

WATER SECURITY – 30 April 2009

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Environment and Conservation. Why was no reference made in the two reports entitled 'Management Options for Acid Sulphate Soils in the Lower Murray Lakes' dated December 2008 contained in the draft environmental impact statement for the proposed weir near Pomanda Island?

The draft environmental impact statement for the proposed weir near Pomanda Island, submissions for which closed on 9 April 2009, gives the possible acidifying and tainting of the river above Wellington as a major reason for constructing a weir at Pomanda Island. These December 2008 reports describe adding limestone to the lakes to minimise the effects of acid sulphate soils as 'a feasible option from both a technical and economic perspective', yet there is no reference to them in the EIS.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (14:53): I will take most of that question on notice and refer to those two reports so I can bring a detailed response to the member. Acid sulphate soils are referred to in the EIS significantly as part of the reason for having to construct a weir if drought conditions continue.

The whole purpose of doing the work necessary to build a weir if we have to is so we have the contingency in place to call upon to protect water supplies for Adelaide and other communities that get water from below Lock 1. Any government that did not take responsible steps to secure our water supplies against the risk of salinisation or acidification would be an irresponsible government, indeed. What we have done is acted responsibly with the Murray-Darling Authority. There is a real-time management strategy in place that we are working with the Murray-Darling Authority to ensure that we can protect water supplies. Any opposition member who says we should not protect those water supplies needs to look closely at themselves.