

New fire tankers



Toronto Fire and Rescue and Killingworth RFS have received new fire tankers which will provide state-of-the-art protection to local communities. The \$310,000 tankers enable crews to access fires in difficult terrain. They also have a water spray protection system which can be operated from the cabin to protect those inside. Our local crews work extremely hard and deserve the best resources possible. In fact, Toronto Fire and Rescue attended 417 fire and emergency calls last year. The tankers have now been operational for several months but it was good to welcome Police and Emergency Services Minister Troy Grant to town to officially hand the tankers over and thank local crews personally.

More police needed



I support the Police Association's calls for the Government to recruit 2500 new officers to cater for our growing population. The State's population grew by 100,000 last year and police resources need to keep up. It is ultimately a decision for the Police Commissioner as to where those new officers go and it's the responsibility of the Government to fund them, but we'd be asking for 20 new officers, some of which could get Morisset Police Station operating 24/7. I believe the State Government will announce an increase to police numbers soon but we're yet to see how many there will be. I'll certainly be pushing for our share.

Contact

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

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Service NSW to open Toronto centre early in the new year

It may have taken three years of fighting, but Service NSW will return to Toronto in February with a new service centre on The Boulevard.

As I reported in my last newsletter, the State Government responded to our calls and made money available in the Budget to open the new centre.

It was originally intended to have the centre open before Christmas, but several existing stores have agreed to shift locations to allow Service NSW to fit into a central location on the main street. This will take some time over the busy Christmas period, meaning the move and the subsequent fit-out won't be completed until mid-February. I think that getting a better outcome and location is worth waiting for.

It's a great and sensible decision by the



Government, not only because it will replace all the services we lost when the old RTA Motor Registry was closed down, but it will also provide a boost for other businesses in Toronto.

It's not just RMS services which will be available at the new centre, but access to more than 40 other Government agencies.

\$3.2m for community and sporting projects

More than \$3.2m was secured for 10 local projects in the latest round of the State's Stronger Country Communities Fund.

Of note, \$450,000 was secured for Hunter Mountain Bike Club to upgrade and expand Awaba Mountain Bike Park.

More than \$600,000 will go towards building a new playground at Bernie Goodwin Memorial Park at Morisset, while \$620,000 will be used to extend the cycleway at Brightwaters.

Walters Park at Speers Point, the home of Lake Macquarie Rugby Club, has been granted \$231,000 for new lighting, and \$680,000 will be provided to Lake Macquarie council to build better shade structures at local pools.



Also making the cut was \$200,000 for a bushwalking track and facilities at Balcolyn, \$140,000 for Morisset PCYC, \$72,000 for Awaba Oval and \$116,000 for a creativity hub at Wangi.

It was fantastic to be able to successfully support so many projects in Lake Macquarie.

Intersection upgrade to be completed in January

The \$3.3m upgrade of the Fishery Point Road-Macquarie Street intersection at Morisset is on schedule and budget. Roads and Maritime Services expect to have the new traffic signals operating from mid-January. The new intersection will have two lanes into Fishery Point Road and will significantly improve traffic

and safety. I was particularly pleased that the RMS agreed to shift the additional lane west towards the rail line so we could save the on-street parking for Macquarie Street residents. Some of the roadworks will occur at night but the RMS will continue to notify adjoining residents beforehand.

Greg Piper Independent Member for the State Electorate of Lake Macquarie



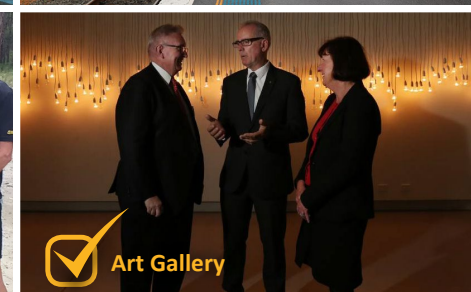
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Lake Macquarie Matters

Opening Day at Lake View Baths, Wangi Wangi, circa 1923.
Picture courtesy of Lake Macquarie History, Lake Macquarie City Council.

Kicking Goals



More than \$30m worth of projects have been funded in the Lake Macquarie electorate over the past few months as some of our key campaigns bear fruit.

The biggest of those is the State Government's commitment to upgrading Wyee station with lifts, better amenities and drop-off zones.

Work on the new Service NSW centre at Toronto will also start early in the new year. Contracts have been signed on the former Millers building on The Boulevard, with the new centre expected to open in February. We also did very well from the State's Stronger Country Communities Fund with \$3.5m for local projects including \$450,000 for Awaba Mountain Bike Park, \$620,000 for the cycleway at Brightwaters, \$680,000 for a new playground at Bernie Goodwin Park at Morisset, among other projects.

We also locked in \$2.25m for the expansion of Speers Point Football Facility. More than \$2m was secured for Lake Macquarie Art Gallery expansion and the establishment of a lakefront 'art trail'. An extra \$10m was secured to expand the Wyee sewer scheme, with construction starting next year, while work on the \$3.3m upgrade of the Fishery Point Road intersection at Morisset is now under way. You can read more about these wins inside. While it's great to see western Lake Macquarie getting the attention it deserves, our efforts won't lessen.

Among my priorities for the new year will be more police for the area and getting Morisset Police Station opened 24/7. We also need a significant investment in our roads, particularly Hillsborough Road and the main road from Morisset to Glendale.

Welcome

Hello and welcome to my final update for 2018. I hope it finds you and your family well.

It's been quite a year for the Lake Macquarie electorate and I'm pleased to say we've ticked off quite a few major items that we've been fighting many years for.

Bringing Service NSW back to Toronto has taken three years but we got there! There were plenty more 'wins' which could not have been achieved without some fantastic community support and our ability to work with any government of the day.

I hope you enjoy this update, and I hope you have a very merry Christmas and a safe, healthy 2019.

Best wishes to you all,

Greg Piper

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Greg Piper Independent Member for the State Electorate of Lake Macquarie

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Speers Point soccer



Lake Macquarie Regional Football Facility at Speers Point will be significantly expanded after we were able to secure a \$2.25m grant from the State Government. Northern NSW Football will contribute \$700,000 towards the cost of the expansion which not only provides world-class facilities for locals but will give the centre the capacity to host national or even international teams. The money will fund construction of a multi-purpose building and education centre, a refurbishment of the turf pitch (adjacent to the synthetic fields) and construction of associated change rooms and toilets.

Anzac scholarship



Good news for Charlton Christian College at Fassifern which was drawn out of the statewide ballot to participate in the 2019 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. Each year, 20 NSW schools are randomly drawn from the ballot. Students at Charlton will now compete among themselves for a once-in-a-lifetime tour of key WWI and WWII battlegrounds overseas next year. That'll be quite a history lesson for one lucky student!

Cardiff bus routes



New bus routes and timetables through the Cardiff and Macquarie Hills areas are now in place. A regional overhaul of the timetables in January left many people in those areas without direct services to places such as Kotara and Charlestown. After many meetings with the Minister and Keolis Downer, we were able to get most of those problems resolved and the new timetables seem to be working quite well.

Rathmines hall to reopen next year

The long-awaited refurbishment of Rathmines Hall is a step closer with work expected to begin early next year pending approval of a development application. We were able to secure \$800,000 towards the renovation project with Lake Macquarie council

contributing a similar amount. The historic hall is an integral part of the Rathmines community so I'm really pleased it's being given a new lease on life. Redevelopment of the hall includes the installation of new audio-visual equipment and lighting, upgraded dressing rooms, backstage rooms for performers, new meeting rooms, improved ventilation, new bathrooms and amenities. All going well, the hall could reopened mid-2019.

Plastics enter our food chain

The proliferation of single-use plastics over the past decade has been enormous and the impact on our environment and health has become a major concern.

Scientists have found evidence that discarded micro plastics have now entered our food chain - a result of humans eating fish, crustaceans and other shellfish which have ingested plastics in our oceans and waterways.

I believe this issue will be one of our greatest health and environmental challenges. This issue is more than just plastic bags, it's plastic straws, disposable coffee cups, even whippersnapper cord and thousands of other products which are used and discarded daily.

I recently made a new video with the assistance of researchers at the University of Newcastle. You'll find it on my website, Facebook page or YouTube channel. Please



I joined University of Newcastle researchers Maddison Carbery and Thana Palanisami to collect samples of microplastics and plastic pollution in Lake Macquarie.

take the time to watch it and hopefully you get a better understanding of what's happening locally and globally.

Return and Earn sites remain a challenge

I was disappointed when the Return and Earn Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) at Rathmines had to be taken out.

I sympathise with the Board of Club Catalina which had been trying to do the right thing by the local community and to earn some income to support the club, but council and state heritage planning rules were unfortunately overlooked.

On a positive note, I know that a number of options for an RVM in the Wangi / Rathmines area are still being considered. Toronto also warrants an RVM and a couple of new sites have emerged as potential locations.



I'll continue to work with the council and TOMRA to get more of these vending machines installed locally.

Kangaroos 'off limits'

As you may have heard, controlled gates will be installed at all entrances to Morisset Hospital to stem the flow of 'kangaroo tourists'.

I know some people won't be happy with the decision, but this is the only sensible solution given that the number of people coming to the site to feed and pet the kangaroos has skyrocketed.

This site is foremost a mental health and large residential facility, and the health and wellbeing of patients, residents and staff along with the welfare of the animals must

be given priority over unregulated tourism. Further, people have been badly injured by the wild roos because tourists forget or are ignorant of the fact that these are wild animals which can inflict serious injury.



When I brought this matter to a head in May, I did so because we needed to find the best outcome for patients, staff and the roos. Hunter Health, following consultation with National Parks and Wildlife Service, RSPCA and animal welfare advocates has now taken the decision to stop the tourist buses and deter tourists from accessing the site.

Visitors with legitimate reasons to visit the site will still be able to do so. The new boom gate will likely be installed by February but temporary measures are already in place. More information is on my website.

Work to start on Wyee station lifts soon

Plans to build lifts at Wyee railway station have moved to the next stage and work should be started by the middle of next year.

As I've previously reported, we finally got funding for the project in this year's State budget after a decade of campaigning with the Wyee community.

Transport for NSW has already started a public consultation period on the plans, and so far the response from the community has been very positive.

Included in the work are new paths from the Gorokan Rd and Wyee Rd car parks, a formalised crossing over Wyee Rd, a new drop-off area on Gorokan Rd, new toilets and improved waiting rooms, as well as improvements to lighting and security.



With the sewer project moving ahead next year, I'm really happy Wyee is finally getting the attention it deserves.

Cardiff station parking



There's a clear need to improve commuter parking around Cardiff station, so I joined forces in the Parliament recently with Wallsend MP Sonia Hornery to help find solutions. I maintain that a lot of the strain would be eliminated if our campaign for Lake Macquarie Transport Interchange got government support and a new station was built at Glendale. We've got similar parking issues at Morisset and Fassifern and I've been pushing for improved parking at those stations as well.

Nurse ratios



I was very pleased to have joined nurses and midwives at Parliament House recently to sign a pledge of support for better nurse-to-patient ratios in local hospitals. It's not simply about providing support to our overworked nurses, it's about improved health care for patients which can often be the difference between life and death.

Support for farmers



I don't think there's a school, club, pub, business or community group in Lake Macquarie which hasn't contributed in some way towards helping those affected by the drought. I'm extremely proud to represent this community in the Parliament and extremely proud of the way we pull together when needed. My thanks go out to everyone who has contributed.