

# viewpoint

## Praise fires, relief available

I would like to particularly thank Country Fire Service volunteers, farmers and all who assisted and were involved with fighting the recent bushfires at Rockleigh, Eden Valley and the Riverland.

Your commitment, dedication and assistance in preventing loss of lives, homes and property damage was exceptional.

Thank you very much for what you have done in assisting our communities.

A thank you must also go to the volunteers, scouts and businesses who donated their time and goods to provide food and drinks to the CFS volunteers and Police.

To those property owners that have lost their homes, stock, fencing, farm equipment and experienced other property damage, I am very sorry.

As a council, we will do all we can to assist you to re-establish your livelihood.

We have established a Relief Centre at the Cambrai Hall and goods and materials are available at the hall through the Mid Murray Support Services, phone 8569 2609 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm) or 0434 828 129.

We have also appointed a relief coordinator, Harry Seager, who will meet and discuss with affected landowners what assistance council, the State Government and the community can provide.

Mr Seager can be contacted on 0409 622 382, email [reliefcoordinator@mid-murray.sa.gov.au](mailto:reliefcoordinator@mid-murray.sa.gov.au)

Please do not hesitate to contact the Mid Murray Council or Mr Seager for assistance.

Thank you again to the Country Fire Service volunteers, farmers and all those that helped in fighting the recent fires.

Dave Burgess,  
Mayor, Mid Murray Council.

## Up to the challenge

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hard working Country Fire Service firefighters and volunteers for their efforts over the past week in the Hammond electorate.

The CFS has done an extraordinary job protecting the lives of South Australians, their

homes and property that have come under threat.

It was great to see so many South Australians rally together to provide relief and assistance to those adversely affected by the fires.

Without the efforts of these very dedicated community members, the fires at Rockleigh and throughout the Murraylands would not have been contained and more damage would have been done.

These people are heroes and must be praised for their efforts and I wish to thank each and every one of those who have helped during this difficult time.

There have been hundreds of volunteers working around the clock and I thank them for their courage and tenacity.

As the fires are brought under control, the focus will now shift to helping those rebuild what they have lost.

We must all work together to ensure those affected by the fires are supported during this challenging time.

Adrian Pederick,  
Member for Hammond.

## Water buy back excess on sale

The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder has, for the last six years, been responsible for water "buy backs" to aid our ailing Murray River system.

Recently, South Australian Senator Simon Birmingham invited the Environmental Water Holder to examine the option of selling excess water to irrigators.

Voila! The Environmental Water Holder has decided it is a good idea!

So, who will this surplus water be sold to? Will it be the water-intensive cotton and rice growers up-river in the eastern states, or the citrus growers in the SA Riverland?

I think we all know the answer.  
SA sold out again.

Ian Smith,  
Blackwood.

## Mess reflects on town

Late last year I was dismayed to see the

vandalised stairwell at the library end of the Murray Bridge Marketplace shopping complex.

As the lifts at that end are often not working (I believe the library has jurisdiction and when closed, the lifts fail to operate) I therefore needed to use the stairwell to visit the centre from the undercover car park.

It's not unusual for such a mess to occur in areas that aren't supervised carefully, and I expected security would be reviewed and the mess cleaned up.

Over the Christmas period I made a number of visits to the Marketplace and noted the vandalism was not attended to.

I contacted centre management and was advised that a clean-up was scheduled, but it was barely worthwhile anyway as it would simply happen again.

I wondered to myself what tourists and visitors to Murray Bridge would see when visiting our largest and quite new shopping centre on their travels.

I also wondered why there was such a defeatist attitude to the situation when, as far as I can tell, there hasn't been any attempt to up security.

I am saddened that the centre hasn't simply used the insurance it undoubtedly has to get it fixed quickly and installed something more appropriate to the area to ensure it doesn't happen again.

Please pick up your act, Murray Bridge Marketplace.

The state of that stairwell simply perpetuates the unfair stereotype that Murray Bridge is a down and out town with little to offer.

We are so much better than that.

Karen Eckermann,  
Murray Bridge.

## More consultation needed

NBN Co's consultation process as they roll into small rural townships is inadequate.

By the time residents are made aware of NBN Co's intention to install a 40m fixed wireless monopole in their neighbourhood it has been months since NBN began scoping the area, started their liaison with the LGA and signed the contract with a local landowner.

Despite no evidence that electromagnetic radiation is safe and studies world-wide indicating it certainly is not, sites are being chosen alongside residences.

In Northern Heights the closest residence is just over 200m, in Mundulla only 75m.

In rural towns there are often hectares of vacant, dwelling-free land available on the periphery of these sites yet NBN Co are not locating towers on this land.

NBN Co cites 'technical constraints' and

'technical conditions' for site selection.

Dr Switkowski's justification is that alternative sites "did not have the same technical and other advantages as the chosen site" that "in particular the chosen site offered the greatest spatial separation from the local community without compromising network coverage".

He said that the standard implemented by ARPANSA (Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency) does not include set distance-based restrictions.

ARPANSA's current study is being funded by the Mobile Carriers Forum, a division of the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association.

On average, ARPANSA are measuring the RF EME (Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Energy) emitted by mobile phone base stations at a rate of four a year. The last SA tower tested was in 2007.

The Department of Communications and Malcolm Turnbull himself responded to these matters by advising that site selection is an operational matter for carriers.

When it comes to consultation Dr Switkowski, Malcolm Turnbull and the Department of Communications place the responsibility squarely with the State Government and LGAs.

Why is NBN Co being allowed to avoid consultation with communities from the outset?

Why are fixed wireless towers being installed where communities do not want them and where they pose a threat to the health of people and wildlife, affect local amenity and property values?

If NBN Co entered into discussions with local residents from the start surely a site could be identified that would prevent risk to residents and meet NBN Co's coverage and technical requirements.

But most importantly, how can it be acceptable for both the Minister for Telecommunications, the Federal Government and Dr Switkowski to skirt responsibility for the undertakings of NBN Co?

Melissa Horne,  
Northern Heights.

## Reminiscing heats up

The highest maximum temperature for Adelaide was recorded on January 12, 1939.

I recall my parents and grandparents discussing that day.

Some elderly people and babies did not survive (I was eight-months-old).

There was no air conditioning, only the affluent had refrigerators, and insufficient ice was available for ice boxes.

"Ice men" delivered in those days, using tongs to carry the large blocks of ice.

People wrapped themselves in wet towels, cool safes used wet hessian for evaporative cooling and one can only imagine what the few public swimming pools must have been like.

The bushfires in January 1939 were, of course, horrific.

Fast forward to January 1982, when I was on a gliding holiday at Waikerie.

There was a day when the maximum temperature in Adelaide was 44 degrees, and 46 degrees in Waikerie.

I was flying a single-seat sailplane and entered a monster thermal which carried me to 14,000 to 15,000 feet.

The freezing level that day was at 15,000 feet.

It took me a long time to descend and land back at the clubrooms with a monster thirst.

A glider pilot from overseas became lost on that day, landed near Loxton, and was found under a bush in a very serious condition.

He was admitted to Waikerie hospital for at least a week and nearly perished.

Alan D Paterson,  
Marleston, SA.