

MEDIA RELEASE

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Uncertainty over Critical Water Allocations for 09-10

The Opposition's River Murray spokesman has expressed his disappointment that the recent State Budget has not specifically nominated any funds for a Critical Water Allocation program for 2009-10.

Shadow Minister Adrian Pederick said the Water Security Minister's answer to his question in Budget Estimates Committee last week left South Australia's permanent plantings irrigators with the same hollow feelings of doubt and uncertainty for their future as they felt last year before the announcement of that program.

'Minister Maywald's reply offered no promise of support, just vague statements about what might happen and that support was dependent on contingency funding. As always, it seems this government chooses to wait for others to take the lead on major issues,' Mr Pederick said.

'It was the Liberals who first pushed for water for irrigators to keep permanent plantings alive and it was some months before the government reacted. Now we are told that future arrangements are dependent on deals done with the other states.

'It would have at least been reassuring for irrigators to know that a specific amount had been earmarked for that contingency that was not dependent on federal government support.

'This uncertainty makes you wonder what was the point of the government spending \$23 million in 08-09 on 61 gegalitres of water for critical water allocations to assist permanent plantings.

'Two things are absolutely certain for 09-10; we can be certain water will be needed and dead certain we'll need funds to purchase it.'