

RIVER MURRAY, LOWER LAKES Feb 5, 2009

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:22): My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Has the government made decisions on whether it will adopt a low intervention program for the Lower Lakes and Goolwa Channel, in minimising the risks associated with low flows and water levels? Bioremediation, natural occurring refuges and native species preservation projects, coupled with direct on-demand treatment of localised acidification hotspots, have been proposed as an alternative to massive intervention with sea water or further isolating the lakes with small bunds and weirs in the area below Point Sturt. Locals have expressed the view that these proposals have uncertain outcomes and only compound the problem for the entire ecosystem.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (14:22): There has been a proposition put forward by one group of residents around the Lower Lakes that we could avoid any kind of engineering intervention if we were to go down the path of bioremediation limiting dealing with local hotspots. However, the South Australian government believes that we need to look at all options, that we need to fully consider and do the feasibility of all of those options, and that is what we are currently doing.

We are currently doing that work, because we make decisions on the basis of the best possible sites. We do not have knee-jerk reactions on the basis of what a particular community may or may not demand at the time. The decisions that this government makes in relation to interventions that we may have to put in place down around the Lower Lakes will be based on appropriate investigations and the best possible science, and we will make those decisions in the best interests of the community.