



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Nats Broadband policy relies on failed competition policy

The National Party's broadband policy that relies on competition policy to deliver telecommunication services to country Australia will prove to be a re-run of the debacle over Telstra – a failure according to the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor was commenting on the policy that was included as part of the Coalition launch during which the Opposition Leader indicated that telecommunication services would be delivered by competition among service providers without a need for Government support.

The Coalition broadband policy was further expanded on today however Mr Windsor believes that country Australians will go backwards if this policy was adopted for the delivery of telecommunication services to country people.

“When we last relied on competition to deliver telecommunication services across Australia, all the service providers focussed on metropolitan Australia and left country Australians to fend for themselves.

“Competitive service delivery went to the biggest markets so that the shareholders were looked after before spreading the service to where it was needed most to negate the tyranny of distance as it would in the country.

“I have been very supportive of the National Broadband Network rollout as I see it as the railway of the 21st Century that will only make doing business in and from country Australia easier and more attractive.

“For the National Party to hitch themselves onto this retrograde policy will only condemn country Australians to once again being left behind on the telecommunications backburner.

“To go back to expecting competition to deliver telecommunication services in country Australia is to go back to the bad old days of being held to ransom on prices and limited access,” Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that it was time to get on and build the National Broadband Network.

“The NBN rollout had unanimous support at the Vision New England Summit held late last year by forty groups from across the electorate and had been progressed very well by Alun Davies and David Jones from the telecommunications working group.

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“Armidale is a first and second release site – one of five first release sites and one of 12 second release sites.

“It’s benefits to e-health and education service delivery will be enormous and the opportunity for business to grow will flow.

“Optical fibre laid now means only digging once catering for our immediate needs but also having the capacity to allow for our future needs.

“Wireless has more restrictions to cope with demand now and into the future and country Australians need the better broadband network to compete on national and international markets.

“It’s too good an opportunity for country Australia to pass up and I will continue to support the NBN rollout so that future generations aren’t lumbered with an antiquated system that will need to be fixed at even greater cost than now,” Mr Windsor said.