

MEDIA RELEASE

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MDBA wades into the weir debate

News that the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) has the power to stop construction of a weir at Wellington has been greeted with cautious optimism by state Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick.

As River Murray and Lower Lakes communities await the federal government's determination on Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) for both the weir and the admittance of seawater into the lakes, the MDBA's River Murray Executive Director David Dreverman has pointed out that under the 2008 agreement, it must also approve any major works on the river.

'It is pleasing to see in what is an otherwise deeply flawed agreement that doesn't vest full control of the basin in an independent body, there is at least an authority to control construction works,' Mr Pederick said.

'I note that the authority's submission on the weir EIS has asked for answers to many of the same questions I've been asking for the past two years.

'It is apparent there are still many unanswered questions about the short and long term effects of this weir and the MDBA is quite right to ask them again.

'It is clear to all that the real and permanent solution to the problem is more water down the river. For this, two things need to happen; the MDBA must be given full and uncompromised control over the Murray Darling Basin and the inflows of the entire basin must be under that control.

'It is also apparent that the design of the weir is not complete. Now there is an admission that pipes will have to be incorporated through the rock wall to regulate through-flow.

'We've said from the start that a shallow spillway well to the east of the main channel would not suffice.

'Given that it is accepted that this massive rock structure will sink into the soft river bed about one metre a year, how are pipes to be prevented from also sinking?

'It is to be hoped that in this case the MDBA will see the folly of this plan and stop it.'