

## RAILWAY CROSSINGS

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (15:42): I am not sure how to start when the last word is 'guts' from the member for Mawson. I commend the honourable member on his contribution about country footy. Having played all my football in the country, and being lucky enough to play—

Mr Bignell: More than one game?

Mr GRIFFITHS: More than one game—in some colts, A grade and B grade premierships—sadly, not rising to the level of one of my uncles who won six Mail Medals in a row—I was lucky enough to perform at some level. Well done, member for Mawson.

I wish to speak briefly about rail crossings in the Adelaide Plains region, which is a rather important issue. I am glad the member for Mawson is still here as parliamentary secretary for transport. I commend the member for Taylor for becoming involved in this matter. She is also intending to meet early next week with constituents who have property on both sides of Light River, which are our northern and southern boundaries, depending on where one lives.

I met with these property owners early last week. They are farmers who in most cases are third generation in the area. They are very safety conscious, and that is the important thing that I took out of my discussion with them. They respect the fact that the railway line has been there for many years, but there is always a constant need for them to move machinery between their various properties.

Efforts are being made to improve the crossings as part of the National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2010-20, for which \$150 million has been allocated to the nation—and the parliamentary secretary might correct me—and between \$13 million and \$14 million is coming to South Australia to undertake rail crossing works.

The concern by these property owners, who are residents of the District Council of Mallala, is that the plans that have been discussed—and there has been negotiation between the District Council of Mallala and the property owners—will restrict them as to the direction in which they can turn, either left or right, when they come from their property and go over the railway line and want to turn onto either an unsealed road (which is part of the local government controlled network) or a sealed road (which is part of the state government controlled network).

These discussions have been ongoing for some time. The council has done some preliminary scoping work on what might be a solution. The property owners are concerned that that initial work will be restrictive. Some effort has been made to engage the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure via some form of meeting with property owners. I know the member for Taylor has spoken to minister Conlon about this matter and a briefing will be provided to the member for Taylor very soon.

I would certainly urge the house to understand that, yes, it is very important that safety is improved on our rail crossings, and I emphasise that all the property owners are very conscious of that. In some of the documents they gave to me, it highlights that there are 100 incidents throughout Australia each year. On average, 37 people die as a result of incidents at rail crossings. So, it is obvious that there is a need to do something, but we need to ensure that, wherever possible, provision is made for these property owners to be able to move around their properties. As they explained to me, it will mean not only an increase in the distance and travelling time for them to use alternative routes to reach their properties but also, in some cases, they might have to take some very large machinery through towns. That in itself creates an inconvenience and it will affect not just Mallala but Two Wells and the many communities along the rail line. Therefore, some level of compromise needs to occur.

I encourage the parliamentary secretary to become involved—and I thank the member for Mawson for nodding his head in agreement—because it is important that we have an outcome. The member for Taylor will inspect the area next week, as I did last week. I was driven around for about an hour by one of the property owners. We would approach a corner very slowly and he would say, 'Okay, we are in a four-wheel drive, but imagine you are in an articulated vehicle and you have part of the trailer hanging over the bitumen road, and you have to stop to see whether a train is coming in either direction.'

Tree lines impact on that vision. In many cases, some of these trees were planted 10 to 20 years ago. It was well intentioned, everyone understands that, and we need to protect the environment, but the size of the trees is now creating many problems. No matter how careful you are, you have to take a guess and, when that happens, there is the potential for an accident to happen, too.

There is a need for the parliament to become involved. I know the minister will be supportive of the member for Taylor in the briefing to be provided, but I hope that DTEI staff will make the effort to visit the area and to talk to property owners to try to find a solution that takes into account not only the interest of road safety and safety on the rails, but importantly that these businesses (which are very safety conscious) can continue without an undue amount of disruption. They are trying to make a dollar; they are trying to access their properties; they are trying to ensure that they can make it work.