



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond
Parliamentary Secretary to the Liberal Leader for
- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

Wednesday August 13th, 2008

While Labor fiddles, the Lower Lakes burn

As time runs out for the world-famous Lower Lakes, governments who have the power to act sit on their hands and chew their bottom lips in anguish according to local MP Adrian Pederick.

'It's almost as if they are desperate for time to run out so they no longer have to face a tough decision,' said Mr Pederick.

'They have backed themselves into a corner forcing them to build a weir that even they don't want to build and now, at the one minute to midnight on the Murray-Darling clock, they don't even know how much water is in the system, where it is and anyway, it's too late to get it here.'

Mr Pederick, whose state electorate covers most of the Lower Murray and Lakes, said governments could no longer ignore calls from the public to save the Ramsar-listed region.

'Thousands of people in the past two weeks have braved some ironically awful weather to make their feelings known about the importance of the Lower Lakes and the need to act immediately,' he said.

'It is becoming blatantly clear that Labor's much-vaunted state and federal government monopoly is incapable of dealing with this imminent national disaster.

'They were caught completely unprepared for it and are still fiddling about with plans and meetings while the lakes burn, from lack of water and now acid sulphate soils.

Mr Pederick said the current argument about whether or not water was available upstream highlighted just how ill-prepared governments were to deal with the problem and how unwilling they were to take responsibility for the situation.

'They've spent millions of dollars on paper water and now that some real water is available through the purchase of properties in NSW and Queensland, they won't get the cheque book out.'

'Prime Minister Rudd and Premier Rann, who like to present themselves as champions of the environment, will draw the condemnation of the environmental world for not taking swift, decisive action – or any action for that matter – that will actually put water back in the river now,' Mr Pederick said.

'They, along with Federal Water Minister Wong and South Australian River Murray Minister Maywald, will be ever remembered as the people who held all the cards and still lost the game.

'They will have the rivers' blood – or is it mud – on their hands.'

Contact: Adrian Pederick 0429 692 921

Contact: Adrian Pederick 0429 692 921