

Lake Macquarie Matters

Speers Point foreshore. Photograph by Greg Piper

Sewer for Wyee

The long campaign to bring sewerage infrastructure to Wyee has been won.

It was with great pleasure I joined the Minister for Natural Resources, Lands and Water, Kevin Humphries, on November 13 to announce a \$26 million plan to connect 400 homes in Wyee to the Hunter Water reticulated sewerage system.

The NSW Government will commit \$6,000 per lot, or \$2.4 million in total, through the Priority Sewerage Program, with the remaining contribution to be made by Hunter Water. Detailed planning will begin next year, with the project expected to be completed by 2020 at the latest.

This is an enormous breakthrough for the people of Wyee. It will end the inconvenience and financial burden they have lived with for so many years and finally unlock the vast potential of their town.

Wyee is poised for substantial growth. It is close to the M1, with proximity and good rail and road links to Sydney, the Hunter



Greg Piper and Minister Humphries announce the sewer project

and Central Coast. Connecting to sewerage will promote development, which will attract families, commercial investment and new jobs. The plan is less costly to residents and has greater capacity for growth than an alternative put forward by Wyong Shire Council.

The fight to win sewer for Wyee is an issue that has spanned my political career of 24 years, starting from my time as a councillor on Lake Macquarie City Council. The community has also played a crucial role in this campaign, and supported my efforts to get sewerage for Wyee on the agenda of successive governments.

I plan to host a public meeting in Wyee in February. For more information on the sewer plan, visit www.hunterwater.com.au, and look under 'Major Projects'.



With Hunter Water managing director Kim Wood and Wyee Child Care Centre owners Karen and Ian O'Connor

Welcome

The end of my second term as Member for Lake Macquarie is only a few months away and I have been reflecting on what an eventful four years it has been.



Two highlights have come in the past month: the long-awaited \$26 million commitment by the State Government to sewer Wyee, and the opening of the \$11.3 million Lake Macquarie Regional Football Facility at Speers Point, which hosted its first matches this month.

It has been equally satisfying to see smaller community projects go ahead, with \$2.3 million in Community Building Partnership grants invested in local clubs and groups since 2009.

Prominent issues over this term have included the Sugarloaf mine subsidence incident and subsequent remediation, campaigns for better public transport and health facilities in southern Lake Macquarie, a better deal for homeowners in residential parks, privatisation of State assets and services as a result of the NDIS, and the preservation of the Newcastle rail corridor for public use.

Looming issues for the next term include the sale of the State's poles and wires and council amalgamations. You can keep up to date on local political issues through my website, www.gregpiper1.com, where you can also subscribe to my regular e-news.



NAIDOC Week, Toronto foreshore



Royal Society for the Blind
Hunter office opening



Charlton College school captains



International Children's Games
torch relay



TAFE support forum



School leaders Parliament visit
with Premier Mike Baird



Toronto Spring Fair



Treasure Hunter with ABC 1233
Newcastle



2014 Memory Walk at
Speers Point



Small Biz Bus Toronto visit



Morisset-Lake Macquarie
Showgirl judging



HMRI visit with
Director Michael Nilsson



Daffodil Day at Toronto



Wyee Station inspection
with the Lakes Mail

Footy facility kicks off

The Lake Macquarie Regional Football Facility at Speers Point has thrown open its gates to the region's round-ball players.

Although the new \$11.3 million training and five-a-side complex won't be officially opened until the new year, Northern NSW Football has taken up residence in what is now its new headquarters and the grounds were used for the recent International Children's Games. It will also be a training venue for the Asian Cup in January, for which Newcastle is one of five Australian host cities.

The centre was built by NNSW Football in partnership with the State Government, which contributed \$7.3 million through the Hunter Infrastructure and Investment Fund. It has two international-sized synthetic training fields, 12 five-a-side courts, an administration building, café, conference facilities and parking for 140 cars.



Greg Piper inspects the new complex

The facility caters for elite players and social footballers alike and will be a great addition to the Speers Point sporting hub.

NNSW Football had the vision for this facility and has done a wonderful job to bring the project to fruition, even finding room in the budget for extra features.

Building boost

Community Building Partnership grants are a great source of funds to build or improve facilities.

Since the program began in 2009, I have had the pleasure of announcing more than 80 grants worth \$2.3 million to Lake Macquarie community and sporting groups. Major projects have included a revamp of amenities at Lyall Peacock Field, new netball courts and lights at Bonnells Bay, refurbishment of Rathmines Community Hall, an electrical upgrade at Morisset Showground, a new bus for Southlakes Carers, extensions to Wyee Community Hall and improvements to horse club facilities in the Wyong area.

The 2014 funding was announced this month, with \$300,000 given to 17 recipients.

Police for Morisset

Morisset will become the headquarters for 19 officers from the Police Transport Command in 2015, boosting police presence in southern Lake Macquarie.

Presently working out of Wyong, the officers will move into Morisset Station once it is refurbished. The Police Property Group is working on plans to substantially upgrade Morisset and Toronto stations.

Concern over lead pollution

The issue of lead contamination around Boolaroo has arisen again following a series of articles in the *Newcastle Herald* based on recent research by Professor Mark Taylor, an academic who specialises in the field.

Professor Taylor's team found elevated levels of lead in areas that were treated under the Lead Abatement Strategy, raising questions about the adequacy of the measures undertaken.

Last month, I wrote to the Environment Minister requesting a review of the scheme, to establish whether further remediation is required. Additionally, the Hunter Public Health Unit will resume testing blood lead levels in children.

If the results of blood testing and outcome of the review reveal further remediation is needed, the Government must move quickly to put appropriate measures in place.

Boundary changes

Lake Macquarie will welcome residents of Argenton and Cardiff South into the electorate at the 2015 State election, to be held on March 28.

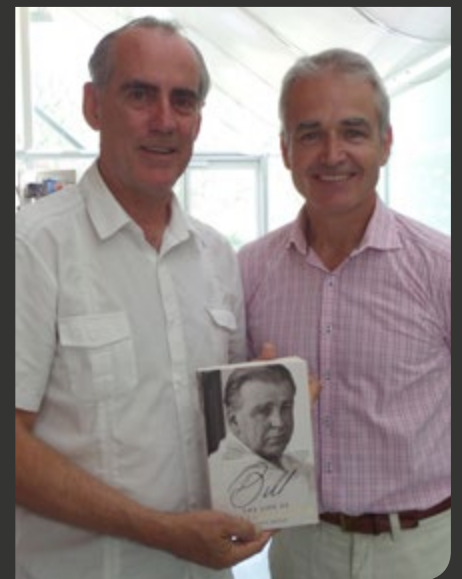
Electoral boundaries across NSW changed following a redistribution last year. The new southern boundary of Lake Macquarie aligns more closely to the council boundary, with areas south of Wyee, including the Yarramalong and Dooralong valleys, moving into the seat of Wyong.

The new boundaries do not take effect until election day. Until then, Argenton residents remain in the electorate of Wallsend and Cardiff South residents in the electorate of Charlestown.

You can check which electorate you are enrolled in on the NSW Electoral Commission website:

www.elections.nsw.gov.au

Wangi's finest



I was pleased to attend the recent launch of journalist Scott Bevan's book *Bill: The Life of William Dobell*, at Lake Macquarie Art Gallery. Scott, like the great artist himself, was born in Newcastle but later discovered the allure of Wangi Wangi – in Scott's case when he and his wife bought a home there some years ago. His book is the result of a longtime fascination with the life and career of Dobell and represents a wonderful meeting of two of Wangi's favourite adopted sons.

Leaders of the future



Jessika Holgate, left, and Zoe Bunt

One of the more enjoyable aspects of being a State MP is the opportunity to work with young leaders.

This year I have had the privilege of working with three young women who are wonderful role models for their generation.

Zoe Bunt, from Toronto High, and Jessika Holgate, from MacKillop College, Warnervale, both participated in the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament this year, representing Lake Macquarie. They discussed and debated a range of issues with other youth parliamentarians from around the State, including domestic violence, youth homelessness, youth unemployment and cyclist registration.

I also hosted Harriet Allen, an intern from England on a Rotary exchange who worked at my office for several months. A recent law graduate, Harriet was involved in research and speech writing and made some valuable and insightful contributions, particularly to debates regarding the justice system.



Harriet Allen with Premier Baird

Contact

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

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Phone: 4959 3200 Fax: 4950 4076

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Road upgrades bring relief

Improvements to two notorious bottlenecks in the Lake Macquarie electorate will bring smoother, quicker and safer rides for regular commuters.

The \$5 million upgrade to the busy intersection between Fairfax Road and The Esplanade, at Warners Bay, was completed this month, with the roundabout removed and the new traffic lights in operation.

Meanwhile, work continues on plans to widen and upgrade the stretch of Cary

Street at Toronto between The Boulevard and Bay Street. The plan involves road widening, new lights and turning bays.

Community consultation on the draft plan took place in June and July and Roads and Maritime Services is incorporating much of the feedback into its final design. The NSW Government has provided \$1.5 million in this budget for further planning and relocation of underground utilities.



Upgraded intersection at The Esplanade



Public meeting for Cary St roadworks

Opal rollout a bumpy ride



While the introduction of electronic ticketing for public transport is a step in the right direction, the rollout of Opal has been far from seamless in Lake Macquarie.

Initially there was only one retail outlet in the electorate, Metro Petroleum at Boolaroo, where people could buy cards, and commuters were caught off guard by the decision by Transport for NSW to levy a new charge on the Route 273 'The Train' bus between Toronto and Fassifern.

This bus was provided to commuters as a free replacement for the rail service when the spur line to Toronto was cut in

1990, and successive governments have honoured this undertaking. I have written to the Minister to protest about this decision and raised it in Parliament.

There has been some progress on the issue of retail outlets, however.

The newsagencies at Toronto and Morisset and BP Express at Toronto are now offering cards and recharge services.



Seasons Greetings

My staff and I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Our office will close for two weeks from Monday, December 22, reopening on Monday, January 5.