



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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Media Release

Friday 7 December 2007

Omodei's Fitzroy River dam plan sending Kimberley backwards

The WA public should remain unconvinced by WA Opposition Leader Paul Omodei's recent attempt to reposition the WA Liberals as a more environmentally-conscious party, whilst he still pursues his plan to dam the Fitzroy River, Environs Kimberley (EK) said today.

There are glaring contradictions between the sentiments expressed in Mr Omodei's 'Leading Change' speech last Sunday (2 December) and his ongoing promotion of damming the Fitzroy River system for irrigated agriculture (ABC Kimberley Morning Show with Vanessa Mills, 4 December 2007).

In his 'Leading Change' speech (2 December 2007) Mr Omodei said:

"The perception that we are the 'knock it down at any cost' party ends today....All you have to do is take a look around to realise the massive impact that humanity has had on this planet. We've dug it up, chopped it down, *dammed it*, burned it, bombed it and built all over it. *And that's just what I've done!* But I tell you times have changed. Now we all have to consider the impact of our actions on the environment".

EK Freshwater campaigner, Dr Gary Scott, said: "The construction of a dam on the Fitzroy River would dramatically alter its essentially free-flowing nature and threaten the existence of endangered species like the Freshwater sawfish. It would also cause enormous damage to the significant Indigenous cultural values that are associated with waterholes and other important sites along the river.

"A dam on any of the Fitzroy River's tributaries such as the Margaret River would be similarly problematic and would be opposed by environment groups and the vast majority of Kimberley residents, as have all previous plans to dam this river system.

"The WA Liberals are making an enormous mistake by continuing to expound this outdated and discredited idea. They can not seriously attempt to reposition the party as environmentally-conscious on the one hand, whilst promoting a plan that will cause untold damage to the party's green credentials on the other.

"The Fitzroy River has deservedly gained iconic status and should receive long-term legal protection. I strongly urge the WA Liberals to drop its policy to dam the Fitzroy River or any of its tributaries and adopt a bipartisan approach towards the development of an environmental and cultural protection plan for the catchment", concluded Dr Scott.

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