

Opposition cuts country MPs

By **Ben Brennan**

THE number of State country Liberal lower house Members of Parliament in the shadow ministry has almost halved following Steven Marshall's reshuffle last week.

The two major regional casualties were Hammond MP Adrian Pederick and the member for Kavel, Mark Goldsworthy, who have been sent to the backbench, while former leader Isobel Redmond, from the Hills seat of Heyson, has also been left without a portfolio.

The high profile member for MacKillop, Mitch Williams, has been demoted to a parlia-

mentary secretary role after surrendering the deputy leadership to the eastern suburbs-based party heavyweight Vicki Chapman.

The reshuffle takes the number of country MPs from seven to five, with Member for Chaffey Tim Whetstone, of

Loxton, and Flinders MP Peter Treloar elevated to roles as parliamentary secretaries.

Member for Stuart, Dan Van Holst Pellekaan, and Goyder's Stephen Griffiths remain on the front bench.

Mr Pederick said he learned he would be dropped from his agriculture, fisheries and forestry portfolio just hours before Opposition Leader

Steven Marshall announced his new team.

"Steven was good enough to inform me what would happen, I said OK and I can assure you of my full support to help win the election that so many South Australians want us to win," he said.

Mr Pederick said he would now be able to focus more effort on his key responsibilities in Hammond but did not rule out a potential return to the front bench in the future.

The reshuffle brings to an end Mr Pederick's six years on the front bench, during which

he has held portfolios ranging from agriculture to the River Murray and mineral resources.

However, he said any personal disappointment came a distant second to the Liberal Party's mission to end 11 years in the political wilderness at next year's State election.

Announcing the reshuffle, Mr Marshall said he taken a merit-based approach to building his new shadow ministry.

"My team will provide a fresh approach - we are energised, focused and very excited about the next 13 months," he said.

"The entire State Liberal team is committed to working together every single day for a fresh start for South Australians.