



MEDIA RELEASE

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Epitome of 'misinformation'

I refer to recent letters in the Murray Pioneer concerning the River Murray and its management.

In Neil Eagle's letter of Dec 28 he makes many assertions that demonstrate his lack of understanding of and respect for the River Murray system as a whole and the vital part it plays in the health of all states and their inhabitants.

It is evident that Mr Eagle regards the river as nothing more than a cheap resource carried in a free delivery system.

We have seen articles before from *The Weekly Times* (Weir demand to cut losses; 28/3/07, p.13) and *The Land* (Dredging the lake's political barrage, 24/5/07, p.33) that epitomise 'misinformation'.

The authors of those articles, Peter Hunt and Dr Jennifer Marohasy respectively, demonstrate no real understanding of the whole-of-river eco-system and the critical importance of its health to all four states, and indeed the whole country.

Worse still, they purport to inform readers who are entitled to believe they know what they are talking about. Based on the content of these articles, it seems they do not. The lack of credibility of these articles casts the same shadow over all other items on the subject in those publications, including Mr Eagle's.

There are already 3,500 weirs and dams in the Murray Darling Basin. Imagine how much 'unnatural' evaporation occurs from their collective expanded weir pools. And then there are the thousands of kilometres of open irrigation channels ...

There is at least 1800 gigalitres of evaporation from them and the river itself upstream of the SA border, which is comparable to SA's entire entitlement of 1850gl.

Mr Eagle complains about irrigators being asked to give up water they 'own'. Salinity levels are already so high in the Lower Murray and Lakes that many locals cannot draw the water they 'own' because it is unusable. This is due to lack of natural flow.

The same thing will happen to the river itself if it is totally blocked at the bottom end. Salinity and toxicity will begin to soar and it will progressively accumulate back upstream, poisoning as it goes.

Those who promote the weir are ill-informed at best or selfish at worst. They are no less culpable than an upstream manufacturer who takes clean water from the river for their factory and returns polluted water ... and to Hell with all those downstream. They are the first to complain when someone upstream does the same thing.

The majority of the most respected scientists in the country agree that building this weir is a major mistake.

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I am not just fighting for my constituents, or even just SA, but for the whole country's sake. We all need to work together to solve this serious problem and we can't do that until we really understand each other's situation and local environment.

Most importantly, we must all respect the river as a living thing – not just as a resource.

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