



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Country Vice President of Libs should do his homework**

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has refuted claims of ‘no interest’ in the recent Bushfire Inquiry by Country Vice President of the Liberal Party, Scot MacDonald.

Mr Windsor said if Mr MacDonald was genuinely interested in the issue from the New England’s point of view, the first thing he should have done was his home work by approaching his local representative.

“Mr MacDonald has not made any contact with myself or my office on this issue – nor any other issue for that matter,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that Mr MacDonald is also incorrect when he suggests that he has no interest in the inquiry.

“I have raised the issue with three of the members of the committee at length in relation to the 1995 NSW Bushfire Inquiry of which I was a member. This Inquiry virtually considered all the issues raised by the recent Inquiry and I wanted to ensure that the NSW Inquiry was considered as background information.

For Mr MacDonald’s information, the increase in new fire vehicles and other equipment in NSW and changes to communications systems was entirely due to the NSW Committee Inquiry.

Mr MacDonald would also know if he bothered to contact his representative that I had meetings with key witnesses at that Inquiry,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr MacDonald may also like to know that I was nominated to be the Independent member of the Committee by his country Liberal colleague (and friend of mine) Mr Alby Schultz, the Federal Member for Hume.

However, rather than have a country Independent that had had experience of the NSW Fire Inquiry in 1995, the Government decided to put a Greens Party Member of Parliament on the Committee.

This makes for interesting logic as the thrust of the Inquiry is opposed to “green” policies,” Mr Windsor said.

“It’s also interesting to note that of the 150 members of the Federal Parliament, it appears that only two have made a submission to the Inquiry and I note no NSW Liberals – city or country are either.

This bears out what Parliamentary Inquiries are all about. They are set up to hear from the public and not necessarily from Members of the Parliament. The Members of the Parliament have the opportunity to contribute directly to the debate in the Parliament and it is more important that members of the public who can’t contribute to Parliamentary debate on an issue take the opportunity of letting their opinion be known through Inquiries or to their local Member.

Once again Mr MacDonald is more interested in the politics of an issue than the issue itself,” Mr Windsor said.

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