

## Media Release

### Save Our Gulf Coalition

3.7.08

Attention News Editor.

#### **NO DESALINATION PLANT AT PORT STANVAC – community campaign to be launched on Sunday.**

A new community group - **Save our Gulf Coalition** – has been formed to stop the Desalination plant from being constructed at Port Stanvac. They will launch their campaign on Brighton Beach this Sunday at 10.00am, and encourage others to join them.

Peter Laffan, Chairman of **Save our Gulf Coalition** said,

“The massive discharge of the equivalent nearly 2 million tonnes per year of salt back into the Gulf has the potential to be an environmental disaster.”

He continued

“There is significant concern among scientists that the brine solution will impact on sea life especially eggs and the young of certain species, including squid, that breed in surrounding waters. The massive intake of water containing algae and other organisms also reduces the available food supply for marine organisms in the Gulf.”

“The unique characteristics of St Vincent’s Gulf mean that water does not move or circulate easily. Even the Government’s own reports, such as the Adelaide Coastal Waters Study, have identified that the discharged brine is likely to move northward towards Adelaide’s other beaches and be trapped in a narrow coastal band.”

“This has the potential to devastate the already decimated seagrasses that are so important as fish nurseries and for retaining sand for Adelaide’s beaches.”

“Half the seagrasses in this area have been lost since 1970 with the resulting loss of sea life and erosion of beaches.”

“As well as irretrievably damaging the Gulf, we are worried about the cost of the plant – and wonder how much money will be left over for storm water harvesting and greater water efficiency measures. This can generate more water (50-160 GL) than the desalination plant, but is not being considered as a major alternative. The Government hasn’t explained why”

“The worry is that once over a billion dollars has been spent, the Government will not be able to do anything else and we will be stuck with this decision.

‘The history of governments getting it right in this area is not good. The Coorong and Lower Lakes of the Murray are probably environmentally lost forever, and the Murray is not far behind.’

‘We risk all this being repeated on Adelaide’s doorstep.’

‘There have been local alternatives proposed, such as stormwater recovery, with excellent examples such as Salisbury Council but no comprehensive comparison has been costed. Instead the Government has adopted the quick fix of an energy hungry Desalination plant.’

‘What is of most concern is there is no Plan B if the Desalination plant gets a poor environmental report. We are concerned that the Government will go ahead regardless of the environmental science.’

‘Once the ecology of the Gulf is damaged it will take generations to recover, if ever. This is our one chance to preserve this critical part of our environment for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.’

‘We also want to know the impact of desalination on the cost of Adelaide’s water and electricity – because of the huge amount needed to operate the plant.’

Save our Gulf Coalition will be campaigning for a **SUSTAINABLE COMPREHENSIVE WATER STRATEGY** that protects the environment and uses the minimum of energy. We are opposing a massive, energy hungry, environmentally threatening Desalination plant whose costs will rise as energy costs rise.

All South Australians are invited to protest against this threat to our way of life and our beaches.

## **Contacts**