



EYRE PENINSULA'S BUDGET RESPONSE
10 June 2009

There's more debt but nothing new for Eyre Peninsula in the 2009 state budget according to Member for Flinders, Liz Penfold.

Mrs. Penfold said she was stunned to read that 2008/09 NRM funding of \$16m was re-announced in the 2009-10 Budget because this funding was already spent and had disappeared in the new and forward budgets.

Regional Budget papers show the re-announced \$16m was Complementary State funding, provided to match the \$19m once-off funding from the Commonwealth *Caring for our Country* program. This was regional funding provided to NRM Boards for local community groups, councils and others to access in 2008-09 only.

Mrs Penfold said a decrease in real terms of approximately \$35m will have a significant financial impact on regional NRM projects.

"This comes at a time when the same government is clawing back thousands of square kilometres of land in free holding and coastal protection planning processes," she said.

"Their initiatives also include huge tracts of land to be included in five proposed NatureLinks corridors across the State, in addition to existing land based national and conservation parks."

"Who is going to manage all the additional conservation land and with what resources?" Mrs Penfold asked.

"And none of this includes marine parks, (of which Eyre Peninsula has 10 of the 19) with a \$7m cut in funding from last year.

"On the marine parks front, we have regulations coming to address displaced commercial fishing effort, uses and activities but no funding for compensation to be seen anywhere," she said.

In spite of agricultural income from the Eyre and Western region alone more than doubling (a whopping \$274 million increase), the region is still struggling with drought and facing the threat of climate change, yet there has been a cut of \$1.7m in agricultural research across the State. This is in addition to the loss of more PIRSA staff from the regions.

Mrs Penfold said Eyre Peninsula has 80% of the State's mineral exploration and a water crisis looming.

"I would have expected a few dollars of infrastructure funding at least going towards roads, ports and water needs. However not a cent can be seen being spent in the region, despite over \$1 billion in transport infrastructure going into the metropolitan area," she said.

Re-announced funding for the Ceduna Hospital and the Port Lincoln Prison are not replacing infrastructure the region desperately needs.

“This Labor Government doesn’t give a damn about country regions,” Mrs. Penfold said.