

Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond

Thursday, 5 June 2014

Lower Lakes and Coorong Study overdue

Liberal Member for Hammond and Chair of the State Liberals' Regional Affairs Committee, Adrian Pederick, has again raised concerns in Parliament with the Weatherill Labor Government's lack of urgency to return the Lower Lakes and Coorong back to health.

A Scoping Study managed by DEWNR to determine the best long-term solutions for managing water quality in Lake Albert, the Coorong and the Narrung Narrows is six months overdue and Mr Pederick wants the Weatherill Labor Government to make its findings public.

Mr Pederick suspects the study has reaffirmed that a connector between Lake Albert and the Coorong is the ideal option to return the Lower Lakes and Coorong to health, as it would lower high salinity levels and improve water quality for primary production, irrigation purposes and the district.

Mr Pederick shares the Lower Lakes and Coorong communities' fears that the Weatherill Labor Government does not want to implement such infrastructure because it will take revenue away from SA Water.

"The Weatherill Labor Government, through a major funding contribution from the Federal Government, began the 12 month Scoping Study in December 2012, to look into all aspects of impacts of past and future management of Lake Albert," said Mr Pederick.

"The report was due to be handed down in December 2013, but it is now June 2014 and we are still waiting.

"I call on the Weatherill Labor Government to release its findings and for Minister Brock to bring this important matter to the attention of Cabinet.

"If the connector is the preferred option and its installation is not implemented, the community must be told what positive actions will be taken to improve water quality in Lake Albert, and to ease community concerns these actions must be given a time frame.

"The future of quality water availability is a priority for the district as a whole.

"A number of primary producers are currently looking at investing millions of dollars of private money in private pipelines to access water.

"This would be a cheaper option than paying \$3.23 per kilolitre to SA Water; however the Government knows this is only viable if the water quality is improved, and I believe the only way to do that is through the installation of a connector between Lake Albert and the Coorong.

"Restoring Lake Albert to health would create 273 jobs and add \$30.7 million to the regional economy a recent Regional Development Australia study has found.

"Why the Weatherill Labor Government does not want to help primary producers grow jobs, increase regional economic activity and support regional South Australia has baffled me since I first entered Parliament and it continues to do so."