



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**TONY WINDSOR MP**  
**INDEPENDENT**  
**FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND**

Suite 2, Level 1  
307 Peel Street  
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

**All Mail:** PO Box 963  
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

**Ph:** (02) 6761 3080  
**Toll Free:** 1800 66 8855  
**Fax:** (02) 6761 3380  
**e-mail:** [Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au)  
**Web Page:** [www.tonywindsor.com.au](http://www.tonywindsor.com.au)

## MEDIA RELEASE

28<sup>th</sup> August 2002

### **Namoi Groundwater users abandoned by Deputy PM – Windsor**

Independent Member for New England, and former Chairman of the Namoi Groundwater Taskforce, Tony Windsor said he was astounded at the abandonment of the Namoi groundwater irrigators by the Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Gwydir, John Anderson.

Mr Windsor said the back flip by the Federal Government in relation to the structural adjustment package process that had been developed by the Taskforce was an example of political treachery.

“John Anderson’s little plot of having millions of dollars to spend in assisting water entitlement holders was nothing more than thin air.

It is obvious to most and common knowledge in the halls of Canberra that John Anderson failed to argue the case well enough for the Namoi Groundwater users in the Cabinet room.

The Liberals have overridden the National Party again,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that the creation of a separate Federal process instead of working with the NSW State Government and does not include irrigators, will mean that those who stand to lose most through the adjustment process are further disadvantaged.

The whole point of the Taskforce process was to provide assistance to those who could demonstrate that they were ‘directly and adversely affected’ by the change in water entitlements to achieve sustainability.

“John Anderson’s words of support over the past 2 ½ years have delivered nothing to those people most affected by the cutbacks.

For Mr Anderson to say that the Commonwealth would not become involved in payment for ‘clawback’ of water entitlement was also hypocrisy.

Mr Anderson should reflect on his and his Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry words when they announced the National Action Plan for Water Quality and Salinity where they stated that the ‘National Action Plan principles involve the payment for clawback of groundwater,” Mr Windsor said.

2 ...

Mr Truss said in welcoming the \$1.46 Billion announcement by the Prime Minister in October 2000 that

*“The Plan recognises that actions required to sustain the environmental health of a region may affect the property rights of individuals and some local economies. Compensation must be payable under the plan to those adversely affected.”*

Mr Truss went on to say in a briefing note “The Action Plan at a glance”:

*In regard to policy improvements, the Action Plan proposes Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments agree to supporting an agenda of key land and water-use policy initiatives. These include:*

- *Land clearing controls in salinity risk areas*
- *Caps on surface and groundwater allocations*
- *Improved security of property rights for water together with improved water pricing and trading arrangements AND*
- ***“Buying back water allocations to achieve sustainable water use”***

“If these words don’t give irrigators an indication of commitment to financial assistance from the Federal Government, I’m not sure what does,” Mr Windsor said.