



### **Totally inadequate government fire plan!**

11 October 2006

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold has accused the Rann Government of negligence following today's fire at Port Lincoln.

"The Rann Labor Government stands condemned", Mrs Penfold said.

"They have had five years to fix the problems since the original Tulka fire recommendations. Since then we have had the devastating Wangary fire and still radio communications and water bombers are major issues today.

"I am totally appalled with the Rann Government's lack of planning in the event of a bushfire following today's blaze at Port Lincoln.

"Despite the fire season starting early and despite notice of extreme fire danger no water bomber had been organised to be at or near Port Lincoln in case of a bushfire.

"When a fire began to pose a risk to life and property, two water bombers were flown over from Adelaide! Once again local pilots carried out the fire spotting without the proper radio communications systems recommended five years ago!

"The Opposition has been informed that despite media reports that two water bombers from Adelaide were due to arrive in Port Lincoln before 12pm, we understand they didn't arrive until after 1pm – putting residents' lives at risk!

"This is outrageous! I could smell the smoke at around 9.30 this morning, yet the water bombers didn't arrive until after 1 this afternoon – after the fire had been controlled.

"If water bombers are deployed during the early stages of a fire they are generally more effective than during the more advanced stages.

"Initial media reports suggest several homes were damaged by fire. If a water bomber was closer to the Eyre Peninsula these homes may have been spared.

"Port Lincoln was once again left vulnerable by the Rann Government. Thankfully no-one was hurt but we weren't so lucky last time, and we might not be so lucky next time."

Shadow Emergency Services Minister Mark Goldsworthy said water bombers should have been ready for action in the event of a bushfire on the Eyre Peninsula.

"Considering the Eyre Peninsula had been tragically hit by bushfires in the past I would have expected the government to be more alert", Mr Goldsworthy said.

“The CFS volunteers who battled the blaze on the ground should not have had to wait several hours for water bombers to arrive from Adelaide. They needed to be assisted promptly.

“The MFS, CFS and other emergency volunteer service crews work tirelessly to protect South Australians from fire and they should be properly supported by the Rann Government.”