
Media Release

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Sheed calls on Federal Government to release Keelty report

Independent Member for the Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed has called on the Federal Minister for Water Keith Pitt to release the findings of the Inspector-General of Murray–Darling Basin Water Resources Mick Keelty’s inquiry into water sharing-arrangements between the states.

“We are in the midst of a crisis, but that does not mean extremely important information, such as the findings of this inquiry, can be buried for six months,” Ms Sheed said.

“I am concerned that Federal Parliament will not sit until October and the be outcomes of various reports and inquiries may be put on the back burner during the pandemic response.

Mr Keelty’s inquiry is too important to remain on Minister Pitt’s desk, according to Ms Sheed.

“I have written to Minister Pitt and called on him to make this advice available publicly and as a matter of urgency following his receiving it. As Mr Keelty currently has no statutory appointment his advice is not a document that needs to be tabled in Parliament which in any event would be very difficult in the current circumstances.

“I am informed that this document does not require tabling in either house of the Federal Parliament and accordingly it will be in the Minister's hands to make it available,” Ms Sheed said.

“The Minister must know that access to water in the Southern Basin is critical to food production such as, dairy products, rice, wheat and other cereals not to mention the huge variety of fruit and vegetables being produced.

“Water policy is arguably now more important as a result of the Coronavirus crisis, not less.

“If Mr Keelty’s findings indicate that change is needed in how we distribute water, then we must be given the opportunity to assess the recommendations and see what is achievable.”

ENDS

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