

**The Hon. Scott Morrison - PM**

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House of Representatives  
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Prime Minister,

This year I met with you the morning after Budget day, I did not come to you with a hidden agenda, and still do not. I came to you as average person, who somehow found herself spokesperson for the grassroots.

On behalf of farmers, small business owners, those employed directly and indirectly by irrigated agriculture and community members, myself and my colleagues spoke openly and honestly about the dire situation unfolding. We told you that our staple food industries and communities were in free fall.

Since then many have been forced to make heart breaking decisions, which should never have been forced upon them. We are not talking about average operators, we are talking about good operators who understand their environment, their land, their flock, their stock, their soil and water management. Then we have those who have been unable to cope and have paid the ultimate sacrifice; we held a minute's silence to remember these people at our community rally last week.

Prime Minister, there is far too much at stake for our environment, our food security, our economy, our citizens for you to not intervene. Yes, there are skeletons in cupboards and it may become uncomfortable for some, however for you to be the leader which you lead us all to believe you were before the election you need to get your hands dirty in the Murray Darling Basin Plan and the Nation's terrible water policy. Make no mistake, the problems our region is facing ARE NOT DUE TO DROUGHT, despite what your Water Minister continues to want us to believe. They are due to poor water management and unconscionable water wastage.

I have no doubt that the Basin Plan is not what arguably the country's greatest Prime Minister John Howard envisaged when he introduced the Water Act in 2007 (although I do not have the same faith in the then Water Minister Malcolm Turnbull's agenda).

You have had us all believe that you are a leader of the common people, that you are a leader who will ensure that those who work hard will be rewarded. You have lead us believe that those who dream and strive will be treated fairly. What is happening in southern NSW and northern Victoria is un-Australian, and now it is unfolding on your watch.

The current Basin Plan will not solve the problems of the Darling or the Coorong and Murray Mouth, but the current Basin Plan will destroy many of the nation's staple food producers, rural communities, the Murray river and the ecosystems connected to it.

People are restless and angry; I beg you to intervene and fix this mess before the unrest escalates. Telling us it is your Water Minister's responsibility will not solve anything. For reasons we cannot understand he has abandoned the Southern Basin communities of central and northern Victoria, and southern NSW.

Please intervene and help us.

Shelley Scoullar