

Question Time

16th February 2012

PORT PIRIE

Mr BROCK (Frome) (14:20): My question is to the Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy. Can the minister explain to the house why the state government did not include Port Pirie in its RESIC Infrastructure Demand Study, which I have in my hand? I have had regard to the report by Parsons Brinckerhoff and I am very concerned that Port Pirie, an existing working port, has not been considered as an option to export mineral commodities. In fact, Port Pirie, under the proposed infrastructure corridors outlined in the report and demonstrated on a detailed map, is not even shown. The minister stated in his foreword, when releasing the report:

It is important South Australia captures the window of opportunity to expand the sector while global demand for our resources is strong.

Port Pirie is well placed for expansion. Port Pirie is open for business.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:21): The member for Frome is a—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: —passionate advocate for his community and he has let me know privately in no uncertain terms about how angry he is about this. I can assure the member for Frome—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I can't hear the minister.

Mr Gardner interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Morialta!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: First and foremost, let me reassure the member for Frome that, through his hard work, this government is completely committed to working with the community and industry leaders of Port Pirie to maximise benefits that will flow from the state's expanding minerals and petroleum industries. I feel that Port Pirie is well placed to prosper as a result of the impending resources and energy expansion. I think the people of Port Pirie are very lucky to have a representative like the member for Frome who is prepared to take the government on, and he has taken us on very, very well. Can I just say that—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Sanderson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Adelaide, you are warned.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: She's been waiting to be warned for so long. She's been passed over so often. It's not fair. With a skilled workforce and with many sites capable of accommodating key infrastructure requirements, I think Port Pirie's future is looking very bright. The 2007 Resources and Energy Sector Infrastructure Council (RESIC) was established by—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: —the South Australian government as a key advisory body of senior public and industry representatives.

Mr Marshall interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Have you fixed up your age on your website or is it still 41?

Mr Marshall interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I noticed last night on Twitter that the member for Norwood is so vain he lied about his age. He has got his age as 41; he is actually 44.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It was close to Valentine's Day, so I assume that's what it was. The 2011 RESIC report—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: —that Parsons Brinckerhoff has undertaken recently—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Minister, can you sit down until we have some quiet. Minister.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: In 2011, the RESIC engaged Parsons Brinckerhoff to undertake the Resources and Energy Infrastructure Demand Study. This study was the first of its kind in Australia and laid out some important information that will be vital to many stakeholders involved in the growth of our minerals and energy sector. This study, through direct engagement with industry, aimed to identify the strategic infrastructure needs for the resources and energy sector over the next 10 years and beyond.

The report identified that South Australia will need to overcome some unique infrastructure challenges to holistically address the needs across commodity value chains. Through this analysis, RESIC formulated a number of recommendations to the government covering: infrastructure corridors and utility hubs; the development of deep-sea ports, along with rail and road logistics, which is what the member for Frome is on about; electricity infrastructure; analysis of water resources; and, of course, government facilitation of investment in resources infrastructure.

On 8 February I launched the discussion paper to seek feedback from the community on those recommendations. This consultation process also includes a roadshow to hear firsthand from South Australians including the people of Port Pirie. In fact, the first of these regional consultations will be held in Port Pirie on 5 March. Further sessions are scheduled for Whyalla—the seat that you represent, Madam Speaker—Port Lincoln on 7 March, and Adelaide on 9 March.

Indeed, it is through a rigorous process of community engagement that this government will be in the best position to work with industry to form a sustainable resources sector. Port Pirie is well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities that we hope will arise from the exploration activity being conducted in the Braemar province and the potential to establish an infrastructure corridor along that region. That is why I want to encourage feedback across the region, and if Port Pirie can make a strong case for investment then the upcoming consultation session is just the venue to do that.

Of course, I strongly urge the member to provide his own submission as part of that consultation process so that his views can be incorporated into the government's response to the discussion paper. The government is listening to the community. We want to hear how

they believe they can best share in the benefits of the rapid expansion of our mining sector. It is important that South Australia uses the window of opportunity provided by the strong global demand for our resources to lock in the sorts of projects that will build up our capacity to export. By attracting developers and investment capital to support local companies, my department is well placed to target the investors required to deliver the megaprojects needed within our borders.

Just as the previous mining booms in this state provided South Australia with a legacy of road, rail and other infrastructure that benefited everyone for years to come, we need to use this opportunity to lock in those nation building projects that will last generations. Feedback can be provided online until 26 March 2012, and I look forward to receiving submissions on the RESIC recommendations.