

MEDIA RELEASE

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Sale of public housing another blow to country SA

Local MP Adrian Pederick has called on the state Labor government to guarantee no public servant will be worse off from its plan to sell off public housing in country areas.

The move would apply to public housing within a 100 kilometre radius of the city. That housing has been made available as subsidised accommodation for public servants such as police and teachers.

Police and teacher unions have objected strongly to the sell-off, stating that it will make country appointments less attractive, which will compound staffing issues in country police stations and schools.

Mr Pederick's electorate covers Murray Bridge, Goolwa and part of Mannum and until recently Strathalbyn – all of which are within 100 kms of Adelaide.

He said over the past five years his office has received numerous calls complaining about the level of police staffing and services in these rural centres.

'It would rank among the most common reasons people call my office,' he said.

'I am also aware that the subsidised accommodation benefit is a clear factor in decisions about accepting or rejecting country postings. I know of a recent situation where such a posting was turned down specifically because subsidised housing would not be available. Months later, the senior position remains unfilled.

'The journey from metropolitan Adelaide to these towns involves around two and a half hours a day in travel time over some 900kms per week. A conservative estimate of the cost of private transport is well over \$500 per week.

'Suitable public transport is non-existent and for Treasurer Snelling to suggest that these areas are no longer regional is ludicrous. 100 kms is still 100 kms and fuel is ten times more expensive than it was 50 years ago.

'Given the difficulties that already exist in staffing public services in these areas, the removal of this support will produce massive staffing problems.

'Once again, the Labor government seeks to cover its own financial management inadequacies and flagging electoral stocks by ignoring the needs of rural and regional South Australia.'