

WATER SUPPLY – 14 February 2008

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (12:02): I move:

That this house call upon the government and SA Water to investigate every possible option, including the use of seawater desalination, for the augmentation of potable water supplies to the Yorke Peninsula and Adelaide Plains regions to ensure that future demands from industry and residential development can be met.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:16): I rise again to speak on an excellent motion of the member for Goyder regarding regional water supplies. What is happening in the Lower Lakes at the moment illustrates the importance of this motion in my neighbouring electorate of MacKillop and also in my own seat of Hammond. While they are running out of water, the government is only at the feasibility study stage, so one has to wonder where regional South Australia sits in the total planning concept of this government. I doubt that it sits very highly.

As far as the Yorke Peninsula is concerned, the member for Goyder has ably indicated a growth in the region. It is certainly a vibrant area of the state's regional economy. The other day when I went over to Port Lincoln and we crossed the Hummocks, I turned to the person next to me in the car and said, 'We are entering another world.'

Mr Griffiths: God's country.

Mr PEDERICK: God's country, as the member for Goyder interjects. It comes from my farming background, because whenever I have been over to the Yorke Peninsula and talked about what yields we may have had at certain times, people look at you knowingly and say, 'Mallee boys.' It certainly is a very prime part of regional South Australia, and it deserves support, as does any other area. The member for Goyder brought up the member for Flinders' constant lobbying for localised desalination on the Eyre Peninsula. What a fantastic place to put it—open coast, especially along the West Coast—to get rid of the brine. With desalination, we must always remember not to put extra salt back into the sea. It is a big sea out there and the salt will dissipate but—

Mr Kenyon interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: The member for Newland interjects and speaks about the concentration. I have actually had a look at the concentration at the Perth plant. The salt water that emits from that plant dissipates within 50 metres. That is monitored 24 hours a day with electronic monitors. It is not as sound; it is not totally open water—Garden Island is offshore. I recommend that the member for Newland go on a study tour; it will be a good excuse to get him out of the state.

Mr Pengilly: There'll be plenty of time after March 2010.

Mr PEDERICK: Plenty of time, absolutely. In the longer term, desalination will happen for Olympic Dam and Roxby Downs, as will happen with BHP. I believe that engineering will fix the problem of brine disposal, whether a brine pipe is needed 5 or 10 kilometres out to sea.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely; and the environmental impact studies are being done, which is something that has suddenly come to the forefront in Labor leanings—since November 2006 when they announced a weir. They had no studies; they did not even indicate a study. They were just going to throw something in the river, they did not know where. But all of a sudden they have become very green. I think they are a little bit worried about preferences and it might relate to the ridiculous situation that happened last week when the Premier and cabinet overruled their Minister for Primary Industries and banned GM cropping in South Australia, but that is another matter.

Ms Ciccarello: He was right behind the decision.

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely—right behind! Communities on Yorke Peninsula and the West Coast deserve better infrastructure and planning and, apart from the areas I represent as the member for Hammond, as parliamentary secretary for the River Murray and the lower lakes I also represent those people, who are really struggling and are in desperate times. It is not all about Adelaide. We were quite inappropriately written off by the Victorian government as a backwater. It is certainly not a backwater. I would like to see any water coming into the lower lakes down my way to make them vibrant again.

We have talked about the energy of desalination. Green technology can do it. The Perth plant is linked to 49 wind turbines on a contractual basis, and obviously it comes through the grid. I have seen presentations on CETO technology and wave technology that can be implemented and can generate more than twice the power needed for the desalination plant, and you can use excess power for building developments either on the peninsula or elsewhere. I commend the motion, which is excellent. We have to look at desalination. The Middle East would not exist without it, and we have to get on with it.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.