

WATERWORKS (RATES) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr BROCK (Frome) (17:47): I think this bill is very important, as do other members of the house. I certainly support the bill in its current format, in particular a couple of sections, including quarterly billing. As the member for Finniss indicated, water is a top priority not only in South Australia but in Australia. In the Upper Spencer Gulf, in the electorate of Frome, which I represent, we are very reliant on water from the River Murray, which needs to be fit for human consumption.

This morning the Premier indicated that, with the money from the federal budget, the desalination plant at Port Stanvac will increase capacity to 100 megalitres. It will supply 50 per cent of Adelaide's water. We have to remember that other parts of regional South Australia come off the River Murray before it arrives in Adelaide. We need to ensure that we have water from the Murray-Darling Basin to Morgan, enough to be diverted across into other parts of regional South Australia.

In particular, the Clare and the Gilbert valleys are growing areas where there are lots of bores. I am coming to terms with the different regulations of the Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council with respect to access to River Murray water and bore water, and its scarcity. At the moment, that is impeding on a proposed, fairly large, tomato glasshouse opportunity, which could employ around 100 people. The issue is water and how they can handle it.

The other issue is the current pricing of water. We have all been very lucky to pay \$1.54 (or whatever it is) per kilolitre. I do not think that anybody in South Australia would be able to tell you the price of water per kilolitre. People use water, but they do not have any consideration or understanding of its scarcity and the cost of getting it to regional South Australia.

Peter Davis, the Mayor of Port Lincoln, has been a great advocate for putting up the price of water to \$10 a kilolitre. If that is intended to save the River Murray, I do not think it will. We will still use water for whatever reasons.

In terms of the Upper Spencer Gulf and the Hon. Graham Gunn's electorate, I said in my maiden speech that the centre of South Australia has the most untapped resources available, and the only thing holding that back is a supply of suitable water.

I have spoken to the member for Giles about the suggested desalination plant at Point Lowly, which is not guaranteed at this point, and we would still need to take it through the EIS. We would need to ensure that, as with Port Stanvac, other desalination plants in this state undergo an EIS to make sure that we have sustainable environmental outcomes.

The member for Schubert also indicated that, as part of the development plan, new houses have to install rainwater tanks. The minimum size of the tanks is 1,000 litres, which goes nowhere, especially if it is connected to the toilet or the bathroom. I believe, as does the member for Schubert, that the compulsory size should be in the vicinity of 20,000 to 30,000 litres per household. Today, rainwater tanks come in various sizes and shapes, and they can fit underground or under houses as part of the foundations. There are ideal opportunities to facilitate different rainwater tank sizes and styles.

Another point is that, concerning the State Strategic Plan, the Premier indicated this morning that the new desalination plant at Port Stanvac will supply 50 per cent of the population's requirements in Adelaide. The question needs to be clear. Is that based on the current population, or is that based on the state's population reaching the target of two million? We need to bear in mind that this is a great state but we do not want the population to stagnate at two million. We want to increase the population, especially with all the resources in the north of the state.

The other issue concerns opportunities for growth. Referring to Adelaide, going towards Gawler and Two Wells the growth factor is phenomenal. I come down here every two weeks. I am on autopilot at the moment when I come down here. Before you know it, you question

whether you have gone through Lochiel or whether you have gone through Port Wakefield, and I am not speeding, by the way.

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

Mr BROCK: That is exactly right, member for Finniss. I want to reassure people here that I am not speeding. I have not done that, but I will have to be very careful because I might get caught going home tomorrow night.

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

Mr BROCK: Yes; that's right. Quite seriously, we also need to look at the growth that is happening in Adelaide and my question a minute ago was whether the desalination plant would accommodate future growth, especially with the Defence Force coming across here and with the growth at the submarine corporation and so forth.

This bill is good, and I certainly support it, but I am more particularly concerned about the continuation of the supply of water to the state here. As a lot of my constituents in Port Pirie and Clare have indicated, desalination plants can overcome some issues, but perhaps what we should be doing is looking again at bringing the rivers down from the north and redirecting them through the centre of South Australia and the Northern Territory not only to facilitate the mining opportunities up there but also to open the area up for agricultural crops, sheep and cattle.

It is one of those things that we take for granted. I know over the last two or three years we have been in drought, but let us really be honest: I do not think that state and federal governments over the last 20 years have really addressed the issue of water. Every time it rains, it goes to the back of our minds, and I am no exception to that. However, we need to keep that right to the front from now on, and make sure that we all work together.

I do not want to be sitting here in five years' time and find that nothing has been happening with desalination plants or other water coming back in. I have been a member of the Murray-Darling Association for many years. I have known the issue of the Murray-Darling Basin up there. I know the concerns from the other states up at the top end. As was mentioned this morning, we should not blame the cotton growers or whoever grows whatever crops up there. Farmers will grow and produce with whatever water is available, and, if they need 10 gegalitres of water or whatever it may be, they can use that and they can grow whatever crops they like.

I commend the bill, and I hope it gets clear passage, but at the same time, we need to ensure that we go further and make certain that we have not only desalination plants here but also future water through the centre of South Australia.