

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday 5 June 2006

MURRAY BRIDGE RAILWAY STATION

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): Will the Minister for Transport facilitate the transfer of management of the Murray Bridge railway station building to the Rural City of Murray Bridge and cover the clean-up costs required to make the building safe for human use? The Murray Bridge railway station has been unused for a number of years and is under threat for a number of reasons.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: I thought you'd know the exact number of years.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, it's about five, Michael. You should know, you were there on Friday night. I visited the site recently with David Altmann, the CEO of the Murray Bridge Rural City Council. I am advised that the site is owned by the Australian Rail Track Corporation but that it is under the management of Transport SA. The site is in a terrible state of disrepair due to inhabitation by feral pigeons and the homeless. It is full of pigeon waste and at risk of fire due to use by the homeless. The Murray Bridge Rural City Council has indicated to me—

The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: —I haven't got any ducks and I haven't got any logs, Kevin—that it may be prepared to take over management of the site for use by young people as a youth centre—that would be just fantastic, wouldn't it—however, the clean-up bill is expected to be in the vicinity of \$50 000.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): I took a trip up there. I enjoy my working relationship with the local council.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I can tell you that I'm halfway through a renovation—I might be up there at the railway station soon. I took a trip up there and examined the land with the mayor. I think our relationship is good.

An honourable member: That's nice, Patrick.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I think it's good, but I'd better get an opinion from him.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Well, I like him. I have visited the land. There are issues, and I acknowledge those, but it should be recognised that a lot of that land is in a prime location. It runs onto some other land, and the council has some quite ambitious plans for some redevelopments and extensions.

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: We don't give away something for nothing very often. Kevin Foley doesn't, let me tell you. However, I understand that the LMC is working with the council. It is certainly looking at master planning or having an examination of all the land we hold there. I am continuing to talk with the council and of course the Thoroughbred Racing Authority which has interests up there.

Our view—and I think you would find it quite acceptable—is that that land should be dealt with, looking at the whole issue in Murray Bridge and all of the opportunities. Frankly, my initial judgment would be that the entirety of the land would be too valuable simply to hand over to the council. I do not know if you have been there, but it has some old rail houses on it and it fronts the river, in a beautiful location, and I have to say I wouldn't mind an apartment up on that riverbank myself. I understand the remediation issues.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I simply could not afford one. It's sort of McFetridge territory, not Conlon territory. But there is no doubt that we will continue to work with the council. I believe that we all would like to see some progress on that, but I think you would accept it needs to be considered as a part of some very ambitious plans from the council itself for some development up there. But I am always happy to go up and visit the mayor, and I am sure he likes me as much as I like him.