

Lake Macquarie Matters

Toronto foreshore, looking east from Station Street, circa 1940.
Picture courtesy of Lake Macquarie History

Spotlight on interchange and new M1 exit

On The Radar



Roads and public transport projects will be priorities this year with the spotlight turned on the transport interchange at Glendale, parking at railway stations, police resources and a new Cooranbong exit on the M1.

I believe that a new exit and entry ramp on the M1 at Cooranbong will not only serve the growing area, it will also alleviate a lot of the traffic congestion in Morisset.

While work on widening the M1 south of Morisset is now well advanced, both the State and Federal Governments need to commit to building the M1 extension from Beresfield to Raymond Terrace and building a new interchange at Cooranbong to serve the growing local population.

That said, the RMS also needs to get on with fixing Hillsborough Road, particularly the Crockett Street intersection at Cardiff South.

I've also been pushing the RMS to develop a proper strategy to handle the increased traffic on main road B53, which is the main road extending from Morisset to Fennell Bay, Boolaroo and Argenton to Glendale.

I'll be continuing to push for the next stage of work on the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange at Glendale, but a bigger emerging problem is the lack of adequate parking at existing railways stations, particularly at Cardiff, Morisset and Fassifern. Our other major focus this year will be getting more police resources stationed at Morisset so the new station can be open longer hours, if not 24/7.

I have regular meetings with senior local police and I'm satisfied that we need an additional 20 police in the local roster to meet the demand.

Welcome

Hello and welcome to my first update for 2019.

As you know, we kicked some significant goals last year but 2019 is shaping up to be just as busy with some important projects in our sights.



In good news, we'll soon see Service NSW open in Toronto, while major works will start on the Wyee sewer project and installation of lifts at Wyee Station.

Because of the election on March 23, Parliament is not likely to resume until at least late April, but that won't affect the progress of those key local projects.

I hope you enjoy this update and, as always, I appreciate any feedback.

Best regards,



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Seniors' diaries



I still have a few free copies of this year's Seniors Card Directory and the 2019 Seniors Diary. The directory contains details of the many thousands of places where discounts are available to Seniors Card holders. The 2019 diary is put together by Legal Aid and provides information on seniors' rights, consumer law, aged care, community phone numbers and a list of agencies and services for older people. You can call into my Toronto electorate office to pick one up, or call 4959 3200 and I'll post one to you.

New village laws

I supported new legislation which delivers greater peace of mind to retirement village residents and their families, and makes village owners more accountable. The new laws are in line with recommendations made by Kathryn Greiner following her inquiry into the retirement village industry. Among other things, it sets a mandatory code of conduct for village operators, more transparency on contract terms, exit fees and living costs in contracts, and better mediation services which are now managed by NSW Fair Trading. For more information, call my office or see the Fair Trading website.



Need a JP?

If you require the services of a JP, don't forget that all my electorate office staff are registered JPs and are available any time during normal business hours. Lake Macquarie is also home to two NSW Justices Association branches – Lake Macquarie (Argenton) and Morisset – which meet monthly.

Service NSW to open soon

The new Service NSW centre at Toronto is on track to open in about a month's time.

As I've previously reported, it will move into the former Millers shopfront on The Boulevard

and the space currently occupied by the gift shop next door.

When opened, Service NSW will offer a lot more than what we lost when the old RTA Motor Registry closed down. In fact, it will offer services from more than 40 State Government agencies.

At this stage, it should open late February or very early in March.

Kerrie's tireless work honoured

In the space of three years, Kerrie Mathews lost two sons to suicide.

She now dedicates her life to helping people and educating others about mental health issues and suicide, and has even built a chapel on her Blackalls Park property for those who are grieving loss or celebrating milestones.

Her dream is to establish a retreat which will turn the tide against youth suicide, and help to ease the pain for those affected by it.

Kerrie is an absolutely remarkable woman, so I was very honoured to host her and some of her loved ones recently and present her with a NSW Government Community Service Award.

It was indeed an honour to personally thank her for everything she is doing in the Lake Macquarie community, and acknowledge her work in such a way.



\$50,000 in grants for local sporting clubs



Almost a dozen local sporting clubs will receive small infrastructure grants under the 2018-19 Local Sport Grant Program.

These grants are collectively worth \$50,000 and are used for improvements to local grounds or facilities, or for equipment, training or sport development.

A full list of this year's recipients is on my website.

I'd also like to remind clubs that I run an annual workshop for club officials which deals with fundraising and the writing of applications for grants such as these. Contact my office on 4959 3200 for more information.

More Return and Earn machines coming



Despite problems with the roll-out, the Return and Earn Scheme is getting good results. More than a billion containers have been recycled so far and the scheme is on track to reduce litter by 40 per cent by 2020. I'm hoping to have some good news soon on new machine locations at Wangi and Toronto.

New push to have Morisset Police Station open 24/7



While the new modern police station at Morisset has delivered local police the facilities they need and deserve, my focus has now turned to getting it operational 24/7 to serve the growing local population.

Make no mistake, our police resources are far better off on the streets than sitting behind a desk at a local station.

Policing methods have changed greatly over the past decade and every police car is now essentially a mobile station, but we need greater police numbers and a station that offers longer or more flexible opening hours.

After discussions with senior local police, I'd like to see about 20 of those new recruits added to the Lake Macquarie roster.

Intersection project gets some fine tuning

Work on the Fishery Point Road intersection at Morisset is almost completed but there's a number of issues I've been working with the RMS on fixing.

Firstly, I believed that the merge lane heading into Fishery Point Road was too short and needed to be longer. The RMS has assured me that the merge lane will be extended, but an exact length is still to be determined.

I also raised concerns that the left-turn arrows are really hard to see if you're at the front of the queue coming out of Fishery Point Road, so the RMS has agreed to put the arrows on another more visible signal.

Thirdly, I believe that traffic turning right towards Dora Creek should have its own merge lane so traffic coming through from



Morisset could continue ahead, similar to how the slip lanes at Woodrising and Fishing Point work.

Unfortunately, the RMS has said current space constraints mean that can't happen, but I'm hoping they can look at addressing the through traffic matter at a later stage.

Christmas was saved for local charity

I again extend my thanks to everyone who came to the rescue of Southlake Marketplace in the weeks before Christmas. As you no doubt heard, thieves stole money, hampers and toys intended for

local families in need from the charity's headquarters at Cooranbong just days before they were due to be delivered. But after putting the call out, we managed to raise enough money, food and toys to replace everything that was stolen. In fact, we raised enough to make sure that food hampers also went to those families on the waiting list. It was a fantastic community effort and I thank everyone who donated.

Greg Piper MP

Petrol prices



It's great to see that the arrival of a new petrol station at Morisset has significantly improved competition in the area and driven fuel prices down. If only we could get the same thing happening at Toronto which lacks the competition from an independent retailer! It always pays to shop around for fuel prices – the savings on an average tank of fuel can often be \$10 - \$20 in the local area. The best and easiest way to find the cheapest fuel prices in the Lake Macquarie area is to check in with the State's free price monitoring service Fuel Check. Both the website (fuelcheck.nsw.gov.au) and the smartphone app can tell you exactly where to find the cheapest prices with real-time monitoring. Just type in your location and it'll tell you where the closest and best deal is.

Suzanne honoured



Suzanne Pritchard's efforts in the community are known to many. She's been president of Coal Point Progress Association for 23 years and is a passionate advocate for sustainable development. After securing a \$250,000 Environmental Trust grant, Suzanne established and managed the Threatened Species Last Stand project which was recently completed after six productive years. She has achieved so much for the local community and has delivered tremendous results, it was an honour to recently acknowledge that work in the Parliament.

\$300 baby bundle

New parents are now eligible for a \$300 'Baby Bundle' to help care for their newborn. The pack includes practical products including a sleeping bag, play and change mats, bath and room thermometers, breast pads, a first aid kit, cloths, wipes, sanitisers, resources on child development and parental well-being and access to a free online first aid training program. New parents will be given the bundle before leaving hospital, or when their newborn is registered with Births, Deaths and Marriages.



Save on car rego

If you're one of the many people who drive from Lake Macquarie to Sydney regularly for work, you may soon be entitled to free or discounted car registration. From July 1 this year, drivers who spend \$15 or more a week on tolls will be eligible for half-price car rego (can be backdated to July 1 last year), while those who spend \$25 or more a week will continue to receive free registration. The initiative is available for all privately-registered cars, utes, four-wheel drives and motorcycles.



Contact

If you need help with any State Government matter, contact my office.

Address: 92 Victory Parade, Toronto 2283

Hours: Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm & 2pm-5pm

Phone: 4959 3200 Fax: 4950 4076

Email: lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Greg Piper Independent Member for the State Electorate of Lake Macquarie

\$100 vouchers now available for Active and Creative Kids



If you're a parent or guardian of a child, you can now apply for this year's 'Active Kids' and 'Creative Kids' vouchers.

Each is worth \$100 and can be used with an accredited sporting club or creative/cultural

group to cover fees, training, tuition, artistic pursuits and the like.

Yes, you can claim both vouchers for any eligible child. All the info you need is on my website, or on the Service NSW website.

Groups share \$330,000 in community grants

More than 20 local community, sporting and cultural groups have secured funding in the latest round of Community Building Partnership grants.

These grants are available annually under the scheme which allows local organisations to build or improve their facilities.

Among the groups which made successful bids

were Southern Lakes District Cricket Club which will now be able to improve ground infrastructure, and Teralba Scouts which will be able to refurbish their hall's kitchen.

Awaba Public School's P&C Association will receive \$20,000 for a new playground and shade installation at the school. South



Cardiff Football Club was successful in getting \$35,000 for disability paths and field levelling, while Cardiff Bowling Club secured \$40,000 to replace a synthetic green. A full list of recent recipients is on my website.

If your club is interested in this year's CBP grants, phone my office on 4959 3200.

A new way to save on your power bills

Like you, I'm angered by rising power costs and the privatisation of the State's power supply which I have opposed at every step.

If you're struggling to keep up, check out

Energy Switch which could save you as much as \$550 a year on your power bills.

Energy Switch is a free online tool that works by comparing your latest power bill with all NSW electricity providers. Enter your details online or at Service NSW centres at Warners Bay and Toronto (from late February) and the system will provide you with the three cheapest options.