



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## Media Release

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# Minister confirms visit to the Liverpool Plains

The Minister for Resources and Industry, Martin Ferguson has today confirmed that he will visit the Liverpool Plains on behalf of the Government to meet with the local community and with the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor to discuss the Independent Water Study of the Namoi Valley.

In May, the Prime Minister made a commitment that either he or one of his Ministers would attend the region, a commitment given in response to a question from Mr Windsor about Shenhua Coal's disregard for the impact of mining on water resources throughout the area.

Mr Windsor emphasised in his question to the Prime Minister then that, "it is imperative that before any mining takes place in the Liverpool Plains area that the Independent Water Study be allowed to take place."

Whilst Mr Ferguson stated that full responsibility for mining historically rested in the hands of State and Territory Governments, he acknowledged the significance of an Independent Water Study in response to strong community resistance to the mines.

Minister Ferguson confirmed his visit as part of his response to further questioning from Mr Windsor about the Liverpool Plains situation.

Minister Ferguson told the Parliament "... *There is then an outstanding question about a potential examination of water related issues, which, as the member for New England would appreciate, I have been having discussions about with our Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water, Senator Penny Wong. I treat the request for such an investigation seriously.*

*I remind the member that he asked the Prime Minister a question in the House about three or four weeks ago concerning this matter and that he was given an undertaking that I would visit the Liverpool Plains area for the purpose of having discussions with the member for New England with respect to these issues. At that time, I would also like to talk to him and the local community about the potential to undertake an independent water study."*

Mr Windsor looks forward to Minister Ferguson's visit reiterating what he said at the time of the Prime Minister's commitment to have a Minister visit the Liverpool Plains saying, "Every politician that actually sees the geography of the area can fully understand the risks that would be inherent in mining large sections of the Liverpool Plains floodplain."

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