



MEDIA RELEASE

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- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

Monday March 31st, 2008

Disaster happening now – not in three years time

A three year wait for real assistance to the Lower Lakes is too long according to the three members of state parliament whose electorates cover the region.

Parliamentary Secretary for the River Murray and Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick, Shadow Water Security Minister and Member for MacKillop Mitch Williams and Member for Finniss and Shadow Tourism Minister Michael Pengilly say the fight for equity and a fair go for local residents and industry is far from over.

'The agreement signed recently between all Murray Darling Basin states and the Commonwealth might well fulfil the political needs of Rann, Rudd and their colleagues, but fails to relieve the environmental disaster at the end of the river system or assist the communities in and around the lower lakes.

'We've already waited 14 months, during which time a serious problem has become a crisis and a national disaster,' the Liberal members said.

'This deal, which was initiated by the former Federal Liberal government, was on the table in January last year but was held up by the politicking of state Labor governments. Now that they've all got what they wanted, the people of the Lower Lakes are expected to wait another three years to get what they so desperately need or see any real benefit.

'The Ramsar-listed region faces imminent and permanent destruction and the only effective fix for this is water flow. Many of the measures to be implemented by this plan will take years to come to fruition.

'As Federal Minister Wong, SA Premier Rann and SA Minister Maywald would have seen during their secret visit to Milang last week, the consequences of years of dispute and delay on the river are clearly evident.

'This is not a disaster about to happen – let alone in three years time – it is happening now. If the Lower Lakes die, the River Murray will begin to die and that will affect every one of us.

'While Wong, Rann and Maywald talk up this long-awaited agreement, they go very quiet when you ask them about help for the Lower Lakes now.'

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