

MEDIA RELEASE

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Agriculture, Food and Fisheries – Forests

Thursday April 9th, 2009

Lakes community hung out to dry

A Lower Lakes community is being hung out to dry by the state government's tardiness and miserable attitude towards paying for an inexpensive pipeline according to local MP Adrian Pederick.

Residents and farmers of 70 properties on Pt Sturt Peninsula where Lake Alexandrina narrows to enter the final channel to the sea are incensed that a proposal to supply their stock and domestic needs is being delayed while the state government fumbles their attempt to extract the \$3 million required from the federal government.

Mr Pederick, who is also Shadow Minister for the River Murray, said the amount involved was minimal and the bureaucratic delay was driving 160 years of farming tradition to the verge of collapse.

'We are not talking about a fortune and we are not talking about a massive and environmentally sensitive project. This is about water for stock and domestic purposes only.

'The state government advised Pt Sturt residents that a decision would be made by the end of January. Then they were told it would be by mid-February; then it was by the end of February. Now they can't get any indication at all, let alone an answer.

'I am also advised that the relevant department in Canberra has returned the original formal application from the state government for funding and is awaiting an amended application. This is disgraceful. No wonder they're being vague about time frames and answers.

'Pt Sturt landholders are angry that water they were entitled to expect under riparian rights has been given to others. It seems the government's early keenness to act has faded and the residents feel as if they've been told to go jump in the lake. If only they could.

'In the scheme of things, this is a miniscule amount of money to pipe water just 15 kms to supply stock and domestic needs of a community entirely dependent on lake water that is now denied them largely because of gross mismanagement of the river.

'The state government is being extremely miserable about this, penny-pinching at the expense of taxpaying South Australians. What little action they have taken around the lakes has been done begrudgingly and only after situations have become critical.'

'I call on Premier Rann and Water Security Minister Maywald to be accountable for their own failings, get the cheque book out, and fix the problem.'

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