



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

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NFF duded after 1 day!!

Vaile fails to point out country parity guarantees in Telstra legislation because there aren't any!!!

Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor had confirmed in Parliament today that the "commitment" given by the Government to the National Farmers Federation (NFF) of parity of pricing for country and city consumers for basic telephone and broadband services is not included in the legislation.

Mr Windsor says that this clarification shows that the deal done by the NFF President Peter Corish is nothing more than a few words from Minister Coonan with absolutely no backing from the legislation that has been rushed through the Parliament this week.

"Acting Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party, Mark Vaile showed today how shallow the so-called "guarantee" given to the NFF was when he could not refer to any clause in the Telstra legislation guaranteeing the 'guarantee'.

The NFF President's guarantee is no more than hot air in a Ministerial speech and has absolutely no capacity to guarantee the services that Mr Corish claims it does.

The NFF have been duded after just one day!

Mr Corish should be ashamed of the role he has played in supporting this legislation and questions remain as to why he has done so," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor followed Mr Corish on the "Our Big Backyard" 2AY radio program from Albury at lunchtime today where Mr Corish said that the National Farmers Federation **didn't** support the sale of Telstra but it supports the legislation going through the Parliament.

"What nonsense - The comment by Mr Corish on 2AY's 'Our Big Backyard' about not supporting the sale of Telstra but supporting the legislation demonstrates that the NFF has been used as a vehicle by the Government to present a view that farmers support the legislation which is just not the case.

The facts are that all surveys of farmers have indicated that the farmers of Australia are opposed to the sale and unlike Mr Corish, do not want to be bought off.

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They know that a few words by a Minister with no legislative backing is not worth the paper it is written on and that is all that has happened,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor points to a recent example of this type of con occurring when Ministers Minchin and Anderson made similar commitments about noise regulations for Sydney Airport when many people were concerned about the sale of Kingsford Smith Airport in Sydney.

“Ministers Minchin and Anderson within two days of making statements to allay fears of changes to noise regulations at Sydney Airport to promote its sale, those Ministers contradicted their statements when Minister Minchin said that no Parliament could bind a future Parliament to anything!

On their own logic, the Government has admitted today that critical issues such as parity pricing are not in the legislation and because of the way the Government has handled the legislation it won't be possible to amend it to include these clauses,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor continued, “Yesterday, the NFF through its President Mr Corish, called on Senator Joyce to support the legislation and then today within an hour of Senator Joyce indicating support of the legislation, Mr Corish turns around and says publicly on radio that the NFF doesn't support the sale.

As Senator Joyce has said so many times that he wouldn't support any legislation that doesn't provide parity of price and parity of service, given the fact that there are no such guarantees in the legislation, I call on Senator Joyce to keep to his word and not support the passage of the legislation,” Mr Windsor said.