

PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

MEDIA RELEASE

Local Government Reform

31st July 2003

Independent Member for Tamworth Peter Draper has met with Minister for Local Government Tony Kelly to discuss concerns raised by Tamworth City Council and Parry Shire Council as the two organisations discuss a possible amalgamation.

“Tamworth City Council and Parry Shire Council are successfully moving forward with their discussions but they want certain questions answered by the Government,” Mr Draper said.

“Both Tamworth City Council and Parry Shire Council want the Government to clarify its position regarding predatory boundary changes from adjoining shires while they undertake the voluntary merger process. They do not want to be under attack whilst concentrating their joint efforts to ensure the best outcome for residents.”

“The Minister showed a good understanding of the councils concerns and will investigate the matter. Our councils deserve to be recognised, not penalised for working together.”

Tamworth City Council and Parry Shire Council have also expressed concern at the future allocation of State funding under any amalgamation.

“Tamworth City Council and Parry Shire Council want clarification regarding their allocation of State funding as there are concerns it will be reduced if they amalgamate. The State Government must help to ensure that residents are better off under any amalgamation.”

“Minister Kelly indicated that an announcement regarding funding protection for the initial 5-year period after amalgamation can be expected shortly.”

As Nundle Shire Council is also seeking to amalgamate with the two councils, the Governments position regarding an outstanding insurance claim was questioned.

“The State and Federal Governments have agreed to cover 85% of any claim, with Nundle Shire Council to contribute the remaining 15%. I have sought a guarantee that the 15% share will be calculated on the current rate base of Nundle Shire Council and not an expanded local government. The Minister agreed with this position.”

A photo of Mr Draper meeting with the Minister will be made available to the media.

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