



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Inquiry into rural skills training and research

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 15 August 2005

Chair: Alby Schultz MP

Committee investigates ways to reinvigorate agricultural extension in Australia

Committee Public Hearing in Parliament House, Canberra - 17 August 2005

Representatives from **Land & Water Australia** will appear before the House Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry on Wednesday (17 August) in relation to its inquiry into rural skills training and research.

The public hearing will take place **from 5.00 pm in Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra.**

Agricultural extension is a service or system targeting the facilitation of change in rural and regional people and communities

Land & Water Australia contend that there has been a "gradual disinvestment in the underlying extension profession, and the infrastructure that supports it".

According to Land & Water Australia the remaining advisors and new facilitators are often relatively young and lack significant experience. Most are on short term tenure, suffer from inadequate professional support, have poor training opportunities and limited career paths.

Land & Water Australia's submission (no. 89 on the committee website) provides a valuable insight into the process of achieving landscape-scale adoption of more sustainable land management practices through research and development, extension, and education and training.

Land & Water Australia suggests a strategy for the extension system in Australia be developed. The strategy would need to address a number of key issues in a coordinated and integrated manner, such as the clarification of the role of universities.

The committee is interested in Land & Water Australia's suggestions for the role of governments and reinvestment in extension.

Committee chair, Alby Schultz (Member for Hume, NSW), said the "committee is interested in discussing how Land & Water Australia have been providing research and advisory programs to rural Australia. In particular, we are interested in their approaches that enhance the 'adoptability' of research".

Further details about the inquiry, including terms of reference and submissions, can be obtained from the committee's inquiry website at

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/ruralskills/index.htm>

or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4500 or emailing Aff.reps@aph.gov.au.

For media comment: please contact the committee chair, Alby Schultz MP, on (02) 4822 2277 (electorate) or mobile 0428 693 553 or email Alby.Schultz.MP@aph.gov.au.

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