



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

*Chair: Mr Tony Windsor MP*

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## **Regional Australia Committee release report on the impacts of the Guide to the proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan**

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia today released a report on the impacts of the Guide to the proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan. The report investigates the impact that the Guide had on regional communities and presents a way forward that involves the local communities.

“The findings of this report show that there are win-win solutions to a lot of the problems in the Basin and that there is a better way through. It will still mean some change, but not great pain, as had been suggested by others” the Committee Chair Tony Windsor MP, said.

The Murray-Darling Basin is one of the most productive regions of Australia with a rich diversity of communities, landscapes and environment. The Committee heard a general agreement wherever it went that more water needs to return to the environment and an acknowledgement that, without healthy rivers, we cannot have long-term and healthy communities. But achieving this must be done in a way that gives Basin communities certainty and confidence about their future.

The Committee makes 21 recommendations in the report. The key recommendations in the report provide a pathway towards the changes that most agree are needed. The key recommendations cover:

- improving the way the authority proceeds in the next stages in the Basin Planning process;
- stopping all non-strategic water buyback immediately;
- establishing a national water fund to invest in water saving projects, environmental works and measures, strategic purchase of water entitlements and research to improve irrigation efficiency;
- the creation of a government owned corporation, a joint venture with state and territory governments, to manage the national water fund; and
- the creation of a standalone Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder.

“We owe it to the people of the Basin, to their willingness to put right the ramifications of decisions made by governments in the past, to find a way forward that helps build a more productive and sustainable future for the Basin” Mr Windsor said.

**The report is available from:** <http://www.aph.gov.au/mdi>

**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, email [ra.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:ra.reps@aph.gov.au) or visit the Committee website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/mdi>