

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Adrian Pederick MP JP**

Member for Hammond

**Shadow Minister for**

**River Murray – Sustainability and Climate Change**

**Agriculture, Food and Fisheries – Forests**

Friday February 6, 2009

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### **Governments are abandoning the lakes**

The government's claim to making "appropriate investigations" and considering the "best possible science" on options for the Lower Lakes and Goolwa Channel is not borne out by answers Water Security Minister Karlene Maywald gave in parliament say the opposition.

In reply to a question from Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick Minister Maywald stated that the government would not have a "knee jerk reaction" to a low intervention proposal from a "single group".

'We were not suggesting they consider only that option but asking why it wasn't on the table with other options presented at recent community meetings in the region,' Mr Pederick said.

'Many people at the meeting would not have realised such an option existed and were forced to choose from the range of unpopular options offered.'

In a further question to Minister Maywald, Mr Pederick asked why a freshwater option was not offered at those meetings.

'In her reply, the minister stated that "South Australia has limited water available to it" and that "30 gigalitres of water would evaporate within three to four days". SA has as much water available to it as anyone else in the market place, which we understand to be at least 200gl currently,' he said.

'The SA Liberal party is not the only organisation to suggest 30 gl will benefit the lakes. Arlene Buchan of the Australian Conservation Foundation made the same statement, which was originally made by Wendy Craik, former head of the now defunct Murray Darling Basin Commission.

'And Professor Mike Young has recently stated that water is available for the South Australian government to purchase for the environment.

'The minister repeatedly claims the water will evaporate from the lakes, as if it doesn't evaporate anywhere else. She forgets to mention that the evaporation rate from the lakes is less than anywhere else upstream.

'For example, according to the Bureau of Meteorology, the rate of evaporation at Menindee Lakes is 43 percent higher than Lake Alexandrina.

'Water will eventually evaporate wherever it is held in open storage but it serves other needs before it does so – needs that are essential to the natural environment.'

Mr Pederick said it was clear state and federal governments have no intention of purchasing fresh water that is available for the lakes environment regardless of the need, a point that is becoming increasingly obvious to all South Australians.