

Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond
Chair of Regional Affairs Committee

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Incorporating clay nothing new

Liberal Member for Hammond and Chair of State Liberal Regional Affairs Committee, Adrian Pederick, is perplexed with a year-long study announced by the Weatherill Labor Government as part of the New Horizons Project.

The New Horizons project will involve a mix of research and field trials conducted by Primary Industries and Regions SA, farming groups, the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide.

The process – clay spreading – involves incorporating clay on sandy soils which improves the fertility and productivity of the soils.

In answer to a question in Parliament recently as to whether the Government was aware this process had been around for 45 years, their response was non-committal.

“This process is nothing new,” said Mr Pederick.

“In 1967 noted South Australian farmer and clay expert Mr Clem Obst, started experimenting with this technique and now the Weatherill Government are going to claim this as their own revolutionary and innovative farming method?”

“Mr Obst has been advocating the claying of sandy soils for the past 45 years and was awarded an Order of Australia medal 10 years ago for developing and promoting clay spreading techniques.

“Mr Obst was the one who pioneered this technique and it is used around the country. We already know that the technique increases water efficiency and retention in sandy soils.

“The Weatherill Labor Government continues to cut funding to the agriculture industry, however they are spending money investigating a process that has been in practice for decades.

“Our farmers need help now – they don’t have time to wait for a year’s trial, then another eight months for the results to come out, then another year for a strategy to be released.

“It is time for tangible support now.”