

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Adrian Pederick MP JP**

Member for Hammond

**Shadow Minister for**

**The River Murray - Forests**

**Agriculture, Food and Fisheries**

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### **Ignorant and insensitive wage policy the final straw**

Riverland and Lower Murray irrigators are entitled to be outraged by imminent changes to wage legislation that will further undermine their viability.

‘With extreme low flows in the River Murray depriving them of 95 percent of their water entitlement, this latest wage impost will be the last straw for many,’ says Shadow Agriculture Minister Adrian Pederick.

‘As if it wasn’t hard enough to get a crop on the trees, now it’s even harder to get it off.

‘It’s almost as if state and federal governments have conspired to drive the final stake into the heart of Australian horticulture.

‘This new award shows their lack of understanding of and complete insensitivity to the realities of primary production.

‘At this rate, just as so much manufacturing has been driven offshore, Australia is doomed to become a major importer of food product instead of a major exporter.

‘Worse still, the very people the government claim to serve will be the biggest victims of the fallout from these wage rules.

‘It won’t serve country people or their communities if higher wages force growers out of business, leaving no jobs at all.

‘Our producers are already expected to compete with third world growers whose workers are often paid a pittance and enjoy none of the benefits we take for granted.

‘The timing of this change shows just how far out of touch current governments are with the stark realities of rural Australian life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.’