

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONALS IN A TAILSPIN – DRAPER

11 March 2004

Member for Tamworth Peter Draper has expressed concern over the rapid decline of support for the National Party in NSW as detailed in the latest Newspoll of March 4th. From a support base of 9.7% at the March 2003 election, the Nationals have plummeted to a mere 4%. At the same time, support for “Others”, including Independents has risen from 14.7% to 17%.

“The massive decline of the Nationals is of great concern,” Mr Draper said. “For the NSW Parliament to be effective we need a credible Opposition in our state.”

“With support for the Nationals dropping to less than one quarter of the Independents, one has to seriously question whether they have any future as a Party.”

The Newspoll data shows the Liberal Party support rising from 24.7% at the March 2003 election to 33% in February 2004, yet Coalition support has only risen 2.6% in this period due to the declining National Party support base.

“Perhaps the Nationals Queensland leader Laurence Springborg has foreseen the future with his proposal to merge the Nationals and Liberals into one conservative force in Australian politics,” Mr Draper said.

“With National Party support at less than one quarter of the Independent support base, it seems that Country people are abandoning the Nationals in droves,” Mr Draper continued.

“A clear example of how out of touch the Nationals are with their constituency is their decision to bow down to the Liberals and support the sale of Telstra,” Mr Draper said.

“I am yet to find any clear thinking country person in favour of selling this national asset when country telephone services are obviously well behind services offered to city constituents,” Mr Draper concluded.

End Release.

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