



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
INDEPENDENT
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Shop 5
259 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02) 6761 3080
Toll Free: 1300 301 839
Fax: (02) 6761 3380
e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au
Web Page: www.tonywindsor.com.au

Letter to Editor

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Dear Editor,

Water tax hypocrisy

Question time in Parliament is often about political point scoring but an answer from the National Party Minister for Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Peter McGauran, to a 'Dorothy Dixier' from a Government backbencher highlights the hypocrisy relating to the current practice/proposal of taxing groundwater structural adjustment payments in valleys across NSW including the Namoi.

Minister McGauran, in an attack on the Labor Party, condemned Queensland Premier Peter Beattie for charging \$100 per water bore on properties in Queensland said he was 'dismayed and distressed' to hear of the dreadful tax that the dreadful Labor Government in Queensland was imposing.

Minister McGauran failed to mention that the National/Liberal Coalition was currently taxing as income the receipt of compensation payments from the joint Commonwealth/State Government's \$150m adjustment fund.

He also failed to mention that the Federal Government owned and operated Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) in charging \$1,000 plus GST per site for underboring the rail line near Burren Junction to install piping instead of the original bore drain system to alleviate pressure on the Great Artesian Basin and that the ARTC is planning to charge landholders \$200 per crossing per year as an annual fee.

Rather than berating others about insidious taxation arrangements under the National Water Initiative, let's hear what Minister McGauran intends to do about these Federal tax grabs under the same National Water Initiative.

Minister McGauran says "the Commonwealth Government" has provided the policy leadership and economic incentive through the National Water Initiative to encourage the States to put their house in order" – Hardly!

Yours sincerely

Tony Windsor MP
Member for New England

Further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 66 8868