



NEW INQUIRY

Managing, co-ordinating and implementing the best science to combat salinity: can it be done better?

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Science and Innovation is to conduct an inquiry into the Commonwealth government's role in managing and co-ordinating the application of the best science in relation to Australia's salinity programs.

The Committee will specifically consider:

- how the relevant science (including new scientific, technical and engineering knowledge) is being used in the management, implementation and coordination of salinity programs;
- the linkages between researchers and those implementing salinity solutions, including the distribution of research across jurisdictions, agencies, and decision-makers; and
- the adequacy of scientific and technical support to implement salinity management options.

Launching the inquiry, the House Science and Innovation Committee Chair, Mr Gary Nairn MP (Eden-Monaro, NSW), stressed the Committee was **not** investigating the causes of, or solutions to, salinity, but was concerned with investigating the federal role in the **management and coordination** necessary to ensure the successful application on the ground of the best scientific knowledge to address the salinity problem.

"The Commonwealth and the states have taken decisive steps to address Australia's salinity problem," Mr Nairn said. "Most recently, the Commonwealth and states have agreed to the *National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality*.

"The *National Action Plan* and state salinity strategies explicitly recognise the importance of salinity interventions being scientifically sound. It is essential that the best scientific knowledge and expertise are used to address the challenges presented by the nation's increasing salinity problem, and this inquiry is aimed at ensuring that structures are in place to guarantee that happens out on the ground."

The inquiry was referred to the Committee by the Minister for Science, the Hon Peter McGauran MP.

Interested organisations and individuals are invited to make written submissions to the inquiry by **Friday, 17 October 2003**.

The full terms of reference, advice on preparing a submission and other information relating to the inquiry can be obtained from the inquiry web site at: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/scin/salinity or from the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4150.

**For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Gary Nairn MP, on:
(02) 6297 3952 (Electorate Office) or (02) 6277 4939 (Parliament House)**

For further information, please contact the Inquiry Secretary
on (02) 6277 2324 or via email at Scin.Reps@aph.gov.au