



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Regional Universities to be winners from review**

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor was very pleased with the answer given by the Minister for Education, Science and Technology, The Hon Brendan Nelson to Mr Windsor's question on the future of Regional Universities and specifically the University of New England.

Minister Nelson's said, "I recognise that the University of New England is a very good example of a fine regional university. It specialises in research in beef, wool and rural futures amongst other things. In reviewing Australian higher education and thinking about the role it will play in driving our economic and social development, including our engagement in Asia, one of the key things the government is looking at is research. There will be \$2.77 billion invested by the Australian government this year in research in Australian higher education."

Minister Nelson concluded by saying "I can certainly reassure the House that absolutely nothing will be done to undermine the role of research that is undertaken in regional universities. In particular, we are determined to see that research is of a very high quality and that it serves the interests and the social and economic wellbeing of people in those regional communities. Out of this reform process I put it to the House that universities and campuses in regions of this country will be very significant winners."

"Minister Nelson's response to my question was very pleasing as there has been numerous occasions where concerns have been raised in relation to the research component of university structure.

The University of New England has developed many partnerships around research in the region and it is imperative that any review of Higher Education does not erode the status of UNE and its capacity to not only teach but do research as well," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said he was urging communities that housed regional universities to maintain an interest in the deliberations of the Higher Education Review as the outcome could have a greater impact on country towns than our city cousins.

Mr Windsor said Minister Nelson has maintained a view that there needs to be some flexibility in government policy to recognise the different cost structures that regional universities operate under and deserved support for his view.

"Minister Nelson has visited the University of New England and I believe that he has a good working relationship with the Vice Chancellor and the Administration.

We must continue this positive relationship and continue to promote regional universities as providing equal to or better than, qualifications obtainable in the metropolitan based universities," Mr Windsor said.

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