



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Bondi Beach important to Malcolm Liverpool Plains Groundwater important to us

Complaints about the loss of \$1.7m funding for the North Bondi Surf Club extensions by former Howard Government Minister for Water, Malcolm Turnbull are ironical according to the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor says Mr Turnbull guaranteed \$4.88m for the Liverpool Plains Groundwater Study but despite letters and going on local television news announcing the funding, Mr Turnbull failed to sign off on the commitment.

“It’s ironical that Mr Turnbull is now having to explain to people who put their faith in him and the former Government to deliver on their guarantees given before the election was announced.

It’s no good now pointing the finger at the new Government when it was the former Government that could have signed a contract and delivered a cheque to ensure the North Bondi Surf Club funding would be there regardless of the election outcome just as Mr Turnbull had the power to do for the Liverpool Plains Groundwater Study,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Turnbull is quoted in the Sun-Herald as saying, “The (North Bondi Surf) club has relied on the integrity of Government to deliver, and that integrity has been shattered”

“Mr Turnbull’s quote is quite unbelievable.

He shattered his integrity when he came up to the Liverpool Plains, made the announcement of funding, wrote off to the Chair and CEO of the National Water Commission Mr Ken Matthews on October 8 2007 asking “.. the National Water Commission to bring forward a study proposal, under the auspices of the \$52M National Groundwater Action Plan, to assess the potential impacts of mining activities on water resources and groundwater in particular” and then failed to deliver.

The Federal Election was then called on October 16 and since then a letter from the Hon John Anderson, former Member for Gwydir, sent to Mr Matthews dated November 19 set out his understanding of the meeting and the undertaking given by Minister Turnbull that the LPLMC proposal was to be funded as a priority, not as ‘co-applicant’ or competitor with any other proposals, the project was to be funded from

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the National Groundwater Action Plan and it was to be managed locally in Gunnedah by LPLMC with a senior representative of the National Water Commission to sit on the Project Steering Committee.

The Liverpool Plains Land Management Committee (LPLMC) put their proposal together and went through all the right channels achieving their desired outcome just as the North Bondi Surf Club no doubt did.

And no doubt just like the extensions to the North Bondi Surf Club are vital to their future, the study that was to be undertaken on the Liverpool Plains is a vital tool not only for the Gunnedah Basin but for other locations where mining and agricultural activities have possible impacts on each other which must be better understood through more accurate science.

For Mr Turnbull to now cry foul should be met with the contempt it deserves and whilst I feel for the North Bondi Surf Club, it should be a reminder to all of us that Government funding from either persuasion is never guaranteed until it's in the bank," Mr Windsor said.