



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA
HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

PO Box 6021, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600 | Phone: (02) 6277 4162 | Fax: (02) 6277 4773 | Email: ra.reps@aph.gov.au | www.aph.gov.au/ra

09 February 2011

The Hon. Tony Burke MP
Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

As you are aware, the Standing Committee on Regional Australia has been undertaking a significant series of hearings and inspections as part of its inquiry into the proposed guide to the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

A number of issues have arisen consistently across the Southern Basin and the Committee is concerned that these issues need to be addressed as a matter of priority. Namely, the Committee is seeking that you investigate:

- the impact of the so called 'Swiss cheese' effect of water buy backs on irrigation districts and that, with urgency, consider more strategic buy back arrangement that may be implemented;
- the impact of the current taxation arrangements on irrigators as a result of water reform such as grants for investments in water efficiency;
- the implications of the Murray Darling Basin Authority's consideration of overbank flows in their modelling of the water requirements of the environmental icon sites and, in consultation with stakeholders, opportunities for engineering alternatives.

The Committee is of a consensus view that these issues be brought to your attention prior to it tabling its report.

Yours sincerely

Tony Windsor
Chair



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09 February 2011

The Hon. Simon Crean MP
Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

As you are aware, the Standing Committee on Regional Australia has been undertaking a significant series of hearings and inspections as part of its inquiry into the proposed guide to the Murray Darling Basin Plan.

A number of issues have arisen consistently across the Southern Basin and the Committee is concerned that these issues need to be addressed as a matter of priority. Namely, the Committee is seeking that you investigate:

- the impact of the so called 'Swiss cheese' effect of water buy backs on irrigation districts and that, with urgency, consider more strategic buy back arrangement that may be implemented;
- the impact of the current taxation arrangements on irrigators as a result of water reform such as grants for investments in water efficiency;
- the implications of the Murray Darling Basin Authority's consideration of overbank flows in their modelling of the water requirements of the environmental icon sites and, in consultation with stakeholders, opportunities for engineering alternatives.

The Committee is of a consensus view that these issues be brought to your attention prior to it tabling its report. I have also written to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely

Tony Windsor
Chair