

SUPPLY BILL

Mr BROCK (Frome) (12:17): As with other members of the house, I would also like to contribute to the debate on the Supply Bill. I must admit that I am in favour of it, but I would just like to say a few words. As a member for Fisher indicated, he drives a Holden, and with a name like mine—Brock—I need to drive a Holden also, support the local car industry and keep the tradition going on.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr BROCK: Thank you to the member for Fisher; hopefully, I will not be speeding. As the member for Fisher and other members said, we have had some excellent times in the last few years. At the moment, we are having some very uncertain times with the economic situation across the world. One of the things that we do not want to be doing is portraying a negative attitude and showing a negative response to the state of South Australia and to the world.

I am getting a message here—slow down. I will slow down. One of the things that I have noticed since coming to parliament eight or nine weeks ago has been the amount of learning needed, and I am still learning, members.

First up, I must compliment the Premier, who has put on hold the supply of four-cylinder cars until further notice, when Holden provides its own four-cylinder cars here. As a state, we should be supporting, as much as we can, local industries, providing, of course, they are competitive.

In parliament yesterday, the Premier listed some major projects achieved in this state in the last couple of years. He went on about the tram project, the Port River, the Bakewell Bridge, the Port Wakefield bypass, and the upgrade of the road, etc. I added them up to about \$1.6 billion. As the member for Fisher indicated previously, as state politicians and as custodians of the state's funds we need to act in a responsible manner, but we need to ensure that we provide infrastructure that is going to benefit the future.

Whilst government projects have progressed, and others are in the pipeline, particularly the desalination plant and other projects, I remind government members that South Australia does not finish in Adelaide. We also need to contribute to regional parts of South Australia. The population may live mainly in Adelaide, but regional parts of South Australia also contribute very strongly, and we need to make certain we look after people out there.

With regard to education, in conjunction with the commonwealth government's stimulus package, I would like to see the government continue to progress that, particularly in terms of regional South Australia's education buildings and air conditioning. Air conditioning seems to be an issue across all of the educational facilities in regional South Australia. I would like to see more money spent on air conditioners to make it easier for students to concentrate. At the same time, in regional South Australia we have to travel fairly long distances to go to school. I ask the government to ensure the improvement of the condition of ageing school buses with air conditioning and the provision of seat belts.

With regard to health, we take on board the Country Health Care Plan, which is still out for discussion. I certainly commend the government for trying to improve facilities and services. As other members have indicated, whilst we may have buildings there, we need to ensure that we retain an increase the amount of services available to regional South Australia, in particular, because it is very hard out there at the moment. To have to travel 600, 700 or 800 kilometres to services in Adelaide is very onerous on the people in regional South Australia.

With regard to water, previously we have had an opportunity in the north of our state with mining activities up there. With the current economic situation at the moment, that may be on pause, but they will come back in. As I indicated in my maiden speech a few weeks ago, one of the issues that we need to confront is water security, ensuring that water is available

not only for Adelaide but also for increased mineral opportunities in the north of our state. That is the only thing that will hold us back: the uncertainty of a continuous supply of water.

It was mentioned yesterday that SA Water has service charges and things like that, and that goes up with the capital value of your premises. The cents in the dollar on that value has not changed, on my observation, so, the higher the valuation of your residence or business, the more money SA Water contributes to the state coffers. I would ask that the increase goes back into infrastructure by way of renewing water pipes and upgrading systems across all of South Australia. We hear all the time of burst water mains and the loss of our precious water, and we seem not to really want to face that issue. We ask people to ration their water in their houses and gardens, but quite often we see fairly large water mains burst and the great loss of water.

With regard to the South Australia Police and police protection throughout our state, I take on board the amount of money that we can put into their activities. However, I just want to talk about regional South Australia, picking up the electorate of Frome. I understand that in the LSA in Port Pirie, and that area there, operational police numbers have not changed in the last 10 years. The fact is that there has been greater activity within that region—extra people coming into the Upper Spencer Gulf area and also the townships of Peterborough, Jamestown, Clare, Port Broughton and the surrounding areas.

I do not understand why, despite an increase in population, increased activities and increased traffic on the highway going through those areas, there is not an increase in our operational numbers. I would certainly ask that the government look at operational numbers and ensure that the requisite number of operational police are on the roads, not behind desks or acting as transport escorts for buildings and activities going to the north of the state.

There will be extra activity with the new wind farms in the north of South Australia and, therefore, more police escorts will be required. Again, I ask that the government look at that matter and ensure that the operational police are out there policing the safety of our people, not revenue raising and not actually escorting wind turbines to regional South Australia.

I think that what the state government needs to do is ensure that we try to help what we already have operating here in South Australia. I certainly encourage the government of the day to ensure that it gives first preference to local industries within the state. I know that we have free trade between the states, but one of the things we need to also do is ensure that the state is viable. We must go forward in a reasonable, effective and responsible manner.

We talk about affordable housing, and it is always being mentioned that the economic situation is getting harder and harder. People are struggling out there. The banks are not passing on the full interest rate cuts, and people are losing their jobs. Affordable housing in regional South Australia is getting harder to obtain. I am hearing that lots of houses out there are vacant. They are ready to be subdivided—the title fixed up and they are ready to be sold. The original concept of that was to sell to homeowners/occupiers, but I know that in Port Pirie quite a few Housing SA homes have been sold. We do not know whether the purchasers are going to live in those homes, because a lot of entrepreneurial people come in and purchase them.

I ask that the government look at upgrading those homes that are vacant at the moment and, in actual fact, purchase or build more homes in regional South Australia to make it better for people on low incomes who are struggling. At the end of the day, if you have a nice home, you feel better and you feel confident. We have to also make certain that we look after our children so that they are able to have a good future.

We also need to ensure that we have a fair and equitable distribution of provisions for all South Australians. I certainly encourage members, when the budget comes down, to look very favourably to regional South Australia to ensure that the services out there are on par with what we have in metropolitan Adelaide, because we are one state, and that is the way we should remain. I commend the bill.

