

Tony Windsor MP

The New England Independent

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

February 2008



Decision to Postpone the Telstra CDMA Network Closure Applauded

I was pleased the Minister for Broadband, Communication, and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy announced that the closure of the CDMA mobile phone network would be postponed until 28 April 2008.

This follows the previous Government's requirement that Telstra should not close the CDMA network unless the Next G network can offer similar phone service in regional Australia.

The Minister also suggested the handsets that Telstra sold early in the process that did not meet the purposes for which they were required should be replaced.

I hope that Telstra takes notice of this advice and proceeds to regain a lot of the goodwill that it has lost. As readers will know, I have been highlighting this issue for some considerable time and am very pleased that the postponement has occurred.

Werris Creek Railway Monument Dedication & Flag Raising Ceremony

The Australian Railway Monument was established to pay tribute to those railway employees who lost their lives whilst serving our country's railway systems. The monument, situated within the grounds of the historic Werris Creek Railway Station precinct, was opened by the Hon Milton Morris AO, former NSW Transport Minister, who has been an ardent supporter of the project.

Eleven flagpoles were commissioned to display the National, State, Territory and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Flags. All States and Territories cooperated to supply the names of the deceased railway workers.

For further information visit www.peterdraper.com.au



Seen in above photo - Luke Donnellan MP (Member for Narre Warren North, Victoria & Parliamentary Secretary to John Brumby, Victorian Premier), Hon Milton Morris AO (Special Guest - former NSW Minister for Transport & Chair, Hunter Valley Training Co), Chris Holley (Australian Rail Monument), David Screen (Rail Heritage Office), Marianne Hammerton (Chief Executive Officer, Rail Heritage NSW), Tony Windsor MP, Ian Lobsey (Mayor, Liverpool Plains Shire Council) and Peter Draper MP.

To the Electorate

I am very honoured to have been re-elected as your Federal Member of Parliament. Thank you. I will continue to work as I have done in the past by putting the needs of the Electorate and regional Australia first in all my parliamentary endeavours.

Congratulations to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and his team upon their Party's election to Government as well as all re-elected and new Members of Parliament from both sides of the House.

The electorate at large has presumably voted for change on the basis of the various promises and announcements made during the election campaign.

This does not mean that we should not review the future outcomes of some of these promises.

For example, there is an ongoing debate regarding the trade offs being made between tax cuts and the urgent need for upgrades to many of our major infrastructure and social services items. This is one debate that I will follow closely during this parliamentary term especially when it concerns the impact it has on Regional Australia.

Finally, I believe that the Government should say "Sorry" for injustices by past governments when Aboriginal children were removed from their parental homes.

The quicker we can do this the better, so we can all move on and address the many issues currently facing Aboriginal communities.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Windsor".

Tony Windsor MP
Member for New England

Ross Hill Public School Student Excels in Major Competition



Izebilla Steenbeeke receiving her awards for excellence in the University of NSW 'International Competition and Assessments' Australasian competition.

Izebilla received a High Distinction in Science, a Distinction in Computers and English and a Credit in Maths as well as winning her School Award for Excellence in all key learning areas.

Three New Family Support Services for Electorate

The Attorney General Hon Robert McClelland has recently announced three new services to help families in the New England/North West. These are as follows:

- A Family Relationship Centre
- A Post Separation Cooperative Parenting Service
- A Children's Contact Service

The New England North West Family Relationship Centre Consortium has been asked to commence funding negotiations to establish the services.

The consortium is made up of Centacare (Diocese of Armidale), the Anglican Counselling Service and Tamworth Family Support. It is pleasing to see this level of cooperation among the service providers.

These important services will be a great help to families going through the traumatic experience of family breakdown.

Where has the Gunnedah Basin Groundwater Study Funding Gone?

A \$4.88M Coalition Government pre-election commitment to fund an independent study of coal, groundwater and surface resources of the Gunnedah Basin appears to have disappeared.

There appears to be considerable confusion between what the former Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, requested and what the CEO of the National Water Commission, Ken Mathews understood regarding that request. The Hon John Anderson, who attended the meeting between the Minister and the Liverpool Plains Land Management Committee, was very clear that the proposal was to be funded as a priority not as a co-applicant or competitor with any other proposal.

Representatives of the LPLMC and Namoi Water have since met with Mr Mathews only to be advised that the letter received from the Minister was insufficient authorisation and he did not consider that he had received any such direction from the Minister.

I now will take the matter up with the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Penny Wong, to have the study application resubmitted.

Fuel Taxes

Did you know that the Federal Government takes approx 50+ cents from every litre of petrol sold or in other words between 30% and 35% of the total bowser price for petrol goes directly into the Government's coffers.

Not only is this a vast imposition on the general motoring public of Australia but also a direct impost on regional Australia as regional commuters do not have access to the public transport systems available to their metropolitan counterparts.

I wonder how many Australians would opt for tax cuts over a reduction in fuel prices?



Tony receiving the William Wilberforce Parliamentary Award for Life Freedom and Family from Mr Bill Scott of Tamworth (representing the Australian Christian Values Institute).

Moree Yetman Toowoomba Rail Link an Opportunity for New England

This recently announced privately funded railway link could provide the basis upon which the north of Armidale rail corridor concept could be reinvigorated.

A private consortium negotiating with the New South Wales and Queensland Governments could be considered and would open up the potentially profitable Sydney to Brisbane freight route and enable the Melbourne to Brisbane freight route to connect.

Service Medal Awards Ceremony



I am pleased to have presented Australian Defence Medals to Mr Kerry White and Mr Peter Szumowski at a ceremony in Inverell late last year. Congratulations and thank you to Kerry and Peter.

New Inverell Electorate Office

The official opening of the new Inverell Electorate Office will take place on 29 February 2008. The office is an important part of the Electorate's infrastructure and has been established to make it easier for the community to contact their parliamentarian and access services.

Contact information is as follows:

88 Otho Street Inverell NSW 2360

PO Box 299A

Tel: 02 6721 0144

Fax: 02 6721 0288



The Hon Tony Burke receiving an Akubra at Inverell, during his tour of the New England Electorate.

Other centres that were visited over a three-day period were Tamworth (and surrounding districts of Duri, Nemingha and Timbumburi), Armidale, Guyra, and Glen Innes.

The Hon Tony Burke, MP Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry visits the New England Electorate

I was pleased to host the Hon Tony Burke during his tour of the New England Electorate.

He was able to see first hand grain, cattle, sheep and egg production as well as meeting representatives from the irrigation industry, feedlotter and various cooperative research centres. He also met with the Upper Timbumburi Landcare Group to inspect their award winning environment management practices.

Having got to know Mr Burke during the previous parliamentary term, I have found him to be a good listener and open to logical argument based on the issues.

Did You Know?

Last year's taxation rebates and other forms of government concessions amounted to fifty billion dollars. This is more than the combined cost of the Health, Education, Defence and Social Security budgets.

The nation cannot expect to continue to fund essential infrastructure and services and continue these enormous rebates and concessions.

Readers are encouraged to seek further information regarding the articles in this Newsletter by visiting:

www.tonywindsor.com.au

or contacting my office by phone, fax or email (see back page for numbers/address).

Guyra Lamb and Potato Festival a Success

Festivals and events are an important part of the social and economic fabric of regional Australia. The Guyra Lamb and Potato Festival is a perfect example.

Initially the Guyra Potato Festival struggled in its early years, but through the tenacity of the committee and the growing support of local residents, the Festival is now a confident, mature, event that is one of the highlights of the region.

Congratulations to President Ron Lockyer and his enthusiastic team.

Photo: Ron Lockyer, President of the Festival Committee, Tony Windsor and Dennis Deonysivs from Westbrook, Queensland.



Final Federal Election Count for New England Electorate

First Preference – Enrolment 91,370 turnout 95.94%

Candidate	Party	Votes	%	Swing
DETTMANN, Brian	One Nation	1,071	1.26	-0.28
WINDSOR, Tony	Independent	52,734	61.94	+7.24
WITTEN, Richard Innes	Citizens Electoral Council	225	0.26	-0.32
BETTS, Phil	Nationals	19,850	23.31	+2.54
BRAND, Luke	Country Labor	8,368	9.83	+0.65
TAYLOR, Bruce	The Greens	2,892	3.40	-0.06
Stood last election	Liberals and other	0	0	-9.58
Total Formal voted		85,140	97.12	-0.09
Total informal		2,522	2.88	+0.09
Total		87,662	95.94	-0.50

Two Candidates Preferred

WINDSOR, Tony	Independent - Elected	63,286	74.33	+2.95
BETTS, Phil	Nationals	21,854	25.67	-2.95



Australian Electoral Commission Divisional Returning Officer for the New England Electorate, Mr Malcolm Pullen, presenting the final results of the 2007 Federal Election.

Rudd Government Ministry – 42nd Parliament

The new Ministry is listed below:

Cabinet

Prime Minister

The Hon Kevin Rudd, MP

Deputy Prime Minister Education Employment & Workplace Relations Social Inclusion

The Hon Julia Gillard, MP

Treasurer

The Hon Wayne Swan, MP

Immigration & Citizenship (Leader - Government in the Senate)

Senator the Hon Chris Evans

Special Minister of State Cabinet Secretary (Vice-President - Executive Council)

Senator the Hon John Faulkner

Trade

The Hon Simon Crean, MP

Foreign Affairs

The Hon Stephen Smith, MP

Defence

The Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, MP

Health and Ageing

The Hon Nicola Roxon, MP

Families, Housing, Community Services

& Indigenous Affairs

The Hon Jenny Macklin, MP

(Leader of the House) Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government

The Hon Anthony Albanese, MP

Broadband, Communication and the Digital Economy (Deputy Leader – Govt in the Senate)

Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy

Innovation, Industry, Science & Research

Senator the Hon Kim Carr

Climate Change and Water

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Environment, Heritage and the Arts

The Hon Peter Garrett, AM, MP

Attorney General

The Hon Robert McClelland, MP

Human Services (Manager Government Business - Senate)

Senator the Hon Joseph Ludwig

Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry

The Hon Tony Burke, MP

Resources, Energy & Tourism

The Hon Martin Ferguson MP

Finance & Deregulation

The Hon Lindsay Tanner, MP

Outer Ministry

Home Affairs

The Hon Bob Debus

Assistant Treasurer Competition Policy & Consumer Affairs

The Hon Chris Bowen, MP

Veterans' Affairs

The Hon Alan Griffin, MP

Housing

The Status of Women

The Hon Tanya Plibersek, MP

Employment Participation

The Hon Brendan O'Connor, MP

Defence Science and Personnel

The Hon Warren Snowdon, MP

Small Business, Independent Contractors & the Service Economy Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation

The Hon Craig Emerson, MP

Minister for Superannuation and Corporate Law

Senator the Hon Nick Sherry

Minister for Ageing

The Hon Justine Elliott, MP

Minister for Youth and Sport

The Hon Kate Ellis, MP

Congratulations

Congratulatory Messages from
Dec 07 to Feb 08.

105th Birthday

Alison Ehsman of Inverell

100th Birthdays

Ruby Mounter of Armidale
Nancy Shepherd of Kootingal
Colin Webb of Glen Innes

70th Wedding Anniversary

James & Edna Johnson of Yarrowyck

60th Wedding Anniversaries

Athol & Una Jones of Tamworth
Len & Nancy Jones of Tamworth
Gordon & Aileen Kitching of Inverell
Les & Hazel Smith of Tenterfield
Wilfred & Ethel Bailey of Tamworth
Leslie & Elsie Sipple of Nundle
Ron & Edna Young of Tamworth
Maurice & Dorothy Thompson of
Kootingal
Gerald & Val Stoddart of Armidale
Gordon & Yvonne Ward of Armidale
David & Jill Hynes of Tenterfield
Chris & Aline Christenson of Armidale

50th Wedding Anniversaries

Neville & Fay Manuel of Tamworth
Colin & Patricia Carpenter of
Glen Innes
Robert & Pamela Bensley of Inverell
Noel & Helen Anstee of Inverell
Max & Fay Skinner of Guyra
Col & Phyllis Mephram of Armidale
Guy & Sally Robinson of Glen Innes
Neville & Bonnie Thomas of Tamworth
Jack & Joy King of Tenterfield
Keith & Alison Taylor of Tamworth
Reg & Grace Whitby of Tamworth

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