

# RIVER, LAKES & COORONG

## ACTION GROUP Inc.

*Keep our waters alive!*



22 February 2009

### **The River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group Wants to See More Science**

Minister Karlene Maywald and Alexandrina Council Mayor Kym McHugh in their press releases of 19 February state that barriers are required to “prevent further acid production in the Goolwa Channel area and mitigate the impacts of acid that has already been generated”. Both consider that this action is justified by scientific evidence.

The “evidence” is CSIRO Land and Water Science Report CLW 01/09, a preliminary report on the impacts of acid sulfate soils in the Goolwa Channel, Currency Creek and Finniss River areas. See <http://www.dwlbc.sa.gov.au/murray/drought/index.html#GoolwaChannelFinnissRiverandCurrencyCreek>.

The report stresses that the work is incomplete and that its conclusions are tentative. It describes the results of sampling along the Finniss River and Currency Creek arms of Lake Alexandrina, but does not comment on processes whereby the lake water might become acidic (the “lateral transport of acids and solutes”). It recommends more monitoring.

River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group Inc member and Finniss resident, Professor Diane Bell asks, “How can we be fully confident of the science?” “Where is the evidence that the acidic soils are actually going to affect the water?”

“As a social scientist, I would be looking for a detailed study, where the sampling sites would be selected on a random basis, to eliminate possible bias. In the CSIRO report there is no mention of statistical methods, or replication, or variability within and between sites. It concerns me that on the basis of observations at selected sites, large areas have been designated as ASS.”

John Yelland, RLCAG Secretary and Pt Sturt resident says, “We know that many of the “ecological refuges” identified in January are now dry, including Dunn’s Lagoon near Clayton. We also know that there are ‘refuges’, sustained by fresh ground water, that are threatened by saline water. The lake is now so low that pumping to fill the Goolwa channel will be impractical by the time the barriers are built. It is getting more saline all the time.”

The advice from the RLCAG is treat the “hot spots”, monitor the soil and water, stop the sand drift with targeted planting, accelerate the bioremediation program and use the \$26million set aside for engineering inventions to get more fresh water down the River. See the Low Intervention Strategy of the River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group Inc. [www.stopheweir.com](http://www.stopheweir.com)

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