

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 13TH APRIL 2016

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: PROPOSAL TO EXPAND MOBILONG PRISON

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:29): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was a little distracted during the final moments of the member for Chaffey's comments, but what I will say in this place is that I have willingly entered Mobilong Prison quite a few times and have willingly been allowed to leave—yes, I have always been able to leave.

I want to comment quickly on the 543rd report of the Public Works Committee on the proposal to expand Mobilong Prison. This will take the prison, that was built in 1987 at Mobilong originally for 160 beds, out to 440 beds. So, I have some concerns about the ever bulging fences keeping our prisoners in place.

I must admit I had some quite cordial conversations with the prisoners the last time I was there. It was a White Ribbon Day function. I always try to make it my business to have a chat. I always say to them, 'I don't want to know what you're here for, but how long have you got?' and things like that, and it can have some interesting responses. In saying that, part of the need to expand facilities across the state is because people are being held in police holding cells, and this will give nine modular units holding 72 extra beds. There will be a new officers' station with additional multipurpose interview and program training rooms and other facilities, including the car park which will come into play.

The construction commences this month and will finish in July of this year, so that will go pretty quickly. The total cost is \$10.74 million, which is \$740,000 more than what was paid out in compensation for the bungled attempt by this government to inflict a Yatala replacement 10 years ago that was announced in the state budget. It was a shameful way to deliver public policy and such a big announcement for my electorate, but also for the state, considering that I had no knowledge of it until it was in the paper on the morning of the budget, and the mayor did not know, but that went by the way and \$10 million was spent in compensation to the three players that had built up bids for that correctional facility for, essentially, a Yatala replacement and a new female prison.

Some of the concerns I raised at the committee were concerns about the road network being upgraded for better access to the prison, including Bremer Road and the full bitumising of that, and urging the government to take heed of upgrades to health facilities in the town. I have witnessed prisoners accessing health services in Murray Bridge, and I do not deny them that, but the government cannot impose more and more numbers and think that everything rocks and rolls along in the background.

Something I have been very proactive about with regard to this increase in prisoners, and certainly if there is a proposal to build a new prison in Mobilong at some stage because the land is still there, is that we need metroticketing to Murray Bridge. I say that because now that right out to the boundary of The Rural City of Murray Bridge is a part of Greater Adelaide, as endorsed in the planning debate yesterday, I think it needs to be taken into that category.

I think we need to have a lot of forward thinking and if there is going to be a debate about a new facility in the future I want to be a part of it and the council of The Rural City of Murray Bridge wants to be a part of it.