

MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

Shadow Minister for

River Murray – Sustainability and Climate Change

Agriculture, Food and Fisheries – Forests

Tuesday December 2, 2008

What planet is the Premier on with the Lakes?

The river and lakes are in deep trouble because the Premier, the man who makes critical decisions on the state's behalf, does not know what he is talking about according to Shadow River Murray Minister Adrian Pederick.

'What hope does South Australia have when the man in charge doesn't know the facts about one of the state's most important and famous natural treasures?' Mr Pederick said.

'The Premier said on morning radio today that the Lower Lakes had "been basically turned in to freshwater lake some decades and decades ago". No wonder our river and lakes are in trouble.

'It is common knowledge that scientists agree the lakes were never anything but fresh, except for perhaps one percent of the past 7,500 years. Over-extraction in the past 150 years changed that.

'I have clearly stated this in Parliament countless times over the past two years. For him to now come out with such an ignorant, ill-informed statement defies belief. What planet is he on?

'This is a premier who would kill the goose that lays a golden egg.'

Mr Pederick said the lower lakes are turning saline because the thousands of tonnes of salt that is naturally flushed down the river cannot get out to sea.

He said there was growing evidence to support the call to let the lakes manage their own recovery.

'Native vegetation that is regenerating on much of the exposed lake bed is expected to alleviate the effects of acid sulphate soils. But if you let sea water in – which you will never get out again – that regeneration will be stymied. The lakes and ultimately the river are doomed.

'This is the man who told South Australia he was fighting for a better deal for the river and lakes. How can he convince anyone else when clearly he himself doesn't understand the system?

'Mr Rann's approach has always been and still is to pray for rain. I call on the Premier and his Water Security Minister to get off their knees, stand up, and fight for South Australia.'