

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond
**Shadow Minister for
The River Murray - Forests
Agriculture, Food and Fisheries**

Friday August 28, 2009

Pederick slams Education Minister's indifference to country schools

Country school facilities are being sacrificed by a state government that is only interested in metropolitan showpieces.

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick said schools in his electorate were being allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that even simple repairs were turning into expensive major projects.

'Schools applying for badly needed additions and upgrades are being turned down year after year, leaving campuses under-resourced. The comfort of students and staff is being compromised,' he said.

'This cannot possibly provide the best possible teaching and learning environment for country areas, and I know it's happening all around the state.

'What started out a few years ago as a modest request for simple maintenance and upgrade has now turned into major rebuilds and replacements involving millions of dollars.

'Needless to say, the Minister and her department are turning them down.

'Last year I went in to bat for a school that had buildings that should have been condemned. Suddenly, despite years of promises followed by mute inaction, the department found some money and the will to do something about it.

'Now we have another school, the 1200 student Eastern Fleurieu School based at Strathalbyn that struggles on in the face of departmental neglect. The staff does a wonderful job despite the conditions but it shouldn't be down to them to cover the gaps.

'While the state government is demanding some schools build expensive new gymnasiums with federal funds, Eastern Fleurieu has no dedicated gymnasium at all, just a twenty five year old shed shared with the community.

'They lack adequate buildings for the students and courses they serve and the minister and her department don't want to know.

'Do we have to make a public fuss about each school's desperate situation before she and her department do what they're paid to do and ensure reasonable standards of public education facilities.

'This is another example of this government's city-centric attitude and shows it is tired, arrogant and out of touch with South Australians.'

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