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Media Release

11th February 2002

Federal Government reps on Equine Centre Board inept

Federal Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor is dismayed at the comments made by National Party Senator, Sandy Macdonald about the circumstances surrounding the slowness of an answer from the Federal Government on the funding of the Australian Equine and Livestock Centre proposed for Tamworth.

“It appears that even though Senator Macdonald and the former Member for New England, Stuart St Clair were both on the Steering Committee for the Australian Equine and Live stock Centre, that they did not give the Committee the correct advice on how to obtain Federal Government funding,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor was speaking about the belief of the Committee that it had made application to the Federal Government via the appropriate then Minister for Sport and Tourism, the Hon Jackie Kelly.

“The Committee, represented by its Chairman, Peter Botfield and Tamworth City Council Senior staffer, Paul Anderson attended a meeting set up by Senator Macdonald with one of Minister Kelly’s Senior Advisers at which they discussed the project and left a copy of the report and a request for Federal Government funding of the project.

Further, John Anderson, Minister for Transport and Regional Services as well as Deputy Prime Minister, has been given three copies of the submission.

To now have a spokesman for the National Party in Canberra claim that no formal submission had in fact been lodged is just an excuse to delay proceedings,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor, the convenor of the original meeting of the user groups and a member of the Committee, believes that Senator Macdonald should have been fully aware of the requirements and guided the Committee to do it right the first time.

“For Senator Macdonald to say that the problem had been compounded by the fact that some people apparently did not know that applications for federal funding usually had to be made via such channels as the Regional Assistance Program or the National Heritage Trust but that it had been deemed more prudent to seek the necessary funding via a pre-budget submission is just splitting hairs.

If the Committee should have made the submission to the Budget Policy Division, the Committee should have been informed by the two National Party representatives on it. Why didn’t they? They were there to help get through the maze to the Federal Government funding as I was to obtain State Government funding.

Any other explanation is just an excuse for their ineptitude,” Mr Windsor said.

Further information from Tony Windsor on 0427 66 8868 or 6761 3080