

## Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond

Monday, 25 February 2013

### Labor walks away from Murray & MDBA

The Weatherill Labor Government has abandoned the River Murray and failed in its 'Fight for the Murray River' action plan following its decision to halve its contribution to the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA).

Liberal Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick has criticised the Weatherill Labor Government for using New South Wales as a scapegoat for its announcement to slash funding to the MDBA.

"The MDBA is an important association and I am surprised the Weatherill Labor Government has stepped away from its responsibility to the River Murray," said Mr Pederick.

The MDBA is responsible for the operations, maintenance and management of the \$3 billion worth of assets and infrastructure associated with the River Murray.

In June 2012, the New South Wales Government announced it would be reducing its contribution to the MDBA joint program funds from \$32.3 million per year to \$8.9 million as of 2013-14.

The Weatherill Labor Government followed suit cutting its contribution from \$28.6 million to \$14.3 million, with former Treasurer Jack Snelling stating:

*"When one state's slashing its funding by three quarters...I can't expect South Australian taxpayers to...support this organisation in an unfair way."* (ABC, 21/12/12)

"It is concerning to see the Labor Government use New South Wales as a justification to slash funding," said Mr Pederick.

"The Weatherill Labor Government was happy to spend \$2 million of taxpayers' money on its 'Fight for the Murray River' advertising campaign, however has failed to commit to basic river care and maintenance.

"The Premier's campaign to return 3,200 gigalitres to the River Murray is now hollow rhetoric with this funding cut, especially in light of the infrastructure work needed in South Australia over the years, including major upgrades to infrastructure throughout the Hammond electorate.

"I am concerned for the barrages at Goolwa in particular, which will require ongoing financial support not to mention the numerous infrastructure upgrades required on the Murray in the Hammond Electorate.

"The Government has placed unnecessary risk on the River Murray and this funding cut goes hand in hand with the Weatherill Labor government's mismanagement of the State's finances."