

Lake Macquarie Matters

Future of sport and rec centre up in the air

SAVING MYUNA



The immediate future of Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre should be known very soon with an independent review of the closure now due for release.

As we all know, the Office of Sport abruptly closed the centre on the basis of an Origin Energy report which said the ash dam wall at Origin's Eraring power station could be compromised by a large earthquake.

While such an event is not impossible, Geoscience Australia puts the chances of a 5.9 quake happening within 100km of Myuna Bay at a 'one-in-5000-years or longer event'.

As I've maintained throughout this debate, if the ash dam wall is a problem then Origin should be fixing it and eliminating any risk before closing valuable public facilities on adjoining properties.

It should also be remembered that while Origin was telling the Office of Sport to close Myuna Bay, it had also applied to increase the size and volume of the very same ash dam it

said could fail in an earthquake.

In my opinion, the actions of the Office of Sport should stand as an example of their disregard for the community, government processes and the Myuna Bay staff.

The community's anger is reflected in the 20,000 signatures we collected on a petition within weeks of the closure. To this day, there has been no apology or public explanation from anyone at the Office of Sport.

Myuna Bay's future will be determined by the independent review undertaken by the NSW Dams Safety Committee.

While we'll have to accept that umpire's decision, I'll be standing firm on the community's desire to have Myuna Bay reopened. I'll also be standing firm on the need for Origin to clean up its own backyard, and on the need for the Office of Sport to review the way it makes decisions on facilities like Myuna Bay without any consultation with the community which owns them.

Welcome

Hello and welcome to my mid-year newsletter.

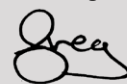
As this is the first since the March election, I want to thank everyone in the Lake Macquarie electorate for their trust and support. It's a

very great honour to be representing our community in the 57th NSW Parliament, and that will never be lost on me.

We had to hit the ground running straight after the election when the Office of Sport abruptly closed Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre, but I am so proud of how the community has rallied for its re-opening.

Fortunately, I have a lot more positive news to share regarding other projects in the area, and as always I welcome your feedback

Best regards,



Inside

- School upgrades at Wangi and Speers Pt
- Work to start on Wyee sewer connection
- Save thousands on your living costs
- Morisset Country Club closes
- Two new Return and Earn machines
- Work starts on new-look Wyee Station
- Multi-level car parks in the spotlight

■ Heaven can wait



It was fantastic to catch up with Mel Steiner and Shane Lewicki from Royal Motor Yacht Club at Toronto recently as they donated the proceeds from this year's Heaven Can Wait sailing regatta to two wonderful local organisations. This year, \$35,000 was raised for the local branch of Cancer Council and \$5000 for Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie. I believe the regatta is in its 13th year now and its total fundraising efforts are approaching half a million dollars.

■ New rescue vessel



I've long supported the fantastic volunteers at Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie, so it was a great privilege to represent Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliot at the commissioning of a new rescue boat for the local service. It was fitting that this wonderful new vessel was named after a stalwart of the organisation, Neil Grieves, who passed away after 40 years of service.

■ Don't Spread the Flu



NSW Health has issued a timely reminder that it's in everyone's interests to stop the spread of influenza. Get a flu shot, sneeze into your elbow, clean your hands and stay away from work if you're sick. You can also drop in to my Toronto electorate office for free bottles of hand sanitiser if you're passing. I can't post them out, unfortunately, so if you can't call in, perhaps you could find a neighbour or relative who can pick some up for you.

Work starts on \$36m Wyee sewer project

The major construction phase of the Wyee sewer connection project will begin next week, with the \$36m venture on schedule to be completed by the end of next year.

Hunter Water is currently liaising individually with all affected residents and that has led to

refinements which will provide a better outcome for all concerned.

Hunter Water will soon establish a site office in the area where residents can discuss their individual plans, while the construction contractor will have an information booth at Wyee Markets each month.

Great to see so many fantastic things finally happening at Wyee!

Work begins on Wyee Station



Work has started on the significant upgrade of Wyee rail station and is expected to be completed within 12 months.

The refurbishment will deliver a safe, modern and easily accessible station with three lifts being installed to provide easy access to the centre platform from both sides of the station. They'll make things so much easier for elderly and frail people, as well as for parents with prams and those travelling with luggage.

The project also includes: upgrades to pedestrian pathways from the car parks in Gorokan Road and Wyee Road; a new kiss-and-ride drop-off zone on Gorokan Road; a formal pedestrian crossing on Wyee Road; improvements to CCTV and lighting; a new family-accessible toilet and improved waiting rooms.

None of the construction work will disrupt any rail services.

New Return and Earn machines arrive



In good news, we've got new Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs) at Wangi Oval and at Fassifern's Croft Oval. In disappointing news, the machine that was at Morisset is currently inaccessible following the closure of Morisset Country Club.

Suitable sites in the Toronto area have been hard to come by so I'm really pleased we've managed to find a site close by at Croft Oval.

I'm happy that the Wangi one is operational as that part of the district was left short when the one at Rathmines was removed.

I've been in touch with the owner of the Morisset Country Club site and with TOMRA which owns the machines with a view to finding another suitable location in the Morisset area. That's now under way.

In the meantime, other machines are located at Bonnells Bay (behind Coles), Wyee (at the community hall) and at Cardiff (at the Vinnies centre in Belford Rd).

By the way, it's worth noting that the scheme has now seen more than two billion containers recycled, and that's a great thing.

School upgrades started



It's fantastic to see that work has now started on the major upgrades of Wangi Wangi and Speers Point public schools.

I was also pleased by the Government's promise prior to the election to clear the maintenance backlogs at all local schools by the middle of next year.

I'll continue to monitor that commitment because the backlogs at some of our Lake

Macquarie schools are quite significant.

The Wangi project includes a new administration building, a new canteen, covered walkways, a new hall and new two-storey classrooms.

Speers Point school will get the same as well as a new library.

Work on both should be completed before the end of next year.



Country Club's closure is a great loss

Like just about everyone else, I was very disappointed by the closure of Morisset Country Club last month.

At the time of writing this, I understand that plans for the 90-hectare site will be unveiled publicly within weeks by a company which has an option to buy it from Drysdale Metals. There is currently no development or rezoning application lodged with Lake Macquarie City Council, so we'll have to wait until the new owner's intentions are known.

Having said that, I've moved to address some of the other matters related to the club's closure. As you know, the club housed a war memorial and hosted annual commemorative services. It was also an authorised evacuation point in times of disaster.

I was able to get key stakeholders into a meeting last month, including the RSL and senior police and I'm happy to report that those issues are being addressed.



I also want to recognise the fantastic work that Erika Ford and her board did in trying to reshape the club's future. They had certainly steered the club into a good financial position before it was forced to vacate.

Hopefully we'll hear from the new owner soon and know more about the long-term plans for this very important local site.

Greg Piper MP

Campaign for more police on course



We've made some good headway in our push for more police numbers in the Morisset area and I am hopeful that we can get Morisset Police Station open 24/7. I've had discussions with the Government and Lake Macquarie Police Commander Superintendent and they've all been very responsive to our campaign.

Significantly, the Berejiklian Government made a pre-election commitment to fund an additional 1500 police officers state-wide over the next four years. We need about 20 to meet the growing workload in the broader Lake Macquarie area and get Morisset station open 24/7.

It has to be noted that while the Government might fund the new officers, it doesn't get a say on where they're placed. It's up to the Police Commissioner to determine where local resources go. Hopefully we can get a positive result on this issue soon.

New transport hub remains a priority



I'm expecting a new spotlight to go on plans for a major transport interchange at Glendale when a business case and feasibility study is completed by the State Government.

Last year, the Government committed \$1.5m towards the cost of preparing an updated business and costings report, with the final \$400,000 of that cost included in last month's State Budget.

I don't doubt that original cost estimates for the project have risen, especially given that this plan has dragged on for so long.

Regardless, I maintain that this project would not only be a major boost for public transport in the area, but also the catalyst for significant investment in retail, residential and industrial areas between Cardiff and Boolaroo.

I'll keep you posted when the study is finalised.

Multi-level car parks needed at stations



The lack of commuter parking at some of our major railway stations has become a growing problem.

At Morisset and Fassifern, most of the carparks are full by 8am. It's the same at Cardiff where commuters are now parking their cars in suburban streets up to 600 metres away.

You might remember that I had some designs (concept only) drawn up for a multi-level car park at Morisset late last year with the intention of showing the Government and Transport Minister what could be done.

I've had several meetings with the Transport Minister since and I came away confident that he's taking things to the next level for us. He expressed his awareness of problems at Morisset and Cardiff in particular and a willingness to look at a solution.

I also raised the matter in State Parliament last month which you can read on my website.

If we're serious about getting people out of their cars and onto public transport, we have to make it more efficient, cleaner, faster, safer and convenient.

There are several sites around Morisset station that could accommodate a multi-deck car park. The same goes for Cardiff. Things are a little bit more difficult at Fassifern where the existing car park is owned by the council, but there is still plenty of scope for a better parking facility there.



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

State Budget delivers on key Lake Macquarie projects

Work on a \$25m indoor sporting stadium at Hillsborough will start soon after funding was confirmed in last month's State Budget.

I was really pleased to have helped secured funding for the 4000-seat sports regional sports stadium located within the Charlestown Electorate

The Government delivered on a number of projects promised prior to the election, including the \$9.36m needed to complete the railway station upgrade at Wyee and a further \$16.8m to begin the actual construction phase of the Wyee sewer connection project.

There is always a lot more that I'd like to see funded. In particular I'd like to see funds for

the RMS to continue planning the widening of the main road all the way from the M1 interchange at Morisset to Glendale.

I'd also like to see a firm commitment to building new parking stations at Morisset, Cardiff and Fassifern stations. The Government has, however, set up a substantial fund for these types of projects and I've already had meetings with the Minister about getting multi-level car parks built at those stations (see adjacent story).

Our case for better health services in the Morisset area is also something I've been pushing hard with the Health Minister and I'm expecting things to progress further in coming months.

Key Budget highlights

- ✓ \$13.4m to start work on the \$25m basketball stadium at Hillsborough
- ✓ \$16.8m to start construction work on Wyee Sewer Connection scheme
- ✓ \$9.362m to upgrade Wyee Station
- ✓ \$2.7m for Hillsborough Road
- ✓ \$1.37m for social housing upgrades
- ✓ \$19m to continue investigations for Fassifern-to-Hexham freight bypass
- ✓ \$1.3m for boating/jetty facilities
- ✓ \$832,000 for next stage of pathway between Speers Point and Glendale



One visit could save you thousands

It's fantastic to have Service NSW now operating at Toronto and I encourage you to call in and find out how you can save thousands on living costs.

By making an appointment with the service centre staff, you can sit down with an expert and get a run-through of all the rebates,

concessions, vouchers and offers that are available or relevant to you.

That includes things like the family energy rebate, toll relief, pensioner travel vouchers, appliance replacement grants, gas rebates, pensioner water rebates, the low income household rebate, CTP green slip refunds, registration rebates for trades apprentices, travel concessions for tertiary students, and of course things like the Active Kids and Creative Kids vouchers.

I know of some families who are saving several thousand dollars a year from rebate schemes they didn't know existed.

More information is on the Service NSW website, or you can phone 13 77 88 to book a 'Cost of Living' appointment.



Greg Piper Independent Member for the State Electorate of Lake Macquarie