



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

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Doctors, Professors and water specialists address Symposium at Strathalbyn

Local MP and Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick was one of 140 people at Strathalbyn Town Hall last Friday to attend a Water Symposium organised by the River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group and entitled ‘All about Water, All about the River.’

The free symposium gave interested people an opportunity to hear about the issues from many well qualified speakers and ask questions about water management and related environmental matters.

Mr Pederick said he felt it was important for the general community to be more aware of the critical issues facing the River Murray and the symposium had given that opportunity to many people from the whole region.

As well as Mr Pederick, former Premier Dean Brown, community leaders and representatives of interested groups were among the large gathering.

Following a welcome to the Ngarrindjeri country by elder Tom Trevorrow, renowned artist and Strathalbyn resident David Dridan lead the large panel of speakers.

Mr Dridan explained his passion for the Lakes and Coorong region and his labour of love in painting its unique scenery. He said that over the past four decades he has closely observed the slow and tragic decline of the landscape, which is depicted in his paintings.

He was followed by other speakers whose combined expertise covered all aspects of water resource management, water trading and licences, river and lakes eco-systems, wetland life and conservation, river flows and aquatic flora and fauna.

Speakers included the Director of the National Water Initiative Mike Smith, Mr Bill Paterson who has had extensive involvement with local council and water management, estuarine ecologist Dr Mike Geddes, Professor Keith Walker – a specialist on the effects of weirs, wetlands ecologist Dr Kerri Muller, native fish specialist Jason Higham and wetland project officer for the Lower Murray Adrienne Frears.

Joining them at the podium were Howard Jones, a grape-growing conservationist from NSW, and Ngarrindjeri cultural weaver Ellen Trevorrow.

The four hour program was broken into two sessions, each lead by guest speakers who then fielded questions from the floor. Smaller groups were then formed to discuss issues in depth and prepare further questions for a plenary with all speakers at the end of the morning.

Attendees were treated to lunch provided by the River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group and prepared by the Lutheran ladies' auxiliary.

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Long-time Milang resident Karyn Bradford, who plays an active role in local conservation, spoke during the lunch break, recalling her life growing up on the lake. She urged those present to take an active part in helping to preserve what is left of the unique and vital wetland environment.

Visitors were invited to take self-guided tours during the afternoon to become better acquainted with the region and its unique character.

Event organiser Carol Hammond said the River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group was pleased with the symposium and hoped it could be a catalyst for more positive action to address the major issue of the over-allocation of water from Australia's rivers.