

KANGAROO ISLAND TRANSPORT – 5th June 2008

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (12:20): I move:

That this house notes the failure of the Rann government in not achieving a fair and equitable cost to travel on the sea route between the mainland and Kangaroo Island, and the subsequent impact on residents, pensioners, farmers, small businesses and travellers.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:41): I rise to support the motion of the member for Finniss that the house notes the failure of the Rann government in making transport to Kangaroo Island a fair and equitable process. The island is a lovely place to visit. I must admit that I have visited the island a couple of times recently. One visit related to a meeting about water. The subject of water never seems to go away no matter where you are in this state or country at the moment. Previous to that, I was assisting the CFS in mopping up a week after the fires.

It was interesting that the member for Finniss mentioned the price of freight of grain from Kangaroo Island. I was very impressed as a farmer in my past life to note the crops through which the fire had burnt—and I was hoping that the farmers had adequate insurance. With its rainfall and soil types, obviously it is a place where they can grow abundant crops. I saw some of the best canola crops that I had ever seen. I would not be surprised at all if their yields were approaching 2.5 tonne per hectare.

There have been issues for years about access to Kangaroo Island. I remember as a child travelling on the Troubridge from Port Adelaide overnight. What a wild and lengthy ride. We also had the Fokker Friendship planes operating in those days. I think they were 44-seater planes. Things have changed since then with the present modern ferries—and I note that one company has just ceased operating—and new people operating those flights.

It is not just access for tourists or residents, it is also the cost to the community. I believe they still freight their waste from Kangaroo Island to a waste depot south of Adelaide. This is a huge cost to the council. I guess that they have been forced into that position because of the costs imposed with waste management and the very scientific and environmental way in which waste is handled. In fact, waste has been made a business, I believe. That is just a huge cost on its own.

In relation to the tourism sector, I believe that, if a national highway was opened up over the sea route to Kangaroo Island, the government would get its money back tenfold because it would make the island that much more accessible not only to international tourists but also local tourists. I know that it is something which sticks in your mind when you think about going to Kangaroo Island. You think about all the water you have to cross and whether to go via Cape Jervis, fly or what.

At the end of the day, whether or not people wish to make that trip gets down to cost. I certainly support the fact that we need to make it easier for people to gain access to the island. Finances are tight. It is a very nice place to visit. However, it also needs assistance, as the member for Finniss said, in the freighting of produce. The island has a very broad agriculture base, as well as a forestry industry cranking up. As I said, the waste is transported from there to the mainland. With those few words, I support this very commendable motion from the member for Finniss.