

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

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DRAPER WELCOMES NEWS OF GREATER LOCAL EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES

The Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper, has welcomed the prospect of an expanded Newcastle Port following the announcement that Sydney's Port operations will cease operating by 2012.

Responding to reports that the government will move container shipping from Sydney to Newcastle and Port Kembla, Draper stated that this was an exciting opportunity for local exporters to attract new markets.

Mr Draper also sees the closure as a valuable opportunity to revisit the Ardglen Rail Tunnel issue.

"There is no doubt that Newcastle coal is a finite resource. This means that our coal at Gunnedah is now far more likely to be in demand" said Mr Draper. "We need the Ardglen Tunnel to be built to ensure that this resource is readily available for export through Newcastle, which is now likely to become a major focus for the export market."

"I have already asked the Minister to reconsider the Ardglen Tunnel. Now it is even more imperative that he give the tunnel his urgent consideration" Mr Draper said.

"I will be pursuing this matter with increased vigour when Parliament resumes next week".

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