

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

Shadow Minister for

River Murray : Sustainability and Climate Change

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries : Forests

Friday Oct 10, 2008

Half-cocked plan an insult to irrigators

The state government's attempt to gain political mileage by announcing an assistance package for irrigators before a proper plan had been prepared was shallow and insincere according to Adrian Pederick who is Shadow Minister for both Agriculture and the River Murray.

Mr Pederick, whose electorate covers the lower reaches of the river and the Mallee, said it was now three weeks since a joint release by Premier Rann, Agriculture Minister McEwen and River Murray Minister Maywald trumpeted the plan and still no clear information was available on the details.

'I understand there have been hundreds of enquiries to rural counsellors and drought relief officers, who have had to apologetically explain that details are yet to be established.'

Mr Pederick said while the package is welcome, even if well overdue, it was hard not to be cynical about its real purpose and timing.

'It is blatantly clear that the announcement itself was premature and timed for political purposes, coming on the heels of a poll showing the government was on the nose for its handling of drought and water issues.

'To make matters worse, the Labor government's federal colleagues have still not finalised the details of an exit package designed to offer other options to struggling irrigators. This has placed even further pressure on counsellors who appear to have been left to face hundreds of anxious farmers trying to make critical decisions about their futures.'

Mr Pederick said it was just another example of the Labor government's lack of understanding and respect for country-based industries and the communities they support.