

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

13 November 2003

Draper Calls on Government to Fund Coolatai Grass Strategy

Member for Tamworth Peter Draper spoke yesterday in Parliament about the invasion of Coolatai Grass throughout the North West of NSW. Coolatai has invaded Travelling Stock Routes, private property, Crown land, National Parks, nature reserves and State Forests. Mr Draper is concerned that much of the local farmland will have its production capacity significantly reduced should this weed be left to spread unchecked.

“Research currently being undertaken into the grazing and environmental impacts of Coolatai Grass near Manilla has shown significant decreases in native plant diversity and biomass,” Mr Draper said.

“At Manilla, 50% of native plant species have been eliminated, and native plant ground cover has been reduced to 20%. Likewise, native invertebrate numbers have been reduced by 30%. These changes at the base of the food chain are likely to have significant on native fauna dependant on native ground cover.”

“Extensive tracts of high conservation value woodland have already succumbed to this invading grass, and many more areas will go in the next couple of years. It could be as little as 5 years before all areas of high conservation value are invaded and the situation becomes irreversible.”

At present, Weeds Officers make no attempt to control new occurrences as Coolatai is not listed as noxious and therefore attracts no funding for control. Mr Draper called on the Government to develop a funded Coolatai strategy to eradicate the grass in areas of high conservation value, and limit the further spread of the grass.

A copy of Mr Draper’s speech to Parliament follows.

www.peterdraper.com.au

Media Contacts: Peter Draper mob. 0417 290 376 Electorate Office ph. 6766 1422
Parliament House ph. 9230 2341