

## WATER TRADING - 5 March 2009

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:20):** I rise today to respond to the Premier's constitutional challenge on water trading. What has happened since he was party to signing the COAG agreement, which he was more than happy to sign up a few months ago (last July)?

We are being told across the chamber many times by both the Premier and his minister that, no, we are under one authority. There will be no state interference. There will not be any problems. We are going to get water. Look what has happened already: a constitutional challenge.

I do not think we need to have this challenge because if Prime Minister Rudd had the courage he would step in and invoke emergency legislation and override it—just get on with it and override the legislation. The minister has just been a party to overriding all the work they did leading up to July of last year.

The minister has stated at public events that, no, there will not be any state intervention. Already we have seen that it has completely unravelled and Victoria still rules the roost. This is the problem. It should have been sorted out before it was signed over. South Australia sold its soul to Victoria when it signed the agreement, so it got an extra \$1 billion. It sold us out down the track.

It has taken two years and four months for this Premier to realise that not only is there an environment but that people actually live south of Wellington, and most of them are Liberal voters—thank God for that. Do the numbers. The Premier could have done the numbers two years and four months ago when he announced the \$20 million structure at Tailem Bend, but he had no idea where he was going. He probably did not know where Tailem Bend was. He certainly does not know where Meningie is, because he did not have the courage to go down there the other day and meet with the people at the launch of the stock and domestic pipeline.

He was more than happy to cut off the irrigation rights to the people on the Narrung Peninsula. He was more than happy to take the \$12.5 million out of the Langhorne Creek and Currency Creek communities so that they could have access to irrigation water; he was more than happy to just cut them off. He is more than happy to have increasing salinity at Wellington already. He is more than happy to have plans on the table for a desalination plant at Tailem Bend. Desalinating river water: what a joke! Because this government held back from coming up with a desalination policy. The state Liberals came up with a policy and then the government followed 12 months later. Why do we have to keep pushing?

There were grand statements in this chamber today that the government is doing so much work with stormwater harvesting. What a joke! Colin Pitman has done more work in the last 20 years than the state Labor government will ever do, because we plan to be there next year and we will bring in an 89 gegalitre policy to capture stormwater in Adelaide to help reduce Adelaide's reliance on the river.

We do not seem to understand whether the government wants to build a weir or not. It has Robyn McLeod stating that, 'We want a permanent solution', and then we have the Premier coming out with a mixed message, 'We are going to lease in some temporary water.' Again, after we have been pushing from this side of the house that there is another solution to more weirs in the river; there is the solution of leasing in temporary water, and finally the government has woken up.

Someone in the Premier's office has listened to the radio and said, 'Hang on, the Liberals are saying this. What do we need to do?', and the numbers add up. For \$10 million you can lease in 30 gegalitres of water. You do the rest of the sums. All the programs that the government has down the Lower Murray, if you count all the weirs and structures that this government wants to put in place: \$300 million of not only money from this government but New South Wales and Victoria would be putting in as well.

I want to talk about the ridiculous assertion that pump station modifications can only go to minus 1.5. An SA Water document, dated 4 June 2008, notes that Mannum, Swan Reach and Tailem Bend can go down to minus 3 AHD, and Murray Bridge can go to minus

2.1. Yet the government is still saying that it has to build the weir to hold back critical human needs at minus 1.5. It is just not right.