

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Over \$256, 000 in Household Drought Relief in Electorate

27th October 2003

Member for Tamworth has welcomed advice that \$256,144 in grants had been distributed to households in the electorate of Tamworth since November 2002. This assistance is part of some \$5.5 million distributed by the NSW Government since November last year.

The grants have been made through the Community Disaster Relief Fund that is administered by the Department of Community Services.

“ I applaud the NSW Governments assistance to those in our region most affected by the ongoing drought,” commented Mr Draper.

“ I would like to see some of the barriers to qualification for EC assistance relaxed so many other families who are disadvantaged by drought would be able to receive assistance,” Mr Draper said.

“ As I said in the Parliament earlier this year, many farmers in the electorate of Tamworth have been disadvantaged by the criteria people must meet to receive assistance. Only a very small proportion of crop farmers qualify for assistance. For crop farmers, the EC criteria are based on winter cereal crops of 2001 and 2002. To qualify, farmers have to prove that the yield of those crops was 50% below a 3-year average before the drought. The criteria does not consider that the average is incredibly low because of the floods experienced in 1998 and 1999.”

“ The Federal Government needs to recognise regional peculiarities instead of a one hat fits all approach.”

End Release.

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