

Tony Windsor MP

The New England Independent

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

February 2007



To the Electorate

2007 will be a very interesting year in Australian politics.

On March 24 there will be a NSW State election and sometime later in the year, there will be a Federal election too.

At the State level, there's every chance that there will be a 'hung parliament' – that is a Parliament where neither the Labor Party or the Coalition win enough seats to form government on their own and have to negotiate with Independent Members for support.

The last time this happened in NSW was 1991 when I was first elected to the State seat of Tamworth.

This would be a very positive outcome for country people in that they would be in a very strong position to bring about positive change to policies that impact on them without being tied to one side of politics or the other.

My experience in a hung Parliament was only good and I'm sure that our current Independent Members Peter Draper and Richard Torbay, if placed in this situation, would be able to work well together with the other Independents to deliver positive policy changes for country people, as well as delivering appropriate levels of funding to projects and programs that will assist country people.

At the Federal level, I look forward to the opportunity of continuing to work with the people of New England in supporting and helping to grow our communities.

We have great opportunities in the region given the right policies and associated encouraging support programs to make them happen.

Along with the expansion of the provision of government services in health and education, I will be working with community members and others to address our serious water issues and climate change challenges as well as for the provision of better infrastructure for people of the electorate to become more competitive on local, national and international markets.

Have a great 2007.

Tony Windsor MP
Member for New England



Tony Windsor, Peter Draper and Richard Torbay met with Bill Elliott, an Australian & International Renewable & Alternative Fuels consultant, in Tamworth to discuss the potential of the NE/NW region to be a producer of Renewable and Alternative fuels.

Australia left at blocks on Renewable and Alternative Fuels

Whilst the USA and Europe are boosting their commitment to renewable and alternative fuels so that they will be less dependent on fossil fuels and the Middle East oil producing nations, Australia has been left at the blocks. In the USA's case they are planning a fivefold increase in the present mandatory fuels target by 2017.

I will continue to press all those that are involved

in the decision making process to mandate the use of renewable and alternative fuels. With our massive production potential, Australia could be leaders in the world instead of procrastinators.

Thanks to Peter Draper and Richard Torbay for nominating me to the NSW E10 Taskforce which is examining the issue of a 10% ethanol mandate in NSW petrol.

Prime Minister's \$10B Water Plan

The Prime Minister's plan to remove state boundaries as an impediment to water reform is worthwhile although some parts of the ten point plan need further debate and, as with all policy announcements, the fine print needs to be seen.

Two obvious points needing clarification are suggestions by Malcolm Turnbull and the Business Council of Australia to use water pricing policy to divert inland water to Sydney and the NSW Nationals' plan to divert coastal rivers inland.

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister seems to have tried to address many of the impediments in the management of the Murray Darling system.

Around the Electorate

\$75,000 in Small Equipment Grants for New England Organisations

Thirty eight not-for-profit organisations will be receiving grants from the Volunteer Small Equipment Programme, which is administered by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The grants will help the organisations to continue to provide services to their communities whether they are emergency and counselling services or arts and recreational pursuits. For further information refer to my website: -www.tonywindsor.com.au

\$35.5M for Armidale based Sheep Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)

I am delighted that the UNE – Armidale Sheep CRC has received \$35.5m in funding to help it continue research into developing new technologies, improvements in the genetic make up of sheep and further enhancing the quality of the Australian wool and sheep meat industries. The CRC brings together Australian Wool Innovation, CSIRO, Meat and Livestock Australia, as well as universities and the relevant State Government departments.

Carbon Taskforce

The Prime Minister said he would consider a farm sector representative on the "Carbon Taskforce" in reply to a question I asked him in Parliament. Unfortunately this has not happened. The farm sector is a major player in any carbon emission debate as it can be a major part of the solution through improved carbon sequestration practices on farm.



Congratulations

Bruce McQualter – ANZ Bank Regional Manager for being a finalist in the Jobs Careers Future Awards - Outstanding Manager Category.

Bruce and Annie McQualter joined the then Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, the Honorable Kevin Andrews MP and Tony Windsor at Parliament House for his presentation.

Tribute to John Cox - Man of integrity

I was deeply saddened at the passing of John Cox - a community-minded man and political identity. I always found John fair and scrupulously honest.

Even though we did not always see eye to eye on all political matters, he could discuss any differences in a spirit of friendship. My condolences go to his wife Jenny and their family.

Gold Card campaigner loses own battle

Ken Coulton, who campaigned relentlessly for obtaining the Gold Card for World War II defence personnel who were prepared to defend Australia but did not directly face the enemy, has passed away aged 91, unfortunately becoming one of the 800 Veterans per month from this group who die whilst the Government procrastinates.

Salvos new Armidale offices

Major Edwin Cox, Major John Rees and Commissioner Les Strong with Tony Windsor enjoying a light moment deciding who made it rain at the opening of the Salvation Army's new Armidale offices.

Photo courtesy of the Armidale Express



New England water saving projects receive funding

Fourteen water saving projects in the New England electorate worth \$725,000 have been funded under the latest round of the Commonwealth Community Water Grants Programme. This Programme is aimed at helping localities being more efficient in the use of the available water by saving, reusing and improving the health of local water resources. The projects will be largely installed with community volunteer labour. It is particularly pleasing to see high schools and sporting bodies being involved.

The successful organisations are as follows:

Organisation	\$ ex GST
Barraba Golf Club Ltd	25,969
Girraween Public Sch P&C Assoc	44,594
Glen Innes Golf Club Ltd	45,273
Gwyder Shire Council	10,273
KA Durant & RG & VA Howie	24,468
Nundle Sport & Recreation Club Ltd	44,873
Pirates Rugby Club Inc Tamworth	48,178
TAFE NSW New England Institute	28,861
Tamworth Anglican College	44,636
Tamworth Regional Council	227,273
Tamworth Regional Council	45,094
Uralla Bowling & Recreation Club	45,317
Walcha Bowling & Recreation Club	45,468
Walcha Central School	45,287

Further information regarding the Community Water Grants programme can be found by visiting www.australia.gov.au/communitywatergrants



Leonie & Derek Rolph pictured receiving the Australian Defence Medal for their services to the Australian Defence Forces with Tony Windsor and the Mayor of Tenterfield Shire, Toby Smith. Presentations were also made in Armidale to Veterans from Glen Innes, Armidale, Uralla, Kentucky, Bundarra and Tamworth.

\$1.9M for New England schools

39 schools in the New England electorate received funding from the Australian Government's "Investing in our Schools Programme".

The 109 projects approved for funding cover a wide range of infrastructure and needs from information technology upgrades, library needs, musical instruments, sporting fields and equipment, science laboratory equipment, sheds, air-conditioning, machinery needs and shade structures.

The following schools were approved:

School	\$Grant
Armidale Public School	36,575
Bald Blair Public School Guyra	113,578
Ben View Public School Armidale	25,735
Bendemeer Public School	38,663
Bonshaw Public School	35,217
Bullimbal School Tamworth	32,391
Delungra Public School	44,490
Drummond Public School Armidale	21,536
Duri Public School	16,846
Gilgai Public school	113,041
Glen Innes High School	49,403
Glen Innes West Infants School	47,742
Gum Flat Public School Inverell	91,660
Guyra Central School	62,496
Inverell Public School	63,357
Jennings Public School Wallangarra	19,821
Kelly's Plains Public School	36,408
Kentucky Public School	14,032
Kootingal Public School	88,251
Limabri Public School	5,598
Mingoola Public School	12,114
Moonbi Public School	23,804
Nemingha Public School	84,252
Niangala Public School	2,073
Nundle Public School	28,619
Parry School Tamworth	61,195
Red Range Public School	49,018
Rocky River Public School	968
Ross Hill Public School Inverell	148,860
Somerton Public School	56,395
Tamworth High School	40,380
Tamworth South Public School	123,834
Sir Henry Parkes Memorial Public School Tenterfield	11,955
Timbumburi Public School	5,000
Uralla Central School	115,969
Walcha Central School	124,845
Woolbrook Public School	5,681
Woolomin Public School	80,868
Yetman Public School	12,610

Red Range Primary School receive recognition for Celebrating Democracy Week



Murrurundi Rail Tunnel Report welcomed

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has recently released their report into the Murrurundi Rail Tunnel Upgrade. Readers of this newsletter will be aware that I have been calling for the release of this document for some time.

The report gives a number of options costing from \$167M to \$465M with operational cost savings from 0.37 cents per tonne to \$1.18 per tonne. The report however indicates that for the project to proceed, it will require the coal industry to support and underwrite the successful option. My view is that there is a role for government to support this important piece of infrastructure, as the upgrade will benefit more than the coal industry.

I will be reconvening a meeting of the Hunter – New England North West Inter-Regional group to provide comment to the ARTC and to rally support from the coal and the grain industries to ensure that this report is not pigeon holed.



Understanding how Parliament works is essential for the survival of democracy

Barraba Central School students visited Tony in his Parliament House office during their visit to Canberra in November 2006.

Around the Electorate

UNE a centre for Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs)

The UNE is fast becoming known for its involvement in Cooperative Research Centres.

Currently the University is involved in 7 CRC's including the Sheep Industry CRC (subject of a separate article on the previous page).

The UNE is to be congratulated for its leading edge research, much of it connected with Australia's rural industries.

The following is a list of the CRCs that the UNE has involvement in:

- Cotton Catchment Communities CRC
- CRC for the Australian Poultry Industry
- The CRC for Beef Genetic Technologies
- Australian Sheep Industry CRC
- CRC for Australian Weed Management
- CRC for Irrigation Futures
- CRC for Spatial Information

In addition, the UNE hosts a number of other research centres and institutes such as:

- The Agricultural Business Research Institute
- The Centre for Ecological Economics & Water Policy Research

Detailed information can be found on the UNE web site www.une.edu.au (scroll down to research)

Inverell attracts Aeropelican to supply commuter air service

Congratulations to the Inverell community and its Council for once again turning a defeat into a victory. This resilient community has yet again shown what can happen when a positive approach is combined with a 'never give in' attitude.

Bingara leaders accept updated photos of the Queen on behalf of their organisations

When it was discovered that many public places in Bingara did not have up to date portraits of the Queen the Lions Club went into action and organised new portraits via my office.

Frames were made locally by Brian Dewitt.



Pictured above L to R Anne Withers (Touriana Lodge), Peter Macbeth (Principal, Bingara Central School), Catherine Egan (Deputy Mayor, Gwyder Shire Council) and John Bancroft (Returned Services Club).

Poll of wheat growers on export arrangements a goer

I am delighted that my investigations into conducting a poll of all Australian registered wheat growers on what they want to happen with the future export wheat marketing arrangements have proven that it can be done and with relative ease.

The Commonwealth Government has refused to conduct a poll to give them a definitive answer on what wheat growers want.

Mark Vaile has reneged on his undertaking given at Warracknabeal Victoria early last year to poll Australian wheat growers on any changes that may be proposed to our wheat export marketing arrangements.

The Government must be held accountable for its actions and the impact its decision will have on the 28,000 wheat growers of Australia.

A poll of all wheat growers will achieve this.

An independent study into Liverpool Plains coal mining is being considered by the Government

After being contacted by many groups and constituents regarding the possible impact of mining on groundwater resources in the Caroon/ Liverpool Plains area, I raised the matter in Parliament with the Prime Minister.

I was pleased to receive a letter from the Prime Minister following my question to him in Parliament concerning the National Water Initiative funds being accessed to fund an independent study into the problems that may occur due to mining in the sensitive Liverpool Plains catchment area.

In part the Prime Minister replied, "Should any matters of national environmental significance be identified as described in the Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, the Commonwealth will undertake an assessment of the impacts of the proposed development."

Taxation of groundwater compensation

Hopefully by the time you read this, the impasse over the taxation treatment of payments to groundwater users will be solved. With both the Prime Minister and the NSW Premier indicating the payments should be treated as compensation for the loss of a capital asset, I am confident of a positive outcome soon. Water users need to know so that they can plan for their financial obligations, especially during the worst drought in living memory.



Congratulations

Congratulations to the following people who have celebrated special milestones during the period November 2006 to February 2007. Congratulations also to the many people who have celebrated 50 years of marriage and 90th birthdays recently, unfortunately limited space prevents me from being able to list you all individually.

60th Wedding Anniversaries

Jack & June Musgrave, Tamworth
Mervyn & Gladys Rush, Inverell
Dick & Marie O'Brien, Elsmore
Laurie & Mim Hardcastle, Tamworth
Maxwell & Marie White, Tamworth
Phillip & Joyce Pearson, Armidale
Hilary & Mildred Burton, Quirindi
William & Marjorie Humphrey, Armidale
Lance & Nancy Kent, Inverell
Donald & Werna Ison, Walcha
Leonard & Nancy Waters, Armidale
Alfred & Elvie Hancock, Inverell
Kenneth & Monica Coles, Tamworth

70th Wedding Anniversaries

Tom & Emily Heiler, Boggabri

100th Birthdays

Alice Thompson, Tenterfield
Bant Iliff, Uralla
Isabell Reading, Bingara

If you know anyone who may be celebrating a special milestone such as a 90th or 100th birthday, 50th or 60th wedding anniversary, please don't hesitate to contact my office to arrange for congratulatory messages to be sent.

Contact details

Toll free 1300 301 839
Address Shop 5/259 Peel St
Tamworth NSW 2340
Post PO Box 963
Tamworth NSW 2340
Phone (02) 6761 3080
Fax (02) 6761 3380
Email: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au
Website: www.tonywindsor.com.au

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.