

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

Shadow Minister for

River Murray – Sustainability and Climate Change

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries – Forests

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Give us the details on timber sell-off

Selling state assets so far in advance is indicative of the government's poor money management according to Shadow Forestry Minister Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick said Treasurer Kevin Foley's announcement of December 19 of plans to sell three life cycles (each cycle is 25-30 years) of the state's forests in advance was hard to follow.

'Mr Foley spoke of it guaranteeing the South Australian budget "now and in the future". I would have thought advance selling of state assets – especially so far in advance, would have weakened future budgets.

'It sounds to me like selling off the family farm to buy your favourite children toy electric trains and trams for Christmas.'

Mr Pederick questioned Mr Foley's statement that the Rann government's first priority was 'guaranteeing the delivery of record investment in infrastructure'.

'Mr Foley refers to electrifying city trains, extending tramlines, building metropolitan super schools, GP Plus clinics in the city and film studios. All those things may be important but should have been addressed progressively over the years with yesterday's money. Instead, we get them all now with tomorrow's money.

'It is notable that all those projects are city-based. Could it be the government is attempting to shore up its 2010 election stocks by lavishing their prime electorates with major projects – some of questionable urgency – right in the middle of a financial crisis?'

Mr Pederick challenged Mr Foley to release specific details about the proposed advance sale of state assets – by as much as 60-90 years.

'South Australians should be given the details and allowed to judge for themselves just how rational and prudent this plan is.'

Mr Pederick said Mr Foley's statement that "a specific figure will not be revealed so as not to jeopardise the sale process" was becoming the government's latest 'one size fits all' excuse to keep from the public the truth about the real value of such actions.