



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

7 June 2004

Windsor welcomes Auslink - New England gets share of funding

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has welcomed the Federal Government's Auslink package announced today saying that a process that viewed road and rail as an integrated transport operation should be supported.

Mr Windsor said, "The projects announced for funding to and through the electorate of New England is a positive result for us. Some of the projects announced that will benefit the New England electorate include

- Devil's Pinch realignment \$19m
- Duval Creek Bridge replacement \$9m
- Realignment and safety improvements at Sunnyside north of Armidale \$9m
- Bridge-widening program on New England Hwy \$4m
- Road widening program on New England Hwy \$22m
- Halcombe Hill realignment and safety works \$15m
- A new connector between the F3 and the New England Hwy at Branxton \$253m"

Mr Windsor has concerns however about how some of the proposals are to be funded.

"I am still concerned that some of the funding announced has resulted from the shifting of \$810m over 3 years from the Fuel Sales Grants Scheme that was compensation for application of the GST to country people.

What we have seen here is a pea and thimble trick taking away the fuel subsidy from general revenue from country people with one hand and then redirecting our own money back to us with much bravado," Mr Windsor said.

With regard to rail infrastructure, Mr Windsor says that Werris Creek in particular will benefit from the \$870m Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) arrangements which will fund upgrading of the Cootamundra to Werris Creek and Hunter – Werris Creek rail lines however following a phone call to Everalld Compton (Chairman – Australian Transport Energy Corridor - ATEC), Mr Windsor has an issue with the tacit support of the Inland Rail proposal.

"Provision has been made for the Gap (Werris Creek) to Boggabilla section of the proposed Inland Rail line which would be fully funded by the private sector however unlike other projects, ATEC - the private sector consortium must present fully funded and costed proposals before the ARTC lease option will be taken up.

I can't understand why so many hurdles are placed in the way of Everalld Compton and his ATEC group. Their fully privately funded project is in itself bigger than the Snowy mountain scheme and instead of fast-tracking a project that will boost inland development, the Government puts speed bumps in its way," Mr Windsor said.

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