



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond
Parliamentary Secretary to the Liberal Leader for
- The River Murray
- Sustainability and Climate Change

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Weir will not guarantee Adelaide's water says Pederick

Senator Wong's assertions about safeguarding water for critical human needs assumes that River Murray water held above a weir at Wellington will be of potable quality says Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick.

Mr Pederick, who is also the Opposition's Parliamentary Secretary for the River Murray, said neither the federal nor state governments have yet explained how they propose to guarantee the quality of that water.

'We know that 170,000 tonnes of salt each year are flushed from the river by the flow past Wellington. Saline water being denser will sit below the fresh water. Where will it go if there's 700,000 tonnes of rocks in the river and only a small spillway in shallow water well to the east of the deeper river bed?' asks Mr Pederick.

He said the acid sulphate soils that are the cause of so much concern in the Lower Lakes have the potential to be an even greater problem between Wellington and Lock 1.

'I am advised that the alkalinity of the water in that stretch of river is at least six times less than the lakes, and nearly three times less than sea water. Low alkalinity severely inhibits the water's ability to combat acidification. It would be truly ironic if we finished up pumping water from Lake Alexandrina back over the weir.'

'These soils also lead to serious build-up of heavy metals that would make the water highly toxic.'

'And how will the threat of blue-green algae be managed in the non-flowing river above Wellington? We know from experience that spreading copper sulphate is only a very temporary fix.'

'Has the government factored in the inevitable cost of treating the river water to make it usable before it's pumped to Adelaide's reservoirs?'

'Could we have another world first – a desalination plant on a major river?'

'Senator Wong, Premier Rann and his Water Security Minister Maywald wave this weir option in the air as if it were the ultimate solution to safeguarding Adelaide's critical human needs. But until these matters are satisfactorily dealt with, there's a real risk we could finish up with an expensive, ineffective white elephant and still no drinkable water.'

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