



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Windsor urges Local Govt to unite for better outcomes**

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor yesterday urged local government bodies to unite on a few major issues to deliver better outcomes for their communities.

Speaking to a motion about Local Government moved by the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, Mr Windsor used the example of the Roads to Recovery Program to show what could be achieved by local government uniting.

Mr Windsor told the Parliament, "To the credit of the federal and local governments, I have seen an initiative where, when they (Local and Federal Government) came together, they were able to set an agenda and have it delivered by government. That was the Roads to Recovery program—an excellent program.

It actually cut the head off the state governments on the way through and delivered the funds to local government. They made the decision locally about how the money was going to be spent and the federal government was able to deliver."

Mr Windsor wants the Australian Local Government Association to play a more forward role in bringing the major issues impacting on the 450 Councils across Australia to the notice of the Federal Parliament for action.

"I say this to the Australian Local Government Association. Don't come in here with an agenda that is 150 motions long. Determine what is important. Get your people behind it. Determine what you agree on, not what you argue about. And set the agenda within this place.

I am sure that in terms of those major issues, if you need an income stream, constitutional recognition or having bridges fixed, then, if you come as one and are prepared to get behind those issues and not go to water when the heat comes on, you will have enormous success in achieving a policy outcome not only at this level but, most importantly, at local community level.....

I have absolutely no doubt that local government has a problem with its income stream. That is mainly state induced; I am not blaming the federal government for all of this. If there is not enough income to deliver the services that local government is required to deliver and there is very little growth in federal assistance grants and other sources of revenue that local government is able to garner, the 450 local government bodies across the nation could weld together on two or three specific issues and demand what they want of the government and the opposition of the day, be it one per cent of income tax, so much of the goods and services tax or whatever else.

But I do not see the Australian Local Government Association setting the agenda in this place (the Federal Parliament). I see it more as receiving the agenda of the government of the day and almost saying 'Thank you very much' for any little bit extra that it gets," Mr Windsor told the Parliament.

"The Australian Local Government Association could be a much more effective organisation if it united all of its members behind their shared major concerns," Mr Windsor said.

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