



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HOSPITALS
28 May 1997

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Despite having to pay for the ALP-caused \$3 billion State debt from the State Bank, and a few other billions, the South Australian Liberal Government has transformed an ailing health system into the nation's most efficient, delivering services to a record number of South Australians. In my own electorate, the Port Lincoln Hospital required an urgent upgrade following ALP neglect. The ALP had three terms of office, 11 whole years to do something about it, but it did nothing. Herein lies the stark contrast between the former ALP Government and the current Liberal Government. The Liberal Government has delivered to Port Lincoln, as it has with many other country areas, a commitment to rebuild health infrastructure. A massive hospital redevelopment program has been undertaken with health units not only at Port Lincoln but at Port Pirie, Mount Gambier, Port Augusta, Wallaroo, Coober Pedy, Kangaroo Island, Millicent and Ceduna receiving very much-needed attention.

The Liberal Government has made a commitment to finish the \$16.5 million Port Lincoln Hospital redevelopment. Approval has been given for \$7.4 million in the final stage. Already, the Government has spent \$9 million on the project. The second stage, at a cost of \$6.3 million, was opened by the Minister, Dr Michael Armitage, on 1 March. Stage 3 started in the first half of 1997 and will be finished late in 1998. I was happy to read further good news today from the South-East region of the State: the *Border Watch* ran a story heralding the new Mount Gambier public hospital and stating that it will be fully operational by mid-July. Mount Gambier provides another example of the stark contrast between Liberal and Labor. In its 11 years of office, the Labor Government promised almost annually to build a new public hospital for the Mount, but continually it let everyone's hopes down. Now, in one term of office, the Liberals have turned that dream into reality.

Other capital works projects with money allocated to them include: Coober Pedy Community Health Centre; Kangaroo Island Hospital; Millicent Hospital; the new Port Pirie Environmental Health Centre; Wallaroo Hospital; Mount Pleasant Hospital; Berri Hospital; the 18 bed extension to the Kessal Wing Nursing Home at Boandik Lodge, Mount Gambier; and Ceduna Hospital. Also, Flinders Medical Centre has a new private wing, while just a few days ago the Premier announced the first financial commitment for the first two stages of the Royal Adelaide Hospital redevelopment. These works will start in August-September. The new 40-bed in-patient psychiatric unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is well under way and expected to be finished within the next financial year. Labor promised most of these developments but did not deliver one of them.

Labor's 11 budgets produced an average annual expenditure on capital works of \$45 million, whereas in the three Liberal budgets the average has been \$77 million. The Opposition Leader, Mike Rann, refuses to apologise for his part in the State Bank debt, but he leads the carping chorus of his ALP cohorts, who criticise the Liberal Government for doing more than they did—and with \$3 billion less.

The Liberal Government realised it had a massive job on its hands when it won office. One of the best testimonies of its success are the new and upgraded hospitals plus the extra services that have been provided. The South Australian Liberal Government now has a reputation for fixing and improving country hospitals, something totally at odds with the previous Government's approach to the country hospital system which revolved around closing and disregarding hospitals. The Opposition criticises this Government as it strives to restore prudent management of the State's finances and caring management of our services and for our debt reduction strategy, including our cuts to recurrent health expenditure. In doing so, the Opposition compounds the legacy which it left South Australians. However, Labor did not only mismanage the State Bank, it also failed to properly manage health services. Up to the end of the financial year 1995-96 this Government had to cut the State health allocation by \$47.5 million, compared with the last Labor budget.