



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Eyre Peninsula: Cape Hardy Port

SPEECH

Tuesday, 3 December 2019

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

<p>Date Tuesday, 3 December 2019 Page 102 Questioner Speaker Patrick, Sen Rex</p>	<p>Source Senate Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
--	--

Senator PATRICK (South Australia) (21:05): Last week I rose to give a speech on Whyalla as a city with a population of 80,000. The speech was about a city with a population of 22,000 that would be transformed by a proposal by GFG Alliance relating to the steelworks in the city. The point of the speech was to make all and sundry, but particularly government ministers, appreciate that assistance to industry can result in a significant long-term benefit for a place like Whyalla and, indeed, for the region around that city, just by providing a little bit of help. During that speech I described a fantastic transformation that would involve a dual carriageway from Adelaide to Whyalla and an upgrading of all of the city's facilities, and I also mentioned a proposed port called Cape Hardy, located about 200 kilometres south of Whyalla. It's an area that could accommodate the Eyre Peninsula's first deepwater seaport, allowing for Cape class vessels to be loaded alongside a wharf and basically open up the Eyre Peninsula to the world.

I took the time over this weekend to travel to Port Lincoln, first, and then I drove north past Tumby Bay to the site where Cape Hardy is. I met with the Pfitzner family. Four generations greeted me when I arrived. The relevance of that family is that well over 100 years ago the family were advocating for a port for Cape Hardy. While I was there they showed me some of the documentation and they let me read the story. The advancement of the port all those years ago was frustrated by things like war and, indeed, different industries and different requirements. Nothing came of the Pfitzner dream—perhaps until now.

If senators were to examine Infrastructure Australia's Infrastructure Priority List, they would find a port under a project referred to as the Eyre Infrastructure Project. So the government's actually onto the idea that Cape Hardy will be a good thing for the Eyre Peninsula. It will be a good thing not just because of the benefit it will provide: to grain growers and the growers of other crops; to the iron ore companies; to the graphite companies that are interested in the site; to the hydrogen company that is interested in the site; to the fisheries people in and around Port Lincoln; and to all the other businesses that would be drawn to the proposed port. It will also be good because of the benefits it would bring to the local population. Those benefits would include employment opportunities for the 16,000 people in Port Lincoln, a reduction in the heavy-vehicle traffic that now takes grain from around the Eyre Peninsula and brings it to Port Lincoln, because the Eyre Peninsular narrow-gauge railway has now shut. That's created a problem, but the port could provide an alternate export point and, in doing so, would remove that heavy traffic from the streets of Port Lincoln.

It would see an increase in passenger numbers out of Port Lincoln Airport, such that, hopefully, we would see greater competition and lower airfares. Port Lincoln would serve as a hub in support of the communities of Tumby Bay and Port Neill, which straddle both the southern side and the northern side of the Cape Hardy site. Then there's what would happen in the local communities of Tumby Bay and Port Neill. Those two townships would serve as the residence for many of the people who would come to work not just in the port but in the industries that surround the port. The towns will expand, the falling numbers that they currently have in the schools will reverse, the pubs will fill and the shops will sell more. I might point out that there's a great fish and chip shop in Tumby Bay that is well worth dropping into if you ever pass by, but the line might be longer if Cape Hardy Port were to go ahead. The shops there would be selling more and, as beautiful as the town is, we'd see upgraded esplanades and public areas, and those areas would be filled with young children and families. Their parents would be there on weekends enjoying the beautiful townships that both Port Neill and Tumby Bay are. All of the kids would require a school to go to. There would be child care and community services that are more sustainable. There would be sporting clubs, which would have to expand. The Tumby Bay Marina would need to be expanded, as well. All of these things are not related to the direct benefits that, of course, would flow from the port itself.

I've been talking up the benefit of the proposed port to the government, both to ministers and to officials, through things like estimates. I have to say that they appear to be listening and showing some interest in turning this Infrastructure Australia priority project into a real priority. The body language on the government side looks good. I hope the government will find a way to support this priority project. It will create jobs, it will spur

economic activity in the region, and it will transform Lower Eyre Peninsula. It would be great for South Australia and it would seal the title of 'visionaries' for the Pfitzner family.