



Steph Cooke

Shadow Minister for Water
Shadow Minister for Crown Lands

Brendan Moylan

Shadow Minister for Agriculture

MEDIA RELEASE

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FARMERS FACE PERMANENT FLOODING UNDER CONTROVERSIAL INUNDATION BILL

The NSW Liberals and Nationals have condemned the Minns Labor Government for pushing ahead with legislation that will erode the property rights of NSW landholders, causing further breakdown in trust with regional communities.

The *Water Management Amendment (Easements for Inundation) Bill 2025* is proposed NSW legislation that will create a framework for permanent easements, enabling government water authorities to legally inundate private land for environmental water delivery purposes.

The Opposition has also raised alarm over a late-stage Government amendment, not properly consulted on with landholders or peak bodies, which would remove compensation rights for damage caused by government-directed inundation.

Shadow Minister for Water Steph Cooke said the Bill entrenches a rigid and unfair approach to environmental water delivery that locks landholders into permanent impacts without genuine choice.

“This Bill locks in permanent inundation easements as the only pathway to delivering water to the environment, stripping landholders of flexibility and removing the ability to tailor agreements to individual circumstances,” Ms Cooke said.

“What is most alarming is the Government’s refusal to genuinely consider deed-of-release arrangements, despite repeatedly acknowledging landholder concerns.”

“Instead, they have doubled down on permanent easements and now, at the eleventh hour, introduced a change to remove compensation rights entirely.”

“That is a major escalation with zero consultation.”

Ms Cooke said the late amendment removing compensation for inundation damage was ‘particularly egregious’ and demonstrated a disregard for basic fairness.

“The idea that landholders could suffer damage caused by government-managed inundation with no right to compensation is extraordinary,” Ms Cooke said.

“It removes long-standing legal protections and replaces them with a ‘trust us’ approach from a government that has already lost the confidence of many regional communities, and has a long legacy of water mismanagement.”

Shadow Minister for Agriculture Brendan Moylan said the Bill and the Government’s handling of it would have serious consequences for landholders across the Murray-Darling Basin.

“This legislation is Labor’s latest effort to erode property rights in regional NSW,” Mr Moylan said.

“Farmers are being asked to accept permanent easements that affect land value, borrowing capacity, and long-term succession planning, all while being told they have no real alternative.”

Mr Moylan said the lack of consultation on the compensation amendment was “completely unacceptable”.

“There has been no engagement with affected landholders or representative organisations before this change was introduced,” Mr Moylan said.

“It reinforces a pattern of decision-making where regional communities are expected to accept outcomes after the fact, rather than being genuinely involved from the start.”

“Labor continues to show a disturbing disregard for landholders’ property rights in NSW.”

The Opposition moved an amendment to establish a legislated deed-of-release pathway as a genuine alternative to permanent easements, which was voted down by the Minns Labor Government and the Greens in the Legislative Council.

The debate now moves to the Legislative Assembly, where the Opposition will again oppose the legislation.

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