



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **Not much 'new' news in Budget**

## **Tax cuts in, Middle class welfare cut, Pension up, Infrastructure boosted - tight times ahead**

The Budget was pretty much as expected and predicted with most initiatives being revealed before the Treasurer's speech according to the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor said the Budget has a \$58b deficit and a \$50b shortfall in Government receipts with total revenue of \$290.6b and expenses of \$348.2b.

"What a difference twelve months can make to a nation's financial position, however I am confident that the resilience in the economy will bring Australia through the current global financial crisis.

"I believe that the Government has acted to minimise the impacts of the crisis and provide programs to encourage business and individuals to look ahead with a degree of confidence.

"There is no doubt that tough times lie ahead as a result of the global financial crisis however I cautiously look forward to the measures contained in the Budget paying dividends in maintaining jobs and minimising the fallout to business and individuals.

"Compared with last year's Budget when inflation was public enemy number one, this year we are having to contend with a collapsing world economy and low confidence levels.

"Australia has been fortunate to be in a relatively good financial position at the onset but we didn't invest enough into nation building infrastructure when flush with surplus funds from our boom times.

"Before the 2007 election and again before last year's Budget, I argued against the \$31B tax cuts that both the now Government and then Government committed to which locked Australia into a position that in the current circumstances is really not sustainable so other forms of giving and taking back have to be introduced," Mr Windsor said.

According to Mr Windsor, as with every Budget, there are winners and losers.

"This year, pensioner's patience has been rewarded with a \$32.49 per week increase for single pensioners and couple pensioners will increase by \$10.14 per week combined.

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Their increase was ‘deferred’ last year and a pensioner’s revolt brought about a bonus payment before Christmas, however the Government couldn’t defer again an increase and I welcome the decision along with the \$600 Carer Supplement on top of their pension.

Carer’s provide an amazing service and the supplement goes a way to recognising this fact,” Mr Windsor said.

Whilst much of the Budget is about funding for programs and doesn’t directly identify specific projects or beneficiaries of support in individual electorates, Mr Windsor says that the New England Electorate has fared well.

Specifically Mr Windsor is pleased with funds provided through education and infrastructure portfolios which include

- Community Infrastructure Program \$9.31m thus far including \$5m for the recently announced Tamworth Indoor Sports Centre
- Blackspot Funding \$701,000
- Roads to Recovery
- Rail funding \$580m (\$290m Murrurundi Tunnel and \$290m upgrades to the Hunter Rail)
- The F3 connection to Branxton will also receive \$1.5B to develop a new dual carriageway road greatly improving the connection to the New England Highway and the way north.
- National School Pride Program \$8.8m thus far Round 2 soon to be announced
- Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century \$12.57m thus far Round 2 and 3 soon to be announced
- Trade Training Centres in Schools \$3m

Mr Windsor is also delighted that Urbenville will receive \$295,455 to renovate and equip the Medical Practice there.

“Urbenville has been under great pressure to retain their two doctors under very trying conditions. The announcement of their funding success is therefore a real boost for the community and Tenterfield Shire Council and the neighbouring area in the electorate of Page.

I also welcome the funding support announced for the Gunnedah primary health care facility of \$500,000 and also the Narrabri Hospital which will receive \$27m to bring together hospital, primary and community health services.

Whilst not in the seat of New England, they are part of the Hunter New England Area Health catchment and it is pleasing to see the upgrades coming to fruition,” Mr Windsor said.

On top of these health projects Mr Windsor will seek input from rural health organisations as to the programs to encourage doctors and allied health professionals to locate in country areas.

### **Other highlights**

**Cooperative Research Centres (CRC)** – seven associated with the University of New England funding maintained

**Small Business Investment Allowance – 50%**

**Telecommunications rollout in the regions** - National Broadband Network \$4.7B

**Climate change, Water and Environmental** – “Renewables Australia” announced

**Other comments will come after further investigation and feedback.**