



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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Pederick says Country Health plan clear on some points and vague on others

The confusion surrounding the government's recently announced Country Health Care plan is causing great anxiety in country communities according to local MP Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick said a recent newspaper report indicated that a country hospital at Strathalbyn would not lose its acute beds yet it was clearly stated in the plan that most country hospitals (including Strathalbyn) will become GP Plus Emergency Hospitals, which will 'link with Country General Hospitals and Country Community Hospitals for acute treatment and admissions.'

'Clearly, it is this government's intention to take away from those 43 country hospitals the range of services available and thence the ability to admit patients.

'Once that happens, local doctors will reassess their own positions and careers and no-one could blame them for choosing to move on.

'A hospital without a doctor is like a school without a teacher – you wouldn't send your kids there and it will be the same for hospitals.

'They will become 'unsustainable', to use the minister's terminology, and once unsustainable, that will be the end.

Mr Pederick said the plan declares this change will occur 'over time', adding that this left more confusion as to when the inevitable would occur.

'The text in this plan is dotted with vague words like 'over time', 'may' and 'might', leaving the government with outs on many details and rural communities with no certainties except that they would ultimately lose their local hospital.

Mr Pederick said that suggesting that country doctors would be happy ordering ambulances, dispensing band-aids and handing out advice on smoking, drinking and diet is either naïve or insulting.

'It is quite apparent from the outcry of so many country doctors – some of whom were involved in what this government called 'consultation', that many in the country medical community believe they have had the wool pulled over their eyes.'

He said the plan produced more questions than answers and no-one in country communities could be satisfied until those answers were given clearly and unequivocally.

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