

Lake Macquarie Matters

Improving outcomes of organ donation recipients in NSW



Over the last five months I have been working with doctors and transplant specialists in NSW on a bill which aims to improve outcomes for organ donation recipients in NSW.

I am looking forward to introducing the *Human Tissues Amendment (Ante Mortem Interventions) Bill 2023* to Parliament at the very first opportunity. The bill, if passed, will allow families (or in very limited circumstances appointed officers in hospitals) to consent to medications or other defined interventions for potential organ donors, aimed to improve the viability and success of organ donations after a loved one passes.

The bill includes protections to ensure that such interventions will not cause any more than minimal harm to the organ donor. Similar laws have been in place in Victoria since 2020 and specialists working in organ donation believe that allowing these interventions to be used here will improve outcomes for organ donation recipients. Allowing the use of these interventions will also honour the wishes of organ donors and their families by ensuring we maximise every opportunity to save the life of another through the precious gift of organ donation. I am very proud of this bill and will keep you up to date with its journey through Parliament.

Welcome

Hello and welcome to my December newsletter, we are now 8 months into the 58th Parliament of NSW and a new Labor Government. I am pleased to report that we are all settling in and getting on with the job of government.



There are of course, big challenges for the Government in NSW and for all of us in Parliament, particularly, with cost-of-living pressures biting, housing supply issues and in the recruitment and retention of our vital front-line workforces, including our police, nurses and midwives, teachers, paramedics and firefighters.

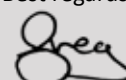
The lack of affordable and social housing continues to be a worsening problem across NSW and we are also seeing public services reduced and police stations closed, not because of budget issues but because we can't recruit and retain enough front-line workers.

This is really starting to have an impact on our community and I am committed to working with the Government to try and fix this mess.

By the time you are reading this newsletter, State Parliament will have sat for the last time for 2023 and I am looking forward to a busy and productive 2024 (after a short Christmas break).

I hope you're in good health and good spirits, and wishing you and your families a happy and safe festive season.

Best regards,



Local Legends

■ Melissa Baez



In our last newsletter we introduced local karate superstar Melissa Baez. Melissa has recently added a new addition to her trophy cabinet, recently winning a championship belt at the ISKA World Cup, the biggest martial arts event in the southern hemisphere! What an achievement, congratulations Melissa!

■ Roisin Kennedy



18 year old Roisin Kennedy of 1st Byattunga Scout Group is someone who clearly does not shy away from a challenge. Three years ago Roisin started working towards her Queen Scout Award and despite COVID and weather delays affecting her ability to finish some activities, she achieve this prestigious accolade earlier this year.

Congratulations Roisin, you should be very proud.

■ Issac Bliss

Where would we be without our local volunteers? Issac Bliss is one of our humble local champions who volunteers countless hours to those in need in our community with Southlakes Incorporated.

I have had the privilege of meeting Issac on several occasions and he is a truly meticulous and compassionate young man as well as being invaluable to the Southlakes Inc team. Thank you Issac for all you do.

Recently, Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Housing, Rose Jackson announced the Government's plan to close Morisset Hospital and to transfer services to a new purpose built facility in Maitland and to the John Hunter Hospital.

Questions about the future of Morisset Hospital have been increasing for some years in the local community and most will not be surprised about this decision. To be honest, I am surprised this decision wasn't made earlier. The old site has important historical significance for Lake Macquarie but many of the buildings are in disrepair. I am sure the new purpose built facility will provide a safer environment and better meet the needs of clients, staff and carers.



The big question is, what will become of the old hospital site. The Government has assured me that no decisions about its future have been made. Several buildings on the site that have been listed on the state heritage register and I have asked the Minister for wide community consultation to take place around future uses for the site before any decisions on its future are made. I will keep you updated as more information comes to hand.

Morisset Show comes back strong in 2023

After a couple of years hiatus thanks to COVID and terrible weather, it was fantastic to have the 69th Morisset Show return in September 2023.



The community voted with their feet, showing up in droves and what a fantastic weekend it was.

A huge congratulations to the Morisset Lake Macquarie District Agricultural Association and everyone involved in the planning and execution of this wonderful community event.

Witnessing the Community Hair Project in action

Many Lake Macquarie locals would be very familiar with the wonderful work Southlakes Incorporated does for our local community. One of the numerous projects that Southlakes Inc runs is the Community Hair Project. The Project supports those in need by providing free professional haircuts while fostering a sense of belonging and support.

On 19 November I was joined by the Governor of New South Wales Margaret Beazley and Minister for Women Jodie Harrison at an event in Sydney organised by the Community Hair Project team. The Community Hair Project joined other not-for-profit groups including Orange Sky, Voice 4 U, Plates 4 Mates and the Bikers Hands at for a meal service in Surry Hills where myself, the Governor and Minister Harrison were able to



witness the important work of these not for profit groups in action.

It was a very enlightening and humbling event and I am very grateful to the Community Hair Project for giving me the opportunity to join them on the day.

Help coming for police in NSW

Greg Piper MP



In recent months my office has been receiving an increasing number of complaints about police services in Lake Macquarie, particularly in the southlakes area. While a few years ago, we were progressing well in our campaign to have Morisset Police Station opened 24/7, unfortunately, over last few years, the NSW Police Force and the Lake Macquarie Local Area Command have faced significant staffing challenges which have resulted in the Morisset Police Station being closed to the public in recent times.

Over the past few months I have held meetings with the Police Association of NSW and the NSW Minister of Police, Yasmin Catley

to discuss police resourcing challenges in Lake Macquarie and how to address them.

It is clear that our NSW Police Force and all of our public service workforces have been under pressure over the last few years with problems attracting and retaining staff. In October the NSW Government announced that it will now be employing police recruits and paying for their time spent during their 16-week training at the Goulburn Police Academy. This is a sensible fix to what I believe was a big flaw in the police recruitment process. I really hope this initiative will help attract more people to the NSW Police Force, an honourable and rewarding career.

Community wins with CBP Program Funding

It was great to see the NSW Government recommit to Community Building Partnerships funding in 2023. The CBP program provides our many wonderful local charities, not-for-profits, sporting and other community groups the opportunity to apply for grants of between \$5000 and \$150,000 for projects that will deliver positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes.

CBP funding from previous years have allowed many great local projects to get off the ground or expand. In October this



year, I attended the opening of the newly renovated Salvation Army at Bolton Point Food Market. This renovation was assisted by a \$23,000 CBP grant.

In November, I held a grants writing workshop for community members to teach people about the grants process and to help people apply for grants and funding. We had a fantastic turn out to this workshop and I am looking forward to hearing about more successful grant applications for our wonderful Lake Macquarie community groups in 2024.



Remembrance Day 2023



On 11 November, as we do every year, we took time to remember and pay respects to those who have served and who are serving, keeping us safe and protecting our way of life.

This year, it was great to see well attended services across Lake Macquarie, including at Speers Point, Dora Creek, Toronto, Wangi Wangi and Cardiff.

We will forever be grateful to those who have served and never returned and those who returned but whose lives were forever changed. Lest we forget.

NSW Police & Emergency Services Sailing Regatta



The NSW Police & Emergency Services Sailing Club has been operating in Lake Macquarie for 39 years now and I always enjoy attending the launch of their Regatta at Royal Motor Yacht Club Toronto.

As always the 2023 Regatta, held on 13 and 14 November, was a great event with 15 boats and 80 crew, comprised of police, fire and rescue and ambulance officers along with salt water ADF veterans and Marine Rescue crews, setting sail on Lake Macquarie for the two day event.

This regatta is fast becoming one of the most popular on our lake and serves as a great way for our first responders to enjoy some recreation and friendly competition together.

Celebrating 125 years of Sanitarium in Lake Macquarie

Sanitarium has a long history in Lake Macquarie, opening its first factory in Cooranbong in 1899. The Cooranbong factory closed its doors in 2018, but over the 119 years it operated it employed many Lake Macquarie locals, serving as one of the primary employers in the area.

Sanitarium continues to operate in our area with the food science and innovation team continuing to work from the Cooranbong site.

From its early beginnings, Sanitarium has grown to one of Australia's most trusted and recognised brands, employing more than 1000 people across Australia and producing more than 2 billion serves of food and beverage each year.

In November I was invited to celebrate Sanitarium's 125th anniversary at a luncheon for retired employees at the Avondale University campus at Cooranbong. It was a wonderful event and a great opportunity to reflect on important role Sanitarium has played in the history of Lake Macquarie.

Community Recognition Statements

Do you know a Lake Macquarie local doing great things? One of the truly enjoyable parts of my job is being able to recognise, in Parliament, great local community members who serve our community or who have achieved great things.

If you know a local community member who deserves to be recognised let my office know at lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au or on 02 4950 4076.

Christmas Office Hours

My office will be closed from 12 noon on Friday 22 December 2023 and will reopen at 8am on Monday 8 January 2024. Wishing you and your family a safe and happy holiday period, from myself and all the Lake Macquarie Electorate office team!

Contact

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

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Hours: Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm

Phone: 4959 3200 Fax: 4950 4076

Email: lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au

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Budget 2023 and Regional Road Funding



In September this year the Minns Government handed down its first budget. The 2023 State budget was definitely an austerity budget, with very few big-ticket items for the Hunter or Lake Macquarie. The Government has forecast that it will have the budget back in the black in 2024 so it will be interesting to see what it delivers next year.

The budget did confirm commitments to two essential infrastructure projects for Lake Macquarie, the Speers Point roundabout upgrade and the Mandalong Road upgrade. Although these commitments are welcomed, there comes a point where the community

needs more than funding announcements, there comes a point when we need to see action on these projects.

Several funding announcements for both the Speers Point Roundabout and Mandalong Road widening project have been made in recent years, but to date we have not seen any formal proposals for these projects. I have raised concerns about the delays with these projects in Parliament and directly with the Premier and the Minister for Regional Roads, Jenny Aitchison, in recent weeks.

I know the lack of movement on these projects is a source of frustration for many and I am continuing to press for progress here.

Water Birds Return to Muddy Lake

How wonderful it is to see water birds returning to Muddy Lake in large numbers. For years the community had been raising concern about the salivina weed that had taken over the lake. The weeds covered the surface of the lake with thick mats of leaves, turning what was a beautiful waterway into what resembled a barren field.

The spread of salivina weed in Muddy Lake has been a challenging problem. The Lake is home to the endangered Green and Golden Bell Frog which means herbicides are not an option, and limited access around the Lake makes it nearly impossible to bring heavy machinery in to remove the weeds.



Over the last 12 months the State Government, through Crown Lands and the Lake Macquarie City Council have been working on a project to eradicate the weed through the introduction of tiny weevils to Muddy Lake. These weevils bore into the stems and kill the weeds. So far, the weevils seem to be doing a good job keeping the weeds under control, which is positive news, but I still believe the best way to eradicate the weed for good will be to open up a channel from Lake Eraring to Muddy Lake to increase the salinity. I will be keeping a close eye on the Lake over the summer months and will keep you up to date.