



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TONY WINDSOR MP
INDEPENDENT
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Government formed

After much deliberation, discussion and negotiation, the Independent Member for New England, Tony Windsor has decided to support the Australian Labor Party to form the next Australian Government.

Mr Windsor came to his decision after carefully and thoroughly working through both the Labor Party's and the Coalition Party's responses to his and his fellow Independent's requests for information about their policies and direction.

His main consideration was always first and foremost about the formation of a stable government and the workability of the parliament.

"People must remember that legislation must pass through both the House of Representatives and the Senate before it becomes law and if there is any legislation that will impact negatively on country people, I'm sure it won't get support in one or other of the houses," Mr Windsor said.

The delivery of broadband services to regional Australians was also a key issue in Mr Windsor's decision.

"I see the National Broadband Network as the railway of the 21st Century that will help country Australians overcome the disadvantages of distance, remoteness and smallness and we really need to do it once, do it right and do it with fibre," Mr Windsor said.

"As part of the final agreement reached, a Regional Australia Fund with an additional \$10B will also be established.

"I am pleased with the way that the Government has acknowledged the need to invest in regional Australia with the establishment of a Regional Australia Fund with almost \$10B in it.

"Particularly pleasing is the commitment by Julia Gillard to provide a one third guarantee in new investments in regional Australia to improve education and health services around the country.

"The bringing forward of the Health and Hospitals Fund is also welcome," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor said that he had spoken for years about the need for country Australians to use their political clout and there is very real opportunity for this to happen in this Parliament.

In his maiden speech to the Federal Parliament in 2002 he said:

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"...I would say at the start of this delivery that one of the things that has always fascinated me in relation to country representation is that, even though we have 30 per cent of the population in terms of the vote, most of that vote historically has been taken for granted by one side of the parliament. We are in a unique situation politically, and have been for the last decade, in my view, where the basic policy framework that the nation is operating under has been by way of agreement by both sides of the parliament.

... With 30 per cent of the vote, country Australia has the potential to have the balance of power—irrespective of who is in power in this chamber—and influence the political process far more than it has in the past. There has been a lack of flexibility. The only way to influence that is through the federal chamber.

As part of the agreement Mr Windsor will maintain his right to vote on all legislation according to the needs of his electorate and his conscience but undertakes to involve himself in negotiations with the Government before exercising that right.

He will vote with the Government to ensure supply and he will oppose any “no-confidence” motion in the Government unless the motion is moved or seconded by Mr Windsor.

Further detail will be released in the coming days

