

Address in reply to Governor's Speech - May 13, 2010

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:23): I rise on this occasion as the re-elected member for Hammond. I am very proud to be re-elected to this place by my constituents. I have already mentioned your elevation to your exalted role, Madam Speaker. I think we will have a very proactive relationship over the next few years, and I wish you all the best in that position in controlling both sides of the house.

To the member for Torrens, the Government Whip, I had a good working relationship with Robyn when I was a deputy whip, and my thoughts are certainly with her and her husband Bob in their current struggle. To the new member for Mitchell, Alan Sibbons, as Deputy Whip on the other side, I certainly look forward to a fruitful relationship with him as well.

I will make comments about new members later on, but I would also like to congratulate the member for Flinders on his election and also his ascendancy to the role of Deputy Whip. He was a very good man to work with on his campaign. It was very pleasant to go to the West Coast and tour around with him. His recognition factor was fantastic and it certainly got him into this place.

I acknowledge the excellent delivery of his speech by His Excellency the Governor, but I will take to task some of the items in that speech, which is effectively written by the government. First of all, I would like to thank a range of people, just as most members have thanked those who have helped them to get back into this place. I thank my family—Sally, MacKenzie and Angus. Our families give up a lot to get us here and give up a lot while we are here.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, that's it. No, my wife does mow the lawn. Certainly, throughout the campaign, she was a great asset in the campaign team, coming on board in the office at times, helping with the fundraising through the trailer raffle program, and organising dinners. It was absolutely fantastic support.

I have also had fantastic support from Beth Hodgkison, who is president of my SEC. I would always say to Beth, 'Is this in order?' or 'Is that in order?'. As you do as an MP, you always want to make sure that things are in order. I always like to double check things, such as knowing what is in my letters or emails that are going out. She would say, 'It's all under control, Adrian.' So, it was great to have trust in Beth at that level, and she did great work. Also, I want to thank other people in the SEC and the branches throughout the electorate, and also the new branch I inherited at Goolwa from the member for Finniss. They do great work.

Goolwa is becoming more and more a retirement area, so there are a lot of older members of the community. However, their vitality and their dedication to the cause are fantastic. Because of its position, that area can always be subject to redistribution. I am very proud to be representing Goolwa at this time. With the redistribution, Hammond was cut and shut a bit. The electorate used to extend up to Swan Reach, but the area has now come back to between Bow Hill and Penong, and that upper area of the Mallee went to the seat of Chaffey. I am very pleased that most of the good people up there voted for the new member for Chaffey and helped in securing his election to this house.

Also, the boundary of Hammond used to run out to Callington, and I shared Callington with the member for Kavel. However, he had a takeover swipe at me and has now taken Callington, with his electorate almost extending into Murray Bridge. I am just holding him off at Pope Road, I think, which is a few miles out of—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: I know. I'm just holding him off at Pope Road. One of my other boundaries is the main road right through Monarto, but I retain the fantastic Monarto Zoo. It got more interesting with the redistribution. My boundary down south used to go only as far as Clayton but, as I said earlier, I picked up Goolwa, and Strathalbyn went into the member for

Heysen's electorate. So, there was quite a major shift in voting, and quite a few people experienced those shifts.

I really want to acknowledge **volunteers** today, not just for their work during electoral campaigns but right throughout the sphere of volunteering, because this is Volunteers Week. Without the work that volunteers do, the state—let alone the country—and its local areas just would not get on. It is estimated that there are hundreds of thousands of volunteers in this state. Some people put the number at 600,000, but I believe there are probably a lot more than that. Someone is a volunteer even if it only involves helping an elderly neighbour or someone put out the rubbish for collection, or it can be as wide-ranging as being with the CFS or the SES.

If we did not have volunteers helping in the nation and in the state, the place would grind to a halt. We could not economically fund these volunteers. What does worry me especially is emergency services, and I reflect on some of the farcical things that obviously happened on that black day in Victoria, where people in control were not at the office where they should have been—the control centre—running the show. It is just incredible that that happened.

What we always have to remember is that volunteers are at the coalface. We do need the paid bureaucracy, but let's not allow bureaucracy to override the decisions made at the coalface at times when they are the sensible decisions; sometimes these decisions have to be made on the run.

Getting back to the campaign, the volunteers who put in their time on election day and helping put up posters, run events, sell raffle tickets and so on, did great work and I was certainly very pleased to have them on board.

I want to talk about a couple of special people who received **Order of Australia medals** (OAMs). **Norm Patterson** had his own battle with his health in the last few months, and the good news is that he is well on the way out of that. Norm Patterson's service to the transport and fertiliser industries has been recognised not only statewide but across the nation.

My SEC Treasurer, **Maurice Wilhelm**, has been recognised for his services to not only the Liberal Party but the community as a whole as a former councillor and, I think, a deputy mayor at Mobilong or Murray Bridge Council. His ongoing passion for the Murray Darling Association and the river just goes on and on. There are many other community events that Maurice has been involved in—the same as Norm—with not only his practical work but also many volunteer events. So, I congratulate those two people.

Moving onto the Governor's speech, as I said I acknowledge his excellent delivery but, because it is essentially a speech written by the government, we have the government making its great bold plan that there will be an extra 100,000 jobs in the state in the next six years. Well, that is giving it an out because it will not be here for the last two of those six years, and we will have to fix it. The numbers have been done, and 70,000 of those places are already in the program, so it is really only a net result of 30,000 if they get there, and the government has an out clause with the two years it will not be there.

I will also comment on the government talking about removing **payroll tax** on wages for apprentices and trainees and introducing reductions in **land tax**. The government only came to this when we put up our own policy to reduce land tax. It is to be welcomed that the government came on board because there are a lot of mum and dad investors, including a lot of migrants to the state, who have investment housing and who pay vast sums of land tax. Because we brought it up, the government has brought it on.

The interesting thing I find about land tax—and we have had several complaints come into the office—is that, when there is a change in the ownership of a residential property (and it could be as simple as a partner dying), all of a sudden they get their land tax bill. It is pretty distressing for a person who could be 85 years old—and I have had one case—banging the drum, 'Why have I got this land tax bill?'

I think it is just ridiculous that because of a paperwork entry, because someone's husband, wife or partner has died, all of a sudden a person gets a bill. I think it is just a tax grab by the government, and it needs to be changed. So many people just get the account;

one constituent with property at Andamooka (it might have been under water for a while) and some at Tailem Bend said, 'I just paid the bill.' That is what people do. In any event, we fixed it for him. I will give the department credit because it acted swiftly, but only after we intervened.

I want to talk briefly about another comment in the speech about **health** being a priority for the government, and I note that the health minister is in the chamber. It certainly has not been a priority for country health in the past four years. The government just wanted to cut and slash services to country residents.

An honourable member: It was dreadful.

Mr PEDERICK: It was dreadful; absolutely dreadful. It meant that, if you lived outside of Gepps Cross or Glen Osmond, you just did not count. As the member for Chaffey rightfully said yesterday, when the Premier spoke to him, 'Why should I help the Riverland? I'll get no votes in Chaffey.' It is outrageous how this Labor government treats the regions.

I concur also with the new member for Stuart's words, when talking about Madam Speaker and her very good representation in the regional seat of Giles. She may be nullified a bit because she is in the chair (not taking anything away from her current position) but I am certain she will make her voice heard to the Premier behind closed doors.

In my seat of Hammond, we could see that all the hospitals (bar Murray Bridge) looked like they were going to close. The minister said in this place—and I am sure someone will look it up in *Hansard*—'We have a plan so that everyone will be within 90 minutes of a hospital.' Ninety minutes is too long: my eldest son has just developed a bee allergy and he could be dead in 10 minutes. It is outrageous to think that, because people live in the country, they can survive being 90 minutes from a hospital. I share the outrage of people across regional South Australia. Certainly the smarter people in the city know that, when travelling through regional areas, they may need health care. When we were away, we needed health care at the Hawker Hospital in Giles, and I must say that we had excellent service for a little issue that had to be dealt with.

It is ridiculous to think that I could have lost hospitals at Pinnaroo, Lameroo, Strathalbyn, Meningie (most of Meningie is just outside my electorate) and Karoonda, and have Murray Bridge as the one and only properly functioning hospital. The rest of them looked as though they were deemed to be aged care facilities. The next hospital up the rack was Mount Barker and, as things filled up, they had to go through to Adelaide in any case. It worries me that, in the background, the government still has plans to cripple country health.

The government's health plan talks about building a new hospital in Adelaide. With just over 48 per cent of the vote, the government believes it has the mandate to build a new hospital at the rail yards. I do not agree with that. Our plan was far better: rebuild the Royal Adelaide Hospital where it is, near the teaching centres. It would save \$1 billion and, over time, that money could be reinvested in hospitals right across the state, that is, in the regions and in the city—that is what is needed to be done.

We have also had a grand announcement from the government about \$18.2 million to boost employment in **mining** and to continue working with BHP to bring to fruition the Olympic Dam expansion.

I hope they have rung up their federal colleagues, especially Wayne Swan and Kevin Rudd. This proposed super tax by the federal government will kill mining investment and mining will be crippled not just in this state but also across the nation, especially in major mining states such as Queensland and Western Australia. Why do Labor politicians think if you earn more than 6 per cent you are wealthy? It is because they just do not get it. It is because no-one on that side has any idea about how business works. Mind you, the member for West Torrens did a cracker interview a while ago, talking about his family's involvement with a charcoal chicken place. It was quite a tale on Radio 891 a few weeks ago, so the member for West Torrens may have a little knowledge about how—

Mr van Holst Pellekaan interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, the member for Newland agreed with me. I do not think it will be long before the member for Newland's second name will be Norm and his last name will be

Foster, because it was Norm Foster who had the courage to cross the floor to put Roxby Downs in place, otherwise it would not have happened in the upper house under the Liberal government at the time.

This is the problem we have. They say that the super tax will reduce the company tax rate and assist in superannuation. Quite frankly, it will kill superannuation. Where do superannuation companies invest? They invest in mines and mining because they are high risk ventures and high capital investment. Sometimes they make a reasonable profit, but all that money gets ploughed back into the community.

I note the government is also talking about building other lanes on the Southern Expressway. There has been a lot of criticism about our side of politics not building a two-way road. Well, we simply did not have the money. It was built by a previous Liberal government before I was a member of parliament, but at least it was smart enough to buy the land—so the land is there. People have been critical about that one-way road but it has worked pretty well. I have used it a few times and it has worked well. But it is another policy initiative that would have got up under a Liberal government anyway.

I want to comment on the River Torrens precinct and the proposed redevelopment and upgrade of **Adelaide Oval**. The Treasurer today got tongue-tied in relation to how much the Adelaide Oval redevelopment will cost. Quite frankly, I do not think it matters because it is a pipedream. It was trotted out by Labor in reaction to our far better plan to build a covered stadium in Adelaide, create a living precinct on the railyards and have some hospitality, hotels and parks in the area. It would be a fantastic venture.

Let us hope that Labor sees the light and looks at our policy and does it that way. I do not believe that the Adelaide Oval redevelopment will happen. It is looking half destroyed now with the extra concrete coming out of the top of it. But whatever they do, it will be 30 years behind before they start because uncovered stadiums are out of date. There will not be any parking there and, as I said, the funding is all over the shop. I do not think it matters what the Treasurer says because it just will not happen. Members only have to speak to people involved in the sporting codes to realise that.

The Governor's speech also refers to 'adequate and secure **water** supplies to service our domestic, industrial, agricultural and environmental needs'. This government must have suddenly had a light bulb switch on or something because it has not done too much for industrial, irrigation and environmental needs for this state over the past four years. Certainly, the member for Chaffey is well aware of that. Irrigators in this state have suffered a belting. Even this year, when there have been inflows into the northern basin, we are still at 62 per cent yet further up the river in the southern basin of the Murray and Murrumbidgee they are on about 95 per cent allocation.

There is no equity in allocations. We have sustainable diversion limits being introduced. South Australia did the work years ago and has kept under the cap since the late sixties, and yet we still have not seen hit the ground the money that John Howard put up, the \$10 billion, which included \$5.8 billion of infrastructure work in the Eastern States, which would put so much more water back into the rivers for use by both the environment and irrigators. It is a real pity that barely any of this money has hit the ground, because I think that would take some of the pain out of the sustainable diversion limits that will be imposed down the track.

I know the draft plan is coming out very shortly—in the next couple of months. We certainly need to find that balance. We need food supply and we need irrigators to be able to irrigate, but there can be efficiencies put in place. I met a farmer, Glen Rorato, when we were up at Deniliquin, and he increased his efficiency by 100 per cent by putting drip lines in on 600 acres of broadacre tomatoes. It was a huge investment of \$700,000, and he could not even use the water that year because he had zero allocation, but he managed to double the use of his available water in the next water year because of his foresight.

Then we have the government wanting to build a **desalination plant**. It hesitated for that long after we brought the policy in, for 18 months to two years, and by then the bill for desalination plants had basically quadrupled what it could have been. Perth built, I think, a 45 gegalitre plant for \$300 million and piped it into the network for less than \$90 million—for \$87 million they did that—and look at ours, \$1.8 billion, and it will not save a shred off the River

Murray because there is some harebrained scheme on the other side of the house that they will switch the darn thing off when there is plenty of water in the river.

It will be 2050 before we see any real reduction in the use of the River Murray. Well, I am sorry, but if you are going to spend that much money then find the power. If you reckon it is green power then we will get it there, but let us check that out when it happens—I will be interested. It is too big a plant to switch off, and if the irrigators and environment get a benefit because we are running a desalination plant, well that is what should be. That is what should be, because the caretaker mode, I believe, for running a plant like that, if you did shut it down or slow it down, would not be that much less than running it at capacity.

We had Labor bragging about its **stormwater** catcher, but it has been too shy to get onto a far cheaper supply of water under that program than desalination. It can be cleaned up. They are very nervous about cleaning up stormwater. It is done at Orange and it is done in other countries throughout the world, but SA Water is extremely averse to letting anyone have third party access to its network of pipes.

We had proposals years ago in Flinders when private investors wanted to put in private desal plants and, basically, it was made that hard for them—they were all but told, 'No, you can't do it because you won't have access to the network.' So, now we pipe 600 megalitres of water annually to Ceduna from the Murray. That is absolutely outrageous and shameful.

I am running out of time, but there are a few things that I want to speak about concerning my electorate. One is the problems of dryland **farming and irrigation** farmers in my electorate. Both sectors right up the Murray and the Mallee are still on exceptional circumstances. Currently, they are being put under threat by a **locust** plague. Their locust plague is already happening. I wish the government would wake up to that. It seems to be putting all its effort into targeting it in the spring.

Yes, it does have to be targeted in the spring, but I have had representatives at meetings—and I know the member for Chaffey was at a meeting at Wunkar the other day and he had a representative at a meeting as well—and farmers are quite disillusioned by the government's response to the locust plague. What is happening is that, because of the unseasonably warm weather, adult locusts have laid eggs and hoppers have already come out of this generation. So we have a problem now and we will have a problem in the future. Early sown crops and feed (canola and lupins) have been wiped out. People are holding back sowing and they will take a big hit in yield.

Locusts are a major threat to our \$4.2 billion grazing and cropping production. The government needs to get on board. I believe the minister has asked the government for \$5 million, but that is going to be way short. Its own spokesman, Ken Henry, said at a meeting that this locust plague will be probably six to 10 times worse than the last one, and the government needs to take that into account because this will tip a lot of farmers over the edge. There have been suicides already through the Riverland and Murraylands and we certainly do not need any more. Farmers have had the added stress of droughts essentially since 2001 (which was a good year; 2002 was the start of the droughts). There were low commodity prices in 2005 and low prices for crops in 2009, and most of the years in between were pretty ordinary. The year 2006 was a shocker. As I have said, those farmers will be tipped over the edge.

So I call on the government to be proactive and supply farmers with chemicals now. They need to ensure that the aerial program is well in place, and I call on the government to supply insecticide for farmers in the spring as well. This could be an impost on some farms of up to \$20,000, and they just do not have it any more. They are doing it tough. They do not want to be in exceptional circumstances but they have not had a cropping income for nearly 10 years, and that is pretty tough with the high cost of inputs, etc.

Also, as I have said previously, we are concerned about the state of the River Murray in my electorate. The government proposed a weir at Wellington in November 2006 and, thankfully, that is off the agenda for the moment because I think that would destroy the river flow. The people around the lakes do not want a lot. They just want a fair go and to be recognised as citizens of this country, too. They have taken a belting. They have had to fight for potable and irrigation water supplies and, certainly down south at Goolwa, they have had a

big battle to have water there. The government's response to all these things is to divide communities with bunds. It is not a holistic solution to the issue of water in this state, and it should be far better managed. In the remaining time, I commend all the new members in this place.

An honourable member: Even the Labor ones?

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, even the Labor ones. I might need some extra time, thank you, Madam Speaker. I congratulate John Gardner from Morialta, Steven Marshall from Norwood, Rachel Sanderson from Adelaide, Peter Treloar from Flinders, Dan van Holst Pellekaan from Stuart, Tim Whetstone from Chaffey, Alan Sibbons from Mitchell, Leesa Vlahos from Taylor, Lee Odenwalder from Little Para and Don Pegler from Mount Gambier. In the upper house I congratulate Jing Lee and Kelly Vincent. I praise all our members who have retired from this place, and also the work of Isobel Redmond and the rest of the Liberal team.