



MEDIA RELEASE

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- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

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About time – but it's not over yet for the Lower Lakes

News of the State Government's push for federal support to fund pipelines to Lower Lakes communities is bitter sweet says local MP Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick.

He said Premier Rann's announcement of a \$500 million package for priority water projects in South Australia was 'about time' and would give hope to many struggling communities and irrigators in the region. But, he added, it did nothing to save the environment, which is facing imminent collapse.

'Pipelines are great for tomorrow but our living environment needs water today. Building pipelines and buying water licences from willing sellers will not save the Lower Murray and Lakes – water will.'

Mr Pederick said he understood water was being held in various upstream storages that could be used to save the Lower Lakes and Coorong, one of the nation's most iconic natural features.

'Mr Rann's bold words about a Memorandum of Understanding on the River Murray count for little in fixing the river's current problems. All the promises and actions are years in the future, and upstream states will still call the shots.'

Mr Pederick also drew attention to the Premier's promise of 'community consultation' to develop specific details of the package.

'This government's record on community consultation has, so far, been dismal. Look at what's happening with Country Health. The government insisted it had consulted with affected communities but now it's forming a task force to consult with them – after they've announced the plan and upset everybody.'

Mr Pederick said the premier's reference to this as being a 'once-in-lifetime opportunity' to save the River Murray from the border to the sea was hollow.

'Premier Rann was the architect of the river's intended destruction in November 2006 when he hastily announced the building of a weir. Now he seeks to be seen as the river's saviour. It's like he's saying, "Praise me for saving your life. I was going to kill you but I changed my mind."

'And which lifetime is he referring to? The Lower Lakes eco-system is 7,500 years old. I hope he and his COAG colleagues appreciate that it's the last chance in a 7,500 year lifetime. It is certainly Premier Rann's last chance to do anything really life-changing for the River Murray.'

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