

Talking Tablelands

with Adam Marshall MP
your Member for Northern Tablelands



Year off to a good start

THE past few months have been incredibly busy and very fruitful in regard to some wonderful funding which has come our region's way for infrastructure upgrades and support for community organisations.

In January I had the pleasure of meeting members from 22 community organisations across the Northern Tablelands successful in gaining \$300,000 through the Community Building Partnership. It's one of the highlights of my role to be able to help facilitate these grants and a pleasure to talk to the people who are so passionate about improving outcomes for their local communities.

I recently took the Roads Minister Duncan Gay on a tour of the region to press the case for some major road works that, if implemented, will give a huge boost to the local economy.

I'm continuing to knock on the Regional Development Minister's door to garner support for the additional \$6.3 million Armidale Dumaresq Council needs to upgrade the regional airport and road links. Armidale is a major tourism, education and trade hub for the Northern Tablelands and this upgrade could potentially improve the economic outcome for a number of industries in the region.

As an unabashed advocate for the renewable energy sector, I've been thrilled with the progress made on projects in this region.

The news that Origin Energy will purchase all the energy produced at the Moree Solar Farm, the start of construction of the White Rock Windfarm at Glen Innes, the multi-million dollar contract Sapphire Wind Farm secured with the ACT Government to provide electricity for 110,000 homes and the continued financial support of the state government for Uralla's Zero Net project – this is just the beginning for the investment and jobs renewables will generate in our region.

The recent decision by the Federal Government to provide \$1 billion for the Clean Energy Innovation Fund (CEIF) as well as the retention of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) and Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) is welcomed. This decision has given greater certainty and security to the burgeoning renewable energy sector and I applaud the Federal Government on this huge financial commitment.

I took the opportunity last month to inspect the start of the long-awaited \$60 million redevelopment of the Armidale Hospital. Demolition work is being carried out at the construction site of the new building at the hospital. It was a red letter day for the community and over the next 18 months of the construction, I will keep the community updated with progress reports.

Adam Marshall MP

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Work underway on \$60 million Armidale Hospital redevelopment

– Main construction on track to start July this year

I WAS delighted to visit the work site at the Armidale Rural Referral Hospital where several buildings have been demolished to make way for a new four-storey structure, as part of the \$60 million redevelopment

It's a wonderful milestone for the Armidale community and one which has been long-anticipated.

The \$60 million redevelopment will deliver a mix of new and refurbished facilities, including the construction of a building which will be directly linked to each floor of the existing three-storey main hospital building.

There will be a new emergency department to receive patients from O'Dell Street, new in-patient ward, four new operating theatres, a

central sterilising supplies department and a new and expanded critical care unit.

Pleasingly, 6,000 of the Armidale blue bricks from the former infectious diseases ward building have been preserved and will be used in the construction of the new building – a wonderful way to blend the old with the new at the redeveloped hospital.

The site preparation work currently underway will be completed by the end of June, to allow the main construction tender to be awarded and work to begin in late July.

Again I thank the community for its tireless support of this project. This point wouldn't have been reached without you all.



Inspecting the construction site at the Armidale Hospital with Acting Operations Manager Wendy Mulligan.

Inverell community applauded



More than two hundred Inverell residents attended the Inverell Hospital redevelopment community information forum in March.

THANK you to those members of the Inverell community who attended the public meeting to discuss the plans for the \$30 million Inverell Hospital redevelopment.

I want to make sure residents are kept up to date and involved in the planning process and it's gratifying to know the community is as equally interested in ensuring the once-in-a-generation redevelopment meets their current and future health needs.

We were able to allow more than half the meeting for the community to have their say and I was impressed by the considered questions, ideas and thoughts that came forward. The planning so far has identified the scope of the redeveloped hospital, which includes:

- ✓ New emergency department with a dedicated mental health facility
- ✓ New combined maternity and paediatrics ward
- ✓ New and expanded renal dialysis unit
- ✓ New inpatient unit and dedicated palliative care beds
- ✓ New operating theatres
- ✓ Inclusion of new imaging diagnostic services
- ✓ New dental clinic, pharmacy, day surgery facility and general infusion
- ✓ New and additional staff accommodation

Water works upgrades



Moree Plains Shire Council's Water Group Manager David Wolfenden, General Manager Lester Rogers, Lands and Water Minister Niall Blair and Deputy Premier Troy Grant pictured at Biniguy which is one of the communities hoping to receive a reticulated water supply soon.

I WELCOMED Deputy Premier Troy Grant and Minister for Primary Industries, Lands and Water Niall Blair to the region in February to consider four local water supply and sewerage system projects that have been shortlisted for more than \$18 million in state government funding.

The Biniguy Water Supply has been one which I have been pushing hard so I am very pleased it has been shortlisted, along with Ashley, Moree and the Bundarra Sewerage System.

Bigger and better plans for Armidale airport

I HAVE been pressing the case with the Regional Development Minister John Barilaro for an additional \$6.3 million to allow Armidale Dumaresq Council to expand and upgrade the existing Armidale airport terminal.

Council wants to double the airport's size with capacity for separate check in facilities, security screening areas for passengers and baggage, meeting rooms and regional air carrier lounge in the future.

In December last year I announced \$1.5 million from the government's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF) for the \$2.2 million expansion of the airside parking apron.

The state government has also committed a third of the cost (\$1 million) for the new roundabout to be constructed on the New England Highway which will provide access to the airport, Saumarez Homestead and the industrial subdivisions on both sides of the highway.



NSW Regional Development Minister John Barilaro.

Upgrade for Moree's operating theatres

WORK began last month on a \$1.75 million refurbishment of the two operating theatres at Moree Hospital.

This will involve major ventilation and air conditioning works, asbestos removal, replacement of boilers, new and replacement equipment and improved storage facilities for the operating suite.

To ensure both elective and emergency surgery will continue uninterrupted while the upgrade work is underway, a Mobile Surgical Unit has been installed at the hospital.

Moree performs around 850 emergency and elective surgical procedures each year which makes it easily the third busiest operating suite in the New England and North West behind Tamworth and Armidale.

I'm delighted to see the operating theatres being brought up to the most modern standards – they'll soon be the best operating theatres anywhere in the state.



Moree Hospital's Clinical Nurse Consultant Sharon Nash outside the Mobile Surgical Unit which will be in use during the \$1.75 million refurbishment of the existing operating theatres.

Highways and byways

MY federal colleague, Member for Parkes Mark Coulton, and I, recently took NSW Roads and Freight Minister Duncan Gay on a short trip around the region to push the case for funding for several road projects in the Moree Plains and Gwydir Shires.

I'm pleased that we were successful in securing \$700,000 for the council to upgrade Tapscott Road and Gosport Street, both at Moree, and Rosedale Road in Ashley to allow B-Triple heavy vehicle access to the saleyards, grain receival sites and cotton gins.

I'm also seeking a commitment for a Newell Highway bypass of Boggabilla, a major project which would resolve longstanding road safety and heavy vehicle freight efficiency issues.

The Gwydir Shire Council also presented the Minister with a \$6 million proposal to construct a heavy vehicle road bypass of Warialda which would address the road freight pinch-point at the intersection of Stephen Street in Warialda and the Gwydir Highway.



RMS Regional Manager Phil Standen, Moree Plains Shire Council General Manager Lester Rogers, Roads Minister Duncan Gay, Mayor Katrina Humphries and Parkes MP Mark Coulton celebrating the \$700,000 roads announcement.

Working for the Northern Tablelands

Community Building Partnerships

- ✓ \$7,372 for the Deepwater Jockey Club to upgrade their amenities block and provide facilities for people with disabilities.
- ✓ \$10,000 for the Armidale District Cricket Association to refurbish the amenities block at the Armidale Sports Ground.
- ✓ \$17,000 for the New England Regional Indoor Sport Complex, (the Den) for repair and replacement of leaking wall louvres.
- ✓ \$28,000 for the Emmaville War Memorial Hall Committee to repair the ageing and dangerous hall roof.



- ✓ \$18,236 for an upgrade to the Armidale Neighbourhood Centre.
- ✓ \$10,000 for the Armidale Learner Driver Mentor Program to assist learner drivers secure their drivers licence.
- ✓ \$4,647 for the Delungra Australian Stock Horse Border Branch to purchase a new public address system for the Delungra Recreation Grounds.
- ✓ \$5,505 for the Delungra Bowling Club to start work on upgrading their kitchen.
- ✓ \$24,500 to build a new amenities block at the BEST Food Garden in Inverell.
- ✓ \$20,000 for the Inverell Pioneer Village to carry out restoration work on the old Goonowigall School.
- ✓ \$6,060 for Yetman Progress Association to build outdoor gym equipment at the Yetman Recreation Ground.
- ✓ \$10,954 for Croppa Creek Bowling Club kitchen upgrade.
- ✓ \$20,500 for the newly-formed Uralla Men's Shed to help with the construction of a purpose-built shed.



- ✓ \$7,300 to convert the Uralla Showground poultry pavilion into a multipurpose venue for the local community to use.
- ✓ \$10,400 for a new kitchen at the Bundarra Racecourse.
- ✓ \$17,985 for the Gwydir Shire Council to upgrade the car park and build a shaded play area, toilet and change room at the Warialda Toy Library.



- ✓ \$10,230 for a new batch of chairs and tables for Warialda's War Memorial Hall.
- ✓ \$18,000 for the Guyra Showground Trust to replace the livestock loading ramp.



- ✓ \$20,000 for the Guyra Shire Council to revamp the town's Aquatic Centre.
- ✓ \$24,000 for refurbishment of Mungindi CHSP office.
- ✓ \$17,042 for Moree PCYC for roof replacement and repairs.

Arts funding

- ✓ \$27,000 for Moree Plains Art Gallery to overhaul their air-conditioning system.
- ✓ \$30,000 for Inverell Art Gallery for air-conditioning and solar electricity.



- ✓ \$60,000 for New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM) for sustainable lighting upgrade.
- ✓ \$3,000 for NERAM Museum of Printing for letterpress workshop.
- ✓ \$1,800 for New England Branch Festival to stage a Baroque Bar performance.
- ✓ \$2,000 for New England Medieval Arts Society for a workshop and performance.
- ✓ \$1,149 for Uralla's McCrossins Mill to purchase industrial shelving to store valuable artefacts.

Funding windfalls

- ✓ \$700,000 to upgrade three local roads in Moree to improve freight links in the district.
- ✓ \$38,872 for a makeover at South Inverell's Waratah Park.
- ✓ \$930,000 from NSW Government's ClubGRANTS program for the upgrade of the Inverell Sports Complex.



- ✓ \$1.75 million for Moree Hospital operating suite upgrade.
- ✓ \$160,000 for Inverell Courthouse technology upgrade.
- ✓ \$6,270 for the Uralla Men's Shed to make some urgent repairs to their shed, the former Uralla Scout Hall.
- ✓ \$50,000 to take Uralla's Zero Net Energy project to next stage.

- ✓ \$200,000 to create a new IT space at the Moree Plains Shire Library.
- ✓ \$5,500 for the Inverell's CWA Branch to help cover the cost of a keynote speaker for their Domestic Violence Professional Development forum in April.
- ✓ \$5,500 for the Boggabilla-based rugby league club, the Macintyre Warriors to purchase a storage container for the club's equipment.



- ✓ \$8,521 to improve fish habitat along the Gwydir River at Gum Flat Reserve at Pallamallawa.
- ✓ \$3,780 for Senior's Week celebrations at Mungindi and Inverell.
- ✓ \$3.66 million for the 32 services at Toomelah, Mungindi, Moree, Bingara, Inverell, Glen Innes, Guyra and Armidale that support vulnerable families.
- ✓ \$160,000 for RFS Airbase tanks at Inverell, Armidale, Moree and Warialda.

Roadworks underway

- ✓ \$1.3 million for New England Highway upgrade 5km south of Armidale.
- ✓ \$7.8 million upgrade of Newell Highway at Nee Nee Creek bridge.
- ✓ \$800,000 for Inverell Shire Council to replace the ageing timber Tin Tot Bridge.



- ✓ \$4 million upgrade of the Newell Highway between Mungle Back Creek and Boggabilla.

New Emergency Services vehicles

- ✓ \$310,000 Mercedes Benz Class 2 fire pumpers for Inverell and Warialda Fire Stations.



Waste Less, Recycle More

- ✓ \$549,780 for the Inverell Shire Councils to complete three projects at Oakwood, Wallangra and Yetman.
- ✓ \$83,200 for the Uralla Shire Council to improve security and install signage at their landfill site.

War Memorials

- ✓ \$9,998 for the cleaning and maintenance of the four marble panels at the Ben Lomond War Memorial Hall.
- ✓ \$4,847 for a night vision security camera to protect the Inverell War Memorial.

New towers eliminate mobile blackspots

WORK got underway in February on three new mobile phone towers at Elsmore (east of Inverell), Hillgrove and Invergowrie.

The NSW Government has committed \$24 million to fix some of the worst mobile phone blackspots across country NSW.

This initiative is a great example of State and Commonwealth Governments working together with the industry to drive a better future for the people of country NSW, which have long missed out on important telecommunications upgrades.

Already we've had the first new tower in NSW installed at Spring Mountain Road, west of Glen Innes, in December last year.

NSW says no to domestic violence

THE NSW government has recently introduced new laws that will ensure domestic violence perpetrators will be made accountable nationwide.

Domestic Violence Orders now issued to protect victims and their families in our region will be automatically recognised and enforced across all State and Territory borders.

This means the NSW Police Force will be able to work more closely with their interstate counterparts to target, monitor and reduce domestic violence offending.

A victim will no longer need to register an interstate order in a NSW court, which can be traumatising for victims and potentially alert a perpetrator to their new location.

NDIS gets ready to roll

A NEW era for people with a disability and their families in Northern Tablelands begins in July.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is on track, on time and on budget in NSW and for people with disability, the NDIS will mean they will have choice and control over their own lives.

I encourage clients, their families and carers in the electorate to start thinking about their goals and aspirations, and what support they will need so that they can live life their way.

Information to support people and providers is available at www.ndis.nsw.gov.au

Push to shorten daylight saving by one month

A PRIVATE Members Bill to end daylight saving a month earlier will be introduced in the State's Upper House this month. If successful, daylight saving will end on the first Sunday in March each year.

The Bill will essentially reverse the extension to daylight saving which was pushed through the parliament without a mandate in 2007.

I've been working on this with my colleagues from country NSW, who are also being lobbied by their communities for this change.

While the issue of daylight saving always provokes a passionate debate – some people love it and some want it gone completely – most people agree that the last month is a pain, it simply drags on for too long.

Congratulations

Local Woman of the Year

I WAS honoured to attend a special surprise morning tea in Glen Innes last month to announce Jan Sharman OAM as the 2016 Northern Tablelands Local Woman of the Year.

Jan is a highly respected and revered local champion, who, at 78 years of age, still has boundless energy and contributes to many local organisations and causes.



Woman of the Year finalist

IN February Glen Innes resident Kelly Foran was named as one of four state finalists for the REX Airlines Regional Woman of the Year Award.

Kelly was chosen from a field of close to 250 nominees across all categories due to the significant contribution she has made in assisting country families access health services through the creation of the charity Friendly Faces, Helping Hands.



Education scholarship

CONGRATULATIONS to Moree early childhood educator Sharlene Morris on being awarded a \$10,000 scholarship to assist with the upgrade of her qualifications to a four-year bachelor's degree.

Sharlene works part-time at the Gwydir Day Care and Preschool and this scholarship will assist her with the cost of upgrading her qualifications.



Clubs & Community Awards, Health Category finalist

THE Armidale City Bowling Club was recognised for its innovative Kids with Cancer Charity Fund, which supports local families struggling with medical and travel costs associated with their child's cancer treatment.

The Armidale Ex Services Club was a finalist for its partnership with Tour de Rocks Riding, part of the Club's fight against cancer. Last year, this fantastic initiative had a special place in the hearts of Services staff who lost a fellow employee to cancer.



Sporting Spirit Award

MOREE'S Little Athletics Club member Melanie Schubert was honoured with the state's Winter Volunteer Sporting Spirit Award, which recognises her outstanding service to the club.

Premier's ANZAC scholarships

CONGRATULATIONS to Warialda High School student Jim Skinner and Guyra Central School student Hunter Davidson who have both won a Premier's ANZAC Memorial Scholarship.

The boys will travel to France in July and visit the official commemoration sites of the Battle of Pozières and the Battle of Fromelles. They will be joined by 24 other Year 10 and 11 scholarship winners from NSW.



Hunter Davidson



Jim Skinner

Renewable energy hub

IN 2013, the state government released the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan and from the perspective of the Northern Tablelands, this plan is definitely working.

To date we have leveraged \$582 million of funding for 104 renewable energy projects across country New South Wales and I am very proud that four of those projects are in this region.

The State's largest solar farm, now up and running at Moree, will generate enough electricity to supply around 15,000 homes each year. Origin Energy has just signed a 15-year agreement with the company to purchase all energy produced.

Near Glen Innes, the construction of Goldwind's White Rock Windfarm has begun and will eventually see 119 turbines built. When finished, it will have the capacity to power 75,000 homes a year and during construction is expected to provide hundreds of jobs locally.

Work is scheduled to begin in October on CWP Renewable's Sapphire Wind Farm, also west of Glen

Innes, which will see the construction of 109 turbines producing clean energy. The company has recently picked up a multi-million dollar contract with the ACT Government to provide electricity to 110,000 homes.

Uralla's Australian-first Zero Net Energy Town (ZNET) initiative continues to progress and I will also be pushing for TransGrid to construct a renewable energy hub near Glen Innes.



Uralla ZNET proponents Jo Fletcher, Peter Low, Uralla Shire Councillor Isabell Strutt, Sandra Eady, Tom O'Connor and Uralla Shire Deputy Mayor Bob Crouch.

Welcome boost

AS an avid supporter of renewable energy, I have welcomed the Australian Government's announcement of a \$1 billion Clean Energy Innovation Fund (CEIF) as well as the retention of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) and Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA). This gives greater certainty and security to the burgeoning renewable energy sector, including a number of projects well underway in the Northern Tablelands and I applaud the Federal Government for its stance.

Helipad plans in hand

I WAS very pleased to receive the detailed design plans of the Glen Innes helipad by Hunter New England Health. I have now passed these on to the Hospital Auxiliary and Glen Innes Severn Council and we can now look towards calling of tenders from local contractors to undertake the various components of the works.

New lighting, pathways and a new entrance will be built from the helipad into the hospital so that people can be wheeled directly from the hospital to the helipad. Some trees will be removed around the site and the ground levelled.

Fuel prices move online

LAST month the Fair Trading Amendment (Fuel Price Transparency) Bill 2016, which requires all NSW service station operators to report their fuel prices in real time on a new online fuel price board, passed through parliament. I spoke in support of the bill.

For the past few years we've had an ongoing issue with fuel prices in Armidale and while the ACCC is in the midst of another investigation, this online price board will certainly help.

Fuel retailers already have to display their prices on signs which can easily be seen as motorists approach the service station.

Local council elections

AMID the confusion caused by the consideration of the three local council merger proposals in the region, I sought advice from the Local Government Minister Paul Toole to clarify the timing of the local government elections, scheduled for September this year.

Those councils which are the subject of a proposal will have their elections pushed back to March next year. This means the Moree Plains, Gwydir, Inverell and Glen Innes Severn Councils will go to the polls in September while Guyra, Armidale Dumaresq and Uralla – regardless of the outcome of the merger proposals – will hold elections in March 2017.



Glen Innes Hospital Auxiliary President Jan Sharman OAM, Treasurer Elizabeth McCarthy and Mayor Col Price look over the helipad planning brief.



There will be no fee for the service station operator to use the online board however there will be severe penalties for selling fuel at a price other than that notified on the online price board.

Wasting less, recycling more

I WAS pleased to join Glen Innes Severn Mayor Col Price in January 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.

With the new facility now accepting paints, oils, batteries, gas bottles, polystyrene and other household problem wastes, the community is able to reduce the amount of environmentally hazardous and recyclable materials that usually end up in landfill.



GISC General Manager Hein Basson, Glen Industries Manager Kylie Hawkins, Mayor Col Price and Jaymie Kelly of JR Richards Waste and Recycling Services at the opening of the new recycling centre in Glen Innes.

Keeping the doors open

CHANGES have recently been announced to the risk-based licence fee scheme which will save licensed venues in small and remote communities across the region thousands of dollars each year.

Licensed venues in localities with less than 1,000 people will now be exempt from paying the extended trading hours risk loading.

This is very exciting news for our region as it represents savings of up to \$5,000 for individual pubs, clubs, bars, and restaurants in many small towns.

I lobbied for these changes for quite a while as these fees place a huge burden on small licenced venues and in particular local sporting clubs which are more often than not run by volunteers.



Croppa Creek Bowling Club Secretary Scott Ramsay was "over the moon" with the new licensing arrangements.

Out and about in the electorate



Ebor Public School: Safely behind the new drop-off zone are students Kaylah Selby, Daisy Donaldson, Cooper Packham, Lucy Selby, Mackenzie Packham, Dan Donaldson and Mackenzie Cook.



Kitchen upgrade for Delungra Bowling Club: Licensee John Taylor and club member Tony Bayliss.



Watering system for Armidale's Alcatraz rugby field: Tim Wheaton, Phillip Foley, Michael Lush, Josh Dunne, Sam Piddington and Bill Hyde put in the hard yards to install the underground system.



Yetman Public School: Principal Ben Delanty with his students.



New England Cancer Connect information day: Cancer Council support officer Paul Hobson, Oncology Social Worker Fiona Ord and Tour De Rocks representative David Mills at Glen Innes.



Moree volunteers thanked: Minister John Ajaka, with Vivien Clyne (Moree Plains Gallery), Jo Sweedman (Friends of Moree Regional Botanic Gardens), Felicity Curtis (Moree Family Support).



New canteen for Bundarra Racecourse: Jockey Club committee members Francis Layton, John Layton and Robert Dwyer.



Armidale Senior's Week: Autumn Lodge resident Enid Sibraa at the Armidale Racecourse enjoying the festivities