



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Nats choose miners over food producers

In a disgraceful back down, the National Party have removed support for an amendment to the Murray Darling Water Bill that would allow for a water study to take place before mining exploration licences were granted according to the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor said that the Nationals had supported the amendment on two occasions.

“Once in the House of Representatives when I moved it and then yesterday in the Senate after it was moved by Senator Bob Brown.”

The amendment states that before any mining exploration licences are granted for mining activity on floodplains that have underlying groundwater systems that lead to the inflows in the Murray Darling Basin, an independent study has to take place to determine the impacts on groundwater flows and water quality and that where a risk is identified the exploration licences should not be granted.

The amendment would deliver a process whereby prior to the granting of exploration licences a full understanding of the science of groundwater be known.

Yesterday in the Parliament, National Senators praised the amendment and themselves for supporting it.

Senator John Williams stated “There is no point in compromising the prosperity of the future and the capacity to feed ourselves for the sake of a 30 year window in mining.”

Whilst Senator Boswell said “Today we have delivered for the people of the Liverpool Plains.”

Senator Nash said “It is about a study to be undertaken about due diligence.”

She added “Senator Brown said that it is simply good country common sense which I think encapsulates the intent of the amendment completely.”

Senator Joyce said “I hope the message is conveyed to the people of the Caroon area that we will support them on this matter.”

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“Quite clearly the Nationals have exposed their true masters, the mining companies – not country people,” Mr Windsor said.

“The Nationals now support an arrangement where exploration licences will be granted on alluvial floodplains that have underlying groundwater systems that form part of the Murray Darling system without any scientific knowledge of those systems.

“The Nationals have also removed the critical clause: ‘where a substantial risk is identified exploration licences may be granted.’

“They now support a view that where a substantial risk is identified exploration licences may be granted.

“What an extraordinary contradiction of yesterday’s position.

“What an extraordinary display of being controlled by mining interests.

“What an extraordinary betrayal of people who have lived and worked within the basin.

“The position the National Party has taken today is to reinforce the existing state based approval processes that have shown to be flawed,” Mr Windsor said.