



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

13 December 2004

Telstra sale study last test for National Party **Invitation to Minister Coonan to see 'up-to-scratch' services**

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has turned the spotlight directly on the National Party as they move closer to pushing the full sale of Telstra through the Federal Parliament when they gain control of the Senate from July 1.

Mr Windsor was referring to the announcement by the Federal Government of its intention to commission a scoping study on the proposed sale.

The sale, if allowed through the Parliament would take place in Mid 2006.

Mr Windsor said it was going to be a real test for the National Party as to whether it would support country people's wishes and oppose the sale or sell out the long term future of country people for short term political gain.

"It is pleasing to see the incoming Queensland National Party Senator Barnaby Joyce saying the right things.

I will certainly encourage and support him in his publicly stated position of not supporting 'anything that will have an undue effect over rural and regional Australia'.

I'm sure that Senator Joyce will be inundated by letters, faxes, emails and in some cases carrier pigeons from country people concerned about their future telecommunications services and the 'undue effect' that the full sale of Telstra will have on them.

Senator elect Joyce and his National Party colleagues really need to listen to country people and act accordingly in representing them or they could find themselves sliding further down the greasy pole," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor has also issued an invitation to the Minister for Communications, Senator Helen Coonan to visit the New England electorate and see for herself the telecommunication needs of people here and the current state of the infrastructure.

"I would be delighted to have Minister Coonan spend some time in the New England electorate meeting people and discussing their telecommunication needs and concerns.

I'm sure that people of the New England would be respectful of the Minister's position but I'm also sure that they would be forthright in putting their position to her and hopeful that she would recognise the importance that country people place on having quality and affordable telecommunication services the future of which can only be guaranteed if the political imperative remains through continued majority Government ownership," Mr Windsor said.

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