



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
INDEPENDENT
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Shop 5
259 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02) 6761 3080
Toll Free: 1300 301 839
Fax: (02) 6761 3380
e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au
Web Page: www.tonywindsor.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Vision New England Summit Sets Agenda

The Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor, offered his thanks to the 66 community groups and 100 individuals who contributed to formulating a vision of the policies that will contribute to the society that local people wish to live in.

Mr. Windsor said, "The Vision New England Summit on Saturday in Armidale saw a broad array of policy areas addressed, with an achievable and well thought out agenda being identified. The Vision Summit has built upon the Country Summits of 1996 and 1998 and we have deliberately kept to the same approach of working on the areas where we are able to gain agreement and mutual support for all groups present."

"We had groups with a diverse range of issues present and I was delighted with the commitment given to the process. This commitment to listening and interacting is the key ingredient to success in this style of process. The major policy areas addressed were Health and Education with a fair and considered hearing and suggestions being offered to each of the 23 agenda items."

"The consistent theme presented by speakers from all walks of society is that regional people want to deal with our problems and challenges by decentralising educational opportunities, services and employment opportunities. This represents a strong rejection of the economic rationalist approach of centralising education, services and employment opportunities, a policy approach that has disadvantaged regional communities at every level."

"The University of New England presented a clear vision through their speakers present on the day and within the actual agenda items. One of the facts that became clear to all is that the University will be able to strengthen our future by increasing the range of courses aimed at the training of professionals in our region enabling them to better understand our challenges."

"The resolutions passed will be examined and priorities and strategies will be sent out to all groups and individuals present. It is also important to remember that Saturday is the start of the process."

"The Country Summit process achieved a 70% success rate and there is every reason to expect similar successes from this process given the vision and commitment expressed by so many different groups on Saturday", Mr Windsor concluded.

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