

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Draper highlights need to upgrade Gunnedah Ambulance Station**

*27 April, 2004*

Member for Tamworth Peter Draper will make representations to the NSW Health Minister, Morris Iemma, over the condition of the Gunnedah Ambulance Station after a recent tour of the facility.

Mr Draper took the initiative to tour the station last week with Gunnedah mayor Gae Swain and general manager Max Kershaw.

He found an antiquated building in a shocking state of repair and at odds with what officers require to run a service covering an area the size of Gunnedah and district.

Mr Draper said conditions for the station's seven full time staff were not only uncomfortable but in certain areas well below acceptable standards.

"The station is displaying the classic signs of years of neglect with the band aid solutions doing no more than costing the service money," he said.

The building not only needs structural repair, adequate heating and cooling, it fails as a functional facility due to poor security and the fact it cannot house two new vehicles.

"Staff are forced to park two brand new \$100,000 Mercedes Benz Ambulance vehicles out in the weather due to clearance of the station garage being too low," Mr Draper said.

"The vehicle wash bay also can't be used due to drainage issues meaning staff have little choice but to spend petty cash at the local car wash, it's outrageous," he said.

Mr Draper said the station was trapped in a time warp.

"I was presented with architectural designs for a new building the NSW Government commissioned in 1974 but unfortunately the plans never got off the drawing board," he said.

[www.peterdraper.com.au](http://www.peterdraper.com.au)

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“It seems the “latest” plans to upgrade the facility were drawn up 30 years ago which highlights how long the station has languished on the Government’s list of capital works priorities.

Mr Draper’s response to the tour will be to bring the station’s deplorable state of repair to the attention of the Minister for Health, Morris Iemma and to speak on the issue in Parliament.

“The officers need a building that’s functional, one that is sufficiently heated and cooled and with enough space to park vehicles which are significant Government assets,” he said.

Mr Draper said the station needed an immediate upgrade and an injection of funding to bring it up to the necessary standard.

“The alternative would be to explore the option of moving the facility onto a site that could be developed within the Gunnedah Hospital precinct,” he said.

Mr Draper said a co-location agreement existed between the Ambulance Service and the New England Area Health Service which meant if a new facility was built on the hospital grounds, there would be no rent burden on the Ambulance Service.

***Media Opportunity: Mr Draper will be available to comment on his plans for the Gunnedah Ambulance Station after 2pm today at his electorate office in Fitzroy St. The architectural drawing of the station building the NSW Government commissioned in 1974 will also be on display.***

End Release

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