WEEKLY COLUMN

Friday, 15 January 2016

Kurrajong re-enactment celebrations

It was a privilege to attend the Inverell Kurrajongs Commemorative march and service this week and then participate in the re-enactment of the 1921 presentation of the NSW Governor's Shield to Inverell, in recognition of its contribution to the war effort recruitment in 1916. It was a perfect way to complete four days of fitting tributes to the bravery of the Kurrajongs. Huge congratulations to Kim Bloomfield, Ann Hodgens and the entire re-enactment committee on a brilliant job! The events were a fitting tribute and a fulfillment of our promise of never forgetting them. Lest We Forget.

Armidale fuel prices a disgrace

Armidale motorists continue to be ripped off at the fuel bowser and there's no rational explanation as to why unleaded and diesel prices are constantly by far the most expensive in the New England North West and some of the highest in all of NSW every week over the last 12 months.

It's a disgrace and the price gougers have to be stopped! Help by making a consumer complaint to the ACCC so that the Armidale fuel retailers can be brought to task: www.accc.gov.au/…/contact-t…/consumer-complaint-form

CCTV security boost for Armidale and Moree train stations

This week I announced major safety and security upgrades for Armidale and Moree Railway Stations, as part of a NSW country-wide program being rolled out by the State Government. The two towns will share in a $2 million security upgrade, which will see 200 high definition motion-sensitive CCTV cameras installed at 22 stations and coach stops across country NSW.

In addition to the security cameras, new Customer Help Points will be installed at both stations. When pressed, the Help Point connects customers to a 24/7 emergency support centre where real-time assistance will be provided. I'm delighted the stations will receive these security upgrades, they will serve as a deterrent to anyone thinking of committing acts of anti-social or criminal behaviour and if they do, they will be caught on camera and found out.

Emmaville community hall funding

I enjoyed another visit to Emmaville on Thursday, this time to announce more than $28,000 in state government funding for the War Memorial Hall Committee to repair the ageing and dangerous hall roof. The interior is in great condition, but the roof needs to be replaced which will also allow people to drink the hall's tank water again. The Hall Committee has been working hard to secure funding for quite some time and thoroughly deserve this financial support. Emmaville is another one of those strong rural communities and typically, always put on a very good spread.

Accreditation for early childhood teachers

This week I welcomed an announcement by the State Government that early childhood teachers will be accredited alongside their peers in NSW schools.

This move further recognises early childhood teachers as professionals who were making an important contribution to the education of our children. It ensures that from this year all NSW teachers will meet the same high standards.

The government is recognising that early childhood teachers are professionals – they are university trained, passionate about children and dedicated to educational development. To be eligible for accreditation, an early childhood teacher will need to provide evidence of approved qualifications, two forms of identification and a current Working with Children Check clearance.

Inverell Basketball stadium floor get its bounce back

While in Inverell this week I inspected the new floor which has been installed in the pavilion/basketball stadium at the showgrounds. The basketball association received a grant of **$157,546** last year and it's now ready for use just in time for the Inverell Show and basketball season. The new floor certainly has the 'wow' factor. It looks great and feels like a brand new facility; it will be well received by all user groups and possibly lead to a renewed interest in basketball in Inverell.

Funding to upgrade Armidale sports grounds

The Armidale District Cricket Association has received a **$10,000** grant through the State Government's Community Building Partnership fund to refurbish the amenities block at the Armidale Sports Ground. This is terrific news for the Armidale's cricketing fraternity; the sports grounds are a well-used and maintained and the work will see new floor coverings, painting and electrical works completed in the change rooms, toilets and official's room. It will certainly make a difference and will be welcomed by players and visitors to the grounds.

Glen Innes community recycling centre opened

I was pleased to join Glen Innes Severn Mayor Col Price this week to officially open the new Glen Innes community recycling centre. The construction of the facility followed a grant of **$238,300** from the State Government last year to council through the NSW Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) *Waste Less, Recycle More* initiative.

The new facility, which is now accepting paints, oils, batteries, gas bottles, polystyrene and other household problem wastes, will bring long-term environmental and health benefits to the Glen Innes community. With residents now having a new service to keep household problem waste out of kerbside bins, the community will be able to reduce the amount of environmentally hazardous and recyclable materials that end up as landfill.

Today and the weekend

I meet up today with the lads from Armidale's Barbarians Rugby Club who are doing a great job installing a new $50,000 in-ground irrigation system for their home ground, Alcatraz. The irrigation system was made possible by a grant of $25,000 from the state government and will mean an end to players having to continually move pipes over the ground. I also travelled to Uralla to make a two funding announcements for the Men's Shed and the Showground Trust.

Tomorrow I'll be attending the Deepwater Races. It's always a great day and I'll also be officially opening the Jockey Club's upgraded amenities block which hasn't been functional for about five years and now has facilities for people in wheelchairs.

On Sunday I'll be spending some time in Guyra at the Lamb and Potato Festival.

ADAM MARSHALL
Member for Northern Tablelands