



**HERITAGE PONIES UNDER THREAT OF EXTINCTION
5 May 2003**

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold today received a letter from the Minister for the Environment and Conservation John Hill, rejecting the Coffin Bay Pony Preservation Society's proposal to fence off 2,000 hectares of the 32,000 hectares in the Coffin Bay National Park.

This would have enabled the remaining small herd of 20 mares, 1 stallion and foals to stay in a small portion of their traditional home. This small herd is all that remains of 3 large herds that had built up since the original Timor ponies were introduced to the area in 1847.

Mr. Hill has a meeting with the members of the Society today at 3.30pm in Ceduna but has not bothered to consult with them on the issue before making his decision.

"The Minister has no generosity of spirit and no vision" Mrs. Penfold said, commenting on the Minister's intransigence in removing the Coffin Bay ponies from the Coffin Bay National Park

"The Coffin Bay ponies have been on the Coffin Bay peninsula for more than 150 years.

"What next does Mr. Hill propose to do? Get rid of all the people?" she said.

Mrs. Penfold said that Minister Hill's colleague, Treasurer Kevin Foley, said 'good government is considering all the options and making the right decisions.'

"Practical options to keep the ponies in (what is to them) their native habitat have been scorned".

"Consequently the Minister has made the wrong decision, a fact that will be proved over and over again in the future," she said.

Mrs. Penfold praised the members and supporters of the Coffin Bay Pony Preservation Society for their commonsense and persistence, including detailed research and lateral thinking in seeking a solution that was acceptable to all parties.

If no suitable location can be found for the ponies some will inevitably end up as dog food. This would be a shameful end for a wonderful icon of Southern Eyre Peninsula.

"This is not the end. We will stand and fight to retain our heritage," Mrs Penfold said.