

**August 17, 2018**

## **CRISIS RALLY**

A crisis rally is being organised in response to the local impact of drought. It will fight for water to be made available so crops in the region can be finished, and also used to help grow desperately needed fodder for drought-stricken stock elsewhere in NSW and Queensland.

Farmers, business leaders and community members are being urged to attend the rally to help send a clear message to politicians.

It will be held next Monday, August 27 in the Deniliquin RSL Club Auditorium, from 10am.

The rally is being coordinated by the Speak Up Campaign, with help from various other individuals and organisations.

Chair Shelley Scoullar said we need immediate and united action to overcome the crisis.

“This rally is about finding solutions – it will not be an exercise in playing the ‘blame game’, but rather an opportunity to work out what proactive steps we can take together as a community in these difficult times.”

Mrs Scoullar said she did not want to pre-empt decisions from the rally, but there have been suggestions that it should appoint a delegation to take local concerns to Federal Water Minister David Littleproud and NSW Water Minister Niall Blair.

“Whatever the outcome, we need a strong, united voice from our community to help ensure our concerns are heard,” Mrs Scoullar said.

She said the drought situation highlights the need to re-assess the allocation of water resources.

“We can either let things continue on the way they are going, which is generally considered to be unsatisfactory, or we can stand up and make our voices heard.

“In this region we have one of the best gravity-fed irrigation systems in the world which has recently had the benefit of significant upgrades. It should be used effectively in times of drought to help our entire nation, not virtually put in mothballs.”

**Speak Up Campaign Inc.**

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## Media Release

For immediate release



Mrs Scoullar said the present water sharing arrangements are seen to be more unsuitable to what is required at the moment when the full situation is taken into account, as follows:

- Dartmouth Dam at approximately 90% capacity and Hume Dam approaching 50% ie. there is plenty of water in storage.
- The SA Lower Lakes are at minor flood level, filled largely with flows from the Upper Murray dams. The barrage gates have been opened to let water pour out to sea.
- There is water from various accounts that could be made available to finish crops and grow fodder at a time when supplies are getting desperately low.

“This is not about taking water from environmental pools and using it for production. It is about common-sense decision making to effectively use our precious water, and this is never more evident than during times of drought. “Water is not a ‘use only once’ commodity. Perhaps there are ways to get multiple use so that a parcel of water can be used for both the environment and growing food and fodder supplies. These are options that need consideration.

“Somehow, we must deliver a message on behalf of our community that the present situation is not tolerable. But we need everyone’s help to ensure it is loud, strong and clear.

“So I urge everyone with an interest in our immediate farming future, as well as the longer term future, to attend our rally,” Mrs Scoullar said.

Speakers from a range of community and industry organisations will be invited to address the rally, as will local political representatives. A final program will be determined in coming days.

**For further information or interviews:** Shelley Scoullar phone 0414 960 785 or email [sjscoullar@gmail.com](mailto:sjscoullar@gmail.com)

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