

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Independents Forum

8th August 2003

A meeting of the four country Independents of NSW has resolved to work constructively with the NSW Government on a number of issues facing regional NSW.

Independent Member for Tamworth Peter Draper hosted the forum attended by Independent Member for Northern Tablelands Richard Torbay, Independent Member for Port Macquarie Robert Oakeshott and Independent Member for Dubbo Tony McGrane. Federal Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor also used the opportunity to share his concerns.

"It was a highly successful forum and we will be lobbying the NSW and Federal Governments on a number of issues that cross the political boundaries. Together, we can work towards improving infrastructure and opportunities for residents of regional NSW," Mr Draper said.

"The shortage of dentists is worse than the shortage of doctors in some parts of our electorate. The Federal Government should come back to the party and once again contribute to funding for dental care. The NSW Government health funding simply does not cover the needs of every person in this state."

"We will again ask the Government to reconsider an increase in poker machine taxes. From Port Macquarie to Dubbo and all across the electorate of Tamworth, communities will suffer if this increase is imposed."

"We will also target education and the lack of funding for the rail system in NSW."

"All of us agree that the NSW and Federal Governments need to be commended on what appears to be a real step forward on property rights. It seems that Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson and NSW Minister for Natural Resources Craig Knowles are finally balancing the livelihoods of landholders with the environment."

"Together with Tony Windsor, we will ask for closer co-operation between the NSW and Federal Governments. A number of problems could be solved quite easily if the two levels of government put aside party politics. The future of rural NSW depends on it."

"As Independents, we have the ability to represent the real needs and desires of our constituents. We will work with any side of politics to improve the future of our electorates."

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