesses. Section 26 of the Parliamentary Committees Act provides that members of the public may be present during the examination of witnesses. A request to make a statement in private will be considered by the committee and, if agreed to, members of the public will leave the room for the duration of that statement.

The audio of today's public proceedings will be streamed electronically within the parliamentary precinct, and the transcript of these proceedings will be available to the public once you have had an opportunity to ensure that they are factually correct. As you know, today's hearing is in relation to natural resource levies. I would ask you to introduce yourself and proceed with your contribution this morning. On behalf of the committee, can I thank you. We really appreciate members making submissions to our committee.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you, member for Ashford. You are an excellent chair to work with and a very good member of parliament, let me say. Thank you very much to the committee for the opportunity to be here today. First, as a point of disclosure I should say that my wife is an environmental scientist. She worked in integrated natural resource management and then on the transfer through to natural resource management over a decade ago, so I just put that on the record, so that everyone understands that.

Again, I thank the Natural Resources Committee for extending an invitation to present in relation to levies and the proposal of a natural resources management levy increase. I would firstly like to acknowledge other members who have presented and will present to this committee, in particular, my colleagues who have previously provided submissions to this committee. In the 2015-16 budget, it was indicated that a new income measure was to be included for water planning and management expenses. It was outlined that \$3.5 million was to be collected from the NRM boards for 2015-16 and that is expected to increase to \$6.7 million by 2016-17.

As members would be aware, the NRM board allocates two levies on regional South Australians—the land levy and the water levy. I will touch on both aspects of the levies but, first, I refer to the water levy. Regional South Australia, particularly within primary producers throughout, have met many struggles over recent times, such as average harvests for numerous years, mainly due to inconsistent seasons or the overabundance of seals affecting the Coorong fishermen.

I note that in the management plan it states that the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin region includes 5.7 million hectares, with 70 per cent of those being privately owned and primarily managed for agricultural and horticultural enterprises. This is an enormous amount of land that holds a strong purpose in the South Australian economy.

Following on from those comments I would like to quote some content from the 'About us' section of the PIRSA website, as follows:

The state's primary industries and regions are crucial for the prosperity of the state, and are continuing to grow in importance. For example, in 2013-14, the agribusiness sector generated approximately \$19.7 billion in revenue, employed one in five South Australian workers, and accounted for 48% (or \$5.4 billion) of the state's merchandise exports. Of the 1.3% growth in the state's economy last year, the agribusiness sector accounted for 0.8% (61%) of that growth.

The rapidly increasing global demand for high quality food and wine, combined with South Australia's strong reputation for food safety, biosecurity and product integrity, creates significant opportunities for the state.

It continues:

Our regions also make a substantial contribution to the state's economy, not only through agribusiness but also through mining and minerals processing, manufacturing, tourism and energy production. Although our regions make up only 29% of the state's population, regional industries generate revenue of about \$25 billion per annum and produce about half of our merchandise exports.

These few comments show just how vital our regions are to the prosperity of South Australia. This should also mean that they be considered and preserved in order to secure a successful future.

Unfortunately this increase does not consider nor preserve those who will be impacted by the NRM water levy. I refer to the Murray-Darling Basin Management Plan 2016-17, 2018-19 that implies that in some cases water levy payers will be paying \$6.30 per megalitre by 2018-19 whereas in the previous plan this would have increased to only \$5.75 a megalitre. This may be only a 55¢ difference, but this factor needs to be factored in greater amounts.

I would like to take this time to refer to some constituents in my electorate and its surrounds who have expressed many concerns in relation to the NRM levy itself along with the proposed increases. The first constituent is not only a homeowner but also a very successful business owner in Langhorne Creek. The concern raised was in relation to the charging of the water levy. As a water licence-holder this constituent is being charged for three water levies: one for Bremer or Angas water; one for the use of underground bore water; and lastly, one for Murray water.

It is believed that only a minimal number of persons understand that the flood systems for the Angas and Bremer Rivers are very unique. It is a natural floodplain. The volume of the Bremer River is five times the size of the river, and I quote from this constituent, 'I don't believe any of the board realise how a flood works in Langhorne Creek.'

In the act it states that businesses have the right to take water; however, over the past 20 years water has been seen to flow only five out of 10 years. There is often no flow enabling the user to take water from it, or it is a minor flow with a very high salt content. This means that those paying water licences 100 per cent of the time for 10 years have the opportunity to utilise the Angas and Bremer water source for only 50 per cent of the time. This seems unreasonable when put into perspective.

The Langhorne Creek business is being charged for three levies and yet at times there is only one source being utilised. It is recommended that a levy should be charged only on the water sources used. Further to that recommendation, I think it should be noted that during the drought when the River Murray water allocation was reduced significantly, the levy was withdrawn. This shows precedence.

A meeting in Langhorne Creek with Sharon Starick, presiding member of the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board, was held for water licence-holders to discuss their concerns. A total of 47 attended the meeting, meaning there were only four or five apologies. As result of the consultation it was indicated that 80 per cent of water user representation reject the NRM levy.

It has been suggested by an NRM water levy payer that the NRM Board instead cut costs through: (1) discarding the multiple mail-outs of levy notices when they are not due; (2) removal of the large coloured brochures detailing events and instead replace with smaller black-and-white documents; and (3) making use of already employed staff to manage ground control, e.g., the removal of weeds. I think this is one of the very big sticking points in regard to natural resources

management. They also have concerns that, even with only a CPI increase of 3.1 per cent, how this is justifiable when most income earners' revenue is nowhere close to 3.1 per cent as an increase.

I would like to draw the committee's attention to another constituent of mine from Murray Bridge, who only this week wrote into the local paper regarding a corella issue. I will read from her letter to the editor and quote:

Who handballed it to the natural resources board who then suggested we wear earplugs? You can imagine how that went down. I was now confused as to what the NRM do. This is a natural disaster. I thought the NRM worked to help our natural resources, native wildlife, wetlands, etc.

After following up on the issue, I was informed that the NRM board had previously refused to assist with another corella issue in the Coorong council, and I must say they did take proactive measures in the Coorong council. Many questioned the reasoning for such a levy for a service that never seems to be accessible, and this follows on to another constituent who contacted me.

A resident of Lake Albert expressed concern with the NRM levy, particularly in relation to the use of the funds raised. This constituent has been experiencing issues with a noxious weed known as the spiny rush, which is a prolific seeder. This particular case was investigated by departmental officers who rode on the lake bed on quad bikes with a GPS to mark the affected area. After the first examination was conducted, the officers were not seen again until water returned to the lake. By the second analysis the claimant told them to just bring a shovel as the weed had increased in volume.

Further to the visits, it was advised that there is no funding available for the eradication of this weed. What the constituent is saying there is that if there is only limited funding, instead of just marking these weeds they could have been attacked first up, either with a shovel, spray, or whatever was suitable (probably a shovel) and dealt with. Although there is no funding, it was noted that another two properties in the region received subsidy to remove boxthorns at least twice.

This brought up further angst for many after the recent announcement of a virus to be introduced as an initiative to cull the invasive fish species, carp. It is asked: who will be responsible for the cleaning up of dead carp carcasses and will funding be allocated for such a task as there currently isn't any available for weed eradication? Several are questioning the reasoning for an increase, and they often can't utilise the resources which the natural resources management are meant to have available through the funds raised from levy.

These increases are worrying on their own before you factor in other increases to levies which have taken place in recent times. For example, the increases in the emergency services levy announced in the budget, families pay an extra \$205 on a \$500,000 home, with the increases over two budgets and along with other increases like motor vehicle registration. I would also like to note a motion put forth by the Mid Murray Council, and it reads as follows:

That:

1. The Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association note the significant cost increase proposed in the South Australia Murray-Darling Basin NRM draft business plan 2016-17, 2018-19 in the amount of levy raised through the NRM levy, land levy proposed to be increased by 136 per cent from \$28 to \$66, and water levy by 10.5 per cent from \$5.70 to \$6.30 per megalitre;

2. The Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association considers that such a significant increase in the NRM levy may have a detrimental effect on the payment of council rates and council operations; and

3. The Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association request that the South Australian Regional Organisation of Councils consider the removal of the requirement by the state government for the collection of the local government natural resource management levy due to the reasons outlined.

Along with many of the constituents in the Hammond electorate, I understand the feeling of financial hardship. It is not something that is taken lightly and is often accompanied by a mass of emotions and difficulties. I fear the effects which such a substantial increase could have on not only those I represent in the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board but for all in regional South Australia.

The South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Plan 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 in its current form illustrates clear differences in comparison to its previous draft plan. For example, if you compare the 2014-15 plan along with the table for the regional land NRM levy in the most recent proposal, it indicates on average for 2016-17 in the council area of Alexandrina that there will be a \$51.21 increase, making residents pay \$86.72, and these are for householders. For the Coorong council, there will be a \$26.86 increase and ratepayers will pay \$51.13 a year. For Mid Murray Council, they could expect to see a \$26.65 increase and pay \$48.38. For Murray Bridge council, it is a \$34.45 increase, making residents pay \$59.89 a year. That is just to name a few that fall within my electorate. I also want to mention Victor Harbor, as these residents will be paying \$190.02 per year, hitting them with \$105.81 increase. This is simply outrageous.

Furthermore, it is simply disgraceful that the estimated budget is expected to rise by \$4,098,713 million by 2016-17, and this is leading towards a 50 per cent increase. It is simply unfair to impose such an impost on South Australians for a resource that in many cases is not valuable to those paying the levy. What I mean by that is that a lot of people do not have any connection to natural resources management on a literal basis and, when they do, they find out for whatever reason that natural resources management, as with the corellas, supposedly does not handle the situation.

It is clear that there is much concern and anger regarding both the NRM board and the NRM levy increase just through comments in the media such as these two remarks: (1) 'We do need help. There is no doubt about it, but we do not need help in one hand while there is another hand in our back pocket pulling it out'; (2) 'Farmers are disappointed the area has been proclaimed for a start. Bores are metered at a rate of \$5.70 a megalitre. I am paying \$1,300 a year for our allocation. The government has not put any money back into the infrastructure or towards paying for putting our meters in and it is very disappointing we have to pay at all. We feel they are double dipping and we are cash cows for this government. There has not been much irrigation for beef in the past, but with the increase in beef prices since Christmas farmers can put more money into inputs, meaning they could irrigate but they are asking if it is worth it, especially in places like the Western Mount Lofty Ranges which charges \$6 a megalitre. You think you are getting ahead and then this forces you to take a step back.'

The Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Management Board asked: we want to know what is important to you. What is important is that the state government, the NRM committee and NRM boards urgently reconsider the management plan in its current form and abolish any significant increases to the NRM land and water levies. Those who live in regional South Australia need to be taken care of, much like those who reside in city suburbs. Thank you for the opportunity to present today.

253 The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Adrian, based on your submission and the call by PPSA for an independent review into all matters regarding NRM levies—an absolute transparent independent review is what they are calling for—would you support their request? How would you suggest that there be some sort of analysis done of where the NRMs and their levies are up to?

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely, in the first instance, I would support that—a fully transparent look and a full transparent disclosure of where moneys are allocated, instead of just blindly pouring funds into a state department. I have been disappointed. NRM was supposedly almost an independent body and then it has been subsumed into DEWNR, so 300 staff just became government staff. People were disappointed before, and I think they have just lost complete connection to natural resources management—completely. To take that even further, and I know I am expanding on your question, if it were in my hands, I think there needs to be a full repeal of the act from 2004, because there is too much time spent on reviews. There are three-yearly reviews, there are five-yearly reviews, and there can be other reviews if the minister demands. I've seen it live. People, even with the five-year reviews, finish doing one and they start the next one.

The biggest frustration for regional South Australians is the fact that they don't see people on the ground taking direct action, as in Murray Bridge. I'm not having a go at the people who work there—they're working under an act. There's a white building there and people just do not understand what actually happens on the ground because they just do not see it and they think, quite frankly, that the actual management is a lost cause, and it's turned into a bureaucratic nightmare.

254 The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: History will record that I was one of those who many years ago advocated for the soil boards and animal and plant boards to be amalgamated, and

obviously that happened, and it evolved even further than that; but one of the issues that I've always been concerned about is one that you have picked up on today and that is weed control. I think some of the boards have done it better than others, but we do see them, in some cases, having a go at, say, boxthorns, but then there are other almost more prolific things—and I know a lot about boxthorns, don't worry. But some of the other more prolific weeds have been ignored and I think a lot of people would see more value in natural resource management if more assistance was given in weed control. I just think that people would actually regard the levy that they pay as valuable if they saw more action in that area.

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely, John. I couldn't agree more. Like I displayed with the comments when the lake bed was a bit dry around Lake Albert and the departmental people were out there on new quad bikes doing GPS. Spiny rush is very prolific and it's obviously got a lot worse than when it was first mapped. They could have shovelled out the few that were there at the time, and then they ran out of money. GPS is a great tool for farmers and everyone involved in the on-land sector but there's not much point when all of a sudden the money runs out and the weeds have reproduced significantly. I think people would have more faith if they actually did see a lot more work on the ground.

I know there are field days occasionally, and that kind of thing, but there is frustration out there on the ground, and then when people see significant rises in levies and they realise, in their minds, that they are getting nothing out of it at all, they are just getting taxed into extinction, it's not good enough.

255 The PRESIDING MEMBER: I wanted to ask you whether you have any comments to make about the role of the federal government in all of this. As you would know better than me, the National Water Initiative in 2010-11 was one of the instigators of looking at water delivery recovery costs. Do you think there is any criticism that needs to be made in those quarters as well?

Mr PEDERICK: Certainly under the National Water Initiative and the Murray-Darling Basin planning on a broader scale—I think we are going to be talking about the Murray-Darling Basin as long as any of us are in this place, and many after us, and there are certainly many discussions in light of that. I have submitted to the Senate select committee in regard to the Murray-Darling Basin and it's interesting how some people are trying to undo the great work that was done by four states, and the commonwealth, in regard to the legislation. A lot of people have reluctantly, I suppose to a degree, given up water—they get paid for it, but from what I'm told, in the main, they are willing sellers, but it has caused issues, especially in the Eastern States where they don't have the reticulation systems that we have down here.

256 The PRESIDING MEMBER: Would you be prepared to table that submission to the Senate inquiry to our committee?

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, I'm happy to table that submission. In relation to that I'll just give a brief overview of that. I mainly voice my concerns in reply to submissions that were made at Goolwa and in written submissions as well about some people's wish to have the barrages removed at Goolwa, which would just be mad, completely mad. So, my submission, it's a very brief submission, it spells it out quite readily what I think: if people want to do that they can pull the 3,500 other structures out of the whole system, fill in all the man-made channels and take out all those structures and let the river go back to nature if they want nature.

257 The PRESIDING MEMBER: The reason I'm raising that is that, as you know, this committee also has a more general responsibility, so that would be helpful, I think.

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely. With the national water initiative, I think in the main that's probably working reasonably well, but there's always arguments about water. I've noticed as an MP it's, if not the biggest issue it's the second biggest issue, but I'd say most likely the top issue that I've had to deal with, especially with having the millennium drought and the river level dropped two metres in my area.

258 The PRESIDING MEMBER: Just on that, I guess what I'm looking at is, obviously, the management cost recovery targets of the main part in all of this. Have you got any recommendations to the committee about, perhaps, alternative ways of dealing with that issue?

Mr PEDERICK: There are cost recovery targets put in but what it seems to me is government cost shifting and it should come out of the taxation base, the general taxation base. What we're seeing is householders being hit with an up to 136 per cent increase and landholders being hit with substantial increases as well. I guess the frustration is, and the corella issue is one of those issues—I mean, it's probably not as delicate as seals, and I acknowledge that seals are a delicate issue but something needs to be done, I will just say that. You would have thought that natural resource management was about controlling corellas, but no. What I am told is that council is at the front line. The Coorong council has a very proactive relocation scheme in place.

259 The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Called a shotgun.

Mr PEDERICK: Maybe. It is very effective. With this constituent in Murray Bridge, around the Riverglades area, I indicated that, 'You need to talk to the council', and I talked to the council and I was putting The Rural City of Murray Bridge together with the Coorong. So, that's just one example of the frustration.

260 The PRESIDING MEMBER: Just on the natural resource management committees themselves, what was your view of the effectiveness, or not, of the committees before the new structure that we have with the department? Did you think that was a better structure or—

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely, because it showed some independence instead of just being a part, directly, of government. Obviously, they're under the strict control of the act, which I think is absolutely flawed, I think it needs modernising after people have had, what, 12 years to look at the act. So, I think either way there would have been improvement, but I'm just frightened it's become part of the bigger government, and that's what people express to me, they throw their hands in the air and say, 'We weren't that happy with it before', and now they're just walking away, they are dismayed. I think it would have been better off where it was, but still needing a review of the act.

261 The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE: Further to your evidence regarding the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin NRM, they say that the key outcome of an assessment was that the NRM water levy is less than 1 per cent of the total cost of running a farm, based on models that they analysed on major irrigators, minor irrigators, averages and so on. So, they're flippantly saying in there, 'Well, it's 1 per cent, so what are you grizzling about?' Any comment?

Mr PEDERICK: Certainly. I farmed for many years before I came into this place and sometimes you're lucky to get 1 per cent, in fact many years you're lucky to get a 1 per cent return. Farmers have to be very resilient, they have many years of losses. It's like one of those things, you are called, I guess, as a farmer, asset rich but cash poor, but the asset doesn't even work for you in the end when the bank will only lend you out to the limit and you run out of cash.

If you look at 1 per cent of a return that can be subjective because of the costs of farming. I am assuming they are talking about net return, but many farmers nowadays would be spending \$1 million a year-plus to operate their business and so there is high risk involved, and issues like natural resources management that they believe are not working affect them deeply.

262 Mr TRELOAR: I am just going back to your question relating to the Australian government and the member for Hammond's comments with regard to that. An observation of mine—you can comment or not, Adrian—is that the South-East NRM Board business plan highlights their sources of funding and, in fact, the Australian government contributes almost 19 per cent to their total funding. The NRM land and water levies contribute almost 76 per cent, and even though now the NRMs are a function of the state government under DEWNR, the state government contributes nothing at all directly, so 95 per cent of the income comes from the levies which we are talking about today and the Australian government. It is the same thing. Would you like to make further comment?

Mr PEDERICK: That is where you see the federal government making that significant contribution of nearly 20 per cent and then landholders are expected to fill the gap. I don't think that you can just impose this so-called cost recovery. I have seen it in fisheries, as harsh as it is.

Yes, natural resources need to be managed. For instance, someone here will know the new drain that was going to be put in down in the South-East. The farmers didn't want anything to do with the cost of running that and I think that has been pushed back. People just get fed up. They run huge risky operations. Look at, say, a dryland operation in my area. If you weren't operating

4,000 or 5,000 acres you really are not in the game anymore. Looking at land values that could be land worth \$3 million to \$5 million, depending on exactly where the property is. That is just your land value, let alone the cost of the plant, and if you needed a new plant you could easily spend another \$2 million. That is a new plant. Not everyone operates a new plant.

It is a risky business and sometimes people have a go at our good landholders because they look so well-off, but they all take a huge risk in doing what they do. You even see it in areas like the South-East that has suffered for two years running with poor rain, so they are used to borrowing money.

I know this as a fact from talking to a girl who worked in banks years ago down there and in the Mallee. She said, 'I know where the real money is. It's in the Mallee because they are used to droughts.' This is why it hurts areas like the South-East even more because they are used to that surety of seasons and irrigated capacity available, but also for rainfall which they are heavily reliant on and haven't been getting.

263 The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS: I must say I am somewhat disappointed, Adrian, from the point of view that you essentially have argued that you don't see much value being given to your area in terms of the role of the Natural Resources Management Board. We had visited various projects in your area and I would have thought they had contributed substantially to various producers. I remember going to a dairy farm just out of Tailem Bend and the substantial capital investment they have got out of grants that have been administered by the board—

264 The Hon. J.S.L. DAWKINS: Federal grants.

265 The Hon. G.A. KANDELAARS: Yes, but through the Murray-Darling Basin Plan which the state government does contribute to, by the way. I am concerned that you don't see any value in the contribution that is made through the Natural Resource Management Boards, e.g. water management in the Strathalbyn area. I know that is always contentious and some people feel that people should be able to dam wherever they like with no consequences for their neighbours. I have a very different view. There is a need to manage those resources and they cost money, so I am concerned that you have seen no benefit.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you. That is not exactly what I said; I was also reflecting on what constituents have brought to my attention. Yes, there have been some great individual projects; but there have also been some complete failures. We saw the rehabilitation of the Murray swamps done many years ago now, and I think the Hon. John Hill was the minister in charge at the time.

We used to have about 130 dairies along that strip, where there are probably 20 now between Mannum and Wellington. We now see that those Murray swamps are just a disgrace to what they once were after that \$30 million; 87 per cent of that was funded by state and federal governments, and 13 per cent funded by the farmers, so I acknowledge that, but what was the point at the end?

It all went acidic when the river level dropped and unless we see a lot more surety with the Murray-Darling Basin Plan on a larger scale and there is an absolute guarantee (which I do not believe there is) to keep that river level at least 0.4 as an absolute minimum above AHD, those swamps which are some of the best dairy production land in this state, if not the country, will never come back into full production.

Certainly there has been investigatory work done on some dairies and some individual projects with federal grants and some state government money, but not on the broader scale. I would suggest that if we were looking at the full rehabilitation of those swamps again, we are probably looking at \$120 million-plus. If you look at 87 per cent of that funding coming out of both federal and state governments, well, I cannot see it being allocated unless there is some guarantee that it will not be a waste of time if the river ever drops again. Even with the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, no-one can guarantee that.

What I am saying in the main is about the frustration out there in the wider world, and I talked before about people who are running bigger enterprises; there is lower staffing. I have been around 53 years and the population in my little community around Coomandook has halved at least and they are time poor. So weed management gets tough, but if they contact the natural resources group they rarely, and I say rarely, get any support whatsoever.

I note the actual work that was done in regard to the spiny rush on Crown land out of council area on the lake bed, and it was mapped, and then the money ran out. That to me is just total mismanagement. I do acknowledge there have been some very good projects and all the states have taken pain in regard to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan but what I really struggle with, and it is the perception—and certainly I think it is very much in the main the reality—of people out there that you have this monolith of natural resource management which is a group of people in buildings renewing plans.

As I said earlier, my wife worked in the business; I know a little bit on the inside, and I have talked to people who work in there now, and there are some very good people there I must say, but they are hamstrung by the current act, and all people need to see is work on the ground. In saying that, I note there are the occasional field days and that kind of thing but it just stuns me when there is something like corellas, where I would have thought natural resource management should be the lead agency, they step back and say, 'Nothing to see here, because low and behold a corella might get hit by lead shot or steel shot over water by a shotgun.' That stuns me.

266 The PRESIDING MEMBER: I think we are going to have to stop there unless there are any further questions. Adrian, can I thank you very much for your time and contribution this morning; we really appreciate hearing what you have to say and also representation from constituents in your patch, so thank you.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you very much for the opportunity.

267 The PRESIDING MEMBER: We see you as a friend of the Natural Resources Committee; Adrian quite often travels with us and makes sure that we have up to date information, so thanks for that.

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely. Thank you, Chair. In saying that, I do very much support the work of this committee. I think it does great work and I think it is a highlight—this committee—of the natural resources sector in this state, but I could not say it uniformly across the state for other sectors.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW