

MEDIA RELEASE

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Rural jobs and services confirmed casualties of 10-11 budget

Forty jobs and many front counter services will be lost to regional South Australian regional producers as a consequence of budget cuts.

Shadow Agriculture Minister Adrian Pederick said Agriculture Minister O'Brien had admitted under close questioning in Budget Estimates hearings that 40 regional jobs will go and some rural services offices will be either closed to the public or closed entirely.

'One in seven is the target to slash PIRSA staff levels according to the minister's adviser,' Mr Pederick said.

'These people, we are told, are to be offered Targeted Voluntary Separation Packages (TVSP) or not replaced through natural attrition, but this is against a background of the clear threat stated in the budget that if the target is not reached, "the government (would) reconsider its 'no forced redundancy' policy".

'On a statewide basis, 179 full-time-equivalent jobs will be lost and minister O'Brien confirmed in Estimates hearings that that was in addition to the 106 or so that went before the March state election.

'At the same time as these job losses are occurring, the government is planning to add to farmers' costs by applying full cost recovery to all primary producer sectors and taking away the rural fuel support.

'Add into the mix the five-to-one multiplier effect of each lost job and it becomes apparent this isn't just 'give with one hand and take with the other'. This government is grabbing all it can with both hands.

'To say there was no apparent effect from the 75 TVSPs taken last year so losing another 200 is not seen as a major issue ignores the fact that, as more leave, remaining staff have to do more and more to cover the gaps.

'There will be a breaking point, at which many dedicated, hard-working employees will simply run out of patience and energy and walk away, and this minister will preside over that moment.'