



Media Release

9 August, 2017

RALLY: Save Our Rivers / Take Water from the Nationals

RALLY DETAILS

When: 10am, Thursday, August 10

Where: Macquarie Street, outside NSW Parliament House

Speakers: All of those quoted above.

Farmers and conservations rallied outside NSW Parliament today demanding a full judicial review into the mismanagement of water in the Murray-Darling system and the removal of the water portfolios from the National Party in NSW and nationally.

Dareton grape grower Howard Jones said: “The Darling River below Menindee was dry for about nine months for the first time in history in the last drought because of the water taken out above Bourke. The National Party does not look after all the people who rely on the river, the people at Louth, Wilcannia, Menindee, the Aboriginal community, tourist operators and graziers. They look after their mates. The Rum Rebellion is alive and well in NSW.”

Goulburn Valley fruit and lucerne grower John Pettigrew said: “The bulk if irrigators want and need the Basin Plan. NSW is the biggest user of water in the Basin. We desperately need a judicial review to expose the culture within NSW between the big end of town irrigators and the bureaucracy. This culture has been around for decades with full knowledge of the irrigator representative bodies.”

Inland Rivers Network spokesperson Bev Smiles said: “The community wants to see positive results from the Basin Plan implementation. This \$13B investment of Australian taxpayer’s money needs to result in healthier rivers and wetlands. The NSW Government is refusing to protect flows in the rivers purchased with public money allowing big irrigators to profit at our expense.”

Nature Conservation Council CEO Kate Smolski said: “The response Premier Berejiklian to allegations of massive water theft and collusion by government officials and irrigators to undermine the Murray-Darling Basin Plan has been inadequate. Primary producers and conservationists want the Premier to take control of the situation by supporting a judicial review and taking the water portfolio from the National Party.”

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nature Conservation Council and Inland Rivers Network are calling on the Berejiklian government to:

- Support a federal judicial review of the mismanagement of water in the Murray-Darling system;
- Refer to ICAC all allegations of corrupt conduct in the administration of water in NSW;
- Take the water portfolio from the National Party and appoint a Liberal Minister to oversee implementation of the NSW elements of the \$13B Murray Darling Basin Plan.
- Implement the Murray-Darling Basin Plan in full and on time.

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