

MEDIA RELEASE

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Roseworthy changes could be counter-productive

The proposed changes to the structure and location of tertiary agriculture courses in South Australia threaten the level of practical agriculture training and the reputation of Roseworthy college.

Speaking about the news that the University of Adelaide's restructuring has resulted in agricultural science courses being conducted at the metropolitan based Waite campus, Shadow Agriculture Minister Adrian Pederick said it cast a shadow over Roseworthy's future.

'I understand enrolments have fallen off and I appreciate the changing times have changed young people's plans and priorities but SA is still heavily dependent on primary production in all its forms and on-farm practical training still has to be the best way of training tomorrow's farmers.

'I have concerns that such a move is more about making the student suit the system rather than making a system to suit the student.

'Past students and many of their lecturers have expressed their concern at this change. The university may ignore at its own peril the comments of past students who say they would not have undertaken the course had it been at Waite back then.

'Falling enrolments could be a self-fulfilling prophecy and that spells trouble for the long-term future of the Roseworthy facility itself.

'Will agriculture courses at a city-based campus turn out better farmers or better scientists?

'A recent report drew attention to the large lag in agricultural employment and skills, which could well see the Australian agriculture industry some 90,000 people short of the number required to keep pace with projected growth.

'Perhaps we should be pursuing more innovative and practical ways of attracting young people into the agriculture business.'