



**Incidence of cancers on EP
29 November 2007**

The only invasive cancer which had a significantly higher incidence on Eyre Peninsula compared with the rest of South Australia is cancer of the lip according to figures from data collected by the South Australian Cancer Registry for 1977 to 2004.

However the registry showed no statistically significant difference between the overall Eyre Peninsula cancer profile in either males or females and that for the whole of the state.

The figures were obtained by the Member for Flinders Liz Penfold who was concerned that the number of people diagnosed with cancer in the Flinders electorate may be above state average.

“Because my office sees significant numbers of cancer victims and carers who are having problems accessing city based health services it has given us the impression that there are higher numbers of sufferers on Eyre Peninsula than average” she said.

However Mrs. Penfold said that she still believes there are some possible cancer clusters that, due to low numbers per post code region, may still require further investigation.

Mrs Penfold said she was advised that lip cancer associated with long-term exposure to sunlight is most commonly found in farmers, orchardists, fishermen, truck drivers and others who have spent long periods of time outdoors exposed to solar radiation.

“Preventative measures include wearing a hat, the slip-slop-slap routine of using sun block especially on the lips, and avoiding excessive exposure to sunlight,” she said.

“Early detection is vital for successful treatment so a trip to the doctor is essential when suspicious skin lesions or changes in moles are noted,” Mrs Penfold said.

Mrs Penfold was advised that invasive cancers that were found to be significantly less frequent than expected included lung cancer in males and females, and kidney cancer in males while cancers of the large bowel, thyroid, male prostate and female breast were similar to those recorded for the whole of the state after adjusting for age and population size.

Despite Mrs Penfold’s misgivings, there was no recorded increase in cancers associated with ionising radiation including fallout from atomic bomb tests, nor from tumours associated with agricultural sprays or chlorine found in water.

Mrs Penfold said the Cancer Registry database records the residence at diagnosis. The latency period with some cancers is typically many years and population mobility also means caution should be exercised when attributing cause based on the recorded place of residence.

“The statistics are heartening in a back-handed sort of way.

“Early diagnosis remains the best hope for cure in most cases therefore I urge everyone to be vigilant concerning their health,” she said