



Media Notice

RIVER MURRAY EMERGENCY – Time to Call a National State of Emergency?

"It is time the major parties backed calls for a National State of Emergency to be called in the River Murray – says John Caldecott Convenor of the Water Action Coalition. WAC is a diverse and broadly represented group of concerned South Australians that have been calling for a Public Inquiry into management of water and the environment in South Australia.

A National State of Emergency should have been called when South Australia's total low flow entitlement was significantly reduced below 1850 GL in early 2007 which has so significantly affected South Australian; our precious river and lake environments, town and urban water supply, and irrigators. The Adelaide Advertiser published a call for a [National State of Emergency on 30th July 2008](#) by 13 experts. Why did the Rann Labor Government fail to act"?

The river and 120 kms of levee banks below Lock 1 have been allowed to crack and dry out so badly that a flood now would cause severe erosion ([For graphic images see "Preserving our heritage"](#)) . "Where are the plans of the major parties to restore South Australia's minimum entitlement of 1850GL?" Section 100 of the Constitution demands a fair share of all river flows. "Governments of the Murray-Darling Basin must immediately put into effect plans for South Australia's emergency to be relieved by all 17 water sharing regions of the Murray-Darling Basin working together."

National and State Governments have been overly focussed on creating the National Water Market and turning river water into a private commodity to the detriment of all else. "The Rudd and Rann Governments have failed to ensure water in short supply is properly prioritised to meet domestic needs first. South Australians are being sold out of the river"

In December 2009 the National Water Commission reported that in 2008/09 a record 1800 GL of available river water was traded in the southern part of the basin. This demonstrated that despite the drought conditions it wasn't broke by any means. 1600 GL was traded in 2007/08 the first year of the new national water market. South Australia's share of total diversions since 1996/97 of around 100,000 GL has been just 6%. Adelaide's water use is meagre compared to these numbers and they do not justify the building of Desalination plants in our Gulfs to add to the environmental disasters that already exists.

"The Rann Labor Government has put all its faith into water markets and failed to ensure water sharing agreements covered all seasons of the Murray-Darling Basin; Flood, Normal Flow, Low Flow, Drought and Emergencies to share all water in the Basin."

"The question of why our Governments have failed to act needs to be investigated by a comprehensive Public Inquiry with the powers of a Royal Commission. Just what are they afraid of? Are they afraid to tell South Australians of their secret water privatisation agenda to privatise water itself?" said John Caldecott.

Further information about WAC:

Google [Water Action Coalition](#)

Australian Civic Trust [WAC](#) Page: <http://civictrust.net.au/page19.htm>

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