



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 25 November

The Murray Darling Basin Commission to appear at inquiry into future water supplies for Australia's rural industries and communities

Public hearing in Canberra, Wednesday 26 November, 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 (26 November) the committee will conduct a public hearing with representatives of the Murray Darling Basin Commission. This will be the final public hearing of this inquiry, with the Committee scheduled to table its report early next year.

The Murray Darling Basin Commission (submission 144, available on the inquiry website) contends that the Murray–Darling Basin Initiative has improved water security, slowed environmental degradation, mitigated the impact of salinity, and improved water use efficiency.

The submission suggests that the most critical challenge now is to improve environmental management of the Basin's rivers in order to prevent further degradation and improve the health of the river system. This public hearing will provide the Committee with an opportunity to get an update on the *Living Murray* process.

The Committee Chair, Mrs Kay Elson MP, says the inquiry has generated considerable interest around Australia, with more than 175 submissions received from concerned organisations and individuals.

"Getting water management right, which includes the balance of allocations between different users, is crucial not only for the prosperity of rural Australia, but the nation as a whole," Mrs Elson said.

All submissions appear on the inquiry website at:
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: 5.10pm, Wednesday 26 November 2003
WHERE: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra
Scheduled Witness: The Murray Darling Basin Commission

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