



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
INDEPENDENT
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Suite 2, Level 1
307 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02) 6761 3080

Toll Free: 1800 66 8855

Fax: (02) 6761 3380

e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au

Web Page: www.tonywindsor.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nationals let the country down – again - Windsor

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor expressed his disappointment in the Nationals failure to support his motion to debate zonal taxation proposals in the Federal Parliament yesterday.

“Zonal taxation proposals have been floated by the National Farmers Federation, the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Local Government and Shires Association as well as being pushed by my predecessor, former National Party Member for New England Stuart St Clair.

The National Party Member for Parkes, John Cobb, has more recently promoted the proposals.

However, when it came to the crunch on the floor of the Parliament, the 13 National Party members voted against bringing on the debate along with their Liberal Coalition partners, yet I was supported by Labor Party members who went against a Parliamentary ‘Gentleman’s’ agreement not to support such suspension of standing orders motions,” Mr Windsor said.

The vote was lost 78 – 59 yet could have been won 72 - 65 had the 13 National Party members voted to support this much-needed debate on a proposal which could see some very positive outcomes for country Australians.

“It is very disappointing that with their much touted holding of the balance of power, the National Party has voted against the interests of their constituent base, the people they so fervently say they represent, country people to block even a debate on the issue.

There is one thing worse than not having the balance of power, it is having it and not using it for the betterment of your constituents,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes it was ironic that Parramatta Liberal MP, Ross Cameron, moved the gag.

“Ross Cameron, I’m sure country people will recall, is best known in country circles for his dismissal of any support for country people and for his attitude that country people should just move to the city if they can’t make it in the country and stop whinging.

This is the type of city Liberal that is having such an over-ruling influence on the National Party,” Mr Windsor said.

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Mr Windsor believes that if anyone was in any doubt about the coalition parties amalgamating, yesterday indicated that they are amalgamated in but name now.

“The blocking of debate on such a critical issue as population drift and zonal taxation proposals follows a well worn path of betrayal of country people.

Others include the failure to debate public liability insurance in the Parliament, the preoccupation with the short-term benefits of the full sale of Telstra, the removal of Roads to Recovery Funding from country councils and support for outer metropolitan doctor programs but not for country doctors.

The National Party’s behaviour on these matters is a disgrace and I will continue to draw it to the attention of country people until they and their Coalition partners, the Liberals, take positive steps to stop the decline of country Australia,” Mr Windsor concluded.

The following is the motion moved by Mr Tony Windsor Member for New England and seconded by Mr Peter Andren, Member for Calare

I move that so much of the standing and sessional orders be suspended as would prevent me from moving the following motion forthwith

“That the House’s program be altered to allow Members to debate

“That in light of the NSW Farmers Association City-Country Snapshot Report showing the growing divide between city and country and the new 10 year discriminatory US Farm Bill and the release last week of the 2001 Australian Census results, this house discuss as a matter of urgency the adoption of zonal taxation proposals as put forward by the National Farmers Federation, The Institute of Chartered Accountants and Local Government Association as a way of overcoming the population drift, economic decline and inequity of services of country Australia.”

Mover.....

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Date 26th June 2002