

MEDIA RELEASE

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Minister throws blanket of doubt over country jobs

Riverlanders can take no solace from the Minister for Agriculture's answer to a question in Parliament about the Loxton Research Centre.

According to Shadow Minister for Agriculture Adrian Pederick, the minister's response on the question of jobs contradicted earlier statements by the Treasurer that 1600 public service jobs would be targeted.

Mr Pederick said the minister's answer to his question how many jobs would be lost to country SA as agricultural research and development programs are relocated was evasive and unhelpful, and leaves the Riverland people none the wiser.

This follows news that four jobs will be lost from the Loxton Research Centre when it relocates its analytical crop management laboratory.

'Minister Caica agreed my information was correct but avoided answering the question. The best he could offer was the bold statement that the government's policy is, quote "we do not get rid of public servants",' Mr Pederick said.

'What an incredible statement. In the mid-year budget review late last year Treasurer Foley said 1600 public service jobs would be targeted.

'I ask the minister again – how many jobs will be lost to country SA through this change?

'Given the huge strain on Riverland communities with the lack of water for irrigation, this is an enormous and insensitive blow for them at the worst possible time.

'These sorts of establishments provide vital employment to other members of struggling Riverland farming families whose main source of income has literally dried up. It also denies country communities some cash inflow for their local economies.

'To take jobs away from the regions at this time shows this government's indifference. It is plainly apparent that the minister and this government have abandoned country SA, including the Riverland. I wonder what the local member has to say about this.

'For Minister Caica to so blatantly avoid my question shows either he doesn't know or doesn't want to say. Either way, it's very discouraging.

'I also ask the minister to tell country people how many of these jobs lost to the country will reappear in the city.'