



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
INDEPENDENT
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Shop 5
259 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02) 6761 3080
Toll Free: 1300 301 839
Fax: (02) 6761 3380
e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au
Web Page: www.tonywindsor.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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John Anderson an absolute hypocrite on water reform

John Anderson, the former Deputy Prime Minister has been described as an “absolute hypocrite” on water reform by the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

“John Anderson has absolutely no credibility entering a ‘just terms’ for water entitlement holders debate when for ten years he refused to use his position in the Federal Parliament to implement the 1995 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Agreement that compensable property rights for irrigators be recognised.

“For ten years he ignored the policy initiative that was agreed by the Commonwealth and the State Governments that if irrigators gave up water entitlement allocations for environmental good that compensation would be granted under the property rights clause in the National Competition agreement.

“Instead, as Minister and for some time Deputy Prime Minister he presided over a payout to the States of \$4.6 BILLION in National Competition Payments for water reform without demanding that they comply with the original agreement on property rights.

“And now when water users have woken up to his treachery, John Anderson and other Nationals start to talk about ‘Just Terms’ for farmers.

“I think it’s time that the Nationals got their “just desserts” and were voted out of existence,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that over the last decade there had been a range of Intergovernmental Agreements, Bilateral Arrangements, Water Quality and Salinity protocols, a National Water Initiative and numerous Murray Darling Agreement with very little progress.

“The reason that John Howard has replaced the National Party with Liberal Malcolm Turnbull is that the Prime Minister was disgusted at the lack of progress the Nationals had made on water reform.

“For John Anderson to spruik ‘Just Terms’ to irrigators when he was the one who demanded NSW write the compensation offer document to groundwater users in the Namoi Valley and five other NSW valleys in such a way that the Federal Government could then tax it as income in the year of receipt rather than the loss of a capital asset again demonstrates the treacherous way that this man has deceived his constituents.

“Just terms” compensation for the loss of an asset is the same as a ‘compensable property right which John Anderson and his cronies have refused to put in place even though they have had the power through the COAG National Competition Agreement with the States since 1995.

John Anderson is a traitor to his tribe,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said he has a Freedom of Information request before the Federal Government for the release of all documents relating to the ‘Achieving Sustainable Groundwater Entitlements’ program but as usual the process was being obstructed by Government ‘processes’.

“If Mr Anderson disagrees with my statement about his involvement in the establishment of the ‘Achieving Sustainable Groundwater Entitlements’ program, he should short circuit the “Freedom of Information” process and release the documents that I am seeking and not just verbally deny their existence or his involvement,” Mr Windsor said.

For further information contact Tony Windsor, Ph (02) 6761 3080