



The Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP

**Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources
Leader of The Nationals
Federal Member for New England**

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17 NOV 2016

The Hon. Ian Hunter MLC
Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Minister Hunter, 

Thank you for your letter of 9 November 2016 regarding the Water for the Environment Special Account (WESA) and the recovery of 450 gigalitres of environmental water through efficiency measures.

I hear and understand your concerns about my recent conversation with Minister Brock.

If it was genuinely possible to put an additional 450 GL down the river without hurting people, then none of us would have a problem with it. The reality is that it will.

South Australia's default share of the 450 GL target is 36 GL. Does the South Australian Government have a plan for where this water would come from without causing negative social and economic impacts to South Australian communities?

I believe that we are heading into an unprotracted and unsolvable stalemate, where the funding will stay on the books for a recovery that will be impossible to make in accordance with the legislative requirements - that the recovery must have positive or neutral social and economic outcomes.

Recent work carried out, including that by the Victorian Government, indicates deeply concerning outcomes if further water is removed from production in Basin communities.

I think the only way to resolve this is to see if there are any other ideas, which would be mutually beneficial to South Australia and the broader Basin community.

My main concern is this - just as you have an understandable desire for one outcome, your colleagues in other states have an equally understandable desire for another regardless of what side of the political fence they are on.

I cannot foresee them agreeing that the additional 450 GL of water can be delivered without significant social and economic detriment.

The hard conversation has to happen about how we resolve this stalemate. I look forward to discussing it with you more at the Ministerial Council.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Joyce', written in a cursive style.

Barnaby Joyce MP