

EDUCATION (COMPULSORY EDUCATION AGE) AMENDMENT BILL
Tuesday 13 November 2007

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 13 September 2007. Page 844.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:16): I rise to speak briefly on this bill. I commend the bill, and believe that these days you cannot have too much education. Opportunities are arising in this state—not just through universities, but hands-on opportunities such as trades—with the mining boom currently under way. Certainly, the Liberal Party promotes freedom of choice in education, and in this state we do have the freedom to attend either state or private schools.

There is a lot of debate on what happens to communities if too many people attend other schools, but at least we can have that debate and decide where we want our children to go or where we think is the best place in terms of their career opportunities.

However, we also have to look after opportunities in the regional areas. Recently I went out to the East Murray Area School's 40th anniversary celebrations, and this school is a real oasis in the Mallee, encompassing a sporting ground as well. It is more than just a school; it is a community centre, and you can certainly see the people's pride in the school and community centre. It is just outstanding.

The educational programs—whether it is growing vines or olives, or the workshop work they are doing where they have their own business and are selling products—are absolutely outstanding.

The importance of education is absolutely paramount. When I was at school I did up to year 10 at my local school at Coomandook and then I went to Urrbrae Agricultural High School here in Adelaide. My intention was to complete matriculation and then either come home or perhaps go on to something else, but for a lot of different reasons (I did not really mix and I did not like living in Adelaide) I ended up back at the farm. It may have been interesting to see where I would have gone had I finished matriculation; I may have made some other choices.

Be that as it may, one way or another having a career in agriculture, the mining industry and the shearing industry has not done me too much harm, and I am now making a contribution in this place.

Earlier I talked about the future of the state, and there are many opportunities, not just in the urban areas but also regionally. Engineering firms are picking up contracts with the mining boom all around the state, and certainly work is being offered to people who are having hard times in regional areas. This is picking up some of the younger people who have, perhaps, just finished school; there is not enough income to keep them at home on their farms, so they might manage to pick up a job at the Australian Zircon mine at Mindarie near East Murray or at the Strathalbyn Terramin mine, which is also opening up in my electorate. So, there are certainly plenty of opportunities there.

As things boom along there are plenty of manufacturing opportunities in the region, especially around Murray Bridge and the Monarto region. There is the Complete Pipe Systems at Murray Bridge manufacturing plastic piping systems.

There is a whole lot of transport infrastructure opening up around the Monarto region, and other opportunities with Australian Portable Camps having moved up there from Aldinga recently. They are certainly having a great boom directly related to the mining industry and other industries that need portable buildings.

We cannot push enough good education or good training. It is common knowledge now that if you get the plumber out it will cost you more than if you go to see the doctor. So, depending on what you are good at, get good at it and you might be the one driving the Ferrari.

When I was attending Coomandook, at a school assembly at the end of the year, one of my school principals said to all the assembled children, 'If you thought this was a long time, wait until you get out in the workplace. You need to be prepared and ready to make the best contribution you can make in your life.'

With those few words, I commend the bill.