



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**MEDIA ALERT**

Issued: 23 June 2003

## **CSIRO to appear at inquiry into future water supplies for Australia's rural industries and communities**

*Public hearing in Canberra, Wednesday 25 June, 2003*

The House of Representatives Agriculture Committee is examining the role of the Commonwealth in ensuring adequate and sustainable future water supplies for communities and industries in rural and regional Australia.

This Wednesday (25 June) the committee will conduct the sixteenth public hearing of its inquiry. Appearing will be representatives of the CSIRO.

The CSIRO (submission 59, available on the inquiry website) believes that the Commonwealth has a pivotal role in setting the values and direction—the vision—for water use in Australia. The vision should assert that (a) the primary right to water should be to satisfy the basic human need for sufficient water of adequate quality for drinking and hygiene, and (b) the environment has a right to have adequate water to maintain the integrity of dependant ecosystems.

The submission suggests that the commercial use of water needs to be tempered by a social allocation—there should be no permanency of right-to-use but rather a licensing arrangement with a set of safeguards of sufficient duration to give forward planning assurance, reduce risk and enable investment.

The Committee Chair, Mrs Kay Elson MP, says the inquiry has generated considerable interest around Australia, with more than 150 submissions received from concerned organisations and individuals.

"Good scientific research is vital to underpin policy development related to water resources. As Australia's pre-eminent scientific organisation, the CSIRO's contribution is crucial to achieving the optimal result for Australia," Mrs Elson said.

All submissions appear on the inquiry website at:  
[www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/wateringq/subs.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/wateringq/subs.htm)

Media and the public are most welcome to attend the public hearing, details of which appear below.

**PUBLIC HEARING:** 5pm, Wednesday 25 June 2003  
**WHERE:** Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra  
**Scheduled Witness:** CSIRO

A transcript of the hearing will appear on the inquiry website a few days after the hearing.

**For media comment, please contact:**

**Mrs Kay Elson MP**, Chair, House Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Committee, 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/wateringq/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/primind/wateringq/index.htm)