

River Murray – 5 March 09

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:13): My question is to the Minister for the River Murray. Has the government's report on riverbank slumping been released yet? If not, when will it be released?

Slumpings along the banks of the lower reaches of the River Murray have been reported for the past two years. It was apparent that falling river levels were the primary contributor to this risk, yet we understand that no specific preventative or corrective actions have been taken and it is only now that a report is being undertaken.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (15:14): Through the government's drought liaison manager, Dean Brown, a community and agency group was established to investigate the issue of bank erosion and concerns in relation to potential slumping. That work has been undertaken and a report has been completed. I understand that that report is about to be distributed for public release.

The remediation actions are not evident because of the fact that a range of issues are contributing to the bank slumping incidences. They include issues in relation to the structure of those particular banks. It also includes the low water levels and bank erosion, as a consequence of motor boats and the like.

There are a number of contributing factors to the banks slumping. It is of major concern and the government has instigated a policy to ensure that public safety comes first and foremost in these issues. We are also working very closely with the council and we have established a cross-agency working group. Remediation action in advance of slumping is extremely difficult and not likely to prevent slumping occurring in the future. We have established a hotline for people to report incidences and cracking so that we can investigate what is happening in specific areas, and we have also written to landholders within identified areas of concern. It is of major concern.

Remedial action on the banks is not possible, in most areas. The cracking is as a consequence of a range of issues, as I said a moment ago, but we will work with the community to minimise any impacts that we possibly can and also to ensure that public safety is foremost.