

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Applications open for up to \$15,000 in funding for towns and villages**

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Regional communities with a population of fewer than 2,500 residents should seriously consider applying for State Government funding to help plan their economic future, Member for Tamworth Peter Draper said today.

Mr Draper urged organisations such as councils, chambers of commerce, community and business associations to apply for funding of up to \$15,000 through the 2004 Towns and Villages Futures Program on behalf of their communities.

The program is administered by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development which set \$1.2 million aside in this year's budget to help small and remote communities grow over the next four years.

"I would encourage community leaders and groups to make use of this offer which can apply to a variety of projects that stimulate economic activity such as tourism initiatives, festivals and art shows," Mr Draper said.

Mr Draper said it was worth throwing a hat in the ring as the Winterbourne community near Walcha could testify. In 2003, the community secured funding to employ a co-ordinator to establish a business and marketing plan for a network of accommodation providers along an ecotourism corridor.

"Such opportunities should be seized upon as regional development will face an enormous hurdle in the proposed centralisation of Business Enterprise Centres to a single 'super centre' in Armidale.

"Smaller communities will be in greater need of a hand to get projects up and running," he said.

Anyone needing information can contact Mr Draper's office or the Tamworth office of the Department of State and Regional Development.

**End Release**

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