

Rann turns back on Flinders' Exporters

Today's admission from the Rann Labor Government that the Port Lincoln TradeStart Office is to close is a major setback for export growth and will hurt businesses across the State.

Liberal Member for Flinders Peter Treloar said Federal Labor has also cut the Export Market Developments Grant Scheme by \$50 million leaving the program at least \$80 million short by next financial year.

"18 of the nation's 48 TradeStart Offices face closure," Mr Treloar said.

"Port Lincoln is one of the victims and the other three SA Offices remain under a cloud.

"Premier Rann promised us during the State Election campaign that only he could get the best deal from Kevin Rudd in Canberra. Well, these cuts are the deal he's struck and it's a bad deal for regional South Australia.

"Once again, Labor has disregarded the contribution that exporters in Flinders and the rest of regional SA make to the State's economy.

"The Premier must reveal what action, if any, he took to lobby Federal Labor to save this export grant funding before the recent Federal Budget and the Minister for Industry and Trade Tom Koutsantonis must reveal exactly how many jobs and grant programs will now be axed in Port Lincoln.

"Under the Rann Labor Government SA's exports have plummeted from \$9.1 billion in 2002 to \$7.9 billion in 2010. The values of goods and exports fell by 23 per cent in the 12 months to March 2010. Car exports alone are down 84 per cent. ABS figures show jobs are being shed from manufacturing, forestry, food and aquaculture.

"We hear plenty from Labor governments about taxes - Rudd's mining super tax and Rann's prohibitive tax regime, which sees South Australia have the highest land tax and payroll tax thresholds in the country.

"But here we have news of cuts in export investment. Where is the money going Mr Rann?

"This is the final nail in the coffin of any hopes the Rann Labor Government had of meeting its State Strategic Plan target of \$25 billion a year in exports by 2014; that promise in that glossy brochure is now paper ready for the dust bin."