



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **ALL Candidates agree Telstra is still not up to scratch Rex battle is a guide to assurances on Telstra**

Independent Member for New England, Mr Tony Windsor has congratulated all candidates for the viewpoint expressed by them at Monday's meet the candidates night that Telstra is still not up to scratch.

"Members of the audience expressed strong viewpoints against assurances that the Government could be trusted on the Telstra issue and I feel the problems Rex is facing at Sydney Airport are a guide to problems regional people would face under a fully privatised Telstra.

All candidates agreed that Telstra should not be sold at this time and I congratulate the Coalition candidates in taking a stance against recent statements made by senior Government Members who feel all commitments have been met to regional communities and that Telstra is ready to be sold.

Unfortunately the Coalition candidates went on to send mixed signals by saying that the electorate was wrong in expressing the opinion that services were inadequate in recent surveys that I conducted seeking the electorate's view," Mr Windsor said.

Both Coalition candidates compared today's Telstra services to the 'PMG days'.

"The Coalition candidates need to be honest in looking back at the PMG days.

When the PMG had the service, bakelite phones were still in vogue and faxes, let alone email and the Internet, were not in existence or anywhere near the integral part of life as they are today.

We are in the middle of a technology boom in communications services and that fact drives regional communities' concerns that regional centres will fall behind under a privately owned Telstra," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that the current Rex Airline/Sydney Airport situation is a warning of what will happen under a privatised Telstra.

"Assurances that we can sell and regulate telecommunications services need to be viewed with scepticism given that regional airport access was said to be safe when the Mascot Airport was sold two years ago.

Today we see Rex's ability to deliver a good service under threat from the private airport operator that wants to maximise profits," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor points to the pre-election Budget statement by Treasury as an indication of the Coalition's commitment to proceeding to the full sale of Telstra.

"The pre-election Budget statement issued by Treasury two weeks ago put the proceeds of the full sale of Telstra in the next budgetary term, stating that the Government has met its commitments under several regional telecommunications reports.

I disagree totally with this statement and I'm sure that the New England electorate is not buying the PMG comparisons or the Sydney Airport style assurances. I will continue to support this electorate and vote against the sale.

I offer political competition to the parties and the blocking of the Telstra sale in the last term is a good example of the role Independents play in our Federal Parliament," Mr Windsor said.

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