



REGIONAL IMPACT STATEMENT CALLED FOR 24 July 2002

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold is calling for a Regional Impact Statement on the proposed Road Safety Reforms and asks that people write to Michael Wright with their views.

"It is amazing that the Labor government have proposed the introduction of a raft of tougher penalties as part of an overhaul of road safety laws, but significantly reduced arterial road funding that would have helped to make our roads safer".

"I am disappointed at the cut to the Arterial Road Funding Program from \$8.4 to \$2.8 million dollars, it is simply not enough to ensure safe roads for South Australians" Mrs Penfold said.

However the cut in funding is not the only change that will affect the Flinders electorate.

The Government's proposed safety initiatives include making it more difficult for people to get a learner's licence and provisional drivers will have to stay on their P's until they are 20 years of age.

Learner drivers are expected to obtain an 80% pass rate for their theoretical assessment and if they fail the practical testing they cannot resit the test for two weeks.

"These initiatives hit country people more, as testing can only be done in certain centres, often many miles from people's homes. If people miss out, it isn't easy to get back and re-sit the test. Sitting for a learners permit will be a time consuming and expensive exercise particularly for the children and parents who have to take the day off work" Mrs Penfold said.

"Drivers caught with a Blood Alcohol Concentration of 0.05 or over will automatically lose their licence, however in Victoria I understand this change had not reduced drink driving or reduced accidents. It just reduces further the ability to socialise in regional areas".

"Travelling significant distances is a fact of life for the majority of people living in regional communities. An automatic loss of licence for a first offence will make people's lives very difficult, in fact, in some instances will make it impossible for people to retain their employment".

"I certainly do not condone breaking the law by drink driving, however penalising a first time offender by taking their licence away for 0.5 will make it much more difficult for people in regional areas which are without subsidised buses on the hour or taxi's readily available" she said.

"This may result in higher unemployment and therefore the social implications of these initiatives may be far greater than visualised" Mrs Penfold said.

"It appears to me that these initiatives have been created by city based dictators who have no concept of what it is like to live and work in rural areas".

"I believe the way to make a significant impact on road safety would be by ensuring greater funding was allocated to the Arterial Road Funding Program and to local governments to maintain local roads" Mrs Penfold said.