

Issue 12 - September 2011



GRIFFITHS FOR GOYDER

WORKING FOR YOU IN GOYDER



Steven Griffiths MP JP

Member for Goyder

Shadow Minister for Economic Development, Small Business,
Transport & Infrastructure, Regional Development,
Federal/State Relations, Government Enterprises

Regional School Bus Operators



Steven speaking at the public rally with regional bus operators in July where over 90 buses crammed the city streets in protest.

Regional school bus operators remain uncertain about their future as they continue to wait for the State Government to issue new DECS school bus services contracts.

Many contracts for the provision of school bus services expired in 2010. The delay in issuing new contracts has left bus operators and their employees anxious as they survive on temporary two year rollover contracts instead of having the security of the standard 15 year term.

I have raised this issue with the government on many occasions over the last 18 months yet they have failed to provide any clarity to school bus operators. In June a devastating blow was delivered to a number of bus operators when the government awarded a substantial part of the DECS regional school bus contract to a large Queensland company instead of supporting family owned South Australian businesses.

Not only is the State Government continuing to wipe their hands clean of small and family operated business in SA, but they have shown their complete disregard for the long-serving operators who have provided dedicated school bus services for many years, in some cases for over 50 years.

I have met with Sonia St Alban, Executive Director of the Bus and Coach Association, and members of the Board quite a few times in recent months. *continued next page.....*

YORKE PENINSULA FIELD DAYS

27th - 29th September 2011

Come and visit me and my staff in the
Cyclone Pavilion

Goyder Electorate Office

51 Robert Street, MAITLAND SA 5573

Phone: 8832 2455 Fax: 8832 2699 email: goyder@parliament.sa.gov.au web: www.stevengriffiths.net

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While the Bus and Coach Association have met with the Minister for Education and future Premier, Jay Weatherill, he refuses to accept that the DECS benchmark figure for each of the bus routes/contracts makes it near impossible for existing operators to continue to provide services without basically working for nothing.

During Parliamentary Estimates (Budget questions) on Thursday, 30 June 2011, I asked Minister Weatherill questions in relation to DECS school bus contracts; so blasé is Minister Weatherill about the future of local SA school bus operators that he stated... ***"I do not know the circumstances of the winning tenderers, whether they had a cost advantage and how they managed to achieve that"***.

It is an appalling attitude, particularly when jobs and people's livelihoods are at risk!

MARINE PARK UPDATE

- In May a **Parliamentary Select Committee** was established to examine the impact of Marine Parks, including sanctuary zones, in South Australia.
- The Committee is currently reviewing submissions received from the community and stakeholders (closing date for submissions was 29 July 2011).
- The Government agreed to undertake **Marine Park Regional Impact Statements** to assess the economic and social impacts of each of the 19 SA marine parks.
- **DENR** released a tender in May to complete individual impact statements for each proposed marine park with consideration to be given to both the positive and negative impacts of implementing draft management plans over a 20 year period.
- Concerns have been raised that assessing social and economic impacts over a diverse region will result in distorted figures which are not at all indicative of the real impact Marine Parks and sanctuary zones will have on individual coastal communities.
- For example, Yorke Peninsula and the Adelaide Plains have a strong agricultural sector which contributes significantly to the local regional economy. On the other hand, the livelihoods of people and businesses in many coastal communities rely on seasonal tourism – of which Marine Parks and sanctuary zones may impact.
- The draft management plans, accompanied by impact statements setting out the expected environmental, economic and social effects of the draft plans, are scheduled for public consultation at the end of 2011.
- I encourage all South Australians to have their say. For information on South Australian Marine Parks visit www.environment.sa.gov.au/Coastal_Marine or contact the Goyder Electorate Office.

Rex Minerals Hillside project

Photo: Courtesy YPCT



IN COMPARISON: The OneSteel pit at Ardrossan is approximately 1000m long 400m wide x 95m deep, which equates to 40ha (area of open pit only). Rex's initial calculations suggest Hillside will be twice the length and width.

In July Rex Minerals released the first details of a conceptual mining study for the Hillside Mine, 12 kilometres south of Ardrossan. The study supports Rex Minerals estimation that Hillside is one of Australia's largest copper development opportunities outside of Olympic Dam.

Steven Olsen, Rex Minerals Managing Director, has advised that it is now predicted the Hillside Mine could grow to produce more than 70,000 tonnes of copper, 50,000 ounces of gold and 1.3 million tonnes of iron ore annually. The project is currently going through feasibility planning stages and mine development is expected to start in 2014 with first production scheduled for 2015.

I have been briefed regularly by Rex Minerals about their proposals, and have also discussed them at length with local property owners. Initial calculations expect Hillside will affect approximately 1500 hectares of agricultural land on Yorke Peninsula.

The challenge going forward will be to ensure that not only is the economic future of our region given the chance to expand, in an environmentally responsible way, but that agriculture (which has been the basis of our growth over the last 130 years) is given the respect it deserves and is able to co-exist with industries that have not operated in the region before.

The mining operation is projected to provide over 600 direct full time jobs. The local region will benefit greatly from the economic spin-offs, including indirect employment, a boost to small business and industry, opportunities to expand and improve local services and infrastructure such as our road network.

Mining activity in the region will require an improved water supply. Rex Minerals confirmed with me that they have had detailed discussions with SA Water and if the mine goes ahead Rex Minerals will be making a significant payment to SA Water for new water infrastructure in our region. This is a good thing, as our region has been calling for improved water supply options for years. As an example, the District Council of Yorke Peninsula has 16 communities that do not have access to a potable, reticulated water supply, while the Adelaide Plains area has been identified as needing a duplicate trunk main (yet to be funded).

Rex Minerals have said that beyond the life of the mine, which is estimated at a 12-year minimum, a number of options have been investigated for returning the land to productive use.

Small Business in South Australia

There is no doubt that small business is the backbone of our economy with over 136,000 small businesses in South Australia, making up 96 per cent of all private sector business in our State. However the State Government have only allocated \$1.9 million to the small business program in the 2011/12 State Budget.

Included in the small business budget program is the intention of the Minister for Small Business, the Hon Tom Koutsantonis MP, to establish the Office of the Small Business Commissioner in South Australia.

While it is proposed the establishment of an Office of the Small Business Commissioner will have a number of functions, including dispute resolution, investigation, representation and the provision of information, I have received feedback from the small business community that the retention of support services and programs that assist and foster the "set-up" of small and family business exceeds the need for a Small Business Commissioner in South Australia, particularly if government funding is going to be diverted away from current programs and services to establish the Office of the Small Business Commissioner (local newsagents have expressed support for a Commissioner and the potential for fairer mediation and dispute processes becoming available to small business).

Such concerns are certainly justified as widespread cuts to small business have already occurred, including the non-renewal of funding agreements to Business Enterprise Centre's from 30 June 2011, and there are plans to further "reduce and refocus" support to South Australia's small and family business sector.

As the Shadow Minister for Small Business I have responsibility for the Small Business Commissioner Bill on behalf of the Opposition. I have received a briefing from the government on the Bill which was introduced on 28 July 2011, and am waiting to review the 56 submissions received from small business and industry following consultation earlier in the year. It is expected that the Bill will be debated in September.

Any comments in relation to a SA Small Business Commissioner are very much welcomed.

Adelaide Oval rent to community sport

Community sport and recreation clubs in regional South Australia will benefit from the Adelaide Oval deal. The Stadium Management Authority (SMA) will pay rent for Adelaide Oval under Liberal amendments to the *Adelaide Oval Redevelopment and Management Bill* passed in the Legislative Council in July.

Rent received from the SMA will commence at \$200,000 and will build at \$200,000 per year capped at \$1 million. It is then indexed to CPI. The amendments also require the money to go to community sport and recreation, not to Treasury.

I am a great supporter of community sport and recreation and strongly supported amendments to ensure funding went to help local clubs. The money will be placed in the Sport and Recreation Fund and will fund the Active Club Program. This program is state-wide and available to all community sport and recreation clubs except those with poker machines.

This is a great outcome for community sporting groups in Goyder and sporting bodies throughout the State. Many of my constituents told me they were concerned about the State Government's massive expenditure of taxpayer money on the Adelaide Oval, so it's great that amendments have been made to ensure more money will flow through to local sporting clubs. Earlier this year a number of clubs in Goyder were successful in their application for funding through the Active Club Program, including:

- **Hamley Bridge Bowling Club; \$5,000**
- **Mallala Bowling Club; \$1,500**
- **Moonta Football Club; \$4,000**
- **Northern District Show Jumping Club; \$7,000**
- **Balaklava Golf Club; \$5,500**
- **Walleroo Mines Bowling Club; \$2,000**

Well done to these clubs! I am more than happy to provide letters of support to accompany grant applications. Please contact my office with the details of your club project.



The Ardrossan Sporting Cub received \$7,000 through the Active Club Program. The Wiesner family are pictured at the official opening of the new playground in April 2011.

Sale of Lotteries SA

The State Government announced their plans to sell the SA Lotteries Commission to a private investor in the 2011/12 State Budget.

Since this time I have been contacted by many people, in particular newsagents and lottery agents, with their concerns about the government's intention to privatise yet another State asset, following announcements of the privatisation of SA Forestry assets and the SA Visitor and Travel Centre.

The sale of SA Lotteries leaves many newsagents and all small businesses who are lottery agents doubtful about their future. At risk is the \$25 million in annual commission outlets earn from the sale of lotteries, and the potential takeover from a large corporate company if the sale goes ahead.

I met with the Australian Newsagents Federation on 4 August 2011 to discuss the concerns of newsagents. When discussing this issue with the State Government the future of lottery agents across South Australia will be my main focus.

GRANTS

Regional Development Infrastructure Fund (RDIF)

is a \$3 million per year fund administered by the Department of Trade and Economic Development. Grants are available for up to 50 per cent of eligible infrastructure costs. For further information and a copy of the RDIF guidelines contact Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North at 31 Hallett Street, Kadina or phone 8821 1099.

Active Club Program opens 27 August 2011 and closes on 24 October 2011.

The Active Club Program provides financial assistance to not for profit community-based active recreation and sporting organisations to develop and expand the services they provide. Eligible organisations can apply for funding in one of the following three categories:

1. Programs and Equipment - up to \$10,000
2. Facility - up to \$20,000
3. Youth at Risk (YAR) - up to \$10,000

For information and a copy of the guidelines contact the funding consultant on (08) 7424 7708 or email ORS-grants@sa.gov.au / visit www.recsport.sa.gov.au

Community Recreation and Sport Facilities Program

opens 20 August 2011 and closes on 24 October 2011. The CRSFP provides funding for the development of new or existing sport or active recreation facilities.

Active recreation and sport clubs/associations, Local Government Authorities and school councils are eligible to apply for facility projects that meet a demonstrated community need.

Requests for facility funding of between \$20,000 and \$50,000 will be considered and applicants must be able to verify that they can at least match the level of funding requested (this can include in-kind contributions such as voluntary labour and donated materials).

For a copy of the guidelines and application form go to www.recsport.sa.gov.au or contact my office on 8832 2455.

Statewide Enhancement Program (StEP) opens 15 October 2011 and closes on 12 December 2011.

StEP supports a range of funding initiatives including core activities and programs/services that have a regional or statewide impact for the active recreation and sport industry. Funding is offered under two streams; State Organisation Support funding & Sport and Active Recreation Project funding. For details contact my office or go to www.recsport.sa.gov.au

Premier's Community Initiatives Fund the fund provides financial assistance for projects that benefit disadvantaged, disabled or socially isolated members of the community. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to assist organisations to undertake a one-off project.

Round 10 is scheduled to open soon, to be placed on the mailing list contact the Grants Program Unit on 8226 2815 or email pcf@dpc.sa.gov.au

Authorised by Steven Griffiths MP

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Motorists hard hit

South Australian motorists are being hard hit following significant increases to fees, fines and charges while being stripped of basic services.

I have received many calls from South Australian motorists with their frustrations, many of whom feel the State Government is treating them with contempt. The following changes have been implemented, and to many, the changes appear to be a blatant grab for cash:

- **Vehicle Registration Labels abolished** - from 1 July 2011 the State Government's scheme to abolish vehicle registration labels took affect. Abolishing registration labels will save the State Budget \$6 million over four years however the burden on drivers to check that the vehicle they are driving is registered by phoning a hotline or visiting a website is an unreasonable impost and I have received many calls from concerned motorists stating the same.
- **Motor Vehicle Registration** - fees increased by 4.3 per cent from 1 July 2011, plus a 2.7 per cent increase to Compulsory Third Party insurance (an average total increase of \$22).
- **Renewal Period Reform** - the State Government also implemented their Renewal Period Reform from 1 July 2011. The renewal options previously offered to drivers of six and nine months have been discontinued. Motorists now only have the option of renewing their vehicle registration for either three months or twelve months.
- **Introduction of fines for unroadworthy vehicles** - the fine will be set at \$120 for a minor offence and \$250 for a major offence. It is estimated that \$7.9 million in fine revenue will be collected over 3 years.
- **Vehicle inspections** - effective from 1 July 2011, a new booking fee of \$22 will apply to all vehicle inspections. Fees for roadworthiness vehicle inspections have also increased by between \$25 and \$100 per inspection.
- **Driver's Licence Renewal** - from 1 July 2011 a ten year driver's licence will now cost \$385 (a \$90 increase) up 32 per cent from \$280 plus a \$15 administration fee to renew.
- **Speeding fines** - will rise by 29 per cent; for speeding less than 15km hour over the limit - e.g. a speeding fine for travelling at 58 kms per hour in a 50 km zone will increase from \$196 to \$252 (a \$56 increase).
- **Petrol Subsidy Scheme** - from 1 January 2011 the Petrol Subsidy Scheme was abolished. Previously the scheme provided a subsidy up to 3.3 cents per litre of diesel or unleaded petrol in regional areas.

Despite the government collecting extra revenue from motorists, very little will be spent on fixing our roads.

The RAA's latest SA road maintenance backlog figure is now \$400 million.