

Community News

Leslie Williams MP

Member for Port Macquarie

Parliamentary Secretary for Regional and Rural Health

Spotlight on local Priorities

A community education centre for Port Macquarie, upgrades to the Harrington foreshore, a tidal pool and funding for safer pathways in the Camden Haven are just a few of the priorities on my list for the Port Macquarie electorate.

There has been significant investment into the electorate during the past six years under a Liberal/Nationals Government but there is still more to do.

I want to see work start as soon as possible on the upgrade of Ocean Drive between Greenmeadows Drive and Emerald Downs Drive following the Government's commitment of \$10 million in 2011. Unfortunately, the cost of this project now well exceeds this amount but I am determined to see this critical thoroughfare upgraded.

I have identified a parcel of land adjacent to the Douglas Vale Winery that I believe would be suitable for a community education centre to potentially accommodate the Port Macquarie Men's Shed and the Hastings Arts and Craft Centre both of which are in need of a new home.

I am a strong supporter of life-long learning and I commend the many organisations in our community that provide such opportunities. The land had been earmarked for sale by the Department of Education, but I have been in ongoing discussions with the Minister for Education to reconsider this plan and retain the land. I am hopeful of a positive outcome.



Also on my radar is the revetment wall at Lake Cathie, improved parking at Port Macquarie Base Hospital, the development and improvement of the Food for Less carpark in Port Macquarie and the much talked about Orbital Road which will address increasing traffic movements that are impacting on Ocean Drive, the industrial area, the health precinct and the airport.

A number of these proposals are the jurisdiction of local government, but as always I am keen to partner with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and Mid Coast Council once detailed funding requests have been made to me seeking financial support.



Alina O'Brien, Leslie, Tom Abell, Karen Robson, John McQueen and Felix Plowright

NSW Government Supporting Local Schools

St Peter's Primary School will get an upgraded canteen and general learning areas using funding provided by the NSW Government.

The school is receiving \$562,161 to support the more than \$1.3 million project under the Building Grants Assistance Scheme, with further funds provided by the school community.

Last month the NSW Government announced record funding to reduce the backlog of school maintenance repairs with \$37.5 million allocated to schools on the north coast.

This funding is on top of the \$7.7 million in additional needs-based funding allocated to local public schools over the past two years.

Since 2011, the NSW Government has committed more than \$5 billion to both government and non-government school facilities to ensure students have the best possible learning environments.

Highway Intersection Issues Raised With Roads Minister



Recently I met with the Minister for Roads, the Hon Melinda Pavey to discuss the proposed upgrading of the Harrington/Cooperook Road intersection with the Pacific Highway.

I arranged the meeting with Minister Pavey after I met with a number of Harrington residents who presented me with a petition asking for works to be carried out at the intersection.

I fully understand the concerns that people have with the intersection and wished it had been upgraded when the original duplication was undertaken.

A preliminary concept design for the grade separated overpass at Harrington was completed as part of the Cooperook Bypass project which opened to traffic in 2006.

The current Government priority is to duplicate the existing two lane sections of the Pacific Highway which will be open to traffic by 2020.

A post duplication corridor strategy for the Pacific Highway is currently being developed which will identify priorities for future building projects along the full length of the corridor.

Soft soil treatment work has also since been completed to prepare the ground so that main construction can start as soon as possible once funding becomes available.

Although the current focus for highway upgrading is to complete the full four lane divided highway from Hexham to the Queensland border, the Government does recognise there will be a need to continue to upgrade the Pacific Highway after major work is completed.

As such the Roads and Maritime Service continues to monitor traffic and safety conditions at a number of intersections, including the one at Harrington Road, to match the timing of the work to the safety need.

I am fully committed to making sure that once the full duplication of the highway is completed that work will start immediately on the Harrington/Cooperook interchange.



Extension of Lord Howe Island Airport Runway To Be Considered



The NSW Government recently announced that it has committed \$450,000 for a feasibility study to investigate the extension of the runway at Lord Howe Island Airport.

The feasibility study is being funded through the \$110 million Restart NSW Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund which supports regional tourism by contributing to critical tourist economy infrastructure projects such as rail trails, airports and cruise terminals.

The NSW Government is committed to improving infrastructure which assists in attracting more visitors to regional NSW and making it a more attractive place to live and work.

A thorough feasibility study including the possibility of an extension of the runway into the lagoon will give us all the facts to help us make the right decision for the Lord Howe Island residents who rely on tourism for their livelihood and for the long term protection of this World Heritage Listed location.

The \$450,000 funding of the runway feasibility study is in addition to a \$1.8 million contribution made by the NSW Government, also through the Restart NSW Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, for a major upgrade of the terminal at Lord Howe Island Airport.

The upgrade will focus on improving the current airport terminal, which is in poor condition and has insufficient space for outgoing passengers waiting for flights.

The terminal upgrade works include the demolition and replacement of some of the existing airport terminal, construction of new toilets, replacement of flooring, installation of additional seating, construction of new covered area and improved entry and exit from the building.



M.A.D Committee members Erin Denham (left) and Alison Neale with Leslie



Right: Leslie with Patricia and members of the Hastings Koalas Orchestra

Supporting Local Heroes



There are many inspirational people in the Port Macquarie electorate that have passionately embarked on addressing the needs of vulnerable people in our community and supporting others to achieve their dreams.

When I heard about each of their ventures I had no hesitation in championing their visions and am pleased that the NSW Government has been able to provide funding support to each organisation.

I spoke recently in Parliament of the leadership of an extraordinary lady – Patricia Johnson OAM and her work with the Hastings Koalas Orchestra who have forged an enduringly relationship with the residents of Handa in Japan.

For the past 26 years Port Macquarie and the city of Handa have enjoyed a cultural exchange program based on increasing trade and economic development.

Erin Denham is another such amazing woman who can be aptly described as a 'pocket rocket'. Erin is a local teacher who has founded the Make A Difference Foundation which aims to support underprivileged people on the Mid North Coast in a very practical way.

This not-for-profit community organisation is currently working hard to raise money to purchase an Orange Sky Laundry van which I think is such a worthwhile venture and one that I fully support.

Through a series of community fundraising activities Erin has to date raised around \$40,000 which will go towards the total cost of \$100,000 for the purchase and fit out of an Orange Sky Laundry Van.



More Public Housing For Port Macquarie

Port Macquarie is set to get more public housing with a multi-million housing development to be built on the corner of Grant and Gordon Streets.

The NSW Governments third Communities Plus Neighbourhood Projects package will include a site in Port Macquarie along with nine other locations in NSW.

This site will be redeveloped to deliver more social housing alongside private and affordable housing.

Community Plus will deliver much needed social housing that is well located and will provide social housing tenants with access to opportunities for education, training and local employment.



Kendall Op Shop Praised in Parliament

One very special part of the electorate is the wonderful village of Kendall. It may be small in size but it is huge of heart, particularly when it comes to raising funds to help others. The driving force of this generosity is the Kendall Op Shop.

In 2009, a generous Grants and Sponsorship Scheme was established by the Kendall Op Shop and since that time \$858,500 has been distributed throughout the Camden Haven area and beyond which is just extraordinary.

The money has been raised thanks to the more than seventy volunteers who help out at the Kendall Op-Shop providing assistance to customers as they purchase donated or hand crafted furniture, clothing, and arts & craft just to name a few!

The Op-Shop is a showcase of just what can be achieved when a community comes together, even one as small as Kendall.

I was proud to join many local people from our community at the annual event where grants are distributed to a range of worthy recipients totalling \$68,900.



With recipients of Kendall Op Shop Grants

As with many local community organisations raising money to support their work is a real challenge and so the financial contribution of the Kendall Op Shop under the leadership of President Diane Pope and her hard working Committee members as well as the volunteers have allowed these groups to continue with their important work for the Camden Haven community and beyond.

Thank you Kendall Op Shop – you are amazing and it is thanks to your tireless efforts that we have so many local assets from which we all benefit.



Making Life Fairer For First Home Buyers

With the Port Macquarie-Hastings area in the middle of a construction boom with huge residential developments at Sovereign Hills, Lake Cathie and West Haven, the State Government's comprehensive housing package of measures will put downward pressure on house prices.



The reform measures which will give local first homebuyers a fair go at owning their own home by significantly reducing stamp duty and providing more housing choice.

The State Government's commitment is for all hard working residents across NSW to be able to aspire to own their own home. These far reaching changes could save first homebuyers up to \$34,360.

Stamp duty is a hurdle for first home buyers across our area, so to give residents a fair go we will abolish stamp duty for all first home buyers on properties costing up to \$650,000 and provide stamp duty discounts on properties up to \$800,000. This means many first homebuyers will not be paying stamp duty at all in our region.

These are just some of the measures we are introducing to give local first homebuyers a fair go.





Funding Boost For Local Sport

The NSW Government has announced more than \$29,600 funding for a number of local sporting organisations as part of the 2016/17 Local Sports Grant Program.

The funding will support for a range of sports including cycling, rugby, golf, paddling and rowing. The main aim of this program is to increase regular and on-going participation opportunities in sport and active recreation in NSW.

Sport is a huge part of our way of life on the Mid North Coast and the NSW Government recognises how important it is to our communities, for both social and health reasons.

I am pleased that the NSW Government has been able to provide funding assistance to enable improvements to be carried out.

The following sporting groups received funding in the is round of grants;

- **\$11,130** for the **Port Macquarie Cycling Club** for a variety of training and sports development improvements
- **\$9,687** for the **Kew Country Club** to improve irrigation of the golf course
- **\$5,000** to **Mid North Coast Rugby Union** to assist



Members of the Port Macquarie Cycling Club

with the hosting of the 2017 NSW Country Rugby Union Championships

- **\$3,200** awarded to the **Port Macquarie Rowing Club** to upgrade boat storage facilities
- **\$1,791** for **Flamin' Dragons Port Macquarie** to purchase stroke coaching equipment

Port Macquarie Library Receives More State Government Funding

The Port Macquarie-Hastings Council library staff do an amazing job with more than 1,250 people through the library doors in Port Macquarie and Laurieton each day making them some of the busiest regional libraries in NSW.



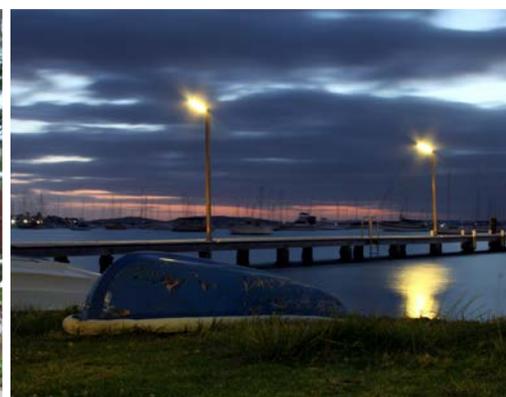
So it was a pleasure to be able to support them with a \$195,915 grant under the 2016/17 Public Libraries Infrastructure Grant program.

The grant is part of \$4 million worth of funding for 31 public library projects across NSW.

The money will allow the library to expand its physical space within the library's footprint and at the same time allow for additional services for library members.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council has pledged to spend the \$195,915 towards VRoom: Augmented Library Spaces.

I am very pleased to again be able to assist with Council with significant funding for our library.



Port Macquarie Mental Health Unit Designs Revealed



Mid North Coast residents recently saw a glimpse of the new Port Macquarie Mental Health Unit, a \$15.9 million expansion project at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital.



First look at plans for our new Mental Health Unit

The schematic design for the new unit were recently unveiled ahead of construction works which will start later this year.

Like so many others, I have been advocating for the new unit in Port Macquarie for many years and to now see the design plans is very exciting.

The new Port Macquarie Mental Health Unit will include:

- Flexible patient care zones
- Staff stations

- Secure patient rooms with natural light
- Quiet spaces for relaxation
- Multifunctional activity room
- Dining and lounge areas
- Secure landscaped courtyards
- Seclusion room
- Interview/admission room.

The designs for the new Unit have been developed in consultation with local user groups, including doctors, nurses, allied

health, support staff and consumers, who have assisted to finalise the layout and configuration of the new unit.

Detailed designs have been finalised and tenders for the construction of the new Port Macquarie Mental Health Unit are expected to be issued shortly with construction to follow soon after.

The new Mental Health Unit will complement the \$104 million major redevelopment of the Port Macquarie Base Hospital which was completed in December 2014.

Makeover of Macquarie Park Netball Courts Completed



A \$920,000 upgrade to the Macquarie Park Netball Courts facility has been completed and is now in full use.

This is an important asset for our local netball competition and the over 1,200 players in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Valley region who enjoy this popular sport.

The upgrade included a surface upgrade and drainage system, construction of a unisex disabled access toilet and major improvements and repairs to the main clubhouse.

The NSW Government provided the \$920,000 grant to Hastings Valley Netball Association through sport and recreation infrastructure funding that supports modern and safe facilities for people to enjoy leisure activities and boost fitness and well-being.



Leslie with members of the Hastings Valley Netball Association

Such infrastructure funding is made possible through the Clubgrants program and over \$50 million in Clubgrants funding is being provided in the current term of government for projects across sport and recreation, emergency relief and arts and culture. Clubgrants are funded through gaming machine revenue from the State's registered clubs.

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