

## COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



Minmi's **Clarice Hamling** was recently named Local Woman of the Year for the Cessnock Electorate. The Local Woman of the Year Award recognises women who have made outstanding contributions and achieved great things in their local area. Clarice was recognised for her outstanding community service, including nearly 20 years with local and regional Parents and Citizens Associations. She is also an active member of the Minmi Progress Association.

Clarice received the award at a presentation at a special assembly and afternoon tea at Minmi Public School, where she works tirelessly for the P&C. A large number of parents and friends attended the ceremony to show their support and thanks to Mrs Hamling and her efforts.

Kurri Kurri's **Bill Way** recently received the NSW Government Community Service Award, after decades of involvement in the local area. Bill has done an enormous amount of work over the past 30 years through Kurri Kurri Tidy Towns, Towns with Heart, Lions Club, Men's Shed and his church. If there is a walk, a plaque or a statue that is less than 30 years old in Kurri Kurri there is every chance that Bill was involved in its installation.

Bill received his award at a surprise morning tea at the Log of Knowledge Park, Pelaw Main. Many of the volunteers who served with Bill in those various groups were on hand to celebrate the special occasion with him, as well as family who were invited to the morning tea.



Picture: The Advertiser

## WE MUST SUPPORT HUNTER JOBS

The Hunter's manufacturing industry is under pressure, and our Governments must do better in giving it support. Clayton attended a rally in Newcastle recently about this issue, which is starting to worry people in the community. We are seeing job losses around the country as our manufacturing industry falters, and our local industries are going to need Government help.

Kurri Kurri's Hydro Aluminium, Volgren and United Goninan are just three examples of local businesses that have closed because of contracting decisions made by the State Government. That's not a political statement; it was the Labor Government who initially failed to deliver a power contract for Hydro, and the current Liberal/National Government who has been giving train and bus contracts to interstate and international companies.

That is unacceptable, and Clayton continues to speak out for local jobs. There is no excuse to send a contract interstate or overseas when local manufacturing businesses are battling. The next State Government, whatever political persuasion, must do better for local workers. A product that costs a little bit more but provides work, skills, knowledge and innovation right here in New South Wales is worth every cent.

## WHAT CAN YOUR STATE MP DO FOR YOU?

At a community Barr-becue or from the office, Clayton can help you with any issue within the responsibilities of the State Government. These include:

*Transport - Health - Community Services - Education - Law and Order - Water-Resources and Energy - Sport and Recreation - Public Housing - Science - Roads - Industrial Relations - Environment - Medical Research - Fair Trading - Seniors Card Applications- JP Applications - Messages for Wedding Anniversaries & Birthdays*

The office can be contacted by

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Clayton is now on Facebook and Twitter, keeping the Electorate informed on what he's up to. You can reach him on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/claytonbarrmp](http://www.facebook.com/claytonbarrmp), or on Twitter @ClaytonBarrMP. He now also has a website up and running: [www.claytonbarr.com.au](http://www.claytonbarr.com.au)



# CLAYTON'S ELECTORATE NEWS



## MID YEAR UPDATE - JUNE 2014

### NEW HUNTER HOSPITAL LATEST

You may recall that a newsletter Clayton sent out 18 months ago said that the conversation had begun on a new Lower Hunter Hospital, and that the whole community needed to be involved if it was going to be done properly. Well it is time for the community to speak up, because some concerning noises are coming from the corridors of power. There are a lot of whispers that the new Hospital will be publicly funded and privately run, and that certain beds will only be available to people with private health insurance. That is what is happening with the new North Shore Hospital at Frenchs Forest, and so far the Liberal/National Government have refused to deny that they intend to do the same here.

That would be a disaster for the area. Private hospitals are run for profit, not for people. The Nurses and Midwives Association, who are a pretty good authority on what works and doesn't work in Hospitals, have made their view very clear, with a spokesman saying back in January: "We don't want another Frenchs Forest". The other issue is location. The proposed site for the new Hospital is not next to the Hunter Expressway. The Expressway will become the aorta of the region, and yet the Hospital will not be located next to it. As Clayton said recently: "Please, can't someone show some vision and foresight?".

These issues will continue to develop, but everyone in the community needs to ask questions, write letters and make phone calls to the Minister and Hunter Members of Parliament, to make clear what sort of Hospital we want to service our region. Clayton recently made a speech to Parliament about this issue, which you can read at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au). He will keep fighting to see some common sense brought into the process.

## CENSUS STATS SHOW WE NEED TAFE

The New South Wales Parliament recently released a seat by seat breakdown of the latest Census data, and the figures show the vital importance of TAFE in our Electorate. Of the 93 Electorates in New South Wales, Cessnock ranked last for persons with a tertiary education, but first for proportion of persons with a trade qualification (see table below). Clayton believes this shows how reliant on TAFE this area is.

The Liberal/National Government has ripped \$1.7 billion out of the Education budget, leading to the sacking of 400 TAFE staff and the reduction of teaching hours in many subjects. Meanwhile, course fees have risen by between \$500 and \$1,500. In the near future students could be charged full fees, which would mean costs of around \$10,000 per course. This would make TAFE less accessible than ever. Clayton is dismayed by these cuts, and is fighting to have them overturned. He recently invited the Shadow Minister for Education, Ryan Park to the area, to discuss the future of TAFE and it's importance to the Cessnock Electorate.

| Education - Qualifications                                      | Highest in State |       | Lowest in State |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Persons with tertiary education qualifications                  | North Shore      | 59.0% | Cessnock        | 12.2% |
| Persons with trade qualifications                               | Cessnock         | 25.4% | Sydney          | 6.9%  |
| Persons with highest level of school completed Year 12          | North Shore      | 75.8% | Cessnock        | 25.2% |
| Persons with highest level of school completed Year 10 or below | Cessnock         | 58.8% | Sydney          | 9.6%  |

**Beresfield - Barnsley - Branxton - Cameron Park - Cessnock - Edgeworth - Greta - Holmesville - Kurri Kurri - Minmi - Tarro - West Wallsend - Wollombi**



# CUTS TO COUNSELLING IN THE HUNTER

Hunter New England Health recently announced that all but a few of their free counselling services would now only be offered by Medicare Local and non-Government agencies, which will make it harder for people with mental health difficulties to get help.

The changes mean that people in Cessnock will only be able to access these counselling services on a Monday when Medicare Local do outreach, and that's only if they can get in. This means that those who are not available on a Monday won't be able to access the services, and those who are will face long waits.

You will have to go to a local GP to get a referral for counselling for Medicare Local. With so many people in the Electorate finding it difficult to access a GP, this will become quite an arduous process. In Sydney, this is not such a problem, but in a regional area like the Hunter, access to a GP on short notice is a dream rather than a reality for many people.

The greatest barriers to getting medical care are money and access. Thanks to these changes, access will be almost impossible unless you have the money. This is a nasty move on the part of the Government, which will be particularly harsh on people outside of the cities and people with lower incomes.

Clayton is furious about these cuts, and will continue to fight against them in State Parliament. If you use these services and believe that you will be affected by the cuts, please contact Clayton so he can make representations on your behalf to the Minister.

# GRANTS DOING GOOD IN THE COMMUNITY

The benefits of Government grants are continuously being shown in the Cessnock Electorate. Clayton recently attended two official openings for projects funded by grants, and both projects are great examples of local community groups working to make the best of Government grants.

Barnsley Soccer Club received funding from the New South Wales Participation and Facility Program to complete the installation of a new drainage system for their main field. Clayton was proud to support their application and be there for the official opening, and was appreciative of Lake Macquarie City Council co-funding the project.

The Kurri Kurri Pre-School project was for a new bathroom, and was funded through the Community Building Partnership. It was particularly innovative, with researchers from the University of Newcastle consulting with the children to find out what they wanted the new bathroom to look like.

If your community group would like information on Government grants that are available, just contact Clayton's office.



Clayton with a volunteer from Barnsley Soccer Club at the official opening of their new drainage system

# CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIA UPDATE

In Clayton's last newsletter he explained the recent changes made by the O'Farrell Government to the process around Cemeteries and Crematoria. The Government will now allow graves to be re-sold after 25 years, and places in crematoria to be re-sold after 10 years. The only way a person will remain in their plot is if their family finds an as yet unknown amount of money to extend the tenure.

Since his last newsletter Clayton's office has been bombarded with calls, letters and emails from people disgusted by these changes, which he opposed when they were quietly rushed through Parliament before Christmas. There were a lot of unanswered questions at first, but we have managed to find out more details about how this hideous system will operate:

- People who are already deceased will not be affected in any way.
- If you have already purchased a plot, you will not be affected.

However we still don't know many of the other details, such as the exact cost of renewing tenure. You are still welcome to write to Clayton's office to voice your concerns or ask your questions, and he can forward them to the Minister. The Government need to get the message that people will not tolerate these cold-hearted changes.



# CLAYTON'S OTHER OFFICE

Did you know Clayton holds a weekly mobile office at West Wallsend? He is at Sugar Valley Neighbourhood Centre in Carrington Street from around 11am until 2pm most Mondays.

He's available to have meetings with constituents just like he does at the Electorate Office, which means that people at the other end of the Electorate can still raise their issues and get help even if they can't get up to Cessnock. We don't want geography stopping people from getting their issues raised.

You can just wander in and try your luck, or call the office toll free on 1300 550 114 and make an appointment — that way you can be sure he'll be there and available.



# COMMUNITY BUILDING PARTNERSHIP



The Community Building Partnership allows local community groups to apply for State funding to build infrastructure projects. Here Clayton is pictured at the recent opening of the renovated workshop at Cessnock Men's Shed and Community Garden.

This year's funding has been spread over twenty community groups for a variety of simple projects which they would otherwise struggle to afford. For example, the Abermain-Weston Rugby League Club received \$11,736 to upgrade their scoreboard and bench seating at Howe Park, Cessnock District Historical and Family History Society received \$5,018 to install a compactor at the local library and Sugar Valley Neighbourhood Centre received \$16,390 to turn an old toilet block into an interview room.

The Community Building Partnership generally opens for applications around September. All eligible local community groups are encouraged to apply.

# MORE COMMUNITY BARR-BECUES



Clayton recently completed another round of Community Barr-becues, which allow him to meet people in the community, particularly those who live a bit further away from the Electorate Office.

Over the last couple of months Clayton has held 14 barbecues, serving free sausage sandwiches and talking to locals about State Government issues. Thank you to everyone who came along.

If you have a State issue to raise but can't make it into the office for an appointment, these barbecues are a great opportunity to see how Clayton can help you. Here's the next round:

|               | Tuesday                          | Thursday                 | Wednesday                            | Friday                                            | Tuesday                          | Thursday                                |
|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Time/Date     | July 15                          | July 17                  | July 30                              | August 1                                          | September 2                      | September 4                             |
| 11.30am – 1pm | Branxton car park at Miller Park | Bellbird Carmichael Park | Barnsley Taylor Park, Appletree Road | Cessnock car park at Cessnock Pool, Wollombi Road | Edgeworth park in Johnson Street | Tarro car park at Tarro Recreation Area |