



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Tuckey's Telstra sale push shows true Government colours Litmus test for country representatives - Windsor

Independent Federal Member for New England, Tony Windsor has described Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, Wilson Tuckey's comments on selling Telstra as an indication of the true colours of the Coalition's intention to sell off the rest of the 51% ownership of the telecommunications provider as soon as possible.

"Wilson Tuckey is the chosen one to run the ball up on the full sale of Telstra as soon as possible rather than ensuring telecommunications services in the country are equal to those available in the metropolitan areas," Mr Windsor said.

The full sale of Telstra appears in forward estimates in the Budget brought down last week by the Federal Treasurer.

"Once Telstra is out of Government ownership, the ability of the country to demand equity of service will diminish considerably.

Big business, driven by the need to return a dividend to its shareholders, will see that providing services to the country is not as profitable as in metropolitan areas.

It will therefore focus on servicing the metropolitan areas and provide only essential services to the country thereby neglecting country people who need access to the best telecommunications technology at affordable rates to be able to compete in the global market," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor describes the full sale of Telstra as a Litmus Test for country representatives in the Parliament.

"Country people have made it very clear to me that they want Telstra to remain majority Government owned to ensure access to the highest quality telecommunications available.

The spotlight will be on those Members of Parliament who represent country people to reflect the wishes of the majority of country people and vote to maintain Telstra in majority Government ownership.

To vote to sell off all of Telstra will bring much pressure on these Members and I would urge country people to make sure that their local member knows their feeling towards this very important issue," Mr Windsor said.