



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](mailto:Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au)  
**Web Page:** [www.tonywindsor.com.au](http://www.tonywindsor.com.au)

## Media Release

27 November 2006

### Farm sector may get a spot on Carbon Taskforce

The Prime Minister has indicated that he will consider putting a representative from the farm sector on the newly announced "Carbon Taskforce" in an answer to a question from Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor today.

Mr Windsor said that he had raised the issue after attending the National Carbon Forum held in Canberra last week.

"Participants at the National Carbon Forum held in Canberra last week were concerned that even though the farm sector could play a very significant part in the 'carbon' debate, as yet the farmers haven't been included on the Taskforce.

"I am pleased that the Prime Minister has given an undertaking to seriously consider having representation from the farm sector.

"Whilst there may be commercial opportunities that will open up for the farm sector through what they may grow in the future to meet the requirements of carbon trading, the farm sector also has a lot to contribute from their practical experience in the application of any recommendations that the Carbon Taskforce may make," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that the potential to use carbon credits to reward agricultural practices could not only improve Australia's soils but also store carbon in the soil rather than the atmosphere and could be one of the solutions that the Federal Government is looking for.

"Emissions trading will become a reality in the future if climate policy moves towards pricing signals to deter carbon emissions.

"With appropriate changes to land management, agricultural soils have the capacity to sequester and store large volumes of carbon, thus improving microbial contact, biological activity, fertility, structure, stability, resistance to erosion and ultimately biodiversity, productivity and profitability.

"Increasing soil carbon can significantly reduce the impact of dryland salinity, reduce sedimentation rates in rivers and streams, improve water quality, improve air quality and decrease the impact of the Greenhouse Effect, global warming and climate change," Mr Windsor said.

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

**Question from Tony Windsor MP Member for New England to  
the Hon John Howard – Prime Minister of Australia  
27<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

WINDSOR (3.13 pm)—My question is to the Prime Minister and concerns another ‘coal’ inquiry. It relates to my question of 17 October 2006 regarding a possible National Water Initiative independent assessment of coal mining in high water-bearing aquifers on the rich black soils of the Liverpool Plains. Given the Prime Minister’s undertaking to do so, could the Prime Minister update the House on his inquiries on that issue? Further, Prime Minister, given that the black soils in question have potential under appropriate land use management to be a natural carbon sink, could you include the farm sector in the carbon task force recently announced?

Prime Minister Mr HOWARD—I think the member has asked me two questions. The first is whether I would include the farm sector in the task force recently announced. I will consider that. I will not promise on the run to do that, because it may be that by including the farm sector you may have to include others as well and, by extension, you end up with an unmanageably large group. I will consider what the member has put to me but bear in mind that the purpose of this joint task force is to look at the potential shape of a world emissions trading system. Whilst the farm sector has an interest in that, I do not think the interest is quite as great as the interest of, say, the resource sector. I will consider it, but I do not make any promises. In relation to your question of 17 October, I confess that, offhand, I do not have any further information. I will try to get some as quickly as possible and to provide it to you this afternoon if that is feasible.