



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor questions Vaile's credibility on nuclear power plant plebiscite comment

The Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor, has queried Deputy Prime Minister, Mark Vaile's credibility in relation to a plebiscite regarding the location of nuclear power plants in Australia.

Mr Vaile has suggested that part of the process for determining the location of the 25 nuclear power plants proposed by the Coalition could be by way of localised referenda.

Mr Windsor said Mr Vaile's track record on allowing country people to have their say was one of failing to deliver.

"Mr Vaile promised wheat growers last year that any change to the exporting of Australia's bulk wheat would go to a referendum of growers – this did not occur," Mr Windsor said.

"Mr Vaile was one of the senior Ministers of the Government who had committed to no US Free Trade Agreement taking place without the sugar industry – this did not occur."

"Mr Vaile was one that said there would be criteria 'enshrined in legislation to guarantee equity of access to broadband and telephone services for country people' - no one has sighted the words in legislation.

"Mr Vaile was one who once said Telstra would not be privatised."

"For Mr Vaile to now say he would have a plebiscite to determine the location of 25 nuclear power plants is very thin on credibility and country residents should be very wary," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor's comments follow the recent results of his survey of residents within the New England Electorate which indicate that two-thirds or 67% of the respondents do NOT want Australia to go down the nuclear energy path, 29.5% said YES and 3.5% are undecided.

"With over 3,000 people sending back their thoughts to me, the result is quite significant," Mr Windsor said.

"Comments from respondents to the survey indicated that people have grave concerns for safe storage of nuclear waste as well as for the safe operation of nuclear power stations.

"Burying nuclear waste is a disaster waiting to happen and people are understandably cautious about what happens if things go wrong with the nuclear power generation process as has happened elsewhere.

"They also believe as I do, that there are other alternatives that haven't been fully explored and developed that would not have the same impact on our environment if things do go wrong."

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