

**House of Assembly
3 December 2009**

MURRAY RIVER

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:35): I rise today to again address the dire strait that the River Murray including the Lower Lakes is in today and certainly the dire straits that have been presided over by the Rann Labor government for almost eight years. We see what has happened in the Riverland with growers resigned to the fact that they cannot purchase any more water.

Hundreds of millions of dollars has been invested by individual growers to get enough water to survive, to get their plantings through so that they can keep their businesses alive. We see businesses like National Foods close down the Berri plant and that is only one plant that has closed down in the Riverland. The domino effect of one job lost in a region like the Riverland would be another four or five jobs lost along the way.

If we move further down the river, you get down to Lock 1—and, of course, the river is basically held at pool level above Lock 1, but, below Lock 1, for years now people have not been able to access water from side channels and lagoons. Even though some federal funding was allocated in the \$10 billion plan, none of that money has come forward so that people can relocate pumps onto the main river channel, so essentially it has cut off irrigation in that area.

When you move further down the river, we have had pump stations collapse into the river at Mypolonga. Woodlane irrigation area pump fell right into the river. We have seen massive areas of slumping around the Mypolonga area down towards Murray Bridge and around Taillem Bend where sections of bank have fallen into the river.

At the Long Island Marina, Bob Hall's marina at Murray Bridge, great areas of bank have fallen in there. I actually have a photo of when I was standing by the bank and we have captured a portion of the bank falling in in the distance. It has been a terrible thing for people to have to deal with both economically and socially. We have had a lot of pain for tourist operators, river boat operators and people relying on the river for their irrigation.

Talking of irrigation, we have seen the demise of the irrigation on the Narrung Peninsula and the Meningie areas. Luckily they were supplied with a potable water supply and it could not have been sooner. We have also recently just seen a potable water supply be approved finally for Point Sturt and Hindmarsh Island, and I know that there are constituents on Hindmarsh Island getting organised to make sure they get access to this water, because the quality of the water of the lakes is up around 5,000 or 6,000 EC in salinity.

It is terrible, terrible times for people up and down the river. We have seen structures put in between Lake Albert and Lake Alexandrina. We have seen a 'fish down' in Lake Albert, about 100 tonne or so of fish 'fish down' by local fishermen, but even after that there could be hundreds of tonnes, potentially up to a thousand, in a fish kill in Lake Albert. I hope the government is putting things in place to manage that because it could be a massive problem to have that many stinking, rotting fish in the lake.

We have also seen the structure down at Clayton which, yes, it has provided water for the people south of there in the Goolwa community but it has also divided communities. It seems to be this ad hoc approach that this government has presided over that people have put up with. It is interesting that, when you talk to some people down there, you would think they would be happy with the water. They used to use it for things like watering the golf course and that, and they do not have potable water for those supplies.

I condemn the government for its management and the way in which it has handled the River Murray. There should have been better negotiations at a national level. It has been terrible to see the loss that people have had to endure up and down the River Murray. It just goes to show that things are not working. We certainly need a national body and to take out the recognition of state borders and get on with the job of managing it as a whole so that we can get environmental flows down the river for the benefit of all the people who are stakeholders in the River Murray, not just in South Australia but throughout Victoria, New South Wales and even in Queensland on the Darling side. The whole thing needs to be brought under control

by one body so that we can have equity for everyone and manage it so that the bottom end gets the amount of water it deserves.