



**Bus aids prisoners' fire recovery role
29 June 2005**

Port Lincoln Prison is taking delivery of a four-wheel drive vehicle so that prisoners can continue their voluntary effort in the southern Eyre Peninsula bushfire recovery program.

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said the work that the prisoners could do is being hampered because the prison bus has been unable to cope with the rugged terrain.

"The upgraded transport will enable them to continue their valuable contribution to the recovery effort," she said.

Work gangs, coordinated by the West Coast Bushfire Recovery Committee, have been involved chiefly in re-fencing and removal of trees from roadsides for safety reasons.

Mrs Penfold commended all volunteers on the work they have done in the recovery program.

"The Nyroca work camp has been particularly valuable in enabling efficient coordination and accommodation for those wonderful people who have come from all over Australia to help.

"The magnitude of the task is brought into perspective when it is realised that the amount of fencing alone that was destroyed in the fire would circle Australia," she said.

**A fire, a kangaroo, a volunteer meet
13 May 2005**

One of the many positive stories to come out of Black Tuesday and its aftermath concerns an 18 year old volunteer from Streaky Bay.

Colliding with a kangaroo is bad enough at any time but was even worse when the driver was on his way to join his emergency services unit to fight the bushfire on southern Eyre Peninsula.

Karl Elliott of Streaky Bay and his brother Eric at Wudinna were both needed in the Streaky Bay SES crew that was ordered to Port Lincoln to assist at the time of the fire.

The accident with the kangaroo happened as the crew members were converging on a meeting point at Port Kenny.

Karl, an apprentice mechanic, suddenly found he had a bill for almost \$3000 for repairs.

His grandmother, Mrs Lisa Baker of Streaky Bay, contacted Member for Flinders Liz Penfold, to see what (if anything) could be done.

Calls to the West Coast Hotline and letters to Ministers followed. Then came advice that an ex gratia payment of \$1500 would be made to the repairer as part payment of the bill.

"We need more volunteers in our emergency services therefore it would be a pity if an unavoidable accident like this resulted in such a heavy personal cost that a person dropped out as a volunteer," Mrs Penfold said.

She said the whole community owes a debt of gratitude to Karl and all volunteer members of SES, CFS and ambulance crews.

ENDS

Police Escort Fees on Transportable Homes for Fire Victims 24 March 2005

Victims of the Lower Eyre Peninsula bushfires have come across yet another hurdle in the recovery process.

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold is lobbying to get police escort fees waived on transportable homes for all fire victims.

Those purchasing transportable homes to replace their own homes lost in the fire could be charged between \$6,000 and \$15,000 for police escort fees.

"It is bad enough that these people have been homeless since January 11 and may have to wait more than 12 months for their new houses. They shouldn't have to pay the government a police escort fee as well, that is higher than the funds many of them received from the government immediately after the fire." Mrs Penfold said.

The quickest option of housing for the bushfire victims is to order a transportable home as builders on Eyre Peninsula are already struggling to keep up with the ever increasing workload in this developing region. To have a house built on site could require months possibly years of waiting.

These victims, many of whom have young children and some who are elderly, need to be able to go back to homes of their own as soon as possible if they are to recover quickly from the ordeal that they have been through. I am aware of one family living in two caravans and travelling kilometres to the local caravan park for a shower who are having difficulty in obtaining a transportable to replace the brick home that they lost. The police escort fee will be just one more cost that they don't expect or need." she said.

Mrs Penfold has written to the Minister for Police Kevin Foley requesting police escort fees on transportable homes be waived for fire victims who lost their homes and is still awaiting his reply.

Burnt passports replaced free of charge 11 February 2005

The Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Alexander Downer approved another small step in the road to recovery for those affected by the Black Tuesday bushfires.

Mr Downer has waived fees until January 2006 for the replacement of current Australian passports lost or damaged in the fire.

The decision was made due to representations from the Member for Flinders Liz Penfold and federal Member for Grey Barry Wakelin.

Mrs Penfold initiated action when she was told that the cost of replacing a passport is as much as \$400.

"This is another cost in the impossibly long list of expenses for people who are trying to rebuild their lives. I am delighted with the Federal Minister Alexander Downer's compassionate response," she said.

Mr Downer said that South Australian residents wishing to replace passports lost in the fires should phone the Australian Passport Information Service on 131 232.

"Replacement passports will carry the same expiry date as the original documents," he said.

Mr Downer said the action is part of the Federal Government's commitment to the bushfire victims.

"The fires severely affected the lives of the lower Eyre Peninsula community, destroying homes, belongings and personal effects.

"It is heartwarming to know of the many groups and individuals who are helping victims to rebuild their lives.

"An important element of this process will be the replacement of valuable personal documents, including passports," he said. ENDS

Win for Stamp Duty exemption 11 February 2005

Victims of the Black Tuesday bushfires will have stamp duty waived on transfer of property thanks to action by Member for Flinders Liz Penfold.

Mrs Penfold previously requested that the government waive all stamp duty for mortgage refinancing and on new vehicles and farm machinery. This was quickly agreed to by the government and has offered relief to many fire victims.

However it was brought to Mrs Penfold's attention that victims purchasing homes to replace those burnt had to pay two State Government fees - stamp duty on the transfer and the registration of the transfer of these homes, together amounting to more than \$10,000.

Mrs Penfold asked Treasurer Kevin Foley if he would waive the stamp duty fee on the purchase of the homes in question time in Parliament on Wednesday 11 February. In a ministerial statement on Thursday the Treasurer said he was "happy to give favourable consideration to such requests on a case by case basis."

"This is another win for our fire victims, making the road back to recovery a little easier and I urge anyone else who may be buying another home to replace one lost in the fire to make an application to the Treasurer," Mrs Penfold said.

"The Treasurer also confirmed that eligibility for stamp duty relief is not affected by the receipt of the State Government's \$10,000 grant as it had been rumoured," Mrs Penfold said. Ends.

Computers for bushfire victims 9 February 2005

Victims of the Black Tuesday bushfires can receive used state government computers thanks to action by the Member for Flinders Liz Penfold.

The computers will come from the Smart State PC donation program which gives used computers to not-for-profit organisations.

The program guidelines exclude individuals therefore Mrs Penfold asked that the requirement be waived in view of the extraordinary circumstances.

Mrs Penfold put the question to the Minister for Administrative Services Michael Wright in question time in Parliament today (Wednesday 9 February).

Mr Wright after consulting his department, said that, upon application, the Department of Administrative and Information Services (DAIS) will provide a personal computer from its available stocks for anyone who is fire-affected.

“This is a win for common sense and is just one more part of the reconstruction process,” Mrs Penfold said.

**The eye in the sky is still blind
7 February 2005**

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold expressed grave concern that a month after the devastating fires of Black Tuesday on January 11th no agreement to use local aerial services for fire bombing has been put in place.

“We have a plane, we have a pilot, but the agreement requested so that he could be used has not materialised,” she said.

An interim agreement could cover the period until a contract on the same or similar basis as the current contract with Australian Maritime Resources for use of their aircraft could be drawn up.

Mrs Penfold took up the matter with the Minister for Emergency Services Pat Conlon in the week after the fire.

She also asked for GRN radios to be installed so that planes and ground fire fighting services could use pilots' local knowledge and communicate more reliably in an emergency.

Mrs Penfold said that local air services operator Kevin Warren has offered to buy two planes for fire bombing provided that operational costs of fire fighting are met by the government.

The proposed type of plane is already used in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia for fire fighting.

“On 28th January I attended the opening of the CFS station at Elliston where Mr Conlon officiated.

“I discussed with some of those present the possibility of a lightning strike as the day was a stormy one and lightning strikes are a common cause of fire especially in our parks.

“It was no surprise to me that as I drove back to Port Lincoln later in the day I saw two CFS units fighting a fire near Sheringa.”

Mrs Penfold said local pilot Kevin Warren, who has an aerial agricultural spraying business, is more aware than most of the vulnerability of lower Eyre Peninsula to bushfire.

As Mr Warren observed, any large fire approaching Port Lincoln from the west would cut off all exit/entry points to and from the city, trapping the population as would have occurred on Black Tuesday had not the wind changed when it did.

Likewise the township of Coffin Bay, which is surrounded by thick scrub and inaccessible country, has only one way in and out of the town.

The vast tracts of inaccessible thick scrub to the west and south of the city of Port Lincoln are subject to lightning strikes. The huge fire in Coffin Bay National Park some years back was started by lightning. The only way to access such a fire in its early stage is with aircraft.

The recent Tulka fire gave adequate notice of the intensity of any significant fire in these areas. This is coupled with the hilly terrain throughout lower Eyre Peninsula which also makes access by land vehicles very difficult if not impossible.

Mrs Penfold said she felt it pointless to wait for the coroner's report before taking action.

"The people of this region should not be left exposed to unnecessary fire danger any longer.

"I ask the government to take urgent action to ensure that the contract requested, the radios and planes are put in place without further delay," she said. ENDS

Lower Eyre Peninsula Bush Fire 11 January 2005

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said this horrific natural disaster in our own community brings home the amazing efforts of volunteers in attempting to keep us all safe and cared for.

She extends her sympathy to those who have lost family and property in the fire on southern Eyre Peninsula.

"our hearts are with all those who have lost family, friends and property. Nothing can replace lives however I know we will all do what we can to comfort the bereaved and to assist those who have suffered property losses," she said.

A hotline 1802020 has been established for emergency assistance of all kinds.

She said a trust fund will be established and the public once again will be called upon for monetary donations.

"Eyre Peninsula generosity has been stretched in response to the tsunami appeals however I know that it will stretch even further to help in this hour of great personal need," she said.

For more information contact ashes@fire-brigade.asn.au