



MEDIA RELEASE

Adrian Pederick MP JP

Member for Hammond

April 5th, 2007

Pederick sets the Vics straight on the weir

Local MP, Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick, has taken issue with a recent report in a Victorian rural newspaper in which certain assertions were made about the SA government's Wellington weir proposal.

Mr Pederick said some of the 'facts' in the Weekly Times article of March 28th were incorrect and would have left readers with serious misconceptions and feeling very aggrieved about the matter and he had written to the paper to express his concern.

Citing the claim that 'the Federal Government had called on South Australia in January to build a weir', Mr Pederick pointed out that no such request had been made and, in fact, Canberra was still waiting for further detail before making a decision.

Mr Pederick also objected to the statement that NSW and Victoria had been 'forced to push up to 3,000 megalitres a day across Lock 1 to supply Adelaide and the lakes'. He said SA had received no more than its entitlement and that had been well managed by the Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation to maximise potential and minimise evaporative loss.

'As for SA irrigators demanding action - that is a sweeping generalisation,' said Mr Pederick. 'There are some SA irrigators who would like to see a weir built at Wellington but a great many do not; particularly those along the Lower Murray and Lakes where the real consequences of such a construction are better understood.'

Mr Pederick agreed that evaporation was an issue but pointed out that it is an issue right along the Murray Darling Basin system, particularly in places where the daytime temperatures are higher and outdated irrigation methods are more common.

'The effects of building this weir that nobody wants would be catastrophic for the river and lakes environment – the largest Ramsar-listed wetland in the southern hemisphere - and devastating for the tens of thousands of people around the Lower Murray and Lakes whose livelihoods are wholly or largely dependent on a healthy river system. Even a so-called 'temporary' weir could leave permanent damage.'

'It's time people stopped thinking of the river as merely a convenient source or receptacle for water and appreciate it is a fundamental part of the whole eco-system.'

'I invite anyone from up the river who would so hastily pull the plug on these people and the environment to visit and become better informed about the need to take care of what is a crucial part of Australia's most vital river system,' said Mr Pederick.

'The world is watching.'

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