



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

Chair: Mr Tony Windsor MP

INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

The River, Our Future, Your Say

Murray Darling Inquiry starts hearings in South Australia

The Inquiry into the impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan in Regional Australia will begin its hearings in South Australia this coming Monday keeping its chairman, the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor away from his beloved Tamworth Country Music Festival for the first time in twenty years.

Whilst Mr Windsor is disappointed that he will miss the Festival, he believes the importance of the Inquiry more than justifies his absence.

“The Inquiry is a major investigation into the future of the Murray Darling Basin.

“I am confident that it will have a strong influence on the direction that Government policy will take and what happens directly to people and communities in the Basin and as a result more broadly on the nation given the contribution that is made by this area to our nation.

“The Country Music Festival is a great annual event that I thoroughly enjoy along with the thousands of fans who come to Tamworth each year but this year the Inquiry into the impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan must take precedence.

“I wish all those attending the Festival a great time and trust that numbers will be high despite many people who would normally come being impacted on by the devastating floods in Queensland, NSW and Victoria.

“It is the fans who make the Festival the success that it is and I’m sure those who do get here will remember those who couldn’t this year and look forward to reacquainting themselves next year,” Mr Windsor said.

The Committee hearings begin at Murray Bridge in South Australia on Tuesday moving onto Mildura, Swan Hill, Bendigo, Shepparton and Griffith before moving further north to Narrabri, Bourke and Dubbo in Mid February and then further north into Queensland in mid-March.

Mr Windsor said the interest in the Inquiry reflected the overwhelming concern of people in the Basin.

“There have been over 530 submissions received by the Committee which reflects the overwhelming concern of people in the Murray Darling Basin to the guide.

“We have also had many groups wanting to address the Committee hearings directly not all of whom we have been able to accommodate given the time constraints, however I can assure people that their views and concerns will be taken into account in the final recommendations

that the Committee will provide to the Government and the Murray Darling Basin Authority have agreed to wait for the Committee Report before making their final report.

“There is a lot riding on this Inquiry and we must get the balance between the competing demands of the environment, the economy and social aspects right,” Mr Windsor said.

For media comment: contact the Chair’s media advisor, Graham Nuttall on 0412 916 040.
For information on the inquiry: contact the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4162 or 0407 406 337, email ra.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/mdi>