

NEWS

Committe hears about state of farming

FARMERS aired their dirt laundry in front of a Parliamentary Select Committee on Wednesday in the hope someone would listen to the problems plaguing their industry.

The four-member panel looking into Sustainable Farming Practices heard from farmers and industry representatives who filled the gallery at the Murray Bridge council offices.

Select Committee member and Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick said the panel appreciated the contribution and turnout of those who took time to present submissions.

“Agriculture accounts for 67 per cent of output for the Murraylands’ region and primary industries are the largest employer in the area, so sustainable farming is clearly important to those who presented,” he said.

“A wide range of issues were discussed which included family succession plans, land and soil use planning, spray drift and chemical use issues, and farm profitability.”

Mr Pederick said genetically modified crops and foreign investment, two emotive issues, were explored by several of the presenters.

“In addition, a stark message was left for the committee regarding suicide rates in regional areas,” he said.

“It is alarming to know that out of six suicides that happen daily in Australia, four are in rural areas.”

Mr Pederick said the meeting was productive and all submissions would go a long way to forming the Select Committee on Sustainable Farming Practices’ final report due to be tabled in Parliament later in the year.