



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Government uses numbers to stop debate on Public Liability Insurance

Federal Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor is extremely disappointed that the most important issue before the Australian community, that of public liability insurance was gagged in the Federal Parliament today.

Mr Windsor, who was to speak in the debate said, "I cannot believe that given the stress in the community over medical Indemnity and Public Liability that the Government would not debate the issue with a view to developing solutions to the problem.

The public has been waiting weeks for the Parliament of this country to debate this issue and show some leadership for Doctors, community groups, non-profit voluntary organisations and the eco-tourism industry.

But as soon as the debate was to start, the Liberal and National Parties vote any debate down."

Mr Windsor explained that the Government then moved to debate the "Space Activities Amendment Bill" instead of debating the critical issue of insurance.

"I think the Australian public are much more interested in what's happening in Australia rather than what's happening in space.

I think the people of Australia would want to make sure that there will be a 'space' in a doctor's surgery and a 'space' for their children at a pony club or a 'space' for a Lions Club to do their charitable work.

If the Federal Parliament continues to deny debate on this crucial issue, perhaps the voters of Australia should make some 'space' for those in Parliament," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor then spoke during the Space Activities Amendment Bill debate to express his disgust.

"It is ironic that the Space Activities Amendment Bill has as its first amendment 'Capping the amount of insurance required to be procured by proponents for each launch at \$750 million. It provides for the Commonwealth to accept liability for third party Australian nationals above the insured amount for up to \$3 billion (the Commonwealth is already liable for damage to foreign third parties under United Nations Conventions)'.

"It really is quite pathetic to have gagged debate on the domestic public liability insurance," Mr Windsor said.

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