



Newsletter November 2026

Dear Members,

Welcome to the first Speak Up Newsletter for 2026.

The focus for all organisations involved in water advocacy for the first half of the year will be the 2026 Basin Plan Review. Through our membership to MRSG, we have been on the front foot and formally provided the key priorities our region expects to see in the Basin Plan Review Discussion Paper expected to be released early February - these can be found in the link at the end of this newsletter.

We received a better than expected response rate to the carp letter we distributed in October last year, although they are all politically correct! You can find the responses [Here](#).

As mentioned in the October Newsletter I will not be seeking re-election at the 2026 Speak Up AGM. Deputy Chair David Farley will be accepting a nomination for the role. Together, we have compiled this history outlining Speak Up's achievements (which you can find [here](#)) and David's vision for the future (which you can find on the next page).

You can register for the AGM using this [Link](#).

MRSG Monthly Reports

As you will be aware, Speak Up provide an active role as members of Murray Regional Strategy Group, here [Link to MRSG November and December reports](#)

Thank you all for your amazing support and your encouragement during this incredible journey. I am looking forward to seeing renewed energy driving Speak Up forward and hope you will all continue your support.

Take care and best wishes.

Shelley Scoullar

Speak Up – A voice for rural communities

Speak Up

Campaign

Annual General Meeting

Friday 13th February

12.30pm

Finley RS CLUB



Attend in person or online. Light lunch provided.
Please use the QR code to RSVP or email - speakup4water@gmail.com

SPEAK UP

A Voice for
Rural Communities



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Deputy Chair's Forward - 2026 and Beyond

As Speak Up 4 Water enters 2026, one reality can no longer be avoided: Australia is quietly re-engineering its food supply chain, and most Australians are barely aware it is happening.

For more than a decade, Speak Up has represented regional communities living with the direct consequences of the Murray–Darling Basin Plan. These communities do not need to be convinced of its impacts, they experience them in lost water security, weakened local economies and growing uncertainty about the future of food production. Their warnings have been consistent, evidence-based and largely ignored.

Australia, however, is now overwhelmingly urban. Close to 90 per cent of Australians live in cities and metropolitan suburbs. For many, the Basin Plan feels distant and technical, something that happens far from their daily lives. But its consequences do not stay in the Basin. They show up at the supermarket checkout, in rising food prices, in reduced resilience during droughts and floods, and in a growing dependence on imported food.

This is the disconnect Speak must confront.

The Murray–Darling Basin Plan is not just an environmental policy; it is an economic and food-security policy,

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whether acknowledged or not. By stripping water security from domestic food production, Australia is increasing its exposure to global supply shocks, price volatility and geopolitical risk. This vulnerability will only intensify as population growth accelerates and Net Zero costs are applied to imported food, pushing prices higher for Australian households.

At the same time, Australians are carrying the ongoing financial burden of the Basin Plan (billions of dollars in permanent costs), while forgoing investment in health, education and productive infrastructure. These trade-offs are rarely explained, rarely debated, and rarely put to the public whose lives they affect.

Speak Up's purpose in 2026 and beyond is clear: to take this reality beyond regional Australia and into the national conversation. To connect water policy to food security, cost of living, and national resilience. To make clear that this is not a regional issue, it is a whole-of-nation risk.

To do this, we must be strong, united and properly resourced. We must expand our membership, strengthen our governance, and invest in the communication required to reach urban Australia with clarity and credibility. Silence and incrementalism are no longer neutral positions, they carry real and lasting consequences.

The choices made now will define Australia's food security for decades.



Speak Up intends to ensure those choices are understood, challenged, and made in the national interest.

David Farley

Deputy Chair – Speak Up Campaign

Speak Up Campaign

Annual General Meeting and General Meeting

Agenda

1. Agenda for meeting
 - a. Minutes from the previous AGM
 - b. Chair Report
 - c. Financial Report
 - d. Spill of elected officers
 - e. Election of new office bearers
2. Open General Meeting
 - a. Future of Speak Up
 - b. 2026 Business Plan & Budget
 - c. Capital Requirements
 - d. Sources of Capital
 - e. Discussion
 - f. Resolutions (to be drafted)
 - g. Other General Business
 - h. Close of Meeting

Nominations for the officer bearer positions can be **downloaded** via this link ([Nomination Form](#)) and need to be returned to speakup4water@gmail.com by **February 6th 2026**

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