

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE: ADELAIDE AND MOUNT LOFTY REGION NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LEVY

Mr BROCK (Frome) (11:33): Frome. There was an electoral redistribution but I don't think it went that way. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I join with the other members of the committee in supporting this disallowing of the levy well in excess of an 11 per cent increase that was sought by the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges NRM Board. As the member for Stuart has indicated, there was a lot of discussion regarding this and whether it has happened previously and whether increases have just been automatically approved by the standing committee, but that is another issue. Our committee, as the member for Stuart has already indicated, works very well. It does not work on party lines. There are members of the government there, there are members of the opposition, and it includes Family First and Independents. We take our role as a committee very seriously.

This committee analysed vigorously the submission from this NRM Board. It is hard to make a decision on it and there is no criticism of what the NRM boards do across the whole region, but it is not our duty to rubberstamp any increases. We need to justify that. It is an impost on the ratepayers of the community. They are already being sluggish with the emergency services levy, the NRM levy and also council rates. We all need to manage and ensure that we do not overburden our communities with imposts all the time.

I think the member for Fisher has already indicated that local government also needs to go through the same sort of critical examination. Even in my council at Port Pirie, last year their rates went up 12 per cent residential, and in the rural area they were up nearly more than 30 per cent. That is an absolute impost, and there is a public meeting tonight regarding the draft budget. I think they are increasing the waste management levy to nearly \$175 per ratepayer plus a 9 per cent increase in the rates. Again, I encourage communities, wherever they may be, to critically examine what their local councils are doing.

The other issue is that local councils are also involved with the collection of the levies. They also need to be very vocal and examine any increases made by any government agency, particularly the NRM boards, because the local councils are the ones who need to collect it, and they need to be the front-line people able to defend the issue.

The member for Bragg indicated some displeasure on certain things, but I will say that I have had the opportunity to actually go to a lot of forums in my electorate with NRM, and I welcome that openness from the Northern and Yorke board. It is a very good one, and I have great communication with them, so I am aware of all the issues that may be happening within my electorate. Again, I certainly support the motion by the Hon. Steph Key, our committee chairperson, and fully endorse the disallowance.