



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

June 7th, 2007

Lake salinity a serious, long term problem – Pederick

The State Liberal party's Parliamentary Secretary for the River Murray and local MP, Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick, said in Parliament last week that the salinity in Lake Alexandrina was a serious, long-term issue and urged the government to work with locals to ease the problem.

Despite attempts to stem the flow of salt water through the Goolwa barrages into Lake Alexandrina, salinity levels in the lower reaches of the River Murray and the Lake continue to rise alarmingly.

Mr Pederick said lake water was already unusable for Hindmarsh Island farmers and many other Lower Murray and lake users, necessitating the use of mains water for stock and domestic purposes.

'The government's defence is that the barrages were not designed to be watertight and that current drought conditions are causing the leakage,' Mr Pederick said.

'But this problem has been coming for months and they were told about it. Water Security Minister Maywald herself said the barrages were not designed for this, yet low flows have been coming for months and farmers' needs were inevitable. Last minute attempts to seal the leaks have had very limited success.'

Mr Pederick commended the efforts of barrage personnel but said, 'It's really too little – too late.' 'Even if they now succeed in stopping the leaks, which seems unlikely, the salt water's already in the lake and the only way to get it out is a massive flow down the river.'

'Run-offs from the eastern hills are helpful but only a big flow down the Murray will push it all through and that isn't likely in the next twelve months at least. Now we have to supply the Island from the limited resources back up the river.'

Mr Pederick pressed the government to work with locals to find solutions to both the short and long term water problems on Hindmarsh Island.

Contact: Adrian Pederick 0429 692 921