



House of Assembly

An extract from Hansard

Thursday 15 September 2011

SAFF CONFERENCE GAWLER SHOW 2011 LOCAL FOOTY

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:29): I would like to talk about a few things which particularly impact upon the rural part of my community, but also things which are important to regional towns like Gawler and regional communities which part of my electorate represents.

Last Wednesday I had the pleasure of attending the South Australian Farmers Federation Feast or Famine conference. I had the opportunity to speak as part of a panel, which included the Minister for Education, the Hon. Jay Weatherill, the federal member for Kennedy, Bob Katter, who in his usual flamboyant way expressed views of which I did not share many, also Senator Nick Xenophon and the member for Hammond.

Agriculture minister Michael O'Brien kicked off the conference in the morning and reminded us that state agriculture, food and wine exports have increased by 40 per cent over the last year, which is an increase of \$1.2 billion in value, despite a significant appreciation of the Australian dollar. There were valuable contributions from: Professor Simon Maddocks, the Chief Scientist of SARDI; Julian Cribb, author and science communicator; and former water security minister, the Hon. Karlene Maywald, gave a good presentation on water issues.

I had the opportunity at the conference to discuss farms, in the context that farmers are effectively small business, and reinforced that South Australia will be the safest place in Australia for small business to set up shop once the state parliament has passed the state government's Small Business Commissioner Bill, which unfortunately is opposed by those opposite.

Food security, competition, water management, GM crops and skills shortages were also canvassed at the conference. Research and development was also high on the list for discussion. The Roseworthy campus of Adelaide University has been doing some stellar work in the field of R&D. Members will be aware that the Roseworthy campus, which is located in my electorate, specialises in dryland agriculture, natural resource management, animal production, veterinary science and animal

science. The pork CRC, the poultry CRC and the beef CRC are also based at Roseworthy, including the JS Davies Beef Cattle Research Centre. The SAFF conference was a reminder that the regions do matter and are an important part of our state's economy.

Strong, healthy and productive regions are good for all South Australians. The RDA boards are proven to be an effective vehicle for the regions to advocate their needs, balancing economic and social needs, and our vast geography. I found the RDAs to be very productive on my visits to the South-East, Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula and the Mid North, where I have been consulting with the regions on strategic infrastructure planning for South Australia. While they can be a little bit parochial and passionate, I do admire the work they are doing. Finally, I would like to thank SAFF CEO Carol Vincent for the invitation and opportunity to speak at the conference. She continues to be a tireless and passionate advocate for rural and regional South Australia and, in particular, farmers. It is unfortunate that some of those members opposite continue to undermine SAFF. The sector certainly needs a spokesperson.

I would also like to quickly talk about two local events. The 155th Gawler Show was another great success, and I understand the show this year had its greatest attendance on record. I commend all those volunteers who put in

endless hours to make the Gawler Show happen. For the information of members, I think the Gawler Show is the only show now outside the City of Adelaide which operates for more than one day. It is a two-day weekend show. It brings together a whole range of rural activities, and this year it had the new BankSA agricultural awareness centre and trail, which helped to provide education for young people and the public about the significance of agriculture and, importantly, prospective career opportunities in agriculture.

We were fortunate to have perfect weather for the show. As I said, I congratulate all those organisers and volunteers who made the day work. I would also like to mention the Gawler Show bus, which was sponsored by Lanser Communities, which was very successful, and helped to reduce car parking problems at the showgrounds.

This weekend is also the footy finals in my electorate, in the Barossa, Light and Gawler league, where Tanunda and Willaston will be playing off for the top prize. I wish both teams the best this Saturday.