

**House of Assembly
29 October 2009**

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders) (11:30): I move:

That this house condemns this Labor government for wasting millions of dollars of taxpayers' funds on gimmicks, icons and non-income earning liabilities, while totally neglecting the infrastructure needed in regional areas that would underpin the industries from which the state reaps a massive export income and also the much touted mining boom.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:55): I rise to congratulate the member for Flinders on bringing this motion forward and I totally support it. I note the comments from the member for Mawson, and I want to look at, in his region, the issue with the Willunga Basin dam project. If it was not for our candidate, Matt Donovan, getting on board perhaps things would not have been progressed. So, let us not paint such a good picture of this so-called caring government which, supposedly, does so much for this state.

We note that, under this government, the Regional Development Infrastructure Fund was cut from \$4 million to \$2.5 million per annum. For a government that supposedly does so much for the regions, I think we need to do a few of the sums. This is a government that was prepared—and I believe still is prepared—to cut the absolute guts out of country health, with absolutely no consultation until afterwards, and then it confronted thousands of people—well, no, the government did not, it peddled out its chief executive officers, if people were lucky, to meetings about country health to say what they were going to do to us.

It is typical of the way this government operates: we will put something out there and then we will have to take the backlash. You wonder why people in power do not learn from this. It was such a huge backlash. The government has no links to the rural regions of this state, apart from the member for Giles, and she—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: What about the member for Frome?

Mr PEDERICK: Is he one of yours, is he? Is the member for Frome one of yours? The Attorney-General is giving the game away again with another one of his little dirty tricks campaigns, indicating that the member for Frome is one of his Labor stooges. I will leave it up to the member for Frome to—

An honourable member: Put it on the record.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes. The member for Frome can put it there himself, but we see that the Attorney-General has laid it on the record that he is one of theirs. It is not for me to defend the member for Frome but I think it just goes to show the idiocy that the Attorney-General peddles in this place.

As I was saying, there was a major outcry about country health, but I still believe that in the background the government still has plans to wreak havoc throughout country South Australia as far as hospitals and health care services are concerned.

Talking about gimmicks that have been brought in by this government, the member for Flinders mentioned the windmills that were barely functional, if at all; the little windmills that were supposedly to show how this government works on sustainable wind energy. We have the tram line that was built up King William Street—it blocks one lane of traffic and creates havoc for people trying to use King William Street—in an area that was already serviced by a bus service.

So, there was no net win for \$31 million of investment, and now we see about the same amount of investment (about \$30 million) on an overpass over South Road. We also see, as the member for Flinders pointed out, the proposal to build a so-called iconic hospital on the rail yards, which will not give us any chance to have the opportunity to develop it as a cultural and entertainment precinct.

There are issues with power supplies in regional areas. If anyone wants to they can talk to the people, as I do, in the Mallee at Pinnaroo and Lameroo about the power cuts that happen quite often out there, and when Australian Zircon was thinking about getting out there. It is

sad to see that Australian Zircon is in caretaker mode at the moment. It would have been far better for the power supply to have been brought up from Tailem Bend so that the power supply through Karoonda, Lameroo and the Greater Mallee area out at Pinnaroo could have been increased by 50 per cent, but that opportunity was lost.

Also, we talk about roadwork in the state. There is almost 20 kilometres of road, partly on the Pinnaroo-Loxton Road and some on the Pinnaroo-Bordertown Road, which, quite frankly, needs a major rebuild. But no, does this government care about that? These are roads that service the Riverland to bring produce down from the Riverland and through to the Dukes Highway so that it can then be transported through to Melbourne or, by turning off at Pinnaroo, through to Sydney. But no, most people from the other side of the house would not have been anywhere near those two roads. The Dukes Highway should be duplicated.

There is talk about how this government has done so much for the regions. As far as water infrastructure goes, if it was not for the people in the Langhorne Creek-Currency Creek area doing it off their own bat in the planning stages, nothing would have happened. Admittedly, the government did come on board and assist down the track, but those people still had to find \$10 million of their own money for the irrigation project. It is a tragedy that this government, while not actually having control, has been in charge of the demise of the Lower Murray and the Lower Lakes. Only in the past couple of weeks have we heard that two communities at Point Sturt and Hindmarsh Island, after years of battling and being told originally that they would have to fund \$100,000 each per connection just to get potable water to their home, will now get it at a reasonable rate of about \$3,500 per connection. But it took years of battling to get that.

In closing, in regard to regional funding, there is so much more to be done. I note the mining opportunities on the West Coast, on the Eyre Peninsula in the seat of Flinders, that could be taken up if only port, roads and power infrastructure and localised desalination plants were provided. There is so much potential in that part of the state. With those remarks, I commend the motion.