

# Speak Up Campaign Inc.

Inc 1800187

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**The Hon. Lisa Neville, MLC**

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**The Hon. Niall Blair, MLC**

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**The Hon. David Littleproud MP**

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House of Representatives

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Dear Ministers Littleproud, Neville and Blair,

I am contacting you on behalf of the Speak Up Campaign Inc, which now has members across Northern Victoria, Goulburn Valley, Murray Valley and Murrumbidgee, including businesses, individuals, councils and business chambers. Speak Up aims to educate communities about Basin Plan issues, last month we organised an Open Water Forum which was attended by 300 people.

Following that meeting you received a letter requesting a meeting with the Prime Minister, Water Ministers and Premiers. To date we have not received correspondence for a meeting to take place, therefore we seek the opportunity to make a presentation to MinCo.

Given what is at stake for communities in the Southern Basin, openness and accountability should be paramount. We are sure that you would agree options for MinCo and BOC representatives to have all relevant information through working with stakeholders prior to MinCo meetings enables geographically relevant information to be provided to Ministers/or BOC officials beforehand.

Allowing constructive discussions through exposure to proposed agenda items prior to MinCo can only be a positive step forward to finding positions that produce the best results for differing regions within the Basin.

As a voice for rural communities and all that they represent, we respectfully request changes to future MinCo meeting be made to increase transparency -

- Agenda for MinCo to be released in impacted stakeholders, including community representatives, two weeks prior to MinCo meeting
- Position of Ministers in relation to the agenda items be released prior to MinCo
- Increase frequency of MinCo meetings held in Basin Communities, with no more than one meeting a year in Canberra
- MinCo meetings include a minimum of a half day tour of local relevant sites
- An hour set aside for Ministers to answer questions from the public

As for the upcoming MinCo meeting we would appreciate a briefing on the agenda items and your position on those items. We ask that following the meeting a de-brief is provided on the issues raised and resolutions from the meeting and the impact they will have on our communities.

It is important that MinCo Ministers are across all of the types of projects being undertaken in return for water for the environment. For example the \$85 million worth of projects being undertaken in Canberra include work on the Tuggernong Lakes. The site is about 20 minutes away from the Hyatt in Canberra and a visit could be on MinCo Minister's agenda.

Regionally held MinCo meetings which included tours of local relevant sites would increase the knowledge and understanding of Ministers and Basin officials. These could include works proposed or new options that could be implemented in the Southern Basin as part of the Sustainable Diversion Adjustment Mechanism, thereby increasing localism in the process.

In summary, we want to work constructively with MinCo and BOC. We believe that this can be realistically achieved which will result in improved relationships and outcomes. We are seeking -

- Greater transparency of MinCo including public release of information and outcomes
- Increased dialogue between communities and Ministers to improve regional outcomes
- Greater engagement at Basin Community level

Yours Sincerely,



Shelley Scoullar  
On Behalf  
Speak Up Campaign Inc.

This letter has been compiled by the Speak Up Campaign Inc. and has the following organisations as signatories -

Edward River Council, Griffith Business Chamber, Upper Goulburn Catchment Association, Murray River Action Group, Murray Valley Private Diverters