

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Tamworth electorate takes a reasonable \$30.1 million share of NSW budget

June 22 2004

Member for Tamworth Peter Draper has welcomed an injection of \$30.1 million to the Tamworth electorate in what he described as a reasonable allocation in the 2004-2005 NSW budget.

Speaking from Parliament, Mr Draper said the \$30.1 million included capital expenditure as well as maintenance for roads, rail infrastructure and grants and subsidies for transport.

"I was particularly pleased to see the \$800,000 set aside to get the \$9.2 million Walcha Multi Purpose Service underway and \$500,000 for safety improvements to the much maligned Manilla Rd," he said.

One of the major features of the health allocation was \$2.3 million to Tamworth Base and Armidale Hospitals for improved service delivery for more complex patient demands, satellite services to rural procedural hospitals and improved recruitment and retention of medical specialists.

Mr Draper said other commitments included:

- \$1.1 million for new works in asset management and \$2.05 million for five Department of Housing accommodation units and ongoing capital works
- \$820,000 in State Forests allocation for roads and bridge construction around Nundle
- \$2.4 million for upgrades to Chaffey Dam and Lake Keepit
- \$2.7 million in railway routine maintenance
- \$2 million for rail track reconstruction
- \$263,000 for five Aboriginal Housing accommodation units
- \$50,000 in the court maintenance program through the Attorney General's Department
- \$400,000 for a WorkCover regional and district office

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Other major initiatives in the budget for the electorate of Tamworth include:

- \$180,000 for a 3km stretch of Nundle Rd for resealing, installation of signage and safety barriers
- \$50,000 for a cycleway on Gipps St from Ebsworth St to Phillip St Tamworth and
- \$20,000 for cycleways in Marquis St and Hunter St Gunnedah.
- \$30,000 for Tamworth pedestrian access and mobility plan works
- Regional road grants of \$235,000 for traffic facilities in Tamworth, \$20,000 for Gunnedah, and \$11,000 for Walcha
- \$46,000 for a road safety officer attached to Tamworth City Council

“It’s pleasing to see that communities in the New England will also share in more than \$131 million on programs and services for elderly people, people with disabilities, their families and carers,” Mr Draper said.

New England will also share in more than \$52 million in Home and Community Care Services funding.

Mr Draper said as part of the reinvestment package for key research centres in NSW the Department of Primary Industries will upgrade the Tamworth primary industries research centre.

There was also good news for irrigators in the Upper and Lower Namoi catchments effected by the Government’s Structural Adjustment Program.

“Irrigators in these areas will share in a \$38.4 million program to assist in reductions in groundwater extractions,” he said.

Mr Draper said the budget was a mixed bag for the electorate and he would be disappointed not to have seen funding for the Gunnedah Ambulance Station and the Gunnedah South Public Hall.

“It was good to see additional overall funding for services such as mental health care and aged care but I will say the extras have been paid for by property investors who were hit with tax hikes in the mini budget,” he said.

Mr Draper welcomed the move to fully fund the teachers’ pay increase through the Education and Training budget which should alleviate pressure on teachers to take industrial action.

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