

**MEDIA RELEASE – SAVE OUR GULF COALITION
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 22nd 2008.**

RECKLESS GOVERNMENT RUSH INTO DESALINATION SAYS ENVIRONMENT GROUP

Community environment group, SAVE OUR GULF COALITION today condemned the Government's decision to rush the construction of a desalination plant at Port Stanvac.

Today the Government announced that it is calling tenders for construction to start in 2010 instead of 2011. Peter Laffan, Chairperson of the Coalition asked:

“Does this mean that the Government will go ahead regardless of the results of the environmental research it has commissioned? Are Mr Rann, Mr Foley and Water Minister Karlene Maywald determined to ignore the large amount of solid information that indicates that there are other sources for Adelaide's water? And are they panicking now that they know there is large-scale community concern about the Government's rush to desalination?”

SAVE OUR GULF COALITION will be giving the community a chance to hear the science at a PUBLIC FORUM on Wednesday Sept 24th, at Brighton Secondary School (Spence Hall) at 7.15pm.

The Forum will hear about the risks to the Gulf, and about the real, practical options for a sustainable water supply, and give the audience a chance to ask questions and air their concerns.

“The information will come from a panel of 7 distinguished scientists and water engineers, who are all convinced that desalination is not the sensible way to go” said Peter Laffan “The Government seems to be ignoring this. Does they have information to justify their decision that it hasn't released to the community? Or is it making its decisions without any regard for the best science and planning?”

A desalination plant at Port Stanvac will be a huge threat to the marine life of Gulf St Vincent – particularly to areas of fish nurseries and the seagrass beds that prevent erosion of our metropolitan beaches. If we source our water instead from the stormwater that runs to waste into the Gulf, we will clean up the Gulf, have cheaper water, and gain enough to reduce our demands on the River Murray.

This is a win-win situation and we don't understand why the Government refuses to consider it – especially when Salisbury Council is successfully using stormwater harvesting so successfully.

We are very concerned that the Government is rushing us down a path that will cost South Australians a huge amount of money, produce very expensive water and risk turning our Gulf into a Dead Sea. It's not too late to change tack.”

Save Our Gulf Coalition is a community environment action group. It is not aligned with any political party.

CONTACTS:

PUBLIC FORUM - DESALINATION – SOLUTION OR DISASTER
WEDNESDAY SEPT 24TH - 7.15
BRIGHTON SECONDARY SCHOOL – SPENCE HALL.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Dr Ian Dyson, a consultant geologist with particular expertise in river and marine environments and the impact of effluent and pollutants.

Mr Colin Pitman, Director, City Projects, the City of Salisbury, expert on the City of Salisbury water harvesting project.

Dr Paul Dalby, Director, In Fusion Consulting; Board member, Water Industry Alliance; Coordinator of the Water Research Cluster, University of Adelaide

Dr Kirsten Benkendorff, Senior Lecturer, School of Biological Sciences, Flinders University, coordinator of teaching and research in animal diversity and disease. In 2000 she was the Young Australian of the Year for Science and Technology.

Mr Richard Clark, consultant hydrologist and waster systems planner. He has been involved in water systems planning for Mawson Lakes, Adelaide Airport Morphettville Race Course and others. Richard Clark is the co-author of the recently released report “Sustainable Focus – Report on Sustainable Water Options for Adelaide”

Assoc Professor David Chittleborough, University of Adelaide, an international research leader in global ecology and conservation biology. He is Co-director of the Water Research Centre, University of Adelaide.

Professor Barry Brook holds the Sir Hubert Wilkins Chair of Climate Change, University of Adelaide and is Director of the Research Institute for Climate Change and Sustainability. His area of expertise includes climate change and computer modelling of climate change risks, using statistical analysis of long term data.