

# Tony Windsor MP

The New England Independent

Official Newsletter of the Independent Federal Member for  
New England Tony Windsor MP

November 2006



## To the Electorate

Dear fellow New Englanders

Like many regions across Australia, the New England area has unfortunately continued to be affected by ongoing drought conditions throughout much of 2006. In the face of this adversity, the resilience and determined nature of residents across our region has been truly outstanding.

I am pleased that Exceptional Circumstances Drought Assistance has been announced for farmers in the New England Electorate. I am hopeful that assistance will now be extended to small businesses whose income is reliant upon the agricultural sector and I will be lobbying strongly for this to occur.

The Government has forged ahead with the full sale of Telstra despite overwhelming community opposition, numerous regional service issues, adverse market conditions and a range of other critical concerns. This move will be a defining moment for the Government, particularly with the approaching 2007 Federal Election when the people of Australia will have the opportunity to have one more say on this issue.

My recent study tour of the United States and Canada has revealed many positive aspects associated with the production of ethanol and biodiesel. There are many lessons which Australia can learn from the success of these industries overseas and a summary of my tour is included in this edition of my newsletter.

As we approach the Christmas season my wife Lyn, our family and my staff join me in extending Seasons Greetings to everyone across the New England Electorate and best wishes for a safe, healthy, happy (and hopefully wetter!) new year.

  
Tony Windsor MP  
Member for New England



Peter Draper and I are working closely on sustainable water use for our constituents.

## New Water Bill to address Property Rights

The sustainability of Australia's water resources and the equity issues surrounding water policy at both State and Federal level need far greater cooperation than in the past.

Peter Draper and I have been working closely on this issue as well as the possibility of extending the capacity of Chaffey Dam.

Peter's Private Member's Bill - Water Management (Water Property Rights Compensation) Bill,

provides the framework for much needed investment security for water entitlement holders in the Peel and Namoi Valleys as well as other valleys in NSW.

The Federal Government has neglected to enact its promised Property Rights Provisions made under the Council of Australian Government's Agreement, but Peter's Bill will effectively deliver the same result for country people.

## Exceptional Circumstances Drought Assistance

At the time of writing, I am relieved to say that ALL of the electorate of New England has been included in the latest Exceptional Circumstances declarations made on October 24. The EC assistance will continue until March 31 2008. It also appears that the Rural Financial Counselling Services of the area will be bolstered to enable them to get out and help people in need of their services.

I thank the many affected farmers from the electorate who made contact with me, supplying me with details of their situation which I was able to give to the Minister to help make him and the Government better aware of the plight of many farmers in the New England.

I have no doubt that the weight of information provided by the farming community went a long way towards making the Government realise the extent of the problem and to overturn their previous decision to exclude areas.

Whilst I'm sure that the assistance will be welcomed by those who will receive this support, rain would be more welcomed and we're all very hopeful of that happening sooner rather than later. For further information call the National Drought Assistance Line on 132 316.

## Around the Electorate

### Medical School - Great News

In a major positive step for local rural health, the Federal Government has announced a total of 80 medical places at the University of New England (UNE) and the University of Newcastle to establish a Rural Medical School at UNE. I have, over many years been a strong advocate for the establishment of a Medical School in the region and am delighted by the announcement.

The success of the University Department of Rural Health at Tamworth Base Hospital and the development of a relationship between the University of New England, University of Newcastle and Hunter New England Health has, no doubt underpinned the confidence of Government to make this commitment. Well done to Associate Professor Peter Jones and his team.

### Dental Petition

The desperate need for significant improvements in dental health care is the subject of a petition being organised by Bendemeer residents Ruth and Charles Mathews.

I wholeheartedly support their petition and encourage you to join me.

The petition to the Speaker and the House of Representatives requests that the House introduces a National Dental Health Scheme to be funded by the Medicare levy.

The petition is available by contacting my office on TOLLFREE 1300 301 839

Recently in Parliament, I raised the serious issue of declining rural dentist numbers and training places for new dentists. Armed with the research of Armidale dentist, Dr Chris Cole, I put forward a number of suggested solutions.

## Ethanol Study Tour

During the winter break from Parliament, I spent a fortnight in the United States and Canada visiting ethanol and biodiesel plants. I was interested in the attitude of the farmers, the government, the fuel companies and the motor vehicle manufacturers towards the acceptance or otherwise of renewable fuels.

The overall impression was one of a very positive attitude to the future sustainability of fuel resources within those countries, particularly the

United States. There was a very positive attitude among farmers and the farm lobby groups and a high degree of leadership from State politicians. I think that stands in stark contrast to the dithering that has been going on in Australia since 2001 in terms of addressing renewable energy, particularly biofuels.

A copy of my report to the Parliament is available on my website.



The Pro-Corn Ethanol Plant in Minnesota

### NSW E10 Taskforce

As a result of my trip and long time interest in biofuels, the State Members for Tamworth and Northern Tablelands, Peter Draper and Richard Torbay, proposed my appointment to the NSW E10 Taskforce. The first meeting was held on 10 October where we set out our work program to address the terms of reference of the group to bring about a 10% mandate for ethanol in petrol in NSW. The Taskforce is a very positive step in the development of an Australian ethanol industry and I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to be part of it.

### Senate Inquiry - the truth trickles out

Former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson's staff member, Wendy Armstrong, has provided some interesting comments in an authorised biography about Mr Anderson in which she refers to Mr Anderson's meeting with Tamworth Businessman, Greg Maguire and Senator Macdonald.

In answer to a question to Mr Anderson in Parliament on 18 November, 2004 "was the possibility of the Member for New England pursuing a career outside Parliament ever discussed" and "were diplomatic and trade appointments mentioned in these discussions", Mr Anderson answered "no and no".

In the authorised biography, Ms Armstrong contradicts Mr Anderson's answer, detailing how Mr Windsor's future WAS discussed saying

"And then he (Maguire) said to him (Anderson), frustratingly, he said to him "Can't you find him (Windsor) a job? Can't you find him a Job? Can't you get him one of those ambassadorships?" Ms Armstrong goes on to recall "And John said, and this is his exact words,"That is not within my gift. That is the responsibility of the Prime Minister and Alexander Downer."

Greg Maguire is still under investigation relating to a possible offence regarding the withholding of political donation evidence from the Senate Inquiry. Senator Macdonald has been dumped from the Coalition's Senate ticket for the next election. Mr Anderson's Seat of Gwydir has since been abolished due to loss of population.

### Guyra celebrates 100 years - Opens new MPS

The Guyra Shire Council celebrated 100 years of serving the community and opened its new Guyra Multi Purpose Service (MPS). The MPS is jointly funded by State (acute care services) and Federal Governments (aged care services) and is a good example of governments working together.

The New England electorate now has seven MPS's either built or being built with Guyra now joining Walcha, Barraba, Bundarra, Bingara, Tingha and Emmaville.

## Telstra sale begun

I believe the decision by the Government to sell a portion of Telstra will be a defining moment for country Australia, with many people concerned about long term service delivery and the capacity for political influence in the telecommunications debate.

I will be working with like-minded people to encourage more Independents to stand at the next election on this issue and many others.

No government can guarantee services into the future if Telstra is fully privatised. There will still be 30% of Telstra in public ownership at the next election and I will be working to ensure that it remains so.

## Vegetable Creek Hospital Fete

As a result of the "Vegetable Creek MPS" being built, Emmaville is now attracting people back to enjoy the lifestyle in a close-knit community with heaps of spirit. The fete brings many people

to town with many activities to help raise funds for the MPS. The positiveness of Emmaville is infectious so a visit to the fete and other Emmaville attractions is highly recommended.

## Schools visits

A cheerful group from Nundle Public School at Parliament House and below, a Flag Presentation at Inverell Primary School with School Captains Luke Turner, Janet Turner, Karlene Fletcher and Patrick Freeman.



## New England grows - Inverell gains Electorate Office

The Federal Redistribution has resulted in the enlargement of the seat of New England to include the Quirindi based Liverpool Plains Council and the loss of the seat of Gwydir.

The New England Electorate is one of the 12 Federal Electorates now entitled to a second office due to the size of the seat. I am pleased to announce that I will be establishing a fully equipped and staffed office in Inverell. This will ensure better access to advice and services in the northern part of the electorate.

Welcome Liverpool Plains to the electorate.



## Around the Electorate

### UNE Research Grants

Three projects totalling nearly \$700,000 over three years have been recognised through the Research Council.

Congratulations to UNE teams led by Dr Nigel Andrew, Dr Bob Boughton and Dr Peter Clarke for their selection to undertake their projects and I look forward to seeing the projects as they develop and deliver their results for the benefit of the community. The research projects are:

1. Ecology of insect herbivore assemblages: Influence of climate, evolutionary history and plant traits;
2. An investigation into the contribution of the national adult education system to the post-conflict reconstruction and development of East Timor;
3. Fire severity, habitat heterogeneity and life histories. Resolving the persistence ability of plants in frequently fired landscapes.

### Tribute to Mr Bob Hyman - TAS Old Boy and Benefactor

TAS Old Boy, Bob Hyman who passed away recently was a man who loved his country and understood its history. He was involved in improving people's lives through his professional, personal, military, educational, cultural and political involvement in his community.

On a personal level, Bob Hyman as my Campaign Chairman in 1991 along with the late Don Barwick and the late Rupert Rowe was a prime mover in my electoral success.

Whether it be the Farmers' Rally in Canberra in 1985, the National Farmers' Fighting Fund, the nurturing of music in Tamworth, his beloved TAS School or his political involvement with Ian Sinclair, Noel Park or Tony Windsor, Bob Hyman's message was always the same - GET INVOLVED.

Bob Hyman, like his father before him, was a true leader.

## Congratulations Glen Innes Severn Learning Centre

The official opening of the Glen Innes Severn Learning Centre took place in late August. Congratulations to the Glen Innes Severn Council (and the former Glen Innes Municipal Council and the Severn Shire Council) for their persistence and commitment to achieving this wonderful community asset that will help give Glen Innes and District a facility that will enable local people to access better educational options without having to leave town.



Tony Windsor with Richard Torbay and Glen Innes Severn Mayor Steve Toms at the Glen Innes Severn Learning Centre opening.

## \$31.4M making the road a little smoother in your area

In 2006, our Electorate has received grants for many outstanding Government and community projects. This is a testament to local commitment, hard work and innovation.

Recently, the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, the Hon Jim Lloyd announced \$31.4M in grants to our local councils.

They are made up of a General Purpose and Roads Grant and are paid directly to Councils from the Federal Government. See adjacent table for grants breakdown.

Council	General Purpose	Roads
Armidale Dumaresq	\$2,365,213	\$978,318
Glen Innes Severn	\$1,764,980	\$939,428
Guyra	\$1,001,325	\$665,663
Gwydir	\$1,546,142	\$1,349,522
Inverell	\$2,592,006	\$1,435,275
Liverpool Plains	\$1,422,108	\$960,328
Tamworth Regional	\$5,567,882	\$2,859,322
Tenterfield	\$1,798,530	\$1,192,606
Uralla	\$1,015,684	\$672,472
Walcha	\$701,161	\$612,138



Tony with West Side Cottage coordinator Sue Beilby and Armidale Dumaresq Mayor Cr Peter Ducat.

## Girraween Community Cottage Project

The Girraween Community Cottage Project (Armidale Dumaresq Council) have received \$150,000 from the Federal Government's National Community Crime Prevention Programme – Community Safety Stream.

Under the same programme Tamworth Regional Council's Domestic Violence project has received \$5,000.

Challenge Tamworth has also received \$231,000 from the Regional Partnerships Program to help establish a specialised equine laundry service. The new facility will provide many employment opportunities, particularly for people with disabilities.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to the following people, plus all those celebrating 50th, 60th and 65th wedding anniversaries and 90th birthdays throughout the Electorate:

### 65th Wedding Anniversary

13/9/06 Don & Shirley  
Medhurst, Tamworth  
11/10/06 Leslie & Sybil Keelan,  
Glen Innes

### 70th Wedding Anniversary

1/8/06 Arthur & Daphne  
Morrison, Tamworth

### 72nd Wedding Anniversary

29/10/06 Boy & Leila Tinson,  
Tamworth

### 100th Birthdays

8/6/06 Elinor New, Inverell  
9/8/06 Clarice Elliott,  
Armidale  
3/9/06 Olive Morton, Barraba  
22/9/06 Gladys Wyndham  
Muller-Chateau,  
Inverell  
1/10/06 Claude Glock,  
Armidale  
16/10/06 Tekla Petrasz,  
Armidale

### 102nd Birthday

Ah Wai Jow, Tamworth

If you know of anyone celebrating a significant milestone, please contact my office 4 – 6 weeks prior to the event.

## Contact details

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Please contact my office so that an appointment can be made. Don't hesitate to inform my staff of your enquiry, as they may be able to help you on the spot.