

MEDIA RELEASE

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Friday September 17, 2010

Agriculture and regions neglected in State budget

Regions are off the state government's 2010/11 budget menu, with country South Australians the victims of huge budget cuts says local MP Adrian Pederick.

State Treasurer Kevin Foley yesterday released the 2010/11 budget, confirming many fears that regional SA would bear the brunt of the cuts.

Mr Pederick, who is Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Food & Fisheries and Forests said the cuts would be felt in many ways; job losses, funding and grant cuts, removal of regional rebates, reduction of research and development and more cost recovery.

'\$80 million will be slashed from Primary Industries and Resources and 180 jobs will go,' Mr Pederick said.

'The removal of wine industry and regional fuel support for example will hit regional producers who will have no option but to pass cost increases on.

'This is a cynical move by the government to have regional South Australians wear the blame for price increases of a great many goods – price increases precipitated by government policy.'

Mr Pederick said the budget cuts made a mockery of a recent statement by Agriculture, Food & Fisheries Minister O'Brien that "SA's food sector has potential to emulate defence and mining industries in terms of export growth opportunities".

'Making us less competitive and hobbling research and development must be the two most counterproductive actions a government could take against achieving that potential.

'It is also worth noting that the "Regional Statement" – a feature of state budgets for many years, has been dropped.

'It would appear Treasurer Foley was too embarrassed to print one.'