



The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP

Minister for the Environment

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The Hon. Niall Blair, MLC

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The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP

Premier NSW

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August 16th, 2018

Dear Minister Blair, Minister Upton and Premier Berejiklian,

Between the Murrumbidgee and Murray Valleys there is currently 405, 000 ML of NSW "rules based environmental water" - 141, 000 ML in the NSW Murray storages and 264, 000 ML in the Murrumbidgee storages.

Within the Murray /Lower Darling and Murrumbidgee systems, this water is held by the OEH (NSW Office of Environment and Heritage) and is sitting as an available resource in our dams right now. Much of this available water is a 'voluntary contribution' to OEH and was acquired from water holders' entitlements well before the start of the Millennium Drought, the 2004 WSPs, the Water Act 2007 and the MDBP. From the Murray Valley 10% of General Security and 3% of High Security and from the Murrumbidgee 15% of General and 5% of High Security has been skimmed off entitlements and transferred to OEH for around two and a half decades. NSW landholders are still paying all associated fees and charges for that water even though they rarely have any timely access to it.

This 405,000ML of 'rules based' water does not include OEH's allocation attached to their licenced water entitlement of over 700,000ML. We understand that parcel is currently at around 65, 000 ML as additional available resource to OEH right now. Nor does this include any environmental water held by the Commonwealth or any other parcels of Government held environmental water.

We urgently call on the state government to voluntarily re allocate the 'voluntary contributions' back to landholders, which can then be immediately distributed through normal allocation rules. The 'rules based water' presently jamming up the system, which farmers still pay the fees and chargers for, would produce the equivalent 792, 000 tons of oaten hay in the Murrumbidgee or roughly 1,584,000 bales.



If some of this water went immediately to saving current crops, cereal hay and pasture hay would be available by late September. Many irrigators would also decide to produce summer fodder crops if they had timely access to water. It's not financially viable to buy in temporary water at current prices and the sowing window is closing rapidly!

There are many desperate and distressed people in NSW at the moment and this water needs to be made available urgently and immediately. Irrigators are, right now, making tough decisions about their cropping programs. None of those decisions are good for NSW's depleted fodder supplies or, indeed, for NSW inland communities.

We look forward to your early attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Buller".

Deb Buller
Murrumbidgee Valley Food and Fibre Assoc.

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelley Scoullar".

Shelley Scoullar
Speak Up Campaign. Inc

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