



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Media Release

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United community needed to stop Pat Dixon Aboriginal Medical Centre closing

The threat of closing the Pat Dixon Aboriginal Medical Centre should be rejected by a united community in Armidale and surrounding towns according to the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor's call to arms has been initiated by recommendations made by a review of the services provided by the Centre by a Commonwealth Review Panel.

Mr Windsor said he was appalled at suggestions that the Centre should close.

"I question the conclusions reached in the review and call on the Commonwealth Government to make clear the agenda being recommended by the Review Panel.

I also call on the indigenous and non indigenous community to unite in their support for the Centre and for any differences between aboriginal families to be set aside for the greater good that the Centre can provide to both black and white community members," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said he was intending to call a meeting of stakeholders in the provision and respect of medical services at the centre with a view to having a united front in support of the Centre.

"If improvements in relation to governance of the Centre or issues of service provision need to be addressed then let us address those issues from a community perspective.

"If the community fails to do so the result could be the loss of a valuable community asset.

"Pat Dixon's life and contributions to aboriginal and community life in and on the Northern Tablelands deserve united support for the Centre named in her honour.

"If there are minor differences and historical divisions between various family groups now is the time for all to stand as one," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said he could not believe that the government was seriously thinking of cutting funding and hence closing the Centre.

"With all the rhetoric that is being peddled in the Northern Territory and other areas in relation to communities taking control of their futures with the assistance of government, I can't believe that the Government could even contemplate the closing of the Pat Dixon Aboriginal Medical Centre.

"If the community wants this centre to stay open, the Centre will close over my dead body."

"Threatening and bullying should be replaced by support and encouragement," Mr Windsor said.

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