

The Editor  
Northern Daily Leader  
PO Box 525  
Tamworth NSW 2340

28<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Dear Editor

I note with interest the concern for my welfare as a new Federal MP, particularly from my National Party friends and would like to put some minds at rest.

Having spent my first two weeks in Parliament, I have found the other Members of Parliament on both sides of the House and the staff of the building to be extremely welcoming and accommodating.

- 1 I note concern that I may be ignored and suggest that quite the reverse has been the case. The Speaker, the Whips of the Parties, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and many Ministers have made themselves available and are most cordial.
- 2 There wasn't a walkout by any side of the Parliament during my maiden speech (as occurred at my final speech in State Parliament by the National Party). In fact about 50 Members from both sides of the House were in attendance and many congratulated me at my completion, which I greatly appreciated. I also attempted to sit in on as many maiden speeches of other new Members as possible and thoroughly enjoyed their enthusiastic views.
- 3 I think the Federal Parliament will be a more friendly environment than the State "Bear pit" partly because all Members of Parliament have to travel and are away from home, whereas in Sydney, many considered it a day job and could be with their families after Parliament.
- 4 I do thank all those who have displayed concern for my wellbeing. However, I can assure you I am enjoying the task of representing the New England Electorate and contrary to a view of some people, I am not having trouble communicating your views within the Parliament or to appropriate Ministers.

If I see or have brought to my attention any inequity towards the New England Electorate or the broader country community, then I will continue to expose and pressure those who purport to represent country people yet cave in to Party room pressure. On issues such as Country Doctors, I cannot stand by and allow inaction to go unnoticed when there have been solutions proposed by country people for both long and short term outcomes which are dismissed without so much as a proper investigation. We must all maintain the pressure to ensure our needs are met and not diverted because we, in the country have not taken a stand on the things that are essential to our way of life.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Yours faithfully

Tony Windsor MP