



Finally

Governments look at local Coorong, lake rescue plan

By **Ben Brennan**

A HOMETOWN scheme to restore the health of Lake Albert and the Coorong appears to be a step closer to reality.

A five-point plan created by the Meningie Narrung Lakes Irrigators Association (MNLIA) will form a part of a 12-month study into Lake Albert and the surrounding region by the Federal and State governments.

And the news could not have come too soon for the association's chairman Bill Henshall, who has advocated the plan through the Murray Darling Basin Plan process.

"What can you say, if you drip water on a rock long enough the rock wears away," he said.

Mr Henshall said it was an encouraging step forward to see the Federal Government announce a study into Lake Albert, but he wondered why it had taken so long.

Under the association's plan, a pipeline would be built between Lake Albert and the Coorong's northern lagoon to manage salinity, the ferry causeway at Narrung would be removed and the Narrung Narrows

would be dredged to 1965 bathymetry.

A drainage scheme in the South East also formed part of the plan, however Mr Henshall said work was already underway on a similar project.

Last month Federal Environment Minister Tony Burke and South Australian Water and River Murray Minister Paul Caica announced a 12-month scoping study into the health of Lake Albert.

The South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources will undertake the study, 90 per cent of which will be funded by the Federal Government with a 10pc contribution from South Australia.

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick said work on Lake Albert was long overdue.

"It has been obvious since 2010 that salinity levels were problematic and the Government has been slow to act," he said.

Salinity levels in Lake Albert have remained high for the past two years despite strong inflows into the river system and a State Government reduction strategy.