



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Budget needs to create opportunities for long term

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor believes that the Federal Government should use the predicted large Budget surplus to create opportunities for the long term benefit of Australia and see it translated to people in the New England electorate.

“With the Budget looking like being in a large surplus, I would like to see the Government take a long term approach to creating opportunities for Australians to share in the benefits of having such a large surplus.

There is a very real opportunity to use the funds wisely to stimulate areas of the country that need a boost and that will create new industry opportunities or enhance fledgling industries to move ahead,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor reported the views from people who attended his series of 22 public meetings around the electorate over the last two months saying that most wanted more services delivered to their communities rather than just personal tax cuts.

“It was an interesting response from people across the electorate, but most people wanted to see their communities better serviced in the areas of health and education rather than personal tax cuts that they didn’t really go that far in improving their financial circumstances.

But when it came to having better access to health services and educating their children, people were united,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor has highlighted a number of opportunities that could be addressed through the Budget that could create opportunities for the nation and the New England electorate in particular.

Examples of Projects & Needs

- **Glen Severn Learning Centre - Glen Innes** – This project has been endorsed by the Glen Innes and Severn communities and has been supported by the Glen Innes and Severn Councils, the NSW State Government, the University of New England and TAFE. On completion of a business plan, the community will be requesting funding from the Regional Partnerships Program to assist in developing the project to maximise its benefits to the community both local and regional by enhancing access to education opportunities in Glen Innes.
- **The National Equine & Livestock Centre – Tamworth** - has again been supported by the community, Local Government, NSW State Government, Horse Industry groups and tourism

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groups. It is very deserving of Federal Government support to provide a facility of the highest international standard to further grow this very significant industry.

- **Wine Equalisation Tax relief for wine producers** will assist the development of the wine industry of the New England and the closely associated tourism and hospitality industries
- **New England Highway upgrades** at Bolivia Hill, Devil's Pinch, Puddledock Road Intersection Upgrade - Armidale, Bald Nob Road Intersection Upgrade – Dundee and continued increased maintenance funding to make the New England Highway a safer National Highway route.
- **Rail infrastructure upgrades** for New England Rail, Murrurundi Rail Tunnel and Melbourne to Darwin Inland Rail Link via Werris Creek
- **Community Legal Services** – Increased funding for North & North West Community Legal Service to match other similar organisations in other parts of the State.
- **Health & Ageing Services** – continued funding for the Multi Purpose Service (MPS) program to establish facilities in Tingha, Walcha, Guyra and Bingara and incentives for Doctors, Dentists, nurses and other allied health service providers to establish or locate across electorate and the inclusion of Dental services under Medicare.
- **Disabilities Services funding** to ensure that people with disabilities can continue to live and undertake meaningful work in their home towns through organisations like Challenge in Armidale and Tamworth, Glen Industries in Glen Innes and Northaven in Inverell.
- **Education services funding** for Minimbah Aboriginal Pre-school and Primary School - for programs for both students and families, the establishment of a University of New England - Vet School, the establishment of a National Centre of Mathematics, Information Technology and Science Teaching, a Chair in Prevention of Rural Youth Suicide, expanding rural nursing teaching and research at UNE and expanding the University Dept of Rural Health & Rural Clinical Schools in Tamworth.
- **Employment services** expansion of the successful Aboriginal Employment Strategy to other centres across the New England electorate.
- **Telecommunications Infrastructure** continued rollout of Mobile telephone towers across the New England electorate to increase coverage across the electorate, and similarly with Broadband Internet access, upgrades of underground cabling and further funding for TV blackspots
- **Zonal Taxation & other economic development incentives** should be more seriously investigated and introduced to stimulate growth across the country
- **Fuel Sales Grant Scheme dis-continuation** has been announced from July 2006 which will add between 1 cent and 3 cents per litre to country motorists
- **Energy Grants Credit Scheme (Previously Diesel Fuel Rebate Scheme)** made applicable to manufacturers who through location have to use diesel generators to provide power for their operation as connection to the National Electricity Grid is proven to be too expensive.
- **Reduction of superannuation taxation** to encourage people to plan for their future by contributing more of their annual income to superannuation funds. The Government will raise over \$5 Billion this year from superannuation taxes which if allowed to remain in the super funds, would grow each year and provide better retirement outcomes for contributors to those funds and thereby reduce the burden on the Government to provide for our ageing population as more people would be able to provide for themselves.
- **Water & Environment funding** to address issues of water and land degradation through support for Landcare groups, individual farmers and other measures including legislating water property rights
- **Agriculture measures** to address Drought proofing and reforming Exceptional Circumstances triggers and assistance measures.

“This is not an exhaustive list but would go a long way to providing encouragement to provide services and grow opportunities in the New England electorate and other parts of Australia,” Mr Windsor said.