



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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4 Year fixed term Parliament would stop election date game playing

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor wants to see a 4 year fixed term introduced for the Federal Parliament.

“A four year fixed term Parliament would stop the game playing that currently exists in the lead up to every Federal election.

This was a similar problem when I was first elected to the NSW State Parliament in 1991 and was one of the reforms that the Independent Members holding the balance of power negotiated with the Coalition Parties as part of the agreement to enable them to form government.

It has been successful at the State level and I see no reason why it would be any different at the Federal level,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor says the uncertainty of the timing of elections impacts more on the community than people may realise.

“The uncertainty of not having a fixed date for a Federal election impacts on many sectors of the community.

The business community may put off decision-making about acquisitions, expansions and employment levels with those in the decision making positions often going into a hold pattern until the announcement is made or until after the result is known particularly in close situations.

It even impacts on the Reserve Bank’s decision on what happens to interest rates which then flows on to the people of Australia in their decisions about mortgages and other personal finances.

With the Prime Minister of the day being the only one who knows when he will call the election, he can play cat and mouse with the lives of people whilst waiting for the most politically opportune time to go to the polls.

This leaves the entire community experiencing uncertainty over what is often an extended period of time.

If we had a fixed 4 year term, everyone would know the date and make decisions accordingly.

If it’s good enough for the President of the United States to know that he will go to the polls every four years on the first Tuesday in November, there perhaps is some merit in introducing the practice here,” Mr Windsor said.

For further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 66 8868