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Media Release

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Sheed airs concerns about future water buybacks

Independent Member for Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed stressed how an independent voice in federal parliament was essential to hear the Goulburn Murray Irrigation District's issues attached to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

"The National Party are clearly not being heard, even with a seat at the Federal Government's table," Ms Sheed said.

"Our only hope is to have a federal independent who can negotiate effectively with whoever is in government at the time."

Ms Sheed spoke in parliament about the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and the targets that must be achieved by its completion in 2024.

"There is a serious concern in our region that there are still many projects underway that will not be completed by that date," Ms Sheed said.

"Under the federal Water Act 2007, if the water is not delivered, if it is not available, if it is not part of the plan by that time, the legislation provides for the Federal Government to go out and buy the water.

Ms Sheed has been calling on the Federal Government for years to legislate that they would not buy back any more water from farmers.

"Promises made by federal water ministers of no further buybacks are worthless because they have failed to back them up with legislation," Ms Sheed said.

Speaking in parliament on Wednesday, Ms Sheed said the impacts of previous buybacks resulted in empty shops and farmers leaving the district.

"We are terrified in our community that it will happen again, and we see a federal Liberal-National party government with no plan for what will happen in 2024," Ms Sheed said.

Ms Sheed said the federal Labor Party had no current policy on the issue, but always stood for delivering the plan in full and on time.

“Our only hope is to have an independent who can negotiate effectively with whoever is in government at the time,” Ms Sheed said.

“We need an extension of time to deliver the water we promised before the Federal Government starts looking towards buybacks to meet the shortfall.”

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