

Bernard Salt to focus a spotlight on the benefits of Lockyer-Somerset water project

Prominent Australian demographer Bernard Salt AM is set to highlight the benefits of a transformational Lockyer Valley and Somerset water project at a major regional event in August.

Mr Salt will bring his unique insights on regional Australia to a special business breakfast in the Lockyer Valley **on Wednesday 26 August**.

Mr Salt, who is a driving force behind understanding and promoting regional Australia's potential, said the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Security Scheme (LVSWS) was a significant example of the economic opportunities that could drive growth and regional prosperity in the decades to come.

"Our regions are likely to experience a surge in growth over the first half of the century that will change the face of Australia," he said.

"For many regions, agricultural production and agri-businesses will provide the foundation to build this new-look Australia.

"Our farming sector will need the support of their towns and their services."

The breakfast event is being co-hosted by the Lockyer Valley and Somerset Water Collaborative and the Lockyer Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Tourism.

Lockyer Valley Regional Council Mayor Tanya Milligan said it was an important opportunity for farmers, business and the community to hear directly from one of Australia's renowned social scientists.

"Bernard is a master storyteller known for his engaging presentations and unique insights into Australia's changing population," she said.

"Feeding this new-look Australia is a key consideration, which is why our region and the LVSWS are so important."

Somerset Regional Council Mayor Jason Wendt said the event would highlight the critical role the region's water project could play in driving future economic growth and development.

"This is a fantastic opportunity to hear from one of the country's leading voices on the potential of regional Australia and, in particular, the role our water project can play for our region," Mayor Wendt said.

Lockyer Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Tourism President Mel Porter said it was a coup for the region to secure Bernard Salt.

"We are delighted that he is coming," she said.

“He is such a great advocate for the regions and will undoubtedly have us all thinking about our future potential.”

The Queensland Government recently announced \$5 million to progress the LVSWSS to deliver a construction-ready project by 2028.

The scheme is seeking to increase irrigation water supply to the region by 50 per cent and deliver \$270 million annually in increased production.

Tickets for the Bernard Salt event are available at [August Business Breakfast — Lockyer Chamber Commerce, Industry and Tourism](#)

The event will be held at Porters Hotel, Plainland, from 6.30am to 8am on Wednesday 26 August 2026.

The LVSWSS forms part of the Water Initiatives in the Lockyer Valley commitment being delivered under the South East Queensland (SEQ) City Deal. The SEQ City Deal is a partnership by the Australian Government, Queensland Government and Council of Mayors (SEQ).

Ends

Key project goals:

- Secure Queensland’s most important horticulture and food production region. The Lockyer Valley and Somerset provide 30 per cent of Queensland’s and 5 per cent of the nation’s fresh produce.
- Increase agricultural output in the Lockyer Valley and Somerset by \$270 million to almost \$1.7 billion annually, to help feed a growing Queensland and nation.
- Protect existing workforce of almost 4,000 including full-time and seasonal workers and add an additional 600 full-time jobs.
- Provide one of the most reliable sources of recycled water in the country.
- First large-scale use of urban water infrastructure to grow food by operating the significantly under-utilised Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme.
- Turn wastewater currently discharged into SEQ waterways and Moreton Bay into high quality recycled water to enhance Queensland’s food security and economy.

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