

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 172

asked on Wednesday, 21 February 2007

MRS ATTWOOD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

As a signatory to the National Water Initiative, has the Government's approach to water resource charges been in compliance with the National Water Initiative or not?

ANSWER:

The Government's approach to water resource charges has been totally compliant with the National Water Initiative (NWI). In a letter received on 6 April 2006, the Prime Minister confirmed that the NWI allows jurisdictions to recover from water users the costs associated with resource planning and management, and has encouraged the Queensland Government to continue with its timely implementation of the NWI as a high priority. In addition, the Federal Government has accepted the National Water Commission 2005 report affirming Queensland's compliance in its implementation of the NWI.

Nevertheless, in recognition of a lack of clarity on this issue at the national level and the recent agreement in principle whereby the Australian Competition and Consumer Commissioner will set water prices and charges in the Murray-Darling Basin, implementation of the Queensland charging regime will remain suspended until a national picture emerges.