

DEVELOPMENT (WATER HARVESTING) AMENDMENT BILL

Hansard 24-9-2008

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (17:38): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Development Act. Read a first time.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHERE (17:38): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is about greenfield developments in South Australia. Members would be well aware that in recent times thousands of allotments have been released in the north and south, in particular, of the metropolitan area. Apart from a few small examples, most of these greenfield development sites, on which homes are now being built at a rapid rate, have had nothing done to them when it comes to stormwater harvesting.

In our opinion, the time has come to ensure that any new greenfield development includes measures for stormwater harvesting. Under this bill any future residential, industrial or commercial greenfield development over a prescribed size will have to include water harvesting aspects. There must be two sets of waterworks for water supply, being the standard SA Water supply on one pipe and the other being what some refer to as purple pipes; in other words, pipes to deliver recycled water to homes, parks and gardens in the new subdivision.

It may be harvested stormwater, where the water is harvested into sedimentation ponds and then retention ponds, and it is then stored in the aquifer so that it can be recovered. In certain instances it may be recycled water of drinking quality, but in this instance not for potable use. There must be stormwater management works in the development to allow for these ponds and to ensure that we have an opportunity to harvest this water. Whilst I acknowledge that there will be some additional expense, the bottom line is that the cheapest way to go about ensuring better water security is to start with your greenfield sites because the infrastructure is already going in, even to the point sometimes of retention ponding (not necessarily sedimentation ponding) being required as part of stormwater mitigation.

If you weigh up what the Treasurer has flagged in that there will need to be and, indeed there already have been, significant increases in the cost of water being provided to those people who have mains water, clearly that is going to get more expensive if the source become even scarcer. Of course, in some instances, the hydrology does not allow, or it is otherwise in the public interest, that aquifer storage and recovery components of this do not proceed, and then this bill allows the minister to grant an exemption. To ensure transparency, that exemption must run through the Environment, Resources and Development Committee so that the ERDC can see that it is a bona fide exemption and not just a way out for developers to get around the importance of stormwater harvesting in entirety.

I note the Hon. Mark Parnell's support of this kind of initiative, as recently I have listened to him and others in this council talking about the importance of getting smart urgently with water. I ask my colleagues here on the crossbenches, government members and opposition Liberal Party members to have a close look at this bill. The Premier is saying that he has a plan to increase the population from about 1.5 million to two million by 2040 or 2050, from memory. Some advice I have had is that, at this stage, that is even more on track than many of us would have thought. But how can we sustain a future for those people, let alone those of us already in this state, if we do not have water, the most fundamental essential source for survival?

Therefore, I challenge the parliament to explain to me why it would not support this bill when this is about a common-sense approach to capturing water that is going to get scarcer, not more plentiful, if you believe those scientists who are talking about climate change. I look forward to speaking in more detail about this bill at the appropriate time, and I commend it to members.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.M. Gazzola.