



**Killing safety in the country
3 August 2007**

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said the need for paid ambulance staff in regional South Australia is particularly acute now that many hospitals no longer have a resident doctor.

“Many hospitals are more than 100 kilometres apart and are located on busy interstate highways.

“On Eyre Peninsula, there is only one paid ambulance officer outside of Port Lincoln to cover 55,000 square kilometres of the Flinders electorate.

“Not one emergency in that area outside of Port Lincoln could be reached in the seven minutes suggested as the national emergency response time despite the very best efforts of our well trained, dedicated, hard working and appreciated volunteer ambulance officers,” she said.

Mrs Penfold was especially scathing of The Advertiser editorial of 1 August 2007 which stated, ‘Country towns no longer depend on local hospitals’ touting that ‘the speed of modern transport including the Royal Flying Doctor Service and emergency helicopters’ does away with the need for many hospitals.

“The editorial mimicked the state government’s attitude to health services in the country, claiming a new ‘can-do’ attitude is emerging however all that is happening is a ‘can-do’ action plan to close down rural and regional South Australia.

“After all, no paid ambulance officers, no doctors, no hospitals, no runways maintained for Flying Doctor planes to land on, and eventually no people.

“This is what the Advertiser editorial calls ‘long-term and well-planned reform!’” ENDS