



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Windsor urges Barnaby to hold the line on full Telstra sale

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has today urged new National Party Senator Barnaby Joyce to hold the line on his opposition to the full sale of Telstra.

“Senator Joyce has been under a lot of pressure from the Liberal Party and his National Party colleagues to support the full sale of Telstra and I can empathise with him as he holds the balance of power as I did in the NSW Parliament from 1991-1995.

It is a tough position to be in but I urge Senator Joyce to be true to those who put him into the Senate and think more about being able to look these people in the eye at the end of the day rather than be worried about the joint party room who are out of touch with the people they represent on this issue.

You only have to look at the polls on the full sale of Telstra to see that it’s not only country people who want Telstra retained in majority Government ownership but also city based Australians,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor points to the new Telstra CEO Sol Trujillo’s seeking of \$5 billion only last week to upgrade Telstra infrastructure as an admission that country telecommunication services are in need of immediate attention in a big way as a result of a lack of re-investment since the Government decided to sell Telstra to reduce Government debt.

“Last week Senator Joyce wanted expert input into the real figure it would cost to improve telecommunication services in the country up to parity of price and parity of service and to do anything without this expert input makes a mockery of any deal that may be done.

The closest thing to expert input so far is from new Telstra CEO Sol Trujillo who last week put a plan to the Government requesting a \$5 billion upgrade program which is a long way above the \$1billion injection plus \$100 million per year from a trust fund of \$2 Billion that is on the table.

At that rate, the rate that the National Party is saying could be acceptable to them, it would take 40 years to reach what Mr Trujillo is saying is needed now and this doesn’t take into account any access to new technology rollout in the future.

Telstra generated \$2.2 Billion for the Government in the year just gone so it’s not as though the Government doesn’t have the ability to reinvest its share of the profits back into upgrading the service and even if it only put back the 40% share of this profit – the share for the 7 million Australians that the National Party purports to represent – then this is still \$880 Million per year that could be utilised and Telstra would not need to be sold at all,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that if Senator Joyce doesn’t hold the line on this issue, the people who put him there have every right to be bitterly disappointed.

“Senator Joyce has thus far talked the talk, but if he doesn’t walk the walk, he will slide back into being taken for granted – just another rubber stamp on anti-country policy for which the National Party is now renowned just when he was being feted as being the resurgence of the National Party and their standing up for country people like they used to,” Mr Windsor said.

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