



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Inverell National uncovers Vaile & Corish's duping of country people on Telstra guarantees

In Question time today, Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party, Mark Vaile was asked to outline the legislative instrument that he previously suggested existed but has continually failed to identify.

As recently as last weekend at the National Party conference in Ballina, Inverell identity, Mr Wacka Williams was forced to move a motion calling for guarantees that there will be no differential between urban and rural phone, fax and internet line rental charges.

"Mr Williams has obviously wised up to the lie that former NFF President Peter Corish pedalled back in September last year that guarantees on parity of pricing for both basic telephone and broadband services would be enshrined in legislation and that the Telstra Sale Bill was passed through the Senate on that basis of that lie.

Mr Corish should be ashamed of his duplicitous role in this deceitful duping of Senator Joyce whose vote was crucial to passing of the sale legislation.

Mr Vaile should tell the Australian people that the truth is, there are no guarantees.

If there were, why would his own party still be passing motions calling for those very same guarantees," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that the National Party and then President of the National Farmers' Federation, Peter Corish had duped Senator Barnaby Joyce and the Australian people on the eve of the Telstra sale Bill by promising that guarantees on pricing parity had been enshrined in legislation.

"On numerous occasions, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and former NFF President Peter Corish have been requested to identify the legislative guarantees that Mr Corish said he had obtained from the Government.

I welcome Wacka Williams words of wisdom and honesty in not believing everything his leaders tell him and country Australians.

The simple fact is there are no guarantees in the legislation and Mr Williams is right to seek them given the National Party's record on capitulation to their master's voice," Mr Windsor said.

Hansard of Mr Windsor's question and Mr Vaile's response follows on Page 2/3

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Mr WINDSOR (2.49 pm)—My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party and relates to a story in today's *Land* newspaper headed 'Nats push for line parity'. Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that my constituent Mr Wacker Williams from Inverell—

Honourable members interjecting.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for New England has the call.

Mr WINDSOR—Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will repeat that. Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that my constituent Mr Wacker Williams moved a motion at the New South Wales Nationals annual conference in Ballina last weekend—

Honourable members interjecting.

Honourable members interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Order! The member for New England is asking his question. He will be heard.

Mr WINDSOR—Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that my constituent Mr Williams moved a motion at the New South Wales Nationals annual conference in Ballina last weekend that called on the National Party to guarantee that there will be no differential pricing between urban and country phones—

Mr WINDSOR In Continuation

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—On a point of order, Mr Speaker: you have previously ruled out of order questions that relate to party political matters purely and simply, and this question is dealing precisely with those issues and is totally out of order.

The SPEAKER—The member for Mackellar will resume her seat. I am listening closely to the member for New England. His question, I believe, is about line rental. I call the member for New England and ask him to come to his question.

Mr WINDSOR—The question does relate to the National Party motion moved last weekend in Ballina arguing for guarantees that there will be no differential pricing between urban and country phone, fax and internet line rental charges. Could the Deputy Prime Minister explain to the House why his party is calling for these guarantees—

Mrs Bronwyn Bishop—Mr Speaker, on a point of order: you did say you would listen to the member's question, and I would refer you to page 538 of the *Practice*, where it says, 'Speakers rule out of order'—

The SPEAKER—The member for Mackellar will resume her seat. The member for New England is moving very close to referring to party matters. He will come to his question or I will sit him down.

Mr WINDSOR—The question relates to line rentals, Mr Speaker. Why is there a call for these guarantees when the government has said previously in this House and to the National Farmers Federation that future pricing parity for both basic telephone and broadband services was enshrined in legislation? Will the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House which legislative instrument the guarantee is enshrined in and why he appears not to have informed his National Party members?

The SPEAKER—The last part of that question is not in order, but I call the Deputy Prime Minister for the rest of the question.

Mr VAILE—I thank the honourable member for New England for his question. I am well aware of the concerns of Mr Williams from Inverell, and he was at the conference. We actually had a lengthy discussion about the government's policy on telecommunications and the commitments that the government made last year when we passed that legislation through this place. As you would expect, and as you know very well, Mr Williams is a great advocate for himself and his peers in business in the area of Inverell—

A government member.

A government member—And the National Party.

Mr VAILE—and the National Party, seeing as it has been mentioned. I assured Mr Williams that the government would continue to implement the policies that we announced last year that would look after the interests of regional Australians as far as telecommunications services are concerned.