

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pederick slams proposed tax slug on CFS

Proposed changes to taxation rules affecting Country Fire Service (CFS) brigades have brought sharp criticism from local MP Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick, whose electorate covers the Murraylands and Southern Mallee is a volunteer fire fighter with the Coomandook brigade.

He said the tax slug has the potential to weaken emergency fire fighting capabilities around country SA.

'Country people have willingly donated their time, always at the expense of their work and families, and placed themselves at considerable risk in the interest of community safety,' Mr Pederick said.

'In recent years an increase in administrative demands as well as mandatory training requirements and fund-raising needs have drawn heavily on volunteers' time and energy.

'We have seen numerous reports from around the country indicating volunteers are getting harder to find and keep.

'The government must take a strong role here and ensure these vital services are not run into the ground by city-based departments and public servants who clearly don't understand how heavily dependent rural communities are on volunteer groups.

'The SA Liberal party showed its understanding of and respect for the CFS at the recent state election by budgeting an additional \$22 million for CFS support.

'This was well over twice as much as the Labor government offered, in part for certain equipment many country stations do not want.

'On behalf of all CFS volunteers in my electorate, I call on the state government to lobby their federal counterparts to prevent the slow strangulation of vital rural fire fighting services.'