

# PETER DRAPER

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR TAMWORTH

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Police raise concerns over lenient sentencing**

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A recent sentence given to a man accused of a sex offence against a child further reveals how out of step the judicial system is with public expectations Member for Tamworth Peter Draper said today.

Members of the community and police have approached Mr Draper over magistrates' decisions on bail and more recently in regard to leniency in sentencing at the district court level.

He has been lobbying the NSW Government to give police more power to appeal magistrates' bail with suspects accused of violent crime in the Tamworth Local Court being repeatedly released back into the community on bail.

More recently Mr Draper made representations to the NSW Attorney General Bob Debus in regard to a sentence handed down in the Maitland District Court to a 23-year-old man accused of a sex offence against an 11-year-old girl.

Police attached to the Tamworth Child Protection Unit brought the case to Mr Draper's attention.

"The community has made it clear the judicial system is failing on a number of fronts and what I find more disturbing is that even our police are becoming disillusioned," Mr Draper said.

The man accused of the crime was given a two-year suspended sentence after agreeing to plead guilty to a lesser charge of sexual intercourse with a child 10 to 16. He was initially bailed on charges of aggravated sexual assault of a child under 16, three counts of aggravated indecent assault and sexual intercourse with a child between 10 and 16 years.

"I have asked Mr Debus to appeal the decision after the Judge refused an appeal from the Department of Public Prosecutions. The offence carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment, and I agree with the view of the police officer who brought this case to my attention that the offender escaped with little more than a slap on the wrist," Mr Draper said.

[www.peterdraper.com.au](http://www.peterdraper.com.au)

Media Contacts: Peter Draper 0417 290 376 Electorate Office ph. 6766 1422  
Donna Hurley 0419 409 538 Parliament House ph. 9230 2341