



Housing Crisis on Eyre Peninsula 3 May 2005

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold has slammed the state government's inaction over the housing crisis on Eyre Peninsula.

"The shortage of housing in rural and regional South Australia was being addressed by the former Liberal Government however action has stalled under Labor," she said.

"The bushfires have turned a problem into a crisis."

A leading Port Lincoln real estate agent estimated that rents have gone up by 12 per cent in Port Lincoln since Black Tuesday, and there is almost no housing available under \$150 a week.

He said there is no incentive for the private sector to service the low rental market because the cost of land (including government charges such as stamp duty) is so high.

A spokesperson for the Eyre Regional Development Board expressed concern that apprentices and trainees are being forced to leave their studies and jobs in Port Lincoln because they cannot afford to keep paying high rents.

At the same time as the government released its Housing Plan for South Australia in March this year, Elliston Area School's newsletter carried a desperate plea for housing for two families. The article stated that housing continues to be a major impacting factor on some of the community.

Mrs Penfold said the Housing Plan had no specific initiatives to meet the needs in country South Australia.

She said the situation on lower Eyre Peninsula is diabolical, with rents for ordinary three-bedroom houses now ranging from \$280 to \$480 or more per week.

"This is beyond the range of those seeking accommodation, even supposing vacancies were available.

"My staff and I have dealt with several constituents in tears over the inability to find accommodation of any sort, let alone affordable accommodation.

"These people were not associated with the fire but they are affected by the housing crisis it has caused," she said.

Mrs Penfold called on Housing Minister Jay Weatherill to reduce state charges immediately as the first step in encouraging private enterprise into greater activity in the market, but again emphasised that long term planning and action were needed.

In a radio interview in October 2004, the state executive director of the Housing Industry Association, Brenton Gardner, said the industry was struggling to catch up with the increased demand on Eyre Peninsula, the Riverland

and the South East.
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