

MEDIA RELEASE

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Minister silent as Ag budget chopped again

SA's agriculture sector is again under siege from a Labor government determined to cripple the state's primary production says opposition agriculture spokesman Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick's statement came after news the state government is planning further cuts in PIRSA, (Primary Industries and Resources SA), reducing their funding by another \$22 million over four years.

'Agriculture is still one of SA's biggest economic generators, but it cannot remain so if it is choked by lack of government support.

'106 jobs were lost late last year and agriculture centres around the state began disappearing off the map, showing the Rann government's contempt for regional SA.

'Now we hear the state's rural counselling service is to be absorbed into Regional Development Australia, the state's drought response team will be axed and a \$4 billion industry will be left to fend for itself.

'This government seems to think the drought is over. I remind Premier Rann and Ag Minister O'Brien that both the Mallee and the River Corridor are still under Exceptional Circumstances and other regions are currently being reassessed and may reapply.

'And as if the 20 percent funding cut isn't scary enough, Minister O'Brien – the self-proclaimed best Agriculture minister in Australia – won't talk about it.

'The state's rural sector is a soft target for Labor. They know they won't lose many votes outside suburbia and short-sighted Labor governments have never understood the need to have a vibrant and progressive rural sector and how that depends on Research and Development and the provision of services.'