



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**MEDIA ALERT**

Issued: 7 October 2003

## The Wentworth Group to appear at inquiry into future water supplies for Australia's rural industries and communities

*Public hearing in Canberra, Wednesday 8 October, 2003*

The House of Representatives Agriculture Committee is examining the role of the Commonwealth in ensuring adequate and sustainable future water supplies for communities and industries in rural and regional Australia.

This Wednesday (8 October) the committee will conduct a public hearing with three representatives of The Wentworth Group: Mr Peter Cosier, Environmental Policy Specialist, WWF Australia; Prof Peter Cullen, Freshwater Ecologist and Australian Environmentalist of the Year 2001; and Dr John Williams Agricultural Scientist and Chief Land and Water, CSIRO.

The scientists who formed The Wentworth Group believe drought-proofing Australia is not feasible. They say that Australians must learn to live within the limitations of their environment and to adjust land-use practices and expectations accordingly. On 31 July 2003 The Wentworth Group published a '*Blueprint for a National Water Plan*' which advocates a number of water reforms to reverse the degradation of Australia's landscapes.

The public hearing will provide an opportunity for the Committee to learn more about the proposals advocated by The Wentworth Group.

The Committee Chair, Mrs Kay Elson MP, says the inquiry has generated considerable interest around Australia, with more than 165 submissions received from concerned organisations and individuals.

"Getting water management right, which includes the balance of allocations between different users, is crucial not only for the prosperity of rural Australia, but the nation as a whole," Mrs Elson said.

All submissions appear on the inquiry website at:  
[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/waterinq/subs.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/waterinq/subs.htm)

Media and the public are most welcome to attend the public hearing, details of which appear below.

<b>PUBLIC HEARING:</b>	5pm, Wednesday 8 October 2003
<b>WHERE:</b>	Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra
<b>Scheduled Witness:</b>	The Wentworth Group

A transcript of the hearing will appear on the inquiry website a few days after the hearing.

**For media comment, please contact:**

**Mrs Kay Elson MP**, Chair, House Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee, on (02) 6277 4274

For background information, including the full terms of reference and copies of submissions, please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4500 or visit the Inquiry website at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/waterinq/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/waterinq/index.htm)