

## SOUTH AFRICA — LAND EXPROPRIATION

### *Statement*

**HON CHARLES SMITH (East Metropolitan)** [10.01 pm]: I rise to briefly speak on a matter that has been attracting some media attention in recent times. As some members may be aware, seizures of farmland owned by the Afrikaner minority have begun in South Africa. According to news reports, over the last few days, the first seizures by the African National Congress-run South African government are targeting farmers in the northern provinces. It was announced earlier this month that the ANC would push ahead with plans to amend the country's constitution to allow for the expropriation of land without compensation. The South African Parliament in February voted in favour of a motion, introduced by the Marxist Economic Freedom Fighters and supported by the ANC, to send the matter to Parliament's Joint Committee on Constitutional Review. It is important to note that the land seizures occurring now appear to be happening unlawfully.

European-descended South African farmers, mainly belonging to the Afrikaner minority, say they are victims of a coordinated campaign of racially motivated violence intended to drive them off the land they have farmed for generations. According to the South African civil rights group AfriForum, the murder rate of commercial farmers is 138 per 100 000 people, more than four times the wider murder rate in the country. AfriForum stated in a 2014 report —

The worst of the matter is not the fact that South African farmers are being attacked and killed, but rather the disproportionate numbers that are involved, the extreme levels of brutality that often accompany these crimes, and the fact that the South African government has largely been in denial about the problem since 2007.

Some of the stories involving extreme and sadistic torture of victims are shocking beyond belief. I will not recount any of the stories here but, after reading a few accounts, it is still difficult to fathom how human beings can behave in such a cruel and savage manner. After reading such accounts, one can only conclude that a campaign of terror is being waged against the country's farmers in an effort to get them to relinquish their farms and leave.

Rather than take efforts to ensure farmers' security, the ANC-led South African government is adding fuel to the fire of racial tension and violence. The decision to seize land without compensation risks not only dispossessing and destroying the lives of farmers, but also wrecking the country's agricultural sector and wider economy. Members will be aware how a similar campaign in neighbouring Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe, once a darling of Western leftists, resulted in Africa's breadbasket being transformed into an impoverished, dysfunctional basket case reliant on international food aid. The country's economy still has not recovered, with inflation reaching 89.7 sextillion per cent during the peak of the crisis. AgriSA, a South African agricultural industry association, has warned that the move to seize land without compensation could lead to food shortages in the country, accompanied by a massive capital exodus and a contagion effect on all property and intellectual property classes. In short, it looks like a disaster in the making.

Here in Western Australia we are fortunate in that our property rights are respected and we do not have the same sort of intense and intractable racial tensions and violence we see in South Africa. Why should we care about the situation in that country or the plight of Afrikaner farmers? There are a few reasons. Firstly, we have a significant ex-South African community here in WA, both English and Afrikaans-speaking. Many of them are understandably concerned about the safety and wellbeing of their relatives and friends back in South Africa and are asking Australians to assist in some way. There are a number of parallels between South Africa and Australia. Both are lands settled by Western Europeans who went forth to create new communities and societies in harsh, inhospitable environments in the Southern Hemisphere. In both cases, sheer sweat, grit and ingenuity were needed to survive and successfully develop the land and its resources. Perhaps the big difference was that demography was never on the side of the Dutch and, later, British settlers in South Africa. They now find themselves a loathed minority in a country increasingly run by radicals who peddle the politics of resentment. Disturbingly, there is something eerily familiar about the racist rhetoric and so-called affirmative action policies directed against particular groups seen to be privileged in South Africa. We are increasingly seeing the same type of rhetoric and policies from the left here in Australia. The South African situation should be a sobering reminder to us all that discrimination is discrimination no matter which direction it goes. Trying to implement equality of outcome through racially discriminatory policies is folly and a highway to hell. Madam President, we should also care about the plight of the Afrikaners because if we, culturally similar people, do not, no-one else will. We should condemn what is happening in South Africa and send a signal that such policies are ruinous.