



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

12th December 2002

Major breakthrough on Water Property Rights PM agrees to withhold Competition Payments

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has commended the Prime Minister, John Howard for his strong stance on withholding future Competition Policy payments to States that don't recognise water property rights.

In answer to a Question from Mr Windsor today in the Federal Parliament, The Prime Minister, John Howard has assured water entitlement holders that they will be compensated where it can be shown that their entitlement has been diminished.

“For years now, we have heard threats from the Federal Government to the States that won't recognise water property rights that National Competition Policy payments would be withheld.

Only last week another \$250 million of Commonwealth funds was signed off to the NSW Government.

I commend the Prime Minister for his strong stance and guarantee of Commonwealth intervention.

The Namoi Groundwater Users will be delighted with the Prime Minister's firm view,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor sees this as a major breakthrough in the fight by water entitlement holders to be able to adjust to new rules governing water use in Australia.

“Water entitlement holders have agreed that there is a need for change in water use practices to ensure long term sustainable operations in certain areas of the State.

They have only ever wanted to be adequately assisted financially to help them make the necessary adjustments to achieve sustainability following on from previous rules under which many water users had expended large sums of money to develop their operations and contribute to their and our communities' economies.

The answer given by the Prime Minister is a major breakthrough that will put the State Governments on notice to do as is required under the CoAG agreement and recognise property rights and pay compensation using Competition Policy Payments where it can be shown that their entitlement has been diminished,” Mr Windsor said.

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