

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### DRAPER SLAMS NSW GOVERNMENT IN PARLIAMENT OVER BENDEMEER

*10<sup>th</sup> March 2004*

Today in the NSW Parliament, Member for Tamworth Peter Draper slammed the Carr Government over its treatment of the small village of Bendemeer. Despite other small schools in the district receiving drought exemptions allowing them to keep their current teacher numbers, Bendemeer has been informed they are to lose their second teacher. Mr Draper was critical of the lack of understanding by the Education Department and Minister Refshauge's unwillingness to listen to community needs.

"The faceless bureaucrats have informed the Minister for Education that the drought has ended in Bendemeer," Mr Draper told Parliament. "Because the drought has apparently ended, the school at Bendemeer will not be considered for drought exemption, and their teaching staff will be halved."

"The school loses three children as a direct result of the drought, and as a consequence one of the schools two teachers are forced to move," Mr Draper continued.

Mr Draper also pointed to Minister for Utilities Frank Sartor as being partly responsible for the schools inability to retain the second teacher. He strongly criticised the Government for making it difficult for the community to attract more residents.

"Community members sent the Minister for Utilities a sample bottle of water from a typical Bendemeer tap to highlight the disgraceful state of the water supply," Mr Draper informed the Parliament. "I presume that it is still sitting on his desk, along with the request for assistance that Parry Shire sent to Minister Sartor in June last year to fix the water supply."

Mr Draper continued: "How long do these people have to wait for clean water? Is this the Carr Governments vision for country NSW in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?"

Mr Draper called on the Government to urgently allocate funds to fix the Bendemeer water supply, and to reassess the need to remove the second teacher from the community. He intends pursuing both issues further as Parliament continues this week.

End release – Hansard transcripts of Mr Draper's speech follows.

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