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MEDIA RELEASE
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Governments in denial on Lakes and Coorong

The dire state of the Lower Lakes and Coorong is likely to become Australia's shame on the world environmental stage as state and federal governments fumble with the decision to save or not to save.

State Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick said the plight of Australia's largest Ramsar-listed wetland was being made worse by governments' lack of resolve.

'It's just not a priority for the federal government and our state government appeared to take the view the lakes and Coorong were expendable.

'It is only quite recently state ministers have acknowledged the depth of the problem and recognised the lakes' importance to the entire river system. Up until recently, their approach was to reinvent the wheel rather than revitalise and preserve it.

'Over twelve months ago a report urged the federal government to list the Lower Lakes and Coorong on the Montreux Record, recognising its critical state and changing ecological character.

'Being on the Montreux Record would require the federal government to be far more accountable internationally for its actions - or lack of them.

Given Australia's comparative wealth with all the necessary resources to manage the lakes effectively, being on the Montreux Record would highlight their lack of will and commitment to the Ramsar Agreement.

'It appears the government sees listing the Lower Lakes and Coorong as a public and international admission of their failure

'Decision makers buried their heads in the sand when it was still covered with shallow water. Now the sand is exposed and they are still in denial.
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'The belated actions they are taking now have been called for by locals for a long time.

'The government is either out of touch with this or so far behind in their thinking that future generations will be left to wonder why they left it so long to act.'

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