



FIREFIGHTERS THANKED
20 February 2003

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold had glowing praise for the volunteer firefighters from Eyre Peninsula who spent time fighting fires in Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales.

"I am particularly proud that Region 6, the Country Fire Service Region that covers my electorate, provided more volunteers than any other region in the state".

"Considering our small population base, this is a magnificent effort", she said.

Three staff members and 95 volunteers, some of whom did two tours of duty, answered the call for help.

Mrs Penfold, speaking in support of a motion in Parliament thanking the firefighters, said the list of names was like a roll call of Eyre Peninsula towns and districts. She said the Regional Commander of Region 6, Neil Ellis, said the fires were started by lightning strikes and eventually burnt out one million hectares.

Mr Ellis praised the cooperation of airlines and charter operators in successfully completing the huge logistics of transporting so many men and women. About 100 volunteers went in each of the five contingents.

Mr Rob Chambers of Port Lincoln said the firefighters on the scene were flat out and all were physically tired. "It was good to be able to relieve them so they could get some rest, and then be able to carry on again when the South Australians came home".

Mr John Haagmans of Yallunda Flat said visibility was limited to about 50 meters and masks were worn all the time to cope with the smoke. He said the people really appreciated the help that was given.

Mrs Penfold, in commending the volunteers, said the hours given up in training, the self discipline needed, and the willingness to sacrifice self for the good of others were characteristics of the Country Fire Service. They are part of the ANZAC tradition that has made Australia the great nation that it is.

"Volunteering and community service are all an integral part of the fabric of rural living. I would like to see the day when volunteering and service above self are equally strong in metropolitan and city areas", she said.