

Ministerial Statement **Martin Hamilton-Smith MP**

Minister for Investment and Trade
Minister for Defence Industries
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Wednesday, 10 September 2015

TIME ZONE

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a Ministerial Statement.

Mr Speaker, on February 5 this year, the Government of South Australia asked the public to consider whether there is merit in changing our state's time zone.

There had been several attempts in recent decades to address the value and relevance of a half hour time zone.

Was it a barrier to our social and economic progress or was it as our legislators believed in 1899, a positive point of difference?

The State Government chose the broadest possible path of consultation, investigation and decision-making.

Some of our fellow legislators have revealed that they have no such appetite for a considered and orderly consideration of the matter.

The initial phase of community consultation revealed a broad range of arguments for and against change.

Many of the issues raised had emerged for the first time in the context of time zone economics, technological change and transport.

Some issues presented opportunities for South Australia, others presented complexities.

In June the government released a report into community consultation phase, titled 'What We Heard'.

As has been reported, it showed a very loud and forthright group from the West Coast had serious concerns.

Regardless of the outcome of the time zone debate, the concerns relating to the West Coast community will be addressed. Flexible school hours, business opening times and other options will be considered.

Mr Speaker, the State Government has done a thorough analysis of the arguments for and against change.

A yet to be released economic study into the value of South Australia's export activity showed that a huge number of South Australian jobs are dependent on exports.

It identified 203,000 jobs linked to activities outside the state. Of these, 113,800 related to interstate export.

It has always been the view of this government that whatever change might be made to the time zone, it would need to be for the social and economic benefit of the state.

That process Mr Speaker requires rigour.

I recently flew to Dubai for meetings with international airline executives to drill down into the pros and cons for our international connections in and out of Adelaide.

The Health Department and Education Department have conducted reviews of the impacts of change.

I can reveal today Mr Speaker, that we had completed this Draft Bill for consideration by Cabinet and then for introduction into the Parliament.

It was drafted because we had shattered some myths about time zone shifts and developed possible solutions for the West Coast communities.

And then the heavy hand of negativity shut the door.

Before they had even seen the Bill and without a skerrick of investigation, the Opposition declared today that they would say NO.

The consultation had been completed, information had been gathered and its veracity tested.

Debate was set to start and the Opposition said NO.

The members opposite closed their eyes, blocked their ears and turned their back.

Mr Speaker, what this process has shown is that many people in our community are passionate about democratic debate.

Yet there are some who just watch things, just sit still and let the world pass them by.

The renowned writer and philosopher Leo Tolstoy wrote in his epic tale 'War and Peace' that, "*the strongest of all warriors are these two - Time and Patience*".

The Opposition has neither the time nor the patience.

Their impatient decision to disengage from the debate and to scuttle the opportunity badges them as the anti-everything brigade.

Mr Speaker, the political opponents of the time zone proposals have slept through the sunrise; today they are just left to ponder the sunset.

The Draft Bill will not proceed.

If the opponents of change ever develop the courage to advance our state, the government remains willing to re-open the process.

We have the time and we have the patience.