

MEDIA RELEASE

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Labor's fundraising frenzy threatens primary production

Labor's frantic grab for cash may well drive primary producers out of business or out of the state as they struggle to cope with skyrocketing water prices.

Shadow Agriculture Minister Adrian Pederick said while SA's water price hike has been met with dismay by urban and household residents the effect will be also felt by farmers who use water for agricultural pursuit.

'Labor is driving SA's primary producers to the point of no return,' Mr Pederick said.

'Farmers and graziers use large amounts of water to produce goods that feed and clothe South Australians.

'Many farmers are being forced to absorb the price increase because the price they get for their produce is locked in by the market.

'My office is receiving an increasing number of calls from primary producers who are getting squeezed off their farms.

'Our dairy farmers are among the hardest hit. One dairyman milking 400 cows reports his water bill has gone up five-fold in five years – to \$100,000.

'He has no choice but to consider either relocating to another state or getting out completely.

'Anyone who exports produce is already getting hammered by the strong Aussie dollar. Any further price pressure will severely damage their markets, perhaps permanently.

Labor must urgently address this issue and support agriculture with a realistic water price structure so we don't end up with an unviable primary industry.

'Just when South Australia desperately needs to retain and attract investment in primary production, Labor seems hell bent on driving it away.'