

CLAYTON BARR'S State News

Winter 2019



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

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Accountability and transparency



As we head into another four years of a Liberal-National Government it is important to hold them to account and make sure all of their dealings are transparent and in the public interest.

Accountability and transparency are key to a healthy democracy. When the government spends taxpayer money, as a community we are entitled to know where and why the money is being spent.

As your elected representative I will work to hold the Government to account and ensure they stay true to the people of NSW.

The Berejiklian Government has still not explained why in the 2018-19 Budget they directed each of their agencies to reduce spending on essential public services including schools, police, hospitals, roads by 3 per cent. Nor have they explained why they are spending this same money, cut from our essential services, on stadiums that do not have a business case that stacks up.

While our police and ambulance services are desperately underfunded, the Government are spending money upgrading Sydney stadiums that are only full one to two times each year.

Taxpayers are entitled to know where their money is spent and why their taxes are not being spent on essential services that affect us everyday, not just Grand Final day.

New drink driving laws

First time low range drink driving offenders will automatically receive an immediate three month licence suspension and a \$561 fine under changes that came into effect in May.

These changes have also been extended to those drivers caught with an illegal drug in their system.

With limited public transport options across our region, it is not worth the risk choosing to drive with alcohol and drugs in your system.

In 2018 alcohol related crashes claimed the lives of at least 68 people on roads in NSW, which includes 55 lives lost on country roads.

Alcohol related crashes account for nearly one in five road deaths.

Fatalities from crashes involving a drug driver accounted for a similar number of deaths.



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Newcastle Port and secret dealings

For some time now, the Hunter community have been demanding answers from the Berejiklian Government about the 98-year lease of Newcastle Port. However, they are using 'commercial in confidence' excuses and legal action to stop the release of documents that should be public and would reveal the true extent of the deal and conditions attached to it.



The documents form part of the Federal Court action the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has taken against NSW Ports over its part in an agreement that prevents Newcastle from developing a container terminal.

The ACCC is alleging that the agreement between the Liberal-National Government and NSW Ports preventing the development of a container terminal is anti-competitive and illegal.

What has been kept secret from the people of Newcastle and the Hunter is that the lease of Newcastle Port included restrictions on Newcastle that advantaged Port Kembla and Port Botany.

It is time the Berejiklian Government explained to the community the reasoning behind the decision to enter a deal that has put a brake on the economic development of the Hunter.

Building for billionaires - then renting from them!

There are many concerns in our community about the sale and privatisation of assets previously owned by the public across NSW.

The Berejiklian Government have recently signed a \$1.35 billion dollar tenancy agreement with billionaire developer Lang Walker. This is the second major agreement the government has made with the Walker Corporation.

This building will cost \$1.7 billion to build with government's 22 year lease of \$1.35 billion to occupy only 1/3 of the building. The developer can then sell the rest of the building for a large profit. Deals like this put billionaire developers before our community.

Another example is their decision to sell the Parramatta Justice precinct to a private company for \$170 million, before signing a lease with the same company worth \$198 million over 15 years to lease the courts and justice offices back.

The government are continuing to sell off state owned buildings only to then pay rent to billionaire property developers.

Many of these property sales are deemed 'commercial in confidence' which means the public are unaware they are happening until the deal has been done.

This just seems like obvious economic madness!



The fight continues for a new entrance

The upgrades and expansion of Cessnock Correctional Centre has caused much concern for our community. One of the most contentious issues has been the location of the access point to the site. Despite months of campaigning including 659 representations sent from my office in favour of moving the entrance to state owned land away from Lindsay and Mavis Streets, the Berejiklian Government have still not made a decision, which has left residents surrounding the current entrance in limbo.



Following the recent election, the Hon Anthony Roberts MP has been appointed as the new Minister for Corrections. Over the last two months I have met with the new Minister to convey the concerns of the local community.

I have also received and reviewed under the Government Information (Public Access) Act (GIPA), the BECA commissioned report on Cessnock Correctional Complex Access Road Option Analysis which has been prepared for the Department of Justice.

This report contained many discrepancies which I have put to the new Minister. The Correctional Centre expanded to twice the size and with the recent opening of a new 330-bed maximum security facility the current entry/exit in residential streets is desperately inadequate. This is not fair to ratepayers, the community and the officers who work there.

I will continue to liaise with the new Minister and Corrective Services NSW to investigate the benefits of using state funded roads as an access point to the site.

Apply for a Seniors Card

Are you aged 60 or older and working less than 20 hours of paid employment a week and a resident of NSW?

If yes, then the Seniors Card may be for you! With this card, you will be eligible for discounts at many businesses. To apply, visit www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au or phone 13 77 88.

Our Local Woman of the Year

Mulbring local Bianca Judd was named the Cessnock Electorate's Woman of the Year at the NSW Woman of the Year awards in March. The awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution made by women across NSW to industry, communities and society.

Bianca was recognised for her outstanding achievements through community appeals, projects and community work.

With the help of her husband Mick and their 4 children, Bianca established The Little Juddies which co-ordinates, collects and delivers goods and gifts for those in need.

Bianca goes above and beyond to help people from many walks of life including farmers, domestic violence victims, the homeless, disaster relief and children's charity Variety.

Last December Bianca and The Little Juddies partnered with Drought Angels to bring Christmas to farmers doing it tough. The appeal generated 14 tonnes of Christmas presents that were distributed to 12 families who had been left emotionally and financially devastated by the drought. Additional gifts were donated to the "Doing It For Our Farmers" warehouse at Tamworth where the goods were distributed with dignity to those in need.

It is the hard work of community heroes like Bianca that serves as an inspiration to everyone across our community.

For more information on the NSW Women of the Year awards visit www.women.nsw.gov.au



My Community Project

My Community Project is all about local ideas, local projects and local decisions. The program will fund projects in each NSW Electorate to help improve the wellbeing of the people and communities. Applications are now closed, but you can vote for your favourite project from July 15 2019.

Voting is opened between 15 July and 15 August for local residents to vote on projects in the Cessnock Electorate.

Each Electorate had the opportunity to seek between \$20,000 and \$200,000 in funding for their projects.

To vote the system requires you to have a MyServiceNSW Account. Call 13 77 88 or visit a Service NSW centre to sign up for an account. You need your Medicare card to verify your name and age and a NSW residential address.

You then need to select between three to five projects in your Electorate and arrange in order of your own preference. Each person can only vote once.

The most popular project will be funded first, followed by the second most popular and so on until no more projects can be fully funded.

Results will be published on the My Community Project website in September 2019.



Kurri Kurri Ambulance Station



After 16 months of delays, repairs at the Kurri Kurri Ambulance Station have started. It was damaged during the freak weather event that impacted the community in November 2017.

The start of repairs is an example of persistence paying off, with multiple representations to the Minister for Health.

The works on the station will bring it up to modern standards and enable paramedics to continue to provide outstanding service to the Kurri Kurri and surrounding communities.

Once the renovations are completed ambulances will return from their temporary facilities at Kurri Kurri Hospital.

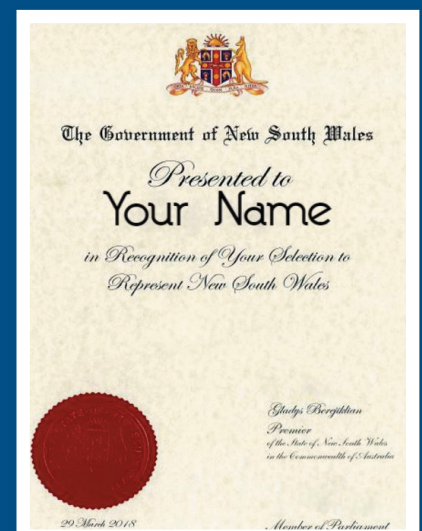
State Representative Award

Across the Electorate of Cessnock there are many talented people who have represented the state in a variety of fields. The NSW State Government Representative Award recognises these amazing individuals.

If you have represented NSW in a competitive field including sport, music, the arts or academic you may be eligible to nominate for the award.

Nominees can be of any age and applications must be lodged within two years of the competition they participated in. All nominations need to be submitted to my office for endorsement then will be sent onto the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

For further information please contact my office by phoning 4991 1466.



Hunter Water home checks

Hunter Water runs a program which enables residents that are eligible for Hunter Water's Account Assistance Program and/or have excessive water usage to have a water audit.

This program aims to reduce water use and the extra costs associated, by providing eligible customers with a free water audit on their property.

To be eligible for the program customers:

- Must be residential owner occupied
- Have a pattern of high water usage
- Have conducted an initial water leak test
- Have an assessment of affordability for essential plumbing works by Hunter Water's Account Assistance Team

Based on the results of the water audit, a licenced plumber may need to carry out some essential work at the property including providing water conservative products, replacing washers on leaking taps, installing a 3 star rated shower head and other measures.

Residents can access this service by calling Hunter Water on 4979 9835.



Sugarvalley is helping those in need



Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre at West Wallsend has a number of programs designed to help local residents. I recently had the pleasure of attending the Centre's Community Information day where I manned the Barbeque and was able to talk to the community members that came along. The day also gave me a greater appreciation of the work undertaken by the centre in the West Wallsend community.

It was great to see so many government and help agencies at the day, including Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW, Hunter Water, AGL, Revenue NSW, Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service, NSW Fair Trading, Legal Aid and more.

The day was a huge success. Congratulations to Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre for organising and co-ordinating such a great program.

For further programs contact Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre on 4953 1667 or sugarvalleync.org.au

Inspiring others



Ray Robinson of Weston was recognised at Parliament House for over half-a-century of service as a Justice of the Peace.

Justices of the Peace play a crucial role in our community. They are volunteers from all sections of the community.

For more than 50 years Ray has volunteered his time to helping people of our area at key moments in their life, such as when they apply for a passport or purchase a new home.

I was honoured to join with the Attorney General to thank and congratulate Ray on this amazing achievement.

His service to our community deserves our recognition and admiration.

Declaration to protect West Wallsend Butterfly Cave

In February, the then Federal Minister for the Environment the Hon Melissa Price MP, issued a declaration to protect the Butterfly Cave at West Wallsend under the *ATSI Heritage Protection Act*.

For over 50,000 years, local Aboriginal women have used the Butterfly Cave as a sacred place.

It was feared the development would threaten the private nature of traditional cultural practices that are carried out in and around the cave.

This outcome is welcomed after many meetings with the Awabakal Land Council, Ministers, Lake Macquarie City Council and community groups.

It is now up to the developer to work within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act.



Hotel to Heritage Hub and community space



The Commercial Hotel at Branxton has been given a new lease on life as a community hub. The former hotel has been lovingly restored to be used as a place for the community to learn and grow.

Branxton couple, David and Kim Barnes have revived the hotel which will now operate as a heritage business hub including an art gallery, museum, accommodation, cafe and community space.

The renovations were made possible with a \$97,740 *Heritage Near Me Activation* grant from the NSW Department of Heritage and Environment.

The funding has enabled the adaptive reuse, upgrade and repair of the Commercial Hotel with multiple spaces available for use. It is great to see a historic local building brought back to public use.

This is a wonderful initiative for the community and will provide a space for a diverse range of people. In April the newly renovated space held an open day, with a fantastic turn out, where locals were able to see all the hard work that had been put in to restoring the hotel.

Congratulations to all involved in the refurbishment of the hotel to make this into a wonderful venue.

JP services available at Edgeworth

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.

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

The community JP desk at Edgeworth will be available on the following dates.

Thursday

- 4 July 2019
- 1 August 2019
- 5 September 2019
- 3 October 2019
- 7 November 2019
- 5 December 2019

Saturday

- 20 July 2019
- 17 August 2019
- 21 September 2019
- 19 October 2019
- 16 November 2019
- 21 December 2019

\$50,000 in local sport funding

Nine local sporting groups from across the Cessnock Electorate received funding under the 2018-19 Local Sport Grant Program. The Program aims to encourage and increase regular and on-going participation in sport. This funding will allow for the improvement of facilities and help with the cost of participating in local sporting groups. Congratulations to the successful recipients.

SUCCESSFUL RECIPIENTS:

- **Abermain Rams Football Club** secured **\$2,872** for the purchase of playing shirts and equipment.
- **Abermain Weston Hawks RLFC** secured **\$5,000** for subsidised registration fees for players.
- **Cessnock Amateur Swimming Club** secured **\$1,000** for the provision of an intensified swim program for participants.
- **Cessnock Amateur Swimming Club** secured **\$2,000** for subsidised uniform and equipment costs.
- **Greta Workers Sports and Recreation Club** secured **\$20,000** to enable the installation of an automatic irrigation system for the bowling green.
- **Kurri Kurri Junior Motorcycle Club** secured **\$5,000** for the purchase of a tractor to maintain their track.
- **Kurri Kurri Netball Association** secured **\$5,000** to enable the purchase of heavy duty marquees for weather protection at games and carnivals.
- **Kurri Kurri Tennis Club** received **\$7,128** to upgrade the floodlighting for four tennis courts.
- **West Wallsend Soccer Club** received **\$2,000** for the provision of FFA C licence course for coaches.



Celebrating our local volunteers

Volunteers are indispensable within the community. I had the pleasure to recognise four outstanding local volunteers in the 2018 Premiers Volunteer Recognition program. These awards are a celebration of the hard working people who have made a proactive and selfless contribution to our community over a significant period of time.

I presented the following recipients with their certificates during a morning tea held for their community service:

- **Les Goldie** - 40 years of volunteering experience
- **Dale Goldie** - volunteering effort in the community
- **Ray Fallon** - volunteering effort by the newly retired in the community
- **Jane Goldie** - 25 years of volunteering experience

The contribution these individuals have made to the local community is outstanding. Each of them deserve to be recognised and celebrated.



Winter 2019 Barr-beques

Over the last eight years, I have hosted over 100 Barr-beques across the Cessnock Electorate. Unfortunately, due to the daylight restrictions and parliament sitting, I have only been able to secure a handful of dates over the Winter period for my Barr-beques. If you do miss out, you can be assured I will be back over summer with more dates.

Tuesday, 16 July 2019
WOLLOMBI

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

Friday, 19 July 2019
CAMERON PARK

Where: Pasterfield Sports Complex, Horizon Avenue
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Tuesday, 23 July 2019
GRETA

Where: Vicinity of the Greta Rural Fire Service carpark,
Nelson Street
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Friday 26 JULY 2019
BROKE

Where: Reserve next to the Broke Rural Fire Service station
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Tuesday, 13 August 2019
KURRI KURRI

Where: Vicinity of Margaret Johns Park, corner Northcote and Boundary Streets
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

Friday, 16 August 2019
BELLBIRD

Where: Vicinity of Bellbird Miners Memorial Park, corner Wollombi Road and Kendall Street
Time: 11:30am-1:00pm

NSW flags



In May I visited Bellbird Preschool to deliver a NSW State Flag. It was great to hear about how the children love to raise their flags every morning.

NSW State Flags are issued free of charge to eligible organisations and community groups.

Organisations who qualify for and require a State flag can send a request to my office by emailing cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Community Building Partnership



Community groups and organisations are the life blood of the Cessnock Electorate. Last year I was fortunate to present Cessnock Country Women's Association with a Community Building Partnership grant of \$22,300 to refurbish their kitchen and install air conditioning.

The kitchen renovations are now complete and it gave me great pleasure to see the improvements. This will no doubt help the CWA with their future events and fundraising.

The CWA were recently able to use the new kitchen to provide morning and afternoon tea at The Stomp Festival with proceeds to the Buy a Bale Drought Relief Fund.

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, health 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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