

Monday, 19 March 2012

### **A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO PICTURESQUE PIKE FLOODPLAIN**

The State Government has renewed its commitment to work with the local community on the on-going rehabilitation of the important 6700 hectare Pike Floodplain in the Riverland.

Minister for Water and the River Murray Paul Caica today signed an MOU with the Pike River Land Management Group, the Renmark to the Border Local Action Planning Association and the South Australian Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resources Board.

Mr Caica who is visiting the Riverland for another round of targeted consultation meetings on the Murray Darling Basin Plan, said the progressive achievements since 2007 to sustain the ecological, social and economic values of the Pike Floodplain underlined the merit of the agreement.

“Since 2007 when the Pike Implementation Program MOU was originally signed we have worked together to improve the ecological condition of the floodplain, sustain the Pike irrigation community and progress the Salt Interception Scheme,” he said.

“Approximately \$10 million has also been secured through South Australia’s *Murray Futures* Riverine Recovery Project which is funded by the Federal Government’s *Water for the Future* program, for infrastructure works at the Pike Floodplain to improve fish passage and regulate water flows.

“These projects to regenerate the Pike Floodplain are encouraging. For too long the riverine environment along the Murray River in South Australia has been degraded by over-allocation and extraction of water, and reduced flows during drought.

“This ongoing work is a reminder of how critically important it is to get the Murray Darling Basin Plan right.”

Pike River Land Management Group chairperson Bruce Hewett welcomed the renewal of the MOU.

“Since regulation of the river, natural flow regimes ceased. This has reduced the frequency and duration of flood events, obstructed fish passage and increased saline groundwater levels,” he said.

“The Pike Implementation Program provides engineering interventions and adaptive water management solutions to deliver environmental flows that ensure the floodplain environment is healthy and resilient,” he said.

“The partnership with the State Government is delivering results for the floodplain environment, the river channel and the Pike irrigation community. We look forward to continuing the good work that is underway to nurture this ecologically significant floodplain.”