



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Telstra Sale – NOT ON – Drifting off the agenda**

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has predicted that the sale of Telstra as proposed by the Liberal/National Coalition Government will not proceed.

Mr Windsor has also called on the Government in a speech to the Parliament yesterday, to remove the cloud hanging over the heads of country people and withdraw the proposal to sell the rest of Telstra immediately.

Mr Windsor says that a number of recent events have made the full sale of Telstra almost impossible.

These include:-

1. the survey by the NSW Farmers' Association indicating Telstra services are not up to scratch.
2. the survey by the Federal country Independents indicated that 98% of country people do not want Telstra fully privatised.
3. the overwhelming majority of submissions to the Estens Inquiry identified service problems and opposed any further sale.
4. meetings held by the country Independents with key Senators from the cross benches in the Senate whose votes would be required to get a sale Bill through the Parliament have indicated that should legislation be introduced into the Parliament that it would not be supported.
5. with the next NSW State Election set for March next year and the announcement by Jack Warnock to stand as an Independent for the seat of Barwon (a large part of which makes up the Deputy PMs seat of Gwydir), means that if the National Party MPs ignore the wishes of country people that Mr Warnock would certainly win that seat and further, Peter Draper another strong Independent candidate in the neighbouring seat of Tamworth would also take away that National Party seat.
6. the Local Government Association's submission to the Estens Inquiry is strongly opposed to any further sale of Telstra as they are concerned for future service delivery by a privately owned monopolistic Telco.

"The meetings that the country Independents have held with the cross bench Senators have been most productive.

We have been able to convey to these Senators, the strong views of country people given to us on the Telstra issue, not just our gut feeling but cold hard results of our survey that can't be dismissed.

I predict that if the sale did proceed, it would almost certainly lead to the end of the National Party as a political player at both State and Federal levels as it would be the most obvious of the Nationals betrayals of country people – the people they continually purport to represent yet fail so often to do," Mr Windsor said.

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