



**Wednesday, January 19, 2022**

**Over the past 10 months I have been actively engaging with my community in the state electorate of Finniss as independent candidate for the 2022 state election. The local ambulance service and hospital are two of the major concerns for our residents.**

**This week, I have informed both of the major parties of these priorities for our region.**

### **Ambulance Service for Finniss**

Paramedics inform me that there have been no additional resources for the Victor Harbor Ambulance Station in 20 years whilst our population has increased significantly. Our local paramedics advise their work-load is unsustainable and unsafe for the community.

There is only one Emergency Paramedic Ambulance after midnight in Victor Harbor which does a minimum of two transfers to Adelaide every night shift. This means the ambulance is away from Victor Harbor for up to seven hours every night and we are left with no paramedic ambulance on the South Coast. It also means there is no paramedic ambulance to provide clinical support to our volunteers at Goolwa and Yankalilla and these volunteers are used to attend emergency cases after midnight.

**There is urgent need for another day/night ambulance for our region.**

The Ambulance Employees Association of South Australian (AEASA) document "SA Is Dying For More Ambos", published in October 2021, recommends two additional ambulances for the Fleurieu Peninsula:

- An additional 1 x 24/7 Paramedic Ambulance for Victor Harbor, and
- An additional 1 x 24/7 Paramedic Ambulance for Goolwa.

In order to accommodate an additional ambulance at our Victor Harbor Station a considerable upgrade to the station will be required. Our Victor Harbor paramedics

operate out of an old, three-bedroom home. The two-space garage does not fit new ambulances so our region is limited to older models that will physically fit in the garage spaces. The station does not have room to expand the garage to house an additional, third ambulance.

**Victor Harbor needs a new, purpose-built ambulance station to meet the needs of our communities now and into the future.**

I have been informed that approximately 20 years ago a brand-new ambulance station was planned, with land designated, however the electorate of Finniss is still waiting.

### **South Coast District Hospital**

The Southern Fleurieu Health Advisory Council (SFHAC) 2020-21 Annual Report to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing identifies these key areas as high priorities for our region:

- Palliative Care
- Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services
- Dementia Clinic
- Aged Care Services
- Extension of Radiology services at South Coast District Hospital between 10:30pm and 8:30am
- Development of a SFHAC Facebook Page
- Increased promotion of COVID-19 vaccination for all Southern Fleurieu residents
- Continue to support the Advance Care Directives Assist Program
- Promote donations and bequests to SFHAC for purchase of medical equipment and health service needs
- Planning for relocation of Emergency Department.

A number of these priorities have been reflected in concerns raised directly with me by members of the community.

Particularly, there has been a significant public call for additional resources for our Community Palliative Care Team and a designated hospice for our region. A very well-attended public forum was held in early 2021 and a volunteer group called the Fleurieu Palliative Care Steering Committee has emerged to advocate for these needs on behalf of the community.

The need to increase our radiology service to 24 hours has also been raised directly with me by paramedics and local health care professionals. Benefits include:

- Decreased frequency of overnight ambulance transfers from South Coast District Hospital to metropolitan hospitals (many of these transfers are required just for an x-ray), thereby increasing availability of ambulances for our region.
- Speeding up assessment and treatment of patients overnight for timely discharge, facilitating improved consumer experience, improved patient flow through our hospital and increased bed availability.
- Decreased burden on patients needing to be transported over night for an x-ray.

I have engaged with a number of local stake-holders who are keen to be part of the conversation and, as a local independent MP, I will utilise my designated position within Parliament to work with government of any colour to secure the necessary resources for our community.

Lou Nicholson

INDEPENDENT. LOCAL.

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