

Lake Macquarie Matters

Hard work pays off

New police stations, new roads, better health services and finally a good result for long-suffering Boolaroo residents. It's been a busy year.

It was great to see the new police stations at Toronto and Morisset opened this year. Our police are now equipped with the most modern resources in the State.

The completion this year of the Cary Street upgrade was very welcome with overwhelming feedback being that traffic is flowing better and more safely. I believe the priority on this route should now be through Argenton to Speers Point.

On roads, it is great news that Lake Macquarie Council has received Federal Government funds that will see the long awaited construction of the missing Munibung Road link to Main Road at Cockle Creek commence in 2018.

This year's State Budget also included \$1.7m to prepare a business case for the Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange at Glendale, while the link road through from Cardiff was completed.

Among the most pleasing results in 2017 was seeing the proposal to privatise the operation of Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation centre



abandoned. Like Wyong Hospital, it will remain in public hands.

The next year will bring new challenges but I'm confident the right groundwork has been laid on some significant projects.

Physical construction work will start on the Wyee sewer project. I've also been fighting hard for funds to install lifts at Wyee rail station, and provide better access at Dora Creek and Fassifern stations.

We're also likely to see improvements to Hillsborough Rd, and I'm hopeful the dredging of LT Creek at Fassifern will be funded.

Our community is filled with inspirational people who made their mark over the past year, but we also endured some sad losses, including Bob 'Dutchy' Holland, Dr Wolf Du Plessis and Michael Chamberlain who were each extraordinary people who worked hard for their local communities.

All in all, a busy but fruitful year, but a busier one awaits.

Welcome

I'm not sure about you, but this year feels like it's slipped past way too quickly.

I hope this final update of 2017 finds you and your family well.

I've been pushing the State Government hard on a number of fronts this year and I'm pleased to say that we're getting some good traction in key areas.

We've also got some really good results along the way too, some of which are detailed in the adjacent story. Being an Independent in Parliament can be very challenging, however I believe that it also allows for co-operative relationships that have seen tangible outcomes for the electorate along with visits to the area by the Premier and recently, the Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, I encourage you to keep up to date with everything happening in our area by following my Facebook page or signing up for my free eNews which can be emailed to you directly each month. They're great ways of staying informed. In the meantime, let me take this opportunity to wish you, your family and friends, a very merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and prosperous 2018.

Best wishes to you all,




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■ Wyee plan on track

The \$26m plan to connect sewer services to the Wyee township has progressed and remains on track to be completed by the end of 2020. Following community and council feedback, Hunter Water is revising the size of the sewer infrastructure and will increase its capacity to allow for predicted population growth in the area, and the future connection of areas outside of Wyee. Hunter Water has completed the draft design of the scheme and is now at the detailed design stage. The environmental impact assessment is also nearing completion. Both I and Hunter Water will host the next community information session with affected residents early next year, so Wyee residents should look out for the invitation in the mailboxes.

■ Wendy's an inspiration



I was thrilled to see Wendy Evans become the first person with a severe disability to sail solo around Lake Macquarie. I had promised Wendy that I'd be there to see her off on her journey in November. For someone with cerebral palsy it was a very gutsy thing to do, but Wendy has shown many times that she has what it takes to take on and beat challenges. Wendy sails with Sailability at Toronto in a specially-modified Hansa 303 dinghy. What an absolute inspiration she is. My congratulations go to Wendy, along with her supporters at Sailability.

■ Sports grants

The State Government offers grants to sporting organisations wishing to install a heart defibrillator at their grounds. The defibrillator, or AED, is a life-saving device which delivers a controlled shock to someone experiencing cardiac arrest, increasing the chances of survival. They're handy things to have around the place. Information about the grants program is available at www.sport.nsw.gov.au/clubs/grants/defibrillator. Applications close on December 20. Any sporting club wanting more information can contact my office on 4959-3200.

Vaccination laws come into play

I strongly supported new legislation in the Parliament which will require children to be age-appropriately vaccinated before they can be enrolled in a pre-school or child care centre (unless medical reasons prevent it).

Sadly, there are still some parents who object to vaccinations in spite of the mountain of evidence that vaccinations not only work, but have saved countless millions of lives. I know that health care is an imperfect science and there is no one-size-fits-all solution, but vaccination unequivocally works. You can read my speech and the full parliamentary debate on my website.

A win for palliative care

I was really pleased to receive unanimous support from the Parliament in October for improved palliative care services in Lake Macquarie.

As you may know, I've been arguing for 24/7 palliative care outreach services to be extended beyond a boundary at Macquarie Road at Fennell Bay to everyone in the electorate.

My motion was supported. It calls on the Government and Hunter New England Area Health Service to ensure that all people in the Lower Hunter have equal access to this important end-of-life service. While this win does not in itself require the Government to do anything, it does ensure that the Health Minister is well aware of the



concerns. I remain hopeful that some of the additional \$100m the Government has committed to palliative care services is used to extend the excellent in-home services beyond the 20-kilometre radius of Newcastle's Calvary Mater Hospital.

Speed limits reduced at Morisset and Arcadia Vale

It was disappointing that the RMS chose to proceed with a reduction of the speed limit on Marconi Road at Morisset despite strong community opposition.

The first I knew of the plan was when the RMS sent me an email advising of the impending change. I challenged the move because I didn't think the change was needed and, after seeking community feedback was supported almost unanimously by many hundreds of people who regularly use that road. The overwhelming view in the community is that a competent driver can easily negotiate that road safely at 70km/h. Most, if not all accidents on the road have been due to speeds well beyond the legal limit.

Regardless, the decision has been made and I urge all to be mindful of this speed limit change as well as being particularly cautious in the vicinity of the Bayside Nursing Home. Motorists at Arcadia Vale and Wangi should also be mindful that the speed limit on Donnelly Road has also been dropped from 70km/h to 60km/h.



With water speed champion Ken Warby and his son David at Toronto.



Daffodil Day with the Lioness Club of Toronto.



Posting my marriage equality survey form with my friend and colleague Alex Greenwich.

Inspirational teens

I'm proud of many young people in Lake Macquarie who work hard for their community and inspire others. These six Year 10 students from Toronto High are among them.

Lachlan Maher, Caleb Watts, Coby Howarth, Skye-Ann Anderson, Kayleb Bennett and Toby Adams walks 250km of the Great North Walk between Sydney and Newcastle, raising more than \$8000 for the Black Dog Institute. Their efforts were even more remarkable because they received the tragic news on the

third-last day of their trek that one of their school mates, Jade Finn, had died in a car accident while on a family holiday. The walk was just something they decided to do to raise money for the institute and to raise awareness of mental health issues. They're an absolute inspiration.



Rathmines playground rises from the ashes

Like everyone, I was appalled when vandals burned down the much-loved playground in Rathmines Park back in July, but it's great to see it resurrected.

It was more than a playground for local kids because it was themed around the town's heritage and the role played by the Catalina base during WWII.

Why anyone would build a bonfire under a playground is beyond me, but I have to applaud Lake Macquarie council for rebuilding it so quickly.

Playgrounds like this are expensive and almost impossible to insure, but the council found the money to rebuild it in the same bright colours and with the same range of play equipment. Unfortunately, police have still not found those responsible for the fire. If you have any information which might help them, phone CrimeStoppers on 1800 333 000.



Boxing Day retail trade to go ahead

The Parliament has voted in favour of new laws which will allow all retail outlets to open on Boxing Day if they choose.



I know many people enjoy the Boxing Day sales, and I know many workers who are happy to work on Boxing Day, but I opposed the legislation for a number of reasons.

I believe that Boxing Day is a day better spent with family and friends. I'd prefer to see it remain as a true and proper public holiday for workers in non-essential industry. I'd rather that we protected the two-day Christmas-Boxing Day holiday and didn't consign it to history for the sake of some (mostly larger) retailers.

My stand, however, was in the minority, and the Government approved the new laws to allow all retailers to trade.

Short-term holiday letting under review

The short-term holiday letting industry is booming, led by the likes of Airbnb and Stayz, but it has prompted a government review because of the impact it's having on some residential areas.



While I don't want to see the industry shut down, it must be better regulated. I made a submission to the inquiry which you can read on my website. It includes a range of recommendations which I believe will help the industry co-exist with peaceful residential neighbourhoods.

The Government received more than 8000 submissions to its review. It's currently sifting through those submissions and is expected to come back with a final report and recommendations early next year.



With Bob 'Dutchy' Holland shortly before his untimely death in September.



Hosting members of Southlakes U3A at Parliament House.



Introducing the Premier to some locals during her visit to Toronto.

Finally, a breakthrough on Boolaroo lead issue

I'm pleased that we've been able to convince the State Government to set up a fund that will assist in managing the legacy issues around the former Pasminco site at Boolaroo.

The State has agreed to establish a fund of \$23.5m over the next four years to address contamination issues, particularly on orphaned industrial sites. The Pasminco site and northern Lake Macquarie are listed as specific beneficiaries of the fund. This fund was a recommendation of the Lead Expert Working Group and the Lead Community Reference Group which I chaired.

It gives residents, businesses and investors assurances and confidence that Boolaroo is not only safe, but a great place to be.



Former Environment Minister Rob Stokes inspects the former Pasminco site with me.

I should also add that Newcastle's Summerhill waste centre is now accepting lead-contaminated soil from Boolaroo residents. Requirements that Newcastle Council have placed on receiving this soil have complicated the issue, particularly for larger quantities, and therefore impacted on the intention to reduce the cost for residents wishing to dispose of this fill. I believe that Lake Macquarie City Council and the EPA need to resolve this, however the process is still a great improvement on what existed.

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

Wild roos are a wonderful sight, but know the dangers

Visiting the kangaroos at Morisset Hospital has become increasingly popular, but that's not necessarily good for these wild animals.

The many hundreds of kangaroos that live and graze in the area have been popular among locals for many decades, but for a few years now have also been attracting large numbers of international tourists. Those tourists are making the four-kilometre trek from the train station and I'm getting more worried that someone is going to get hurt. While the roos have become familiar with human interaction, they are still wild animals which pose a risk. They can be dangerous, particularly the males.



Signage advising against feeding the animals is routinely ignored and all too often food that is bad for the health of the kangaroos is fed to them. Visitors should also be aware that the site is part of the Morisset Hospital and that there are no public facilities such as toilets or drinking water available.

Lake groups share community grants

I'm very pleased to announce that a record 24 projects will be funded under this year's Community Building Partnerships scheme.

The groups will share in \$300,000 to improve or construct new facilities.

The successful recipients are: Cooranbong Men's Shed (\$15,000), Woodrising Neighbourhood Centre (\$22,152), Rathmines Catalina Association (\$2585), South Cardiff Football (\$12,000), Morisset Showground (\$4400), Morisset-Toronto Meals on Wheels (\$9330), Toronto Tigers Baseball (\$12,243), Southlake Men's Shed (\$10,000), Toronto Croquet (\$6000), Macquarie Hills Community Pre-school (\$15,000), Macquarie United Sub Junior Rugby League (\$18,500), Lake Macquarie Rowing (\$20,000), Cooranbong Business and Community Alliance (\$3500), Boolaroo Public School P&C (\$5000), Salvation Army (\$14,000), Cardiff Child Care (\$10,000), Toronto Bridge Club (\$15,000), Boolaroo-Speers Point Community Kindergarten (\$40,000), Bolton Point Child Care Centre (\$5000), Dora Creek School of Arts (\$15,000), Macquarie Shores Swimming (\$3500), Scouts Association (\$11,790), Toronto Men's Shed (\$15,000), and Westlakes Archers (\$15,000).

\$100 Active Kids bonus

The State Government announced a \$100 'Active Kids' rebate in this year's State Budget.



Every school-enrolled child, from kindergarten to Year 12, is eligible for a \$100 voucher which can be used for sport and fitness activities with a registered provider.

The voucher will be available every year for four years.

The Government is in the final throes of setting the scheme up through an online portal, and parents should be able to claim their voucher from January 31 onwards.

Sporting or fitness clubs, including dance schools, will need to register as an approved provider before they can accept the vouchers. That process will be under way shortly.

For more information, call 4959-3200, or visit www.sport.nsw.gov.au/activekids.