



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

19 June 2007

Lib Senator's comments show lack of commitment to delivering Govt's equity of broadband service promise to country people

A Liberal Senator's reported comment that "people in rural areas cannot expect proper telecommunication services and will be happy with the Federal Government's broadband plan" is appalling and shows a lack of commitment to delivering equitable telecommunication services to country people as promised by the Commonwealth Government on the full sale of Telstra according the Member for New England Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor was responding to a media report of Liberal Senator Judith Adams' comments given in Canberra as the Government's broadband announcement yesterday continues to create strong debate in the Parliament.

The West Australian Senator is quoted as saying that 'As far as I'm concerned, it's little bit like medical services you can't expect to have proper services out in the bush, it's just not like that.'

"This is an appalling comment and an indictment of current thinking within the Coalition.

It belies a belief that two of the most important issues facing rural and regional Australia, telecommunications and health, is beyond this Government to fix," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that Senator Adams' latest comments flies in the face of her own First Speech to the Federal Parliament on the 11th August 2005.

'.....The impending sale of Telstra is causing a great deal of angst in rural and remote Australia. It is essential that the regulations set down for the privatisation of Telstra allow for rural and remote Australians to be given access to new communications technology. Australia's wealth is created in regional, rural and remote areas, and it is important that business opportunities are not lost due to inadequate communication services. I have experienced first hand the improvement of telecommunications in rural and remote Australia, and I want to be guaranteed that it will continue... (Hansard).

"It can only be assumed that an edict has come down from the Cabinet that all Coalition Senators and Members must beat the drum on the Government's broadband despite personal beliefs or misgivings.

It shows the weakness in Party politics to the detriment of country people just asking for a 'fair go,'" Mr Windsor said.

Speaking at a doorstep interview at Parliament House in Canberra, Mr Windsor said the guarantee that was given by the Government when Telstra was sold was that there would be equity of access and parity of pricing in relation to broadband and telephone services.

"What was delivered yesterday was a three or four tiered system. Optic fibre in the city. Some of the bigger towns like Tamworth and Armidale in my electorate will get twenty megabytes in terms of broadband, others will go on to wireless where the best they can expect is twelve megabytes and others will go onto satellite where God knows what they'll receive," Mr Windsor said.

...2/

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

Mr Windsor said information from the WiMAX (broadband wireless) web site indicated that the technology was affected by a number of factors.

“I understand that terrain, density and height of tree cover, hills and valleys can all block or partially reflect signals.

Bodies of water are also highly reflective of Radio Frequency (RF) transmissions and the RF shadow of large buildings can create dead spots directly behind them,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that information from the telecommunications industry suggests that current technology would not be able to satisfy demands by regional business and domestic users.

“I’ve been informed that ‘inherent latency’, the audio and video delay caused by long range satellite transmissions, coupled with wireless loop (last mile) latency, has not been solved and that topography and geography will impact on wireless Broadband, particularly in the New England electorate.

This ‘inherent latency’ could impact on consumers attempting to access value added services such as the ability to make cheap phone calls via VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) and video conferencing affecting businesses, health organisations and many more,” Mr Windsor said.

Release Ends