
Monday, 19 February 2007

RANN WELCOMES RUDD'S COMMITMENT TO DESALINATION PLANT

Premier Mike Rann today welcomed a firm commitment from Federal Labor Leader Kevin Rudd today to a \$160 million contribution to the proposed desalination plant in the Upper Spencer Gulf, should Labor win this year's Federal election.

"This is a positive commitment to a commonsense project that is in the national interest," Mr Rann said.

"The planned desalination plant, to be built by BHP Billiton to service the needs of a proposed massive expansion of the Olympic Dam mine, can be expanded to supply fresh water to the Upper Spencer Gulf towns and the Eyre Peninsula.

"The plan is to relieve an estimated 30 million litres of water a day currently drawn and piped from the River Murray to these areas of South Australia, and replacing it with desalinated water.

"The State Government has already committed a share of \$160 million to the proposed plant and an equal commitment from the Federal Government means we can supply 22 gigalitres of fresh water – or one third of the plant's capacity - to the people of that region.

"Securing an agreement from the Federal Government is critical to whether or not we can create the extra capacity needed to supply desalinated water the region.

"That is why Kevin Rudd's commitment to the desalination plant today is significant.

"We hope that Prime Minister John Howard now matches that commitment in a bi-partisan way," Mr Rann said.