

# CLAYTON BARR'S State News

Summer 2017-18



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

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## Train wreck coming and there's no way to stop it!

Over the last six years, we have seen the Liberal-National Government go about selling off the majority of NSW's profit-making assets. These are things like our ports, our poles and wires and our lands and title office. Previously, the profits these assets made, each and every year, would go towards funding our hospitals, schools and police.

During this sell-off, I have had many conversations with local constituents - some in favour and some totally opposed to the sell-off. Regardless of your personal view, surely we can all agree that selling off our profit-making assets means there will be less money coming into the NSW Budget in future years. Naturally, that means less money for our hospitals, schools and police.

The Liberal-National Government have been quite active in promoting the benefits of these sell-offs. Their standard mantra is that the money they make from the sell-offs will fund their infrastructure program. We are told that NSW will have the buildings, the motorways and the bridges that will shape our future and make us the envy of the rest of the nation. The problem is that all of this infrastructure is being built in Sydney, with the Hunter region, and particularly the Cessnock Electorate being left out again.

So, we have the infrastructure growth in Sydney, but few of us from the Hunter will be able to regularly benefit from the shiny new bridges and motorways. Although we will all be hurt by the fall in the State's income.

The 2017-18 Budget Papers show that there is falling growth for future income. In fact, it is nosediving. Because most of the State's profit-making assets have been sold off, it means that our income is free-falling. There is a train-wreck coming and the problem is, there is no stopping it.

Around 2020-21 is when we can expect the funding crash to occur. The State's income will have dried up and whoever is in Government will have to make some very unpopular decisions to make sure our hospitals, our schools and our police continue to be funded.

## Secret plan to sell Service NSW



It has been revealed the Government has a secret plan to sell-off Service NSW to seven private corporations. This will put the personal details of customers at risk.

I have spent the past few months travelling around NSW talking to residents who want their Service NSW centres kept in public hands. When will the sell-offs stop?

## Energy crisis - how did we get here?

Throughout this year we have seen much argy-bargy about electricity supply. It has been deemed an "energy crisis" and there is a real possibility that we will experience blackouts during Summer due to a lack of supply.

So, how did we get here? How is it that energy prices have increased significantly in recent years and yet, we may soon be having frequent power outages?

Between 2007-2011 in NSW and 2007-2013 at a Federal level, those in power made a conscience decision to move toward renewable energy and away from fossil fuels. Both Governments invested plenty of money, resources, construction and education into promoting the use of renewable energy.

But when these Governments were defeated, their successors felt the move towards renewable energy had gone too fast. Their response was to withdraw much of this investment into renewable energy. What they failed to do was make a decision on how they intended to provide the energy supply we require locally and nationally.

This indecision is now having an effect on our energy supply and electricity bills. It is not caused by climate change or the burning of fossil fuels.

When you think about it, there has been little investment in coal, gas or renewable power in recent years. The Government talks about it, but they have failed to act.

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## Caring for our injured workers

In 2012 the then-O'Farrell Government brought in some incredibly hurtful changes to the workers compensation scheme. These reforms changed the scheme from one that looked after all injured workers to one that looked after some injured workers for some of the time.



Probably the most contentious part of the 2012 changes was the introduction of the five-year cut-off date for injured workers who have 1% to 20% whole body impairment. The math is quite simple: these changes were made in 2012 and therefore came into effect in 2017. Between September and December 2017, 4,223 injured workers were kicked out of the workers compensation scheme. Their financial support has dried up and they have been forced to turn to Centrelink, and that is only if they are eligible.

This is a cruel decision that can have long-lasting effects on these injured workers - physically, psychologically, financially and socially. I have had injured workers tell me they will not be able to survive once they have been kicked off the scheme. It is heartbreaking as you sit across from someone as they plead for your help and talk about their suicidal thoughts.

The Government's response to this has been to set-up a telephone hotline where those affected workers can speak to a psychologist over the phone.

The response the Government should be providing is the abolishment of the five-year cut-off of the weekly workers compensation payments. The Opposition recognise this. We recognise that it will go a long way to helping those injured workers who need ongoing support and assistance.

As the Shadow Minister responsible for workers compensation, I introduced the *Workers Compensation Amendment (Protection of Injured Workers) Bill 2017* into Parliament with the aim to abolish the five-year cut-off and remove some other limits on medical expenses.

But staying true to their form, the Government refused to allow the Bill to be debated and all but ensured injured workers lost their support at Christmas.

## Casualisation hurts workers

The NSW Government claims that since they entered office in 2011 there has been an incredible growth in the number of jobs created, particularly in regional NSW. But when I speak with constituents from across the Electorate, it is clear that we are not experiencing the job creation success that the Government continually promotes.

The Government often uses very positive figures when they talk about job growth. They give the impression we are in a jobs boom. The problem is that when it comes to measuring jobs, the Government is using statistics that equate a single hour of work a week to a job. They are counting casual work as full-time work.

What we are experiencing is a casualisation of the workforce. It has been responsible for zero wages growth and a decline in wages in regional areas. It also has a huge impact on job security, pay and conditions for workers.

Casualisation of the workforce and the pressures that are being placed on employees in the workplace have resulted in unsafe conditions, employees working when they are not well, employers not paying superannuation entitlements and employees not receiving penalty rates to which they are entitled to.

## The pressure on our Police

**We all know how hard our local Police work, right across the Cessnock Electorate. From Barnsley to Bulga, our men and women in blue are putting in an incredible amount of effort to keep our community safe. In fact, the statistics show they are working harder than almost all of their colleagues across the State.**

Our local police attend to more situations, make more arrests, respond to more calls for assistance, and generally do more policing than is the average or the norm. There are many reasons for this, but the main reason is that police numbers are generally allocated based on population. Despite the high crime rates in our area, we still have a low population.

As part of the re-engineering of the NSW Police Force, Cessnock and Kurri Kurri will now join Branxton and Greta in the newer and much larger Hunter Valley Police District. Given this new District will be based in Muswellbrook; it means more policing resources will be allocated to the Cessnock region to cater for a growing population, including Kurri Kurri, Branxton and Greta. This can only benefit those communities.

Under the re-engineering, the suburbs of Barnsley, Cameron Park, Edgeworth, Holmesville, Seahampton and West Wallsend will remain in the Lake Macquarie Police Area Command.



## New Abermain Fire Station



I was pleased to join Fire & Rescue NSW Commissioner, Paul Baxter, Abermain Fire Brigade Captain, Bill Lang and the Minister for Emergency Services, Troy Grant to officially open the new Abermain Fire Station.

The state-of-the-art facility will now have the capacity to house two engines, offer firefighting training and increase the storage of protective and firefighting equipment.

As the Abermain community continues to grow, the new Station will provide the support and assistance needed during times of emergency.

It is great to see our local firefighters receiving the modern facilities they deserve.

## Big Steps Campaign



Early childhood educators from across the Cessnock Electorate walked off the job in September demanding equal pay. I joined them to lend my support to their Big Steps campaign.

Early childhood educators have an important role in the community. But, they are some of the lowest paid professionals in the country. Their wages do not reflect the value of their work or the value of the children for whom they care and educate.

I support all early childhood educators across the Electorate in their fight for equal pay.

## What has been happening in Parliament?

For most people, the only thing they see of Parliament is the theatre of Question Time on the nightly news. The truth is, much more happens when Parliament is sitting, and it is a lot more civil. There are many opportunities to

## Recognising our volunteers



Volunteers are the lifeblood of any community. This is certainly the case in the Cessnock Electorate! I recently took the time to visit Cancer Council volunteers on Daffodil Day to thank them for their effort in raising money to assist in the fight against cancer.

Do you know someone from our Electorate who has given much of their time to volunteering for a cause that makes a difference to the lives of people in our area?

The NSW Government can recognise two volunteers each year from the Cessnock Electorate who make a tireless contribution to our community by awarding them the **NSW Government Community Service Award**.

To nominate someone please visit [www.dpc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au)

## Local JPs honoured



Three locals from the Cessnock Electorate achieved a significant milestone this year. Brian Howe, Dorothy Gumbleton and Ian Grosse have been serving the community for 50 years as Justices of the Peace.

I caught up with the three long-serving JPs for morning tea to present them with commemorative certificates to mark the occasion.

It was a small token to thank them for their tireless volunteer effort over the decades. They have been performing the important legal functions of a JP for the majority of their lives.

talk about local issues and ask the Government for assistance. I also take the time to recognise our special achievers from across the Electorate. To read my speeches visit: [www.claytonbarr.com.au/speeches](http://www.claytonbarr.com.au/speeches)



# Bringing my Barr-beques to your area

I value the opportunity to be able to get out into the community to talk with local residents about issues that are important to them. That is why I am bringing my Barr-beques to a location near you.

**Tuesday, 23 January 2018**

## HOLMESVILLE

**Where:** Joseph Holmes Memorial Park,  
Appletree Road  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## KITCHENER

**Where:** Poppethead Reserve,  
Cessnock Street  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

**Thursday, 25 January 2018**

## KURRI KURRI

**Where:** Margaret Johns Park,  
Corner Boundary and  
Northcote Streets  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## KEARSLEY

**Where:** Jeffrey Park,  
Caledonia Street  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

**Tuesday, 20 February 2018**

## MILLFIELD

**Where:** Park opposite the  
General Store,  
Wollombi Road  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## BROKE

**Where:** McNamara Park,  
Wollombi Street  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

**Thursday, 22 February 2018**

## LAGUNA

**Where:** Car park at the front of  
Laguna Public School,  
The Great North Road  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## GRETA

**Where:** Norman Brown  
Memorial Park,  
Corner High and Water Streets  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

**Tuesday, 27 February 2018**

## NULKABA

**Where:** Corner Kerlew Street and  
Wine Country Drive  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## WESTON

**Where:** Peace Park,  
Cessnock Road  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

**Thursday, 1 March 2018**

## HEDDON GRETA

**Where:** Car park opposite  
Heddon Greta Hotel,  
Main Road  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## EDGEWORTH

**Where:** Kane Bruce Park,  
Durham Drive  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

**Tuesday, 20 March 2018**

## BELLBIRD

**Where:** Bellbird Miners Memorial  
Park,  
Wollombi Road  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## MULBRING

**Where:** Mulbring Park,  
Vincent Street  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

**Thursday, 22 March 2018**

## EDGEWORTH

**Where:** Turnbull Street Reserve,  
Turnbull Street  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## MILBRODALE

**Where:** Grassed area,  
Corner Putty and  
Milbrodale Roads  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

**No need to make an appointment, just turn up!**



## 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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