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## Organisers prepared for a second Convoy to Canberra

Another Convoy to Canberra protest rally could be organised in coming months.

Organisers of the December rally say they will not accept a 'softly softly' approach from new Water Resources Minister Keith Pitt, and if that's what happens the rally will take place.

And they are concerned at the potential consequences, with some farmers saying there needs to be civil disobedience before the Federal Government will take the necessary steps to address their issues.

"We are extremely concerned about Keith Pitt's appointment as new Water Minister," rally co-organiser Jan Beer said, "although we are hoping he proves us wrong.

"It appeared some progress was being made, at long last, with David Littleproud (previous Water Minister). So is this a ploy to get Mr Littleproud out of the firing line and further stall any efforts to fix the Basin Plan?

"It certainly looks that way."

Mrs Beer said the new appointment appeared a deliberate ploy to slow down progress while another Minister was educated about the intricate water issues in the Southern connected system.

She added the Member for Nicholls Damian Drum would have been the ideal person as new Water Minister, because he already has an understanding of what needs to be done. However, as usual, our political leaders will not let common-sense and sound decision making get in the way of their political games.

Mrs Beer said the Water Minister's portfolio had been described as "a poisoned chalice" in the National Party but that was only because previous Ministers had found it difficult to adequately consult and did not have the courage to make tough political decisions.

"That does not have to be the case. There are achievable solutions, if only Government Ministers would work with us," she said.

“It took us a long time to connect with David Littleproud, but I think he eventually realised that we had some genuine complaints and they would not go away without changes to water management.

“We will not accept another lengthy period trying to get our messages across; we will be rallying again if Mr Pitt does not immediately come down to our region, learn about the unnecessary economic and environmental damage, and take steps to fix it.

“The National Party leadership may be trying to wear us down as we try to educate yet another politician with no background in water and no understanding of the Southern Basin, but it will not work. We refuse to be worn down.”

Mrs Beer said The Nationals are facing a crisis in many parts of regional Australia because of their refusal to adequately stand up for their constituents.

“Michael McCormack (Nationals leader and Deputy Prime Minister) has been on the back foot when it comes to tackling failures in the Basin Plan.

“The Liberals do not want to address the problems because it’s too politically sensitive. We have solutions, but some of these may upset their political mates in South Australia and the city progressives.

“So their approach has been to try and string us along, probably hoping it will all go away when the drought breaks.

“But the Basin Plan’s problems are deeper than drought, as inquiry after inquiry has shown. Governments have all the evidence that change is needed, but do nothing about it.

“If we have to bring Canberra to a standstill to demand action, that’s what we will be doing,” Mrs Beer said.

**For further information or interviews contact:** Jan Beer phone – 0407 144 777