

Tony Windsor MP

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Anderson Fails Medical Test - Windsor

Country Australians can have little confidence in the non-answer given by Leader of the National Party, John Anderson to a question by Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor in Federal Parliament today.

Mr Windsor wasted no time in seeking a commitment from the Government to addressing the crisis of Country Doctors.

In answer to a question from the MP for New England, Tony Windsor regarding the inequity of the allocation of Medicare dollars to country areas, Mr Anderson failed to address the issue and played the traditional game of blaming the States for all the problems of health.

Mr Windsor highlighted the recommendation made by Gunnedah based Medical Director of Barwon Division of General Practice, Dr Grahame Deane that country Australians received less than half their share of Medicare dollars.

“The solution delivered by Dr Deane at the Regional Forum held in Tamworth in September last year was ignored by Mr Anderson.

The Forum was instigated, convened and opened by John Anderson but he refuses to address the issues raised, and further refuses to listen to recommendations given in good faith,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that rather than denouncing the States, Mr Anderson should address the Federal issues relating to equity of Medicare Funds.

“\$149 per patient per year in the city is spent from Medicare funds compared with just \$61 per patient per year in Country Australia.

The Medicare scheme and the provision of Medicare Provider Numbers are Federal issues – not State issues,” Mr Windsor said.

“Mr Anderson failed to even consider the use of Medicare Provider Numbers on a geographical basis as a means of addressing the inequity despite having admitted in his answer that it would be some years before trained rural kids would be able to ease the demand through Bonded Scholarships and other long term programs.

We need an immediate solution so we don't lose more population through the lack of doctor services,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor added that many people from across the New England North West, including himself, attended the Regional Forum in good faith.

“Why attend Forums like this if solutions recommended by country people are ignored,” Mr Windsor questioned.

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