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Question Time

YORKE PENINSULA MINING

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. Can the minister provide an update to my constituents as to the status of the Rex Minerals proposal? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr ELLIS: Constituents of mine received notice in April that the roadworks required to be completed prior to mine commencement would start in May. To date, six months later, no work has occurred whatsoever.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:41): That is unacceptable. If the member's community was promised something by Rex Minerals and it hasn't been delivered, that is not good enough, and I share his frustration.

Mining companies and the mining industry as a whole often talk at length about multiple land use frameworks and social licence. When mining companies make promises, they should keep them. Having said that, mining companies work in a very different and fluctuating economy. When commodity prices fluctuate so dramatically, it can make it very difficult to raise capital, it can make it very difficult to procure services.

In the current employment market in South Australia, having the lowest unemployment rate in the state's history, the state is faced with a unique challenge that we have not faced before. It's not that there is no demand for work; it's that it's hard to find the workers that we need to do the work. I suspect that what has occurred here is that there probably are roadworks that are funded by Rex Minerals and that they are looking for contractors to do that work and, given the demands we are spending on road maintenance, it's probably getting harder and harder to find the contractors to do that work. But what I undertake to find out is exactly what has happened, what has gone wrong, and give the member and his community a fulsome answer because they deserve it.

The Yorke Peninsula Rex Minerals deposit is an excellent deposit of copper that will help grow our state, grow our royalties base, create jobs on Yorke Peninsula, and of course copper is a commodity of decarbonisation and is growing in demand each and every year. There is no forecast over the next four, eight, 12, 20 years where the world will see copper demand decreasing. Copper demand is going to be growing exponentially and, because of

the impacts of climate change and the need to carbon-abate, copper and electrification are going to be critical.

So I will get to the bottom of this for the member. I know he is passionate about making sure his local community are serviced and serviced properly. I know that from the correspondence I get from him and the number of times he calls me about particular roads in his electorate. I will chase this up and get him a detailed answer.