

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

More petitions tabled in Parliament to save rail service

11th November 2003

Member for Tamworth Peter Draper today tabled over 3,500 signatures on petitions from the electorate of Tamworth to assist in the campaign to save the Tamworth to Armidale rail service.

Mr Draper asked the House to note the tabling of the 3,500 plus signatures, to welcome the support from the communities of Tamworth, Walcha and Gunnedah, and finally called on the Government to honour its pre-election promise that country rail services would not be reduced.

"The signatures tabled today were in addition to the over 12,000 signatures already tabled by Member for Northern Tablelands Richard Torbay," Mr Draper said.

"I pay tribute to the residents of Tamworth, Walcha and Gunnedah who signed the petition. This fight will be won by people power, and to see the communities putting their voices into print has helped influence the Governments stance on this issue."

"I addressed the Gunnedah Combined Pensioners Association meeting last week, and they were very vocal in condemning any proposal that may threaten their service."

"Along with Mayor Gae Swain, I updated the meeting on the current situation and asked for support to retain the Armidale service. The members have not only signed petitions, but also written letters. This action is very timely, as the meeting in Armidale was advised that the Moree line, and in turn the Gunnedah service, was also under threat."

"Mayor Bill Heazlett has led a vigorous campaign in Walcha Shire to keep the service, and I have received many letters and signatures from Walcha and also the Walcha Road and Woolbrook areas."

"This fight has not been won yet, but I believe the weight of public opinion is starting to sway the Government," Mr Draper concluded.

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