



Reduction of teaching scholarships 8 June 2004

If you missed out on a teaching scholarship in the past, Member for Flinders Liz Penfold would like to hear from you.

Mrs Penfold is concerned that the Labor State Government has dropped the number of country teaching scholarships by 18% in the past twelve months.

She questioned the reduction from 95 the previous year to 78 since the problem of attracting qualified teachers to country areas has been clearly demonstrated.

“This reduction has meant that 11 less young people have gained a teaching scholarship from Eyre Peninsula,” she said.

Students who gain a teacher scholarship must work for two years in a country school as part of the contract of accepting the scholarship.

In a convoluted response to a question from Mrs Penfold, the Minister for Education Jane Lomax-Smith said retention was an issue.

She said that, with a higher retention rate, “there will be more teachers on the ground, in the schools”. However she ignored the problem that teachers first had to be recruited prior to being retained.

The Minister also ignored other issues such as career advancement that necessitates transfer from country schools.

Mrs. Penfold said that the scholarships have been welcomed by students from Eyre Peninsula to assist them with some of the cost of university study, but who also want to return to a rural area to work.

“The scholarships have only been available for the past two years with some recipients entering the workforce this year, so I question the so called problem with retention” Mrs Penfold said.

“The government has announced that scholarships are available to address teacher shortfalls, therefore I will be following this issue closely to ensure that rural students are not missing out” she said. ENDS