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NEWS

Strong call for seal cull

By Claire Campbell

CROSS-PARTY pressure is mounting on the State Government to take action on the long nosed fur seals in the Coorong and Lower Lakes.

For years, politicians have been raising questions in parliament and seen no action while the local community and fishing industry falls into despair.

After years of frustration from locals and the fishing industry, Member for Hammond Adrian Pederrick is putting another private member's bill to State Parliament for a sustainable harvest of long nosed fur seals in the Coorong and Lower Lakes, three years after he first tried to sanction a program to reduce the seal numbers.

"We need a humane, managed, sustainable harvest so people can see some benefit at the

end of the tunnel," he said. "The Government have their eyes and ears shut to this issue, there's been plenty of time for these other options to be instigated over the past few years, but nothing's been done."

"We don't see any action they just say no cull, we see the Minister (Ian Hunter) flopping around saying lets change fishing practices, well they've been doing that for years."

"If it's affecting people that badly that they're thinking there's no way forward, then that's an indictment on a Government that just sits on their hands."

Greens Member of the Legislative Council Tammy Franks did not support Mr Pederrick's call for a cull of fur seals in the Coorong and lower lakes, but agreed immediate action needed to be taken.

"I understand completely that this is a massive problem

and endangering people's livelihoods and lives," she said. "However, we need to be talking with the experts and the community and exhausting other options before we resort to practices like culling, which we know could have a major impact on our tourism industry."

"The Government needs to step up here, take action, relax licence fees and support them (fishers) as much as they can and not leave the industry on its own to manage the issue."

"I am informed that acoustic harassment devices are one cost-effective option that the Government has not looked at."

But Mr Pederrick disagreed sustainably harvesting long nosed fur seals would ruin the local tourism industry.

"Look at the United States and Canada, both are sealing countries and I don't see any affect to tourism," Mr Pederrick said.


"If people are concerned about tourism, they need to look at the Coorong's native wildlife and the migratory birds that come through, all these things are being affected by the invasion of New Zealand fur seals."

"When they invade the river that much that it prevents boating activity on the river, that's the farcical stage, but then what are they going to do?"

Ms Franks is heading to the Coorong and Lower Lakes next Thursday and Friday to speak with councillors, fishers, ecologists, the local community and Ngarrindjeri elders about the long nosed fur seals and the impact they are having.

Both Mr Pederrick and Ms Franks support exit grants for fishers who want to leave the industry, along with mental health and career transition

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Over the years I have worked in many different jobs