



**Parliament, Regional Sitting  
15 September 2005**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I move:

That the next regional sitting of the House of Assembly before the next state election be held in Ceduna.

If the government is going to spend taxpayers' revenue to bring all the House of Assembly members and their staff, Hansard staff, parliamentary clerks, and all the paraphernalia including carpets, chairs, computers, etc., to the country, then I strongly advocate that the next meeting of the House of Assembly outside the metropolitan area should be in Ceduna. If educating the community about parliament is important, it also follows that members of parliament, particularly ministers, need to be educated about regional areas, especially those isolated from our major cities. This year, we went to Mount Gambier—the state's largest regional city. It is logical that a remote regional town should be selected as the next venue. It would be enlightening for Labor ministers to learn how isolated remote communities such as Ceduna survive and thrive by using their initiative to cope with questionable government decisions that impact, often negatively, on social justice issues and day-to-day living.

By visiting Ceduna, the cabinet and all Labor members would become acquainted with the fiasco that this government's Minister for Education has made of the Ceduna Area School. I suggest that this school, with its temporary classrooms that were built in Adelaide and put in Ceduna as a temporary measure in 1978 by the then Labor government, would be the most practical location for the sitting. The school was one of the first casualties of the change of government. The first stage of the redevelopment, which was budgeted for \$5 million, was immediately abandoned, along with the tender process. The funding was reduced to \$3.9 million, bearing in mind that \$1 million of this sum was federal support and included in both amounts.

Continued pressure from the Liberal opposition has ensured that the Ceduna Area School redevelopment has remained in the education budget and has finally been increased. The tender process has waxed and waned, started and stopped, in keeping with this government's indecision and lack of concern for rural regional South Australia. I understand that \$5.1 million has now been allocated for the school in the current budget. It remains to be seen whether it will be put to good use and we will finally see some real improvements at the school. This lack of concern has again been shown in the tender process, which excludes local businesses from winning the building contract, ensuring that, once again, the classrooms are to be built in Adelaide and transported to Ceduna.

I find it ironic that, while in Mount Gambier at the innovations display, I spoke with a government representative and picked up the Labor government's document entitled 'Industry capability network South Australia: creating opportunity for South Australia's business.' Under the heading 'Benefits for buyers', it states, 'Maximise the number of capable suppliers and competitive local solutions.' I cannot help but wonder whether these opportunities are only for businesses big enough to be unionised. The preference for unionised companies excludes other employers, particularly those in the country who are more than capable and are responsible to the local community where they live and employ locally.

For the benefit of the house, I point out that local tradespeople and builders live and work in their communities. Their work has to be exemplary or, through word of mouth, they will quickly lose business. I ask the Minister for Education that all future contracts for the Ceduna and other regional towns be made available to local contractors wherever possible. Perhaps local businesses and TAFE could combine to give vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities as part of training young people living in our regions who do not have the city's opportunities. I was interested to hear the Minister for Employment,

Training and Further Education's announcing something similar for the Upper Spencer Gulf cities only yesterday. However, this government does not care about anything that does not cement its own agenda, and rural and regional South Australia is low on that agenda, despite much of the state's revenue being dependent on the productivity of our regions.

Labor members speak at length about their concern for health issues. One only wished that the action of the state government were as evident as the rhetoric. The adage 'actions speak louder than words' applies here, for the actions of cabinet, especially the Minister for Health, reveal that the Labor government is not concerned about the health of all South Australians, especially those to be born and their mothers who, for the first time in generations, have to travel hundreds of kilometres to give birth in Port Lincoln or Ceduna and not their local hospital. The death rate from breast cancer and prostate cancer is higher in the country than in the city.

Country residents have greater difficulty in accessing health services and, if treatment is needed, the cost is substantially higher than for those living in the metropolitan area. The few acute care services that are still left in our country hospitals are strapped for cash. Despite the Minister for Health's assurance that acute care services would be maintained in our 10 hospitals on Eyre Peninsula, they are not being maintained. The government's infrastructure plan plainly states that, according to the minister, they are not needed as we are now going to have 'wellness centres' for preventive medicine instead.

In estimates on 6 August 2002, in relation to acute care, the minister said, 'There is no intention to make any changes in that regard.' I am happy to put that on the record. On 19 July 2004, the minister was again asked about acute care services in the 10 hospitals on Eyre Peninsula. In a lengthy and scathing reply that says more about the minister's character than the portfolio she is handling, she did not answer the question. I wonder what would happen if the minister were injured—

**Ms RANKINE:** I rise on a point of order, sir.

**Ms PENFOLD:** —on some of the hundreds of kilometres of roads—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wright has a point of order.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** —in my region.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Flinders will not continue talking.

**Ms RANKINE:** Sir, not only is the member's speech of no relevance to the motion that is on the *Notice Paper* but she is also now reflecting personally on the Minister for Health. This is scandalous.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Flinders is straying from the motion. I took it that the member wanted to highlight these issues via a regional sitting. The member needs to make the connection a bit more explicit, but there is to be no reflection on members. Members can criticise policies and practices, but we are not in this place to devalue other members of parliament; people need to understand that. Attacking a policy, proposal or project is very different from reflecting on the character, integrity or honesty of a member. The member for Flinders.

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** That would be lost on the member for Flinders.

**Ms RANKINE:** Sir, I ask that she withdraw that comment.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not hear the precise words she said. I will look at *Hansard* and see what was said and, if it was a reflection on the minister, I will get the member to withdraw it. The member for Flinders.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Thank you—

**The Hon. I.P. LEWIS:** Mr Speaker, why did you allow the Attorney-General, by way of interjection, whilst you were still speaking, to besmirch the reputation of the member for Flinders by saying that your remarks would be lost on the member for Flinders?

**The SPEAKER:** Well, he was out of order if he said that.

*The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The attorney has an unfortunate habit of forgetting that he is the senior law officer in this state and should be setting an example in his behaviour in this place. The member for Flinders.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It would highlight the difficulties faced by the ambulance services, since these are run by volunteers who make great personal sacrifice to keep some form of safety cover in these districts. Erica White, the

Director of Regional Services for the South Australian Volunteer Ambulance, recently described her volunteers as the most incredible volunteers she has worked with in over 20 years in the industry.

When we were in Mount Gambier, the minister announced funding for suicide prevention as if she and her government had only just realised the problem of suicide in general and male suicide in particular. In June last year, in answer to questions about suicide, the same minister did not seem overly concerned about the problem. It took her almost 12 months to come up with the funding that was asked for at that time. When questioned about continuation of funding for the Seasons of Growth program in July last year, she said, and I quote—

**Ms RANKINE:** On a point of order, sir. Again, this motion is about a regional sitting of the House of Assembly in Ceduna.

**Mrs Penfold:** And bringing awareness—

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mrs Penfold:** —to the minister and the government.

**Ms RANKINE:** No; it is not about health.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wright will resume her seat. I believe that the member for Flinders said at the start of her speech that, if we had a regional sitting, these were the issues that could be raised. I think it is a bit of a circuitous approach, but the member should link it into the question and the value of a regional sitting on the West Coast. The member for Flinders.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think the experience of going to Ceduna and hearing from the local people and bringing out these issues will be the link.

**Ms Rankine:** We've been there with community cabinet. We've been there.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Wright!

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** We've been there with the Constitutional Convention roadshow. Were you there?

**The SPEAKER:** The Attorney-General is out of order, as is the member for Wright.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** A visit to Ceduna would be an education for government members—

*The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The Attorney will be warned in a minute.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** —on the issues that face this remote region. Just getting there will be a new experience for many of them. Their first real awakening will be when they have a shower that smells strongly of chlorine, and they need to be sure to pack conditioner or the minerals in the water will make their hair stand on end. Water is a huge issue in the region and the lack of it will affect the development of the new marina and limit the potential of mining if it is not quickly addressed.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** On a point of order, sir—

**The SPEAKER:** I assume that the Attorney is going to object to the interjections from his colleagues sitting behind him.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** I will come to that, sir, but I thought it was against parliamentary convention to read out speeches word for word.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Some members have different levels of memory and speaking capability. I do not think that it is a valid point because I do not know whether the member for Flinders is looking down at the paper rather than looking at members opposite. She might prefer, for various reasons, to look at her notes rather than to look at members opposite.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** We could let private enterprise go ahead and build a desalination plant and, instead, use the \$48.5 million that has been put towards a pipeline to bring—

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** You could make the pretence of not reading it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the Attorney!

**Mrs PENFOLD:** —water from the River Murray to upgrade roads and railways on Eyre Peninsula or, as the member for Hammond suggested last night, a second powerline to connect the \$1 billion worth of wind energy—that is 1 000 megawatts—into the grid.

**Mrs Geraghty:** You've had more money spent in your electorate than I have in mine.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Torrens!

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Ceduna is also the place to go for those concerned about our indigenous people as it is the centre for a region that extends to the border with Western Australia and north across to the Overland railway line. We have some wonderful role models among these indigenous people and it would be instructive for members of parliament to meet them face-to-face along with many others who live in this isolated but progressive part of our state. I hope that I have convinced the government—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chorus on my right on the government benches—the members for Torrens and Wright and the Attorney—is completely out of order. It is not only disrespectful but it is very unfair to try to hinder someone's time allocation, and I am inclined to give the member for Flinders extra time to make up for that.

*Ms Thompson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Reynell should know that you do not speak over the chair or else you can be named on the spot. The member for Flinders will get an extra minute because of the time wasted.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Flinders will now get an extra two minutes for that response.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, but I think that I have had my say. It shows how sensitive they are, and I know that they will all jump up when I call for a division and vote to have the next meeting of the House of Assembly in Ceduna. I urge members to support the motion.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the next speaker, the house will come to order. I do not know whether people have been drinking orange cordial, but they should avoid some of those artificial colourings and flavourings because they can affect behaviour, and it seems that they may be.

Visit [www.parliament.sa.gov.au](http://www.parliament.sa.gov.au) for additional speeches on this topic.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The chair is being very tolerant. The member needs to be quick to get the call. Does the member for Flinders want the right of reply?

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Mr Speaker, perhaps you can clarify this. Do I get a right of reply at the end, or just for the amendment, or is this for both?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Flinders will get one opportunity.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** And this is it?

**The SPEAKER:** The questions will be put in sequence depending on what happens. This is your one and only opportunity.

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will not be supporting the amendment. I can understand why the member for Giles—

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for West Torrens has had his chance.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** —is so keen to have it amended so that perhaps they could have it at Whyalla, but I point out that Whyalla is a regional city. It does not have the issues that I have on Eyre Peninsula. Whyalla has a university.

**Ms Ciccarello:** They have different ones.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Norwood!

**Mrs PENFOLD:** Whyalla has a reliable hospital, reliable water, a dentist, a paid ambulance service, whereas, in my electorate, the whole 45 000 square kilometres has 10 councils and 10 hospitals—and I now understand that only two of those hospitals have obstetrics, so there are eight hospitals where women cannot have their babies. There has been a dental crisis, with the people from Ceduna having to travel all the way down to Port Lincoln to have their dental work done. The people from Ceduna have to go to Whyalla or Adelaide to have a lot of medical—

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for West Torrens!

*Ms Breuer interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Giles!

**Mrs PENFOLD:** When they are travelling between Ceduna and—

*Ms Breuer interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Giles will be warned in a minute!

**Mrs PENFOLD:** They have to go from Ceduna, through to Kimba, through to Wudinna, Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie and down to Adelaide. If we had it at Whyalla, it would be only half way. There is another 400 kilometres, and during that 400 kilometres people have to travel through towns where the ambulance service is actually manned by volunteer ambulance people, unlike most of the rest of the state. So, if they have an accident near Kimba, as many do, they must rely on the people from the businesses and off the farms to rescue them.

**Mrs Geraghty:** We have looked after your electorate far better than your government looked after it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Torrens!

**Mrs PENFOLD:** If they have an accident near Wudinna, the same thing will happen. They will have an ambulance that is manned from the community and not a paid ambulance service. In Ceduna, very fortunately, I have one paid ambulance officer, and the volunteer Ceduna service has to cover the whole of the area between there and Wudinna and across to the border. So, if you have an accident on the way to the Bight, it will be the volunteers from the farms and the businesses in the area who will go

to your rescue. I want a real commitment from the government, not a watered down one, and not a commitment like I got for the school at Ceduna soon after the Labor government got in, when it reduced the amount of money for the school. It stopped the tender process, docked it by \$2 million, and it is still not built. I was there only the other day, and I went and had a look. There is still not a sign of any building on the Ceduna site. So, that Ceduna school is still waiting. The water at Ceduna is still hard and unreliable, and the pipes have been bursting.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the members for Torrens and Wright will be warned, and they will not get another warning.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I think it would be a very good idea if the people in this parliament actually went there and had to wash their hair in that terrible water.

*Mr Caica interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Colton!

**Mrs PENFOLD:** So, Mr Speaker, I want a real commitment—not a commitment that is not fulfilled—from this government to have the next sitting of the parliament in Ceduna.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The house will come to order.

The house divided on the amendment:

AYES (23)

Atkinson, M. J.	Bedford, F. E.
Breuer, L. R. (teller)	Caica, P.
Ciccarello, V.	Conlon, P. F.
Foley, K. O.	Geraghty, R. K.
Hill, J. D.	Key, S. W.
Koutsantonis, T.	Lomax-Smith, J. D.
Maywald, K.A.	McEwen, R.J.
O'Brien, M. F.	Rankine, J. M.
Rann, M. D.	Rau, J. R.
Snelling, J. J.	Thompson, M. G.
Weatherill, J. W.	White, P. L.
Wright, M. J.	

NOES (17)

Brokenshire, R. L.	Buckby, M. R.
Chapman, V. A.	Evans, I. F.
Goldsworthy, R. M.	Hamilton-Smith, M. L. J.
Hanna, K.	Kerin, R. G.
Kotz, D. C.	Lewis, I.P.
Matthew, W. A.	McFetridge, D.
Meier, E. J.	Penfold, E. M. (teller)
Redmond, I. M.	Venning, I. H.
Williams, M. R.	

PAIR(S)

Stevens, L.	Brown, D.C.
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Majority of 6 for the ayes.

Amendment thus carried.