

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP

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Weirs won't guarantee Adelaide's water

More weirs will not fix Adelaide's water crisis says Shadow Minister for the River Murray, Adrian Pederick.

'The government has lead the people of Adelaide to believe that a weir at Wellington will save them from dying of thirst but, not only will it not save any water or reduce demand, it actually threatens the quality of the city's water supply.'

He said lack of flow would limit the natural flushing/mixing action between river and lake causing;

- Massive and rapid salt build up in the river, (as much as 2 million tonnes a year passes Wellington)
- Accumulation of toxins from run-off
- Acid sulphate build-up in the river.

'Much of Adelaide's water is pumped from the river below Lock 1 at Blanchetown. Anything that affects the quality of water in that stretch of the river threatens the city's water supply,' Mr Pederick said.

'The threat of acidification in this part of the river is very high because of its unusually low alkalinity – the natural foil to acid build-up. The alkalinity reading of 50 milligrams per litre (mg/l) is well below that of seawater at 130mg/l and way below the lakes 300-400mg/l. Blocking the river at Wellington will exacerbate that problem.'

Mr Pederick said the trigger point for acidification in Lake Alexandrina is about minus 1.5 metres AHD, (below sea level), yet recent information from SA Water indicated that the pump off-takes could be lowered to minus 2.1m at Murray Bridge and minus three metres at the Mannum, Swan Reach and Taillem Bend sites.

'So what is to be achieved by damming the river at Wellington, which will result in massive salinity increase and acidification of the Blanchetown to Wellington weir pool? What do we do next – sacrifice the river back to Blanchetown and keep writing it off until we reach the border?'

Mr Pederick urged the government and all South Australians to vigorously pursue other options to address Adelaide's water shortage and supply. These include stormwater capture and reuse, recycling, desalination and programs that save water and reduce demand.