



# "Privatisation: The Cost of Water Reform?"

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011

5.30 for a 6.00 PM start

Allan Scott Auditorium, [UniSA City West campus](#),

Hawke Building, 50 North Terrace, Adelaide

## Hawke Centre FREE public forum

RSVP essential via [Hawke Centre web site](#) or phone (08) 8302 0215

**Keynotes by Maude Barlow** (International Water Campaigner), **Dr Ian Douglas** (Fair Water Use (Australia)) and **John Caldecott** (Convenor Water Action Coalition).

*A sustainable Water Future without compromising the health of interdependent ecosystems is a critical issue for our state and our nation.*

What are the likely social, environmental, legal and economic impacts of Water Reform? And what can we do about it?

**"Privatisation: The Cost of Water Reform?"** will explore the water reform process and the far reaching impact of increasing privatisation, and where control of our water, our rivers and aquifers and our water supply utilities currently lies and will lie into the future and the implications for citizens.

The mismanagement of the Murray-Darling Basin over the last two decades has had disastrous consequences for communities, ecosystems and economies, particularly those at the end of the river system in South Australia. There have also been significant impacts on greater metropolitan Adelaide with more to come.

COAG's Water Reform agenda will be under the spotlight in this forum. Many Australians have supported the spirit of water reform, but many are beginning to question the push towards a national water 'market', and whether the broad needs of citizens and environments of Australia can truly be addressed under such a 'privatised' system.

**Background:** The process of Australian Water Reform commenced in the late 1980s and has been driven by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). In June 2004, Premier Rann co-signed the ["Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Water Initiative"](#) (NWI). The [National Water Commission](#) was established to hold the states accountable to this process. The stated objective of the NWI is "to achieve a nationally compatible market, regulatory and planning based system of managing surface and groundwater resources for rural and urban use that optimises economic, social and environmental outcomes". The [2010 Draft Water Industry Act](#) sanctions the establishment of private companies to provide monopoly and fragmented water supply and water services. It is expected that there will be higher costs for South Australian households and businesses as a result.

**Format:** Prominent speakers have been invited to take part in a forum that will discuss the environmental, social, economic and legal/constitutional implications of Water Reform. Politicians will be invited to respond. The evening will also include a panel session and questions from the floor.

**Panel Members:** [Deb Tribe: 891 ABC Radio](#) (Facilitator), [Ross Womersley](#), Executive Director, SA Council of Social Service, [Professor Rob Fowler](#), Adjunct Professor of Law, University of South Australia, [Mark Henley](#), Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide and [Professor Fran Baum](#), Professor of Public Health and Australia Research Council Federation Fellow, Flinders University.

**About [Water Action Coalition](#):** WAC is a broadly based movement of community groups and environmental organisations seeking an informed and constructive debate on our water future. WAC supports policies that seek to ensure sustainable water supplies, without compromising the health of interdependent ecosystems.

**Jointly presented by the [Water Action Coalition](#) and [The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre](#)**

