



# Police station unveiled

By **Joanne Fosdike**

THE official opening of the new \$12.5 million police station at Murray Bridge yesterday was overshadowed by the news SA Police were facing a \$150 million budget cut.

Police Commissioner Gary Burns said he had been in discussion with the State Police Minister Michael O'Brien prior to the opening and found him supportive of the situation.

"There is irony that we are opening a new station when this is happening," he said.

"In the end my preference is police out on the road serving the people."

Commissioner Burns said there needed to be a review of the police

budget to see what cuts had to be made and where they could be obtained.

During a press conference outside the new Murray Mallee LSA headquarters, Minister Michael O'Brien said many factors would be considered before any decisions were made.

He said closing some metropolitan police stations serviced by one or two staff could be an efficient way of freeing up resources without affecting staff numbers.

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick said the State Liberal Party would oppose the budget cuts and would ask for a frank discussion on the issue when Parliament resumed next week.

**Continued page 5.**

## New Murray Bridge police station unveiled

From page 1

“They are talking about \$150m in cuts but say it won’t affect police numbers,” he said.

“The Government can’t have it both ways - 78 per cent of the police budget is its human resources.

“They need to give a black and white statement saying what is going on.”

Mr Pederick said the cuts were unacceptable and should not even be considered in the light of recent events.

“It is unacceptable for two reasons, firstly we have had 16 shootings in South Australia recently and secondly (former Premier) Mike Rann promised to shut down motorcycle groups when he was in power and that never happened,” he said.

“We want to see real outcomes.”

Mr Pederick said people in the Hammond electorate often asked him why there were not more police officers on the beat and why stations were not opened longer .

“It is a matter of money,” he said.

“This State Government has to realise budget cuts impact on response times and stretch our loyal police to the limit.”



**It's official:** Police Minister Michael O'Brien and Police Commissioner Gary Burns were all smiles at the opening of the new Murray Mallee LSA headquarters at Murray Bridge yesterday despite the announcement the Government has decided to slash \$150m from the SA Police budget.