

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

Opposition Whip

Shadow Minister for

Agriculture, Food & Fisheries and Forests

Friday December 17, 2010

River's return bring relief and risks

Rising river levels have brought great relief to parched communities along the lower reaches of the River Murray, but also present new dangers says local MP Adrian Pederick.

Above average rainfall in much of the Murray Darling Basin has brought the river rapidly back to more normal levels.

'After languishing below sea-level (AHD) since 2008 the river level at Murray Bridge is already one metre above it and is expected to gain a further 30cm before peaking in late January,' Mr Pederick said.

He said rumours of big floods had been overstated and he was advised that while river levels may reach those seen in 1992, they will not get to 1974 levels, let alone '56.

'The river's rapid and welcome return has raised hopes of a bountiful year for many river-based industries, including recreational boating and tourism.

'But while I encourage people to enjoy the river's return, I must also urge caution. Apart from possible localised flooding of low-lying areas, holiday-makers should also take into account the river's strong flow.

'I've had reports of up to seven kph in places, presenting all boaters, skiers and swimmers with special risks and making it quite difficult for some houseboats.

'Unstable banks and trees at the river's edge add to the perils people should be aware of.

'The rising level and strong flow also brings a lot of debris back into the river, some of which is floating just below the surface.

'We've already had one tragedy and another near miss and I ask everyone to take care of themselves and look out for each other over the summer season.'