

Speak Up Campaign Inc.

Inc 1800187

speakup4water@gmail.com



April 10, 2019

Dear Minister Littleproud (Nek) and Sussan,

We sincerely appreciate the extra time we had with you post the meeting with the Prime Minister last Wednesday. Additionally, we appreciate the swift actions you have put into place since.

In regards to the Basin wide socio-economic review we would like to make the following recommendations –

- Please include an assessment of the MDBA's operational management of the river system in the review, as this is having a detrimental impact on water availability.
- Also include an assessment of the volumes of water which can be delivered, and the socio-economic impacts of delivering above capacity, not just to irrigators but also riparian landholders
- Can we please have the opportunity to have input into the composition of the panel, which needs to be completely independent to the MDBA. It is extremely important that each region has representation that we can trust, with a panel member who understands each community and water policy

With respect to the parcel of water which we committed to identifying, we have found 340GL of deferred South Australian entitlements water within storage in the upper Murray dams. In the last 4 months South Australia have sold water back to upstream communities as they have water they cannot use, as well as having water deferred for the future.

While there are many mechanisms which could be explored to determine how this could work, some simple suggestions would be –

- Use drought funding to purchase the entitlements from SA and distribute the entitlements into the NSW Murray productive pool as an allocation
- Borrowing the entitlements which would need to be repaid after NSW Murray has an allocation of 30%

Our preference would be option one, that being to use drought funding. As always we want to work constructively with government, to find mechanisms to prevent the Southern Connected system (particularly the Murray Valley) from becoming unnecessary collateral damage of the drought, instead of using our infrastructure and some adaptive management (which we were promised) to be part of the solution. As per our policy document [Balancing the Basin Plan](#) we do not want to blow up the plan, but put necessary steps in place to get the right balance.

Please don't forget that Adelaide have a desal plant that has not operated at full capacity, drought funding could also be used to subsidise this cost freeing up water for upstream communities.

Your Sincerely,
Shelley Scoullar
Speak Up Campaign