



GRIFFITHS FOR GOYDER

WORKING FOR YOU IN GOYDER

Steven Griffiths MP JP

Member for Goyder

Shadow Minister for Finance

Employment, Training & Further Education

Public Sector Management and Federal/State Relations



Fight to save our Country Hospitals



Since the release of the Country Health Care Plan on June 5th by Minister Hill and the Rann Labor State Government, the people of regional South Australia have demonstrated magnificently that they will never support a plan that places the future of their hospital in jeopardy.

A rally of 1000 people on the steps of Parliament House in mid June was just the start. Twenty six public meetings held around the state, involving thousands of people, quickly followed. Over 30,000 signatures against the Country Health Care Plan were presented to Parliament on 24th July and on Saturday 26th July a rally was held in Norwood to make city people aware of what the implementation of the Plan could do to the communities in which they holiday in or their country cousins live.

It is thanks to such people power that Minister Hill and Premier Rann were forced to back down on the Plan. They have gone back to the drawing board, with a revised Plan to be presented by the end of August.

Within our electorate of Goyder I have convened three public meetings at Yorketown, Balaklava and Maitland. In total an estimated 1,500 people attended the three meetings to voice their concerns at the State government's plan to decrease services in 43 regional hospitals.

I have been asked by a number of people why this issue has become so political. The answer is simple, it is political because the decision to slash health services is a decision that has been made by the Rann government.

It is political because no consultation by the government was given to general practitioners, hospital board chairpersons, CEO's, the Rural Doctor's Association or the community over plans to downgrade regional hospitals.

It is up to the State Government to reverse their decision and scrap the Country Health Care Plan and to do this we as a community need to fight for the services we as tax payers and country people deserve.

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Goyder Electorate Office
51 Robert Street, MAITLAND SA 5573
Phone: 8832 2455 Fax: 8832 2699 Email: Goyder@parliament.sa.gov.au

Budget funding for Goyder – where is it?

The Rann government's sixth State Budget was handed down on 5 June 2008 and overlooks regional South Australian's once again.

The Goyder electorate fairs poorly from the latest budget with little funding injection for essential services in health, education and skills training, roads and water security.

Essential funding to ensure water security for Yorke Peninsula and Adelaide Plains has also been forgotten in the budget. As the dry conditions continue it is an absolute disgrace.

No mention of direct funding for hospitals and health services within Goyder are apparent in the budget.

Again with our ageing population and increasing tourist numbers putting a strain on such facilities it is outrageous that our taxpayer dollars are not being put back into our community services.



Steven with Federal Member Rowan Ramsey and District Council of Yorke Peninsula CEO Ricki Bruhn, inspecting the poor road conditions on one of many roads in need of repair within the electorate.

THE 08/09 BUDGET DOES NOT DELIVER

- Despite regional population growth the Rann government's Budget fails to invest in regional infrastructure and services for the future.
- The government has not made water security a priority. Considering that more than 90 per cent of South Australians rely on the River Murray no new initiatives to secure our water were in the 08/09 Budget.
- Taxpayers will fund a \$162 million tram extension over the next four years. (In many opinions the tram extension to the western suburbs is going in the wrong direction, it is the north and south corridors that need to be opened up for commuters.)
- Construction of the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital will commence in 2011. Whilst planning to cut country health services the Rann government have no problems in spending \$1.9 billion on the new Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital, this money could be much better spent on more doctors, nurses and improving regional health.
- South Australia's payroll tax threshold remains the lowest in Australia and continues to inhibit business growth despite the payroll tax threshold being increased from \$504,000 to \$552,000 from 1 July 2008.
- Compulsory third party insurance will increase by 7.2 per cent.
- Land tax revenue will increase from \$223 million to \$306 million which is likely to see rents rise and place further pressure on an already tight rental market, as well as reduce incentive for investment to occur.
- Mining fees increased from 1 July 2008 increasing by more than 10 times in some instances; mining lease application fee up from \$81 to \$1,000 and application for registration of a mineral claim up from \$30.75 to \$300.

2008 TAX SUMMIT

A Tax Summit was held at Parliament House on 12 May 2008.

The Liberal Opposition hosted almost 100 community and business leaders at the Summit where discussions and debate focused on developing reform options for a fairer tax system in South Australia.

Findings from the 2008 Tax Summit will be used to form the Liberal tax policy for the 2010 State Election.

For a copy of the 2008 Tax Summit Report please contact my Personal Assistant, Kim Philbey on 8237 9194 or email kim.philbey@parliament.sa.gov.au

Computers in schools program

In June, 64 South Australian schools received funding under the first round of the Federal governments \$1.2 billion computer in schools program. However the election promise is currently in question.

The objective of Round One funding was to bring those schools with students, in years 9 to 12, with a computer to student ratio of 1:8 or worse, to a target ratio of 1:2.

However it seems South Australian schools may not benefit from the promise to deliver a computer for every secondary school student as some State public schools are worried they will be left to pick up additional operating costs after the computers have been purchased.

Up to 50 schools have expressed concerns about the funding as they don't know whether they will end up paying to install, run and operate these computers.

Education Minister Lomax-Smith should have been the first to fight for South Australia to get a commitment and our share of national funds to ensure our public schools will not be left to foot the bill for on-costs.

It won't be clear if additional funds will be provided for the expenses associated with running the new computers until the next Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting takes place.

There is also confusion over speculation that the State government is spending the Federal money on replacing old machines only and not actually increasing the computer to student ratio.

Round Two of the Federal funding scheme opened on July 14, and will close on October 9.

SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM THE GOYDER ELECTORATE OFFICE

Congratulatory messages - (100th birthday or 50th, 60th, 65th or 70th wedding anniversary) from State and Federal Members of Parliament, the Premier and Prime Minister, Governor and the Queen for certain occasions. Please allow minimum of eight weeks notice and provide a copy of birth or marriage certificate.

Enrolment - if you have recently moved, changed your name or turned 18 don't forget to advise the Australian Electoral Commission. For electoral enrolment forms please contact my office on 8832 2455.

Grant Funding - contact my office for information on current and up coming funding rounds available to community groups.

Letters of support - I am always happy to support local community, sporting, volunteer and charitable organisations applying for government funding.

State and Federal Flags - the Electorate Office has State flags available for community groups and can arrange Federal flags through Federal Grey or Wakefield Electorate offices.

Tours of Parliament House - please contact my office to arrange school and community group tours of Parliament House.

Water saving rebates - contact my office for information on SA Water rebates or visit www.sawater.com.au

First Home Bonus Grant - the Goyder Electorate Office has information available on the stamp duty rebate of up to \$4,000 (in addition to the Commonwealth First Home Owner Grant). Phone my office or visit www.revenuesa.sa.gov.au for details

Free legal advice - The Legal Service Commission of SA offers free legal advice and information, Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm. Phone the Legal Help Line 1300 366 424.

Problems with your electricity provider - the Energy Industry Ombudsman can investigate and resolve disputes between customers and electricity companies. It is an independent and FREE service available to both residential and business customers. Phone my office for further information.

Parliamentary Speeches - all speeches and questions I have asked in Parliament are available. If you would like a full copy of any speech I would be happy to send it to you. My office also has information on Bills and Legislation.

Signs of Stroke

Stroke is Australia's second biggest killer and a leading cause of disability.

I am supporting the National Stroke Foundation's campaign to raise public awareness of the signs of stroke. During National Stroke Week from 15 September Stroke Foundation's FAST wallet cards will be available from my office.

FAST is a simple way of remembering the signs of stroke and what to do if you experience them or see the signs in another person.

Facial weakness

Arm weakness

Speech difficulties

Time to Act FAST—calling 000 immediately could prevent death or severe disability.

In the next 12 months Australians will suffer nearly 60,000 new and recurrent strokes—that's one every ten minutes.

I commend the National Stroke Foundation for accepting the challenge to get the FAST message out to 1.3 million Australians.

Volunteer Bonus Book

The State Government has produced a Volunteer Bonus Book to reward South Australian volunteers.

I commend this initiative as our volunteers make an outstanding contribution to our local communities making them some of the best places to live in the world.

The Bonus Book is full of special offers and discounts for use in South Australia.

The Volunteers Bonus Book is available through the Goyder electorate office however stocks are limited and will only be distributed as one per customer.

Update on School funding

I have been contacted by a number of School Councils, principals and parents with their concerns in relation to possible State Government funding cuts to public schools.

Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith is yet to provide specific details on how a new funding model may affect smaller rural schools.

I have written to Minister Lomax-Smith seeking information on the proposed new funding model, in particular how it will impact funding allocations to each and every school within the Goyder Electorate.

Shadow Minister for Education David Pisoni wrote to the Minister several weeks ago but is yet to receive a response.

As it stands I will support the outcome that is best for schools and students.