



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

20 December 2007

# Committee duped by former Minister! Groundwater study back to drawing board

The \$4.88M study of the coal, groundwater and surface resources of the Gunnedah Basin appears to be headed back to the drawing board following a response from the former Minister, Malcolm Turnbull to an inquiry from the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor as to the status of the funding committed to by Mr Turnbull prior to the announcement of the Federal Election.

Mr Turnbull committed to providing \$4.88M to the study on October 5 and wrote to the National Water Commission on October 8.

However in response to an email from Mr Windsor yesterday, Mr Turnbull has indicated that *“The NWC (National Water Commission) is planning to bring a proposal forward to the new minister. Now Sen Wong may countermand the instruction I gave in my letter in the future.”*

“This is very disappointing news for the Liverpool Plains Land Management Committee (LPLMC) who worked hard and in good faith to secure the commitment from former Minister Turnbull before the announcement of any election.

The Committee has every right to feel duped into thinking that they had achieved their desired outcome and that the study would happen regardless of the election result.

It was certainly portrayed during the election that this was the case but now post election the Committee has had their worst fears confirmed that the funding was NOT as secure as they had been led to believe by Minister Turnbull and as the retiring Member for Gwydir John Anderson also believed as shown in his letter of November 19 to the CEO of the National Water Commission (CEO).

I also have concerns that the proposal that the NWC is planning to bring forward to the Minister is NOT the Liverpool Plains Land Management Committee proposal,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that he will now seek a meeting with the new Minister, Senator Penny Wong in a bid to have the study undertaken.

“It’s a case of back to the drawing board in terms of putting the case to the new Minister, Senator Penny Wong.

Whilst I’m hopeful that Senator Wong will see the benefit of the proposed study, not only for the Liverpool Plains but for other areas where mining activities have the potential to impact on agricultural activities and the water resources needed by both, the situation should never have arisen.

It just goes to show that the previous Coalition Government was prepared to say whatever they believed it would take to continue in Government with little regard for the people who thought that their word was their bond and could be trusted,” Mr Windsor said.

---

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