



\$20m promise

By **Elle Vince**

GIFFORD Hill's future looks more promising after the State Liberals announced they would provide \$15 million to the development if elected.

On Friday, the Murray Bridge Racing Club learnt it would receive a \$5 million grant post-election from the Regional Development Fund, if the Liberals were successful, with an additional \$10 million being made available through a low interest loan over a 10-year period.

The Federal Government also re-committed a further \$5 million through the Murray-Darling Basin Regional Economic Diversification Program.

State Liberal leader Steven Marshall, who visited the site on Friday, said the development was a great opportunity for the region and would help reduce the Murraylands' high unemployment rate.

"Currently, the unemployment rate in Murray Bridge is 10.3 per cent," he said.

"The development could lead to more than 1000 direct jobs being created if the Murray Bridge council proceeds with

other development opportunities created by this investment.

"This will have significant economic flow-on effects for Murray Bridge and the surrounding region and secure racing all-year round on safe all-weather surfaces."

The project would also mean the creation of a 700-person capacity multi-purpose function and conference centre at the heart of a major housing development.

"The Gifford Hill development is one of the most exciting projects underway in the region and will become the new site for South Australian thoroughbred racing and underpin the future success of the State's racing industry," Mr Marshall said.

"It's a fantastic development, it'll be one of the best regional racing facilities in the country."

Thoroughbred Racing South Australia (TRSA) chief executive Jim Watters praised the Liberal's commitment and said TRSA had been working hard to

support the plan for years.

"This is an asset currently lacking in the region and the completion of the facility will lead to a direct increase in employment opportunities in the region, while enhancing the growth of conference and tourism opportunities," he said.

"It will benefit the State of South Australia, the Murray Bridge community, the thoroughbred racing industry and the Murray Bridge Racing Club."

The Federal Government will continue its assessment of all remaining projects within the \$100 million Murray-Darling Basin Regional Economic Diversification Program with further announcements expected in coming weeks.



Costly promises: State Liberal leader Steven Marshall commits to a \$15 million investment in the Gifford Hill racecourse and housing development, flanked by Murray Bridge Mayor Allan Arbon, Liberal Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick and Federal Assistant Regional Development Minister Jamie Briggs.