



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Telstra politicking questionable Windsor calls for Investigation

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor is calling for an investigation into the use of Telstra staff for political gain.

Mr Windsor instanced the recent use of Telstra staff to be part of rigging a newspaper poll in the Port Macquarie News newspaper and the recent publication of a letter to the Northern Daily Leader in Tamworth and the Armidale Independent newspaper, which was printed without the knowledge of the supposed author.

Mr Windsor said the Area General Manager New England North West Telstra Country Wide, Ian Peters, had contacted him, indicating that he had not written the letter that bears his name and had been printed under his name.

Further investigation reveals that the letter originated from a Sydney fax number under the banner of Telstra Corporate Affairs and signed 'per' two initials claiming to be on behalf of Mr Peters.

Mr Windsor said it was unforgivable for Telstra to place their Area Manager in such a situation that was apparently done to cause deterioration in a good working relationship between himself and Mr Peters and their respective offices.

"I have always enjoyed an excellent working relationship with Telstra Country Wide staff and I am very disturbed that Telstra Corporate Affairs have used the name of the Area Manager without his knowledge.

One can only assume that this was being done because of my opposition to the full sale of Telstra.

For some politically driven Telstra staff member in Corporate Affairs to use Mr Peters' name without his knowledge requires the Minister to inquire as to the motives of some of those in his portfolio responsibilities," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor is calling on Minister Alston to have the letter's author authenticated.

"As a public figure, there will always be different views expressed and I am quite prepared to accept criticism as to any public statements I make.

If Telstra Corporate Affairs have a problem with anything I say in the media, they should have the guts to use their own letterhead and identify the author rather than denigrate the credibility of the Telstra Country Wide staff.

It is not acceptable for Telstra officials to use someone else's name to carry out their own political agendas," Mr Windsor said.

Further information from Tony Windsor - Mob 0427 66 8868 or 02 6761 3080