



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## Media Release

12 July 2004

### Health Survey saying NO to merger

The New England Health Services Survey currently being conducted by the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor is showing very clearly that people of the electorate do NOT want to merge with the Hunter Area Health Service.

“With nearly 4,000 responses in a week, you can count on your fingers and toes the number of people in the New England that want to merge with the Hunter.

So the response to the merger question could almost be described as unanimous with the message to be sent to the NSW Minister for Health, Morris Iemma – ‘leave OUR health service as it is’ – please!” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor has passed on the progressive count of the survey both to the Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper, Member for Northern Tablelands Richard Torbay and to the New England Area Health Service to help them in their reporting back to Minister Iemma as a decision will be made at the next Cabinet meeting.

“It is important to pass up-to-date numbers of the survey to our State MPs Peter Draper and Richard Torbay and to the NEAHS on how people are feeling about the merger so I will be giving this information regularly to them as they continue to represent the issue to Minister Iemma in the lead up to the next State Cabinet meeting.

It is therefore important for people of the New England to return their survey form as soon as possible so our views are known,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor was very pleased with the responses to other questions too.

“Indications on the other questions on the survey are that most people would like to see basic dental services covered by Medicare.

There is also strong support for the establishment of a Medical and Allied Health Services Faculty at the University of New England and that there is also strong support for increasing the Medicare Levy from 1.5% to 2% if the funds were used to increase bulk billing levels, extend payments to dental care and deliver more medical services.

The response to the survey has been excellent and shows how important the health issue is to our community,” Mr Windsor said.

People are asked to return their completed survey forms by the end of July.

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