

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 10TH MARCH 2016

RIVER MURRAY BOATING AND RECREATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:14): I rise today to speak about the River Murray Boating and Recreational Advisory Group, and I acknowledge the kind words today in question time from the Minister for Transport. This has been a long road for our group. We formed just over three years ago in response to a piece in *The Advertiser* on the front page about no-wash zones, and we knew we needed to act to protect everyone's rights in relation to the use of the river. So, that is why the River Murray Boating and Recreational Advisory Group was set up.

It is a group I am heavily involved with, but there are also a lot of volunteers on board, and we have the Boating Industry Association and Houseboat Hirers Association on board. I must acknowledge that staff from the environment department and the transport department have been very helpful along the way. I will once again acknowledge the support from the Minister for Transport, because without that support and the funding from that department, we would not be where we are today.

This group was incorporated in 2015. RMBRAG conducted a community survey in 2014, and the response from some 400 responders identified concern for boating behaviour and education on the river. From this response, the committee identified strategies to target these concerns which were:

to develop a code of conduct for the diverse and varied activities that are undertaken on the river and its immediate environment,

to develop a communications and education plan that effectively connects with a range of demographics and generations who use the river, and

to provide solutions and recommendations to government for implementation and seek support financially and in kind.

In 2015, shortly after becoming incorporated, RMBRAG applied for funding through the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and were successful in receiving \$20,000 in September. The group have established a one-page code of conduct which covers river users making use of boats and jet skis with topics such as wake, noise, no power turns, keeping your distance, signals, education, location, speed and awareness, wake jumping, life jackets, and drugs and alcohol. With the \$20,000, RMBRAG have also created nine short educational videos, of which three will be launched tomorrow at Sturt Reserve in Murray Bridge. They will also be launched on the Facebook page Murray River Life and everyone is encouraged to share the videos if possible. The code of conduct will also be available on the website, www.rmbrag.com.

I would just like to acknowledge everyone who has been involved, not least my staff and former staff who have been heavily involved in this project. I would like to acknowledge everyone from up and down the river who have come to meetings in Murray Bridge or here in Adelaide to make sure we can keep this

project going, and acknowledge that they kept that work up and that desire to make this thing work.

I think we have achieved a great outcome with minimal funding. I am not trying to be too critical of government, because we are very appreciative of what has happened here with the \$20,000, but I think we have made probably hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of investment out of \$20,000 through this way, through the volunteer support and through the ability to hire people like Bec Gange to star in the videos and her group who did the filming one day on the river. It is not too hard to get people to have a bit of fun on the river and work with us to get these videos up. Drones were used and they were fantastic videos that were put together.

I would also like to acknowledge Adam Bruce for his work in coordinating these people and being the chair of our committee. He has done a great job working through meetings and working with departments to get the job done. Certainly George Bolton from the Boating Industry Association has been a great person and a great conduit to have between the committee and the department. Once again, I would thank everyone who has been involved.

It is going to be a great launch tomorrow. I have seen the videos; they are fantastic. They will really hit the mark that we want to hit so that people will behave appropriately on the river. We want a river that is appropriate for all river use, whether you are a canoeist, a rower, a wakeboarder or a jet-skier. We understand that we need to educate and not regulate, because every time that big yellow boat comes round the corner, the boats slow down. We think this is a great opportunity to get the message out to people along the river, and I appreciate the support of the transport department and the transport minister. It has been fantastic and we will launch this tomorrow.

Time expired.