



REGIONAL OFFICES

4 June 2003

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development advise the house why the two people employed by the government to run regional offices now report to the Premier and not to the Minister for Regional Development? In July 2002 the Labor government announced the establishment of two regional offices at Port Augusta and Murray Bridge. At that time both offices were the responsibility of the regional affairs minister and were to 'encourage stronger relationships between the regional affairs minister and local community leaders, business and organisations'.

The opposition has since been advised that the staff hired to run these offices are both former Labor candidates: Justin Jarvis, who ran for the seat of Stuart, and Jeremy Makin, who ran for the seat of Heysen. We have also been advised that, since the member for Mount Gambier took over as the minister for regional affairs, the two ex-candidates now report to the Premier. A constituent has raised concerns with me that, since these former Labor candidates are no longer connected to the minister for regional affairs, the regional offices will become more concerned with politics than the real concerns of regional communities.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): Can I just say that I saw the comments made in the house, I think it was yesterday, by the honourable member in relation to our community cabinet meetings in her district, and it seemed to me that those comments were at odds with her reaction when we were there, but that is a matter for the honourable member to say. I just wonder exactly what that was all about: it certainly lacked a certain grace, and I would have expected better of the honourable member. I can say that I think it is fantastic that we have community cabinet meetings, which we have held in Mount Gambier, Penola, Taillem Bend and in the Riverland at the end of last year. We have also been to Murray Bridge, Port Augusta, Ceduna, Port Lincoln, Port Pirie and to the southern and northern suburbs. Most people think that this is a good thing. We do not do the fly in/fly out routine of the past.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacKillop has a point of order.

Mr WILLIAMS: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacKillop has a point of order.

Mr WILLIAMS: My point of order relates to relevance. My recollection of the question from the member for Flinders was about the regional offices in Port Augusta and Murray Bridge being staffed by failed ALP candidates from the last election and had nothing to do with regional cabinet meetings.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Premier will come to the substance of the question.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am delighted to be able to announce that we do have regional offices, and I would have thought that this would be welcomed by members opposite. I think it is more than appropriate that, given that I am the Minister for Economic Development as well as the Premier of the state, they report to me.

