

Dan van Holst Pellekaan MP

Member for Stuart

Thursday 11 April 2013

Government refuses to fulfill commitment to scrap River Murray Levy

In April 2012, the State Liberals had a significant win in State Parliament when it forced the Government to abolish the charging of its "Save the River Murray Levy" to customers who do not get their water from the River Murray. Unfortunately though, while the Government agreed to the change over a year ago, it has so far refused to make good on the promise.

In response to questioning from Member for Stuart Dan van Holst Pellekaan, the Government is still using the unacceptable excuse that it is *"investigating the administrative changes necessary to facilitate this change."*

"This transparent avoidance and delay are inexcusable," said Mr van Holst Pellekaan.

"Labor's administrative changes could be commenced immediately by just not charging the levy to customers in the towns of Orroroo, Carrieton, Melrose, Booleroo, Wilmington, Wirrabara, Hawker, Quorn and dozens of others around the State where the Government already knows that they do not draw water from the Murray.

"The Government says it cannot implement the change until every last customer is identified - the change should be implemented immediately for the 95 per cent of customers that are already known and then determine the rest as quickly as possible."

In further response to Mr van Holst Pellekaan's questions, the Government has said that "SA Water is also developing a communications strategy to ensure that all effected customers are notified once the changes take effect."

"That's a pathetic excuse – notify them next quarter by removing the charge from their water bill," said Mr van Holst Pellekaan.

In 2003/04 when the situation was reversed and the Labor Government introduced the measure to collect the levy, in the same one-year period they had already collected \$12.7 million.

"If the Government was serious about reducing cost of living for South Australian families it would have abolished the levy as quickly as it introduced it," said Mr van Holst Pellekaan.