



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## Media Release

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# Health reform needed Co-operation urged

“When I first went into the New South Wales parliament in 1991, the proportion of the state budget that went to health was about 20 per cent.

“About one-fifth of the state’s budget was allocated to health. I am told that in New South Wales at this particular time, even though the budget is much larger, over 40 per cent is allocated to health. There would be a number of political debates as to how and why that occurs—whether the doctors or pharmaceutical companies are getting too much, whether it is management—but I think it is becoming very plain to most people that a portfolio area that is absorbing something like 40 per cent of the state’s budget cannot go much beyond that proportion.

“There are a number of things that have to happen there; probably the simplest one is that there has to be more money going into that system. Once you get to 50 per cent of the total in a budgetary sense, other things have to drop out: the vital necessities of the provision of services by the states, from police to education—the whole range of other activities that are demanded of the state’s budget.”

This is what the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor told the Federal Parliament in a Matter of Public Importance debate two weeks ago (Feb 23).

Mr Windsor is therefore supportive of the need for reform of the health service delivery and is keen to get further detail particularly about what the Federal Government’s proposal means for the delivery of health services to country Australians.

Mr Windsor told the Parliament, “It (health) is the No. 1 issue; it always is the No. 1 issue; it will be the No. 1 issue at the next election.

“There will be a debate that goes on about who is going to do what in terms of health policy.

“At some stage the people have to recognise that, for the population that we have with the remote area issues that the minister spoke of and many other issues that we are all aware of in country areas, we are going to have to address this by injecting more money into it. Management can do only so much.

“We will always debate whether we need local hospital boards or other boards, whether the Commonwealth takes it over or the states stay in charge.

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“Those things may achieve something at the margin, but none of them are likely to achieve the outcomes that many people, particularly those who live in the country seats ... deserve.”

Mr Windsor is urging all levels of Government to co-operate to truly achieve the best health service delivery.

“People everywhere are sick and tired of the blame game that goes on between the State and Federal Governments particularly in the area of health services.

I would therefore urge everyone involved to engage with each other and fully co-operate to achieve the best possible outcome for ALL Australians regardless of where they live.

I will certainly be working to that end and look forward to having input into the process,” Mr Windsor said.