



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Move All Salt To Sea For A Healthy, Working River**

There are three pillars indispensable to a healthy, working Murray Darling Basin – move all salt to sea, keep open the Murray Mouth and Commonwealth decision-making in the national interest.

The Mayor of Alexandrina Council that includes the Murray Mouth, Kym McHugh, said the system must move 2 million tonnes of salt out to the sea each year or else the Basin will “choke”.

“That’s 250 semi-trailers of salt a day,” Mayor McHugh said.

“Anything less will choke the communities, livelihoods and biodiversity that rely on a healthy, working river.

“To stop this from happening we must all support ‘Three Pillars’ for Basin management.

“Pillar 1: there is just one way out – the Murray Mouth – and it needs to be open for nine out of every 10 years.

“Pillar 2: all salt – right back to Queensland – must be moved out to sea. If it isn’t, the system will choke from the Murray Mouth up with rising salinity and degraded land.

“Pillar 3: the Federal Government must set and ensure compliance with targets to achieve a healthy, working river.

“The Three Pillars will enable equity and an assured future for all who rely on the Basin’s healthy, working waterways.”

Mr McHugh said the Three Pillars must be the priorities for the Murray-Darling Basin Authority as it prepares its draft basin plan, expected to be released within days.

Alexandrina Council has commissioned experts to help prepare its submission to the Authority during the 16-week consultation period.

The centre-piece of the submission will be a simple and clear-cut method of measuring the health of the system with an average salinity cap for the water at the end of the river system. The cap would ensure the water was “fit for use”, as required by law.

“To achieve this we must move all the salt out to the sea through an open Murray Mouth,” Mayor McHugh said.

“Alexandrina Council commits to work for the good of all that rely on a healthy, working river. We must put aside State boundaries and small-town thinking. We have to think big and think collectively.

“In the Murray Darling Basin of the future, what is good for one community, individual or environment must be good for us all.”

Mayor McHugh said that, despite all current salt interception measures, the Murray-Darling Basin accumulates 2 million tonnes of salt in its river system each year.

“There is only one way out for this enormous quantity of salt,” Mayor McHugh said.

“If we bottle it up, it will back-up through the system all the way to Victoria, NSW and Queensland. We have to move all this salt out to the sea.

“If the Murray Mouth is closed for any length of time we know we are all in trouble – the Murray Mouth is the canary in the coalmine for the entire Basin.”

The cornerstone of all this is for the Federal Government to provide whole-of-catchment management and leadership.

Mayor McHugh said his Council would work alongside all councils, interest groups and water users throughout the Basin.

“We look forward to doing what is in the best interests of everyone in the long-term,” Mayor McHugh said.