



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond

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Government cuts broomrape program

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick has expressed disappointment at the Government's funding cut to the branched broomrape eradication program, which he says is another knife in the back of country South Australia.

'In last week's Budget Statement under Expenditure, the Treasurer states, '...savings are being achieved through a reduction in the branched broomrape eradication program ...". This Government has cut \$3.25m from the branched broomrape eradication program over the next four years,' Mr Pederick said.

'This program was introduced by the former Liberal Government and continued as a result of the compact between the former Member for Hammond and the Government. It states in part, "...to commit to a program of fumigation to eradicate branched broomrape where ever it is discovered in South Australia and thereby provide certainty to the release of the land from quarantine and to fairly compensate the landholders who make their living from the land upon which the infestations occur..."

'The funding reduction shows this government is losing its commitment to this vital program, which ultimately protects the quality and export potential of the state's produce as well as preserving the value of farming land across regional SA.

'The \$500,000 cut in the first year 06/07 has, indirectly, already taken effect. One of the program's most respected and trusted employees has resigned in the face of having his hours cut by half. He too has a family to feed.

'This person, himself an experienced farmer, provided and facilitated many different services to farmers and landholders in the region; liaison between them and the program, compiling and distributing a regular newsletter to keep them informed, maintaining the mailing list, advice and guidance about many diverse matters – control alternatives, bookkeeping, spraying training, financial counselling, assistance with bank reconciliations to retain banks' support – to name a few.

'For farmers and landholders, this person was a 'One Stop Shop' whose knowledge and independence was greatly valued. Others within the program will be asked to cover the gaps but they cannot do so as quickly or efficiently as one person could.

'Next year the program loses \$750,000 and the following two years each lose \$1m. As this program is also supported by other state governments including the Federal Government, it is reasonable to think that they will say 'Well, if South Australia has reduced its contribution, we'll reduce ours.'

'If that happens, what other economies will have to be made to the program and how much longer will it then take to achieve the same end?

Contact: Adrian Pederick 0429 692 921

'This is another slap in the face for rural producers who are again suffering a major drought.'

Contact: Adrian Pederick 0429 692 921