



FARMING

Minister hits back on claims

SOUTH Australia's Agriculture Minister has hit back at the State Opposition over its attacks on the primary industries budget.

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Minister Gail Gago returned fire on her opposition counterpart David Ridgway last week over the Liberal Party's criticism of cuts to agriculture in this month's State Budget, as well as in past years.

"While they snipe, whine and mumble about what they "intend" to do, this

Government gets on with the job of providing for primary industry," Ms Gago said.

"During a time of significant fiscal restraint and savings pressures, this Government has been able to find and deliver new funding for agricultural pro-

grams and initiatives."

The Minister pointed to \$10.3 million worth of funding for into premium food and wine, \$2.5 million over four years to establish South Australian products in China and \$2.7 million over five years to establish innovation clusters in the Murraylands and Riverland areas.

She said \$1 million over four years would go towards fruit fly surveillance and a "high value food manufacturing centre" would benefit from \$4.1 million.

Her comments come after Opposition members - including Murraylands MPs Adrian Pederick and Ivan Venning - slammed this year's budget, saying there had been further drastic reductions to funding for the State's agriculture departments.