



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

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New groundwater quality study funding supports need for comprehensive Liverpool Plains Study

The announcement today of \$876,000 in funding to improve management of groundwater quality in highly developed aquifers in New South Wales by the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong highlights the need for the comprehensive study of the impact of mining on groundwater under the Liverpool Plains and further down the Namoi Valley according to the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Whilst Mr Windsor welcomes the Minister's announcement of the study that will investigate up to seven groundwater management areas in New South Wales where there is risk of declining groundwater quality, he believes the funding of such a study indicates the lack of knowledge currently available about groundwater and its interconnectivity between aquifers.

"The funding of more investigations into groundwater quality and yesterday's announcement of \$5.4m for the development of an 'atlas of ecosystems dependent on groundwater' is very welcome.

It highlights the current lack of knowledge about this very valuable resource, its sustainable use and its interconnectivity with other aquifers and surface water systems.

It also highlights the need for planning processes to better take into account the possible impact of disturbing groundwater aquifers through developments such as mining of these areas where groundwater passes under and through where mining could have both onsite and offsite implications.

It's a bit like 'the dial before you dig' process that developers in urban areas must undertake before they excavate to ensure they don't knock out telecommunications, water, gas or any other services buried in the ground.

We need to know the consequences of breaking the groundwater arteries before anyone digs otherwise the short term gain could really develop into a long term pain," Mr Windsor said.

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