

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Independents call for dairy industry taskforce

3rd July 2003

The four NSW regionally-based Independents today challenged the Government to form a NSW Dairy Industry Taskforce to assist where possible with the current crisis facing grassroots dairy farmers.

Independents Peter Draper (Tamworth), Robert Oakeshott (Port Macquarie), Richard Torbay (Northern Tablelands) and Tony McGrane (Dubbo) forced the Parliament to vote on the dairy industry in NSW.

The National Party chose not to vote to debate the dairy industry and were noticeably absent, preferring to gather in the Parliament foyer and wait until the vote was over. To their credit, they supported the call to establish a taskforce.

“Three years have now passed since deregulation and dairy farmers across the Electorate of Tamworth are still suffering. Milk prices have gone up but prices to farmers have gone down,” Mr Draper said.

“To this point, no party has wanted to help our struggling dairy industry and that is why we need this taskforce. It could play a fundamental role in finding a way forward for dairy farmers.”

Independent Member for Port Macquarie Robert Oakeshott said, “Such a taskforce has been formed in Western Australia. They recognise a crisis is currently facing our dairy communities and they are willing to help this critical industry.”

“It astounds me that the National Party and the Labor Party continue to ‘wipe their hands’ of the dairy industry and blame everyone else but themselves for forcing a once viable industry to the wall,” said Mr Oakeshott.

A Hansard transcript follows this release.

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