



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
INDEPENDENT
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR NEW ENGLAND

Shop 5
259 Peel Street
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

All Mail: PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Ph: (02) 6761 3080
Toll Free: 1300 301 839
Fax: (02) 6761 3380
e-mail: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au
Web Page: www.tonywindsor.com.au

Media Release

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\$5m from Digital Regions Program for Hunter New England Area Health Chronic Disease Management

A Chronic Disease Management program for Regional and Rural Communities designed by Hunter New England Area Health will receive \$5m from the Federal Government's Digital Regions Program.

Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has congratulated Hunter New England Area Health and welcomed the announcement made jointly by the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd and Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy Senator Stephen Conroy yesterday in Sydney at the "Realising our Broadband Future" Forum.

"I congratulate the Hunter New England Area Health Service on their initiative in designing this program for chronic disease management for regional and rural communities.

The funding will be used to connect a number of smaller centres to the National Broadband Network and provide access to online programs which will allow better management of chronic health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease as well as enabling access to specialist care through the telehealth system.

This proposal has substantial merit in improving access to health services for regional and remote communities," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor believes that the upgrading of network connectivity and videoconference services will have major benefits for health and other services in these communities.

"The establishment of a Chronic Disease Management System that works across care settings has great potential to reduce the impact of these diseases on sufferers and their families and lessen the burden of isolation and travel to access services.

The program will provide numerous benefits and equity of access for disadvantaged groups including indigenous communities and people in regional areas for many years to come.

I thank the Prime Minister and Minister Conroy for their announcement which I believe recognises the initiative shown by the Hunter New England Area Health's commitment to delivering a quality health service to small and large communities across the region," Mr Windsor said.

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