



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Give back \$100m to local Councils for local roads

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has called on the Liberal and Labor Parties to commit to restoring the full Roads to Recovery Program funding amount to \$300m spread among all local Councils instead of the reduced amount of \$200m announced as part of the Auslink Package.

"I will be campaigning on the need to restore the Roads to Recovery Program to its original criteria so that all councils will be treated fairly under the allocation formula.

'Roads to Recovery' was an excellent program that originally allocated \$300m per annum to Local Government Authorities on a fair and equitable formula so that all Councils received their fair share.

The new Roads to Recovery Program will see only \$200m being allocated under the original formula with the other \$100m falling into a category called "roads of regional significance".

The roads of regional significance funding will see a competitive process for funding of roads that will link regions but are too costly for the one local Council to undertake on their own.

To access this \$100m will require local Councils to agree on a section of road that meets all of their requirements and to combine their efforts to compete for a share of the funding.

Further, these arrangements will be open to political manipulation and could allow for funds that were spent in country areas to be syphoned off to metropolitan areas," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that there is ample budgetary room to reinstate the Roads to Recovery Program to its former funding levels particularly since the National Party Leader, John Anderson has removed the Fuel Sales Grant Scheme (FSGS) worth \$270m per annum from country motorists.

"The Fuel Sales Grant Scheme (FSGS) was put in place to compensate country motorists for the inequitable application of the GST in July 2000 due to bowser prices being in some cases 30c more in country areas than city areas.

The FSGS removal means that we now have a two tiered fuel tax system operating between city and country motorists which the GST was never supposed to do.

The least the Government can do is reinstate the full \$300m funding to the Roads to Recovery Program that country Councils can continue to improve the safety of country roads and improve infrastructure for the economic benefit of their communities.

It's another case of the BIG print giving and the fine print taking away," Mr Windsor said.

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