

Health of Lower Lakes not an environmental issue

The Rann Government has completely washed its hands of the dying Lower Lakes with Environment Minister Jay Weatherill refusing to answer questions about the status of 50 gigalitres of water the Federal Government ordered it to purchase.

Shadow Minister for the River Murray Adrian Pederick said it was beyond belief that Minister Weatherill would not answer a question about the Ramsar listed Lower Lakes.

"I asked the Minister when the 50 gigalitres of water that Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett told the Rann Government it had to purchase for the Lower Lakes was purchased, when will it be delivered and how much did it cost," Mr Pederick said.

"Mr Weatherill – the State's Environment Minister – wouldn't answer the question.

"He tried to tell me it would be a more appropriate question for the Water Security Minister.

"It was unbelievable – the State's Environment Minister doesn't think it's appropriate to answer questions about what his government is doing to help save one of South Australia's most significant environmental sites which is also a Ramsar listed wetland!

Earlier this year the Federal Minister for the Environment Peter Garrett told the Rann Government it had to provide an additional 50 gigalitres of freshwater into the Lower Lakes.

"I think the people of the Lower Lakes deserve to know if the Rann Government had any intention of purchasing that water if they hadn't been forced to by the Federal Government.

"I was also going to ask the Minister why the Rann Government didn't purchase water sooner and when the Rann Government planned to purchase more for the Lower Lakes environmental health."

"The Minister said it was a matter for Karlene Maywald and that it was not a matter for him and the Environment Committee."

"I've been calling for 30 gigalitres to assist the lakes survival for months and months, and each time been told by the Premier or Minister Maywald that it wasn't available, wouldn't help or would just be lost.

"I will be asking all of the questions of Ms Maywald next week and expect a response."