



**Prepare for Bird Flu
20 February 2006**

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold is calling on both major political parties to support funding for a data base of all birds and poultry in South Australia as a matter of urgency.

The proposal is put forward as a control measure in the event of an outbreak of bird flu. It should begin immediately using discretionary funding, and not wait until after the election.

The proposal comes on top of the federal government's announcement of an injection of \$6.5 million into bird flu research.

Mrs Penfold said each local government council could compile a data base for its region, thus covering all but the 'out of districts' areas of the state, but the project would need to be funded and co-ordinated by the state government.

"A rapid response through the instant availability of this information to any call by the state or federal government for a specific bird cull could save hundreds of lives," she said.

"Particular species, or those kept under free range conditions, could be targeted immediately by response crews using the prior knowledge provided through such a data base.

"It is easy to imagine the chaos, cost and inefficiency that would result if culling crews were sent out without this information, or attempting to obtain the information on the run while an outbreak was in progress," she said.

Mrs Penfold said councils would need state government funding to pay for the administrative costs involved and called on the major parties to support the proposal.

She said the Bird Flu virus currently only spreads from bird to bird and bird to human.

"However this disease is rapidly getting a foothold throughout the world. It is no longer confined to Asia but has been reported in the Mediterranean and Africa.

"A mutant virus spreading from human to human would have catastrophic effects across the world," she said.

Mrs Penfold suggested the mandatory information might consist of the owner's name, exact address or location, all species of birds, number of each species, how kept e.g. free range, caged, aviary, loft, indoor pet, etc., value, and whether it is a commercial venture.

The data base would need to carry further information such as whether or not carrier pigeons are being raced, are live birds bought and sold, are poultry products (eggs, table birds etc) sold.

Mrs Penfold said wild birds and even migratory wild birds must be included using private and government departmental knowledge and include the months of migration and expected numbers of birds.

“The Boy Scouts motto, ‘Be prepared’, is a sound one to follow in connection with bird flu,” she said. ENDS