



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Bellata Gold claim refuted

A claim made by Bellata Gold owner Doug Cush that no sitting Member based in Tamworth had been to see him has been refuted by the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor.

Mr Cush made his claim in an interview on the ABC New England North West as part of a response to an Austrade Export Awards invitation email to media which included promoting a National Party State candidate.

“I refute claims made by Mr Cush that no sitting member based in Tamworth had been to see him.

In fact Mr Cush would well remember a number of discussions held as far back as his questions relating to the old Fielders Flour Mill in West Tamworth and discussions since Bellata Gold established in Taminda including a visit to the plant on 20 May 2004 with Mr Cush and Tamworth Mayor Clr James Treloar discussing possible options for financial assistance from Government.

I also spoke with Mr Cush on the phone on a number of occasions to discuss his plans and offer guidance to access financial assistance.

It is disappointing that Mr Cush ‘can’t recall’ these events after the success of his application for Federal Government support.

My criticism was not of him or his accessing taxpayer funds to help his operation to grow.

My criticism was aimed at Austrade for allowing their event to be politicised in the way that it has.

Bellata Gold is a deserved recipient of Federal Government funding of \$576,000 through the Regional Partnerships Program to develop their business.

However, they shouldn’t feel the need to pay the piper – the Federal Government - by allowing their success to be used to promote a State National Party candidate.

I reiterate my earlier comment that it is wrong for Austrade to be politicised and it is demeaning for Bellata Gold to allow such a use of their business when they have received their assistance on their merits not on political grounds,” Mr Windsor said.

Further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080 or 0427 66 8868