



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond
Parliamentary Secretary to the Liberal Leader for
- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

Monday July 21st, 2008

Keep your eye on the hospital services ball says local MP

Despite assurances that hospital services in the Strathalbyn district would not be downgraded, local MP Adrian Pederick said some questions remained unanswered and country South Australians should remain vigilant.

His comment followed a public meeting at the Strathalbyn Town Hall last week, attended by some 150 people including residents, retirees, local health professionals and business people.

Mr Pederick said the recently released Country Health Care Plan had left all communities confused and concerned.

'No sooner have local health communities lost their controlling bodies through the obligatory disbanding of local hospital boards and the government's pruners appear on the horizon, scateurs at the ready.

'We heard representatives of Country Health assure us there would be no changes to services and facilities at Strathalbyn yet the Plan states clearly there will be.

'It was disappointing that despite my personal invitation to the Minister for Health John Hill to attend, no government representative could find time to put their own case.

'It was helpful to have spokespeople from the department and what they had to say was interesting but, with all due respect, they are not the policy-makers or decision-makers.'

'Contrast this with the attendance of my colleagues, (Shadow Health Minister Vickie Chapman, and Liberal MPs Isobel Redmond and Iain Evans), who all chose to attend to seek answers and show faith with the concerned community. The Liberal Party is not driving this, contrary to what the government would have you believe. It is a grass roots protest from country communities and their local health fraternities.

Mr Pederick said he believed country South Australians deserved more respect from their government members.

'I note that Minister Hill will attend a similar meeting in the Riverland, in fellow minister Karlene Maywald's electorate, where her husband is mayor of a local council that unanimously agreed to protest the plan. Perhaps the government is feeling some electoral heat in Chaffey.'

Contact: Adrian Pederick 0429 692 921

Mr Pederick urged all country residents to keep a close watch on developments through the next consultation period and contact their suburban friends and families to let them know what the Labor government is doing to services around the state.

Contact: Adrian Pederick 0429 692 921