



Mallee loses in state budget

By **DEIRDRE GRAHAM**

The Mallee has again been left out of a city-centric state budget, according to Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick said while the \$1million boost to step up surveillance and control of fruit fly was a positive from the Budget, not much else was.

"The sad thing is the impact on primary industry," he said.

"PIRSA's budget has been cut by \$11.5 million, with \$7 million alone taken from the Department's agriculture, food and fisheries programs.

"Services like SARDI and Biosecurity SA were hardest hit with cuts to R&D and savings targets for the state's biosecurity measures.

"120 jobs are also expected to go out of PIRSA with most being cut from Rural Solutions SA and SARDI.

"This is despite agriculture being one of the biggest producers in the state, espe-

cially considering that the Olympic Dam has now not gone on."

Mr Pederick said the other regional information included a 30 per cent cut to RDA with funding to cease on July 1.

Infrastructure will also be impacted on, with "not much in it for regional areas", despite \$1.3 billion being committed to city projects.

"There's no new road funding (in the Mallee)," Mr Pederick said.

"There's no money being committed to the Pinnaroo to Loxton Road and the Pinnaroo to Bordertown Road, and in the meantime car rego is going up."

He said health in the Mallee would continue to have to be monitored with rumours of job cuts in rural health.

"There's about 1000 jobs to be cut out of health and they are talking about 200 being targeted in country health," Mr Pederick said.

"We will just have to monitor that so we don't get services impacted on in the Mallee."

Other decisions to impact on rural voters, when they visit the capital, include a car park tax in central Adelaide which will cost \$2 a day, which aims to raise \$100million over four years.

Mr Pederick said the state's debt and forward estimate was expected to peak at \$13.75 billion according to budget calculations and the state deficit has gone up from \$1.16 billion to \$1.3 billion.

"By the 2016/17 budget the interest on government debt will reach \$952 million," Mr Pederick said.

"Total state liabilities in 2016 when you include workcover and public sector workers compensation will be a \$30 billion bill – that's if it is ever called in in one day."

He said, however, that two regional pluses include \$2.6 million to establish innovation clusters in the Riverland, Murraylands and Limestone Coast, and \$2.5 million over four years to promote the state in China.