



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

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

Tuesday July 8th, 2008

Pederick urges attendance at July 16 public meeting on health

Residents of the Strathalbyn district are being urged to attend a public meeting next week to learn more about the effects of the Country Health Care Plan on services at the Strathalbyn hospital.

Confusion surrounding changes to public health and country hospital services has arisen since the plan was first announced on June 5th.

Local MP Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick said he had received numerous calls and his office had received many enquiries from concerned residents following contradicting reports about changes to Strathalbyn hospital services.

'The State Minister for Health released the Country Health Care Plan under cover of darkness on Budget Day and it was overshadowed by the media's focus on the state budget,' Mr Pederick said.

'Closer reading of the plan revealed some worrying facts and a whole lot of uncertainties. It was quite clear that the government's intention was to relegate most country hospitals to first aid post status and ultimately leave most if not all of them without the right to admit patients.'

'Following public outcry from around the whole state and when later challenged on the real effects of the 'proposed' changes, we heard the Chief Executive of Country Health SA declare there would be no changes at Strathalbyn, but there might be some changes here and there 'over time'.

'Now the government has set up a 'Task Force' to convince country South Australians that they'll be better off with health services than before. This would appear to be a veiled admission that their plan was not well presented.

'It is to be hoped that the Minister or his representative can draw that veil back and show the people of Strathalbyn – a rapidly growing community - just exactly what their hospital will look like in two years, five years and ten years time.'

Mr Pederick said many people make important life decisions about careers, house purchases, business, schooling and retirement based on the availability and reliability of local health services.

'The government's plan is riddled with uncertainties – ifs, mights and maybes. Either they are similarly unsure of the future or there is some other grand plan that has yet to be revealed.

'I urge people to attend the meeting at the Strathalbyn Town Hall at 7pm on Wednesday July 16, where I sincerely hope the plan can be clearly explained, the questions that the public, the local medical fraternity and the local business community have can be answered and their fears allayed.'

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