



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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Windsor moves amendment to Wheat Marketing Bill

ALL wheat growers should have a say!!

But only Independents stick up for country constituents again

An amendment to the Government's Wheat Marketing Bill to give ALL registered wheat growers in Australia a say in their future was moved by the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor and seconded by Independent Member for Calare, Peter Andren but all the major parties failed to support the move.

Mr Windsor and Mr Andren wanted ALL of Australia's wheat growers to have a say in what happens with THEIR future rather than be represented by industry groups that have proven in the past to be puppets of the Government on major issues that will impact badly on country people.

Mr Windsor took the action of moving his amendment following repeated refusals by the Deputy Prime Minister to stick to his word given to wheat growers in Warracknabeal Victoria in March this year that a poll of registered wheat growers would be done if changes were to be made to the marketing of export wheat.

"ALL Australian wheat growers must have a say in their future and the only way for this to happen is to poll ALL registered wheat growers on any changes to be made in the export wheat marketing arrangements," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor is disappointed in all the major parties particularly in the National Party's compromise of their constituents again on an issue central to the wellbeing of a major Australian rural industry – the wheat industry.

"The National Party has once again been derelict in its duty of standing up for country people.

"They have compromised their constituents again by not agreeing to my amendment despite a guarantee given by the Deputy Prime Minister Mark Vaile to wheat growers at Warracknabeal in Victoria that they would be polled on any changes proposed to Australia's export wheat marketing arrangements.

"The National Party is captive of the Liberal Party and unfortunately they lack the spine to stand up and be counted and truly represent their constituents.

"The Minister for Agriculture, Peter McGauran claimed in his response to my amendment that he would be writing to wheat growers and that National Party members would be talking with farmers in their electorates.

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“The letter to growers will only set out what the final deal will be and there are no National Party MPs in Western Australia where wheat farmers are most dependent on export wheat markets as they don’t have a local market in which to sell their product like eastern state wheat growers.

“The last time National Party members asked their electorates about a major issue was the full sale of Telstra and despite being told in no uncertain terms that they didn’t want it sold, the National Party supported the sale so it won’t matter a damn what the growers tell their National Party MPs, if it doesn’t match what the government wants to do, it won’t be implemented,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that the Labor Party has also missed an opportunity to show country people their bona fides of caring for the country.

“The Labor Party’s new leader Kevin Rudd came to Tamworth when it was becoming evident that Australia’s export wheat marketing arrangements through AWB would be reviewed.

Mr Rudd met with wheat growers indicating that the Labor Party would listen to the growers yet at the first opportunity to make sure they got the real message direct from growers, the Labor Party joined with the Government showing they are no better than the Liberal National Coalition parties,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor’s and Mr Andren’s attempt to give wheat growers direct input into their future may have been stymied by the major parties, but Mr Windsor is not letting up.

He will conduct his own poll of wheat growers when the options are revealed.

“I really want Australia’s wheat growers to have their voice heard directly on how their export wheat will be marketed.

To make sure they do, I am going to conduct my own poll of wheat growers and table it in the Parliament then everyone can see just how well these country representatives actually represent their constituents rather than rule over them,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor’s amendment read:

66 Registered wheat growers to be given opportunity to vote on options for change

Before further changes to the legislative provisions governing the marketing of Australia’s wheat are presented to the Parliament the Minister must ensure that all registered wheat growers are given the opportunity to vote on options for change.