



**Respite Crisis and supported accommodation horror
3 December 2007**

Eyre Peninsula's families caring for disabled members are under acute stress, suffering depression and family breakdown at rates well above those of the general community due to government cuts to disability services while Minister Conlon spends hundreds of thousands of dollars on social events said Member for Flinders Liz Penfold.

Mrs. Penfold attended the community meeting at LEPSH recently. She said that the meeting confirmed what she has been hearing in her office.

"One mother who has cancer was informed indirectly through her adult son's carer that respite had been reduced from 3 over-nights and one day, down to only two nights per week.

Parents caring for their disabled family member receive assistance of \$90 per fortnight while respite carers receive \$90 per night.

However the estimated cost of supported accommodation is over \$100,000 per year.

This mum, while battling with her own health has been told that her adult son is unlikely ever to get into supported accommodation, and as she said, 'the list is too long so I guess as a responsible parent I'll look after him for the time of my life'.

Mrs. Penfold said another family has had support hours cut from 30 hours a week to 17 hours because their child has reached 18 years of age.

"The burden on parents, their relationship, and on other children is unfair and this extends to many families in similar circumstances."

"To be told that the government's top priority is now to house the homeless must be a bitter pill for those who have a disabled child who would be homeless except for the support of their family."

"This government has enough funding to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars for social events like the tram opening and to launch the Port River Expressway so the money is there. The State Government must reinstate the support hours."

"Ageing parents of adult children with disabilities need more support not less."

Mrs Penfold said the State Government can not continually blame former Liberal State and Federal Governments.

"Respite in Jack Martin House would appear to be an immediate help but it is time that the second stage of ADAM house was built and the next one planned."

"I call on the Minister Jay Weatherill to take action now because these people are at the end of their tether" Mrs Penfold said.