



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **New evidence shows need to reopen Electoral Act investigation**

New evidence contained in an 'authorised' biography of the former Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson has caused the Member for New England, Tony Windsor to call for the reopening of investigations into allegations of possible breaches of the Electoral Act in the lead up to the 2004 Federal Election.

Mr Windsor will write to the Australian Electoral Commission and the Australian Federal Police requesting that the investigations be reopened in light of astonishing new evidence.

"There are extraordinary revelations made by a former staffer to former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson in an 'authorised' biography that demands closer scrutiny," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor is referring to the claim by Ms Wendy Armstrong in an authorised biography of the former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson that she was actually in the meeting when the Tamworth businessman Greg Maguire, former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson and Senator Sandy Macdonald discussed Mr Windsor.

It was previously assumed that Ms Armstrong was only in the meeting when the proposed equine centre was discussed.

"I find it incredible that until now, John Anderson, Sandy Macdonald and Greg Maguire have never mentioned the presence of this lady in relation to her being there when discussions took place among them about my career when there was an investigation by the AFP and a Senate Inquiry.

If Ms Armstrong's claim that she was privy to discussions about my political career is correct, why did she NOT come forward when those inquiries were being undertaken?

Will John Anderson, Sandy Macdonald and Greg Maguire all verify her statement and then explain how all of them neglected to mention that she was there at the time my career and other aspects of my future were discussed?

Why did she not come forward to clear Mr Anderson of any involvement at the time?

Why did ALL the people in the meeting forget or fail to mention that she was there despite her being mentioned by me in my evidence to the AFP and to the Senate Inquiry as having been asked to leave the room?

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Why did Ms Armstrong wait to make her claim in an “authorised” biography of Mr Anderson?” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that Mr Anderson, in answer to questions from the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament on November 18 2004, ‘was the possibility of the Member for New England pursuing a career outside parliament ever discussed’ and ‘were diplomatic and trade appointments mentioned in these discussions,’ said, ‘no and no’.

In the authorised biography, Ms Armstrong contradicts Mr Anderson’s answer detailing how Mr Windsor’s future WAS discussed saying, ‘And then he (Maguire) said to him (Anderson), frustratingly, he said to him, “Can’t you find him (Windsor) a job? Can’t you find him a job? Can’t you get him one of those ambassadorships?”’

Ms Armstrong went on in the book to recall Mr Anderson’s exact words – ‘And John said, and this is his exact words, ‘That is not within my gift. That is the responsibility of the Prime Minister and Alexander Downer.”’

Further, it is written in the ‘authorised’ biography, ‘Responding to Windsor’s claim (that she had been asked to leave the room) head-on, Armstrong is adamant that she was, in fact, there for the crucial discussion, as evidenced by her clear recall of the specific words the men used. She was not, Armstrong stresses, merely there for the conversation that related to the equine centre proposal.”’

Mr Windsor believes that by making this claim in the ‘authorised biography’, Ms Armstrong confirms that Mr Anderson did in fact mislead the Parliament on November 18, 2004 when he answered ‘no and no’ to discussing ‘the possibility of the Member for New England pursuing a career outside parliament ever discussed and were diplomatic and trade appointments mentioned in these discussions?’

“Mr Maguire told the Senate Inquiry that they did discuss these matters. Mr Anderson told the Parliament on November 18 that they didn’t and now Ms Armstrong confirms that they did,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor points to further in the chapter where it is stated, “Watching Maguire address the Senate committee in March 2005, Armstrong was in no way surprised by the businessman’s honesty. She expected nothing less from him because she had no reason to doubt him. ‘What Maguire said about the meeting was accurate...’

“Senator Andrew Murray’s questioning of Mr Maguire at the Senate Inquiry gave Mr Maguire every opportunity to disclose that Ms Armstrong was indeed still at the meeting when Mr Windsor’s future was discussed. But he did not.

Senator Bob Brown during his questioning of Mr Maguire again gave him the opportunity to reveal that Ms Armstrong was still in the room at the time of the discussion, yet Mr Maguire did not.

Ms Armstrong sat there watching Mr Maguire in the hot seat and yet did nothing to corroborate his evidence. Why?” Mr Windsor asked.

Mr Windsor says that Ms Armstrong’s recollection in the book of her reminding of Mr Anderson that she was there also raises more questions.

Ms Armstrong says in the book, ‘I said to John, “I just want to remind you. I was there.”’ She reassured him his recall was accurate and that she had seen, first hand, just how above reproach he had been in the meeting with Greg Maguire.

‘And he (Anderson) leant across,’ Wendy remembers, ‘and said, “of course you were there. How could I have doubted myself? How could I have doubted myself? I’ve been really worried. You were there. You would remember. You would know.”’

“Neither Mr Anderson, Senator Macdonald nor Mr Maguire remembered or mentioned in any of their public statements or evidence that Ms Armstrong was there in the meeting at the time discussion took place about Mr Windsor’s political future even though, according to Ms Armstrong’s revelation in the book that she reminded Mr Anderson ‘during the early days ... around November 2004’, that she was there.

Was this before or after Mr Anderson told Parliament on November 18 2004 that the group had not discussed my career - bearing in mind that supposedly the first time that Mr Anderson knew about this matter was the night before, even though his initial response to the Parliament on 17 November - 25 minutes after I first raised the matter, he included reference to ‘the member of my staff who was in attendance at the meeting’?

The claims in the book raise more questions than they quell,” Mr Windsor said.

“Why would Ms Armstrong also admit in the book she did leave ‘the men’ before the meeting ended but she was sure she was there for crucial conversations – how can she be certain of that?

I find it incredible that a person who now says they were present during discussions relating to me is in direct contradiction to comments made by Mr Anderson in the Parliament and that this person did not come forward during a Federal Police investigation and a Senate Inquiry.

It is time a proper investigation took place into this matter with the benefit of all the evidence given under oath to the Senate Inquiry by a number of witnesses and the amazing new revelation by Ms Wendy Armstrong, a former staffer to the Deputy Prime Minister, John Anderson,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor is also interested in finding out where the Australian Electoral Commission is up to in their investigations into the matters referred to it by the Senate Committee following their Inquiry with regard to donations allegedly made to his campaign by Mr Maguire.

“The Senate Committee referred matters to the Australian Electoral Commission in late 2005 relating to statements made to the Committee by Mr Maguire regarding donations he told them he had made to my election campaigns and as yet no report or response from the AEC has been made public.

In light of this new evidence, I call on the AEC to again refer the matter to the Australian Federal Police who indicated that if further information came to light they would do further investigation and also for the Senate Committee to review its findings,” Mr Windsor said.