



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond
Parliamentary Secretary to the Liberal Leader for
- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

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Govt assurance on transport a temporary fix - Pederick

Assurances about the delivery of transport services in the Coorong, East Murray and Mallee gave some breathing space but left some unanswered questions.

Since news broke last week that agreement between the government and the current transport operator could not be reached, the office of the local Member of Parliament has been deluged with letters, emails and phone calls.

In response, Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick arranged an urgent meeting with the Minister of Transport the Hon Patrick Conlon at which assurances were given by the minister and a senior departmental officer that services would be maintained by another operator.

Mr Pederick said Coorong Coaches have conducted the services since 2002. He said the company's efforts had pioneered the introduction of similar services around the state and had been used as a model interstate and it was disappointing that it had ended this way.

'Spiralling costs and increasing but unfunded demand has, however, made it impossible for them to continue services that they have actually been running at a loss.

'My understanding is the offers made to them by the government were not sufficient to make the runs viable and no-one can be expected to run at a loss. Short extensions of time and meagre offsets for cost increases did not provide enough certainty for the operators or their staff.

'The minister assured me in the presence of others that services would be maintained. I and everyone else in the region will be watching closely to hold them to that promise, and I urge people to contact my office if they observe any reduction in services.

'The only way they could attract another operator to take up those services is to offer them the same sort of support the current operator was seeking.

'As I understand it, an interstate company will fill the gap for the moment. So it's injury on top of insult as more SA taxes dribble across the border and out of the local economy.'

Mr Pederick said advice had been received that the existing medical bus and Unity College services provided by Coorong Coaches would not be affected at this time.

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