



The Peak body for five landholder associations and 1600 irrigators in the Murray Valley

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## **Media Release**

### **Southern Riverina Irrigator's tour Lower Lakes and Coorong in South Australia**

Southern Riverina Irrigator's key message to the South Australians is that there is simply no water to be sent to SA from our area, according to SRI Chairman Ted Hatty.

SRI representatives, led by Mr Hatty, were invited to South Australia last week by the SA Natural Resources committee to see first hand the state of the Lower Lakes and the Coorong and to meet local irrigators and representative groups.

"The tour was an interesting and useful fact-finding mission, however the bottom line is that until there is a huge rainfall event there is simply no water to ease the SA concerns." said Mr Hatty.

"We are launching into our third year of zero allocation, and we are doing it as hard as our South Australian counterparts.

"One of the sites on the tour was the site for the proposed Wellington weir, where local landholders stated their opposition to the weir's construction with no realistic alternatives.

"When discussing the lower lakes, there was a general reluctance to explore all the options that they have control over in SA, with the preference to look up stream to the other states for the perceived answers - which they believe is more water.

"Our delegations suggested SA need to consider their options assuming there is no water.

"It was interesting to learn that the recent local rainfall and run-off has improved levels and water quality of the lakes and the Coorong, and that these recent inflows may postpone the problems until Autumn 2009." Mr Hatty said.

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“Also of note was the fact that the lower lakes have been maintained and managed at what is called a flood level [300mm above sea level], which seems unrealistic in these dry times.” Mr Hatty concluded.

Following the combined tour, the SRI group toured the shores of Lake Albert and the Barrages before being given an extensive tour of the Coorong and drains region by a local landholder, Mr James Darling, who is well informed about the system.

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