

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Draper calls on Government to honour its promise on small rural schools staffing formula

June 29 2004

Member for Tamworth Peter Draper has asked the Government to honour an undertaking given 18 months ago to review the staffing formula for small rural schools in NSW.

Mr Draper said a motion to review the antiquated formula, which the Government and Opposition agreed to in November 2002, had been conveniently forgotten after a change in portfolio for the Minister for Education and Training.

"The Government can no longer afford to ignore this problem. The need has not gone away, teachers and parents in small schools want the Government to undertake this review," Mr Draper said.

In a recent address to Parliament, Mr Draper detailed the difficulties small rural schools faced when student numbers dropped below a certain number and triggered the loss of a teacher.

In the case of Bendemeer Public School, when student numbers fell below the "magic" number of 26, the school faced losing its second teacher equating to a reduction in teaching staff of 50 per cent. Fortunately, the school was given an 11th hour exemption under drought provisions after Mr Draper lobbied the NSW Minister for Education and Training Dr Andrew Refshauge.

"I told Parliament that had the Government honoured its commitment to review the formula, that situation would have been avoided saving students, teachers and parents a great deal of stress."

In his address, Mr Draper highlighted the experience of Bendemeer, Nundle, Niangala, Nowendoc, Attunga, Tingha, Tintinhull and Mullaley public schools whose concerns he has personally relayed to Dr Refshauge.

Continued over

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“I have also asked the Minister to consider the situation for school administration support staff members whose hours at certain schools have been cut back even though the teaching staff positions have been temporarily guaranteed,” he said.

Mr Draper said the need for a formula review had intensified with the onset of drought and tough economic times.

Please find following a copy of Mr Draper’s speech made in Parliament today.

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