



Comments on

The Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth:

MANAGING FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE

by

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FARMERS FEDERATION
(SAFF)
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

On

September 2009

CHAIR: Sharon Starick

Level 1, 67 South Terrace
Adelaide SA 5000

CONTACT: Natural Resources Executive Officer
Ms Sandra Keane
Email: skeane@saff.com.au

PO Box 6014
Halifax Street SA 5000
Telephone: (08) 8410 7233
Facsimile: (08) 8211 7303
Website: www.saff.com.au

General Comments:

- The South Australian Farmers Federation (SAFF) supports the provision of freshwater for the Coorong and Lower Lakes.
- The document needs to broaden its context, in that it must have linkages with the Murray Darling Basin, the Murray Darling Basin Authority, the end of the river system, etc. The relationships with these areas need to be strengthened within the document.
- The document does not discuss how it links with the Basin Plan which is being developed by the Murray Darling Basin Authority. This document has no status if it does not relate to this Plan.
- The document does not talk about the importance of water allocation planning and cross-coordination between states. It should describe how this currently occurs and how it could contribute to a healthy Lower Lakes and Coorong.
- The document should reference the longer-term decline of the Lower Lakes and Coorong, e.g. that flows over the barrages have been significantly reduced over the past 10 years. It should be highlighted that the decline has been taking place over a reasonable length of time.
- SAFF supports an adaptive response with contribution across all levels of Government and substantial industry, scientific and community involvement.

2. What is at stake?

- This section does not highlight the importance of this area as part of the Murray Darling Basin, e.g. in relation to ecological functions, as an outlet for salt from the whole Basin etc.
- The section titled 'a regional community and economy' could identify some of the key industries, e.g. dairy, wine, horticulture, etc; and indicate what they contribute to the State's economy. This would highlight the importance of keeping these industries alive and healthy in this region. Also, this section does not highlight the impacts of water quality of the Lower Lakes, instead the section refers to water quality of the River channel.

4. What is being done to manage the current problems and plan for the future?

- The linkages between the lower lakes, Murray Channel, Murray Mouth and Coorong needs to be highlighted and solutions need to take this into consideration so that there is a whole-of management approach. This is currently not evident from the list of initial response measures, emergency measures, etc.
- The section titled 'Planning for a worst case situation' needs to include a brief description of what a temporary weir will achieve. Significant parts of the community do not understand what the weir is designed to do and what it will not do.

7. Taking action to secure a healthy future

- SAFF supports the involvement and engagement of the community, including organisations like SAFF, in further planning and implementation of management actions through consultation, education and building the capacity of the community.
- SAFF would recommend that any management actions are undertaken within a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework to enable adaptive management. This process also needs to be transparent to enable greater community support, involvement and understanding.