



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
INDEPENDENT
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Shop 5
259 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02) 6761 3080
Toll Free: 1300 301 839
Fax: (02) 6761 3380
e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au
Web Page: www.tonywindsor.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

29 September 2004

Independents support REX call for airports watchdog

Federal and State Independents have today given their full support to Regional Express' call for the establishment of a national airports authority to oversee Australia's privatised airports and ensure fair and reasonable access for regional airlines.

Federal NSW based Independents, Tony Windsor and Peter Andren, along with their state colleagues Richard Torbay, Rob Oakeshott and Peter Draper agreed that a "watchdog" is required to uphold federal guarantees of competitive access to airport facilities.

"In light of the Sydney Airport Corporations pressure on REX to move from its gate and lounge, there is an obvious need for a national airports authority or similar body," Mr Windsor said.

"There is a real possibility this gate move is the thin edge of the wedge to favour the major airlines at the expense of regional carriers".

"It is essential to have a government agency overseeing situations where essential services are held in monopoly hands".

"This is not an issue that can be ignored by the Sydney Airport Corporation. Regional and rural Australia will not be silent in the face of any threat to its services".

"Country Australians are too used to seeing their services removed by stealth or left to dwindle, and as evidenced by the strength of the coalition of organisations supporting REX, any threat to the quality of service on offer from our largest regional carrier will not be tolerated".

"The NSW Farmers Association, the Local Government Association, the Shires Association, the Country mayors and regional Aviation Association all supports the establishment of an authority chartered that ensures fairness and transparency in the management of our airports".

"The Sydney Airport Corporation may try to dismiss this issue as a beat-up, but country Australia has seen services decline in too many areas from education and health to telecommunications to let it happen again to its airlines," Mr Windsor said.

"The federal and state independents also strongly support the proposed regional air summit as a first step to avoiding another crisis for regional air services, just when carriers such as Rex are restoring confidence and services to regional travellers," he added.

For further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 668868