

Community News

Leslie Williams MP

Member for Port Macquarie
Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy



The past 12 months has been exciting marking the announcements of many key projects and the commencement of others which will provide enormous benefits to communities across the Port Macquarie electorate.

The Wrights Road intersection is one of the busiest intersections in Port Macquarie and it will receive a much-needed upgrade this year improving accessibility to the hospital and the nearby medical precinct, the St Columba School, the new Charles Sturt University and the expanding residential area at Lake Innes. The NSW Government will spend \$7 million in the first half of this year to deliver a fully signalised intersection.

An ambitious plan to link shared cycleway/pathways in the Camden Haven took a giant step forward with the NSW Government announcing \$420,000 for the planning and commencement of the projects. Two projects are being developed by the Beach to Beach and the Schools to Schools committees which, when completed will see around 24 kilometres of shared cycleway/pathways constructed in the Camden Haven.

Construction work on the new Port Macquarie Fire Station is well underway. The new fire station will provide firefighters with state of the art facilities worthy of a modern fire service. The NSW Government has invested \$3.9 million in this new fire station, which is being built within Port Macquarie's emergency services precinct and will open this year. This will be complemented by a new \$310,000 Mercedes Benz Class 2 pumper which arrived last month.

Finally, work is now completed on the construction of the \$8.3 million Lake Cathie Public School which will open its doors and welcome the first students on 28th January.

The new Lake Cathie Public School is well equipped with 10 classrooms, a library, school hall, canteen and covered outdoor learning area. Work also included the building of an administration building, staff facilities, games and assembly courts, a sports field and car park.

The school looks spectacular and the Principal Jock Garven and staff have already put in many hours to make sure there is nothing but smiles on the faces of the new students and their parents when they arrive on day one of the first term.

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Principal Jock Garven, Leslie Williams and Dean Noble
Front, Adam Hines and Freya Briggs
who will start school next year at
Lake Cathie

Government throws Council a lifeline



Minister for Roads Duncan Gay and Leslie Williams

Following years of delays and budget blow-outs, it was fantastic to welcome the Minister for Roads to the Camden Haven to announce the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government had thrown an \$8.4 million lifeline to Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and would appoint a technical assurance engineer to guarantee the delivery of Stingray Creek Bridge.

After more than three years this vital project has still not started – infrastructure that is owned and managed by the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council.

Minister Gay stepped in and will work hand-in-hand with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to make sure this project is delivered as soon as possible. This is a great result for the people and businesses of the Camden Haven.

This community now has certainty this new bridge will be built, with the NSW Government investing \$16.4 million to replace the old structure. A technical assurance engineer from Roads and Maritime Services will visit the site monthly and report to the project steering committee to ensure the project is progressing as it should.

This intervention by the State government means the community can now be assured that the new bridge will be delivered with a completion date expected to be Christmas 2017.

Thank a paramedic day



Leslie with local Paramedics

Our local ambulance stations accommodate a group of hard working and dedicated professional men and women who serve our community in times of emergency.

I took the opportunity on *Thank A Paramedic Day* to personally show my appreciation on behalf of the community to each and every paramedic in our area. These people regularly undertake work in unfamiliar and unpredictable situations yet consistently deliver exceptional care and kindness, integrity and compassion.

They work in an environment that changes with each Triple Zero call that comes in. They tell me while the work is challenging and variable it is incredibly rewarding.

Our community is fortunate to have paramedics by their side when they need them most. There are few people who can say 'I saved a life at work today.' Paramedics can and do and for that on behalf of our community, I say thank you.

Multi-million dollar hospital expansion



Twenty years after it opened, the Port Macquarie Base Hospital underwent a major expansion which was officially opened in December by the NSW Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner and the Federal Assistant Minister for Health, Fiona Nash.

The expansion of the hospital was a significant milestone in the provision of state of the art acute health services for our region.

The redevelopment of Port Macquarie Base Hospital began in 2012 and now completed has enhanced health services with an additional 12,000m² of floor space for patients and staff. This was a much-needed redevelopment in a fast-growing area with an ageing population.

The \$104 million redevelopment of Port Macquarie Base Hospital has delivered an additional four floors and accommodates:

- ✓ New emergency department, including additional treatment bays and separate paediatric area;
- ✓ New seven-theatre operating suite to replace the existing four theatres;
- ✓ New two-room day procedure unit;

- ✓ New 34-bed theatre recovery unit (an increase from 8 beds);
- ✓ New cardiac catheterisation laboratory;
- ✓ New 24-bed critical care ward (an increase from 10 beds);
- ✓ New 30-bed, medical inpatient ward;
- ✓ Relocation of the existing 15-bed paediatric ward to the new building;
- ✓ An additional 200 car parking spaces.

The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is committed to enhancing the state's health services. The expansion of the Port Macquarie Base Hospital will provide this community with an extended range of health services, giving local people access to modern quality care, closer to home.

This new Commonwealth and State funded project has been built for the future with 800m² of space to meet future demand providing care for our community for decades. The dedicated staff at the hospital are now able to deliver first-class care in a first-class facility.



It's official - NSW is number one again

The CommSec "State Of The States" Report released at the end of last year has seen NSW listed as first among all Australian states and territories, moving up from third place from the July scorecard. The analysis compares quarterly performance between jurisdictions on a range of areas, including economic growth, construction, retail trade, housing, unemployment and population.

This is the first change at the top of the leader-board since July 2011, and comes less than a week after the NSW triple-A

credit rating was reaffirmed and the State taken off negative watch by Standard and Poor's.

NSW has returned to being number one of all Australian States.

The economic management of the NSW Government led by Premier Mike Baird and Barry O'Farrell over the past three years has meant the hard work and discipline has paid dividends with confidence returning to NSW.

NSW has retained its top rank in dwelling

starts for the third straight quarter. The report comments that NSW remains the strongest in the nation for new home construction, with housing starts more than 36 per cent above decade averages.

Not only has the NSW Government balanced the budget by living within our means, but locally we're also delivering a new public school at Lake Cathie, a new Fire Station in Port Macquarie, continuing to upgrade the Pacific Highway between Port Macquarie and Kempsey as well as building the Sancrox Road interchange.

\$1.4 Million in community grants

The NSW Government's Community Building Partnership (CBP) program is an excellent opportunity for community organisations to access much needed funding assistance. In December I was pleased to announce another \$400,000 for 37 local groups for a range of projects from solar panels to sporting facilities and building upgrades.

This brings the total funding amount since March 2011 to \$1.4 million for our community. The Community Building Partnership grant program directly benefits community groups, creates local jobs and increases business opportunities while at the same time enhances local investment in the Port Macquarie electorate.

This year's recipients are:

Volunteer Marine Rescue Port Macquarie	\$40,000
Bonny Hills Progress Association	\$4,500
Port Macquarie Sailing Club	\$15,000
Port Macquarie Rotary Lodge	\$20,000
Wauchope Bonny Hills Surf Club	\$12,500
Mid North Coast Conservatorium	\$6,780
Meals on Wheels Mid North Coast	\$30,000
Camden Haven P.A.H & I Society	\$27,730
Port Macquarie Municipal Band	\$3,296
Lansdowne Hall Reserve Trust	\$3,595
Laurieton Men's Shed	\$20,000
Sailability NSW Port Macquarie	\$10,000
Harrington Lions Club	\$8,000
Camden Haven Little Athletics	\$3,000
Port Macquarie Autism Spectrum	\$10,000
Bonny Hills Lake Cathie Cricket Club	\$20,000
Hastings Baseball	\$15,000
Mid North Coast Maritime Museum	\$5,000
ACES Inc	\$15,000

Camden Haven Historical Society	\$6,900
Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club	\$3,085
Moorland Recreation Reserve Trust	\$6,000
Hastings District Flying Club	\$15,000
Harrington Crowdy Head Chamber of Commerce	\$8,000
Port Macquarie Little Athletics	\$5,000
Heart Support Australia	\$10,000
Life Education NSW	\$1,114
Cooperook and Lansdowne Forest History Group	\$15,000
Camden Haven Show Society	\$10,000
Lord Howe Island Aquatic Club	\$10,000
Moorland Soccer Club	\$7,000
Marine Rescue NSW	\$7,000
Beach to Beach	\$10,000
Kendall Riding for the Disabled	\$2,500
Lake Cathie Football Club	\$10,000
Camden Haven Neighbourhood Centre	\$4,000



Our dedicated Sailability team

Better boating



Boating facilities in Port Macquarie are set for a major boost with the NSW Government contributing \$400,000 to upgrade the Westport Boat Ramp and \$40,000 towards a study to find a suitable location for a new boat ramp on the Hastings River.

Both projects were identified as priorities in the Mid-North Coast Regional Boating Plan, which was recently finalised. The funding for both these projects will address the increasing demand for facilities in the Port Macquarie and Hastings River

areas by improving the capacity of boat ramps and enhancing the fishing experience for both locals and visitors.

The Westport Park boat ramp is the most popular boat ramp in Port Macquarie and Stage One was completed in July last year. Construction of Stage Two will include widening of the ramp to four lanes, an additional pontoon and improvements to car and trailer parking.

Providing a new facility on the Hastings River has also been



identified as a priority and we will work with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to commission a study and consult with the community to identify potential site options.



Renewable energy grants

The Port Macquarie-Hastings region has a developing Sustainability Network group. The Network consists of members from business, local council, NSW government departments, TAFE, primary producers and community organisations.

The Network is currently working on an application for funding to determine the feasibility of a community owned renewable energy project for the Hastings where any perpetual funds generated by the sale of the energy will be returned into other sustainable projects. The Network is open to anyone interested in sustainability and new members are most welcome.

Their vision is to work with the community to develop and deepen all aspects of environmental, economic and social sustainability in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region.

The group meets every six weeks at the Port Macquarie TAFE Campus and is currently chaired by the North Coast TAFE's Sustainability Educator, Rod Ware. If you would like to find out more information email rod.ware@tafensw.edu.au

Club Harrington signs new ClubsNSW MOU



Club executives from throughout the Port Macquarie electorate recently signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NSW Government providing certainty for the clubs and employees across the region.

Our local clubs are part of hundreds of clubs across NSW employing over 42,000 people and contributing more than \$3.2 billion to the State's economy each year.

Locally we have 12 clubs employing over 460 people and making a total social contribution of over \$14.8 million in addition to paying almost \$6.8 million in tax.

Clubs are the backbone of our community and this MOU builds on key commitments already achieved and ensures further investment for the future of our well-loved clubs.

Regional communities leading the way



NSW renewable energy action plan



NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Regional Manager Don Arnold, left, Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy Leslie Williams, Northern Tablelands MP Adam Marshall and Uralla Shire Mayor Michael Pearce

In my role as the NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy, I recently had the opportunity to announce the NSW country town of Uralla on the Northern Tablelands could be generating enough green energy locally to completely fulfil its energy needs.

Visiting the Northern Tablelands with local MP Adam Marshall, I announced Uralla's successful bid to become Australia's first Zero Net Energy Town (ZNET), creating a blueprint for other towns and communities across the country to follow.

Uralla will be the first town that satisfies all of its own energy needs from renewable energy sources, or zero net energy, in a way which is competitive in terms of price, quality, reliability and security. It is possible that this could be achieved within a decade.

This first stage of the ZNET journey for Uralla is about scoping out the feasibility of being a zero net energy town and defining the mix of different renewable energy sources required and how it might be delivered.

The NSW Government is proud to sponsor this project by providing \$105,000 through the Office of Environment and Heritage for a community Consortium to prepare a blueprint or business plan for the project.

The State Government's vision is for a secure, reliable, affordable and clean energy future for NSW.

The Plan positions NSW to increase energy from renewable sources at least cost to the energy customer and with maximum benefits to NSW.

The strategy is to work closely with NSW communities and the renewable energy industry to increase renewable energy generation.

Consistent with the Plan, the NSW Government made a submission to the 2014 Renewable Energy Target (RET) Review which supports retaining but reforming the Scheme.

For more information about the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan go to <http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/sustainable-energy/renewable-energy-action-plan>

Solar energy plant to provide power and jobs

Over the past months it has been interesting to see the development of the Moree Solar Farm and I was pleased to be part of the official start of the construction of one of Australia's largest solar energy plants with the turning of the first sod in November.

This is a major commitment to solar energy and confirmation of the NSW Government's determination of growing the renewable energy sector and confirming our State as number one in that endeavour.

This plant, covering 350 hectares 10km south of Moree, is a joint venture between Pacific Hydro Australia and European company Fotowatio Renewable Ventures (FRV) and will consist of 250,000 solar photovoltaic (PV) panels which will be able to 'follow the sun'.

The technology has the potential to produce 30 per cent more energy than a farm using fixed position panels and to capture a higher volume of peak priced electricity.

This project means jobs, local investment and more opportunities in regional NSW, especially for young people. It will supply about 15,000 households with cheap, clean energy and create 100 jobs during construction.

Solar energy has a number of benefits. It is cheap and environmentally friendly with these benefits enhanced through the planning requirement for a biodiversity offset at the plant.

NSW leads the country in large scale solar projects and, after hydro power, solar PV is the largest source of renewable energy generated in NSW.



Work commences on the Moree Solar Farm

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