



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Windsor asks Communications Minister what ‘Up-to-scratch’ means for New England?

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has written to the Minister for Communications, the Hon Helen Coonan, requesting an explanation of how the Estens’ Inquiry into Telecommunications will change the communication landscape in the electorate of New England.

“I have requested Minister Coonan’s office to demonstrate by way of example if the Estens’ recommendations are fully implemented over the range of telecommunications services, how that will impact on service users in the New England electorate.

In essence, I am seeking an in-depth explanation of what services will be available to the various exchanges and communities within the New England electorate after the application of Estens.

What will ‘Estens’ mean for the people of Yarrowyck, Old Mill, Ashford, Deepwater, Calala, Bendemeer and Kingstown to name just a few places in the electorate?

If the Minister has a view of the Estens Report and the term ‘up-to-scratch’, her Department should have a blueprint of every exchange in Australia and the actions required to bring those exchanges ‘up-to-scratch’,” Mr Windsor said.

Rather than asking for all the details Australia-wide be made available, Mr Windsor is requesting only for details of his New England electorate.

“Let the people of the New England electorate know what services they can expect to receive, when those services will be delivered, where the new mobile phone towers will be located, which exchanges require upgrading, which landlines will be replaced and what internet speeds will be available in each community and district within New England.

When one reads the Estens Report, many of the recommendations are open to a number of interpretations.

It should be possible to identify the service delivery changes that will be required by location and I look forward to the Minister’s detailed response at her earliest convenience,” Mr Windsor said.