



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Wheat growers need say in their future post-Cole Inquiry

Member for New England Tony Windsor has again called for a poll of all registered wheat growers if any changes to the existing marketing arrangements are proposed.

Mr Windsor made the call for a poll during his Matter of Public Importance (MPI) debate on "The future of the Australian Wheat Industry" in the Parliament yesterday afternoon.

Mr Windsor doesn't believe that the usual industry groups the Government consults for comment can be trusted on this very important issue.

"Australian wheat growers are going to be impacted on by any changes in the marketing of their product and they should be the ones to make the decision.

The Prime Minister has indicated that he will be presenting a proposal to the Government Joint Party-room next Tuesday however I believe he should take the time to poll ALL wheat growers before making any legislative changes.

The Government trots out its faithful industry bodies the Grains Council of Australia and the National Farmers' Federation whenever it wants a supporting voice from the rural sector but these groups have proven to be nothing but Government lapdogs on major issues.

We've seen the conduct of the National Farmers Federation under their former President and now political aspirant Peter Corish selling out country people with the NFF supporting the full sale of Telstra supposedly on guarantees for parity of basic telephone and broadband services enshrined in legislation that still can't be found.

The Grains Council of Australia also forgot who they represented over the development of an ethanol industry in Australia when they became a voice for the car industry and virtually everybody else rather than working to provide Australian grain producers with another market and the possibility of getting prices higher than what they were getting 25 years ago," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor has called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party Mark Vaile to stick by the guarantee of a poll he gave to wheat growers in Warracknabeal Victoria earlier this year.

"Mark Vaile gave a guarantee in Warracknabeal Victoria earlier this year to poll ALL registered wheat growers on any changes and I again call on him to stand by that undertaking.

If it takes a bit longer then so be it. We must get it right so that wheat growers can have the confidence in the process of marketing their product and Australia's international trading reputation so badly tarnished by this scandal can begin to be rebuilt," Mr Windsor said.

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