

# COUNTRY ALLIANCE

## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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## **McGauran's defection underlines policy failures: Alliance**

Country Alliance says the decision by Victorian Senator, Julian McGauran, to defect to the Liberal Party with a state election only months away, demonstrates a key weakness in the Coalition's handling of regional issues to regional voters.

Alliance spokesperson, Russell Bate, said Senator McGauran's admission that there was no real policy difference between the Liberal Party and National Party highlighted the need for renewed political representation in country areas.

"Country Alliance gained registration as a political party last year for this purpose," he said.

"We didn't see McGauran's defection coming, but we have long believed that there was a need to offer regional voters a better alternative than they currently have," he said.

Mr Bate said the defection has boosted his party's electoral chances by showing the electorate that the Nationals have become "too close" to the Liberal Party and lost its identity as a consequence.

He said the recent decision to sell Telstra is an example of how the Liberal Party will never be the preferred rural party and cannot be trusted to ensure that rural needs are considered in major policy decisions.

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