



**I.D.E.A.S. for us
26 February 2007**

Global warming and climate change, losing youth from regions to cities and lack of a skilled workforce to fill positions particularly in health, education and technical areas were just some of the issues discussed at the I.D.E.A.S. seminar held in Adelaide last Friday.

Member for Flinders, Liz Penfold attended the seminar that focused on issues facing regional Australia.

The Community and Economic Development Workshop was hosted by the City of Playford and the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. or 'Initiatives for the Development of Enterprising Actions and Strategies' with Peter Kenyon and presenters from British Columbia and Ontario in Canada where regional issues are very similar to those facing regional Australia.

"I saw the workshop as an opportunity to take time to look at the challenges that are ahead for our regional communities and consider what I can do to help to stimulate local solutions" Mrs. Penfold said.

"Peter Kenyon is from Western Australia and has taken a personal interest in Eyre Peninsula. Peter quoted Harold Flaming 'The wisdom of a Community will always exceed the knowledge of experts'. That is the wisdom I want to tap into.

"As a result of his presentation I am changing the questionnaire on the back of my new voter letter to obtain more detailed information about individual communities within my electorate and what they may need to make them even better. I urge those who receive the questionnaire to fill it in and get it back to my office. I can then feed this information back to the relevant authorities," she said.

"People can also submit their suggestions through my website www.lizpenfold.com," Mrs. Penfold said.

The importance and knowledge of people in our local communities can not be underestimated according to Peter Kenyon. One of the interesting facts put by Peter was that 60-80% of new jobs and about 70% of new investment is driven by existing business in a region.

"Existing businesses are the ones most likely to see the gaps and generate the new ideas that will create the jobs within their communities," Mr. Kenyon said.

However people can be stimulated to think about these new opportunities according to presenter Clare Wasteneys, from Ontario Canada. She outlined a project called 'First Impressions' which Mrs. Penfold said was similar to the Community Builders initiative that happened on Eyre Peninsula some years ago.

"First Impressions is a simple yet inexpensive project that requires a team of people to swap towns for a day or two and analyse what they like and don't like about the town that they are visiting.

Things like town entrances, cleanliness, friendliness, signage, range of businesses, places of interest, schools, housing and potential jobs, even public toilets are all assessed. The advantages are two fold with feedback to the visited town helping them look at what they are doing well and not so well in the eyes of a newcomer and secondly the team look at their own town with a different perspective on their return," she said.

'Red flag issues' that sometimes emerged unexpectedly were a surprise. One town was cited, where the population were shocked to discover that the town's biggest employer planned to shift. The owner said that he couldn't afford not to shift, as among other things, his premises were too small for the expansion that he was considering whereas suitable premises were available in a nearby town. Fortunately the Council were able to find him suitable land and assist with approvals to build a purpose built building and ensure that he stayed in their community.

"I am sending the details of the 'First Impressions' program to all of the Councils on Eyre Peninsula with the suggestion that they consider an exchange with similar towns on Yorke Peninsula, as I believe both regions would benefit from doing this assessment even if they have undertaken similar ones in the past," Mrs Penfold said.

To quote John Theobald, "Big things happen when a lot of people do small things differently."
ENDS

Another community program bites the dust 7th June 2006

The successful Community Builders Program established by the Liberal government in 2000 looks set to bite the dust through Labor disinterest and mismanagement.

Shadow Minister for Regional Development Liz Penfold said questions on the program have been sidestepped by the Minister for Regional Development and by Labor Legislative Councillors.

She said one of the objectives of the South Australian Strategic Plan is to increase volunteering and to promote community participation, both of which have been effectively delivered by the Community Builders Program.

The program has been an excellent developer of leaders in regional communities along with economic development initiatives.

Mrs Penfold said applications for the next round of the program should have closed by now however no calls for submissions have been made.

"Minister Maywald said the continuation of the program involves the outcomes of the budget and she suggested awaiting those outcomes.

"That gives me no confidence that the Minister for Regional Development will be batting for her constituency in budget deliberations.

"She is a member of a government that has deferred the budget for months, despite that same government being in control of the treasury for four years and therefore knowing better than anyone how the state's finances are going," she said.

Legislative Councillor John Dawkins said the program has been conducted annually in clusters of communities across four regions of the state, and it has featured strong involvement from the federal government, the Local Government Association of South Australia, and individual councils.

"There is growing community concern about the future of this program, leading to a suspicion that the Strategic Plan is just another smoke screen to hide Labor inaction," he said. ENDS

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