



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## Media Release

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### Over 2 MILLION reasons not to sell Telstra

The Independent member for New England, Tony Windsor says the widening gap between the Prime Minister's statements on Telstra and the Deputy Prime Minister's statements serve to highlight the need for more NON-party Parliamentary Members to ensure Telstra remains in majority Government ownership.

The Government's desire to sell Telstra flies in the face of the over 2 MILLION faults shown in Customer Network Investigation (CNI) Reports that have accumulated over the last few years.

"Just last week the Prime Minister stated that 'Telstra is up to scratch' and therefore ready to sell.

The interim budget papers released at the same time also state that the Government has met its commitments with the proceeds from the planned sale included in these interim budget papers.

My position as an Independent allows me to respectfully tell the Prime Minister that he is wrong and I am able to state to the people of New England that I will again vote against the sale the next time it is placed before the Parliament," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Howard on Sunday Sunrise, 5<sup>th</sup> September said "Yes, we believe that the services are in combination of the Estens Report and the commitments given, we believe they are, to use my expression of three years ago, 'up to scratch'".

Mr Windsor says that statements from the Deputy Prime Minister and the National Party are at odds with the Prime Minister.

"The Deputy Prime Minister and his band of Nationals respond differently to the Prime Minister.

They pretend the Telstra sale is not on the agenda, simply because they cannot vote against the Liberal organised sale.

Proof of their real position is the fact that they voted to sell Telstra on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2003.

The National Party isn't interested in changing the Liberal's viewpoint on this topic despite their knowing that the sale is against the wishes and best interests of regional communities," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor points to the state of telecommunications infrastructure to support his argument.

"The facts are that regional telecommunications infrastructure is rundown and as leaked reports indicate, 'a fix when failed' policy has seen the infrastructure deterioration increase, not decrease.

I enclose a photograph and report just handed to me of a 'bodgied' up repair that will fail in the near future in the New England area.

This faulty joint has caused numerous complaints however Telstra regard it as too expensive to repair and the 20 or so customers connected at this joint simply have to live with a poor service. .../2

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

This case is by no means an isolated one however it typifies the service that Mr Howard regards as 'up to scratch' and therefore ready to be sold.

The Liberals and Nationals will claim that they can legislate to ensure customer service however this repair is already covered under existing Customer Service Guarantees and remains in this condition," Mr Windsor said.

The report of the Tamworth fault sits with an estimated 2 MILLION PLUS faults in Customer Network Investigation Reports nationally.

"Given the huge distances that regional Australians face each day, telecommunications is simply too important to hand to private operators.

We need to keep the Government linked to the problems and challenges through ownership.

Who do we believe on this, the interim budget papers and the Prime Minister or the fix when failed Nationals who voted in Parliament to sell Telstra on the 21<sup>st</sup> August last year.

I support the people of the New England electorate who have overwhelmingly said that NO sale is best for regional communities and I will again vote against the sale in the House of Representatives and work with the Senate to block the sale," Mr Windsor said.

### **The following is the email received from a concerned Telstra employee**

I have been asked to forward this photo on to you. It is a photo of a faulty joint in the New England region, which could have a massive impact on the area. Our member has put together the following explanation of the photo.

The joint has 30 pair cables in it with 20 working services in it. It has been windowed (sheath cut) and connectors can be seen outside the joint.

By the red labels, many reports (at least 4-5) about the severity of the problem have been sent to Launceston Customer Network Investigation (CNI), dating back to 2000 or 2001.

The pit is adequate but due to the cable being direct buried and the cable being damaged where it enters the joint and too short to remake, it will have to be bored for around 100 meters.

When water enters the pit it gets into the cable and will affect the service of some or all existing services.

Telstra will on occasions claim that this is beyond the Customer Service Equipment Guarantees (CSGs) and the cost of repairing this complete job here could be as high as \$6000.

Telstra until 4 years ago had dedicated staff to repair this work. They are 95% redundant and contractors are getting a small percentage of this major work.

It occurs in old areas of all villages, towns and cities until there is conduited between the pits.

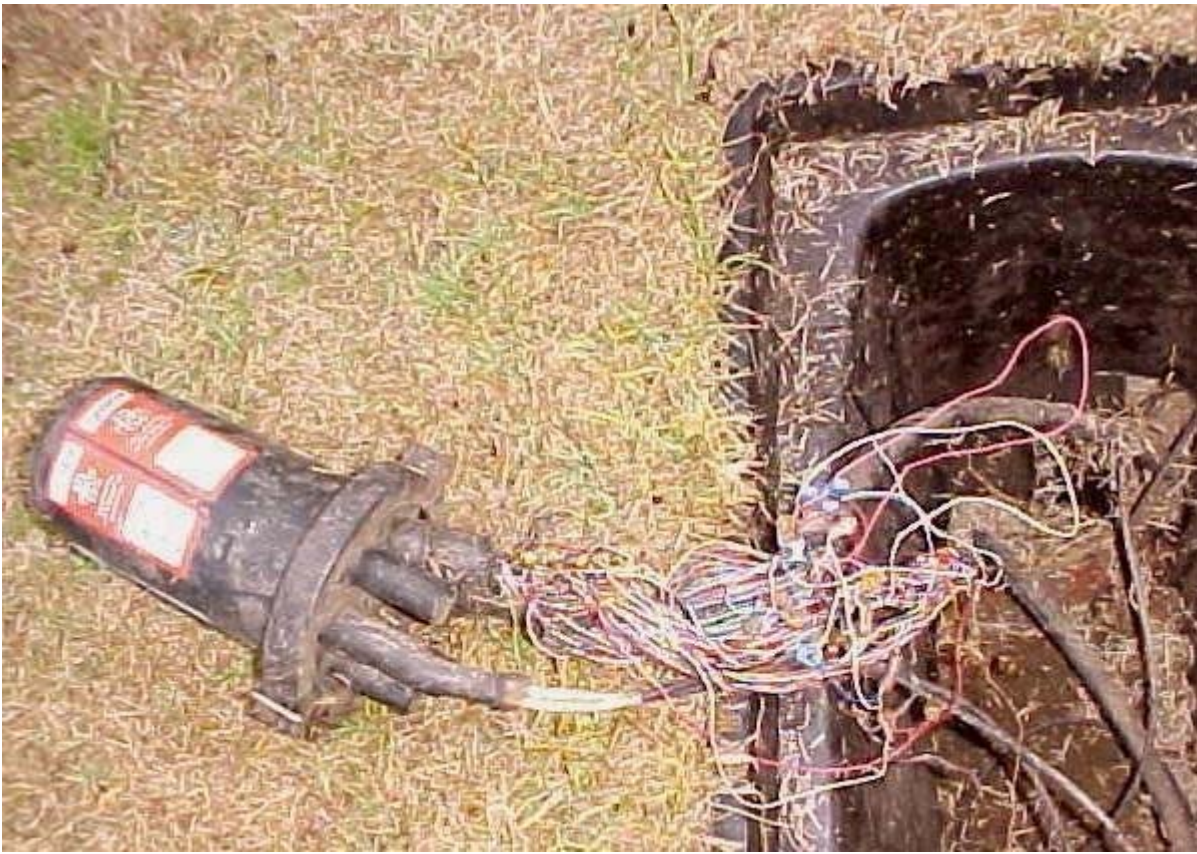
There are over 2 million CNIs in the system now. When they are re-reported they are just noted.

If we had major floods or thunderstorms Telstra then claim CSG exemption until the water dries out of these types of joints.

This is a really bad joint but there could be up to 25 joints in a customers service, with varying severity of damage.

Regards,  
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PHOTO ATTACHED



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