



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

26 September 2006

NEW OFFICE OF WATER RESOURCES WELCOMED

Federal Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor, has congratulated Prime Minister, John Howard, upon his decision to establish a new Office of Water Resources and encouraged the Prime Minister to go to the next step and appoint a full blown Ministry for Water.

“Water is the most critical resource Australia has and should be the responsibility of a Federal Minister even though the Australian Constitution gives the States responsibility for water,” Mr Windsor said.

“It has become obvious in recent years that the States are not capable of managing a resource that has no regard for State boundaries.”

Mr Windsor said the move by the Prime Minister indicates that the COAG and National Water Initiative had failed to deliver the expected benefit.

Mr Windsor added that he hoped the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who has responsibility for water issues, would address the property rights issue which had been ignored by the previous Minister and also address the groundwater taxation issue and compensation for the loss of water as well as urban water use and management.

“Mr Turnbull will also need to take account of the impact of water markets on regional communities and particularly take into account the long term effects of changing water distribution patterns.”

“The Menindee Lakes are a classic example of where massive water savings could be achieved through reengineering to reduce the surface area exposed to evaporation.”

“This is a good first step in addressing Australia’s water needs and indicates that Mr Howard recognises the first 10 years have been wasted,” Mr Windsor said.

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