

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2016

SUMMARY OFFENCES (DRONES) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 19 November 2015.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (10:55): I rise today to speak on the Summary Offences (Drones) Amendment Bill. I note that we live in a very fast moving world, a world where technology overtakes most of us, especially those born before 1970. Technology is a fact of life and we need to embrace it, at least to a certain extent, or we will be left behind.

The member for Heysen had a discussion with us on our side of the house about being at a function where there was a drone hovering overhead filming the event and streaming the footage direct to another location. As the member for Heysen noted, it was all done at the invitation of the event organisers, and there is no problem with that, or indeed with children being able to play with small remote controlled helicopters which might have a camera attached. For want of promoting a brand name, GoPro cameras are all the rage, or similar ones you can buy in the market. I know my eldest son has a lot of fun recording his motorbike exploits on his GoPro camera. Sometimes it goes a bit sideways and every way, but that is when he falls off.

The issue around all this technology, especially the issue of drones, is when such technology is used to invade people's privacy. The issue, especially in light of what the member for Heysen is keen to express, is that it appears there is no law in this state which would prevent a media organisation, a neighbour, or any person, from flying a remote controlled drone up to the window of your home, or over your backyard, and filming whatever it can capture.

The little understanding I do have of drones is the simple fact that they can be flown out of sight. How you manage that I am not sure (whether you have a screen), and from what I understand some of them have a homing device. I am sure there are a few that get lost and they become the property of someone else by default. The issue is around privacy laws and the fact that there is no privacy law as such to protect anyone's basic right to privacy, nor is the Civil Aviation Authority going to seek to control these drones, as long as they do not venture into controlled air space.

I note the Attorney-General has indicated he would be generally supportive of some sort of privacy law, but has not moved to introduce any bill to that end. Certainly the proposal by the member for Heysen is that it would be unlawful to fly a drone with or without any camera or recording device attached over any private property without the owner's or the occupier's permission, and that sounds very reasonable to me. I suggest that the limit need only be, say, 100 feet above the property, or 30 metres in metric discussion.

I think that this is a good, middle-of-the road idea so that it does not cut the use of the technology but also it is giving individuals the right to privacy because I am sure that no-one would appreciate a drone flying up to their window, especially, and potentially filming what is going on in their private residence.

It is one of those things that, with the ongoing issue around them, drones are used far more widely by industry. I know that the real estate industry uses them for flyovers of properties. It is a great tool for them so that they can advertise the properties and give a unique perspective over what is going on on the ground. Obviously if they are selling the house I am sure they get the seller's permission to do so because I think that would be highly appropriate.

I think that we do need to manage this, and certainly I have noticed their use in regard to a little committee I am involved in, the River Murray Boating and Recreational Advisory Group, which is just doing the final edits on some safety videos for river use by all watercraft. I must say that Adam Bruce, our chairman—

The Hon. J.W. Weatherill: A great wakeboarder.

Mr PEDERICK: He is a great wakeboarder. He knows, obviously, a lot of people in the wakeboarding and skiing field, and he has made some great short videos that, before too long, will be released just as safety videos for users of the river because there is not enough compliance on the river. When the big, orange/yellow boat comes around the corner every one tidies up their act for a while until the boat disappears.

Just in saying that, as I have said in this place before, I will again thank the Minister for Transport for his department's contribution of \$20,000 to help us do this project. However, in saying that I think that if this were a government project we would save many hundreds of thousands of dollars, but that is by the by. We have got the contacts through Adam and others on the committee, and the Boating Industry Association is on board as well as the houseboat hirers association.

I saw some of this raw footage and I thought that it was magnificent with respect to what you can do with drones to get those overhead shots, otherwise you would have to hire a helicopter at great cost to do the same thing. It does give fantastic real-time footage of what is going on, especially in this case in regard to filming watercraft on the River Murray. I commend everyone who was involved in the filming. They went down for a day and they filmed about 10 of these videos which, as I said, will be released over time. They are just going through the final edits.

I certainly understand the use of drones and I certainly understand why they have become popular. I note that there was some discussion that was had in the party room around remote-controlled helicopters. One of my boys got one for Christmas and I think it lasted about 12 minutes before it plummeted into the ground and screwed the main drive off. I may have been in control of it, or not.

The Hon. J.W. Weatherill interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes. They can be great things but you have to manage them. I saw one that the member for Stuart was showing me the other day. I think that the trade name is Lily, from memory, but it is something that will follow you or go in front of you for a period of time and film what you are doing from the air.

This technology is just getting better and better over time, but in saying that we, as legislators, as we do over time, have to keep up with modernising legislation and making sure that it is appropriate in regard to people being able to have their privacy and not have their privacy interfered with by these drones overhead.

Some people may want to use these drones for nefarious reasons but that is up to them, but they need to be controlled as well. I think this is a very legitimate piece of legislation. I think it is something that we need to proceed with because people's privacy is paramount, but also, as the member for Heysen indicated, we do not want to lose the ability to use this technology for their enjoyment. As I said, the aim is to not impinge on people's private lives and that is the main issue here. I commend the bill and I hope it has a speedy flow through the house.

Time expired.