

Lake Macquarie Matters

Legislating for Local Jobs

Hunter coal mine closures will impact 50,000 jobs over coming decades, with almost 12,000 jobs lost by 2030 alone. We need to act now to ensure there are sustainable well-paid jobs for these workers in the future.

The impact on jobs was evident last December when Eraring Power Station announced plans to continue operations until 2029. As Myuna Colliery's supply contract wasn't linked to the life of the Power Station, immediate concern was sparked for the future of their staff.

Following tense negotiations, an agreement was reached in March to extend the supply of coal to the Power Station through to its scheduled retirement in April 2029.

The extension of operations was welcome news for the 300 Myuna workers and thousands more in the regional supply chain. This hard-won fight highlighted the imminent threat of job losses and uncertainty for workers' futures. But this isn't the end of the story.

Workers need urgent support before they're unemployed and the chance for transition to new industries is lost. It is important to get

this right to ensure coal regions thrive in the future.

The Future Jobs and Investment Bill 2025 sets up a framework to support the economic transition of coal regions, with the aim of facilitating strategic planning around land use and regional economies and support for workers and businesses.

This is to replace the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund, which was never designed to be equitable for coal communities. When that scheme was introduced, we were legislating to support communities facing energy transition on the not too distant horizon. Now we must support communities through a transition already happening.

I moved amendments to the Bill which increase Ministerial accountability, entrench community consultation and improve transparency. The Bill passed the Legislative Assembly in March, although passage through the Legislative Council has stalled.

More must be done to ensure we protect communities who have supported NSW through electricity generation, and I will keep pushing for action.

This isn't about addressing energy production, distribution and consumption as we move towards renewables; it's about the human cost as workers' lives are upended. Transition away from coal-fired power is inevitable, but hardship for communities in the face of this change is not.



Welcome



Hello and welcome to the mid-year edition of my Lake Macquarie Matters Newsletter. Where has the year gone?

This edition will touch on the happenings in Lake Macquarie so far in 2026.

With the cold winter weather hitting us, take a moment to sit and have a read of my Community Feature, highlighting the amazing people and organisations who uplift and support our community through hard work and local spirit.

I have the privilege of representing you in NSW Parliament and strive to bring your concerns to the attention of the Government and advocate for local priorities. In this edition you will see updates on many local projects from environmental initiatives to road and transport upgrades and the changing landscape of our energy industry.

Regards



Pushing for a Plan

Morisset Hospital may be the future home of the replacement Sports Facility, but it is so much more. With heritage buildings, beautiful landscape and local historic significance, it's safe to say, locals will have ideas for its future, which I raised recently when I met with Health Minister Ryan Park.

NSW Health may finalise its use of the site as early as next year. But, aside from the 7ha parcel allocated for the Sports Facility, the next stage of its life remains in limbo.

Nobody wants to see vandals and thieves moving onto the vacant site, destroying a century of local history. However, I fear a lack of Government planning will allow just this.

During discussions with Ministers, I'm hearing enthusiasm and a desire for progress, but very little has been achieved. The site deserves more than a bureaucratic quagmire until

someone decides to tick a box to move forward.

Divestment of the precinct is one of my top priorities for the 26-27 Budget and I will

continue pressing for a clear path forward, so the community can finally feel there's a plan including local priorities and the best use of the site moving forward.



Rough Sleepers on the Rise

Homelessness is rising. Local street counts record only a few dozen rough sleepers. However, including hidden forms of homelessness, the number rises over 700. Many are transient to avoid attention or being forced to move on.

Recently my team have helped numerous people in the area by liaising with Council, Homes NSW, homeless shelters and local charities to provide assistance and connected them with social housing providers.

In NSW the Protocol for Homeless People in Public Places affirms; people experiencing homelessness are entitled to seek shelter in public spaces. Of course, unsafe living conditions pose a risk to both rough sleepers and the broader community. Police may only

issue move-on directions when there's a genuine safety, public order or behavioural concern. However, this often results in people being moved on repeatedly with nowhere to go.

There are numerous factors causing homelessness. We need stronger alignment between State agencies, councils and service providers, more social housing, as well as holistic wraparound services such as health and mental health care, substance and post-custodial support and employment assistance.

Behind every statistic is a person, often invisible, deserving a genuine pathway out of homelessness. We need a response matching the scale and complexity of this challenge.

Health Services on Life Support

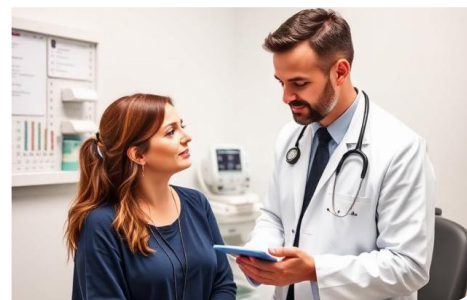
Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) has identified the need for more public health services in southern Lake Mac.

We've seen the rollout of nurse practitioner and geriatric medicine clinics virtually and at the Southlakes Multi-Purpose Centre, including for aged care, continence and wound care.

While this meets some urgent short-term needs, we need a solution for the future.

In April, I met with Health Minister Ryan Park and asked for increased funding for Rehab in The Home to help get people out of crowded hospitals and back home faster. This creates better outcomes for patients and the health system alike.

I also called for a permanent public health presence in the Southlakes region. Specifically, a Health One clinic in the Morisset area, as recommended by HNELHD, to address service gaps in the region and the need of our growing population.



Community Grants E-Bulletin

Are you a member of a local sporting club, community, or environmental group? Maybe a volunteer or charitable organisation? Do you have a community project you need funding for?

After so many enquiries seeking support from local organisations, I have begun distributing an email bulletin for available grants and funding opportunities. If you would like to receive this E-Bulletin, please contact my office, and ask to be added to the mailing list.

Building Our Energy Future

Lake Macquarie's strong legacy of powering NSW is set to continue with the delivery of a large-scale Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) at Origin Eraring and the development of the Hunter Transmission Project (HTP).

Origin celebrated the completion of Battery 1 in March, helping to ensure grid stability as we transition to renewables, with Battery 2 coming online next year. I have enjoyed visiting the site to see the progress of the BESS and thank Origin for this investment in our community as the coal fired Power Station nears the end of its operational life.

BESS systems are needed to ensure a smooth transition and, with the completion of the HTP, will support NSW's renewable energy infrastructure into the future.

The HTP will build a new, 110km, overhead 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line between Bayswater in the Upper Hunter and Olney in the Lower Hunter, to connect NSW's existing network and strengthen system reliability and security.

The project, exhibited in 2025 for feedback, used the process to inform further investigations

and refinements to minimise and manage any impacts with EnergyCo continuing to work with communities. The project is currently being assessed by the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, which is reviewing the reports.

For upcoming HTP info sessions, to contact them directly or get updates, visit: energyco.nsw.gov.au/http

Both projects play an important role in the delivery of energy from the Central-West Orana and New England Renewable Energy Zones to the rest of NSW.



Re-Use and Re-Purpose or Remediate?

One part of a future beyond coal is finding the best use for former mining land. The re-use of mining land is an opportunity to strengthen coal regions. Not all former mines can or should be repurposed, nor should re-use of the land let mining companies off the hook. Their re-use should strike a balance between economic, social, environmental and sustainability benefits.

Mining sites have high-quality built infrastructure including power, water, sewers, roads and rail connections. There is a real opportunity to transform this land into new urban centres with residential development, industry and employment opportunities.

As more people come to Lake Macquarie and the energy transition progresses, we need more homes and jobs. With a lack of

employment land in the region, re-use of mining sites offers an elegant solution. It means we can use land to attract industry and investment, create jobs and boost the local economy, reducing the need to cut down trees and disturb natural habitat.

With our local legacy of mining, we have an opportunity to lead the State and if we can get it right in Lake Macquarie, then we can get it right throughout NSW.



Mid-Year Parliament Wrap Up

Work never stops in my Electorate Office, but things have slowed to a snail's pace in Macquarie Street. With unlikely upper House alliances and 'poison pill' clauses holding up timely passage of legislation, we haven't seen many Bills pass in the last 6 months. The people of NSW deserve representatives who get on with the job, not play political games.

Notable laws passed in the last 6 months:

- make it a criminal offence for landlords to knowingly permit the sale of illicit tobacco or vaping goods on their premises
- implement a 21-day grace period where a person who has chosen to contest their fine in court can withdraw their election
- reform the workers compensation scheme, which these laws finally passed after first being introduced in May 2025.
- create offences which strengthen petrol stations' price reporting obligations, so drivers get accurate price information via the Fuelcheck app

A key priority is securing a just transition for Lake Macquarie and the Hunter region. Over the past 6 months, I worked with the Minister for Natural Resources on amendments to the Future Jobs and Investment Bill 2025, which passed with unanimous support in the Legislative Assembly. At the time of writing, this Bill is stranded in the upper House.

Parliament was also recalled late last year to pass the Terrorism and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 in response to the Bondi terrorist attack. It's since proved controversial, as the NSW Supreme Court found it infringed the freedom of political communication guaranteed by the Australian Constitution. It's vital for Government to maintain public safety and social cohesion following a terrorist event. But this law has proven flawed, and Parliament must now reflect on the Court's findings when considering other legislation of this nature.



LMHS School Leaders visit NSW Parliament House

Meet Our New Furies

I attended a very special Fire and Rescue NSW graduation of two new firefighters, Rego Mahmoud and Matthew Loudon.

Rego, originally from Egypt, chose to call Lake Macquarie home after becoming an Australian citizen. He will now give back to the community by helping others in their most difficult moments. With family unable to attend, I wanted him to know he has a supportive and proud community around him.

Matt, a Morisset local, is also giving back to his community. Becoming a firefighter takes courage, commitment, and a genuine desire to serve others.

They both represent our great community by stepping up, giving back, and helping keep others safe.



Chris Gavenlock – Lake Macquarie Local Woman of the Year

It was a pleasure to join Chris as she received the prestigious award at the NSW Local Women of the Year Awards in March. Her dedication to our community is truly inspiring.

Chris has spent 30 years preserving the history of Morisset Hospital, founding the Morisset Hospital Historical Society, and even writing a book on the subject "A Private World on a Nameless Bay".

Chris has also used her own life experiences to help others, through her advocacy with the Dystonia Network of Australia. Congratulations on this very well-deserved accolade!

NSW Local Women of the Year Awards



Big Move for Survivor's R Us

Survivor's R Us Inc. have unveiled their brand-new Community Hub, located opposite the former site.

Whether it's people experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, mental health or financial challenges or simply need support. It's a place where people can come for help and a hot meal. Founder Maria Martin began Survivor's R Us after experiencing first-hand how overwhelming domestic violence is when you don't know where to turn.

I thank the incredible team of 220 volunteers who transformed the new premises. Unlike before, they own this building after securing a \$2.8 million Federal Government grant supported by Pat Conroy MP.



Remembering Our HERStory

During April, Local photojournalist, Carla Edwards, brought "HERStory: Remembering Australia's Military Women", to NSW Parliament.

HERStory, a national documentary and oral history project, ensures women who served Australia are no longer left at the edges of public memory.

Carla began after recognising how little information existed about Australian servicewomen. Their service was real, but their place in public memory felt partial, brief, or missing. Over 250 women and counting have been included, each adding to a national record of women's military service and lived experience.

The exhibition was a perfect acknowledgement of servicewomen during ANZAC commemorations.



Heaven Can Wait – Charity Sailing Regatta

This amazing regatta has been running for 20 years fundraising for cancer support services and our community.

This year they handed over an incredible \$75,000 to the Hunter Cancer Council NSW Home Help Program, along with \$5,000 to Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie. Since it began, they've raised around \$800,000.

They also announced, they will fully fund the operational costs of the Cancer Council's Transport to Treatment service (and now need volunteer chauffeurs)!



Simply Deadly Mural in Toronto

The final touches were put on an amazing artwork adorning the length of Simply Pharmacy Toronto in April.

Sam Zoghbi and his team sponsored the artwork, collaborating with Joanna Rees and the Toronto Sustainable Neighbourhood Group.

Local artists Maree Simon Ahoy, Les Ahoy, Jason Mackenzie and Lacey Simon created 'Lake and Land Mural' paying tribute to the Westlakes community, history, families and businesses.

The wall has a history of being graffitied, it's hoped the artwork will breathe life into the area, inspiring pride and appreciation from all who view it.



Safety First at MPSC

I presented a new defibrillator to Marmong Point Sailing Club in April, on behalf of Minister for Sport, Steve Kamper MP, and funded through the Local Sport Defibrillator Program 2025/26.

With around 40 members, several living with heart conditions, this life-saving equipment provides reassurance for members, visitors, and the wider community in the event of a medical emergency.

Keep CALM and carry on!

Lake Macquarie is stronger when organisations step up to support and connect local people, and I acknowledge Community Activities Lake Macquarie (CALM) Inc, for reopening the Bonnells Bay Community Centre. It was great to officially cut the ribbon in February.

CALM do incredible work supporting kids, young people and families, and are now delivering those vital services to the Morisset Peninsula. Facilities like this strengthen communities by providing a welcoming place for people to gather, feel supported and build positive futures.

A huge thank you to CALM, and the organisations operating alongside them to get this facility up and running!



Speers Point

Speers Point transport upgrade is a step closer with early works starting soon! You can expect to see crews set up a site compound and carry out pre-construction investigations ahead of construction later in 2026.

The \$16 million upgrade will reduce travel times and congestion, improve safety and provide smoother journeys for road users.

The project will deliver increased capacity on T C Frith Ave with two lanes in each direction between the

roundabout and north of Seventh Street. It also includes traffic lights at T C Frith Ave and Seventh St to improve safety and traffic flow at peak times. Transport for NSW carried out further investigations and traffic modelling to refine this intersection following community concerns about banning right turns after the intersection is signalised.

Major construction, set to start in late 2026, is expected to take 12 months to complete.

More info at: www.transport.nsw.gov.au/speerspoint



Mandalong Rd

Tangible progress on this project is hard to identify, with motorists dealing with daily traffic chaos in Morisset due to delays in the much-needed Mandalong Road Upgrades.

Earlier this year, Transport for NSW carried out another round of investigations to inform the construction phase of the project. I understand frustration at the announcement of more investigations, and we all just want construction to start already. But this is a major \$76 million joint State and Federal funded infrastructure project, and planning and approval processes across governments take time.

Detailed design is underway and includes further geotechnical and survey investigations, development of detailed engineering drawings and reports, and construction specifications for project delivery. The procurement process will commence when detailed design is completed, which is expected later this year.

Subject to property acquisitions and project approvals, Transport for NSW advised me they will be aiming to start construction in late 2026 (but only time will tell), as it's dependant on weather and the release of funding to commence works.



NSW Parliament Tours

Did you know you can book a private tour with my staff of NSW Parliament House?

Learn about the history of Australia's oldest public building and the operations of NSW Parliament. Go behind the scenes with access to areas normally off limits to the public. Tours are open to local schools, clubs and community groups interested in the history and workings of our Parliament.

Groups are limited to 10 people and run on Tuesday and Wednesdays of sitting weeks. Contact my office to enquire about a tour of NSW Parliament: lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au



Deaves Road

In March I met with Federal Member for Hunter, Dan Repacholi MP, and Lake Macquarie Mayor, Adam Shultz, to announce \$8.7 million in funding to flood-proof Deaves Road.

The Federal Government pledged \$4.6 million with NSW

Government adding \$4.1 million through the Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package and Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

The project will upgrade 2.1kms of road between Crawford and Mandalong Roads. Lake Macquarie City Council is delivering the works, which began in February and are expecting to be open to traffic in

April 2027.

Deaves Road has been flood prone for many years, and our growing community needs this vital connection to function reliably in any weather.

The region continues to develop, with population expected to double by 2046 meaning ongoing investment is needed to keep our community resilient.

The wrapping came off a new community space at Bernie Goodwin Oval in Morisset.

Thoughtful design is essential to ensure public spaces are enjoyed by the community they are built for. I especially loved knowing local teenage girls played a key role in the design, highlighting the importance of including circular spaces to gather and connect in a safe, fun and inclusive environment.

There's also some great new play equipment Minister for Hunter, Jodie Harrison MP,

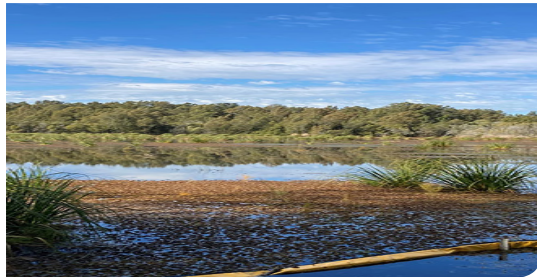


Mayor of Lake Macquarie, Adam Shultz and I took the chance to test out!

Upgrades were funded by the

NSW Safer Cities Program and delivered by the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation, and I'm pleased to see this space come to life.

Getting Flow Right in Frog Fight



Locals are continually interested in the changing nature of Muddy Lake.

I first brought this invasive weed issue to Crown Lands' attention in 2022, and significant work has been undertaken since. Control

of Salvinia using weevils continues to be effective with Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) releasing weevils

again in late 2025, and surveys show a steady increase in weevil numbers and decline in weed coverage.

In 2023, UNSW Water Research Laboratory (WRL) assessments confirmed reinstatement of

tidal connection is the most effective long-term option to control Salvinia, which doesn't survive in salty waters, at Muddy Lake.

WRL completed a design in 2024 to reinstate tidal flow and recommended further field investigation to refine the design, understand the water flow and assess risks.

Research by LMCC and the University of Newcastle found Lake Macquarie's only population of endangered green and golden bell frogs.

Salinity level testing to minimise the presence of Salvinia without negatively impacting the Frogs is ongoing. The findings will be completed by December informing channel design to achieve effective tidal flushing.

Crown Lands, working with LMCC, developed the Lake Macquarie Coastal Management Program for the next 2-5 years. This will investigate hydrological characteristics and water quality of Muddy Lake to deliver a suitable management approach including Environmental Protection works.

Safe Travels for Train Passengers

NSW Government's Safe Accessible Transport program has identified Cockle Creek Train Station's need for an upgrade.

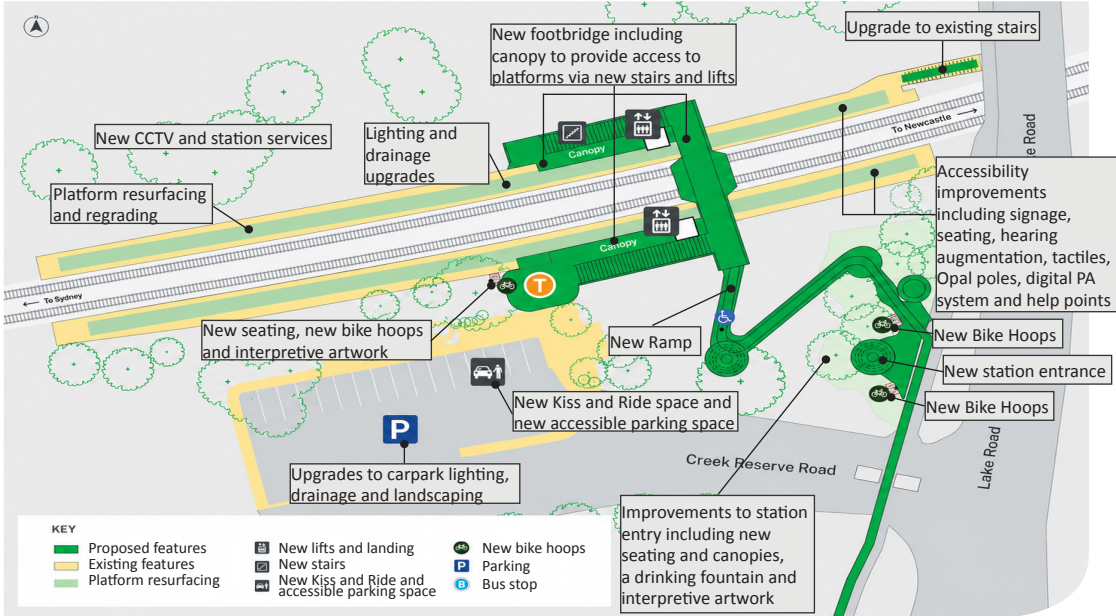
This will deliver a new footbridge, lifts and stairs, as well as upgrading the existing stairs connecting the Newcastle-bound platform with the road bridge on Lake Road. It will also provide improvements to the Lake Road entry, a new kiss and ride zone, accessible parking spaces and paths to station amenities and bicycle parking.

Passengers can look forward to the installation of CCTV cameras and wayfinding signage, improved connections to the bus stop, tactile indicators,

and other upgrades to make facilities safer. Consultation

was conducted in April, with planners now busy reviewing

feedback to prepare a report for the community.



Indicative layout of Cockle Creek Station upgrade, subject to change during detailed design stage.

Community Recognition Statements

Do you know a local legend? Someone who is worthy of public recognition through volunteering, or dedicating their time to help others, or with a notable sporting achievement or prestigious award?

I love to celebrate these efforts with a short speech to the NSW Parliament called a Community Recognition Statement.

These are recorded in Hansard, the State Parliamentary record, to forever acknowledge those who represent the best of us.

To submit a nomination for a Community Recognition Statement you can email my staff:

lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Contact

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More Spots for Little Tots

Teralba and Booragul Public Schools are closer to becoming home to new co-located preschools supporting young families in western Lake Macquarie.

The \$769 million program aims to build 100 new public preschools in NSW.

Construction has begun at both sites with Teralba preparing for retaining walls and services and Booragul progressing to foundations and framing.

Each centre will have places for 40 children each day and provide fun modern rooms and outdoor play areas.



Safe Haven for DV Survivors



In 2025 there were 1008 recorded domestic violence incidents in Lake Macquarie, with many more unreported.

In May I joined Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Jodie Harrison MP, Dawn Walker, CEO Jenny's Place Domestic Violence & Homelessness Support and James Adrichrem from Housing Plus, to turn the sod on a \$5.9 million women's refuge in Lake Macquarie.

It's being built under the NSW Core and Cluster

program and delivered by Housing Plus with Jenny's Place providing support services.

Opening mid-2027, it consists of nine, pet friendly, self-contained units, providing safety and privacy. Unlike others, the refuge allows teenage boys and adolescents to stay with their mothers.

It's a terrible reality, but every refuge built is a step forward in making NSW a safer place for families escaping violence.

LMHS Upgrading and Excelling

Lake Macquarie High School was recognised as one of 45 public schools in NSW showing the most improved HSC results in 2025. This reflects consistent effort over seven years with students achieving strong progress across the board.

Principal Brendan Maher acknowledged this milestone belongs to the whole school community. A focus on smaller class settings, wellbeing programs, and continued investment in new learning spaces is clearly making a difference.

LMHS has also seen fantastic upgrades under the High Potential and Gifted Education Partner School Program, including new visual art, food tech, hospitality, marine studies, woodwork and sport facilities.

Congratulations for this fantastic result.

David Hughes Takes the Helm at LMCC

I was pleased to hear from Lake Macquarie Mayor, Adam Shultz, of the appointment of David Hughes as the new Chief Executive Officer of Lake Macquarie City Council.

Aside from David's (impressive) credentials, which include 8 years as a Director Built and Natural Assets, he brings a wealth of local knowledge and a true passion for supporting our community.

I acknowledge and commend Tony Farrell, who stepped into the interim position, for his dedication and contributions during his time in the hot seat.

Congratulations David, I look forward to

working with you in your new role to build on the fantastic legacy of Council and their commitment to the people of Lake Macquarie.



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