



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond
Parliamentary Secretary to the Liberal Leader for
- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

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Pederick applauds resilience in the face of adversity

The people of the lower lakes are to be applauded for their resilience and adaptability in endeavouring to make the best of a bad lot as the water's edge recedes into the distance at their properties around Lakes Alexandrina and Albert.

This was the claim of local MP, Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick, who visited the area last Friday to talk with farmers and residents about the effects of the dwindling flow of the River Murray.

He and representatives of PIRSA and Dept of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation saw first hand the efforts made by many local farmers to deal with the extreme fall in lake levels and the effect this had on water availability and quality.

"In the face of extraordinarily low water levels, and with little assistance from government, these farmers have had to use their own initiative and money on positive measures to try to salvage something from a desperate situation," Mr Pederick said.

"Some have laid expensive extensions to their pipes to reach the receding shoreline. Others have installed expensive desalination plants to keep the increasingly saline water usable. Natural soaks are also being excavated in an effort to access some water.

"There are 225,000 litre water storage tanks springing up around the place as those confident in the future seek to provide their own longer term storage facilities on the belief that the river will flow again.

"It is heartening to see these people using their own initiative and cash to provide some hope for the future.

"Conversely, many have sold off their herds or even their farms, so ending decades of highly productive farming and severely affecting all aspects of the local economies as their families and workers leave to seek employment elsewhere.

"But all these people are to be applauded for making tough and courageous decisions in the face of extreme adversity," Mr Pederick said.

"Their actions and initiative highlight the government's inactivity and lack of foresight. The proposed pipeline from Tailem Bend to Narrung should be increased in size to ensure future generations have some surety of adequate supply.

"A 400mm pipeline will cost more but would greatly increase capacity and allow some supply for industry, rather than just stock and domestic."

"It would be good to see the government match the locals' initiative with some positive forward-thinking of their own for a longer term solution to the region's problems.

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Mr Pederick said the government's responses to the state's water crisis seemed mainly focused on survival, rather than looking further into recovery and sustainability, particularly of river and lake communities.

Captions

Photo 1

State MP Adrian Pederick and Narrung dairy farmer Lesley Fischer stand in the vast expanse of dry ground left by the receding waterline.

Photo 2

Local farmers and departmental advisers discuss the lake level and water supply options as the lake recedes in the distance.

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