



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Who left the gate open, Jock?

Recent comments relating to the comparisons of service levels to country people in the changeover from CDMA to NextG mobile phones have raised the ire of the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor has been a long time campaigner for equality of access to telecommunication services and the need for Government involvement in the delivery of those services.

President of the NSW Farmers Association, Jock Laurie has come out recently saying:

- 1 Rural NSW has raised concern regarding the NextG network and has called on the Federal Government and Telstra to address the problems.
- 2 Phone and internet users at the NSW Farmers' Association Annual Conference in Sydney today said current service levels are inadequate, fearing rural residents will be left behind.
- 3 Despite the commitment from Telstra and the Federal Government, delegates are concerned that NextG isn't even as good as CDMA.

"I say to Jock Laurie who was a major player in the National Farmers' Federation decision to endorse the full sale of Telstra – 'Who left the gate open?'"

"The NFF and its membership body, the NSW Farmers' Association of which Mr Laurie was President, signed off on the sale after being given so-called guarantees that there would be equity of access for country people for telephone and broadband services and that they had written advice from the Government to that effect.

"The NFF was also told that those provisions would be 'enshrined' in the sale legislation.

"Where are those guarantees now Jock?"

The written advice has never been seen and the Government guarantees aren't in the legislation!

"Why bellow now when your Association let the cows out?"

"Where is the future proofing your Association endorsed at the time to make sure that future technology would flow on to country consumers?"

"The first test of future proofing is failing dismally.

Rather than blaming Telstra, which as a private company now has the right to operate in the interests of its shareholders, Mr Laurie should blame the Federal Government of the day and his own organisation for falling for the three card trick in the first place," Mr Windsor said.

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