



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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MEDIA RELEASE

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MP PRAISES QUICK RESPONSE TO INVERELL FIRE TRAGEDY

The Member for New England Tony Windsor said he was pleased to see that government departments, state and federal, and the Inverell Shire Council were quick to respond to those in need following the fire at the Byron Arcade in Inverell during the early hours of Sunday morning. Mr Windsor praised the efforts of all involved in fighting the fire that consumed the heritage listed building over the weekend. He said the quick response of emergency services had no doubt saved lives and had contained the spread of the fire to neighbouring businesses and residences.

“Our first thoughts and major concern is the welfare of those residents of the flats on the second floor of the Byron Arcade building who lost their homes and possessions following the weekend blaze that had razed the hundred year old building. I appreciate the efforts of Centrelink in their quick response in assessing crisis payments. Centrelink and the NSW Department of Community Services are working closely together to alleviate the suffering of those affected”, Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that he was saddened to see so many small businesses affected by the fire and hoped many would rebuild.

“Small business is the backbone of country towns, providing employment, good service and value for money. Many businesspeople support local community activities such as sports clubs and social venues and their leadership in small towns are a valued asset.”

Mr Windsor said his office had already contacted the Department of Environment, Heritage and the Arts in relation to possible restoration funding. Mr Windsor was also concerned at the almost total loss of Inverell’s recorded history following the destruction of the Inverell District Family History Group offices. He has offered the group the use of his office until such time as they can reorganise and find suitable premises.

Mr Windsor said “This is the time for all of us, particularly the Inverell community, to do all we can to offer support to those that have been affected by this disaster.”

Release Ends. Photograph following.

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Tony Windsor meets with Byron Arcade residents left homeless by the fire.