

Speak Up Campaign Inc.

Inc 1800187

speakup4water@gmail.com



Hon Tanya Pilbersk
Minister for Water
House of Representatives
Parliament House,
Canberra ACT 2600
tanya.plibersek.mp@aph.gov.au

February 1, 2023

Dear Minister Pilbersek,

Speak Up Campaign membership consists of people in rural communities and businesses in southern NSW and northern Victoria, whose impacts throughout Basin Plan implementation have been severely under-represented.

While farmers are financially compensated when they participate in water buybacks, the businesses that service those farmers are not compensated for lost income as a result of declining production on farm and subsequently declining job opportunities and population, which has been identified in MDBA socio-economic data.

We are writing to you as MinCo approaches seeking assurance about your commitment to the Neutrality Test which was put in place to protect rural communities. Can you please outline how you will ensure recovery of an additional 450GL does not result in any adverse social or economic impacts on the rural businesses we have mentioned above.

We would appreciate your feedback on your definition of negative social and economic impacts, and how stringently you will oversee they are adhered to.

Lastly, we urge you to take every action possible to make changes to legislation to ensure the funding for the 450GL of up-water is spent on improving water quality and not volumes, because recovering more water is still going to leave these following issues to deal with –

- Carp proliferation
- Deliverability issues
- River bank erosion
- Loss of habitat to native fauna and flora
- A Murray Mouth which will still need dredging

We need your support to protect our communities, as well as the food and fibre production in our region, on which our nation and the world relies. We look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shelley Scoullar".

Shelley Scoullar (Chair – Speak up Campaign)