



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Windsor welcomes Coalition support of Water amendment

Negotiations with the Coalition Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Water, Ian Macfarlane over a proposed amendment to require an independent assessment study to be done prior to mining exploration licences being granted for coal in areas on or adjacent to surficial aquifers that have underlying groundwater systems and form part of the Murray Darling system have been described by the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor as very fruitful.

Mr Windsor has previously proposed an amendment that the Coalition initially supported but then backflipped on after mining industry pressure however it now appears that following negotiations with Mr Macfarlane and Caroon Coal Action Group representative, Mr Tim Duddy that an amendment which covers the needs of the farm sector is now acceptable to the Coalition.

Mr Windsor has welcomed the Coalition's new position.

"I welcome the Coalition's reversal of its previous position on exploration licences on alluvial floodplains underlain with large quantities of groundwater.

"It has been a long drawn out process and I congratulate the Caroon Coal Action Group for their commitment to achieving a workable solution to the problem.

"I am seeking a legal interpretation of the final wording of the amendment to make sure there is no wriggle room however from negotiations with Mr Macfarlane it does appear to be a genuine attempt to deliver an outcome that delivers certainty to both the mining and farming sectors with regard to the fully understand the underlying interconnectivity of groundwater, surface flows and the impact that mining could have on these resources.

"The final wording of the amendment is very important so that no one is left in any doubt as to what can and can't be done in certain areas.

"Like the Coalition, I too encourage the Rudd Government to support the amendment, in the interests of the environmental, agricultural and economic future of the Murray-Darling Basin.

"I would also like to congratulate Tim Duddy from the Caroon Coal Action Group for his continued commitment to achieving this outcome and working with all sides to do it," Mr Windsor said.

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