



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Adrian Pederick MP JP**

Member for Hammond

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## **Pederick cautions on Government back-down on schools**

Local MP, Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick, has welcomed the news that the government has reversed its decision to force schools to pay a 1% Workcover levy – but is wary of where other cuts will be made.

The Premier Mike Rann and Education Minister Jane Lomax-Smith announced at a press conference last Wednesday morning that schools would no longer be required to find between \$50,000 and \$100,000 each year from their already stretched budgets.

But, ominously, the Minister's said in her statement "the government will continue to find new ways to manage existing programs to free up funds".

Mr Pederick said that was a clear sign that other programs within schools will suffer to find the \$17 million this decision has cost. 'Have they given with one hand and taken with another?' he asked.

'What we need from this government is a clear indication that they will stop plundering school programs. And we also need to make clear whether the aquatics program will remain as is or is still under review. The Minister said today an aquatic program will remain, but will not say what form it take. She needs to make that clear so staff in those programs can have the uncertainty about their future lifted.'

Mr Pederick said he was also disappointed that it had taken the Minister almost nine months to make a decision on Aquatics and Music programs.

'It amazes me that it took them nine months to realise this mistake but only a couple of weeks to realise the Workcover levy plan was a bad decision,' he said.

Mr Pederick said that despite the Premier's boast that the Budget was robust enough to manage this cost, 'the Liberal Party would be watching with keen interest to see where the government drags the money from to cover this backflip.'

'The government's assertion that they are spending more money on education leaves you wondering just how wisely and efficiently it's being spent. Given the massive increase in public service numbers, you wonder how much of that money is actually being spent on kids.

'While the announcements are good news, the whole business will leave a very bad taste in voters' mouths. No doubt that taste will still be there in 2010 when South Australians will be asked to choose between a government that has played them for fools and a Hamilton-Smith led Liberal government that will be responsible, considerate and open in its decisions.'

**Contact: Adrian Pederick 0429 692 921**