



HF COAST RADIO SERVICES

15 August 2002

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold asked, "What do we have to do to alert this Government to a potentially life threatening situation?"

Mrs Penfold was staggered when the Minister for Transport Michael Wright said "I do not have a clue what the answer is" when asked about the delay in getting the emergency service, Coast Radio Adelaide, up and running, was about.

The Minister's admission was in reply to Mrs Penfold's question asking when Coast Radio Adelaide, located at Port Augusta, would be fully operational, preferably before lives were lost as a result of the Government's seven weeks of inaction.

The new distress system was supposed to be operational in 1st July. Mrs Penfold said she was dismayed by the Minister's lack of interest especially since the issue had been specifically drawn to his attention by letter and the matter had been widely reported in the media.

"We have the largest fishing fleet in Australia operating out of Port Lincoln, plus all the other commercial and recreational boaters in South Australia, along with recreational sailors from interstate and overseas who travel through our waters, and the Minister appears unconcerned about their safety!" she said.

Mrs Penfold said fishing industry workers had expressed real concerns that, even if the station were operational, it is located too far from the open ocean of the Bight to pick up the radio distress signals that most recreational and fishing boats use if in trouble.

Marine safety was previously covered by Telstra run facilities in six locations around Australia. State run stations of 100 watts were to be in place by 1st July 2002 to take over duty when the 1000 watt Telstra stations were decommissioned.