

CLAYTON BARR MP

STATE NEWS - JANUARY 2016



It's time for another edition of my Electorate Newsletter, covering a few of the things that are going on around the Electorate and down at Parliament. As always, if there are any State Government issues I can help you with please call my office on 4991 1466 or e-mail cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au. However I have no say with local Council or Federal Government matters, so your best avenue for those issues is to contact your local elected Councillors or your Federal MP.

Clayton Barr MP, State Member for the Electorate of Cessnock

HIGH HUNTER UNEMPLOYMENT - WHERE'S MIKE?

A new Research Paper from the NSW Parliament says the Hunter Valley's unemployment rate is 10.1%, with youth unemployment at a staggering 20.6%. It is a horrifying reading.

The figures cover the Cessnock, Maitland, Port Stephens and Upper Hunter Electorates, and show that employment decreased by 6.1% last year, and that the Hunter Valley's unemployment (10.1%) and youth unemployment (20.6%) rates are nearly double the State averages (5.9% and 12.7% respectively). One in ten of our people, and one in five of our young people don't have a job. That is an economic and social disaster. Unemployment can have a terribly damaging impact on someone's life. As well as placing stress on your finances, it hits your confidence and mental health, and can turn people to crime.

Mike Baird is supposed to be an economist. So what is he doing to help our region diversify its economy? The downturn in mining has hit us hard, but we are getting no support from our Government. He can barely find the time to come here! Far from helping, he and his Government are making things worse. Just when our people are struggling to find work, his TAFE fee hikes have made it far harder to get skills and qualifications. He is refusing to preference local manufacturers for Government contracts. His abolition of the Cellar Door Subsidy made things harder for our vignerons and the thousands they employ.

All Mike Baird has done in five years as Treasurer and Premier is vandalise our local economy. He needs to come up here and listen to our local workers and businesses. More than that he needs to start showing our region some attention and work with us to turn things around.

COMMUNITY BARR-BECUES ARE BACK

Over the next few weeks I'll be setting up my tent and barbecue at a spot near you, cooking up a storm and talking to local people about the State issues they're concerned about. Here's the schedule, come along for a sausage sandwich and a chat:

BARNSELEY	Tuesday 2 February	11.30am – 1pm	Taylor Park, Appletree Road
BROKE	Tuesday 2 February	4.30pm – 6pm	Reserve next to the Bush Fire Brigade shed
BRANXTON	Thursday 4 February	4.30pm – 6pm	Car park at Miller Park
CAMERON PARK	Tuesday 1 March	11.30am – 1pm	At the front of the Community Centre, 107 Northlakes Drive
EDGEWORTH	Thursday 11 February	4.30pm – 6pm	Park in Johnson Street
KEARSLEY	Thursday 3 March	4.30pm – 6pm	Jeffery Park, Caledonia Street
KITCHENER	Tuesday 9 February	11.30am – 1pm	Reserve opposite the Khartoum Hotel
KURRI KURRI	Thursday 4 February	11.30am – 1pm	Margaret Johns Park, corner Boundary and Northcote Streets
MILBRODALE	Tuesday 1 March	4.30pm – 6pm	Grassed area, corner Putty and Milbrodale Roads
PELAW MAIN	Thursday 3 March	11.30am – 1pm	Log of Knowledge Park – opposite the Empire Tavern
WESTON	Tuesday 9 February	4.30pm – 6pm	George Smith Reserve, Cessnock Road (corner First Street)
WOLLOMBI	Thursday 11 February	11.30am – 1pm	Next to Tennis Courts in Negro Street

GOVERNMENT PROPERTY - OUR STATE FOR SALE



For some strange reason, the New South Wales Government has been acting more like a Real Estate agency than a Government for the people lately. The result is that we, the taxpayers of New South Wales, own an awful lot less today than we did a few years ago.

In the 2014/15 financial year, the Government sold \$346 million worth of Government buildings. For this financial year they are planning to sell \$865 million worth! Most bizarrely of all, many of the buildings will then be leased back to the Government for terms of ten or fifteen years, so that the new owner will more than make their money back.

It won't surprise you to learn that buyers have been queuing up around the block to get their slice. It's a terrible deal for the State, with private owners making huge, easy profits at the expense of the taxpayers.

A local example is the Hunter Water Headquarters on Honeysuckle Drive in Newcastle. It is being sold off by the Government, and guess where the money's going? It's not staying in the Hunter, with the Hunter Water customers who paid for the building. It'll be going to Sydney, to fund one of the Government big infrastructure promises.

The assets generate income which pays for our hospitals and schools. By selling them off for a quick buck, the Government is creating a huge problem for our future.

CONGRATS PELAW MAIN PUBLIC

Pelaw Main Public School has had great success in Hunter Water's 'Water Catchers' competition. Primary Schools around the Hunter region were given the opportunity to submit a script and storyboard for a short film about how waters gets into our taps. They were encouraged to be creative with the idea to get people thinking.

Pelaw Main did a tremendous job, and were picked as one of nine finalists from over forty entrants. That meant that they got to actually make their movie, with the help of a professional film crew! Few things are as important as conserving water, so the Pelaw Main team should be very proud of themselves for getting the message out. You can see the budding young film stars in action for yourself at www.thewatercatchers.com.au



A QUICK NOTE ON REDISTRIBUTIONS



You may have heard a bit of talk lately about a redistribution of Federal Electorates, meaning that some people (particularly in the Kurri Kurri and West Wallsend areas) may be in a different Federal seat at the next election.

That process is being sorted out by the Australian Electoral Commission at the moment. The good news is that it's only the Federal Government that is impacted, so if you're receiving this newsletter you'll be in the Cessnock State Electorate for the foreseeable future.