

## Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017

### Time to turn around regional population drain

The Hammond Electorate has suffered a population drain impacting on the local economy, according to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics.

In the 12 months, between 2015 and 2016, the Murray Mallee lost 131 people, raising concerns about the impact of high unemployment and challenges in providing career opportunities for youth in the region.

Member for Hammond, Adrian Pederick, said the region offers an enviable lifestyle but lifestyle alone is not enough to retain people in the area.

“The reality is, high unemployment and underemployment is impacting upon the region’s ability to maintain population size,” Mr Pederick said.

“The State Government’s obsession with centralising services from regional South Australia is also having an impact.

“Small to medium businesses are the backbone of the South Australian economy, yet too many businesses are focused on just surviving, with the swathe of government taxes and levies on top of skyrocketing utilities costs.

“Giving South Australian businesses greater scope to invest, means more job opportunities will be created in the regions,” said Mr Pederick.

Shadow Minister for Trade and Investment Tim Whetstone said regional areas in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania all experienced population growth between 2015 and 2016, but regional South Australia’s population went backwards, with a net loss of 109 people.

“There is a direct link between population growth and jobs growth, and regional South Australia has seen continued high unemployment and underemployment over an extensive period,” Mr Whetstone said.

“Population loss in South Australia is further exacerbated by people moving interstate.

“Population growth is a key element to recharging our regions. The 6,484 people who left South Australia for interstate in the past 12 months in net terms, is 6,484 people who are no longer employed, studying, buying houses and a car, eating at restaurants, or educating their children in our state and in our regions.

“Given the significance of regions to the state’s economy we cannot afford this level of population loss from regional areas.”