



Inquiry into future water supplies

Public hearing, Wednesday 13 November 2002

Peter Cullen at inquiry into future water supplies for Australia's rural industries and communities

Professor Peter Cullen will this Wednesday give evidence to the House of Representatives Agriculture Committee's inquiry into future water supplies for Australia's rural industries and communities.

Professor Cullen is a leading member of the 'Wentworth Group' of scientists, which has been active in presenting options for managing Australia's scarce water supplies.

He was the founding Chief Executive of the Cooperative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology, serving as Director from 1993 to 2002, and was awarded the Prime Minister's Prize for 'Environmentalism of the Year' in 2001 for his work on the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

House of Representatives Agriculture Committee Chair Mrs Kay Elson says that since the inquiry was announced, water has become a major domestic political issue, and ranks with the challenges to national security, as one of the two major policy issues facing the nation.

"It is now clear that getting water policy right is essential to the future of Australia," Mrs Elson said.

Water policy involves many of the perennial themes of the Australian Federation: private rights versus community benefit, commonwealth-state relations, and inter-state relations.

"These issues may be canvassed with Professor Cullen, as may the recommendations of the Wentworth group, of which he is a leading member," Mrs Elson said.

The inquiry into current and future water availability was announced in July and is looking at the role of the Commonwealth in ensuring adequate and sustainable supply of water in rural and regional Australia.

The inquiry has so far received more than 90 submissions.

PUBLIC HEARING

WHO: Professor Peter Cullen appears at House Agriculture Committee water inquiry
WHERE: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra
WHEN: Wednesday 13 November 2002, 5.00pm

For **media comment**, please contact:

Kay Elson, House Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee Chair, 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/index.htm