



MEDIA RELEASE

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- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

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Rann's tough talk on the Murray Darling loud but empty says Pederick

Premier Rann's tough talk on excessive Murray-Darling extractions is a classic case of belated huff and puff according to local MP Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick, the Member for Hammond who has been fighting the state government on its handling of the River Murray and its weir proposal since November 2006, said the Premier's announcement last Thursday was all bark and no bite.

'Reports of water theft and over-extraction have been around for some time. Now suddenly it's in the news and Mr Rann wants to be seen to be leading the charge – even if it is from the rear.

'All we've had up until now is window-dressing – assurances that nothing more could be done and fanfare for a new cross-border agreement that only reinforces the failings of the past 100 years.

'It's weeks since Martin Hamilton-Smith (Opposition leader), announced I would tour the northern part of the basin for a first-hand look at water management, storage and diversion. I've been and seen it from the air and talked to people on the ground and it would make you cry.

'For weeks we've been hearing there wasn't any water anywhere. Now the Premier backs a thorough and independent audit. Well did he know what was out there or didn't he?

'And he would have everyone believe the audit was his idea.'

Mr Pederick said the time for tough talk was months ago and Mr Rann's bold assertions were true to form – loud but empty, with the recent COAG agreement another hollow boast.

'Everything Labor's new Murray Darling Basin Authority does will have to be approved by its Ministerial Council, in which each state has the right of veto. Mr Rann has been crunched by his Labor mates and vested interests are calling all the shots. Yet he waves an agreement triumphantly in the air, just as British Prime Minister Chamberlain did days before the outbreak of World War II.

'What we have at the moment is Premiers and a Prime Minister. What we need are Statesmen with vision and courage.'

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