

MEDIA ALERT

Cry Me A River – Pipeline Policy A Real Drag

The folly of the State Government's North-South pipeline water policy will be exposed by author, adventurer and lifelong water-engineer Steve Posselt, as he paddles and drags a kayak from Echuca to Melbourne, beginning August 1.

The already stressed nature of the Goulburn River system means Posselt will be forced to trek over hills and dried out parts of the River before he reaches Melbourne on August 16.

The Government has begun building the contentious North-South pipeline, which will drain 75 billion litres of water each year from the Goulburn River near Yea following its completion, piping it over the Great Dividing Range and into Melbourne.

Posselt aims to highlight the plight of already struggling rural communities that will be severely affected by the pipeline.

"Please have a heart Melbourne," Posselt said before embarking on the trip. "Don't let the Government steal this precious water. The river needs it. We have alternatives - the river does not".

Dedicated to water conservation, Posselt has previously paddled and dragged his kayak from Brisbane to Adelaide – along the entire Darling and Lower Murray Rivers, documented in his book *Cry Me A River*.

Posselt feels similarly passionate against the Brumby Government's North-South pipeline.

"Almost as much rain falls on Melbourne as Melbourne uses and what are we doing about that? When there is not enough water to go round, no amount of large-scale engineering will get us out of trouble. In fact, it usually makes things worse," Posselt said.

Beginning in Echuca on August 1, local riverboats will provide a send-off for Posselt, tooting horns and waving flags as he sets off on his arduous journey. He will then stop at Shepparton, Murchison, Nagambie, Seymour and the site of the Melbourne Water Pump Facility at Killingworth near Yea.

He has the support of other water saving groups including Watermark Australia, an initiative of the Victorian Women's Trust, which published the community-based publication 'Our Water Mark - Australians making a difference in water reform'.

"There are far better and more sensible government solutions," author of 'Our Water Mark' Mary Crooks said of the North-South pipeline.

Crooks nominated a number of water saving alternatives the Government had failed to properly explore, instead opting for a quick-fix unsustainable pipeline.

"All of Melbourne - homes, businesses and industry has to become truly water-efficient, with much more storm-water being captured and recycled, as well as residences being fitted with water saving devices," Crooks explained.

Posselt will paddle into Melbourne via the Yarra River on August 16, finishing at Federation Square, where people from the city who share his concerns will join him to make a plea for common sense water decisions.

For further information contact Steve Posselt on 0438 138 982. Steve is happy to talk with media along his journey. Itinerary available soon.

Mary Crooks, Project Director of Watermark Australia at the Victorian Women's Trust is also available on (03) 9642 0422. Mary can also be contacted via 0418 388 606.

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