



What's in the State Budget for Eyre Peninsula?

28 May 2004

MORE TAXES & CHARGES:

Deeper pockets will be needed to pay for the rises in taxes and charges in the 2004 State Budget, Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said.

"The Rann Government will collect \$587 million more in taxes from South Australians compared with the last Liberal Budget in 2001

"That's \$1.6 million extra every day," she said.

Mrs Penfold said that \$180 million of the alleged \$360 million supposedly being returned in community tax cuts comes from the removal of the bank debits tax that was agreed and committed to by the Former Liberal Government five years ago.

"This is one of the taxes that was agreed should end when revenues from GST were received," she said.

"The Rann Government must hope that people have short memories when considering its campaign promise of no new or higher taxes.

"The tax burden will continue to disadvantage households, business and the entire South Australian economy," she said.

EDUCATION:

Cleve is a winner and Ceduna is once again a loser in Labor's 2004 State Budget, Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said.

Cleve Area School will receive \$680,000 for the upgrade of administration and staff facilities that should be completed by June 2005.

"While this news is naturally pleasing will it be delivered? I was very disappointed that Ceduna Area School was not mentioned in the Budget papers this year despite being promised for the last three".

"I have already spoken with the new Minister for Education Jane Lomax-Smith who has given an undertaking that the Ceduna junior school will be completed by the start of the 2005 school year," she said.

The \$5 million redevelopment of Stage 1 of the Ceduna Area School was built-in in the last Liberal Budget in 2001-2002. However the Labor State Government in 2002 reduced the amount to \$3.9 million and delayed the project.

The project includes \$1 million of federal funding that has already been paid to the state.

The redevelopment was due to be completed by September 2003 but has not yet started.

Mrs Penfold has repeatedly raised the redevelopment of the Ceduna Area School in ministerial contacts and questions and speeches in Parliament.

"I believe the present Minister realises that I will not let this issue go away.

"The \$1 million of federal funding already paid towards the cost of the project is a concern.

"Where is it now? Why hasn't the interest gained from this money over a period of two years or so been added to the project, how can it vanish from the books?" she asked.

HEALTH:

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold expressed alarm that health services in rural South Australia have again missed out in the 2004 State Budget.

State Government funds (excluding Commonwealth funds) to country hospitals and community health services have been cut by \$5.6 million or 3.2%, while Federal funding for country hospitals has increased by \$3.7 million for the same period.

The state figures are an estimated result of \$173.7 million for 2003-04 compared with a budgeted \$168.1 million for 2004-05.

"If you allow for health inflation of about 6%, that means a cut in state funded health services of about 9% in real terms," Mrs Penfold said.

"For each of the last two years country hospitals have had to make savings or cuts in services of 3% a year.

"This is devastating news for our hospitals, many of whom have had to cancel surgery, stop obstetrics, and reduce specialist medical services and allied services such as physiotherapy and podiatry," she said.

Mrs Penfold said she had a deep concern for the future of health services on Eyre Peninsula along with the consequent flow-on effect on population.

"People, especially professionals, do not choose to live where health services are not readily available.

If we are to continue the expansion of our aquaculture, farming and mining industries to triple exports in the next 10 years as the Premier is asking us to, our hospitals must be maintained".

Marine Innovations South Australia:

A commitment to build the Marine Innovation South Australia (MISA) complex at Port Lincoln is the high point of the 2004 State Budget while health is again the big loser, Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said.

"The fact of getting the project into the ongoing budget stream is the important decision that locks MISA into becoming a reality," she said.

Over four years, \$12.9 million of an estimated total cost of \$25 million has been allocated. The \$300,000 for the first year will allow planning to begin.

The initiative will be undertaken in partnership and co-investment with the Port Lincoln Marine Science Centre, SARDI, universities, industry and the CSIRO.

MISA will provide research and industry development support for the expansion and ecologically sustainable development of South Australia's fisheries, aquaculture and marine ecotourism industries.

"This project, has the potential to place Port Lincoln top in the world for southern temperate marine research and development and education," Mrs Penfold said.

She said when the site is finalised the possibility of including TAFE and a senior high school could be explored.

ROADS:

Reductions in funding point to country roads being in for another bumpy ride under the Labor Government's 2004 State Budget, Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said.

"Unsealed rural arterial roads are one of the losers with funding cutbacks to the program.

"This contrasts with the Liberal initiative, which was ahead of schedule in 2001-02, to have all rural arterial roads sealed by 2004.

She said there has been no additional funding to the road shoulder sealing program. Funding for overtaking lanes has also been cut. However Mrs Penfold was pleased to see that \$692,000 of the \$7.9m project for the Cowell to Tumby Bay upgrade will continue.

"Both of these are significant areas of concern for the upgrade of the remaining sections of the Lincoln Highway in the near future," she said.

No funds have been specifically allocated for the Bratten Way linking Cummins and Mount Hope nor for the Cowell-Kimba road.

The State Black Spot program has also been cut.