



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

MEDIA RELEASE

16 April 2008

Coal mine planning process to be raised at 2020 Summit

The issue of coal mining under highly productive agricultural land with substantial groundwater reserves will be raised at this weekend's 2020 Summit in Canberra by the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor as an example of inadequate planning procedures in the Murray-Darling system.

Mr Windsor will use the proposed development by BHP, which is currently undertaking exploratory drilling on the Liverpool Plains around Caroona in his NSW electorate, to seek support for better research into the impact of coal mining on groundwater aquifers and possible damage to above ground farming operations.

“The Liverpool Plains is a highly productive black soil plain area underlain with interconnected groundwater systems that eventually enter the Murray Darling system via hydraulic systems.

Importantly, in terms of proposed mining, little is known about the science regarding these interconnectivity issues.

It was for this reason that an application was made to the previous Federal Government for a study into the impact of mining on groundwater and now before the new Government.

People are rightly concerned about the impact down the valley as, if the connection between the aquifers is broken by the mining, it could well be like cutting an artery and bleeding to death,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes the current State based planning procedures that the mining companies have to comply with, do not take into account possible downstream impacts.

“If we are serious about the Murray Darling system and the various connectivity issues involved, then the Commonwealth Government needs to be more involved in the approval process for mining in these areas.

A localised planning approval process is a recipe for disaster,” Mr Windsor said.

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