



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Windsor supports Anderson-Aquilina meeting to resolve Namoi Groundwater stalemate**

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has come out in support of the Member for Gwydir, and Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson and the NSW Minister for Land & Water Conservation, John Aquilina in their attempts to move the compensation issue for Namoi Groundwater users to conclusion.

Mr Windsor said that one of the major constraints to a solution had always been the reluctance of the Federal and State Governments to actually sit down with water users and negotiate a solution.

Mr Windsor, who was Chairman of the Namoi Groundwater Taskforce, said that the Taskforce had never assumed that it had the ultimate solution to the sustainability of water in the Namoi system.

“Obviously there are always different ways of solving the same problem.

John Aquilina has developed a different scenario that in my view could work if more money was added.

It is a plan that recognises that those who are impacted on by the structural change of water loss are compensated for that loss.

The problem is that Mr Aquilina’s plan has been constrained by inadequate funding.

If more money is available, there is no reason why the Aquilina Plan couldn’t be successful,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that is important that water users have an open mind on the process that is now developing and not get too tied up on the \$120m figure that is being bandied about.

“The \$120m in the Taskforce plan involved a \$40m levy on water users and a market mechanism to buy out inactive water entitlement holders.

Once the levy is removed and the introduction of across the board cuts to active and inactive entitlement holders, the dollar figures change considerably.

If the aim of the process is to treat all entitlement holders equitably in terms of share of the resource (ie using across the board cuts) I believe a figure of \$60m could come close to compensating those who are directly impacted by the change.

That is what a ‘structural adjustment scheme’ is supposed to be about – helping those who are hurt, not giving windfall gains to those who aren’t.

I encourage John Anderson and John Aquilina to get together and work with Jack Warnock and Geoff Carolan to work out the final plan to resolve this problem as quickly as possible,” Mr Windsor said.