



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Windsor fights for better Free Trade Agreement Independents spotlight Govt & Opposition on FTA inadequacies**

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor today joined with other Independents, in opposing the Free Trade Agreement with the United States spotlighting the inadequacies of the Coalition Government negotiated deal and the Labor Party Opposition agreement with it for political expediency.

The four cross bench members divided the Parliament demanding that further debate take place in the House of Representatives following the debate that took place in the Senate where Labor Party Amendments were eventually passed but only with the Government and Labor Party Senators joining forces.

In his speech to the Parliament, Mr Windsor said "... It (the FTA) is not good enough for the farmers of Australia and it is not good enough in terms of safeguards for medicines and the PBS into the future.... I think this legislation does need the full consideration of this House, and the House needs to do that in a deliberate fashion, not just rush this legislation through the Parliament.

Some months ago I raised this issue with the Prime Minister and asked him: because there were concerns about the net effect of the free trade arrangement on various industry groups and the populace of Australia, would he consider getting the Productivity Commission – really the only independent body in terms of economic assessment – to review this particular piece of legislation? He has not done that."

The Independents moved

"That the House, acknowledging that the narrow scope of debate available at this stage is unsatisfactory:

- a) Recognises that the House of Representatives is not being given the opportunity to consider matters highlighted in evidence to the Senate Inquiry on this legislation, specifically:
  - i. concerns regarding the delayed access of key Australian agricultural exports to the US market;
  - ii. serious reservations about the impact of US intellectual property rights on the Australian economy and the lack of fair use clauses in the agreement;
  - iii. concerns about the lack of consideration of economic impacts of exotic diseases on domestic industries in Chapter 7 dealing with Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary measures
  - iv. the lack of monitoring of price impacts on our domestic markets.
  - v. the impact on Australian manufacturing;
  - vi. the unequal application of country of origin rules in the agreement;

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- vii. the inadequacy of amendments agreed to by the government and Labor Party in relation to pharmaceuticals and Australian media content;
- viii. the potential undesirable consequences for regional development policy; and
- ix. the lack of protection of the Australian national interest in this agreement;

and

- b) Recognises that further negotiation is required to further improve the Free Trade Agreement in Australia's interest, particularly in light of potential US reluctance to accept the amendments made by our parliament in relation to media content and the PBS.

Mr Windsor harked back to comments made by the Leader of the National Party and Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson last year.

“John Anderson said ‘It would be un-Australian if sugar were not included.

Well sugar is not included and benefits to other sectors such as poultry meat, beef and pork are questionable.

I think we, the Australian people, deserve better and I wanted the Parliament to allow sufficient time for all of the issues to be properly debated – not rammed through because an election is looming,” Mr Windsor said.