

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

Shadow Minister for

River Murray – Sustainability and Climate Change

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries – Forests

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Just how much water has SA got in reserve?

The Rann Government must come clean on just how secure Adelaide's water is after it was revealed that it has been investigating mining the city's aquifers for water.

Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick said news the Rann Government was investigating drawing on Adelaide's aquifers for water raised doubts it had actually secured enough water to supply the city.

'It is more complicated than the government simply saying it has secured 200 gigalitres (gl) of water for critical human needs. The River Murray is the delivery system for that water and there will be conveyance losses to be factored in,' Mr Pederick said.

'For SA to access 200gl from the river, another 696gl flow is required to carry that water along the river channel. On top of this, another 750gl is needed simply to get that 896gl to the SA border.

'The public must also understand that 350 of the 696gl must flow past Wellington to maintain acceptable water quality at the pump off-takes below Lock 1 at Blanchetown. Without that, the water becomes unusable. That 350gl flow is for the good of Adelaide's water supply - not the health of the lower lakes.

'If you stop that flow, salinity will soar and the algal blooms, which are a direct product of low flows such as that which occurred in NSW last week, will almost certainly occur in SA. There has already been one outbreak in Waikerie this year.'

Mr Pederick said Minister Maywald's statement that NSW and Victoria would be asked to help with water flow from tributaries that are outside the Murray Darling Basin Authority's control was fraught with uncertainty.

'Premier Rann is planning to take Victoria to the High Court over its four per cent cap, and at the same time Minister Maywald is asking for their help - threatening them with one hand and begging with the other.

'Because the much-vaunted COAG agreement has been shown to be fatally flawed, there is no over-arching authority to take control and address the true urgency independently and equitably.

'Minister Maywald claims to have conveyance water and water in reserve to flush algal blooms. Just how much real water have we in reserve with unfettered access to manage salinity, algal blooms and conveyance?'