

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Adrian Pederick MP JP**

Member for Hammond

**Opposition Whip**

**Shadow Minister for**

**Agriculture, Food & Fisheries and Forests**

Tuesday September 21, 2010

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### **Minister withholds information from public meeting**

The Lower Murray community have been left hanging by the failure of three government representatives to attend a specially convened meeting in Murray Bridge yesterday to report on the condition of levee banks along the river banks.

Falling river levels have badly affected much of the river bank below Lock 1, with major slumping causing loss of equipment and infrastructure and threatening public safety.

The deteriorating levee banks, which were the object of extensive repair recently, are again at risk as water levels return to near normal.

The meeting, organised by the Lower Murray Irrigation Association, was promoted to all irrigators and interested community members below Lock One.

Local MP, Adrian Pederick, has today criticised Minister Caica for withdrawing his staff from the meeting.

“The meeting invitation promised presentations by several government department staff. Three of these staff members were withheld by the Minister.

“The public will rightly feel aggrieved by the snub and insulted at the lack of faith shown them by the Government.

“The Government has been out of touch with the local communities and slow to act in the region and are now hiding from the very people who need to hear what they have to say.

“As I understand it, there was a perception that their safety was at risk in attending.

“If that is the case it is an absolutely ridiculous notion. We have had numerous visits and presentations by State and Federal ministers, some of whom addressed highly contentious issues, and there has never been a hint of trouble.

“I don't believe there was any perceivable risk to anyone's safety and I call on the Minister to explain publicly why his staff were withdrawn at the last minute and to quickly reconvene another meeting to finish the job,” Mr Pederick said.