



**FORMER MEMBER FOR FLINDERS**

**1994 - 2010**

### **ADELAIDE AIRPORT TAXIS**

**12 May 2003**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** As the member for Flinders, I regularly commute to and from the Adelaide Airport. While the airport terminal is long overdue for an upgrade, the inefficiency of the airport taxi pick-up is something to be experienced, and is inexcusable. Recently, a gentleman in front of me, in a very long queue of about 200 to 300 people, stated wryly that he thought he should fly back to Melbourne and take a taxi to his meeting; it could be quicker. It is very sad to see so many people waiting patiently for taxis at Adelaide Airport. Sometimes there are between, as I said, 200 to 300 people sweltering in hot sun or crowding underneath limited shelter from sun, wind or rain.

The airport is often the first impression that South Australian visitors get. They have travelled long distances and, when they finally get to Adelaide, we force them to remember us by keeping them standing in one long, tired queue. People who fly in for business and medical appointments are frustrated and anxious when, having arrived in Adelaide in reasonable time, lose up to 45 minutes, or more, waiting for a taxi. When coming from my electorate of Flinders out of one of the only two regular air passenger transport terminals left at Port Lincoln or Ceduna, they may well already have travelled by car for several hours. This is not the way that we should be remembered. We have a wonderful state and wonderful people. We should be in control of our facilities and efficiently managing them. The first impression of our state should be a positive one.

Currently, taxis at Adelaide Airport are regulated by a taxi traffic light that turns from red to white to signify spaces in the first layoff and the main rank. This system does not work effectively at present. Often this light is red when there are spaces and white when there are not. A concierge system, which apparently worked well, ran for about six weeks and then was dropped. Perhaps this system could be improved by using a shared taxi system organised by the concierge. However, if a concierge system for the Adelaide Airport is not suitable, a replacement system is essential.

One way to double the pick-ups and, thereby, relieve the congestion, would be to allow taxis to pick up on both sides of the current rank and/or from the airport internal road running parallel to the taxi rank on the car park side. A barrier should be erected to prevent queue jumping. This would further reduce tensions. In addition, an enlarged shelter from the sun, wind and rain that encompassed the walkway from the terminal as well would be much appreciated by travellers. In other states, a shelter runs between the international and domestic terminals.

South Australia currently expects our visitors to walk just under one kilometre with their luggage over a poorly defined track, catch the Skylink bus that operates every half an hour, or hour, depending on the time, or pay a taxi fare of \$6 to \$6.50 between the domestic and international terminals. I am sure that our visitors do not appreciate this, nor do our taxi drivers. Drivers have often waited in line for the white light for up to an hour or more, and after taking this small fare between the two terminals they have to return to the end of the queue. Everyone knows that the wait for a taxi ordered for a short trip is often longer than the trip itself, and if most people's pay depended on fares they, too, would be reluctant to take on small jobs.

Recently, I booked a taxi to meet me on arrival, as I had business guests from Melbourne who arrived at the same time. The taxi was old and poorly maintained, and so was the driver. After almost backing over one of my guests as they were putting their luggage into the boot, he proceeded to Parliament House, where he refused the fare, stating that he was a hire car and that I would be sent an account. As I settled my guests in for our meeting, the errant taxi driver then arrived at the door with a parliamentary attendant to get payment, as he had been mistaken. I am pleased to say, however, that today I utilised the services of Adelaide Impressions, and the

situation was much better.

Resolution of the taxi situation is imperative, and may involve a cooperative effort on the part of Adelaide Airport authorities, the taxi drivers, their companies plus local councils, SA Tourism and government. It is important for the economic viability of our taxi industry that we make it as efficient and cost-effective as possible. It is also important for our tourist industry, our businesses and the state's economic growth.

In Adelaide City Council's 2003 development plan, the corporate goal is to have 150 000 daily average visitors by 2010. Despite the recent setback in international travel, domestic travel is improving, and South Australia is not keeping pace. I commend the Adelaide City Council (and others who are working on the development plan) for its forward thinking. However, I hope that consideration is given by them and others for arrangements to upgrade the airport situation, as outlined, as quickly as possible, as a first step. Visitors to this state are the customers of our resources, and like any other customers we must provide them with good services, otherwise they will take their money and their business elsewhere. As Mr Roger Sexton from the South Australian Economic Board stated at the Business Vision 2010 meeting last Friday, visitors should step out of the plane at Adelaide Airport and know that they are in the most efficient state—and wouldn't it be great to start at Adelaide Airport itself.