

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

Opposition Whip

Shadow Minister for

Agriculture, Food & Fisheries and Forests

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Rain bounty to benefit the river and lakes

News that heavy rainfalls in the eastern states and locally will lead to increased levels in the Lower Murray has been welcomed by local MP Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick, whose electorate covers most of the river and lakes between Lock 1 and the Murray Mouth, said the increased flow would bring great relief to the region.

'This is water we didn't dare dream of. The drought and low river and lake levels have been so dominant in every aspect of life here that this massive inflow has brought life and hope to thousands of South Australians,' he said.

'Major storages upstream are looking better than they have for years. The Hume is over 60 per cent capacity, Dartmouth-41, Lake Victoria-66 and Menindee Lakes-92.

'Much of the increased flow will benefit the environment as prescribed by the current river agreement, but the effects of the protracted drought will take more good seasons to fully rectify.

'I trust River Murray and Water Security Minister Caica will quickly resolve the question of removing the Narrung bund to allow Lake Albert a desperately needed flush. I also call on him to clarify exactly what the trigger points are for the Clayton regulator.

'Both bunds were temporary measures and should have had management plans with set trigger points to ensure their removal before large inflows arrive.

'Irrigators – SA's vital food producers – also should share in this bounty, and given the high security allocations over the border, it would seem reasonable their allocations increase too.'

Mr Pederick said while the increased flow was great news for SA's Lower Murray, increased pool levels pose some special challenges.

'River bank slumping and cracking levee banks presented great difficulties and dangers for river towns, residents and businesses.

'The re-wetting of those banks, particularly where there are buildings and other infrastructure, will require careful monitoring and prompt repair.

'Most importantly, the state Labor government must not assume the river's problem is solved.'