

MEDIA RELEASE

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The River Murray - Forests

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

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Stop passing bucks on water – spend them on the ground

‘When it comes to lack of action, blame games and buck-passing on the nation’s river crisis, Federal Water Minister Penny Wong should practise what she preaches.’

The statement came from state Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick following his attendance at the Murray Darling Association’s national conference in Adelaide this week.

‘The \$10 billion rescue package that underpins the current federal government’s planning was conveniently handed to them by the former Howard Liberal government.

‘Nearly two years later we are yet to see major advances in improving irrigation infrastructure – especially in the eastern states where efficiencies are generally low.

‘It’s time for Wong to stop passing the buck and get some bucks on the ground in the form of infrastructure. Water saving infrastructure upstream would enable many downstream irrigators to actually access water they are entitled to – albeit only 10 percent.

‘And to assist those downstream irrigators, spend some Murray Futures money on relocating pumps from dried up backwaters to the main channel so they can actually get to their water.

‘Buying back water entitlements is important, especially for the river’s longer term survival. But fixing wasteful irrigation systems, particularly in the eastern states, will make better and more equitable use of what water we have – now.’