

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Confusion over CountryLink continues

29 April 2004

CONCERN among local community members over the ability to book a seat on CountryLink rail service between Tamworth and Sydney has resulted in Member for Tamworth Peter Draper fielding a number of inquiries.

Mr Draper has met with constituents personally and spoken to others on the phone to find a great deal of confusion over access to the train's booking system.

News broke this morning that staff at CountryLink travel centres, central reservations in Sydney and support staff would strike today for 12 hours in protest to cuts to CountryLink services.

"Tamworth and Armidale have not been affected to date but there seems to be a degree of misinformation circulating within the community," Mr Draper said.

"I have received a number of calls from people, especially the elderly who don't have access to a computer at home and are worried they won't be able to book seats on the Xplorer," Mr Draper said.

Mr Draper said he has made representations to the Minister for Transport Michael Costa asking him to clarify the Government's plans for CountryLink service reservations.

"There has been a lack of consultation within the community over rail services which is becoming more and more like the local government amalgamation debacle.

"Boundary changes were handled very poorly without the community being listened to, and I'm urging the Minister to clarify the future plans for the rail service to avoid a similar backlash," he said.

Mr Draper pointed out that train patrons had spoken highly of the CountryLink reservation staff at the Tamworth station.

"One concerned constituent remarked he had not been treated like a number when he made an inquiry, it was a personalised service and he was looked after very well," he said.

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