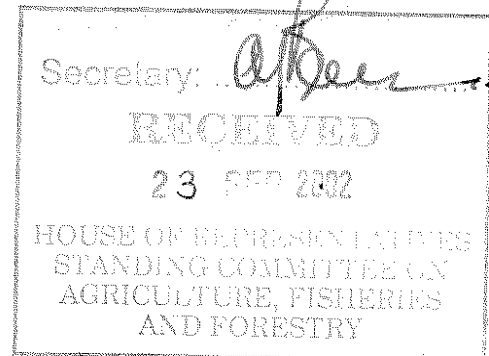




# Upper North Coast Water Management Committee

improving water management in the Clarence, Coffs Waterways & Bellinger Catchments

Mr Ian Dundas  
 Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry  
 House of Representatives  
 Parliament House  
 CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Dundas,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Inquiry into current and future water availability in rural Australia. Given the focus of the Upper North Coast Water Management Committee (UNCWMC) is Water Management Planning in the Clarence, Coffs Water ways and Bellinger catchments in Northern NSW, an inquiry of this nature is of great interest to the Committee.

At the last meeting of the UNCWMC, the members discussed the Inquiry and in particular the Committee's Terms of Reference as detailed. The Committee would like the following points to be considered in light of these Terms of Reference.

TOR Dot Point 1 – sustainable use of water for environment and users (ESD).

- Need to consider coast and inland separately (biophysical zones)
- Commonwealth to help industries structurally adjust
- Catchment based sustainability
- Water supply and water quality should be integrated
- Inter-governmental approach
- Resourcing – include environmental levy
- Whole of water cycle management
- Commonwealth government to reduce greenhouse gases through tree planting and reducing vegetation clearing and regeneration

TOR – Dot Point 2 – Stability of supply and storage of water for domestic and other use.

- Catchment approach
- Diversions not a major thrust for sustainability
- Need good science, particularly on the coast
- Salinity action plan a positive initiative
- Local solutions to local issues (think small and think innovative).

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TOR Dot Point 3 – Effect of Commonwealth policies and programs on current and future water use.

- Need national water policy (including new COAG policy)
- Integration of Fed/State/Local policies – driven from bottom up as well as top down

TOR Dot Point 4 – Commonwealth policies and programs to address competing demands on water resources.

- Focus on water efficiency and reuse
- Aboriginal rights for water
- Community sharing of cost for water management
- Add social and environmental issues to the COAG competition policy

TOR Dot Point 5 – Adequacy of scientific research on approaches for adapting to climatic variability.

- Cloud seeding may result in water diversion

With interest, the UNCWMC will be watching over the outcomes of this Inquiry. If the Committee requires any feedback or information input from a regional perspective this Committee would be more than happy to assist.

Yours sincerely



*for* Peter Cuming  
Chairperson  
9<sup>th</sup> September 2002