

NEWS

Candidates clash at election forum

By **Peri Strathearn**

SAME-SEX marriage and genetically modified crops were among the issues dividing election candidates at a public forum in Murray Bridge on Tuesday night.

Four of the five candidates for Hammond in Saturday's State election discussed their views and took questions from an audience of more than 30 people.

Liberal MP Adrian Pederick, Nationals candidate Rachel Titley, the Greens' Damien Pyne and Family First's Daniel Gutteridge were all generally in favour of proposals to continue the Murraylands' growth: the Tailem Bend Motorsport Park expansion, the Gifford Hill development and better public transport.

"There is no demand for (public transport) because no-one can afford it," Mr Gutteridge said.

"We need something trialled to get on top of this."

However, Mr Pyne was alone in his support for same-sex marriage.

"We are 100 per cent against discrimination like this," he said.

"We certainly don't agree with (ideas about) negative impacts on children with homosexual parents."

Ms Titley spoke in favour of the financial benefits of genetically modified crops, but Mr Pyne said they were unnecessary and Mr Pederick said the Liberals opposed them.

All parties indicated they would support the development of wind farms within appropriate constraints.

"The Liberals have a clearly defined policy that we don't want wind farms within two kilometres of a house or five kilometres of a town," Mr Pederick said.

"But some farmers want them on their properties for additional income.

"There has not been one scientific review (saying) that wind farms are a health hazard."

Mr Pederick and Mr Pyne clashed over the Liberals' commitment to delivering the Gonski funding reforms.

Either way, Ms Titley said, something needed to be done to add to educational opportunities in the Murraylands.

"Twenty-five per cent of 15 to 19-year olds are not getting an education and not getting employed," she said.

"We need a redevelopment ... for our brightest and our best to gain tertiary education and avoid moving out of the area."

But all candidates agreed it was important to take an interest in the election despite Hammond's "safe" status.

The forum was organised by The Murray Valley Standard and moderated by journalist Peri Strathearn.

Labor candidate Lou Bailey was unable to attend.



Democracy at work: Liberal Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick makes a point as candidate Daniel Gutteridge, moderator Peri Strathearn and candidates Rachel Titley and Damien Pyne listen at Tuesday night's election forum in Murray Bridge.