

REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (15:47): While I wish to talk predominantly about another matter, I commend the member for Light for his contribution in regard to volunteers. All of us who are lucky enough to represent the people of our communities in this place respect and witness every day the effort that volunteers make in our community, and have done for generations. I pay credit to the wonderful people out there who willingly devote an enormous amount of their time, often at great personal sacrifice, to make a difference to the communities they live in. Without their efforts, we would be a much poorer place.

I wish to talk today about roads, which is a shadow portfolio-related issue for me but also predominantly an issue in my own electorate. In my Address in Reply contribution this morning I talked briefly about transport infrastructure, but I wish to highlight some particular instances that I think should be brought to the attention of the house.

Prior to coming into this place, I worked for some years in local government, and local government has a strong responsibility to provide a reliable road network. Therefore, I recognise the difficulty in ensuring that the resources required to build a road network to the expectations of every community are challenging, so I am not completely naive in this. However, I think it is important for us all to recognise that there is an enormous unmet demand for an improvement in our road network.

Within my own electorate, and not very far south of where I live, is a section of road that I travel on very regularly between Maitland and Millicent. There is a particularly bad section and there is no way of describing it other than it is a disgrace. The number of gouges in the road, because drivers of vehicles can be unsuspecting about the pronounced dip in this section of road and suddenly find that the bottom of their vehicle scrapes along the road, is frightening. When following people down that section of the road, I can tell whether they are locals because they move to the centre of the road. If they are first time visitors to the place they go straight over the bump and you see everything around their vehicle jump around. So, to the member for Mawson (who, I understand, has taken on the parliamentary secretary role associated with this), I encourage him to visit regional South Australia, as he has indicated this morning he intends to do.

Investments have been made, and I commend the government on that. Within my own electorate I have had an investment of funds also, but there is an enormous unmet need out there that needs to be fixed and very soon.

In about 2004 there was a reduction in speed limits from the previous 110 km/h to 100 km/h. As the CEO of a regional council at that time I was hopeful that that would result in a significant investment in road infrastructure to bring it back up to the standards required to return to the 110 km/h speed limit. However, sadly, shoulder situations are terrible on many roads. Again, I do acknowledge the fact that some investment has taken place, but there are some sections of road that people in the community continually come to me about. I know that they are writing to the Minister for Transport. I encourage them to write letters to the local newspaper and I encourage these people to ring talkback radio, too, because it appears that you have to be a loud voice all the time to make a difference.

Within the electorate last year I circulated a petition specifically calling on the Minister for Transport to invest in the road network. Some 2,396 signatures, I think, were collected from many of the communities across the electorate who were very upset about the road network, and they wanted something done. They were pleased that, as part of the election commitments made by both parties, the Liberal Party put funds on the table to address this backlog of road maintenance. Sadly, the Labor Party did not come out with that level of commitment. It does have some funds available, but there needs to be a lot more. I therefore encourage the member for Mawson in his deliberations with the minister to fight for a greater share of the amount of money in the state budget to go towards transport and, indeed, towards the maintenance of our road network, because it is seriously in need of it.

The Barunga West Council is no longer within my electorate—only a small portion of it is; most of it has been transferred to the electorate of Frome. That council has been writing to me and to the member for Frome, Mr Brock, asking for support in getting some funds allocated to it. I know that the member for Frome has spoken to me about the fact that he intends to enter into regular discussions with all the representatives of the parliament who surround his electorate to try to get some things done on the linkage roads that are in poor condition, and I think that is a good move.

Clearly, there is a desperate need in much of regional South Australia—indeed, the member for Morphett referred me to a section of Anzac Highway today, too, which needs an investment in road funding—for an enormous amount of investment to occur, because the people of South Australia

have paid their taxes for generations. They have done so on the basis that it was going to be returned to them in some way by the provision of services and infrastructure. In many cases they have had improvements occur, and I am sure that they would gratefully acknowledge that, but there is an enormous area of road network that does need more to come into it.