

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Draper supports cleaners in bid to protect jobs threatened by Government contract changes

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Member for Tamworth Peter Draper today applauded the action of cleaning staff from across the region as they converged on his electorate office in protest to the State Government's intention to rob them of job security.

The cleaners who travelled to Tamworth from Glen Innes, Gunnedah, Narrabri and Armidale are taking action against the Department of Commerce's plans to renegotiate contracts for cleaning schools, TAFE colleges and Government buildings effective from October next year.

"The new contracts will give contractors flexibility in making their own arrangements in the choice of cleaning staff so there are real fears jobs will go. With union figures putting the average age of cleaners at 48 years, alternative employment opportunities are limited," Mr Draper said.

"Cleaners tied to these contracts are feeling extremely vulnerable. I have sent numerous representations to the Minister for Commerce, John Della Bosca, on behalf of those who've come to my office. In the past they have always been able to negotiate a guarantee of employment but that will come to an end under the new system," Mr Draper said.

Mr Draper said it was the first time in 11 years the union had taken action on behalf of its cleaning members which indicated how seriously the issue stood to effect the work force.

"It is unfortunate that groups such as cleaners are forced to take action such as today's rally, but I have undertaken to raise their concerns in Parliament and bring their predicament to the attention of Government and Opposition," he said.

"The Commerce Minister should be supporting this group. The standard of our public facilities should be maintained and a suggestion to call on P&C volunteers to supplement cleaning activities is unrealistic and would be laughable if it wasn't so serious."

"The request is simply unfair. All cleaners want is a guarantee that their jobs will not disappear under yet another Government restructure."

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