

HAMMOND ELECTORATE COMMUNITY GROUPS

Grievance – June 20th, 2007

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): I rise today to speak about a couple of community support groups in my area. I am heavily involved in one group which is presently being formed and the other group has been around for 10 years—and long may it continue albeit in a new form from 30 June next year. First, I speak about the Murray Lakes and Mallee Alliance.

On 18 May representatives from the Murraylands Regional Development Board and the six councils that fall or partly fall within the electorate of Hammond—Coorong District Council, Rural City of Murray Bridge, Southern Mallee District Council, Mid Murray Council, District Council of Karoonda East Murray and Alexandrina Council—and other state and federal MPs met at my office to discuss the possibility of forming an alliance to work together to identify opportunities and prepare strategies for the coordinated and structured development of the whole region. I am pleased to say that this group unanimously decided to move forward with the proposal and the Murray Lakes and Mallee Alliance is now a reality. The group will meet every second month at different places within the region. These meetings will enable those present to discuss events and opportunities that are shared across the region in an informal atmosphere, where they can speak openly among their peers without fear or favour.

Since being elected I have been involved with the Fleurieu Alliance—a similar group based on the Fleurieu Peninsula—and I have been very impressed with its creative and proactive approach to regional strategies. This group also provides an opportunity for various departmental personnel and others to meet with the highly concentrated group of main players from the regions and saves them having to arrange several smaller meetings to discuss points of common interest. The group works alongside existing development boards, complementing their important activities, and requires little or no funding and, accordingly, is not a drain on existing resources, state or local. I look forward to the upcoming meeting of this group in Tailem Bend next month, and I am sure it will soon take its place in the region as an important generator of ideas and activities.

The other group I wish to discuss is the Murray-Mallee Strategic Task Force, which I have talked about in this place before and which has been around for 10 years. I will declare an interest: my wife was the first main component of this task force being the first full-time staffer. I think she did a wonderful job—but I have to say that because she may read this *Hansard*.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, she did do a wonderful job, and she still does with her work, which is a couple of days a week with the natural resources management board. This group was formed through various community-minded people worried about social matters within the region, and how to coordinate them and assist government at all levels, be it local, federal or state, to get the right outcomes, because too many times the social needs of people are forgotten.

On 14 June we held a meeting to decide the future of the task force, and it was pleasing that, after much vigorous debate between PIRSA representatives, myself and other members—the Hon. Bob Sneath was in attendance as a representative of the government on the task force—it was decided to keep the task force running for another 12 months. Hopefully it will then meld into part of the local regional facilitation group, which comprises departmental heads who now meet regularly. We decided this was probably the best way to move forward as groups in the regions seem to be struggling to access funding to keep going. The task force has been struggling, but we think that, if we merge with the regional facilitation group, it will give a social face to that group. I will be writing to them to see if I can become part of that group.

I also acknowledge the Hon. Rory McEwen for writing a letter to John Berger requesting executive support through Rural Solutions SA for a period of 12 months. I am sure I can speak on behalf of the chair, John Berger, that he will accept that offer as it stands in a letter of 5 June to me from the Hon. Rory McEwen, and I wish the task force all the best in the future, albeit in a different form, but they will certainly be keen to accept the offer from the minister.