



## The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP

Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister

Mr Colin Austin  
Lot 55, Elzeards Way  
Kookaburra Park Eco Village  
GIN GIN QLD 4671

11 MAY 2006

Dear Mr Austin

Thank you for your letter of 27 March 2006 regarding water policy and new technologies to harvest more rain in Australia.

The Australian Government is committed to improved water management in Australia and led the development of the National Water Initiative (NWI). The NWI was considered by the Council of Australian Governments and has been signed by the Australian Government and the governments of all states and territories. The NWI is the blueprint for water reform in Australia over the next decade. Implemented fully and effectively, the NWI will result in a nationally-compatible market, regulatory and planning based system of managing surface and groundwater resources for rural and urban use.

In addition, the government has established the \$2 billion Australian Government Water Fund to support the NWI and assist with the funding of practical water solutions, primarily through the Water Smart Australia programme. Water Smart Australia is a large project programme which supports on-the-ground water resource projects that will make a significant contribution to the sustainable and efficient management of Australia's water resources and promote the uptake of new technologies and practices. The programme is not intended as a substitute for the existing water supply responsibilities of the states but represents a significant commitment to the support of innovation and best practice.

Administration of the Water Smart Australia programme is undertaken by the National Water Commission (NWC). All project proposals that come forward for funding under the Water Smart Australia Programme will be given careful consideration by the NWC against the programme guidelines and on a competitive basis before advice is provided to the government for final decision. The guidelines for the programme can be found on the NWC's website, [www.nwc.gov.au](http://www.nwc.gov.au).

Thank you again for writing to me about this important issue. I trust that this information will be of interest to you.

Yours sincerely

**Malcolm Turnbull**