

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Hoteliers need a timetable to adjust to smoking bans inside licensed premises**

*27 September 2004*

Licensees need a timetable from the Government over when it plans to ban smoking inside hotels and clubs to enable adjustment to an anticipated downturn in trade and job losses, according to Member for Tamworth Peter Draper.

Mr Draper has been approached by hoteliers in Tamworth concerned they will not be given enough time to adapt trade, staff management and facilities to accommodate a ban on smoking indoors at licensed premises which is widely accepted as being inevitable in NSW.

The Queensland Government will ban smokers from all Queensland, pubs, clubs and outdoor eateries from mid-2006 under tough new anti-smoking laws with similar bans announced recently in Tasmania.

Currently licensed premises in NSW such as pubs and clubs are exempt under the Smokefree Environment Act 2000 from providing a smoke-free workplace for staff and patrons unlike hospitality venues such as restaurants and cafes which have been smoke-free since 2000.

The NSW Government supports the concept of smoke-free licensed premises and formed the NSW Joint Working Group for Smoke-free Licensed Premises in October 2003 to working toward a "clear plan" and an appropriate timetable for the implementation of a ban.

"Unfortunately JWG members, which included among others representatives from the Cancer Council NSW, Clubs NSW, various Government departments and the Australian Hotels Association NSW, were unable to agree on a timetable for a phased in introduction or on a final date for the ban to be enacted," Mr Draper said.

"In recent weeks I have been approached by a number of license holders who fear their livelihoods are at stake as a result of the concerted move toward a smoking ban which they feel is beyond their control".

Mr Draper said the JWG report highlighted that tobacco smoking was the greatest single cause of premature death in NSW killing about half of its long time users.

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It also referred to a Cancer Council NSW report released in April which estimated that exposure to environmental tobacco smoke currently accounts for between 73 and 97 deaths per year among 40,000 NSW hospitality staff.

“While recognising health of staff and patrons is a priority, hoteliers feel the Australian tradition of enjoying a beer and a smoke will soon disappear putting jobs in country centres and the livelihoods of generations of publicans at risk,” he said.

Mr Draper called on the NSW Minister for Science and Medical Research Frank Sartor to provide hoteliers with a timetable in relation to when their exemption under the Smoke-free Environment Act 2000 will end.

“Hoteliers are telling me they will need time to make necessary adjustments to the way they run their businesses. A timetable would facilitate a gradual adjustment to what will be a significant practical and cultural shift in the life, times and tradition at hotels and clubs,” Mr Draper said.

**End Release**

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