



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Windsor offers assistance to Telstra to replace inferior Next G handsets

The smooth transition from the CDMA to Next G mobile phone networks is of such importance to the people of the New England electorate, that Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor is offering to assist Telstra in the process.

Mr Windsor's offer comes following Telstra Country Wide representative Brett Riley's announcement on ABC Radio New England North West that Telstra would replace the Next G handset of people experiencing problems with inferior handsets.

It also follows responses to surveys and direct contact with him and his office as well as participating in a two day tour of equivalence testing of the electorate.

"It has become apparent from recent surveys and contact made directly to me and with my office by people from the New England electorate that the transition from the CDMA mobile phone network to the Next G network is not going as smoothly as everyone would like.

Last week, an offer was made by Mr Brett Riley from Telstra Country Wide on ABC Radio New England North West where he said that **people experiencing reception problems with inferior Next G handsets could have those handsets changed to handsets that perform better however he indicated that people would have to get to Armidale and clearly this is not practical.**

What I am proposing is to help facilitate Telstra-customer days in communities around the New England electorate so rather than thousands of people having to travel hundreds of kilometres, I will be asking Telstra to go to each community over a couple of weeks to look at the existing handsets and advise on the new handsets," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that regardless of whether we like the changeover or not, it is now a reality and the main thing now is to ensure a smooth transition for all mobile phone users.

"I would encourage people undertaking the changeover process to be careful when choosing a new handset and seek appropriate advice before entering into any new contracts to ensure it will do what they want the phone to do.

To those people who have already changed over to the new Next G mobile network, what is now needed is your understanding along with Telstra's service to address the problems being experienced so that customers can have confidence that the new system will eventually be equivalent to if not better than the CDMA as has been promised by Telstra.

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“My offer to Telstra is to help facilitate a smoother transition from CDMA to Next G, by having a member of my staff assist in co-ordinating an electorate wide process for customers having problems with their new handsets to go to a location in a centre near them to have their handset settings checked and if need be arranged to be changed over for a more suitable handset as Mr Riley indicated on the ABC.

It would be a fairly straightforward process and one that I believe would engender a better relationship between the many disgruntled mobile phone users and Telstra and most importantly, would bring about a much smoother transition for everyone concerned.

As it stands at the moment, Telstra has a few bridges to rebuild with their customers who just want the same service or better than the old CDMA service as promised,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor thanked Mr Riley for his offer to people currently experiencing problems with their handsets on the ABC but has again called on Telstra to extend their CDMA switch off date past the 28th of January 2008.

“I thank Mr Riley for making the offer and I look forward to working with local representatives of Telstra Country Wide to help smooth the transition for people of the New England as quickly as possible.

I would however call on Telstra to extend their switch-off date of the CDMA system past the 28th January next year to allow more time both for the continued improvement of the new Next G network and for the public to be able to changeover their handsets.

It is very important to country Australians that their mobile phone service not diminish when with co-operation it can be achieved to the mutual benefit of all concerned.

It could be very much a win-win situation,” Mr Windsor said.