



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Chaffey Dam clarification sought from PM ... AGAIN

Clarification of the Chaffey Dam upgrade has again been sought from the Prime Minister by the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor.

For the second time in a month, Mr Windsor has written to the Prime Minister seeking his clarification of the situation.

This follows contact from the new Chair of the Chaffey Dam Community Reference Panel, Mr Bruce Brown indicating some confusion among the Panel about the future of the project given contradictory statements made by various players, particularly in relation to the Commonwealth's call for a new business plan.

"It's disappointing that I have had to write again to the Prime Minister asking for his clarification of the Chaffey Dam upgrade funding and processes.

"Surely the Commonwealth haven't committed funds to a project that did not present it with a business plan.

"If that were the case there would be some real probity issues to be answered.

"The community needs to know that the project is set in cement regardless of who wins Government at the next election," Mr Windsor said.

A letter from the Minister for the Environment and Water, Mr Turnbull to Mr Windsor dated October 11 regarding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed upgrade of Chaffey Dam adding to the confusion said, 'As you may be aware, the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) protects matters of national environmental significance. The Chaffey Dam locality and its immediate catchment area may include matters of natural environmental significance such as threatened species and ecological communities and listed migratory species. The nature of any impacts upon these matters, if any, *remains to be determined* and will be considered if the proposal is referred to me to determine whether approval under the EPBC Act is required.'

"The Minister for the Environment and Water, Malcolm Turnbull and his Departmental staff appear to have a different view of the project's processes than the Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile and the National Party candidate for New England," Mr Windsor said.

.../2

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“There is too much wriggle room in the wording of various statements for my liking which has sparked my distrust of how secure the announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister is.

“Mr Vaile is prone to say one thing in the electorate and then back down in Canberra when the acid is put on him by his Liberal masters despite his being the Deputy PM and I am very concerned that this may well be the case with Chaffey Dam.

“The Prime Minister is well aware of the Chaffey Dam upgrade proposal from the numerous questions I have asked in his presence in the Parliament on the issue.

“I have therefore sought, as a matter of urgency, the Prime Minister put the matter to rest and clearly state the Commonwealth’s requirements with regard to the project,” Mr Windsor said.