

Minister Geoff Brock

Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Local Government

Thursday, 12 February, 2015

Brock Agreement delivering significant projects and new jobs for regions

Regional Development Minister, Geoff Brock says his four year agreement with the Premier to form stable government is delivering significant economic benefits and new jobs for the regions.

“The agreement provides for a State Government commitment of \$126 million over four years with every one of those dollars invested in our regions to stimulate economic activity and create new jobs,” Mr Brock said.

“The agreement includes increasing the Regional Development Fund from \$1.6 million a year to \$15 million annually over four years and a \$10 million one-off Jobs Accelerator Fund this financial year.

“The funding has already been flowing to the regions this financial year and will continue to be allocated as new projects are approved over the term of this government.

So far this funding has included:

- \$6 million to Sundrop Farms expansion at Port Augusta (100 construction jobs – around a further 200 for plant operation)
- \$2.5 million towards Thomas Foods for a new boning facility at Murray Bridge creating 200 new jobs and employing 60-70 contractors during implementation
- \$1 million for a new cellar door facility at Jacob’s Creek in the Barossa Valley (40 construction jobs and 8.5 ongoing new jobs)
- \$500,000 to Day’s Eggs for a new free range production facility in the Yorke and Mid North region (20 construction jobs and 12 ongoing new jobs)

“The enhanced Regional Development Fund has also provided \$500,000 towards establishing the James Morrison Academy in Mount Gambier – the newest and most innovative place to undertake jazz studies in Australia.

“It’s disappointing to see the Opposition continue to personally attack me again this week and downplay what we are achieving in the regions,” Mr Brock said.

“I think it’s really is time for them to start making a positive contribution and stop being negative about the important contribution our regions make to our economy.

“We’ve still yet to hear any real positive ideas from their Shadow spokesman, Stephen Griffiths, on how we can grow economic activity in our regions.

“Mr Griffiths also conveniently overlooks the impact of the Federal Liberal Government’s Budget cuts resulting in an \$87 million direct impost on South Australian councils and their ratepayers through:

- Removal of concessions will which cost SA around \$30 million a year from July 1 this year
- Loss of Supplementary Local Roads funding (\$18 million a year)
- Freezing indexation of the annual Financial Assistance Grants to councils (up to \$39 million)

“I continue to travel regularly across the State meeting with locals to personally hear their views on the many issues that are of interest to them, and I’ve received an overwhelming positive response to the State Government’s approach to regional development.

‘People I talk to tell me they’re appreciative of the State Government’s renewed focus on the regions and they constantly offer up innovative ideas to me about how we can stimulate increased regional economic activity.

“We’ve already held three Country Cabinet meetings in the Riverland, on the West Coast and in the Adelaide Hills and Cabinet Ministers have been out in the regions on a weekly basis.

“Today, we’ve announced the first of this year’s country cabinet meetings will be held in Peterborough next month.

“As well, Regions SA has been formed as part of the Department of Primary Industries and Resources and a high powered SA Regional Cabinet Committee meets regularly to consider regional issues.

“A regional summit will also be held in a major regional centre later this year,” Mr Brock said.