

FORESTRY – 30 April 2009

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:59): My question is to the Minister for Forests. Will he instruct or advise Forestry SA not to pursue the export of unprocessed round logs? We have been advised that Forestry SA is considering selling unprocessed round log for export. Given the recent announcement by Carter Holt Harvey that it will retrench some 90 workers, all of whom were employed in the secondary processing industry, and in consideration of the fact that that industry constitutes almost 30 per cent of the South-East's economy, it would seem inappropriate for such exports to occur.

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Forests, Minister for Regional Development) (15:00): I thank the honourable member for his question. He would be aware, as would anyone in this chamber, that Forestry SA operates as a GBE (government business enterprise) and conducts its business according to what is the best approach for it to take from a business perspective. I know that you, too, have offered help in whatever way you can down there, and I know that people in the South-East appreciate that. However, I have also spoken today to Mr Epp from CHH about the situation down there, and I will continue to liaise with him very closely during this time.

It is not just about the welfare and wellbeing of those people who are going to be out of work as a result of the commercial decision but also other aspects that relate to the provision of produce (if that is the right terminology for wood) to that sawmill. At this point in time I will continue to do that and do whatever it is that is in the best interests of the forestry industry in the South-East.