

## Moonta and Ardrossan hospitals & Marine Parks – 6 April 2011

**Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (21:01):** I wish to talk about some things that are relevant to my electorate also when it comes to the grievance opportunity as part of the supply debate. The first one relates to a decision that was made and announced on 16 September last year when the budget came down and the impact that that is going to have across forward years on my community, particularly as it relates to my community's private hospitals.

In my case it is Moonta and Ardrossan that were affected by the budget decision, and I have to tell you that the immediate effect of this was absolutely one of shock in those communities and a great fear that evolved immediately as to what the future was going to be. I understand, yes, that a lot of discussions have taken place since then. A lot of nervous energy has been expended by the hospital boards, the management of the hospitals and the wider communities of those areas in trying to determine that they have a strong future.

I do recognise that Country Health has become involved and helped develop revised business plans but, as I posed the question previously, I pose the question again this evening. When decisions like that are going to be made, in trying to control panic that is going to be evident because obviously people are going to be fearful about the future of their facilities, come in early and talk to the communities and do not rely upon it being dragged into the debate and the argument about it. Give some specifics, though, especially as it relates to Moonta because to me it is still a crazy decision even though things have moved forward a bit in the argument about it since.

Moonta is a private community hospital. It has some eight beds and a contract existed where patients could come from the public hospital system which was full—and in most cases probably that would be close by in Wallaroo which has, I believe, only about 19 or 20 beds—and they would accept those public patients into the Moonta private community hospital on the basis of a fee of only \$120.05 per night. In itself that sounds very cheap, and it is very cheap, especially when you compare it to what the cost of a bed is within the public system. I am advised that, for example, something like the RAH has a cost of approximately \$1,400 per night. I find it very hard to comprehend, from a financial viewpoint (and when you have a system that works well, it provides an overspill facility and there is only a cost being met when the service is required), that you do not retain that sort of thing.

Yes, it identified a savings across those four community hospitals of \$1.174 million. It has a detrimental effect upon those communities enormously, which I hope they do recover from. I was there not long after the announcement, and a public rally was held at the Moonta Hospital and a thousand people were there. They filled the lawn area in front of the hospital. They showed up as a sign of support for their facility, which they have supported for generations. They were fearful for it. They wanted everyone to understand the importance of it, and they were prepared to take up that fight in any way possible.

Similarly, the Ardrossan Community Hospital has been challenged financially for a vast number of years. It has had an agreement in place since 2006, I think, for originally \$120,000 per year in recognition of accident and emergency costs. That has increased a little now to its current situation of \$146,000 per year. From 30 June that hospital, like Moonta, faces the withdrawal of those dollars.

The Ardrossan Community Hospital has also looked at business plan opportunities and recovery of funds for the aged-care facilities that it provides as part of its operations from the federal government, but it is that accident and emergency issue. Ardrossan, being located on the coast road, with probably 300,000 visitors going past that area of Central Yorke Peninsula heading further south, has a very important position. Its ambulance service is extremely busy collecting, transporting and treating injured people.

Those people are delivered to the Ardrossan hospital and treatment is provided to them. It does come at a cost. The hospital board recognises that and contributes towards it, but it does require that level of support. It might have found some other revenue sources that will compensate in some way to allow it to have a future, but it is still a great frustration to me that public funds cannot be committed to provide facilities to ensure that the public can be treated.

The next issue I wish to talk about is marine parks. I commend the member for Bragg for organising the meeting last night. Some members in this chamber will say that it was blatantly political but, really, it was a forum and a voice opportunity for the thousands of people across South Australia who are really strong recreational fishers and who wanted to have the chance to express themselves in one united voice.

Being there and hearing those people and the anger in their voice, how loud they yelled things out, the fact that they wanted to get on the microphone and the fact that they were comfortable being in front of a television camera or a radio microphone indicated that they wanted a chance for people to hear the frustration they felt.

Marine parks are a very emotional issue, and for the people I represent in this place from Yorke Peninsula and the Adelaide Plains it is one they will continue to argue against for ever and a day. I have been to the public meetings held on the peninsula, and they are not ones that I have held, so they are not political. They are meetings that have been called by local action groups that have

formed themselves together or, indeed, by the local advisory group (LAG) that the minister has appointed. In each of those meetings I hear a lot of frustrations and tensions flowing through, too.

The people who attend those are very supportive of the principle behind marine parks. The Liberal opposition is supportive of the principle behind marine parks, but there is a level of frustration that is flowing through these sanctuary zone declarations that came out at the end of November. There was no consultation with the local advisory groups, and, again, they are being instructed by big brother who sits to the right-hand side of the Speaker that 'This is what you are going to take.'

These people want the chance to go out fishing. It is for the commercial operators, it is for professional fishers and it is for the rec fishers, and it is the impact upon the economy of the Yorke Peninsula that we in this place all have to be concerned about. Last night, a member from the Real Estate Institute, Mr Robin Turner, as a private individual, provided some comment from a real estate operator on Yorke Peninsula who talked about the percentage of transactions that go through his business that are related to people who buy holiday homes or homes on the peninsula. Those people are not permanent residents.

**The Hon. K.O. Foley:** How would you do it if you were in government?

**Mr GRIFFITHS:** I want to make sure, Mr Foley, member for Port Adelaide—

**The Hon. K.O. Foley:** How would you do it?

**Mr GRIFFITHS:** Consult; consult early. Tell people, engage the local advisory groups. You appoint local advisory groups but do not use their expertise. You come in there and you tell them, 'This is what's going to happen.' You get people to nominate for this and they are the ones who become the public face of it and they are the ones who cop the flak for it, but those local advisory group members are good people, too. They cop an enormous amount of flak over it. Those people want to get a positive outcome, too. They want to find a middle ground opportunity that allows marine park principles to be reserved, for some small level of sanctuary zones to exist—a smaller level.

*The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:*

**Mr GRIFFITHS:** And I can quote to the member for Port Adelaide an example of a group of people who have gone to an enormous amount of physical effort in the Port Victoria, Chinaman Wells and Balgowan communities for Marine Park 11. They have looked at the 14 key principles that the minister has asked his department to look at when determining proposed sanctuary zone locations. They have met those and they have found areas that they think meet all those criteria and occupy only 3.2 per cent, not the 25 per cent that is currently proposed, or thereabouts, for Marine Park 11. So we have to, indeed, use this forum as an opportunity to argue the case.

*The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:*

**Mr GRIFFITHS:** I am not disputing the out of boundaries, member for Port Adelaide. I am talking about the sanctuary zone boundaries that are within the parks.

*The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:*

**Mr GRIFFITHS:** Already I have had people contacting my office asking, 'Can I go fishing off the beach?' That is the level of anxiety and fear that exists. All you are doing is putting fear in the community. The level of distrust that is out there is enormous at the moment.

You have to do the economic and social impact study to determine that and then use that as really important evidence to look at the target size: how big do we want this sanctuary zone to be? The minister continually talks about 10 per cent of marine waters being targeted for sanctuary zones. That is his principle. Look at what the economic and social impact will be, because the science and principles are important, but you have to look at people.

That is what we in this chamber deal with all the time, that is, people; and these people have made substantial investments. They are really concerned that, indeed, tourism and all the by-product industries that support recreational fishing and the people who come there to live permanently will be seriously and permanently harmed by such large-scale sanctuary zones. The communities that are close to a sanctuary zone feel gutted.

I will quote Port Victoria again. It is a small town with 400 people and an amazing history in the grain trade, the port, 'Cape Horners' and all that sort of thing. The marine areas have been part of their life forever and they are really concerned that their future is going to be taken away because of this. So, the process has to be right.

Talk about consultation but let's get it right and make sure that we bring the community along with us, otherwise they will keep complaining and clogging the talkback radio stations. They will use any forum they have to ensure that the members of the Labor Party in the government—backbenchers, ministers, whatever it is—are told every day about what they feel. These recreational fishers are 270,000 people who live across South Australia. It is an enormous lobby group. They want to make sure they have the chance going forward to go fishing. We all want to make sure they have got the chance to go fishing but, unless you do it properly, you are going to fail.