



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
WEDNESDAY 02ND AUGUST 2017
APPROPRIATION BILL 2017

Estimates Committees

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:54): I rise to speak to the estimates process here in 2017. Some people may be shocked, but I actually found it the best of a bad innings of estimates that I have had. I am not sure why I say that, but perhaps I am just getting used to the process. Hopefully, it is the last one.

Members interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: I must be drinking the Kool-Aid.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: So you think it's Kool-Aid do you?

Mr PEDERICK: Yes. It is very hard to get direct answers to very direct questions and I guess what upsets me, and this has been mentioned by other members in this place, is when good old Dorothy the Dinosaur gets wheeled out to ask questions. We do not see the courage that has been the case with some ministers in the past, and I reflect on the former member for Port Adelaide, who would sit down for Treasury estimates, reading the paper and looking very calm, and he would just say, 'Well, give it to me.' I do not give much to the former member for Port Adelaide, but I will give him that. He had a lot more courage than other ministers in this place.

It is the time that opposition members and Independents can ask those questions, if they are in the lower house. I certainly do not believe it is a time for government questions to be asked; we have a limited time and we have time lines we need to deal with. However, I guess it is what it is and you try to get what you can out of it.

Because I was interested, the other day I was sitting in on the estimates to do with corrections, police and the emergency services. As far as the corrections sector is concerned, obviously I have the medium-security Mobilong Prison in my electorate. It was originally built decades ago to house 160 prisoners, and it has just been expanded with the Eyre Wing—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: It might be better than the original rooms, but it now has beds and cells for 460 inmates, so it is certainly squeezing out of the sides. I think the only place it now has left to build any accommodation is the oval, and I do not think anyone would like to see that, as far as not filling it up like a city block is concerned. So there is an issue with Corrections. There is an issue of hundreds of millions of dollars having to be spent in my electorate, at Mount Gambier, at Port Augusta, at Port Lincoln, and Cadell in the Riverland as well, in regard to these expansions.

I reflect on what happened in 2006 when it was announced on budget day—and budget day that year was my first year in; it was in September, delayed because of the election—on the front page of the paper that, 'We're going to build a new prison at Mobilong.' Whether or not you contacted the local member—which would have been helpful—it would have been helpful if you had let the mayor and the people of Murray Bridge and surrounding areas know. That did not happen.

Essentially, what happened in the end was it did not happen. The land is still there, and if it ever does happen in the future there will need to be long discussions about what other benefits can be brought to Murray Bridge so that they will accept a high security prison—because this was going to be the Yatala replacement and the women's prison replacement—being built in the vicinity. You can only do that by taking the community with you. You cannot do it by just imposing it on a community, notwithstanding the fact that there are opportunities for an electorate with prisons, as far as employment goes. However, there are many negative views in communities about having prisons in their community.

In regard to emergency services, I am a member of the CFS and I did ask some questions around the suitability of some of our fire truck equipment. I have been following up on that, after I asked my questions about some of our fire trucks where the exhaust systems get too hot and they are actually firefighters. The minister had not had that raised with him, but I will be sending correspondence to Mr Malinauskas in the other place when I have all the information together on that query about whether there is an issue with some of the trucks in regard to lighting fires. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12:59 to 14:01.