



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PM STILL refuses to tell where Telstra guarantees are enshrined in legislation

The Prime Minister John Howard has continued his evasive activities in relation to country telephone and broadband services by referring to a “non-existent” Senate statement on the so-called promise made to the National Farmers’ Federation.

Mr Windsor was referring to the NFF’s statement made by their President Mr Peter Corish in encouraging National Party Senator Barnaby Joyce to support the Telstra sale legislation because they, the NFF had received guarantees that parity of pricing for basic telephone services and broadband services was enshrined in the legislation.

“The Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party Mark Vaile have consistently avoided the issue of parity of pricing for telephone services and broadband in the ‘deal’ with the National Farmers’ Federation President Peter Corish.

The facts are that the Prime Minister knows full well that there is no reference to the parity of pricing between country and city phone and broadband users in the Telstra sale legislation.

It is at best misleading for the Prime Minister to make reference to a statement that doesn’t exist.

Even if it did exist, it would have no bearing in law as a Senate statement can’t over-ride the Telstra sale legislation where it does not appear,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor again called on the Prime Minister to produce the ‘deal’ made with Peter Corish and the alleged Senate Statement.

“The Prime Minister should be open with the Australian people and in particular with country people about the ‘deal’ done with Peter Corish and the NFF.

The Senate Estimates process has also been probing the Minister on this issue to no avail and it is high time that the Prime Minister was honest enough to either produce the document or say it doesn’t exist.

Only yesterday at the Australian Local Government Association conference in Canberra it was revealed by the Director of National Economics Peter Brain in their annual ‘State of the Regions’ Report that poor download speeds and coverage as well as expensive access to broadband were big factors holding back economic development in country Australia and recommended an investment of \$3 billion to bring internet services up to scratch on top of the Federal Government’s commitment of \$1.1 billion to rollout more broadband in the country that bought the National Party’s support of the sale of Telstra.

Telstra is not sold yet and I will not give up on this issue,” Mr Windsor said.

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