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How committed to farmers is the NSW Government?

The NSW Coalition Government will this week have a chance to show whether it is committed to the state's food producers during a petition debate. A petition organised by the community-based Speak Up Campaign will be debated in the NSW Parliament on Thursday, after it received 11,000 signatures – 1,000 more than the required 10,000 signatures to force a parliamentary debate.

The petition calls for the NSW Government to support a federal Royal Commission into the Murray-Darling Basin Plan, and establish a national water register.

Speak Up chair Shelley Scoullar said the petition debate was the culmination of efforts from any people across the state, and thanked Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party Member for Murray Helen Dalton for her support and tabling the petition.

“We are desperate for the NSW Government to take decisive action to stop the waste of water occurring under the Basin Plan, which is having a significant impact on rural communities and state prosperity.

“Unfortunately, to this point the Basin Plan has been more about playing politics than supporting our communities; the petition debate is a chance to put common-sense ahead of politics,” Mrs Scoullar said.

She added members of Speak Up would be in Sydney for the debate and to support Mrs Dalton.

“We established the petition because Mrs Dalton was the only regional political representative prepared to demand changes to the Basin Plan. It needs to be debated and we need political acceptance that changes are needed to overcome the unintended consequences from the plan, in particular the water wastage and environmental damage from excessive river flows.

Media Release

For immediate release

“The NSW Government has made some poor decisions and these are greatly impacting the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lower Darling systems. Helen can articulate this better than any other state politician.”

Mrs Scoullar said on the federal front there was frustration at the lack of action from the Coalition Government to fix failings in the Basin Plan.

“One Nation’s Malcolm Roberts is the only federal politician I would be comfortable handling this issue, but he is in the Senate and not the Lower House. Our Lower House federal members from this region, Sussan Ley and Damian Drum, have not been prepared to put their electorates before party politics and demand changes to the Basin Plan. This is why we elected to target state rather than federal parliament.”

She said Speak Up was looking forward to this week’s debate in the NSW Parliament and encouraged those who could not attend to watch it live at 4pm on Thursday on www.parliament.nsw.gov.au and clicking on the green ‘live’ button on the top left hand side. They can also post on social media with the hashtags #daltondebate, #speakup and #nevergiveup.

“This is not just about farmers, it is about our rural communities, job losses and environmental destruction as a result of flawed science that politicians, looking after their own futures, are not prepared to acknowledge and fix.

“Finally, I would like to thank everyone who helped with the petition for playing their role in highlighting the inequities and discontent that we are feeling,” Mrs Scoullar said.

For further information or interviews: Shelley Scoullar phone 0414 960 785