

Tuesday, February 3, 2009

SA WATER BEGINS SITE ACCESS WORKS NEAR WELLINGTON

SA Water will today begin road works into the proposed temporary weir site near Wellington as part of pre-construction works.

Minister for Water Security Karlene Maywald says commencement of site access works does not mean a final decision on the weir has been made.

“I stress again that this is not a decision to build the weir but is part of the preparations required in case the drought continues and the quality or quantity of supplies for drinking water below Lock 1 deteriorates,” she said.

“Undertaking pre-construction works will reduce the construction time for the temporary weir by up to three months. This mean any decision to be made on the weir is delayed as long as possible.

“Commencement of construction of a temporary weir will only occur if triggers outlined in the Real Time Management Strategy to Avoid Acidification in the Lower Lakes are reached. At this stage, the triggers are unlikely to be reached before February 2010. Given a construction timeframe of nine months, work on the weir itself may need to being in April/May this year.

“This will change if inflows into the system are greater than minimums modelled and/or losses such as evaporation are less than modelled under the worst-case scenario.

“The Murray-Darling Basin Authority and the South Australian Government are continuing to monitor the situation very closely.

“The Government does not want to build a temporary weir. We are undertaking the planning for the worst-case scenario in the hope that it will never eventuate.

“These preliminary road access works were noted by Parliament’s Public Works Committee in December 2008.”

Road access works will be undertaken in two stages. The first stage will begin this week and involve upgrade works to Nalpa Station Road and the upgrade of a private road through the northern portion of Nalpa Station. All approvals for this work have been obtained and the Rural City of Murray Bridge has been contracted by SA Water to undertake the work.

The second stage of the preliminary works, which involves the construction of a causeway to Pomanda Island and the upgrade of an existing track on the eastern abutment, will not begin this week. Agreements and approvals for these second stage works are still being finalised and works will not proceed until all necessary approvals are in place.

SA Water is likely to complete all preliminary road access works in May 2009, subject to approvals.