



**Regional Boards to merge  
18 May 2009**

The possibility of further funding demands being placed on Local Government Councils is one of the concerns arising from the proposed amalgamation of Regional Development Boards and Area Consultative Committees.

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said the lack of consultation with local councils and development boards about the plan, which was announced in late April and is to begin on July 1<sup>st</sup> was farcical.

“Under the plan, the state’s 13 Regional Development Boards will merge with the four federally-funded Area Consultative Committees to establish Regional Development Australia (RDA).

“The number of organisations will be cut from 17 to eight, and of the eight, seven will be based in regional areas based on the Rann Government Regional Boundaries,” she said.

“The proposed new Eyre and Western Region RDA will extend to the Western Australia border and include the cities of Whyalla and Port Lincoln.”

“The proposal is for the three levels of government to contribute the same amount of funding to the new scheme however particularly in view of last week’s Federal budget cut in funding there is no certainty about what will happen in the future,” Mrs Penfold said.

“The Labor state and federal governments are adept at passing on responsibility without providing the financial means to fulfil those responsibilities,” she said.

Mrs Penfold said Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association members have expressed strong concern over this aspect of the mergers.

They strongly believe that the current independence and autonomy of both Whyalla Economic Development Board and Eyre Regional Development Board, with each representing its own community of interest, are non negotiable and should be maintained in any future RDA model.

I am concerned that regional communities are being railroaded into accepting the RDA without proper consultation. I encourage you to write to me regarding your concerns and questions, Mrs Penfold said.

Submissions close on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009 and can be sent to:

PO Box 1798, Port Lincoln

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Email: [flinders.portlincoln@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:flinders.portlincoln@parliament.sa.gov.au)

Issues already brought to Liz's attention are:

- Commonwealth funding minimal,
- Current state government funding is \$18 million, local government \$5 million and federal government \$1.4 million (reduced to \$1.1m in this week's budget),
- Adelaide RDA to be fully federally funded, with the seven regional RDAs sharing the balance of allocated fund,
- Funding may be weighted (population based),
- Length of time it has taken to get MOU drawn up. Changes first announced July last year and discussions with State Government last November about proposed changes but only just coming to consult with local government,
- Very short time frame to get new organisations in place, new constitutions, articles of association, strategic plans, work plans, budgets and organisational plans, board appointments, existing contracts and assets transferred,
- Timing in the worst economic cycle experienced for decades,
- Retention of experienced staff,
- Appointment of chairs and deputy chairs by the Boards, not by the Minister.