

Friday, 15 August 2008

ILLEGAL WATER DIVERSIONS ARE ENVIRONMENTAL TERRORISM

South Australian Premier Mike Rann has called for the harshest penalties for anyone caught illegally diverting water from the Murray-Darling River system.

“I’m very concerned about allegations being raised in the national media about diversions of Murray-Darling water in other states,” Mr Rann said.

“While I’m not going to comment about those specific allegations, it’s my view that anyone who is illegally involved in diverting water in the Murray-Darling system during this crisis is engaging in an act of terrorism against the people of Australia.

“It should be a criminal offence, and anyone siphoning water off illegally in my view should be locked up, rather than the fines that I’m told are currently in place.

“I will ask for this matter to be raised at the next meeting of Murray-Darling Basin Commission and the next Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council meeting, including making large scale water theft an indictable offence.

“We are dealing with a water crisis in Australia, with one-in-a-thousand year record low inflows into the nation’s life-blood.

“During a national crisis like this, we should all be in this together. That’s how we manage our way through things.

“Anyone who’s doing this sort of thing is unbelievably treacherous to the national interest and it’s an act of terrorism against the Australian people.

“Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is to be applauded for investing billions of dollars in buying back licenses and investing in infrastructure to reduce water wastage.

“But that work can be undone if people are illegally taking water at such a crucial time.

“The independent and verified water audit that the Prime Minister announced yesterday will help identify all the public and private water storages in the system, and hopefully will help identify the water thieves.”