

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Adrian Pederick MP JP**

Member for Hammond

**Opposition Whip**

**Shadow Minister for**

**Agriculture, Food & Fisheries and Forests**

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### **Minister's unconvincing answer to tree disease threat**

The State Minister for Forests was very unconvincing in his handling of a question in state parliament this week says Opposition Forests spokesman Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick said he asked Minister O'Brien what steps the government was taking to identify and combat the spread of Myrtle Rust, a non-indigenous fungal disease that has the potential to devastate native trees and plants.

Mr Pederick said the disease had begun to spread in New South Wales resulting in the forced destruction of affected trees and quarantine of affected areas.

'The minister responded 'All possible steps". This brief and unconvincing answer almost undoubtedly was a 'one size fits all' attempt to cover his complete ignorance of the problem,' said Mr Pederick.

'The brevity of his answer suggests either the government regards Myrtle Rust as of no risk or they've never heard of it.

'I can accept Minister O'Brien might not have heard of it, and that being the case, he should have simply said so and offered to come back to the House with an informed, considered response.

'This minister is fast gaining a reputation for making uninformed comments and decisions that have the potential to seriously affect the state's primary producers and economy.

'He has so far fallen well short of his own glowing reference of himself as one of the best people in Australia to be a minister.'