

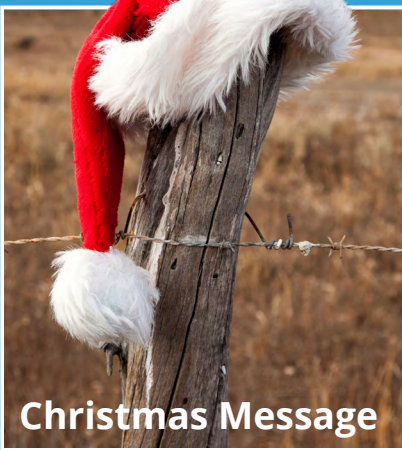


Helen Dalton MP
MEMBER FOR MURRAY

Christmas Newsletter



December 2019



Christmas Message

I'd like to wish everyone in my Murray electorate a wonderful Christmas and a happy and safe New Year.

This year 2019 has been hectic, and I'm just getting started in my fight to protect our water and restore hospital and other services to our towns. This newsletter will give you a summary of all the things I'm doing, have achieved and plan on continuing over the next year.

As always, if you've got any ideas or suggestions, I'd welcome you getting in touch with me by emailing murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au. For all news throughout the year, please check out my Facebook page Helen Dalton MP and my website helendalton.com.au.

But for now, please enjoy your break, and let's hope for a happy wet New Year.

- Helen

- MERRY -

Christmas

+ & +
HAPPY NEW YEAR



Ending the secrecy on water ownership

I'm introducing a new law into Parliament to end the secrecy around water ownership in NSW.

Why? When I was elected in March, I was shocked to learn I didn't have to declare my water entitlements in the conflict of interest form they make MPs sign.

We have to declare land, property, jobs and shares. But not water!

In November, I asked NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian why State MP's don't have to reveal their water interests.

Her response was that we can trust politicians to "proactively" disclose this

information. She doesn't want any changes to the law.

That's not good enough for me. I believe the first step in fixing our water problems is to find out who owns it.

We know there are politicians, foreign companies, Sydney traders and government departments who own water – and manipulate the water trade – but it's impossible to identify them. They're keeping water scarce and pushing prices up so they can make huge profits on the back of farmer's misery.

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Griffith Children's Allergy Clinic to be saved

In October this year, Griffith's much loved children's doctor Maxwell Hopp came to me with some tragic news.

The NSW Government told him they were going to stop funding his community health nurse. This meant his children's allergy clinic – to which Griffith families had made 4,500 visits over the past 20 years – would be shut down.

Associate Professor Hopp said he appealed to NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard, but his pleas fell on deaf ears, so he asked for my help.

The closing of the allergy clinic was something I could not tolerate. It would mean a whole generation of Griffith families would have to travel to Melbourne or Sydney for allergy treatment.

So I shared a letter from Dr Hopp to my Facebook page and urged every Griffith parent to write to the Health Minister. Hours later my post was shared almost 1,000 times. I also informed all media about the cut; condemned the decision in NSW Parliament and wrote to Minister Hazzard requesting an explanation.

Within a few days, the NSW Government reversed their decision. Dr Hopp wrote me a much happier letter thanking me for my help to keep his clinic alive. I'd like to extend the thanks to people like Emma McWhirter, Kiara Rand, Vicki Greedy, Michelle Butler, Doug Roberts, Griffith Business Chamber and everyone else who wrote to the NSW Health Minister after my call out to do so. I understand he was bombarded with hundreds of your emails.

It's a good lesson that we as country people don't have to put up with cuts to our services, and that taking action to fight back can be effective. I won't let this issue rest until we have a rock solid guarantee from the NSW Government, but it seems we are moving in the right direction.

I'll also be pushing hard for promised funding upgrades to be delivered to Deniliquin, Leeton and Griffith hospitals as soon as possible. Country people are sick of putting up with third world health services. I will be making this a top priority.



[From front page...](#)

The current online NSW Water Register prevents people from searching for the water entitlements of companies, individuals and government departments.

Applying for a water licence is currently easier than opening a bank account. People can hide behind a corporate veil so the general public don't know they're the actual purchaser.

My Bill will:

1. Force NSW politicians to declare their water interests on our conflict of interest form;
2. Change the application process for getting a water licence so people can't hide their identity when they apply for their licence; and
3. Change the online water register to allow people to search for water holdings of people, companies and government departments.

The Bill will be debated and voted on early next year. For a copy, please see my Facebook page Helen Dalton MP, or go to my website www.helendalton.com.au. Please email any feedback or comments by mid-January to murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

Plan to better manage our forests



In August this year, my party introduced legislation to bring back tree thinning on land in the Murray Valley and Pilliga National Parks. This is something my predecessors promised to do for years but never managed to achieve.

I believe properly managed forests are far better resources than those that are locked up and left alone. As bushfire dangers surge across the hot summer, it's vital that we put measures in place to reduce the risks.

This Bill will revitalise the region by creating jobs and energising an industry devastated by government.

I will keep you updated on progress on our bill over the next few months.



Change of seat makes a world of difference

The NSW Government did nothing for the Murray Electorate over the past 35 years.

So it seems a change of vote can make a difference. It was good to see some investment in infrastructure in the NSW Budget this year. I'm pleased to see a commitment for a new Griffith Community Centre and funding for a new Griffith Base Hospital.

But I'm still not satisfied.

There's no funding allocation figure for Murrumbidgee Regional High School, a school which desperately needs teachers and building upgrades. Meanwhile, the NSW Department of Education is spending millions on solar panels for Sydney schools.

Deniliquin Hospital and Leeton District Hospital are getting piddling amounts, just \$3.2 million and \$2.5 million respectively. That won't even be enough to upgrade the parking facilities.

This Government has a massive surplus thanks to the many taxes you pay. But we're still getting scraps compared to Sydney.

I'll be hounding Ministers over the next few months to fight for a much bigger share of the NSW Budget next time. I'm also following up all of the NSW Nationals pre-election promises and will push them to deliver as soon as possible.

Killing Family Farms

In October, I made a speech in NSW Parliament about the annihilation of small family farms across NSW. I explained how this is driven by government policy, not drought.

While politicians didn't pay much attention, the response from the public was overwhelming. The speech reached almost one million Facebook users, and was viewed 300,000 times. I received calls about it from all over the world.

Here's an extract of my speech:

"For years, I've heard rumours of a plot to wipe out mum and dad farms in this state. I used to think this was just paranoia and conspiracy," I said

"But lately, the plot has thickened. In the past few weeks we've heard some extraordinary statements from prominent National Party MPs – the party that's supposed to represent regional Australia."

"Last month, Agriculture Minister Senator Bridget McKenzie said struggling farmers should consider selling up and leaving their land."

"After decades in which their own government's policies have seen a transfer of hundreds of billions of dollars away from family farms and into the hands of giant, often foreign owned corporations, these politicians are now telling the remaining Aussie small town farm survivors to shut up shop."

"If only getting another job were that easy for farmers, for their families and for their communities."

"Getting another job, for a farmer, is NOT like moving from a bank job to a marketing job in Sydney."

"Selling your farm is a traumatic experience. It's like selling your heritage, your history, your identity, your home and in Regional NSW, you can't just walk into another job down the road."

"Every time a farming family leaves the bush, the flow-on effects for small towns are enormous. It means less money going into corner shops, less kids going to the local school, less demand for the local businesses. More people lose their jobs, more families move to Sydney."

"Government bureaucrats use this as an excuse to cut funding for schools, hospitals and services and the multiplier effect, or the minus effect, just continues."

"It's up to us in Parliament of NSW to show our children there's a future in farming. To show them we want to grow our own food, not import it. That we want diversity in agriculture, not domination by multi-nationals. That we want people living in regional towns, not all moving to Melbourne, and Sydney."

"It's time to invest in our farming families and to stop destroying them."

For the full speech, go to my Facebook Page Helen Dalton MP. Small family farms are something I will fight to protect over the next three years.



Recognising fabulous achievements in my Murray electorate

It's been my pleasure to recognise some fabulous achievements from people and groups across Murray in NSW Parliament this year. Below is a list of some amazing contributions to our community from across the electorate. If you know of someone or a group that deserves recognition, please email my office at murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au with your suggestions.

| NAME | TOWN | ACHIEVEMENT |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Pat O'Sullivan | Hillston | 64 years of providing news to small towns as editor of the Hillston-Ivanhoe Spectator |
| Tony Kew | Deniliquin | Involved with Rotary Club of Deniliquin, Deniliquin Car Club, St Paul's Anglican Parish Council and Deniliquin Golf Club |
| Griffith High P&C Association | Griffith | Received second in the state for NSW Department of Education Healthy School Canteen Strategy |
| Edward River Council | Deniliquin | Local Economic Contribution prize at Local Government Excellence Awards for Visit Deni campaign |
| Piper Stewart | Griffith | 13 yo established 'Bambigi' which funds 6 months swimming lessons for Aboriginal kids in Griffith region as well as teach water safety |
| Robert Marmont | Hay | 50 years of service with the NSW Ambulance Service, 44 years in Hay |
| Chris Glenn | Mathoura | 30 years continuous volunteer service to Mathoura Rural Fire Brigade |
| Jennie Wilson | Moulamein | "Out of the box thinking" and dedication to improving student outcomes in regional and remote schools |
| Michelle Fortuna, Christian Luther, Pamela Stidiford and Roth Gordon | Wentworth/ Dareton | Volunteers received Certificate of Achievement for Community Palliative Care in the Wentworth and Dareton communities |
| Ryan Butler | Leeton | Selected to compete in the athletics and track events in Canada |
| Jodi Brown and David Marsden | Finley | Received the Secretary of Education's Award for Excellent Service and Public School Parent of the Year Award respectively |
| Meghan Fisher and Deni Ute Muster | Deniliquin | Meghan Fisher and Vicky Lowry from Deni Ute Muster received Outstanding Young Employee Award and Excellence for Social Enterprise Award respectively |
| Amber King Gee | Barham | Won second place in the Ag Art Wear novice division at the Elmore Field Days |
| John Robinson | Griffith | Integral part of the development of Griffith Pioneer Park Museum |
| Jess Horder | Griffith | Established Riding for the Disabled in Griffith some 40 years ago |
| Harold and Bonnie Clapham | Deniliquin | Presented with 2019 Community Champions Award at the Ute Muster Chairman's reception acknowledging over 10 years involvement |
| Sione Nosa | Griffith | Volunteers to assist migrants to fill out forms |



■ Helen with Tony Sergi (left) and Peter Cremasco (right) who arranged the collection of millions of litres of donated water for stock and domestic for drought affected communities.



■ 13 year old Piper Stewart has been recognised for her efforts in establishing 'Bambigi' which funds 6 months swimming lessons for Aboriginal kids in the Griffith region as well as teach water safety.

| NAME | TOWN | ACHIEVEMENT |
|---|------------|---|
| Liam Davies | Hay | Founding member of Hay Mardi Gras and ambassador of Hay's Rainbow on the Plains Festival |
| Lyn Flanagan | Balranald | First female President of Balranald Ex-Services Club |
| Moama Police Station | Moama | Government asked to provide a new, fit-for-purpose Police Station in Moama |
| Parkview Public School | Leeton | Won 2 awards as part of Wakakiri National Dance Competition |
| Dale McCleary | Griffith | Organise and transport bottled water to communities such as Brewarrina, Tilpa and Louth |
| Lisa Kearines | Leeton | Awarded a special service award in the 2019 Scouts Adult Recognition Awards for contribution to Scouting |
| OTA Tongan Community Group | Griffith | Tongan community group in Griffith created OTA |
| Ashton Cowling | Wentworth | Worthy recipient of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Agricultural Show Award |
| Finley Show Society | Finley | Outstanding commitment and dedication and Finley High School for dominating beef cattle sections |
| Finley Dementia Alliance and Finley Regional Care | Finley | Work with Dementia Australia to open a dementia friendly community cafe |
| Deniliquin Health Advocacy Committee | Deniliquin | Providing community input into the health needs of Deniliquin |
| Babs Donaldson | Griffith | Contribution and dedication as a Director of Country Hope in providing ongoing support of children and their families diagnosed with cancer |
| Olga Forner | Griffith | Contribution and dedication as President of Griffith Can Assist |
| Tony Pastro | Griffith | Dedication and volunteers to assist disabled people with Riding for the Disabled |
| Tony Sergi | Griffith | With Peter Cremasco is arranging the collection of millions of litres of donated water for stock and domestic for drought affected communities |
| Jane Gibbs | Yenda | Nominated as my local woman of the year for her extraordinary 20 years of community service – including fostering over 100 children and spending a decade working with children with a disability |

Push to keep Doctors in Wentworth

I was most distressed to learn the town of Wentworth is poised to lose its remaining GP doctors. This would be terrible for the people living in Wentworth, who would be forced to cross the border to Victoria for basic medical appointments.

A community committee – The Establishment Group – are trying to re-establish a GP service in town. They are looking into all avenues to provide a model of care that best suits small communities.

I will be doing everything I can to support the Establishment Group's work. I have already written to NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard asking what funding may be available to set up a clinic and fund a new doctor in town.

Please write to the Health Minister at office@hazzard.minister.nsw.gov.au to let him know your concerns. If you have any ideas to help, email my office at murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au.



Birthday and celebration card requests

Everyone loves a milestone! If you'd like a birthday, anniversary or congratulations card from me to someone special in Murray, I'm happy to write one. Just email my office at murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au with the name, age, special date, mailing address and any other relevant info on the person you'd like me to wish, and I'll send it on. Please provide as much notice as you can before the special date.

Fight for a new Moama Police Station

When I visited Moama Police Station in October, I was absolutely shocked to see the state of conditions in which the NSW Government expect our dedicated police officers to work.

There's no women's toilets, so female staff members have to use the same loo as male suspects.

The cracks all over the roof and walls are big enough for mice to crawl through. The charge dock has no drainage facilities so fluids flowing from suspects seeps through on to the carpet.

There's no CCTV camera, no holding cell, no changing room, no storage facilities, no secure windows and a broken alarm system.

The police keep us safe!! So we need to ensure they work in safe conditions.

After I publicly called for a new police station in the media and on my Facebook page, the NSW Government announced the station has been prioritised for a redevelopment.

In the New Year, I'll keep the pressure on to push the NSW Government to build a much needed new station.



Dangerous trends in foreign ownership

The Government approving the sale of one of Australia's largest baby formula manufacturers to a Chinese company is the latest in a series of secret foreign sales of our most valuable resources.

Last year, the Government allowed a large Temora agribusiness to be sold to a Canadian pension fund for LESS money than a group of Aussie farmers were willing to pay.

This trend is dangerous. Current rules actually favour foreign multi-nationals over Australian families.

The irony is people vote for the Liberal and Nationals because of their reputation of protecting our borders.

It's time they realised Australian farms, Australian rivers and Australian assets are very much within our borders and they need protecting too.

The frustrating thing is there is nothing on the Foreign Investment Review Board website explaining why the Government allows major sales of land, water and agribusinesses to foreign companies.

I have been doing my best to scrutinise foreign purchases – writing to Ministers and asking for a "please explain" on key overseas purchases. I also made a speech on this in NSW Parliament, which so far has been viewed almost 100,000 times. Please have a watch on my Facebook page Helen Dalton MP and write to Government ministers to express your concerns.

West Corugan gets emergency water supply

Residents in the communities of Daysdale, Savernake and Rennie contacted me in deep distress in late September as they faced chronic water shortages as temperatures were rising.

While their water provider West Corugan Private Irrigation had a stock and domestic licence allowing them 736ML, they needed 3,000ML to fill the channel system in order

to deliver all the town and domestic water needs. This really was an insane scenario given so much water in the region is being wasted to so-called environmental flows.

I wrote two letters to NSW Water Minister Melinda Pavey urging her to grant an emergency water allocations to West Corugan. In late October, the Minister

finally granted a "special purpose" allocation of the necessary 3,000ML.

While I was pleased at this outcome, these communities should not have been forced to beg for drinking water. It's just another example of why we urgently need to pause the Murray Darling Basin Plan. For more info on my fight to pause the plan, visit helendalton.com.au.

Support Farmers' Legal Fight

The insane cruelty of this government towards desperate farmers astonishes me. I'm currently fighting to bring justice to a group of Murray Valley groundwater irrigators who are facing government-inflicted financial ruin.

A few years ago, the NSW Government slashed Murray Valley Groundwater Irrigators Association water allocations by up to 90 per cent. Essentially, they based their new water sharing plan on historical allocations, punishing the farmers for using water efficiently in wet times and crippling them during drought.

The farmers rightly took them to court. The Government admitted their mistake, and the irrigators dropped their court case.

But now, the NSW Government have whacked the farmers with a \$610,000 legal bill. After losing their stock and their farming businesses, young families now contemplate mortgaging their homes to pay this unjust legal bill.

During their decade long struggle with the government, two farmers have committed suicide. The government appears to be chasing money from the dead farmers' family members. This is just sickening.



■ Farmers Brett Napier, Stuart Gannon, Greg Sandford with Helen Dalton.

I have called on NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian, Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Water Minister Melinda Pavey to immediately waive all legal costs. I'd urge you to do the same by writing to each of these Ministers. You can find their contact details here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/ministers/>

If it can happen to them, it can happen to you too. Together, we can fight for justice. For more information, visit my Facebook Page, Helen Dalton MP.

Leeton Preschool gets an early Christmas Present

I was delighted to help Leeton Pre-school get a grant for an additional classroom, which was awarded in late November. Letters like this make my job worthwhile.

Hi Helen,

I hope you are well. I just wanted to email you to let you know that with your letter of support Leeton Preschool has been successful in gaining the department of education capital works grant for an additional classroom which we applied for earlier in the year.

I am extremely excited and forever appreciative for the support of Helen and her staff in our application.

We look forward to sharing the progress of the build with you all and the benefits for our little Leeton community.

Thank you again,

*Laura Lashbrook, Centre Manager
Leeton Preschool Ass Inc.*

Taking Action Against Bad Behaviour

Since my election in March, my office has been inundated with complaints about councils, irrigation companies, health bureaucracies and various other government departments. I'm hearing a lot about alleged bullying, corruption, neglect and mistreatment of our most vulnerable residents.


Wherever possible, I have taken your complaints directly to the relevant Ministers to ask for investigations or disciplinary action. But I've been met with a brick wall. It seems this government is determined to turn a blind eye to wrongdoing.

I refuse to give up. What I need from you is a bit more support and information. The more evidence you give me, the harder it is for Ministers to ignore the issue.

If you can provide a succinct summary of your complaint (one page or less), including specific dates, people's names and locations – that would help. Any supporting information you have; including statutory declarations, records, letters and photos, would be even better. If you're prepared to tell your story to the media, that often sparks action. Our office can help you make the connections.

While many councillors and bureaucrats across Murray do a fantastic job, I would dearly love to support you in rooting out corruption and bad behaviour wherever it exists. Email my office at murray@parliament.nsw.gov.au for more information or to provide your evidence.

Follow Helen Dalton

 Helen Dalton MP or visit www.helendalton.com.au



Shelley's Army Rises As Our Leaders Fail

On December 2, I joined 3,000 people from our communities in a Convoy to Canberra to protest the appalling water policies destroying our communities.

The aim of the rally was to urge politicians to pause the Murray Darling Basin Plan; request a Royal Commission into water corruption and to demand policy changes so that our farmers and communities can access water currently being wasted. The rally happened just a week after the insane situation of SunRice having to lay off 100 workers due to lack of water – even though their rice mills operate within throwing distance of full rivers.

The convoy was organised by the incredible Shelley Scoullar and her group Speak Up 4 Water. It was an amazing logistical effort to think they managed to

get thousands of farmers to give up two working days during a drought to travel to Canberra and take our fight to our leaders.

The National Farmers Federation's head office is just 500 metres from the protest. But not one NFF executive bothered to make the short journey from Canberra's trendy café district to Parliament House to thank farmers for making this journey.

National Party leader John Barilaro snubbed the convoy to instead spend the day at the beach doing swim safety videos for international students.

As our leaders went missing, ordinary families stepped up to take the fight directly to government.

I'd like to personally thank Darcy Hare, Chris Brooks, Jan Beer, Topher Field,

Robert Quodling, Ron McWhae, Carly Marriott, Doug Fehring, Lachlan Marshall, Helene Mortlock, Deb Scott, John Lolicato, Paul Pierotti, Darren De Bortoli, Leo Ieraci, Lindsay Schultz, Bart and Johanna Brighenti, Allan Beale, Graeme Pyle, Laurelle Sheedy, Sue Braybon, Jon Gatacre, Andrew Crossley, Alastair Starritt, Suzanna Sheed and countless others who helped make this convoy a success.

We don't know what impact our protest has made, but at the time of publishing, it looks as if the government were changing their tune. I think the cracks are starting to appear.

If, in 2050, we are still growing food and living in small towns, you'll know to thank Shelley and her army of forgotten Australians.



Helen Dalton MP
MEMBER FOR MURRAY

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