

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (17:00): I shall be brief. I do commend the member for Morialta, and I think his 18 or so minutes expresses the frustration that he felt in the seven sessions of the five days of estimates that he actually took part in. For my sins, I was actually involved in all five days, across 13 different portfolio areas and 15 hours, and I asked questions for 13 of those, so I suppose I had the chance to express my level of frustration a bit more than some other members.

I enjoy estimates questions opportunities. I think it provides a good chance for us to drill down to specific issues. There is a chance for some level of informal chat to occur. It is interesting that some members do not choose to do that; they choose to have quite lengthy opening statements and then a lot of questions from their own side. Some are very comfortable in just being asked questions, so I commend those members who do that.

There are a couple of areas I want to focus on today. The first is the health area and community private hospitals. We had a good opportunity to ask questions of minister Hill in that regard. It disappoints me immensely that this decision, taking effect from July of 2011, will withdraw \$1.174 million from the Glenelg, Keith, Ardrossan and Moonta community private hospitals. Being lucky enough to represent the Ardrossan and Moonta hospitals, this decision disappoints me terribly, and I know the communities in the central Yorke Peninsula and northern Yorke Peninsula are very concerned about the impact it will have on health provision in those areas.

I want to put a few basic facts before the chamber. In the Moonta scenario, up to eight beds per day can be made available for public use at that private hospital. The government pays, as per a negotiation, \$120.05 for every day of bed occupancy. To me, that seems the cheapest public bed hospital you will ever find in your life. It is a mad situation. It jeopardises the future of the Moonta hospital. Twenty staff, potentially, face retrenchment from probably March or April next year, because the hospital has to ensure that it has the funds to pay out the expected costs of any retrenchment payment to any of their staff members.

In the Ardrossan scenario, they have had an agreement in place for 4½ years for a contribution originally at \$10,000 per month, which has had some level of indexation, bringing it up to about \$140,000 per year now for accident and emergency funding. The loss of that will make an important difference to their ability to fund their clinical care beds, and indeed place the Ardrossan hospital, which has an extensive area for high and low-care aged services, also in doubt. These are two communities that are vibrant and strong. They have great futures. There is development occurring in that area. The populations will continue to grow.

To me, it seems a ridiculous decision to withdraw a relatively small amount of money from the health budget, being some \$4.5 billion in total, and taking \$1.174 million away from these four community private hospitals. That is why the member for Light's contribution today really did disappoint me. I have had points of order taken on me before for the use of the word 'gobbledegook'. I would have said that about the member for Light but, given that some people have expressed a frustration with that, I will say it was all balderdash then, because what the member for Light demonstrated to me today was that he does not truly understand communities. He wanted to take political opportunism out of it, and I thought more of the member for Light than that. Anyway, we will move forward.

I had great concerns also in the small business and regional development areas when it affects Regional Development Australia and their reduced funding from 2013, and indeed reduced funding for the Business Enterprise Centres from July of 2011. These are government-supported arms of economic development at the lower level that do truly

make a difference. They have existed for some years. They have a wide network of clients. They provide support in so many different ways that make a difference to the success of small business, and the challenges of the GFC have presented themselves to metropolitan and regional areas alike.

Small business is the lifeblood of South Australia, but it appears to me that really the Labor government has been prepared in this budget to sacrifice any support for small business. That is extremely disappointing, because if we want our economy to grow we need to ensure that small business is supported so that little problems do not become big problems. Quite often it only takes a relatively small amount of effort from an RDA or a BEC; those groups know how to help small businesses grow their businesses, but the withdrawal of funds and the threat that that poses—by basically both ministers saying that it is necessary for those groups to go out and find alternative sources of funding which can only come from one source and that is from the businesses that they support which, indeed, puts more pressure upon the businesses that need their support—disappoints me immensely.

I commend the member for Waite on his questioning in respect to Playford Capital, which is venture capital at the lower level of the scale with a greater level of risk associated with it, but the economic benefit to the state is magnified many times through that. So, withdrawing funds from Playford Capital and, indeed, withdrawing funds from Innovate SA, which is based out of Mawson Lakes, again, puts more pressure upon small business.

All members here would know that there are 135,000 small businesses in South Australia, and 96 per cent of our businesses are classified as small to medium enterprises. If government support cannot exist to ensure that small business is there to grow the economy in South Australia, it places the future of our great state at risk. So, there has to be a reversal of this situation; there has to be an inward-looking Labor government that recognises that it has made errors and does something about it to move our state forward, because if it does not then it is putting everything at great risk.

Finally, I want to close on the Department of Planning and Local Government estimates session: it is very important. When it comes to the future growth of our state, with population projections, we need to make sure that we get that right. I was rather amazed, and I know that the member for Light has questioned this before, that concerns have been expressed about Liberal members seemingly wanting to spend more money all the time. I raise the point that the DPLG holds an important role in the future in getting the planning right, and the member for Light acknowledges that too.

I was disappointed to note that there has been a 10 per cent reduction in the salaries costs of DPLG. These are the people who need to be there; they need to make sure that they are supporting local government and business when it comes to development plan amendments, and they need to make sure that they get the planning right for the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide. If there is one area of government that needs support within the bureaucracy it seems to me that the DPLG is it. So, that is frustrating to me.

In reply, the minister talked about better use of resources, condensing things, making sure that outcomes are focusing on areas of strategic needs, but that means that other things are missing out. Communities across South Australia have expressed a lot of concern about the continual delay in the consideration of development plan amendments, so we need to make sure that we get that right. I welcomed the estimates sessions. I am sure that other members want to contribute. Thank you.