

CLAYTON BARR'S State News

Winter 2018



CLAYTON BARR MP | YOUR LOCAL STATE MEMBER FOR THE ELECTORATE OF CESSNOCK

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New Police station needed



The re-engineering of the NSW Police Force was marketed as the right step towards increased police resources in Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Branxton and Greta. However, 6 months on, it is clear the existing Cessnock station is not equipped to accommodate the number of officers we need.

Under the new policing model, Cessnock station was set to welcome 10 new positions, more detectives, a crime management unit and Domestic Violence Liaison Officers. However, the 10 new positions have not been created and the other promised officers are still working from Maitland station because Cessnock station does not physically have the space, with the officers already working there, doing so in cramped conditions.

For the past 7 years, I have been calling on successive Police Ministers to commit to building a new modern, state-of-the-art station that caters for our growing population. Their lack of action has left our community without the policing resources and officers we so desperately need. Kurri Kurri station has sat idle for the past 2 years. There is certainly space available to accommodate our officers currently stationed at Maitland.

Without additional policing resources, crime will be dealt with reactively instead of proactively. The blame should not be directed towards existing police. They are some of the hardest working officers in the State, on a workload per officer basis, and should be commended for their incredible work-ethic and commitment to making our area safer. It is just that they currently do not have the resources to proactively target crime.

We need to convince the Minister for Police that a new station is needed now in Cessnock. Email your support to cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Impacts of refund

You may be aware the NSW Government is providing CTP Green Slip refunds as part of a reform package. In the short-term this may sound like a great system, but there are many problems with it.

The refund is only possible because the Government changed the laws to offer less coverage for those that get injured. This is a positive outcome for those people who do not get injured. In the short-term, they will pay less for their CTP insurance.

But it is the people who will be injured in a crash that will be impacted the most by these changes. In the longer-term, less coverage means those injured will not be able to access the treatment and financial support they need to recover.

The scheme is also designed in a way that the Government keeps a portion of your refund. There are approximately 4 million motorists in NSW who are eligible for the refund. The government has decided they are taking a \$10 handling fee from each refund that is processed. If every eligible motorist accesses their refund, the Government will keep \$40 million.

Unfortunately, the Government has decided a refund of less than \$20 will not be provided to motorists.

Given only 25% of eligible motorists have claimed their refund, it is likely only about 50% will eventually claim the refund. That means the Government will hold onto the \$240 million left unclaimed.

So much for a refund scheme.

INSIDE

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Our financial future looks concerning

Since they formed government in 2011, the NSW Government has implemented a damaging fiscal program that, in the short-term, can be perceived as beneficial. However, in the long-term it will create serious budgetary issues that will impact how essential services are funded.

Over the last 7 years, a number of significant changes have taken place. The first is that many of the profit making assets the NSW people owned and maintained have been sold. Previously, the profits from these assets would have funded essential services such as police, schools and hospitals. Now there has been a reduction in the number of profit-making assets, it means there will be less money available to spend on these essential services. This is something that every member of our community should be concerned about.

The second challenge is very similar to the first. The NSW people still do own a number of properties that make a profit for the State. However, contracts and agreements have been signed that give private operators the right to collect the rent from these government owned properties for decades to come.

A perfect example of this is the rent collected from shopfronts along Darling Harbour. A private operator paid the NSW Government \$192 million to purchase the rights to collect the rent from these shopfronts for the next 30 years. Over this period, the private operator will make \$665 million in profit through this arrangement. Imagine the improvements that could be made to essential government services with that money.

The third challenge will be the cost of renting back the buildings that have been sold. For instance, in 2016 a local Service NSW building was sold by the NSW Government to a private investor. Once the sale was processed, the government immediately committed to renting it back. Within 10 years, the private investor will earn back the amount they paid for the building through rent collected from NSW taxpayers. Importantly, the rate of rent will immediately hit the budget bottom line. This is true of more than 100 buildings across NSW. The State has gone from being owners to renters. The growing value of each building will now belong to the new private investor, instead of the people and the State.

In the next few years there will be a noticeable difference in the amount of government spending on community services. The NSW budget will be much different. In short, there will be less revenue coming in and more expenditure going out. There is a financial mess heading our way and it is irreversible. I keep reminding the government of this in Parliament but they are failing to listen.



Return and Earn frustrates recyclers

The Government's much anticipated Return and Earn scheme has been in place for 8 months, yet teething issues are still being experienced by users on a daily basis.



Since its rollout, I have been contacted by many people who have experienced problems with the scheme and I have been working with the Minister for the Environment to address these issues. Concerns are regularly raised about the machines being full, the long waiting times and the amount of litter that is left around the machines. I have asked Questions on Notice in Parliament and written to the Minister on several occasions, yet these problems remain.

I have been a long-time advocate of a container deposit scheme and still believe it can make a difference in reducing the amount of littering in our streets, but the Government needs to address the problems that have emerged.

Machines are currently located at Cessnock, Edgeworth, Kurri Kurri and West Wallsend. There is also an over-the-counter collection point at Huntlee. Given the scheme's popularity in our area, I have been asking for more machines to be installed.

Kurri Kurri Ambulance Station repairs

Last November, during the weather event that impacted Kurri Kurri, a number of buildings and landmarks were damaged. One of these was the ambulance station on Alexandra Street where extensive structural damage occurred.

For those people who regularly travel along Alexandra Street, they will have noticed the station has been fenced since November. This has raised plenty of questions in the local community, particularly in relation to the operational hours of the station.

For the last six months, I have been in contact with the Minister for Health regarding the status of the station, and when the community can expect it to re-open. Based on the advice of Health NSW's structural engineer, remediation works are expected to be completed by the end of this year.

In the meantime, temporary station facilities have been erected at Kurri Kurri Hospital that will house staff, equipment and facilities until ambulance operations are reinstated at the station on Alexandra Street.

The number of ambulances servicing the Kurri Kurri region remains the same. They are still very much active in the local area.



The fight to save the Butterfly Cave

Over the last 4 years I have provided regular updates on the fight to save the Butterfly Cave. The Cave is a beautiful, sacred women's site nestled in the bushland of West Wallsend that has a history of some 35,000 years. However, it is in danger of destruction due to an encroaching housing development.

The Awabakal women of our area still use the Cave for women's business. The elders take the young women there as part of a process of ceremony that helps them identify with their Aboriginal heritage. It is an important part of their history.

Saving the Cave is an incredibly important thing we can do for the Aboriginal people in our Electorate. In fact, it is one of the most significant things we can do for the Aboriginal people of NSW. To save the Cave, the NSW Government needs to buy the land from the developer. The developer acquired the land that was zoned residential, put in a development application and sought approval to build on the land.

Surely, the government can find \$1 million or \$2 million to purchase the land so it can remain sacred. There is regular evidence of the government spending millions of dollars to save Anglo-Celtic artefacts that are 200 years old.

Thanking those who volunteer



Volunteers are an important part of our community and I regularly take the time to meet and visit these exceptional individuals to thank them for the contribution they make to our area.

Recently, I sat down with Anne-Louise O'Connor who volunteers many hours a week to making a difference with VIEW. Anne-Louise is one of the many volunteers in our Electorate who dedicates a significant amount of time and effort to improving our community.

Special volunteers can be nominated for a *NSW Government Community Service Award*. To nominate a volunteer, visit www.dpc.nsw.gov.au

\$300,000 injection into our Electorate

One of the most rewarding parts of being the State Member for the Electorate of Cessnock is working with community groups and organisations to assist them as they make a difference in the local area.

Late last year I was pleased to announce that 19 local community groups from our Electorate shared in close to \$300,000 in funding through the Community Building Partnership Program. This funding will support these groups as they look towards upgrading and constructing community infrastructure that will enhance our local area.

I know this funding will help these community groups make a positive difference across the region. Thanks to the initiative of former Premier, Nathan Rees, communities across NSW have had access to this funding pool for close to a decade. In that time, the Cessnock Electorate has received more than \$3 million in funding.

I took the time to visit Michelle at Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre to see how their new defibrillator is making a difference in West Wallsend and Holmesville. Thanks to this investment, the staff, visitors and neighbours of the Centre will have access to this life-saving machine. This is just another example of the wonderful benefits the Community Building Partnership creates.



SUCCESSFUL RECIPIENTS:

- **Bellbird Preschool** secured **\$22,517** to undertake playground repairs.
- **Branxton Croquet Club** secured **\$6,000** to assist in upgrading their lawns.
- **Branxton Greta Amateur Swimming Club** secured **\$21,000** to build a shade structure and storage facilities.
- **Cessnock City Council** secured **\$31,275** to construct a toilet at Bellbird Community Hall.
- **Cessnock District Hockey Association** secured **\$6,000** to refurbish their canteen facility.
- **Cessnock Minor Rugby League** secured **\$20,000** to install lighting at Mount View Park.
- **Cessnock PCYC** secured **\$16,079** to create an outdoor community youth hub.
- **Edgeworth Senior Soccer Club** secured **\$20,200** to upgrade lighting at Jack McLaughlan Oval.
- **Greta Rural Fire Brigade** secured **\$10,672** to install new uniform lockers.
- **Greta Tidy Towns Committee** secured **\$11,500** to construct a new Greta Cemetery entrance.
- **Hope Valley Christian Church** secured **\$20,000** to contribute to the purchase of a 22 seat bus.
- **Kurri Golf Club** secured **\$30,000** to replace corrugated iron roofing.
- **Kurri Kurri Community Services** secured **\$20,000** to upgrade lighting.
- **Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance** secured **\$15,425** to upgrade the meeting area at Holmesville Community Garden.
- **Mai-Wel (Richmond Vale)** secured **\$3,606** to build and upgrade picnic tables.
- **Mum's Cottage (Holmesville)** secured **\$4,510** to repaint and fit-out their office.
- **Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre (West Wallsend)** secured **\$11,444** to purchase a defibrillator and LED advertising signs.
- **Towns With Hearts (Kurri Kurri)** secured **\$25,652** to construct a storage shed.
- **Weston Heritage & Tidy Town Committee** secured **\$3,500** to purchase a new ride-on lawn mower.

Schools and hospitals before stadiums

Since the NSW Government announced their decision to spend more than \$2.3 billion on knocking down and rebuilding Sydney stadiums, I have spoken with hundreds of people that oppose the idea and only 1 or 2 that support it.

In our Electorate, we could build a new school in each suburb and a new fully public hospital with \$2.3 billion, and still have change. But this does not seem to register with the NSW Government.

I have launched a petition calling on the NSW Government to reverse their decision to spend billions on knocking down and rebuilding Sydney stadiums.

The response from the community has been strong. If you would like more copies of the petition, please contact my office by calling 4991 1466.

SCHOOLS & HOSPITALS
BEFORE STADIUMS

To the Honorable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.

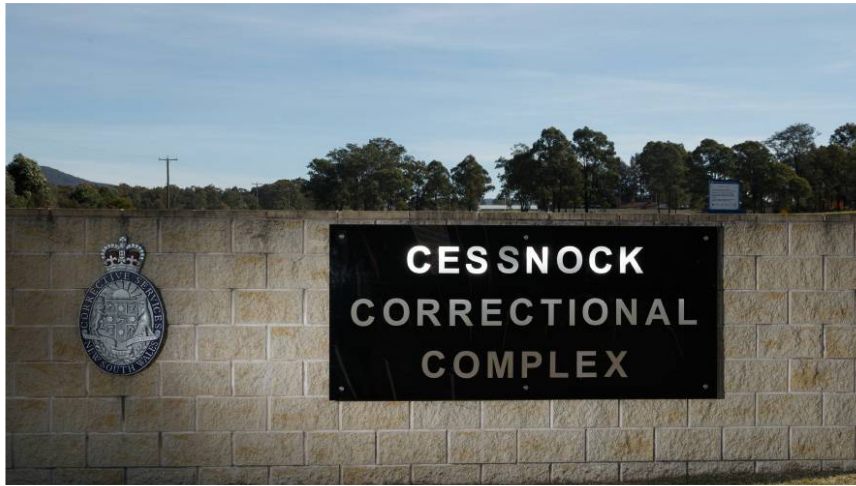
This petition of residents across NSW appeals to the attention of the House the \$2.3 billion that the State Government is spending on Sydney Stadiums at the expense of the state's schools and hospitals.

The undersigned petitioners therefore ask the Legislative Assembly to direct the Government to spend these funds on the State's schools and hospitals and other essential community services.

SIGN THE PETITION

Please return your completed petition to Clayton Barr MP
100 Vincent Street GPO Box 2421, Cessnock NSW 2325

Which entrance?



The new Hunter Correctional Centre was opened earlier this year but no final solution has been decided about the proposed new entrance to the complex.

One of the ongoing frustrations of the Cessnock community has been the failure of Corrective Services NSW to make a decision about a new entrance to the site.

I am continually writing to the Minister, asking Questions on Notice and meeting with concerned residents but have not received a final answer. As a community, we need to force the hand of the Government.

Duffie Drive upgrade



After years of advocacy from our community, upgrades have been taking place at the intersection of Duffie Drive and Maitland Road in recent months.

The \$2.9 million upgrades will result in the installation of a single lane roundabout, the widening of Maitland Road and the improvement of visibility and lighting at the intersection.

For over a decade, the Cessnock community has been calling for changes to be made to the intersection. The number of reported and unreported crashes have continued to increase in recent years, with some motorists suffering serious injuries.

These upgrades would never have been possible without the advocacy of our community. The wheels of government turn slowly.

Local Sport Grant Program

Eleven sporting groups from across the Cessnock Electorate will be in a better position to assist people from our area participate in sport and active recreation thanks to funding under the Local Sport Grant Program.

We all recognise the importance and value of sport in our community. It is the lifeblood of our area and I welcome any investment into local sport clubs to help them continue to make a difference in the lives of many people.

SUCCESSFUL GROUPS:

- **Abermain Weston Hawks RLFC**
secured **\$3,000** for the purchase of training uniforms and jackets.
- **Branxton Golf Club**
secured **\$1,030** to purchase artificial turf practice nets.
- **Branxton Greta Amateur Swimming Club**
secured **\$5,000** for the purchase of uniforms and to subsidise fees.
- **Cessnock Clay Target Club**
secured **\$20,000** to construct new walkways and awnings.
- **Fernances Creek Riding Club (Fernances Crossing)**
secured **\$2,080** to install an irrigation system.
- **Greta Branxton Colts RLFC**
secured **\$2,000** to allow volunteers to undergo accreditation development.
- **Greta Branxton Football Club**
secured **\$2,000** to allow volunteers to undertake development courses.
- **Hunter District Cycling Club**
secured **\$1,500** to go towards hosting the State Open Road Cycling Race.
- **Hunter Valley Football Association**
secured **\$1,840** to allow volunteers to undergo accreditation.
- **West Wallsend Soccer Club**
secured **\$3,500** to host a junior gala day and allow volunteers to undergo development courses.
- **Weston Junior Football**
secured **\$5,000** to purchase new goals and footballs.

School upgrades



It is promising to see the government has made a significant investment in three local schools that will improve learning environments and encourage students to reach their potential.

Since my election I have continually pushed for the government to respond to the growing maintenance concerns in our local schools. Last year it was revealed the maintenance backlog in the Cessnock Electorate was close to \$10 million across each of our schools.

I am glad the NSW Government has been able to make the investments in:

- **Kurri Kurri High School** to improve the entrance to the school and extend the administration area.
- **Nulkaba Public School** to upgrade the administration building, improve amenities and build 14 new classrooms.
- **West Wallsend High School** to improve the entrance to the school and extend the administration area.

I am continuing to push the government to work through the backlog at our remaining schools.

HEX impacts local roads



The opening of the Hunter Expressway in 2014 has significantly improved travel time for motorists, yet the impact on nearby local roads continues to create a number of safety issues for residents.

An unintended consequence of the Hunter Expressway has been the failure to address issues that have emerged on the connection roads that lead to and from the expressway.

There are a number of problems that have emerged as a result of the opening of the Hunter Expressway, but three that I regularly receive inquiries and complaints about are the intersection of Gingers Lane, Government Road, Hart Road and Sawyers Gully Road, Weston, Main Road, Heddon Greta and Minmi Road, Edgeworth.

1. There are a variety of safety issues at the Weston intersection and I understand Cessnock City Council is working to resolve these in the short-term.
2. Traffic has increased considerably along Main Road, Heddon Greta since the opening of the expressway and the emergence of new housing developments in the area. Congestion is a significant problem along this stretch of road which creates a variety of safety issues as motorists attempt to turn out of side streets.
3. Minmi Road, Edgeworth is now so busy that it surely needs to become a State road.

These are just three of the many roads issues I am trying to resolve. Further attention on these issues will hopefully lead to some improvements by the Roads and Maritime Services.

Justice of the Peace services available

Local residents often require the services of Justices of the Peace (JP) but sometimes find it difficult to locate or identify members of the community who serve as a JP.

For people who live in the eastern end of the Cessnock Electorate, the Morisset and Lake Macquarie Branch of the NSW Justices Association regularly provide free JP services at Edgeworth Town Square Shopping Centre on the first Thursday and third Saturday of each month between 10am and 12pm.

The community JP desk will be available on the following dates at Edgeworth Town Square Shopping Centre.

Thursday

- 5 July 2018
- 2 August 2018
- 6 September 2018
- 4 October 2018
- 1 November 2018
- 6 December 2018

Saturday

- 21 July 2018
- 18 August 2018
- 15 September 2018
- 20 October 2018
- 17 November 2018
- 15 December 2018

If you live in another part of the Electorate, you can find a list of local JPs by visiting www.jp.nsw.gov.au

Funding helps Laguna RFS save lives



Our local NSW Rural Fire Service brigades do a tremendous job in protecting our community during periods of devastation and destruction. Each of our local brigades relies on teams of volunteer men and women, who often put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe.

It is always great to recognise the commitment and dedication of these volunteers and to thank them for their service.

At every opportunity, I like to take the time to thank our emergency services personnel. It was very pleasing to be able to do this with the Minister for Emergency Services, Troy Grant, recently when

we dropped into say thank you to the volunteers of the Laguna brigade. I was also pleased to present them with a \$5,000 cheque to assist them in preparing for, and responding to, emergency situations in their area.

The brigade has earmarked a new computer with a large interactive screen as an item they need to support their work. In 2018 computers and software are central to responding to emergency situations and it is important our local emergency services have access to modern and updated equipment.

The funding will also go towards improving firefighting capabilities with safety additions to the brigade's tanker. Enhancing the Laguna tanker with new safety items means the volunteers will be able to provide additional support to structural fires and provide external lighting at night.

A half-century of service as a JP

I was pleased to join with Alan Oram from Barnsley and Bob Broadfoot OAM from West Wallsend at a special ceremony at Parliament House in May as they were recognised for 50 years service to the community as Justices of the Peace (JP). It was great to see Alan and Bob recognised by the Attorney General on this milestone occasion. Between them, they have provided more than 100 years of assistance as JPs.

Alan has used his appointment as a JP to assist businesses, families and community group prepare documents for legal and official purposes.

Since 1967, Bob has been helping the people of West Wallsend at key moments in their lives, such as when they apply for a passport or purchase a new home.

Alan and Bob are both fine examples of the contribution JPs make in our community on a daily basis. They have both served the area with distinction and enthusiasm over the last 50 years.

JPs provide a vital service to the community. If you are interested in becoming a JP, please visit www.jp.nsw.gov.au and complete the online application form under the menu item 'Becoming a JP'.



Barr-beques to keep you warm this winter

Following the huge popularity of my Barr-beques during the summer period, I have decided to hold some more during the winter Parliamentary recess. Earlier in the year, I held 18 Barr-beques in every corner of the Electorate, from West Wallsend to Bellbird, Edgeworth to Milbrodale and Greta to Laguna. It is always great to see members of the community come together to talk and look at solving problems that have arisen in their neighbourhood.

Tuesday, 26 June 2018

WOLLOMBI

Where: Former Wollombi Public School site, Wollombi Road
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Thursday, 5 July 2018

BROKE

Where: McNamara Park, Wollombi Street
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Thursday, 28 June 2018

EDGEWORTH

Where: Turnbull Street Reserve, Corner Turnbull and Johnson Streets
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Tuesday, 24 July 2018

BARNESLEY

Where: Taylor Park, Appletree Road
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Tuesday, 3 July 2018

PELAW MAIN

Where: Vicinity of Centenary Park, Tomalpin Street
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Thursday, 26 July 2018

GRETA

Where: Vicinity of Norman Brown Memorial Park, Corner High and Water Streets
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm



Student leaders visit Parliament House

I was thrilled to welcome student leaders from Kurri Kurri High School, Mount View High School and West Wallsend High School to Parliament House in April.

The students were participating in the Parliament's Secondary Student Leadership program which aims to equip young leaders with the skills and knowledge to make a positive contribution in their communities.

All six leaders demonstrated maturity beyond their years and were great ambassadors of our area.

Here to help

As your local State Member for the Electorate of Cessnock I can help by:

- Advocating on your behalf with issues such as housing, police, education, roads, transport, youth and community services
- Writing to Ministers on your behalf seeking their assistance in resolving issues you may have with the NSW Government or its departments
- Providing assistance with processing of your Justice of the Peace applications
- Arranging milestone anniversary and birthday congratulatory messages

Connect with me

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