

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Media Alert

30 October 2004

Member for Tamworth Peter Draper has invited the Shadow Minister for Education and Training, Jillian Skinner, to Uralla on Monday, November 1, 2004, to meet representatives of the region's small schools.

Mr Draper and Member for Northern Tablelands, Richard Torbay, have organised the meeting to update small schools on lobbying efforts to have the staffing formula, which determines their teacher numbers, reviewed by the NSW Department of Education.

Mr Draper sought the Shadow Minister's position on the issue after receiving a less than satisfactory response from NSW Education and Training Minister, Dr Andrew Refshauge, to a series of questions on why the formula has not been addressed.

He asked Dr Refshauge why the Department had failed to review the formula despite the former Education Minister agreeing to do so in Parliament in November, 2002.

"Dr Refshauge's response to a series of valid questions was somewhat dismissive. He failed to commit to conducting a review pointing instead to the Government's Class Size Reduction Program which is a separate program altogether," Mr Draper said.

"I was interested to see Ms Skinner support the need for more flexibility and control at a local level in regard to the way small country schools are staffed. Although the Coalition has not released a formal policy on this topic, it is an issue the Shadow Minister has identified as being of concern," he said.

"Earlier this year Mr Torbay and I held a meeting with the region's small schools with schools from Tamworth and Northern Tablelands electorates represented. There remains a great deal of uncertainty and pressure on teachers and administrative staff as a direct result of this archaic formula," Mr Draper said.

**The meeting will be held at the Uralla Shire Council chambers at 2pm.
Media are welcome to attend.**

End Release

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