



WATER SUPPLY

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (12:02): I move:

That this house call upon the government and SA Water to investigate every possible option, including the use of seawater desalination, for the augmentation of potable water supplies to the Yorke Peninsula and Adelaide Plains regions to ensure that future demands from industry and residential development can be met.

It is a pleasure to put this motion to the house today, and I do it in all sincerity. While some accusations are made across the chamber that we sometimes do not mean what we talk about, I certainly do mean this one. For me, it is part of the reason I came into this place. As all of us have done, in my maiden speech in the house I talked about my reasons for coming into parliament, or seeking that role, and what I wanted to try to do for the future. I spoke at quite some length about the fact that water issues in my community would be a major focus during the time I had the opportunity to be in this place. Since then I have continued to talk about water. In saying that, I also recognise that many of my colleagues are also very concerned about water supplies to their own electorates as well as to the state, and I pay particular attention to the fact that the member for Flinders is very passionate about water. She constantly talks to me and to the party room about it, and about the needs of the Eyre Peninsula communities.

I do not want to refer back to my maiden speech too often, but there are a couple of points I made two years ago that I want to make sure I get on the record again.

Mr Pederick interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: You never know. First, I want to note that in my maiden speech I made reference to the previous member for Goyder, John Meier, when he made his maiden speech on 14 December 1982. He said then:

A major problem in parts of Goyder, especially in the early years and still today in selected areas, is that of water. In most areas however, it was the piped reticulated water supply that brought certainty of supply to the people. Unfortunately the reticulated water supply does not extend to all areas of the electorate. This in turn limits the development potential of many farms, it limits the amount of stock that can be carried, and it means an uncertain water supply for many households, especially during our current drought.

Remember, this was 1982. He continued:

Although I strongly believe that the reticulated water supply must be extended to all parts of Goyder with all haste, at the same time, because of the limited water resources to which South Australia has access, I am very concerned about the availability of water for the next generation's usage. Hopefully, priority will be given to examining alternative methods to supplement the water supply for rural areas generally.

Sadly, 25 years later exactly the same situation is in place, and thus the reason for my motion. You will also note that John Meier's words included 'alternative methods'. That is also reflected in my motion because it is important that we use whatever technology is out there to ensure that water supplies are available for our communities.

I know of at least 16 communities across the electorate of Goyder that do not have access to a reticulated water supply through the mains network; they rely solely on rainwater for their water needs. For my own home at Maitland (to which I have a reticulated supply) I have invested substantially in rainwater tanks, as have many people in the region. In my case, I have a 10,000 gallon tank and a 5,500 gallon tank, giving me over 60,000 litres of rainwater storage, and I use only that.

We all acknowledge the terrible pressures that the River Murray is under from the effects of the drought

experienced over the past five years. Clearly, the pressure on the traditional supply of much of our state's water needs demonstrates that every possible option available to us through modern technology needs to be investigated and pursued.

I take this opportunity to quote some examples of the augmentation costs that are being forced upon developers in the Yorke Peninsula and Adelaide Plains regions when they wish to pursue expansion of those communities. Within the Copper Coast area, which is experiencing an amazing growth by virtue of people making lifestyle choices and wanting to move there, the cost per allotment to developers in contributing to SA Water is in the vicinity of \$5,000 per block. The 1,600 allotment Dunes development at Port Hughes, which incorporates the Greg Norman designed golf course, has been advised by SA Water that water will be available for the residential allotments that are created and the clubhouse but not for the golf course.

With the continuing drought, this is a decision that I totally agree with. It is the only one that SA Water could have made and, certainly, it is the only decision that the community would have accepted, as our precious River Murray water should not be available to water a new golf course. I commend the developers on what they are doing here because they are working very hard to make sure the community supports the proposal. They want to use treated water from a yet to be constructed community waste water treatment plant which is in the planning stage with the District Council of the Copper Coast, but they need to make sure that they have a water supply available because the golf course is their marketing tool.

When you look at the TV advertisements, it shows the coast—and obviously that will be a major feature—but it is also the fact that probably one of the top 10 golf courses in Australia will be produced by this development. It is important that they developed the golf course and they do not let it wither and die, so the only option for them is to construct a seawater desalination plant to ensure a supply of water.

From what I have read from the developers, they are talking about a plant that will produce 1.5 million megalitres of water per day. I would have hoped that the announcement of this proposal would have been accepted by the community but to say that the news has caused considerable concern is an understatement. My belief, though, is that the community is concerned for two reasons, one being the location of the detailed plant as indicated by the local council based on three options that the developers proposed, and the second being the effect of the discharge into the marine environment of the brine solution which comes from the desalination process and which will go out into the Spencer Gulf. Certainly, I, the community and the government do not want to do anything to harm the marine environment of any of our coastal waters. I respect these concerns and I will speak to as many people as possible about what the real issues are in order to make sure that the developers and the government are aware.

The District Council of the Copper Coast has indicated a preferred location for the desalination plant, but unfortunately to many people in the community the fact that the council has made that decision seems to suggest that it is a done deal. Clearly, that is not the case. Any decision for a desal plant will rest upon very serious consideration on the part of the state government following the preparation of a detailed environmental impact statement. In my electorate office I am contacted on a regular basis about this. The local newspapers carry articles about this seemingly every week, with letters to the editor every week, expressing concerns about what people see as the negatives of it. I think we need to move on. We need to get the science right so that something can happen.

I am aware of another augmentation contribution that occurred a few years ago costing \$10,900 per block for a 50 allotment subdivision that was developed at Stansbury. In Ardrossan I am told that it is \$15,000 per block for an augmentation contribution on the proviso that you can get 100 allotments to commit up front. In a regional community it is pretty hard to get subdivisions of that scope to happen at all. Ardrossan is a town of 1,100 people. It has had a lot of recent investment in the community private hospital, a dental

surgery, the doctors' facilities and a new supermarket. People on Yorke Peninsula believe in the town but, unfortunately, when suddenly you have to come up with a \$1.5 million contribution towards water augmentation, it makes it near impossible.

Last week's edition of the *Yorke Peninsula Country Times* quoted numerous developments that are occurring within the area of the District Council of Yorke Peninsula. I will read them into the record: Point Turton has 102 allotments coming on stream; Marion Bay, 201; Edithburgh, 113; Black Point (a great place I try to get to for a week every year), 65; Port Victoria, 101; Port Clinton, 143; Rogues Point (a small community on the East Coast), 12; Balgowan, 20; and Corny Point, 207.

That is 964 allotments, some are approved, some are being formally considered and some are in the planning stages. There is a great chance for at least 75 per cent of those to get approval within the next year. In the northern part of Yorke Peninsula, Kadina is also expanding, with residential and commercial development, and we are all aware of the Wallaroo Marina, which has 400 allotments, with many of those already having had houses built on them. Every time I go to Moonta, I see a new area that has been opened up for subdivision, with houses under construction.

These projects are just a few examples of the regional development that is happening across the Yorke Peninsula in Goyder. I also want to make sure that members are aware of what is happening in the Adelaide Plains. The Wakefield Waters development proposal by the Chapman family is for several thousand allotments in canal-style developments. We have also seen a lot of growth and opportunities in the Adelaide Plains, with intensive chicken farms and industries, such as the Primo abattoir at Port Wakefield and Balco at Bowmans.

Growth and job opportunities are bringing a lot more people to the Adelaide Plains to live. Obviously, residential developments are occurring, and subdivisions are happening in Balaklava, which has 1,500 people and wants to grow even more. All these developments will use more and more water. The growth in industries in the Adelaide Plains demands an increased water supply. I know that last year very serious consideration was given to a new pipe from, I think, Auburn to Port Wakefield at an approximate cost of \$36 million. It did not quite get up, but I hope that it is still under budget consideration for this year because, for the industry potential in the Adelaide Plains region to be reached, it needs to happen.

I am very proud of the fact that, in January 2007, the Liberal opposition announced a desalination proposal for Adelaide, based upon the Perth project at Kwinana. With other colleagues, I went to Perth in May 2007 and inspected the plant. We found out that it produces 45 gigalitres of water per year, and that it cost \$320 million to build and \$67 million to connect to the mains network. It happens, and it works.

The Western Australian government built it a lot more quickly than the five years the Rann government is talking about for Port Stanvac. It was not \$1 billion, when the minister for finance went straightaway on radio and said, 'This is what the Liberals are committing to Adelaide.' It was not \$1 billion. We were talking about the Western Australian example. It is interesting that the minister for finance at the time said that Adelaide did not need it. Well, here we are, less than a year later, and the government has finally come out with a plan to build a desal plant for Adelaide.

Western Australia believes in desal technology so much that it is spending \$750 million in this year's budget to build another plant. We believe that the Liberal vision has been proved right. Unfortunately, it has taken the Rann Labor government far too long to come to the same conclusion—that it needed to build a desal plant to have a secure water supply for Adelaide.

I know and respect the fact that desal is energy intensive. I know and respect the fact that energy generation in Australia is from coal-fired plants, with this energy production option pumping out an enormous amount of waste into the atmosphere. That said, desal will also be a major factor in the answer

to South Australia's future water needs, and the government has finally recognised this.

The government is proposing a 50 gigalitre desal plant. I know that it will cost \$1.1 billion, and I know that it will cost \$300 million to connect it to storages and the network. We have now heard that we are talking about spending \$850 million to increase water storage in the Mount Lofty Ranges—and not necessarily just Mount Bold. Again, that water has to be pumped from the Murray. That is the plan, as I understand it.

The member for Flinders has spoken to me, and also to the Liberal Party meeting room, about the fact that every time she gets private investment proposals for desal technology on Eyre Peninsula she seems to hit her head against a brick wall because the government is not interested in helping out. The government will not make it happen. The government is not interested in ensuring that SA Water actually has a philosophy of willingness to use desal water within its network—and that is part of the struggle. What chance is there when private investors want to make these sorts of developments happen but the people who control the network are not interested in the product?

The Premier talks quite often about the investment planned for Adelaide that will ensure that water reuse figures will increase from the current 20 per cent to 45 per cent, and I think the national average is something like 9 per cent. I support this vision; we all have to support this vision. But it is not just about Adelaide: it is also about regional South Australia, too.

I am lucky enough to represent in this house a wonderful part of the state, a region people love to visit, a region in which people want to live, work and holiday. It is also a region that is being held back because of the restrictions of a water supply system that was designed and built in the 1950s for a very different purpose and need. It is barely keeping up with the current demand, and the peak times really do stretch it. In January, when we have a lot of holidaymakers there, we are in big trouble, because water pressure drops, supply cannot be guaranteed and people really start to struggle. Importantly, it has very little ability to be expanded upon.

The traditional source of water for all of Goyder has been the River Murray, and it is stressed beyond belief: we all know this. Traditional solutions will not guarantee a water supply for Goyder, just as they will not do so for Adelaide. Adelaide has a solution in the planning stages. Goyder seemingly has a future in being restricted by a lack of vision and planning. I call upon the government and SA Water, and all members in this house, to do something about this matter, something that will ensure that the future water demands for the Goyder electorate from industry and residential development can be met.