

Talking Tablelands

with Adam Marshall MP

your Member for Northern Tablelands

Parliamentary Secretary for Northern NSW and Renewable Energy



2017

a look ahead

THE Northern Tablelands had a very productive 2017 – and even just a few months in, this year is looking to rival it. In the last few weeks we've seen several major developments forge ahead after years in the planning phase. The Solar Farm, White Rock windfarm, Armidale Hospital and Inverell Sporting grounds have all hit major milestones, with the last three also to be completed this year. It's immensely satisfying to see the results of work from councils, workers, campaigners and I finally come to fruition.

With the earthmovers and builders hard at work, I'm fighting for the next round of major infrastructure projects that will define 2017 for the Tablelands. This year, hospitals will be a major focus: Inverell Hospital has a new staffing arrangement as of April 1, and I will ensure the \$30 million redevelopment happens quickly and to community expectations.

The \$60 million new Armidale Hospital will be fully constructed by the end of the year, with the grand opening early next year. Glen Innes Hospital also badly needs an upgrade, and I'll ensure it receives the \$500,000 promised.

Water security is also seeing some strong moves forward. Construction will begin soon on a pipeline for Boggabilla and Toomelah, which promises to improve the taste and reliability of both towns' water supplies. In some instances – water has needed to be carted in, which is not an enviable position for council or its ratepayers.

With that underway, I'm also exploring options for Guyra's water – their council for years has planned to upgrade existing infrastructure, but hasn't been able to meet the capital cost. I believe with state government help, we may see some movement soon.

We've had a couple of early political wins in the region. Paramedics will get a far fairer death and disability entitlement than they were being offered – which could have been substantially less than other first responders. Also, drivers across the state will get a better deal on their CTP, following action against insurer super profits.

My campaigns on those issues, like all others I pursue, happen for the good of those in my electorate. If there's something I can do – please do write to me – as every day, I'm your voice in parliament.

Don't forget to stay in touch, and together we can help the Northern Tablelands grow and prosper in 2017.

Inverell Hospital moves forward at breakneck speed



I've updated Inverell Shire Council on the development, as well as detailed plans, and they're just as impressed as I am. The \$30 million hospital will be a great asset for Inverell.

I'M glad to report that Inverell Hospital's redevelopment is progressing quickly – with the business case recently submitted to the NSW Government for consideration. They're going over the costs and calculations, to make sure the community gets the best deal possible.

The development received \$1 million in this year's budget for planning purposes, and I will pressure Hunter New England Health and Health Infrastructure to ensure this project is ready for funding at the next budget.

The proposal itself is incredibly extensive for \$30 million – it includes; a new emergency department with facilities for children, and patients with mental health or drug issues; a new inpatient unit; medical imaging with room for expansion; an operating theatre with state of the art hygiene; day surgery; renal dialysis, with increased capacity; a main entry; and mortuary.

When the NSW Treasury has signed off on the

business case, we'll be able to share the details with all members of the Inverell community. I will hold a public information session with Hunter New England Health – to keep the community briefed, and allow the opportunity to ask questions of infrastructure experts.

The Inverell community has been campaigning relentlessly for this development for over a decade, and it's good to finally see progress. This project is my number one priority across the electorate – and I will make sure the town gets the hospital it deserves.

There's some more good news – from April 1, Inverell Hospital will have more staff thanks to a new, external staffing arrangement. Two doctors will be rostered on at all times, and even during breaks will be rapidly able to respond to patient needs. This new deal will prevent doctor shortages in future, and mean that the hospital's GP clinic will be manned 7 days a week for the first time.

Adam Marshall MP

Armidale office: Suite 1, 175 Rusden Street, Armidale NSW 2350 Phone: 02 6772 5552 Fax: 02 6772 5026

Moree office: Suites 2-6, 161 Balo Street, Moree NSW 2400 Phone: 02 6752 5002 Fax: 02 6752 6102

Mail: PO Box 77, Armidale NSW 2350 Email: northerntablelands@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Web: www.adammarshall.com.au



@a_j_marshall



adammarshallmp



adammarshallmp

Windfarm turbine construction surges ahead



Glen Innes Mayor Steve Toms was equally impressed with the rapid development.

LAST month I inspected the first turbine to go up at the Glen Innes Windfarm – and the construction only seems to have picked up from there. Now there are seven of the 90 metre tall generators standing on the hillside, meaning the project has seen 10% of its turbines built in just one month.

Up to 280 people are working on the project on any given day, using earthmovers, crushers and cranes to get the mountaintop ready for the 90 metre high pylons. Currently there are another 7 pads ready to build upon.

This is an enormous project not just in terms of scale, but its impact on the local community. Glen Innes is going gangbusters with property prices surging, rental properties largely booked out and strong investment in local businesses.

Equipping our firefighters

RURAL firefighters in some of the region's smaller towns are now better outfitted to fight fires and attend to crashes, with new vehicles and buildings worth over three quarters of a million dollars. Early this month Elsmore Rural Fire Brigade officially opened a new, larger station, capable of holding two vehicles with new amenities for all workers.

Yetman, Glen Elgin and Inverell also got upgraded vehicles – replacing tankers that were, in one

instance, over 20 years old. These vehicles will reduce maintenance costs for the brigades and service, as well as improving reliability even in the toughest conditions.

Our RFS volunteers continually display the highest levels of professionalism, in dealing with bushfires, hazard reduction burns and accidents on our many highways. This gear will help them look after us for years to come!



The newly acquired truck is 22 years newer than their old tanker.

A new year, an exciting new responsibility

I FEEL both honoured and privileged to be appointed to the Berejiklian-Barilaro (try saying that quickly) Cabinet to serve as Tourism and Major Events Minister and Assistant Minister for Skills. It's been quite a journey for this lad from the land at Curlewis, near Gunnedah, and I'm looking forward to the challenges and the opportunities ahead.

Of course it would not be possible for me to be given this opportunity without your support - the people of the Northern Tablelands, as your representative in the NSW Parliament, and I want to reiterate my commitment to serving all of my constituents and

advocating for their needs first and foremost.

Tourism is a \$37.1 billion a year industry, employing close to 297,000 people in NSW. Sydney is recognised the world over as a mecca for international visitors, along with our beautiful coastal areas. I am really looking forward to helping open up rural and regional NSW to more international and domestic tourists and building the capacity for our regions to attract and host more major events and grow the events we hold now.

I've already announced a \$300 million fund to develop regional tourism, a third of which is available now. I believe this will help regional Australia and our

patch to grow. Events like the Glen Innes Celtic Festival and Opera in the Paddock complement our region's natural beauty, and I know we can make the most of the opportunity.

In the skills role, I want to work closely with the Deputy Premier to ensure the government and TAFE works with industry to overcome the biggest challenge of not having enough skilled people to fill the jobs being created. This is a critical portfolio for the continued economic growth of the state and country NSW.

Moree's grain back on track

MOREE'S intermodal freight link is now hard at work, cutting down freight costs for growers and reducing the number of trucks on the road. Each train replaces 56 B-double trucks that would usually be heading to Brisbane, and are so large that it takes six hours to fill, working non-stop.

The NSW government contributed \$1.6 million of the project as part of its Fixing Country Rail pilot program, and construction has run \$400,000 under budget. Every year, it will shift 250,000 tonnes of grain and 6,400 cargo boxes of cotton and pulses down to

Newcastle – saving producers some \$40,000 in freight each trip.

I farewelled the first train at the start of this month - it carried some 2,200 tonnes of crop destined for other shores. That reach will mean growers now have a much larger market, for up to 40% less in freight costs. Additionally, it will cut 6,500 truck movements from local roads and the Newell Highway, improving safety and cutting maintenance for Moree Plains Shire Council.



These trains will benefit growers, consumers and road users.

Armidale Regional Airport Upgrades



The upgraded airport will cater to the growing demand for flights into Armidale.

CONSTRUCTION of the expanded Armidale Regional Airport has taken off – with crews working hard since early February. The \$11 million upgrades include a new café and retail area, a new baggage carousel and more passenger seating.

These upgrades are essential to allow larger planes into Armidale, and support growing visitor numbers. Last year we saw a new airline make its way into town – and as businesses make a leap of faith, it's important the state government does the same. The earthworks and pipeworks are complete, with the first slab pour completed at the beginning of March. Progress is moving ahead as scheduled – with the entire western extension due to be ready by mid-May.

Turning the clock back on Daylight Saving

IN MARCH my colleagues and I took significant action on daylight saving – a bill was tabled to end the period a month earlier, and I brought a petition of 6,000 signatures to Parliament. This petition is the result of tireless campaigning, and thousands of people across regional New South Wales making a stand.

Geoff Provest MP's bill is now awaiting discussion before parliament – I will be arguing a strong case for it to be adopted, inspired by the many letters and calls I've received from constituents.

If this bill is successful, Daylight Saving will end on the first Sunday of March, instead of the first Sunday of April. We view this as a fair compromise between the wishes of city dwellers, and the needs of regional Australians.

A win for cheaper insurance

MOTORISTS across country NSW will save money and get better returns on their CTP Green Slip Premiums after I took local drivers concerns straight into parliament.

Premiums had risen 85% over the last decade to become the most expensive in Australia – yet insurance companies were returning less than half in payouts. In response, the NSW Government has introduced a bill that will make it easier to claim from insurers, while also cutting down on potential for fraud.

A 25 year old private motorist in Armidale will save \$41 annually under the new scheme, while a Moree taxi driver would save a whopping \$1,757, for a saving of around 40%. If passed, the changes will come into effect in December this year.

Congratulations

Education

ARMIDALE apprentice hairdresser and shop boss Louise Wall has won a \$15,000 scholarship to boost her training and development. Louise is planning on using the training to branch out her successful business to cater to general beauty needs.



JULIE Gittoes is the principal of Bald Blair Public School, and runs after school care to give kids an additional chance to learn. She's also the Secretary for the Guyra Lamb and Potato Festival, and has trained thousands of volunteers over decades.



MARY Gaston is a 'Hidden Treasure' thanks to her work with the Yetman Public School teaching decades of scripture, sewing and reading lessons. She took a well deserved break a few years ago – but has heard the call, and started teaching kids again.

Humanity awards

ARMIDALE'S Ruth Blanch has won the Premier's Volunteer Award, for her work with the NSW Country Women's Association, Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, church groups and the region's Special Olympics club. She's invaluable to all of those groups – and the award is a well-deserved honour.



Agriculture

WELL done to Emma Doyle, one of just four finalists in the state's RIRDC Rural Women's Award. Emma is pioneering a pilot program to mentor young women in agriculture, to increase retention of young people and close the gender gap in the industry. I wish her the best of luck with the finals in April.



CONGRATULATIONS go to Julie Gittoes and Mary Gaston, two of the region's inclusions in the 2016 'Hidden Treasure' honour roll. The DPI initiative thanks women who are instrumental to community development in their local towns.

Working for the Northern Tablelands

Arts and Culture



- ✓ **\$5,000** to provide an international food and a musical act for **Glen Innes Harmony Day**
- ✓ **\$100,000** to restore Inverell's old Byron St Premier Farmhouse building
- ✓ **\$2,950** to **New England Writers Centre** for the Deadly Secrets crime weekend writing workshop
- ✓ **\$3000** to **New England Bach Festival** for the one day community arts festival ARTivate in Armidale
- ✓ **\$1,600** to **2 Rivers** to help fund Crafternoon Tea to highlight crafts in Ashford
- ✓ **\$3,000** to **Mehi Gallery and Studio** to assist in producing the Colour Me Kamilaroi picture book
- ✓ **\$39,868** to fund a Poetry Slam for **Moree Community Library**, helping local artists present their work
- ✓ **\$150** to help a **Mungindi student** purchase University textbooks

Schools and Kids

- ✓ **\$318,000** for upgrades to amenities, ramps and the construction of a drop-off zone at **Uralla Central School**



- ✓ **\$30,000** to help extend the **Glen Innes Pool House** before and after school building, allowing for more students and room for activities



- ✓ **\$248,000** to build a drop-off zone and accessible bathrooms at **Yetman Public School**
- ✓ **\$107,000** for **Inverell Public School** to construct accessible toilet facilities
- ✓ **\$30,000** for **Glen Innes Public** for repainting works

- ✓ **\$30,000** at **Ross Hill Public** to build a new covered outdoor learning area



- ✓ **\$153,000** at **Macintyre High School** to build new accessible toilets and upgrade storage facilities
- ✓ **\$4,000** to repaint exterior walls at the **Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre**

Community Building Partnerships

- ✓ **\$30,000** to construct "Mehi Beach" at the Moree Water Park, which aims to be an iconic aquatic facility for inland NSW
- ✓ **\$15,000** to upgrade male and female toilet facilities at **Moree PCYC**, boosting hygiene and functionality
- ✓ **\$19,000** for the **Inverell Lapidary Club** to double its showroom and workshop areas



- ✓ **\$30,000** to enclose the courtyard at **Inverell HACC**, providing a safer and more comfortable outside area for elderly residents



- ✓ **\$26,000** to buy a new mower for the **Bingara Sporting Club**



- ✓ **\$14,783** to purchase grand stands for the **Macintyre Warriors Rugby League Club**

- ✓ **\$8,900** to buy a new greens mower for the **Glen Innes Bowling Club**



- ✓ **\$15,000** for the **Inverell Mower Sports Club** to start the nation's first mower racing club
- ✓ **\$2,500** to buy a first aid kit and defibrillator for the **Inverell Little Athletics Centre**
- ✓ **\$31,711** to upgrade the **Moree Aged & Disability Services** verandah to serve as a respite room
- ✓ **\$33,000** to upgrade the change rooms and toilets at **Armidale PCYC**
- ✓ **\$17,748** to seal the entrance, pathways and courtyard for the **Glen Initiative Garden**



- ✓ **\$15,343** to upgrade **Yetman Hall**, from painting to sanding and polishing the floor
- ✓ **\$19,462** to provide additional shelters for **Glen Innes Swimming Club** patrons at the pool

Strengthening our communities

- ✓ **\$3,970** for the **Armidale and District Historical Society** to publish an index of their journals
- ✓ **\$50,000** to upgrade the training room at the **Armidale City Gymnastics Club**
- ✓ **\$17,422** to provide the **Armidale Dumaresq State Emergency Services** with a new vehicle storage facility
- ✓ **\$10,000** to fund a local **Armidale Learner Driver Mentor Program** through Jobs Australia
- ✓ **\$9,000** to the **Armidale Men's Shed** to purchase a dust extractor, to help improve safety and hygiene
- ✓ **\$15,000** to build an outdoor learning area for **Armidale Montessori Playschool**
- ✓ **\$15,234** for airconditioning units at **Armidale PCYC**
- ✓ **\$50,000** to support upgrades to the building housing **Armidale University of the Third Age**
- ✓ **\$44,000** to upgrade walls and windows at **Wongwibinda Hall**
- ✓ **\$200,000** to add all-weather facilities at the **Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre**
- ✓ **\$22.5 million** to study red meat genetics at the **University of New England** for better productivity

Finishing Armidale Hospital



Construction is progressing quickly, and hasn't been held up by rain.

AFTER years of planning, the final concrete pour for Armidale Hospital has been completed – and now works begin on the high-tech facility, adding comforts and utilities to ensure quality healthcare.

The recently complete top floor will house the Central Sterilising Supply Department, a vital area that will ensure the highest standards of hygiene will be maintained. Beneath that, utilities and services are starting to go in on the emergency department,

intensive care and perioperative suites.

It's incredible that in just months this huge building has sprung up, seemingly from nowhere. I pass by on most days, but it's when you stand on top that you realise just how quickly it's coming together. The New England-based Richard Crookes Constructions team say they're progressing ahead of schedule, with the grand opening due for early next year.

Ensuring Water Security



Inspecting the Boggabilla end of the pipeline with Moree Plains Shire Council.

IT DOESN'T take an expert to say that water is essential to any town – not just for the comfort of its residents, but also to give it the best chance to grow. This year, I'm working to ensure the successful delivery of over \$15 million worth of water security projects for the townships of Boggabilla, Toomelah, Ashley, Biniguy and Moree; as well as kickstart another project in Guyra.

Coastal Works has won Moree Plains Shire Council's tendering process – so construction should begin shortly on the 14 kilometre, \$4.6 million pipeline. This will end pump failures, and ensure council will

no longer have to truck in water during drier, hotter months.

Additionally, I have been in high-level talks to secure funding for Guyra's water supply. The former council had long considered options; ranging from a pipeline to Malpas Dam, to upgrading the existing dams – but lacked the funds to do so.

I'd like Guyra to be the next town to have the benefits of improved water taste and reliability, and I'm working with council and the NSW Government to discuss options.

Strong progress on the \$1.18 million Inverell Sports Complex

WE'RE seeing the long-awaited Inverell Sports Centre get closer to the finish line. Construction of a new clubhouse with full disabled access is almost complete, with council aiming for a launch in April. New security fencing and upgrades to irrigation across the sporting fields have been wrapped up – and the final additions are now being planned.

Council is now finalising designs and costing for 400 person spectator seating and improved pitch lighting. These final works are due to be completed in September, with community usage taking precedence over construction.

It was a bit over a year ago that I announced the \$930,000 state contribution to the project – and it's remarkable to see how the site has changed. By this time next year, I anticipate Inverell will have some of the best sporting facilities in the state.

Outfitting Inverell Police with the best

I'M PUSHING hard to get Inverell Police Station a sorely needed rebuild. Approaching 60 years old, it's been considering retirement for a while – and is the oldest 24 hour police station in the Northern Tablelands. To compound the issue, with 56 officers, the station has three times the contingent it was intended to house – so the rural crime squad and detectives are working out of the old police residences.

I've met with the Minister for Police, Troy Grant and Inverell Shire Council mayor Paul Harmon to push the issue along. Since surveyors inspected the site last year, NSW Police have been constructing a business case for the upgrade. Considering the age of the station and the value of police in the local community, I believe it will be a perfect candidate for a rebuild.

Armidale's Hydrotherapy pool

HUNTER New England Health have now installed a new ultraviolet filtration system at the Armidale Hydrotherapy pool – in hopes of fixing a long-running water quality issue. I have been assured by the health service that they're working to a speedy resolution – and I hope that by the time the postal service has delivered this to you it will be up and running again.

This is a valuable service for those seeking low-impact exercises in the region, whether it's for rehabilitation, swimming lessons or for the elderly. When works are done, a working group will discuss the long-term future of the pool – as no repairs last forever.

Out and about in the electorate



Armidale National Services Association helping ex-servicemen keep in touch with one another.



Celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Guyra Library opening.



Youth support workers and police working their best to keep young people on track in Inverell.



The Glen Innes Showgirls are enthusiastic to give back to their community.



Yetman Public School spends lunchtime in their new eco-classroom.



Dropping in for a morning tea at the Yetman Memorial Hall.



Deputy Premier John Barilaro inspects drone equipment at AgSkills in Moree.



Bingara District Cricket Association keeps on growing and is proving to be a strong side



I dropped in at Gravesend Public School to see how the students are going.