

Submission:

Living on Kangaroo Island is expensive. In addition to being remote, we have the water gap issue also. As SeaLink have a monopoly on vehicle transport to and from the island, they can charge what they like. In fact, KI is the most profitable of their entire ferry business. Other issues that impact and follow on from this monopoly is that food and petrol are markedly more costly than on the mainland. Additionally, we have only one medical clinic on the island, which is not bulk-billed, therefore an added expense. Residents frequently have to travel to the mainland for medical treatment, and have no alternative but to fly (very costly, and no car at the other end) or taking their vehicle over at exorbitant ferry rates. To add insult to injury, the KI Council have now introduced timed paid parking above the terminal, adding to the burden residents also bear from living in a remote location. In our case, a trip to the main shopping area in Kingscote involves a 140km round trip, which consumes a quarter of a tank of expensive diesel (in the order of \$1.71/litre). This is a trip that needs to be made at least twice a week to stock up grocery requirements for our business. The paltry discount we get on our vehicle registration does not begin to cover the wear and tear on our cars, including regular tyre punctures. Our Council rates are very high, and there is not the ratepayer base to adequately service the island's roads. Most of these are disgusting and dangerous, and have cost us thousands of dollars in expensive repairs. It seems ludicrous that we have (or had, until his dismissal) a very highly paid CEO and now a Deputy CEO, for a population of approximately 4500. Kangaroo Island is the so-called jewel in South Australia's tourism crown, but it is not adequately resourced regarding infrastructure. Remote area tax relief would help residents offset to some degree the high cost of living which obtains here.