



**MARK AURICHT**  
**5 June 2001**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** Today, I pay tribute to a great South Australian, Mark Auricht, whose death has touched us all. Channel 7 News brought us regular accounts of the progress of the two South Australian climbers, Duncan Chessell and Mark Auricht, during their assault on the summit of Mount Everest. They were to be the first South Australians to achieve this feat and, in fact, Duncan did achieve his goal. However, as we sat in the comfort and safety of our homes, listening to the nightly progress reports, I do not think anyone believed that the assault would end in tragedy. Such a pioneering spirit is a dream for so many of us, and these brave young men had the support and enthusiasm of all South Australians with them.

I was not aware that Mark is the son of Dr Clive Auricht from Coffin Bay on Eyre Peninsula until I spoke with Clive only a few days before. He was very proud of his son and, when I expressed some concern, Clive reassured me that Mark was climbing with a friend, that the army was close by and that they had a satellite phone to keep in close contact in case of an emergency. He was pleased that our Premier John Olsen had given the young men a South Australian flag to be placed on the summit when they arrived.

Mark was an experienced mountain climber and was aware of the danger of his mission. During the 14 years that he spent accumulating practical experience he visited the Himalayas on many occasions. In 1995, Mark and climbing partner David Hume were the first Australians to successfully climb the Makula Peak, the fifth highest peak in the world. However, confidence, assurance and experience were insufficient to overcome the dangers of physical effort at such high altitudes as the peak of Mount Everest. Mark had a dream and a vision into which he put his utmost effort and concentration. He died fulfilling that dream.

Death comes to us all. If we could choose the manner of our death, meeting that time while doing something we liked most would be the preference for many of us. However, for Mark death came too soon and the manner of it would not lessen the grief of family and friends.

I can understand something of Mark's character through my friendship with his father, which has developed as together we pursued the obtaining of more doctors for the country regions of South Australia. Clive Auricht moved to Elliston, a remote and small country town on the west coast of Eyre Peninsula, to indulge his passion for fishing. It is the stuff of which romances are made—the kind of action one encounters in fiction rather than real life.

Dr Auricht's time at Elliston—and later at Cleve—will long be remembered in those districts. The way in which he was accepted as 'belonging' points to the friendly ease that his son enjoyed in relating to others.

Mark was an assessor and an adviser with the South Australian Rock Climbing Education Association since 1992. Abseiling was one of the activities offered during a Liberal government seminar based at McLaren Vale some years ago. I did not know at the time but one of the very pleasant young men who helped me to overcome my fear of heights and drop over a cliff on the end of a rope—not just once but twice—was Clive's son, Mark. He must have been amazed that someone could be so worried about such a small challenge.

We will remember Mark as one of those who are prepared to dream of great things and then to put in the extra effort to achieve his dreams. It is that single-mindedness that characterises those who can be termed 'great' and who rise above the average, whatever their field of endeavour. Mark Auricht is a role model for all South Australians, and on behalf of South Australians I extend sympathy to Mark's wife and stepson and to his parents, Dr Clive and Helen Auricht.