

CROSS-BORDER COMMISSIONER

Mr BROCK (Frome) (11:39): I also rise to speak on the motion put forward by the member for Mount Gambier. As you are aware, my electorate is nowhere near any borders. However, quite a few of my constituents—business constituents in particular—are looking to expand and sell to other states, so they have been carrying quite a few of the concerns that the member for Mount Gambier has highlighted.

We live in a big world, and at the moment our local businesses have to look outside the square in order to survive. Many of them conduct business interstate. In my electorate, engineering firms, planning firms and other operators trade with other states and also overseas, and they have to comply with state regulations. I understand from the member for Mount Gambier that New South Wales has had a similar operation since 2012 and that Victoria will consult with it as part of a business case. Unfortunately, each state has varying restrictions and regulations and this becomes very frustrating for businesses when they need to quote and tender for interstate business opportunities.

My office has heard from constituents requiring assistance to deal with the anomalies that exist between not only New South Wales and Victoria but also the Northern Territory. To help them understand where to go and how to get that information can sometimes be very confusing. As the member for Giles has indicated, even some members of the regional development association are not aware of where to go for this sort of stuff.

It is very interesting that the minister has indicated that a commissioner is not warranted at this particular point in time; nevertheless, I would encourage him to look very closely at this issue. We need to learn from what we have previously done and what has been done in other states, to understand how we can all work collaboratively to be able to get the best opportunities for our businesses. I think that would be the view of both sides of the chamber here in Parliament House.

Businesspeople need to know the variations in the regulations and the jurisdictional requirements relating to interstate policies. This is an issue that we need to look at collaboratively and work on very honestly and openly with everybody, including our interstate components. Perhaps all states need to look at the same regulations. We are a nation, but we are made up of various states and the Northern Territory.

Unfortunately, we have variations because of the different regulations and jurisdictions. Quite frankly, I find that very frustrating from the point of view of business. As I indicated earlier, businesses do not just trade within their own jurisdiction or with other states within Australia. They also export, and they must comply with the regulations of other countries. Another frustrating aspect is that we import a lot of farming equipment. When that equipment comes into South Australia, there are different regulations regarding width and so forth of that farming equipment, and permits must be obtained.

That is an issue I will be taking up, and I am gathering more information on that. If we are allowing that type of farming equipment to come in, we really need to make certain that they comply with our regulations, or else change our regulations. If our regulations vary from the import regulations, yet we are still giving permits for people to travel with that equipment from Port Adelaide to the regional areas, then we need to change our regulations, and that is something I will be looking at further down the track.

I congratulate the minister on saying that he is not looking at appointing a commissioner at this particular point. I have great faith in the minister, and I believe that he will be able to look

at the whole thing very openly and honestly. I urge this parliament to support this motion from the member for Mount Gambier, and I commend the motion to the house.