



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Resurrecting Rural and Regional Australia Gunnedah Forum

Independent Member for New England, Mr Tony Windsor will be attending the Gunnedah 'Resurrecting Regional and Rural Australia' Forum organised by Bindaree Beef at the Gunnedah Services Club tomorrow, 24 September, at 10.00 am.

The Gunnedah forum is the last in a series of five such forums that started in Roma on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June and has since included Taree, Gympie, Lismore and now Gunnedah.

"The two party system has been unable to address the concerns that are relevant to the vast majority of people living in rural and regional Australia which has lead to wide spread expressions of discontent.

There are very real risks to our society when people feel that they are not being listened to and I congratulate Bindaree Principals Mr John McDonald and his daughter Mrs Leigh Belbeck on the commitment they are showing to regional and rural Australia, not only through their investment in regional employment but also through providing these forums for people to express their concerns.

I will be raising the following specific issues however I invite any questions from the floor that people feel are relevant to the future of regional Australians.

### Issues to be addressed at Forum

- Regional health care models
- Regional education needs
- Regionally based medical training
- Renewable fuels
- Telecommunications infrastructure
- Property rights issues water and vegetation
- National Competition Policy, poultry meat, single desks, farm debt mediation,
- ACCC tougher on predatory pricing and duopoly powers,
- Enterprise zones
- Quarantine rules
- Transport / Rail infrastructure funding
- The US FTA
- That the current ACCC review recommend the continuance of telecommunications price parity between country and metropolitan Australia.
- That Telstra remain in majority public ownership
- Reinstatement of the Fuel Sales Grants Scheme worth \$270million per year (1 to 2 cents per litre at the bowser) for country motorists
- The need to provide regional airports with security comparable with city airports as a matter of National Security.

"I look forward to addressing these issues and hearing the views put forward by the community tomorrow," Mr Windsor said.

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