



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

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- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

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River bank slips a worrying sign says Pederick

Further deterioration of the riverbanks near Murray Bridge is another new and worrying symptom of the wide-ranging effects of low flows in the River Murray, according to local MP Adrian Pederick.

Local farmers Matthew Jaensch and Kristy Kowald have brought to attention of local environmental groups the worrying sight of large chunks of river bank sinking or sliding into the river as levels fall.

Mr Pederick said Mr Jaensch explained that last December fine cracks began to appear in the ground many metres back from the water's edge. The cracks quickly widened and within the last few weeks an area about 50 metres long and up to 15 metres wide had dropped several feet leaving the willows in the river and unstable ground behind. Many more cracks are appearing nearby.

Mr Pederick said the ground had dropped anything up to 1.8 metres and water was visible in the cracks. Earthmoving contractors were not prepared to risk their staff and machinery in the unstable conditions.

In his discussion with a group of about 15 interested people touring the area to look at river bank degradation, Mr Pederick said that while the symptoms were most obvious in the Lower Murray and Lakes, it was a whole of river problem.

He said he supported the plan to pump water from Lake Alexandrina to save Lake Albert from acid sulphate soils but that it must be supported by a release of water from above Lock 1.

'The \$50million water buy-back is a start but it is a mere fraction of the \$3billion set aside by the Howard government last year,' Mr Pederick said.

'We have to get more water back into the river for the river's sake, and it needs to happen quickly. Now we have a new government wanting to form a new group to make decisions about the problem.

'Enough talk; the problem is obvious and so is the solution - a major buy-back of water from willing sellers and a central body with overarching powers to manage the resource and rein in the over-allocation that has brought us to this point.

'All this talk of damming the river is distracting us from the real problem – getting a reasonable flow of water back down the Murray all the way to the Mouth.'

Caption: The river bank at Toora, just north of Murray Bridge, is starting to slip into the river as the level drops and the bank dries out.

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