

## Budget reply June 18, 2008

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (21:10):** I rise tonight to make my contribution to the AAA budget—not the AAA credit rating that the Treasurer thinks he has got but the budget that is 'All About Adelaide'. There is absolutely nothing—I stress, nothing—in this budget for regional South Australia. As I said in my earlier contribution, the Labor Party only have a map of South Australia which ends at Gepps Cross and Glen Osmond. There is nothing outside those areas if you go through the budget papers to see essential allocations of money to country and regional areas.

As I have said before, the people in the Riverland, the people in the Lower Murray around Murray Bridge and the people in the Lower Lakes are really suffering from the inattention of Labor governments, both state and federal—it is just atrocious that this goes on. There are people who cannot afford to buy water to sustain their irrigation and people who cannot access their water. I had a meeting only today with agriculture minister McEwen about the Jervois footy club, which needs to put in infrastructure to access water for their oval.

All they need is a \$28,000 grant, coupled with the \$28,000 that the community are putting in and the 13 gigalitres of pledged water from local irrigators, to keep their oval going. Jervois is a little town that supports sporting clubs, bowling clubs, netball clubs, football clubs—about 450 different people use these club facilities in a little place like Jervois.

Do you know what the minister said to me today? He said, 'If the government put any funding toward it, why would we fund something that might become a stranded asset?'—a pipeline that would go 1.1 kilometres into the river to support the Jervois Football Club's oval.

Because, strange as it may seem, what has happened at Jervois is what has happened with the present health minister who, once he has stuffed up natural resources, has managed to give country health a belting. Through his management, or rather, mismanagement of natural resources with the so-called rehabilitation of the Lower Murray swamps, now they cannot access a waste water channel at the back of those swamps so they have to go this 1.1 kilometres for water. The minister said to me that the government will not put in funding for what may be a stranded asset if there is no water allocation or no water available. I said, 'Well, minister, if that happens no one would access water for themselves and do any work for it.'

It is interesting to note that I had a conversation with people at DWLBC who admitted that the trenchers were turning up to dig the privately-funded pipeline to Langhorne Creek and that was going to start today. I found that very interesting. These are just people who are trying to get on with their lives and trying to keep their communities viable.

I get back to health, and we saw hundreds of people protesting out the front today. There was no difference really to the protest that was here yesterday—thousands of teachers protesting against the Labor government, members of the Australian Education Union.

Today we had country communities out in force. I had quite a few phone calls from people who said, 'We can't make the trip. We are too busy out here surviving, but give everyone our best. We support the program.' They know only too well that they have been cut off in this budget, and they know that it is an absolute fabrication if Minister Hill thinks fewer people will access services in Adelaide. The simple fact is that there is a great part of this state between Berri and Whyalla—hundreds and thousands of square kilometres of this state where people live and try to run their lives.

I talked about mining in my contribution earlier today. We talk about the big mines—Roxby, Prominent Hill—and I notice that the member for Stuart talked about what could happen in this area with the Leigh Creek mine (run by NRG) and other associated interests. Where will people go when they need health services? They have the Australian Zircon mine at Mindarie. It takes them three quarters of an hour to get to Loxton, and they have more than that—an hour and 10 minutes—to get to Berri. There is no point ducking back to Karoonda, a half an hour away, for health services if this plan goes through, because there will not be anyone there. There will not be a doctor. The doctor from Karoonda was in the chamber today during question time, and he is just appalled at what is going on.

Right throughout the outer regions of Mallee we have had trouble attracting doctors. If they do not have any services to supply, there will be no reason for them to go there. I reflect again on what has happened in Strathalbyn. Where will people from Clayton, Milang, Langhorne Creek and those areas go for health services? They will end up going to Mount Barker, which will be fully loaded, because there will not be any room for people, and then they will have to go to Adelaide anyway.

I want to make a comment about the Mobilong Prison upgrade near Murray Bridge. The government gave in-principle support for adequate public transport, to help supply infrastructure for stormwater, maintain roads and other infrastructure programs, and to make a decent contribution to the Rural City of Murray Bridge. The government has to come through with its word. If it wants to run state facilities—the women's prison, the men's prison, high security prisons, and the forensic mental health facility—the government needs to come good, and do not think the Rural City of Murray Bridge will just stand by and get along without any assistance.

I want to again reflect on transport in the Mallee and the Coorong at the moment. In a letter that a constituent wrote to Minister Hill it states:

*I would like to bring to your attention here at Meningie, situated at the Lower Lakes, that we have just found out that the Transport Advisory Board has recommended not to renew the contract for the public transport from Meningie to Murray Bridge. This service will cease on 30 June 2008.*

*I need not tell you how important public transport is to our community. You may think how does this concern you. As our community is under enough stress, and to lose this essential service, it seems that the rural communities have to accept a lesser standard. There are people living east of the tollgate. So I would like to challenge you and your public servants to back up your proposals published in the new South Australian Country Health care Plan, section 4, page 18, under the heading, 'Better Transport and Improved Coordinated Care (the Patient Journey)'.*

*'Transport and accommodation support will be developed to help country people access the health care services they need.'*

*The Patient Journey Initiative has already improved coordination of care and appropriate discharge planning for patients who need to access health services in other locations to ensure a smooth transition of care between services and locations. This initiative uses patient liaison network members, rural liaison nurses, patient transport coordinators and local practice nurses to support rural people to access health services.*

*We will:*

- Explore ways to increase transport options which can incorporate the existing Patient Assistance Transport Scheme.*
- Improve access to transport and accommodation subsidies and support when using both metropolitan and country services.*

That is all very interesting, isn't it, when we have a government that is threatening to cut the funding to the Coorong services that run out to the Mallee down the coast road to Meningie and down the Dukes Highway to Culburra.

I indicated in my contribution last night that last week I sought a meeting with Minister Conlon on this issue, and Minister Caica on the other side laughed, thinking, 'Oh, yeah, that'll happen.' I must say that Minister Conlon and I have a working business relationship. He did say last time that perhaps we need to have a monthly appointment, and I said, 'Yes. I'll book that in right now, minister.' It seems that I should have, but at least he is giving me the time at 11 o'clock tomorrow to discuss this issue with the operator of the service at Coonalpyn and some concerned parents of students who ride on one of the buses—and I commend my contribution.