

MEDIA RELEASE

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The River Murray - Forests

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

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Pipeline decision brings relief – albeit belated

Hindmarsh Island and Point Sturt residents have at last heard the news they've been waiting for – a piped water supply to their homes.

Residents and landowners at the foot of Lake Alexandrina have drawn fresh water from the lakes for 140 years but decades of over-allocation and the current drought have reduced flows to critical levels, leaving them high and very dry.

'While other lakeside communities received assistance with piped water for critical human needs and stock and domestic supply, residents of Pt Sturt and Hindmarsh Island have been given the runaround by state and federal governments and had to cart expensive water, dispose of stock or let things die,' said Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick.

'Of course they are relieved by this decision and eagerly await the pipeline's completion but some of the damage has already been done, lives and businesses affected,' said Mr Pederick, whose electorate takes in most of the Lower Murray and Lakes.

'What must be remembered here is that at the outset, the government said there would be no discrimination in assisting communities affected by dramatically reduced lake levels.

'Yet Pt Sturt and Hindmarsh Island were ignored. Our own state minister for Water Security Karlene Maywald indicated only four months ago they would have to fund their own supply at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars. If that's not discrimination, I don't know what is.

'This water supply is for critical human needs – not irrigation. One wonders if it would have taken so long to get this decision if the situation had occurred in Minister Maywald's upstream electorate.

'It is to be hoped that the long delay in this decision does not leave residents without water for another hot summer while they wait for it to be built.'