

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### DRAPER AND TOMALIN PUT NATIVE VEGETATION AMENDMENTS TO MINISTER

*25<sup>th</sup> February 2004*

Member for Tamworth Peter Draper met with representatives from the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources to discuss how the Native Vegetation legislation will affect farmers from the New England and North West.

Brian Tomalin, a local farmer and member of the NSW Farmers Association, prepared a detailed response to the legislation that formed the basis of discussions. Mr Tomalin accompanied Mr Draper to the meeting, and raised issues that were of concern to local farmers.

“The aim of the meeting was to address a number of concerns that would see many farmers try and stay out of the system rather than working within the new regulations,” Mr Draper said.

“We discussed property plans and how to make them work for both farmers and regulators, the actual meaning of routine agricultural management activities, how the act has unseen consequences such as a tree with mistletoe needing departmental approvals before treatment can start. Many farmers would let such a tree die rather than go through the process.”

“One of the most contentious issues is the need for a farmer to prove “existing rotational farming practices”, as this will exclude a large section of the farming community from obtaining a basic Property Vegetation Plan,” Mr Draper said.

“As Brian Tomalin pointed out, much of the country that farmers manage was not developed with the intention of a planned rotation. The entire concept of rotational farming is a relatively new one, and while in effect that is what has happened on many farms, farmers will be unable to provide evidence to meet the regulations.”

“The regulations that will define the legislation are being drafted at present, and the Ministers Chief of Staff and Senior Policy Advisor both indicated that the concerns raised would be looked at and addressed in the regulations. They indicated that a detailed response to all the issues raised would be provided shortly.”

“I was pleased with the response that Brian Tomalin’s concerns received from the Ministers advisors, and I will examine the response in detail once it is received,” Mr Draper concluded.

End Release

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