



SALINITY SCIENCE REPORT

Science Overcoming Salinity:

Coordinating and extending the science to address the nation's salinity problem

RELEASED TODAY

Salinity research must be better coordinated and communicated, according to the House of Representatives Science and Innovation Committee report into combating the nation's salinity problem tabled today.

The Committee concludes that it is vital that viable salinity management options are developed and communicated to catchment management organisations and land managers.

Releasing the report *Science Overcoming Salinity*, the Committee Chair Mr Gary Nairn MP said: "The recommendations made in the report are aimed at improving the coordination of salinity science from the research level through to its application on the ground."

"We must ensure that farmers and catchment management organisations dealing with the problem of salinity on-ground are equipped with the necessary knowledge and resources to fight salinity," he said. "We should also continue to find economically viable management options, and if there are gaps in our scientific knowledge these need to be addressed."

The report's 24 recommendations fall into seven broad themes:

- enhancing the mechanisms by which salinity research is included in regional natural resource management planning processes;
- assessing the nature and extent of the Australian Government's investments in salinity research and development activities;
- improving the coordination of the salinity research effort, particularly through the continuation and expansion of the National Dryland Salinity Program;
- encouraging the development of new, economically viable salinity management options, and the establishment of an R&D fund to finance strategic salinity research;
- improving salinity data collection, management and retrieval systems;
- ensuring that relevant salinity research is extended to users, particularly farmers and catchment management organisations; and
- encouraging private sector involvement in salinity research, development and extension.

The Committee will conduct a media conference this afternoon.

MEDIA CONFERENCE DETAILS

DATE AND TIME: 4.00 PM, MONDAY 21 JUNE 2004
VENUE: PARLIAMENT HOUSE, COMMITTEE ROOM 2R2

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According to Mr Nairn MP: "Ensuring that sound scientific research underpins efforts to manage salinity is vital if the nation is going to effectively address this pressing environmental problem. Salinity is an issue that cannot be solved by governments alone. Indeed some of the most promising developments in salinity research and development are being made by the private sector, and successful on-ground works are being undertaken locally by farmers. Thus, we must ensure that viable management options are developed and extended to land managers battling salinity."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE INQUIRY:

The inquiry was launched in August 2003. In addition to advertising the inquiry, the Committee wrote to more than 250 stakeholders inviting them to make submissions. Public hearings were conducted in Sydney, Wagga Wagga, Shepparton, Perth and Canberra from October to December 2003. In total, 60 witnesses were examined.

The Committee received 81 submissions from a broad range of organisations and individuals, including: Australian and state government departments and agencies with responsibility for natural resource management; regional catchment management organisations; the higher education sector; and private sector organisations involved in product development and the provision of extension services.

Submissions to the inquiry, hearing transcripts and the full terms of reference can be accessed from the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/scin/salinity/

The report is available on the committee website, as are submissions to the inquiry, hearing transcripts and the full terms of reference:
www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/scin/salinity/

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

For further information, please contact the Committee Secretariat
on (02) 6277 4150 or via email at Scin.Reps@aph.gov.au