



David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

Media statement

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Qld Maranoa MP to host Independent SA senator in bold move to save Balonne communities from Murray-Darling Basin Plan watershed

IN A bold move in the fight to secure a better Murray-Darling Basin deal and save the Balonne region, Maranoa MP David Littleproud has persuaded Independent Senator Nick Xenophon to jump state boundaries and tour affected communities.

“Nick’s team represents three important votes in the Senate. That’s why I invited him to the Balonne so when he casts his Murray-Darling Basin vote, he’ll vividly remember the names and faces of those who live in Dirranbandi and St George,” Mr Littleproud said.

The Murray-Darling Basin stretches across four states and the ACT with the two parliamentarians – Mr Littleproud in Queensland’s corner and Senator Xenophon for South Australia – representing not only opposite ends of the vast water network but also diverge on the political spectrum.

“I’ll leave no stone unturned to get a better deal for my communities and I thank Nick for accepting my invitation to visit Dirranbandi and St George in early May,” he said.

“Aggressive water buys backs have hit hard Dirranbandi and St George in my electorate, shattering business confidence, in a region reliant on irrigation, resulting in a damaging population drift with communities on the brink of collapse – but not on my watch.

“The human element and community impact of this plan is critical and that’s why this visit is so important.

“Gigalitres represent jobs and community longevity in rural Queensland. I’ve seen fear in the eyes of hardened men. I’ve seen tears in their eyes because of uncertainty about what the future holds for their families and all that’s been created over generations. They can see that a pen-stroke could undo it all.”

Spanning more than one million square kilometres and generating 39% of the nation’s national income from agricultural production, the Murray-Darling Basin has been the centre of many water management attempts to balance irrigation with conservation.

The latest management plan – devised by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority – is expected to be handed to the Deputy Prime Minister in May. Later, it will then be tabled in the Federal Parliament, based on an ongoing review of the Northern Basin’s water recovery targets.

“It’s the Basin Plan’s ambition to take 2750GLs of water away from farm production in the name of environmental outcomes but really 35GLs will be ripped out of the Lower Balonne catchment area in Maranoa, destroying communities,” he said.

“The 35GLs loss would only deliver 3GLs to the people of Adelaide in South Australia. It doesn’t make sense the two communities of Dirranbandi and St George would be crushed for so little benefit.

“This injustice will definitely be highlighted when Senator Xenophon visits affected producers and stakeholders in Maranoa, in early May, before the Murray-Darling Basin Plan will be tabled in the Federal Parliament.”

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