



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## Media Release

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### **Windsor calls on coal companies to support independent Liverpool Plains groundwater study**

The impact of longwall coal mining on the Liverpool Plains and Namoi valley groundwater system was the central issue, Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor, raised in his address at the Gunnedah Basin Coal Conference today.

Mr Windsor earlier in the morning addressed a community rally, also in Gunnedah, organised by the Caroon Coal Action Group which sought to highlight the need for protection of the Liverpool Plains' prime agricultural land from the long term effects of mining.

In his address at the mining conference, Mr Windsor asked the mining industry to co fund an independent study into assessing the groundwater networks under the Liverpool plains which has never been adequately studied before.

The visit to Gunnedah comes on the heels of Mr Windsor's request in Federal Parliament that The Senate includes the Liverpool Plains groundwater and coal mining issues to be investigated by the Senate's Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee.

However the Federal Government is hesitating on any decision to fund the study.

"I have asked the mining industry to assist with funding for the independent study into the impact of longwall mining on the Liverpool Plains and in so doing make the proposition more attractive for the Federal Government to support.

"To refuse an independent study of the potential impacts of long wall coalmining—not only in highly productive food producing areas but in areas underpinned by interconnected groundwater systems that we have no knowledge of—is hypocritical," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that as a Nation we can't afford to let the State of New South Wales get some quick cash for coal mining exploration licences at the expense of Australia's groundwater resources.

"I call on the Prime Minister and the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts to take a stand and not to leave it to the New South Wales Government.

"If we are serious about the Murray-Darling, climate change, coalmining into the future and sustainability of food bowls and production, we have to have more knowledge of these groundwater systems and their interconnectivity.

"Otherwise fifty years from now, Australia will be asking similar questions about water – 'Why did New South Wales take the short-term cash option and destroy an interconnected system of highly productive groundwater aquifers?'" Mr Windsor said.

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