

MURRAY BRIDGE PRISON 1 21/9/06

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): My question is to the Attorney-General. Why did the government fail to advise the mayor and the Rural City of Murray Bridge Council that the new prison would be located at Murray Bridge before the announcement was made? At a meeting with council in June 2006, attended by correctional services CEO Peter Severin, and the Director of Prison Infrastructure John Case, Mr Severin informed council that there were no plans for any site in South Australia at that time. At the same meeting, Mr Severin said he would engage council if, and when, Murray Bridge became an option for the new location. He further advised that thorough community consultation and engagement would occur prior to any decision.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): All will be revealed in the budget.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: But it is true, there has been speculation. Indeed, just the day before yesterday the opposition spokesman on prisons, Michelle Lensink, issued a news release saying—

Ms Chapman: The honourable.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The honourable Michelle Lensink—thank you, member for Bragg—issued a news release saying:

Prisons will again be overlooked.

In this news release—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: In this news release—this woman is clairvoyant—she says:

Prison infrastructure . . . likely to be the big losers in Thursday's State Budget, Shadow Correctional Services Minister Michelle Lensink said today.

Ms Lensink said she expected history to be repeated in this year's Budget with spending on prisons . . . to be overlooked again in favour of projects such as funding big screens at AAMI stadium. And she goes on:

It has been over two years of promises of upgrades to the women's prison and major restructure of the state's prison system and still the community has yet to see any confirmation of capital works projects except for the completion of Mobilong.'

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: In the immortal words of Maxwell Smart, 'Missed by this much!'

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Yes. As the Minister for Transport says, in the words of Maxwell Smart, 'She missed by just a little bit. She missed by this much.' She goes on:

The continued neglect of our prisons not only places prisoners—

Mr PEDERICK: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hammond.

Mr PEDERICK: The Attorney-General is going off on a diatribe. It has nothing to do with the question.

The SPEAKER: I hope the quote is going somewhere.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Yes, it is going somewhere, sir. She says:

The continued neglect of our prisons . . . places prisoners at risk.

She goes on to mention overcrowding, and overcrowding again, and hanging points in cells needing to be removed. Well, I cannot think of a better way of removing them than building a whole new prison.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Oh dear! I am so wounded. The member for McKillop has accused me of door-knocking. I can teach him how to do it. For the first time, do a bit.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: After the Hon. Angus Redford, the previous spokesman for the Liberal Party—

The Hon. M.D. Rann: An adviser to the Queensland Liberals.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I think he was advising Mr Flegg, was he not, in the Queensland election?

The Hon. M.D. Rann: He was the brains behind Flegg.

Members interjecting:

Ms CHAPMAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Yes, I take the point of order. The Attorney will get to the question.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Mr Speaker, the District Council, I think of Yorke Peninsula was it, or Northern Yorke Peninsula, was lobbying the government as hard as it could to get a prison. I think any district council in this state, any rural city, would love a prison.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Look, sir, I don't know what is in the budget but I await it with interest.