



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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ATTENTION: News Editors, Political, Resource and Environment Reporters

Oh my dear! Fitzroy River dam proposal blind to environmental costs and community aspirations

WA Opposition Leader Paul Omodei's 'visionary' proposal to dam the Fitzroy River for large-scale irrigated agriculture and build a Kimberley to Perth pipeline to drought-proof the state would come at an enormous cost two conservation groups said today.

Days after visiting the failed Camballin Irrigation Area along the Fitzroy River, Environs Kimberley's Freshwater Campaigner Dr Gary Scott said that Omodei's proposal would be a waste of taxpayer money given the plan has already been dismissed as too costly in a recent study. "Mr Omodei is saying he will spend \$10 million to investigate the plan, yet only last year a \$5 million independent review found it would be both environmentally damaging and uneconomic to extract large amounts of water from the Fitzroy when compared to other options for supplying water to Perth".

Dr Scott met with Traditional Owners and an Indigenous ranger group who live along the Fitzroy River the day after the Liberal leader's announcement and they expressed great concern that this proposal was once again being rehashed. "Instead of picking over the carcass of the discredited Kimberley canal idea I would encourage Mr Omodei to talk to people living along the Fitzroy River to find out their aspirations for development in the region". Many of these aspirations are strongly expressed in the *Kimberley Appropriate Economies Roundtable Report* which came out of a landmark meeting held in Fitzroy Crossing in October 2005 between Indigenous, conservation groups, pastoral, research, and government representatives.

"Mr Omodei's announcement has been made without thought to local consultation and existing community planning processes. It looks like the long drought in the Liberal's vision for water and environmental policy has yet to break".

Dr Scott will attend the *Kimberley Economic Forum* to be held in Broome tomorrow. The forum will feature an address by federal Liberal Senator Bill Heffernan, Chair of the federal government taskforce to investigate options for large-scale agricultural development and water extraction in northern Australia.

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