



**\$5m for city hospitals - nothing for country
23 March 2004**

Despite the major shortfalls in funding for hospitals across regional South Australia not a cent of the \$5 million promised by the Labor Government will be spent outside of Adelaide.

No new surgery in regional South Australia along with the likelihood that State Government funding cuts may reduce specialist services in country hospitals.

That is the outcome of an announcement by the State Minister for Health Lea Stevens according to the Member for Flinders Liz Penfold.

Mrs Penfold slammed the State Labor Government for its partisan delivery on health and the Ministers trite comment 'what about Gawler'.

"Country people are being treated like second class citizens who do not matter, and Gawler is not considered to be the country by my constituents" she said.

"Patients are waiting years for surgery and that wait now could well be extended."

Mrs Penfold said the Minister was arrogantly blasé about the cost and trauma of travel to be treated in a city hospital – even supposing that is an option – plus the time, cost of accommodation in the city, and lack of support from family and friends at a time when their support is most needed.

"I question Ms Stevens' ability for the position of Minister for Health.

"The Minister has grandly pronounced that the total of \$5 million allocated for extra surgery is all going to city hospitals for procedures. Yet even with this extra surgery there will still be over 10,000 people on the waiting lists.

"There is a need for enough guaranteed work in rural and regional hospitals to maintain specialists in these centres, yet none of the extra funding will be spent outside metropolitan Adelaide.

"Is this part of a much wider scheme by State Labor to do away with hospitals in the country and to downgrade health services?" Mrs Penfold asked.