

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP

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Agriculture, Food & Fisheries and Forests

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Liberals take irrigators plight to NSW

The State Liberals will take the plight of South Australian irrigators to a number of New South Wales irrigation districts this week.

Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick and Shadow Environment and Conservation Minister Mitch Williams will lead the tour. They will be accompanied by Liberal candidate for Chaffey Tim Whetstone.

Mr Pederick said that many of the irrigators in the irrigation districts the group will be visiting are enjoying water allocations of up to 95 percent whereas Riverland irrigators were struggling with just 18 percent of their allocations.

“The drought is affecting everyone Basin wide but South Australian irrigators really are getting the raw end of the deal,” Mr Pederick said.

“Mitch, Tim and I are heading to NSW so we can get a better understanding of how decisions made by Mike Rann and his Federal colleagues are impacting on irrigators all over the Basin.

“This fact-finding mission will take us right up in the Snowy Mountains above the Dartmouth and Hume Dams so we can see for ourselves how much water is there.

“Mike Rann has shown he doesn’t understand how the Murray Darling Basin works – this was made clear when he lauded the supposedly ‘historic’ COAG agreement in July last year.

“The Liberals are determined to fight for equality for South Australian irrigators and to do this we need to see how things are being done in other states.”

Shadow Environment and Conservation Minister Mitch Williams said the Lower Lakes were literally being hung out to dry by other Basin states and it was time to get their side of story.

“Mike Rann’s ‘historic’ COAG deal was nothing of the sort – the environment and especially the Lower Lakes have seen no improvement as a result of it.

“The Liberals have lobbied and will continue to do so for a whole-of-Basin approach to the River.

“If the COAG agreement signed by Mike Rann in July last year was supposed to end the state warfare over the River Murray why are we now heading to the High Court to remove Victoria’s four percent cap on water trades?

“It just shows Mike Rann has no understanding of how the Murray system works.”

Liberal candidate for the seat of Chaffey Tim Whetstone said he was aiming to represent Riverland irrigators after the next State Election so it was important to talk to irrigators from other Basin states.

"I have seen first hand the devastation wreaked by record low water allocations and what it has done to producers in the Riverland as well as the local communities.

"I hope by accompanying Mitch and Adrian on this fact-finding tour to NSW we can continue to lobby for greater equality for South Australian irrigators."

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