

ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS BILL 2009

Second Reading

Resumed from 17 June.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [9.21 pm]: I need to highlight to the Minister for Regional Development and to the house that I am not the lead speaker. The member for Armadale will be the lead speaker.

In commenting on the Royalties for Regions Bill 2009 that is before us, I will again labour the point that I have laboured in this place for some time about the royalties for regions policy and the royalties for regions funding programs and how they relate to the Peel region. I will commence my comments by highlighting to the house the legitimacy of the Peel region as a recognised region of Western Australia. It is a statutory region supported by legislation in this place. It is recognised as a legitimate region of Western Australia.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Order, members! I want to hear what the member is saying and I am sure members do too.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The region itself comprises five local government authorities, one of which is within the metropolitan region scheme; that is, the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale. The other four local government authorities in the region are the Shire of Boddington, the Shire of Murray, the Shire of Waroona and the City of Mandurah. Those local government authorities that I have mentioned—Boddington, Waroona, Murray and Mandurah—under this Parliament's statutory register are non-metropolitan local government authorities. I continue to remind members of this place on both sides of this house of that fact. Therefore, when a policy is introduced and promises are made with regard to the policy—in this case the royalties for regions policy—it is very important that we acknowledge boundaries. When I talk about—as has the Minister for Regional Development in the rhetoric before the election and now as minister of the new government—delivering outcomes for the regions and in many cases the regions that accumulate or generate royalties, I must again highlight to this house the contribution that the Peel region makes to royalties in Western Australia. We have a major mining operation by Alcoa Alumina in the Shire of Murray reaching into the hinterland in Dwellingup. It is a massive operation in the Peel region with employees, contractors and those associated with work drawn from within the region and from boundaries across the region. Where are those royalties drawn from? They are drawn from the region. Which region are they drawn from? They are drawn from the Peel region. Which shires comprise the Peel region? They are the City of Mandurah, the Shire of Boddington, the Shire of Murray, the Shire of Waroona and the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale—regional localities. Alcoa is not the only mining operation contributing to the royalties of the state of Western Australia. Alcoa is one but there are others. Boddington Gold Mine now operates in Boddington. I understand that the Minister for Regional Development and the Minister for Sport and Recreation have been to Boddington to have a look. There are more than 1 000 workers in the satellite town just outside Boddington, which has been set up as part of the operations of Boddington Gold. The mine is delivering huge economic benefits to the region, not only in the Shire of Boddington. It draws employees and contractors from the City of Mandurah, from the Shire of Murray and from as far down as the Shire of Waroona and the Peel region, which is a legitimate region of Western Australia. Alcoa and Boddington Gold are therefore delivering much needed and essential royalty revenue to the state of Western Australia. However, that is not the only mining operation in the Peel region. There is Iluka's mining operation, and there will be a new one in Keysbrook, about which the member for Murray-Wellington has made some strong comments. He opposed the granting of that mining licence for the area in Keysbrook to mine mineral sands on agricultural land. That operation, along with Iluka's operation in Waroona, is also making a significant contribution to royalties to the state of Western Australia. It peeves me when members of this place do not acknowledge those localities as regional localities. Members scoff and laugh at me and say that Mandurah is an outer suburb of Perth. That is crap!

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): I ask the member to withdraw that remark.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I apologise and withdraw that last comment.

Debate Resumed

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is rubbish! It is rubbish because the City of Mandurah—until this government or another government in the future excises it from the non-metropolitan region and puts it into the metropolitan region—will proudly, and I will proudly in this place, continue to argue its regional status. The City of Mandurah council continues to promote itself as the regional gateway city to the south west. We recognise ourselves as a legitimate regional city. We are the largest regional city in Western Australia. In the past, people have bypassed us and said that Bunbury is the biggest regional city. That is rubbish. Mandurah has the largest population, 65 000-plus, and is the largest regional city outside the metropolitan area. In this place, I have

compared how we see ourselves, in terms of our identity, to like cities in other parts of Australia. I have used as an example the former industrial city of Newcastle, north of Sydney. Connected by a rail link and a major highway, Newcastle —

Mr J.E. McGrath: Newcastle is three or four hours away.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Let me finish, member for South Perth. Newcastle very proudly promotes itself as a regional city and would never accept being considered as part of Sydney. Gosford, a city outside of Sydney, proudly calls itself a city.

Mr J.E. McGrath: It is an hour and a half away from Sydney.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, it is not. That is rubbish. The member does not know. He does not know his geography. He sits in his plush South Perth office with all the Mercedes flying past and has no idea about regional Western Australia. The member should sit in his box and shut up.

Mr J.E. McGrath: I was there last year.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Order, members.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The fact is that that is one example. We would not call the great city of Geelong a part of Melbourne. If the member for South Perth were a Geelong person, he would not stand here and defend Geelong as part of Melbourne—he would be thrown out of the place!

Mr J.E. McGrath interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Be quiet, member for South Perth; I have the floor! The member sits and pontificates across the chamber. He needs to get out into the regions more. He needs to get out. He needs to stop passing his time in the leafy, plush suburb of South Perth and get out into the regions and understand what it means.

Geelong is connected by a rail link.

Ms M.M. Quirk: Let me know when you are finished.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I will, member for Girrawheen; sorry, I thought the member was talking to me!

There is a frequent rail service to the city of Geelong, which is 80 kilometres from Melbourne. What is the distance from Mandurah to Perth?

Mr J.E. McGrath: Thirty-seven miles.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: What is that in kilometres? I am not as old as the member for South Perth.

Mr J.E. McGrath: Sixty kays.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No; it is not; it is 80 kilometres.

Mr J.E. McGrath: No, it is less than that.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is 80 kilometres. People in this place, on both sides, constantly mock me when I argue about the regional status of the City of Mandurah.

Mr J.E. McGrath: We do not mock you.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, they do. The member did it just then! He will do it again in a minute if he is not careful.

Mr I.C. Blayney: It's a dormitory suburb.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is not a dormitory suburb. That is rubbish! Who said that?

Mr I.C. Blayney: I did.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Geraldton said that! Oh come on, member for Geraldton. What a ridiculous comment to have made. A dormitory suburb! If the member for Geraldton were to come to my electorate and call Mandurah a dormitory suburb, I can tell him that he would be chucked out on his ear. How ridiculous to come into this place and say that. How ridiculous! I do not call Geraldton a northern suburb of Perth. Do I? No!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member! I am sure that you are going to address the bill in a moment.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course I will.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The fact of the matter is that I have clearly articulated in this place on a number of occasions the statutory recognition of the region known as Peel. I have articulated in this place that there is an act

of Parliament that highlights that the City of Mandurah, the Shire of Murray, the Shire of Waroona, the Shire of Boddington and the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale are legitimate local government authorities in the Peel region; and that the Peel region contributes to the royalties of the state of Western Australia.

Dr K.D. Hames: It is second or third —

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course! And why is the member for Dawesville not supporting us. He is not standing up for his seniors. I have to do all his work and all the work for the member for Darling Range. I have to circulate the petition —

Dr K.D. Hames: You haven't been down there for years!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Who has not been there?

Dr K.D. Hames: You! When you were the minister, we hardly saw you at all.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Well that is an interesting comment by the member for Dawesville, who does not even live in his electorate. The member does not even live down there! He has admitted in this place that he does not live there. He has said that he lives in Yokine. A few months ago, he said that he had lived in Yokine for 40 years. He does not live down there, so he cannot comment about whether I live in my community or not. When I was minister, I went home to my community every single night!

Dr K.D. Hames: So did I.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No, you did not; you went around the corner to Yokine, son! The member went around the corner to Yokine and he knows it. He should not tell fibs in this place. He goes to Yokine. He should be standing up for the seniors of his community and explaining why they do not get the Seniors Card and the fuel card.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Health, do not encourage him!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: You should be standing up for the fishermen in your community, because they are coming after you, sunshine!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Health will abstain from interjecting and the member for Mandurah will get on and talk about the bill.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Very much so!

They are after the minister because they know that he is letting them down. The fishermen know that the member for Dawesville, as their local member, is letting them down. They know that and they are coming to see me because they know that the member for Dawesville is not going to cross the floor and vote down the fishing regulations. They are targeting the member and, watch out, they are also targeting his good friend over there, the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr Acting Speaker —

The ACTING SPEAKER: Yes?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am going to draw this argument to the crux of the matter. We have a clear definition and boundary—absolutely clear. Now, this government, through the Minister for Regional Development is sending mixed messages to us. He is saying, on the one hand, that we are a region and that therefore we are eligible for royalties for regions funding. I applaud that and I welcome that. I am very pleased that we have successfully won royalties for regions funding for a range of projects in a number of localities in the Peel region. I welcome that. However, a number of recent policy decisions have seen the minister send mixed messages. On the one hand, we are in the regions and therefore attract royalties for regions funding, but on the other hand, we do not. I want to use one example. In my electorate of Mandurah, some of my constituents who live on the eastern side of the Serpentine River are eligible—and good on them!—for the \$500 fuel card. Good on them! In fact, I have been encouraging them to apply for it and to make sure that they get it. Four hundred metres away, across the Serpentine Bridge, are members of my community who have limited access to bus services, particularly those living in Mandurah Gardens Estate and parts of Coodanup and, of course, in the large retirement village area in Carnegie Place, which is known as the St Ives development—these are just two examples. According to the royalties for regions fuel card program, they are not eligible for a card. The primary reason given by the Minister for Regional Development is that of access to public transport. However, in a letter from the member for Dawesville to one of his constituents, Mr Meakin, the member stated that access to a suitable hospital and the issue of costs were the reasons residents of Mandurah and Dawesville are not eligible for the fuel card. He told Mr Meakin that it would be too costly to provide the citizens of Mandurah and Dawesville with a card. He contradicted the Minister for Regional Development. The minister says it is because

of public transport, but the member for Dawesville says it is because they have access to a good hospital and because it would cost too much. Who is telling the truth? Who is right? The Minister for Regional Development is saying it is because the residents have access to a train or other adequate public transport. The member for Dawesville is saying it is because residents have access to a suitable hospital and because it would cost too much. The Deputy Premier, the member for Dawesville, let it out of the bag. He should not have told his constituent about the cost. Apparently, it would cost around \$10 million or \$15 million over four years to give the same fuel card concession to Mandurah pensioners. Some of them get it because they live on the eastern side of the Serpentine Bridge.

[Member's time extended.]

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is a good question, and I will tell the member —

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: No. The boundary should be those areas outside the metropolitan region scheme.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Should everyone in Mandurah get it?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Absolutely. They should get it until the Minister for Regional Development and the government decide to extend the boundary of the metropolitan area to include the City of Mandurah. If the government does that, we will have no argument. I am telling the minister now that he has created an unfair situation. The Deputy Premier is now telling Mandurah pensioners that the reason they do not get the Country Age Pension Fuel Card is because they have a good hospital. The people of Geraldton have a great hospital; I hope that the people of Albany have a good hospital; the people of Kalgoorlie have a brand-new hospital; and the people of Bunbury have a very good hospital. Those towns, I might add, also have a very good public transport system. It is not brilliant, but they have a public transport system.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The people in Northam, where I was born, have a public transport system to Perth.

Mr B.J. Grylls: It is not free.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They have a transport system to Perth.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Which one? The minister has created a situation whereby the left hand is not talking to the right hand. The member for Dawesville sent a letter to Mr Meakin that clearly said the reason that pensioners of Mandurah are not getting a fuel card is that they have a good hospital—the Peel Health Campus; I have no problem with that—and that to make that provision would cost too much. That is not the same reason the Minister for Regional Development gave me.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Minister for Health did not put that in his letter. He should read the letter. I have a copy of it. The Minister for Health did not talk to the Minister for Regional Development about what his answer was.

Dr K.D. Hames interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Why did the Minister for Health not tell him that it was because Peel had a good hospital? Why did the minister not tell him that? It is because he is telling a fib. He is not telling the truth. They are not talking to each other.

Mr P. Abetz interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: They are both saying totally opposite things. The member for Southern River does not understand the issue. The reason Mr Meakin in Erskine is not eligible should be the same reason that the Minister for Health told me he is not eligible—but he did not; the member for Dawesville said that Mr Meakin was not eligible because there was a good hospital.

Dr K.D. Hames: You are drawing a long bow.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Minister for Health has been found out on this. That is the problem. This is an example of why the system is not right. How do we fix it, the minister asked me. It can be fixed by using the royalties for regions boundary—that is, the boundaries that are the regions.

Mr B.J. Grylls: No.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is what I think the Minister for Regional Development should do. The people of Peel live and work in a region that delivers royalties to Western Australia, just as the people in the Pilbara, the Kimberly and the goldfields do.

Mr B.J. Grylls: If you made a good argument about it, like the member for Darling Range, I would listen to you.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Why are we different?

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Erskine is not even close to the rail station.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am, for all the pensioners in Mandurah. It is because they live in a regional city and because our community, which includes the City of Mandurah, makes a significant contribution to the wealth of the state through the royalties that are derived from the Peel region, that they should be sharing in that program's delivery. The trouble is the Minister for Health has been caught out.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Members will have the opportunity to speak later. I want to hear the member for Mandurah.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The trouble is the Minister for Health has been caught out.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Is that from the train station?

The ACTING SPEAKER: I call the Minister for Regional Development to order for the first time.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is probably about five kilometres, but I stand to be corrected. The criteria of the relevant merits of the royalties for regions scheme and where that program will be delivered must be made very clear. If that program is aimed at delivering services to communities that make a significant contribution to Western Australia through the creation of royalties, Peel gets a big tick. It makes the third highest royalties contribution in the state. That region makes a significant contribution to royalties in Western Australia.

Mr B.J. Grylls: If the fuel card is such a good idea, why did you not do it when you were in government?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The minister is in government. Why does the minister have a problem? Is it because it would cost too much, as the Deputy Premier said?

Mr B.J. Grylls: It would cost too much, yes.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Why did the minister not say that in his letter to me when I originally wrote to him about why it was unfair?

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The minister did not say that; he said that it was because of public transport access. I can argue about a range of other public transport accesses for other regional cities in Western Australia.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The problem is that the minister is not listening. Was the minister not listening to me about 10 minutes ago when I said that I welcome the royalties for regions funding that has been delivered? I am saying that Peel is recognised for funding for one aspect but not another. I am just asking the minister to be consistent. We know that the real reason pensioners in Mandurah are not getting the fuel card is simply that it costs too much and apparently we have a good hospital. I do not accept that reason at all. If the Minister for Regional Development wants to extend the boundary of the metropolitan area to include the City of Mandurah, there would be no argument.

Mr B.J. Grylls: I will not do that.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Good, because I will fight the minister if he tries to do that. I will fight the men and women on this side if they try to do that, too.

When we evaluate the merits of the royalties for regions program, I simply ask the government, firstly, to recognise the major contribution to royalties that the Peel region makes and has historically made for more than

40 years because of the Alcoa operations. Secondly, the government must recognise that the region is represented by five local government authorities that are very proudly individual. They have a very proud regional outlook and they work very closely together. Thirdly, the government must recognise that the people who call the Peel region home in all five of those localities are actively engaged in the local economy that derives their incomes and livelihoods from the mining industry. I have given the government three examples of that. Fourthly, if the government is to apply the royalties for regions programs to the region, it must do it in a consistent manner. The evidence shows that that has not been done, and the fuel card is an example of that. Fifthly, the government must recognise that the population of Peel will continue to grow and that many of the people who live there and who are attracted there are attracted to it because of the positive regional elements that make it different from the metropolitan area. I cannot see why the minister and the government cannot accept that. The government should not use excuses such as Peel has a good hospital or that it will cost too much money, even though the fuel card is not given to the pensioners in Mandurah but is given to the pensioners over the road. That is a total inconsistency.

When we consider this legislation in consideration in detail, the lead speaker for the opposition, the member for Armadale, will move some amendments. The distance from Perth central to the Mandurah post office is 73 kilometres. The Leader of the National Party and I were debating the distances. I hope that the Minister for Regional Development will listen closely to the opposition's proposed amendments as the Royalties for Regions Bill 2009 makes its way through this place.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The minister has. I am not trying to have a go at the minister too much, because in past press releases he has recognised the value of the Peel region. But I am trying to say that some of the decisions made in policy areas have been inconsistent with what he has said. I think that is unfair, and I will continue to argue the inconsistency on behalf of the pensioners of Mandurah. One of the arguments is that they have access to buses or that they can jump on a train if they have to go to a hospital appointment. It is not as simple as that. In Mandurah there are 90-year-old men and women living in their own homes because they have been encouraged to remain as independent as possible.

Mr B.J. Grylls interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Will the minister listen; this is important. They cannot get to a bus because a bus service does not run close to their homes, and they do not drive because either their licence has been taken from them or they have voluntarily handed it in, so they rely on a taxi subsidy voucher if they have been lucky enough for their doctor to have recommended it. It would really help them if they were provided with the Country Age Pension Fuel Card, which, according to the criteria, would allow them to have their son, daughter or friend take them shopping once a week, as many of them want to do. A number of these older people live in the City of Mandurah who have been wiped off because they have access to a train or a bus. I wrote a letter to the minister detailing the situation of Mr Mills from Meadow Springs as an example. That man cannot go to hospital on a bus to get his cancer treatment in Fremantle because he is highly vulnerable to infection, and he has no family to take him. How is he supposed to get to his appointment? Being provided with a fuel card would have really helped him, because he could use that fuel card to get a friend or carer or someone to help him, and he could have helped them with the transport costs. Honestly, minister, there are hundreds of people like that in Mandurah and in the member for Dawesville's electorate. It is not as simple as saying that, with a sleight of pen, those people have access to a \$1.2 billion train, so they do not need a fuel card. It is not as simple as that. These are real people who live in my community and they would very much benefit from the provision of a fuel card.

Mr B.J. Grylls: You should campaign for that when you get back into government you'll give it to everyone!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I might do that. I do not have the power to do that now; the minister is in government and I am pleading to the minister on behalf of those people. They are the people I want to support and represent. The minister should listen closely to this plea because those people deserve to be treated as people, not as simple statistics who are too expensive for the state and have therefore been written off with that sleight of pen. Across the bridge at Serpentine, just 400 metres away, my other constituents, who I do not begrudge, receive the fuel card.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Dr K.D. Hames (Minister for Health)**.

House adjourned at 9.53 pm
