

Action needed to combat mouse plague

Environment Minister Paul Caica has ruled out assistance for farming communities battling the 'worst mouse plague since 1993'.

"New crops have been wiped out across huge parts of South Australia – this is a problem that can no longer be ignored," Member for Flinders Peter Treloar said today.

The situation was highlighted on the ABC's *Landline* program last Sunday.

"I'm told that this plague has the potential to be more damaging than the drought, with the financial hardship of lost crop revenue compounded by the exorbitant cost of baits."

Minister Caica has said the Government will not provide *"any financial support at this point in time with respect to farmers"*.

"With Treasurer Kevin Foley delaying the State Budget until September, communities are suffering while the Minister is hamstrung by the State's financial position," Mr Treloar said.

"I understand that the Government has set up a working party on this, but the possibility of the plague returning in spring means a more urgent response is required, similar to the response we've seen to locusts.

"The mouse plague is also a huge social problem for farming communities – the horrific situation of mice in the home is a threat to basic household hygiene, and is also a horrible situation for children and families trying to sleep with mice crawling on them at night.

"The Liberal Opposition will continue to put pressure on the Government to change their stance on the way mouse plagues are dealt with.

"Not only is this a financial problem for producers, it is hurting the agricultural sector of our regional economy, and is a huge social problem for families and farming communities.

"I call on the Minister to give this issue the prominence it deserves, as a matter of urgency for the Government and its agencies to fix."