



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE
ON REGIONAL AUSTRALIA**
INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Chair: Mr Tony Windsor MP

Murray-Darling Basin Plan flows under Parliamentary scrutiny

The human impact of the proposed Murray-Darling Basin plan will come under the scrutiny of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia in an inquiry launched today.

The Terms of Reference require that the committee specifically focus on the socio-economic impact of the proposed Murray Darling Basin Authority's 'Guide to the Proposed Basin Plan' (the Proposed Basin Plan) on regional communities, with particular reference to:

- the direct and indirect impact of the Proposed Basin Plan on regional communities, including agricultural industries, local business activity and community wellbeing;
- options for water-saving measures or water return on a region-by-region basis with consideration given to an analysis of actual usage versus licence entitlement over the preceding fifteen years; and
- the role of governments, the agricultural industry and the research sector in developing and delivering infrastructure and technologies aimed at supporting water-efficiency within the Murray-Darling Basin.

In examining each of these issues, the Committee will also consider community views on:

- measures to increase water efficiency and reduce consumption and their relative cost-effectiveness;
- opportunities for economic growth and diversification within regional communities; and
- previous relevant reform and structural adjustment programs and the impact on communities and regions.

Announcing the inquiry, committee chair Tony Windsor MP said "The need to return water to the Murray-Darling is an accepted fact but this does not need to occur at the expense of regional communities. There has been a lot of concern expressed in communities and in the media about the impact Proposed Basin Plan. This inquiry is an opportunity to objectively assess solutions which will equally benefit the river and the community."

The committee invites interested organisations and individuals to make written submissions to the inquiry, addressing the terms of reference, by 20 December 2010. The Committee will be undertaking site inspections and public hearings in affected communities.

For media comment: please contact the Chair's media advisor, Graham Nuttall on 0412 916 040.

For information on the inquiry: contact the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4162, email ra.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's webpage at <http://www.aph.gov.au/ra>