

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (STORMWATER HARVESTING) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (17:30): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Local Government Act 1999. Read a first time.

The Hon. R.L. BROKENSHIRE (17:31): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I was very keen to bring this bill to the parliament because it is a critical bill for the future of South Australia when it comes to providing alternative water sources for South Australia. I trust that with this bill our chamber and the whole parliament can work with the government to get serious about backing the fine work that some local government sectors have been doing when it comes to stormwater harvesting.

Due to the workload today, it is not my intention to speak in great detail about this bill or others that I will introduce. However, I will go into much more detail at appropriate points as the bill proceeds through the chamber. I will not retrace the history of stormwater harvesting and its merits. It is simply worth noting that the science on this is not new, but the government at this point is not showing significant desire and tends to be ignoring the merits of stormwater harvesting. Overseas and in our own state and nation there are many fine examples of stormwater harvesting.

Family First has decided that we can wait no longer and must make legislative moves to ensure that stormwater harvesting can occur. Prime examples I commend are the Salisbury council model, which I inspected many years ago, a partnership primarily between the Salisbury council and the commonwealth. Mr Colin Pitman had a great deal to do (and still does) with that project.

In more recent times, under the leadership of Mr Jeff Tate, the CEO of Onkaparinga, and Mayor Lorraine Rosenberg and the councillors in the Onkaparinga council, together with executive staff, incredible work has been done on initial modelling for stormwater harvesting. Recently it received many millions of dollars from the commonwealth government to ensure that the first stage—and from there one would hope the second stage—of stormwater harvesting and retention continues. There are many other examples.

When in the other place, pursuing recycled water for the Willunga Basin, I went overseas to look at stormwater harvesting projects, and in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys in California, just out from San Francisco, they harvest a lot of water running off the terrain in that area. They cleanse it and then use that water through stormwater harvesting techniques to irrigate vineyards and other horticulture in the area. In places like Israel (Tel Aviv), lacking immensely in rainfall, the country there is as harsh as any of the worst country we have in South Australia, but they are able to harvest their water and put it through dams and sedimentation ponds naturally back into the aquifer. They then have a cleansing process that mother nature provides through the sands in that aquifer and that water is reused through bores, is pumped about 90 kilometres and creates most of the vegetable and fruit-growing areas in Tel Aviv. There are fine examples of this happening around the world.

This parliament, through one of its committees, recently heard some extraordinary admissions from the chief of the Stormwater Management Authority that it was, in effect, not in its mandate to go beyond stormwater mitigation works to prevent flooding into stormwater harvesting. This legislation will ensure that the Stormwater Management Authority will have on its agenda the very important issue of stormwater harvesting. We will never wean ourselves completely off the River Murray—nor should we, as I shudder to think what would happen if we did not have the River Murray in South Australia for critical human need.

It would be easy for other states and the commonwealth in a desperate situation to say that we do not have a critical human need with regard to the River Murray and that,

therefore, they will not give us any water allocation if the drought continues or if climate change has a major impact. Not wanting to be weaned completely off the River Murray, it is nevertheless important that we be weaned to a large extent. It is absurd to think that as recently as this week we have seen gigalitres of water flowing off our roads, through our stormwater system and straight out into the gulf, damaging the gulf at the same time. It will be a win/win situation if we get this bill through.

Under this bill, the Stormwater Management Authority will be tasked with preparing a plan for expenditure from increased state government moneys that go to local government for stormwater harvesting. How is this funded? The most appropriate source, in our view, is the windfall gains for the government from the Land Management Corporation's revenue. We think this is appropriate because the expanded land usage (and the buildings that go on it) will create more water run-off, more water in our creeks and drains, and more water running out to sea, killing the seagrasses.

It makes complete sense that, in the spirit of environmental responsibility and in order to ensure water security for South Australia, the Land Management Corporation should contribute 10 per cent of its land sales income towards stormwater harvesting. We should bear in mind also that about 97 per cent of all subdivision land in South Australia's metropolitan area comes from the land bank of the Land Management Corporation.

Family First is a watchdog party in this chamber and it is on the lookout for wasted public moneys, and the cash cows—the LMC and SA Water—are on our hit list. I will have more to say about SA Water at a later stage, but today this bill is targeting the Land Management Corporation's windfall revenue gains in order to assist local government to retrofit stormwater harvesting infrastructure into existing subdivisions and, in so doing, to ensure a guaranteed water supply for the future needs of all South Australians. This is a relatively simple bill, and I commend it to members.

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