

MEDIA RELEASE

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Agriculture, Food and Fisheries – Forests

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Pederick slams Rann's statement on the lakes

Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick has slammed Premier Mike Rann's attempt to confuse the Liberal Opposition's approach to saving the lower Lakes.

In a statement to the media yesterday, Mr Rann has accused the state opposition of making "ludicrous claims" and not understanding the ecology and problems of the lakes.

'Mr Rann has misrepresented the Opposition's position on the Lower Lakes. He has stated we've said only 30 gigalitres (gl) are needed to "fix the problems of the Lakes" ; Mr Pederick said.

'What we have said is only 30gl is needed to greatly improve the chances of the lakes survival and recovery. The strategically timed addition of 30gl over the next twelve months will give the lakes another winter/spring rainfall season and double their chances of survival.

'Mr Rann said the Liberals are suggesting we need 1450gl. We're not talking about filling the lakes. While the levels and surface area are low, evaporation is minimised. We are only seeking to keep the lakes above the acid sulphate soils trigger point levels.

'It is quite obvious Mr Rann does not understand the lakes, their problems, the causes of those problems, the needs of the environment or our position on them.

'Mr Rann also appears to have forgotten that currently a flow past Wellington of 350gl per year is required to maintain the absolute minimum water quality in the river for human consumption. That's a fair chunk of the 450gl he claims are needed for the annual maintenance of the lakes. Most of it's already happening Mr Rann.

'He's just bought 30gl for \$14 million for critical human needs and another 50gl for permanent plantings. We're proposing the acquisition of another 30gl for critical environmental needs.

'And as far as his suggestion that the Liberals study the problem, I point out that I have visited the Lakes some 30 times in the past two years, had hundreds of discussions with scores of locals and attended well over 60 meetings addressing this specific problem.

'As far as I know, Mr Rann has rarely visited the lakes since 2003, and my contacts around the lakes inform me that he has been particularly conspicuous by his absence in the region.'