



## DAMIAN DRUM MP

Federal Member for Nicholls

4 September 2019

To whom it may concern:

**RE: Fix the Basin Plan Communities Crisis Rally at Tocumwal on September 5.**

I am sorry that I am unable to be present at the rally today.

There is no doubt that too much water has already been taken out of productive agriculture to satisfy the environmental needs that make up the Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBP). This is my opinion, and I'm working as hard as I can to convince others that this is more than an opinion. To convince them that it is a fact.

We know that to change the MDBP, four state governments, as well as ACT and the Federal Government, all need to agree to any changes. Obviously with South Australia's situation, passing changes to the plan would be extremely difficult, edging towards impossible.

In the face of this, I am looking into every possible opportunity that I can find to get more water available for productive agriculture. This means questioning every drop of water that is used by the environment, calling out the science associated with the lower lakes, holding the local Catchment Management Authorities accountable for their environmental flows and the respective outcomes, and trying as hard as I can to change the attitudes of those in the cities. Unfortunately, until we change the attitudes (the hearts and minds) of those in the cities, we are going to be unable to change the quantities of water that are being taken away from agriculture and delivered to the environment.

We are also currently looking at various aspects of the *Water Act 2007*, to explore whether or not the MDBP is in contravention of the objectives within this act. We have also asked that the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder (CEHW) make water available to productive agriculture within dry seasons, which was in the spirit of the design of the plan when it was first mooted by John Howard in 2007. We are examining conveyancing losses, and our expectation is that the CEHW accept this loss on its accounting ledger in critical dry seasons

We have effectively put a stop on the 450GL up-water coming from the consumptive pool, by putting in place the social and economic neutrality test, but I also understand this doesn't stop private investors from taking water out of the most secure regions in the basin.

I have always been available for anybody that wants to talk about water, and I will continue to be available into the future.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damian Drum', written in a cursive style.

**The Hon. Damian Drum MP**  
Federal Member for Nicholls