



MOOTED WATER PRICE RISE CONDEMNED

14 February 2003

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said raising the price of reticulated water on Eyre Peninsula to \$2 a kilolitre was a recipe for raping Eyre Peninsula while martyring the residents.

“The State Government will pay about \$37 million just to manage public transport in the city this financial year but I haven’t noticed any city councils or boards offering to help pay towards the cost, or any suggestion that services should be curtailed to reduce the cost,” she said.

Mrs Penfold was responding to an article in Thursday’s Times 13 February 2003 where higher prices were flagged by the Eyre Peninsula Water Catchment Management Board.

Mrs Penfold said she was also greatly disturbed by the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association’s support for higher charges. “Such an outcome would further endanger our delicate competitive edge and therefore jobs within the region. We already have to contend with higher freight and phone costs and so on”.

“The additional barrier of higher water cost may make some projects unviable, leading to a downturn in income and employment.

“It may even be contrary to ACCC guidelines,” she said. Mrs Penfold said that if services and infrastructure are required elsewhere in the State then it comes out of taxes. If filtration plants are installed elsewhere in the State they are paid for out of taxes.

If the Adelaide metropolitan water supply needs boosting then the cost comes out of taxes. “In other words, our taxes help to maintain the water supply across the State”.

“Where is the justice in proposing that just this region of the State bear an additional burden in attempting to get an adequate water supply?” she asked.

Mrs Penfold pointed out that, since Eyre Peninsula consumers are a small portion of the whole of the State, a small increase in price in the metropolitan area would pay for our needs and keep us on the same competitive basis, at least in water.

Mrs Penfold said the Community Obligation funding was used to ensure equity for all citizens of the State and should be used to provide the water for Eyre Peninsula’s current and future requirements.

Shadow Minister for Water Resources Mark Brindal said Mrs Penfold had led the fight to get better water resources for Eyre Peninsula because they were limited, fragile and failing.

Mr Brindal said more than doubling the charge from 97cents to \$2 per kilolitre was untenable as a matter of social justice and he believed that if it were done then it may have to be done across the State.

“If the Government has not adequately provided for Eyre Peninsula, then the businesses and residents should not be penalised for that,” he said.

Mr Brindal and Mrs Penfold said debate on the water supply across the State would be a positive move. It has been suggested that Eyre Peninsula be connected into the Murray River in which case the water cost and supply would be the same as the majority of the State.

Mrs Penfold said what is needed is a government that acts on water. “We have the answer for Eyre Peninsula in wind farms and desalination plants that private enterprise are seeking to establish.

“The Eyre Peninsula Catchment Water Management Board could move this forward significantly by identifying hindrances and suggesting solutions,” she said.