



### **Employment, Women 22 March 2004**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services, representing the Minister for Employment, Further Education and Training. Will the minister explain to the house why since May last year the total number of women in full-time employment increased nationally by 1.7 per cent (39 400 jobs) but declined in South Australia by 9.2 per cent (15 300 jobs)?

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism):** I will reiterate that there has been a dramatic rise in the dollar, a drought and a range of issues that have affected South Australia but, beside that, I am very happy to take her question on notice, because clearly I have given the same answer for the last five questions at least and that has not explained the issue to the opposition in a way with which they are satisfied.

### **EMPLOYMENT 11 February 1999**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I take this opportunity to put forward my views on job creation in this State. The regions of South Australia have a significant part to play in providing jobs for the unemployed and the under-employed people of this State. We have further potential for direct job expansion in the highly successful wine industry and in the aquaculture, tourism and mining industries. Support services in transport, packaging, education and training, equipment provision, accounting, legal, Government departments, research and the like will create further job opportunities, with thousands of these in the city as well as in the country—as is the case now. I believe this fact is under appreciated by many living in the city who have little contact with the country and who do not recognise the interconnection. Many see country regions as little more than nuisances—if they consider us at all.

We in the country see our role as absolutely necessary for our State's survival in the top level of the world economy. It is my view that it is the country regions that make much of the real wealth of South Australia with the export of our primary products and that many of the city jobs are created from the recycling of this money through support services. In addition, our exports provide the capacity through foreign exchange for us to import the consumer products from overseas that we all expect to enjoy in our everyday lives and, also, much of the capital equipment we need for our industries. It stands to reason that if we are to create more real wealth for South Australia—and therefore jobs—primary

industries must be encouraged and people must want to go to the country to live.

Therefore, the quality of life in the country must be seen as equivalent to although different from that available in the city. After all, we have lots of fresh air and space and can easily go camping, fishing or surfing. Often, we live no more than five or 10 minutes from work. In the city you have wonderful events and easy access to world class venues that provide activities and entertainment which many in the country will never see—except on television. Probably the most necessary things that we in the country need if we are to achieve the quality of life and the potential for job creation that I believe we have are excellent telecommunications, water, power, roads and services.

Fortunately, the Minister for Transport in another place has significantly improved the roads in country regions over the last few years, with a total of \$41 million being spent in my electorate alone. However, still much more needs to be done, such was the neglect of country roads before this Liberal Government came to office. Many country businesses must be able to work directly with international markets so that we can tailor our products to fit them or value add our products as required to obtain the best prices.

Our businesses must be viable in terms of having enough profit to provide a reasonable quality of life. The expectation that country people will sacrifice quality of life, particularly in relation to the education and health of their children just to stay in the country, has gone. Communication is essential to education. In this modern age a narrow range of subjects or a limit on the level of education that can be obtained is unacceptable. Many often self-employed small business people in country regions, particularly in the fishing and farming industries, who have not had the opportunity to go to school past grade 7 are grappling with trading on the futures markets and selling overseas on the Internet and require an intimate knowledge of how exchange rates operate. I am often amazed by their level of understanding. Lifelong learning is here to stay, and those who are involved in primary industries need it as much as anyone—and so do their children, who are often the entrepreneurs of the future.

This brings me to my next point in relation to the need for top-class telecommunications infrastructure and, of course, services. There is a need to bring and retain good teachers, doctors and other professionals to country regions. Without a doctor nearby, a country town is not seen as a good place to retire or to raise children—and without children the school will collapse. Communication at reasonable cost, so that professionals can communicate with their peers, is essential. Training and assistance now readily available by techniques such as a video conferencing and telemedicine can help reduce the isolation felt by many professionals. The country can often provide all round job experience in many fields—far better than most jobs in the city where people can specialise themselves or send clients to others who do. In the country you are often on your own. By necessity, you become a general practitioner in your particular field. While the work is often very rewarding, it can be very draining.

The single factor that I believe will prevent this State from reaching the potential that it has will be in not getting this State back on its economic feet. I understand that, while Queensland has over \$4 billion in the bank earning interest, we have over \$7 billion of debt that costs us around \$2 million per day in interest. As a State, our biggest income

earners are payroll tax and fees and charges, obtained in large part from our major source of jobs—small to medium sized businesses. It does not take much imagination to work out which State will be in a position to reduce payroll tax and fees and charges first, if we do not get rid of our debt.

The money and the jobs will go where the overheads are lowest, where people can get more bang for their hard earned buck. So, let us sell ETSA and pay off at least as much debt at the State Bank disaster gave us before ETSA's value reduces as other States get private enterprise upgrading their power resources. Let us get on with making the State what it should be: the best State in Australia, arguably in the world, to live and work. Only then can I see a level of resources being spent that will provide the first-class communication essential to jobs in regions and all the other infrastructure projects and services that are also necessary for long-term job creation, particularly in regional Australia. Perhaps we may be able to remove some of the overheads on business such as the anti-job creation tax on payroll.

I am proud of the Liberal Government's record in the job market since we came to office. Real jobs have been created, with a consequent new hopefulness appearing in our State. I can certainly feel the optimism in my electorate in contrast with the pessimism that prevailed in 1993. I commend the Government's tackling of the intractable issue of unemployment by going to the public and seeking their views: those who take the risks and responsibilities of employing, those who are employees, those who are self employed and who have the potential to employ, the unemployed, and the retired. From their collective wisdom I believe will come worthwhile initiatives for future employment in our wonderful State. I thank them for taking the time to provide input to the job workshops and can assure them that their ideas are being considered carefully by the Minister and his department. The information will be collated and disseminated via the Internet, CD-ROM and books so that the necessary action can be taken.

I ask the Independent members and the Opposition to consider carefully their opposition to the sale of ETSA and the position in which this leaves our State. Queensland, and soon Victoria, will be in a position to remove some of the significant overheads that are constraining the expansion of jobs. Their businesses will be more competitive on the world markets. Our businesses will languish or shift interstate. Do we want more jobs or not? If we want a vibrant economy in this State and the implementation of the many good ideas provided in the jobs workshops, then I believe that ETSA must be sold.

### **Country Youth Employment 7 July 1998**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Many small rural communities are unable to provide employment to the majority of their young people. This pulls apart the fabric of these communities as our energetic, dynamic and much loved young ones are forced to seek employment elsewhere. The impact on small rural communities of this youth population drift is manyfold. Communities mourn the circumstances that force their children to leave the district with the likelihood that they will never return. This restricts the opportunities of these communities to grow and flourish as the next generation produce their offspring.

Older generations have been left to run farms and businesses without the vibrancy, energy and innovation that our young folk bring to the task. Sporting and recreational organisations traditionally provide an opportunity for isolated country people to socialise and interact. These groups find it difficult to field teams in local sporting competitions or recruit younger people to recreational pursuits. It is imperative that these communities are able to provide employment to retain some of their young people if the communities are to continue to be viable.

The Liberal Government has put in place a number of initiatives that are helping to rectify the situation. A major initiative is the exemption of stamp duty on the transfer of the family farm to the next generation. Numerous smaller initiatives have been undertaken, and I commend the Government for implementing the small business incentive scheme and the small businesses which are taking up this initiative.

As a result of the small business incentive scheme, eight small and isolated communities on the Lower Eyre Peninsula will potentially retain some of their young people. A total of 18 employers in the Lower Eyre Peninsula region, outside the major town of Port Lincoln, have made application to employ a young person through the small business employer incentive scheme. The scheme offers incentive to small businesses to offer traineeships or apprenticeships to young people, thereby greatly enhancing their long-term employment prospects. Seven places for apprentices and 11 places for trainees are currently being determined, one each at Tumby Bay, Elliston and Wudinna; two at Streaky Bay; three each at Ceduna, Cowell and Cummins; and four in the small community of Cleve.

That the initiative has the backing of small businesses throughout South Australia is manifest in the fact that over 1 000 expressions of interest were received, with a reserve list having to be established. I am delighted that these grants are being offered in addition to other grants and training subsidies offered by the Federal Government. Small businesses participating in the scheme receive \$4 000 over two years. This can make a significant difference as to whether or not a small business is able financially to employ another person. In those regions where employment opportunities are scarce, the small business incentive scheme provides very welcome assistance to employers wishing to expand their businesses and provide employment opportunities to local young people. I am also extremely pleased that 40 per cent of the grants have been allocated to regional South Australia, which sorely needs this kind of assistance in order to regain some of the vibrancy and population it lost during the farming crisis of the 1980s and early 1990s. To help repopulate our country schools and also to invigorate our many voluntary organisations, we need this input. The SES, St John's and the CFS, as well as service organisations such as Apex, Rotary and Lions Clubs are vital to the good health of our country community. Funds are raised to provide the community with equipment for organisations such as the hospital, St John Ambulance and CFS, as well as for parks, etc. I commend the initiative of the Government.