

EYRE PENINSULA BUSHFIRES

Mr BROCK (Frome) (12:04): I wholeheartedly support and congratulate the member for Flinders for bringing this motion forward and also endorse the amendment by the minister. I will be very brief and I will not repeat what everyone else has said, but from an emergency services point of view, it is not only the CFS people we have to thank, but also the SES and also the ambulance people and others like that across the whole of the state.

Just referring back to the clearing of vegetation, I will be very supportive of and speaking on the member for Morphett's bill to amend the Native Vegetation Act. In my travels I have been very fortunate as I have not had to be involved in a bushfire. The severity of bushfires is hard to comprehend. As part of the Natural Resources Committee we did have the opportunity, with the member for Davenport, to look at an inquiry into the Adelaide Hills bushfire, and we had the opportunity to view, firsthand, a video of the Canberra fires. Just sitting there watching that video was traumatic enough, and we were sitting in an air-conditioned office.

Certainly one of the issues I have is clearing sufficient firebreaks across not only regional South Australia but in very close proximity to Adelaide, and one of the things I do find is that the local councils that are responsible for this seem to leave it to the last minute and we can see, even with this season here, how the seasons have changed very dramatically, and I think we need to look at the road verges being cleared not only once but maybe two or three times leading up to it, because once the temperature gets like today they cannot use any equipment to actually start clearing.

Also, I think the other issue is, and I had this issue with my own local council for a household block in Port Pirie, some residents requested vacant blocks belonging to the ARTC to have notices served upon them to actually have their blocks cleared and they were told very clearly the local councils cannot enforce those or put notices out until such time as the total fire bans are declared and, again, that is one of the things I will be taking up later on.

I, as with others here, support and congratulate the member for Flinders for bringing this up here, and I certainly am very appreciative of all the volunteers of all the emergency services across South Australia and, in particular, the CFS, because they do take their lives in their hands to save somebody else's life. So I certainly, again, congratulate the member for Flinders.