

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **DRAPER CALLS ON PREMIER TO CONFIRM FUNDING FOR REGIONAL STUDENTS IN NEW DEBATING COMPETITIONS**

Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper has called upon the Premier to confirm that regional students will have the same level of access to the new debating competition as metropolitan students.

The call comes following the announcement by the Premier today that public school students are being encouraged to improve leadership and public speaking skills through becoming involved in the newly created Premier's Debating Challenge – to be known as the Premier's Cup.

"I applaud this initiative, but I am naturally concerned to see that our students in regional NSW are not disadvantaged with this new competition. Regional students can be disadvantaged in any state-wide competitions centred in Sydney because of the prohibitive cost of travelling to and staying in Sydney to compete," said Mr Draper today.

"I have seen students unable to attend sporting competitions and miss out on other valuable learning experiences because the cost of travel and accommodation in Sydney is prohibitive, and is not covered by the state government."

"So often the highest level of competition is Sydney-based. There is no reason why the finals of such competitions can't be held in regional centres – and many reasons why they should. We need to move away from this Sydney-centric approach to high-level competition."

"I would be very disappointed to find that this is just another unavailable opportunity for our students, who are already disadvantaged in comparison to city students when it comes to accessing many of the State's key resources and programs," Mr Draper said.

"I will be making the Premier aware of how important it is for regional students to be able to compete equally at state level with their city counterparts," Mr Draper concluded.

**End Release**

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