

# Talking Tablelands

with Adam Marshall MP

your Member for Northern Tablelands  
Minister for Tourism and Major Events  
Assistant Minister for Skills



## Record budget spend for the region

SCHOOLS, hospitals, and roads across the Northern Tablelands have seen an unprecedented level of funding thanks to a huge 2017-18 NSW Budget package of \$220 million, almost doubling last year's record budget of \$117.8 million.

The package funds big ticket items such as \$30 million for the Inverell Hospital redevelopment; \$65 million for the Armidale Future School and \$29.5 million to complete Armidale Hospital's redevelopment.

More than \$46 million is being spent on major projects and upgrades on the Newell, Carnarvon and Gwydir Highways and Waterfall Way.

This includes major works to increase vehicle

weight limits around Moree and Boggabilla and provide additional overtaking lanes.

This huge amount of funding has come after extensive consultation with communities and councils and acknowledges the Northern Tablelands as a vital arterial route for transport in NSW.

In addition to these big ticket items, dozens of projects identified by communities, council and the government as a priority, are receiving the funds needed to get them underway.

Our region is a vital driver of the State's cultural and economic landscape and this budget is helping move our region forward. I'll ensure we keep that momentum going.

## Rewards flow for regional growth

IN the last few months I have been working hard to ensure our region receives its fair share of the \$1.3 billion the NSW Government has committed to the new Regional Growth Fund.

This once-in-a-lifetime funding boost will ensure continued investment in roads, hospitals, schools, sporting and cultural facilities.

The \$11.3 million Stronger Country Communities Fund for infrastructure will go towards projects such as playgrounds, community centres, halls and local parks. This funding will be felt in virtually every community across the Northern Tablelands, big and small.

Country sporting facilities will also get a free kick for major upgrades with \$100 million for new infrastructure set to boost fields, pitches and tracks across the Northern Tablelands.

This Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund will help country areas develop a more professional sporting presence. Sport forms a core part of the identity of our regional communities helping to build town pride, improve fitness, and drive local economies.

The new \$100 million Regional Cultural Fund will

provide a shot in the arm for arts and cultural needs in the bush and help fund major projects that are often overlooked in favour of metropolitan areas.

It will provide recreational and educational benefits and encourage increased tourist visitation, which in turn helps art practitioners expand their networks and enter new markets.

I encourage councils and groups to visit [www.nsw.gov.au/regionalgrowth](http://www.nsw.gov.au/regionalgrowth) and check out funding opportunities.



Discussing the new Regional Growth Fund with Uralla Shire Mayor Mick Pearce.

### 2017-18 NSW Budget highlights for the Northern Tablelands:

- **\$46 million** to upgrade and repair the region's road network.
- **\$65 million** to build a 1,500 student school in Armidale.
- **\$30 million** for Inverell Hospital to fast-track construction.
- **\$29.5 million** to complete fit-out of Armidale Hospital.
- **\$1.23 million** to upgrade Aboriginal Housing.
- **\$1.84 million** to upgrade social housing.
- **\$40.79 million** in Restart NSW funding.
- **\$4 million** to replace the bridge over Nee Nee Creek north of Moree.
- **\$2.5 million** for Newell Highway overtaking lanes.
- **\$940,000** to upgrade Newell Highway south of Moree.
- **\$1.4 million** for repairs on Waterfall Way at Wollomombi.
- **\$1.6 million** for repairs to the New England Highway.
- **\$2.89 million** to Inverell Shire Council for road maintenance.
- **\$1.87 million** to Moree Plains Shire Council for road maintenance.
- **\$1.89 million** to Gwydir Shire Council for road maintenance.
- **\$1.42 million** to Armidale Regional Council for road maintenance.
- **\$1.17 million** to Uralla Shire Council for road maintenance.
- **\$694,000** to Glen Innes Severn Council for road maintenance.
- **\$396,000** for community transport for the aged and those with disabilities.
- **Service NSW** centres to be built in Glen Innes and Moree.
- **\$100,000** upgrades on the Carnarvon Highway.
- **\$100,000** upgrades on the Newell Highway north of Moree.

## Adam Marshall MP

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## Renewables will play huge part in region's future



With Boggabilla Solar Farm developer Mike Mailler and the recently completed 3.6MW array.

IN the wake of current federal political debate about the value of renewable energy, I want to reassure the community of my strong support for renewables, a strong energy generation mix and the development of current and future projects in the Northern Tablelands.

Despite some of the State's largest wind and solar projects under construction or in operation, the region has only 'scratched the surface' of the enormous potential and opportunities for renewable energy projects.

The Moree Solar Farm and the Inverell and Glen Innes windfarm projects are tangible examples of progress being made in the region by the renewables sector.

The NSW Government has also just given approval for a 400,000 panel Metz Solar Farm near Armidale and a few weeks ago I visited a 3.6 megawatt solar facility which has just been completed outside of Boggabilla.

For the first time in our region's history, we are on the cusp of being a net exporter of energy, reversing the historic trend and building wealth in our communities – we are fast becoming the renewable energy hub of NSW and Australia.

I believe it's vital that governments at all levels continue to support the development of current and future renewables projects.

## \$60m Armidale Hospital redevelopment on time

WITH construction at the fit-out stage across all floor levels of the new Armidale Rural Referral Hospital, I was delighted when given the opportunity last month for a site inspection and progress report.

The four-storey building, which will house the hospital's new emergency department, critical care unit, in-patient wards, operating theatres and sterilising unit is progressing at a great rate of knots.

The internal fit out of the four floors has begun in earnest and the external scaffolding will soon come off the building as the brick work will be completed.

Construction is on track with the inpatient unit on the second floor, and the fit-out of the new emergency department on the ground floor is well advanced.

The two top floors, the operating theatres and sterilising unit will be the last floors completed.



Inspecting progress on the first floor of the Armidale Hospital redevelopment.

## Region on track for new passenger trains

I WAS thrilled to announce the NSW Government has started the process of replacing all passenger trains in country NSW with a new and modern fleet.

In December last year, following yet another train breakdown, I called upon the Government to overhaul our rail carriage fleet so I'm delighted they listened to the communities here in the North West and will be replacing the decades-old Xplorer fleet.

The new carriages will offer a vastly improved service for the thousands of travellers who travel via rail to Sydney, giving them a 21st century experience for the lengthy trip.

The procurement process is now underway and the ageing fleet, servicing Armidale and Moree, will soon be leaving the station for the very last time.

## New home for Inverell sport

AFTER a marathon effort, the Inverell Sports Complex is in the final stages of a \$1.2 million redevelopment. In May, I had the pleasure of officially opening the new clubhouse which includes a canteen, weatherproof viewing areas and seating for up to 100 patrons.

New security fencing and upgrades to irrigation across the sporting fields have been completed. Council is now in the final stages of building seating for 400 spectators and upgrading the lighting on the pitches.

It was a little over a year ago I announced the NSW Government's \$930,000 contribution to the project and it's remarkable to see how the site has progressed. Once completed, Inverell will have some of the best sporting facilities in regional NSW and will be in a strong position to attract state and national events to the town.



Opening of the new clubhouse at the Inverell Sports Complex with Mayor Paul Harmon, left, and John Scoble.



Very happy members of the Inverell Business Chamber's Air Service Working Group.

## First flight from Inverell to Brisbane touches down

AFTER many long years without a commercial flight service, a large crowd of Inverell residents assembled at the airport last month to welcome Fly Corporate's 19-seat, Metro 23 turbo-prop aircraft as it arrived at 9.15am from Brisbane.

Congratulations must go to Inverell Shire Council and the business chamber's Air Service Working Group on their concerted effort on presenting such a strong business case to the airline, which secured the new service.

A regular air service is an essential component of a regional community that's growing and whether you're in business, a tourist operator or needing access to interstate or international flights, everyone will benefit from this air service.

The aircraft will depart Brisbane each morning, touching down in Inverell first and then on to Moree and arriving in Brisbane at 11.45am. The service will operate Monday through to Friday and, with the triangulation of the route, its financial sustainability is ensured.

# Working for all Northern

## Transport & roads funding secured

- ✓ **\$3 million** for Gwydir Shire Council for the construction of the Warialda bypass.
- ✓ **\$1.5 million** for Moree Regional Airport technology and tarmac upgrades.



- ✓ **\$440,000** for Armidale Regional Council to upgrade **Kempsey Road**.
- ✓ **\$47,860** to build a pedestrian crossing on the Carnarvon Highway at **Mungindi**.



- ✓ **\$364,000** for Gwydir Shire Council to upgrade **Trucking Hub**.
- ✓ **\$65,550** for Glen Innes Severn Council for three **new pedestrian crossings**.

## Essential services

- ✓ **\$4.6 million** for Moree Plains Shire Council to **drought proof Boggabilla and Toomelah**.
- ✓ **\$2.9 million** loan for **Inverell's** sewerage treatment plant.
- ✓ **\$560,000** for **Moree Plains Shire Council** to upgrade truck wash facilities at **Moree Saleyards**.



- ✓ **\$315,000** to **Inverell & Yetman RFS** for a new tanker.
- ✓ **\$208,321** to refurbish the **Dhiyaan Aboriginal Centre** in **Moree**.
- ✓ **\$180,000** to **Glen Elgin RFS** for a new tanker.
- ✓ **\$150,000** to **Uralla Shire Council** for staff training.
- ✓ **\$140,000** for **Armidale** homebuilder Uniplan to assist with construction of more **affordable housing**.
- ✓ **\$130,227** for **Moree Plains Shire Community Recycling Centre**.

- ✓ **\$125,000** to **Elmore RFS** for station expansion.



- ✓ **\$50,000** for a new public amenities block at **Ebor Showground**.
- ✓ **\$50,000** to **Hillgrove Progress Association** for picnic area upgrade.
- ✓ **\$40,000** to **Wooloombi Hall Trust** for deck and BBQ slab.
- ✓ **\$30,000** to **Glen Innes Showground Trust** for a new roof for the Stud Cattle Pavilion.

## Justice and support services

- ✓ **\$320,000** for **Moree Courthouse** upgrades.
- ✓ **\$243,000** to **Moree's Miyay Birray Youth Service** for a new transport vehicle.
- ✓ **\$161,000** to **Inverell Rural Outreach & Support Services** for domestic violence support.
- ✓ **\$20,000** for **Beyond Empathy** aboriginal arts and cultural activities.
- ✓ **\$5,000** for **Armidale & District National Servicemen's Association** to help keep in touch with its members.



- ✓ **\$15,000** to **Armidale RSL Sub Branch** for memorial plaques.
- ✓ **\$6,500** for a Soup Kitchen for the **Armidale Community CareVan**.
- ✓ **\$41,000** for **Armidale Legacy House** for building renovations.
- ✓ **\$26,458** for **Armidale Meals on Wheels'** learning café.

## Education

- ✓ **\$7 million** for **school maintenance** across the Northern Tablelands.
- ✓ **\$569,376** to expand **Armidale's Minimbah Preschool**.



- ✓ **\$318,000** for upgrades to amenities, ramps and drop-off zone at **Uralla Central School**.
- ✓ **\$107,000** for **Inverell Public School** to upgrade toilet facilities.
- ✓ **\$248,000** for drop-off zone and bathrooms at **Yetman Public School**.



- ✓ **\$30,000** to **Glen Innes Public School** for repainting works.
- ✓ **\$30,000** to **Ross Hill Public School** to build a new covered outdoor learning area.
- ✓ **\$153,000** to **Macintyre High School** for amenities block upgrade.



- ✓ **\$30,000** for extensions to the **Glen Innes Pool** before and after school building.
- ✓ **\$17,230** to replace floor covers at **Armidale's Galloway Children's Centre**.
- ✓ **\$15,000** for **Armidale Montessori Preschool** to construct outside teaching area.
- ✓ **\$7,978** for **Drummond Park Preschool** to install solar panels.
- ✓ **\$4,000** for **Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre** to repaint exterior walls.

## Communications

- ✓ **\$63,734** for **Glenn Innes Severn Council** to improve radio frequency identification.
- ✓ **\$7,835** to **Glen Innes Community Radio** for a new radio antenna at **Deepwater**.



# Tablelands' communities

## Sports

- ✓ **\$166,200** for new shared pathway along the Newell Highway to the **Boggabilla Sportsground**.
- ✓ **\$52,590** for **Garah Racecourse** to rebuild the historic grandstand.



- ✓ **\$50,000** for **Armidale Gymnastics Club** to construct a new training room.
- ✓ **\$42,000** for **Guyra Campdraft Club** to upgrade cattle yards at **Guyra Showground**.
- ✓ **\$41,800** to **New England Mountain Bikers** for UNE mountain bike trail.
- ✓ **\$40,000** to **Wards Mistake Tennis Club** for a new amenities block.
- ✓ **\$29,015** for **Emmaville Rifle Range** to improve comfort and safety at the range.



- ✓ **\$26,000** for **Bingara Sporting Club** to purchase a specialist greens mower.
- ✓ **\$25,000** for **Guyra Sports Council**.
- ✓ **\$24,102** for **Guyra Polar Bear Swimming Club** to upgrade change rooms.
- ✓ **\$20,000** for **Armidale Riding Club** and **Equestrian Centre**.
- ✓ **\$20,000** for **Armidale Rugby League Club**.
- ✓ **\$17,448** for **Armidale Rifle Club** to upgrade targets.
- ✓ **\$14,630** for **Guyra Junior Rugby League**.

## Cycling and walking

- ✓ **\$70,000** for **Inverell Shire Council** to extend the cycleway network.
- ✓ **\$29,500** for **Armidale Regional Council** to extend shared footpath and cycleway network in **Guyra**.



## Environment

- ✓ **\$35,000** for **Armidale Urban Rivercare Group** and **Armidale Tree Group** for rehabilitation projects.
- ✓ **\$13,061** to **Armidale Tree Group** for an Education Centre.

## Arts and culture

- ✓ **\$46,656** for **Australian Garden History Society** heritage rose garden at Saumarez.
- ✓ **\$31,000** to **Inverell Shire Council** for local heritage conservation projects.
- ✓ **\$28,000** for **Glen Innes Shire Council** to fund local heritage advisory service.
- ✓ **\$20,000** for **Gayinyaga Aboriginal Advisory Committee** for memorials.
- ✓ **\$5,000** for international food and music at **Glen Innes Harmony Day**.



- ✓ **\$100,000** to restore **Inverell's** old Byron Street Premier Farmhouse building.
- ✓ **\$2,950** to **New England Writers Centre** for crime writing workshop.
- ✓ **\$3,000** to **New England Bach Festival** for ARTivate.
- ✓ **\$1,600** for **2 Rivers** to help fund Crafternoon Tea in **Ashford**.
- ✓ **\$3,000** for **Moree's Mehi Gallery and Studio** to assist with Colour Me Kamilaroi picture book.
- ✓ **\$39,868** to fund a Poetry Slam for **Moree Community Library**.

## Community Building Partnership Grants

- ✓ **\$30,000** for new **Mehi Beach** at the **Moree Water Park**.



- ✓ **\$15,000** for **Moree PCYC** to upgrade toilet facilities.
- ✓ **\$19,000** for the **Inverell Lapidary Club's** showroom and workshop area.
- ✓ **\$30,000** for **Inverell HACC** to enclose its courtyard.

- ✓ **\$14,783** to **Macintyre Warriors Rugby League Club** for grand stand and seating.
- ✓ **\$8,900** to **Glen Innes Bowling Club** for a new greens mower.
- ✓ **\$15,000** for the **Inverell Mower Sports Club** to help kickstart start the nation's first mower racing track.



- ✓ **\$2,500** to **Inverell Little Athletic Centre** for a first aid kit and defibrillator.
- ✓ **\$31,711** to **Moree Aged & Disability Services** for verandah upgrade to serve as respite room.
- ✓ **\$33,000** for **Armidale PCYC** to upgrade change rooms and toilets.
- ✓ **\$17,748** for **Glen Initiative Garden** to seal entrance, pathways and courtyard.



- ✓ **\$15,343** for **Yetman Hall** trustees to paint the interior and to sand and polish the floor.
- ✓ **\$19,462** for **Glen Innes Swimming Club** to build additional shelters.

## Stronger Communities Funding

- ✓ **\$3,970** for **Armidale and District Historical Society** to publish journals.
- ✓ **\$17,422** to **Armidale Dumaresq State Emergency Services** for new vehicle storage facility.
- ✓ **\$10,000** for the new **Armidale Learner Driver Mentor Program**.
- ✓ **\$9,000** to **Armidale Men's Shed** for a dust extractor, to improve safety and hygiene.
- ✓ **\$15,000** for **Armidale Montessori Playschool's** new outdoor learning area.
- ✓ **\$15,234** to **Armidale PCYC** for new air conditioning units.
- ✓ **\$50,000** to **Armidale's University of the Third Age** for building upgrades.
- ✓ **\$44,000** for **Wongwibinda Hall** for upgrades to walls and windows.

## New energy relief plan reduces household bills

HOUSEHOLDS across the region will save hundreds of dollars on their energy bills each year, with a new NSW Government assistance package offering far-reaching reforms that will put power back in the hands of consumers. The relief package will help small businesses save up to \$1,900 a year and support for low income households and pensioners will increase by 20 per cent.

The energy affordability package includes:

- The Low Income Household rebate increased from \$235 to \$285 and the Family Energy Rebate increased from \$150 to \$180;
- Discounts on equipment upgrades for small business to save each business up to \$1,900 on their yearly bill;
- Discounts for energy efficient lighting and air conditioning upgrades for all households;
- Discounts for up to 23,000 concession cardholders to upgrade old fridges and TVs;
- An end to unnecessary charges from retailers such as fees for paper bills;
- Penalties for retailers who don't move rebate recipients to a better deal; and
- Energy saving upgrades for up to 16,500 public housing.

For more information please visit [www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers](http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers)

## Strong resistance to change of daylight saving

A PRIVATE Members Bill was introduced in State Parliament earlier in the year to bring daylight saving to an end a month earlier. To support that Bill, I launched a state-wide petition and in February, tabled more than 6,000 signatures which showed countrywide support for the change and trigger a debate in the Legislative Assembly.

Regretfully, a motion to debate the Bill in Parliament was not successful and would not be supported if introduced into the Legislative Assembly. There is resistance against any changes by most, if not all of the colleagues representing the metro and coastal regions – they have the numbers but please be assured I have been working on this issue since I was elected as your MP early in 2013, and will keep at it.

## Cheaper insurance for motorists

MOTORISTS across country NSW are now saving money and get better returns on their CTP Green Slip Premiums after I took the concerns of regional motorist to parliament.

Premiums had risen 85 per cent over the last decade to become the most expensive in Australia yet insurance companies were returning less than half of that 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 motorist in Guyra will save \$41 annually under the new scheme, while a Moree taxi driver will save a whopping \$1,757, for a saving of around 40 per cent. If passed, the changes will come into effect in December this year.

# Congratulations

## Education

ARMIDALE hairdresser and business owner Louise Wall won a \$15,000 scholarship to assist with her training and development.

Louise is still an apprentice and is running a very successful business in Armidale, so the scholarship was well deserved.



## Arts scholarship

WELL done to Inverell's talented Breanna Krauss who won a \$10,000 NSW Government Arts Scholarship which will be used to pay for music and guitar lessons and vocal training.

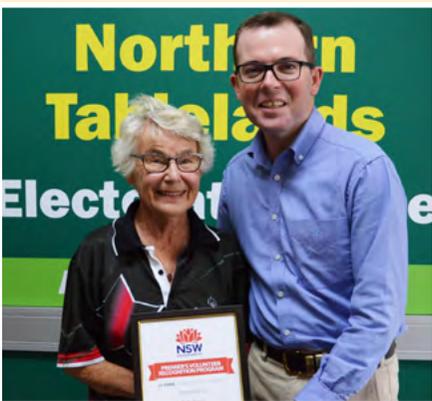
Breanna is a tremendously talented, driven and passionate performer and will make the most of this incredible opportunity.



## Premier's award

ARMIDALE'S Ruth Blanch 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 member to all of those groups and the award is a well-deserved honour.



## Hidden treasures

CONGRATULATIONS to Julie Gittoes and Mary Gaston, two exceptional women who were included in last year's 'Hidden Treasure' honour roll.

Julie Gittoes is the principal of Bald Blair Public School and runs after school care, giving students an additional chance to learn. She's also the secretary for the Guyra Lamb and Potato Festival, and has trained hundreds 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.



## 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, increase the retention of young people and close the gender gap in the industry.



## Funding locked in for Warialda bypass

WARIALDA'S long awaited bypass is now just around the corner with the NSW Government committing \$3.03 million from the Fixing Country Roads program to the \$6.56 million project.

The 3.6 kilometre bypass will take heavy vehicles from the north of Warialda along a new route to the east of the township, over a new bridge on Warialda Creek and onto the Gwydir Highway. The route will also incorporate a new truck wash and effluent disposal point.

This will allow heavy vehicle traffic to avoid the challenging pinch point at the corner of Stephen Street and the Gwydir Highway. Currently B-doubles have to cross the centreline of both roads, which slows down traffic and presents a significant hazard to traffic and pedestrians.

Removing trucks from the centre of town will significantly improve the efficiency of the local freight industry, make local roads safer and reduce the amount of livestock effluent in the centre of town.

## Millions pour in for regional water security

THIS year I've been working to ensure the successful delivery of over \$15 million in water security projects for Boggabilla, Toomelah, Ashley, Biniguy, Moree and Guyra.

Construction has now been completed on a 14 kilometre, \$4.6 million Boggabilla-to-Toomelah pipeline. Moree Plains Shire Council is now in the process of installing new pumping facilities and a floating pontoon which will see an end to pump failures ensuring council will no longer need to truck water in to the village during the hot, dry months.



Looking over plans for the Boggabilla to Toomelah pipeline

## Guyra pipeline best option

I'VE also been in high-level talks with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional Water to secure funding for Guyra's water supply. The former council had long considered various options ranging from a pipeline to Malpas Dam to upgrading the existing dams but lacked the funds to do so.

At my request, Armidale Regional Council has worked with the Department of Primary Industries to assess all those options and have since confirmed the best and most cost-effective is a pipeline from Malpas Dam.

This will not only help the community avoid future water shortages but will bolster employment in the horticultural industry which currently employs 600 people in Guyra. I will continue to fight for the community and ensure this project goes ahead.

## Another step forward for Inverell Hospital



Inverell residents had the chance to provide feedback on the design plans of the Inverell Hospital redevelopment.

AS a result of concerns which were raised at the recent community information session on the Inverell Hospital redevelopment, and at my request, Health Minister Brad Hazzard has agreed to facilitate a meeting onsite with representatives from NSW Health Infrastructure, Hunter New England Health, Inverell Shire Council and local clinicians.

Our local clinicians are an important part of the decision process. To that end, the decision makers met with the clinicians in Inverell and Mayor Paul Harmon and I were pleased to join the group and receive that input.

The \$30 million redevelopment of Inverell Hospital is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to dramatically upgrade hospital infrastructure and health services for the Inverell district for decades to come.

I want the community to get maximum value from the project and get the very best long-term health service and clinical outcomes.

I'd also like to thank each and every local that contributed to that information session. After so many years fighting for a redevelopment, this is truly the community's hospital and I'm glad to see the passion displayed by so many is as strong as ever.

## Push continues for new Inverell Police station

A NEW 24-hour police station for Inverell is a step closer to reality after Inverell Shire Mayor Paul Harmon and I received a firm commitment for a rebuild from NSW Police and Minister Troy Grant at meeting in NSW Parliament a few weeks ago.

I arranged the meeting, which included NSW Police Commissioner Mick Fuller and Deputy Commissioner Regional Field Operations Gary Worboys, to push the new Inverell Station up the priority list and seek urgent assistance to immediately address structural issues within the existing station.

The Minister saw first hand the urgent need for a new station when he visited Inverell last year and was firmly committed to the project. It was a very positive meeting.

We not only secured unanimous agreement for the new station in Inverell and for it to be delivered as quickly as possible, but also an immediate injection of more than \$250,000 to undertake work to address some urgent problems that cannot wait.

Given the number of new stations and other major capital works projects NSW Police is already committed to delivering from the last election, realistically, the community is not going to see a new station in Inverell for at least another 12 months.

It's not fair on our local police to ask them to work for another 12-18 months in a cramped and inadequate

station while our new station is being planned, so I am delighted with the immediate injection of funds to address safety and operational issues within the station right now.

In no way does this diminish the case for the new station nor the urgency of it and I am determined to ensuring the Inverell community gets the new police station it deserves.



A new 24-hour police station for Inverell is a step closer to reality after Inverell Shire Mayor Paul Harmon and I received a firm commitment for a rebuild from NSW Police Minister Troy Grant and Commissioner Mick Fuller.

## Hydrotherapy pool vital health service for local community

MUCH to the relief of many in the community, Armidale's Hydrotherapy Pool was reopened in late July after six months of closure for maintenance.

I was however extremely disappointed with comments made at the time by the Armidale Hospital manager, which played down the role of the pool and cast doubt over its future.

It's great that the 40-year-old hydrotherapy pool has been brought back up to scratch and is now fully

operational and while the health service has a view about a hydrotherapy pool not being 'core business' for them, a facility like this is definitely core business and vital to the local community.

I've since had a meeting with a number of passionate locals who've formed a Hydrotherapy Pool Working Group and have begun the process of planning for the construction of a new hydrotherapy pool in Armidale.

## Armidale airport upgrade on final approach



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

REGIONAL travellers will be pleased to hear work on the expanded Armidale Regional Airport is expected to be completed by the end of November.

The \$11 million upgrade, which includes the expansion of the airside parking apron and doubling the size of the existing passenger terminal, has been a great win for the local community. Airport users are already enjoying the new baggage handling facility and passenger lounge and visitors are getting a much better first impression of our region.

The new terminal has been essential to allow larger planes into Armidale and support growing visitor numbers. Our airport sees some 140,000 passenger movements per year which, considering its smaller catchment area, means it's attracting passengers at a greater rate than larger hubs like Tamworth.

In addition to raising the capacity to 200,000 passengers per year, the airstrip upgrade will ensure incoming flights aren't bottlenecked by plane movements on the tarmac which will lead to fewer delays.

## Moree grain back on line

MOREE'S new intermodal freight terminal, located at Broadbent Grain, is now hard at work, cutting down freight costs for growers and reducing the number of trucks on the road. Carrying 2,200 tonnes of locally grown grain from Moree to the Port of Newcastle, the trains are replacing 56 B-double trucks that would usually be heading to Brisbane.

The NSW government contributed \$1.6 million to the project as part of its Fixing Country Rail pilot program and construction ran \$400,000 under budget. Every year, freight trains will shift 250,000 tonnes of grain and 6,400 cargo boxes of cotton and pulses to Newcastle, saving producers some \$40,000 in freight each trip.

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.*

## Ministerial role brings greater opportunities for rural and regional NSW

I WAS both honoured and privileged to be appointed as the state's Tourism and Major Events Minister and Assistant Minister for Skills earlier this year. It's been quite a journey and I'm enjoying the challenges and opportunities that come with the new roles.

Of course this would not have been possible without the support of the people of the Northern Tablelands and as your representative in the NSW Parliament, I want to reiterate my commitment to serving all of my constituents and advocating for your needs first, and foremost.

Tourism is a \$33 billion a year industry, employing close to 200,000 people in NSW. Sydney along with our coast regions are recognised the world over as meccas for international visitors. I am however working to open up rural and regional NSW to more international and domestic tourist 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 and I believe this will particularly help our patch 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 this opportunity.

As the Minister responsible for TAFE NSW, I am working closely with the Deputy Premier to ensure

the Government and TAFE NSW work with industry to overcome our biggest challenge - not having enough skilled people to fill the jobs that are being created. This is a critical portfolio for the continued economic growth for the state and country NSW.

On the home front, TAFE NSW's new Digital Headquarters in Armidale is a step closer to being established with the commencement of construction of the Digital Learning Lab and recruitment of key managerial positions. Eight positions have already been recruited to the team in Armidale, including three senior managers.



*Over the next six months there will be 40 new jobs at the Armidale's TAFE Digital Headquarters.*

Construction of the \$2 million Connected Learning Centre (CLC) at Glen Innes TAFE campus is well underway.

When the CLC opens next month, there will be an increase in teaching staff to four full-time, and 26 casual teachers, enabling it to offer an additional five courses for students in Early Childhood, Health and Disability, Agribusiness Management, Aboriginal Languages and Building and Construction.

In addition to this the CLC is designed to be easily reorganised to suit a variety of career options and community needs which is a great step forward for the Glen Innes community.



*Enjoying an unusually 'frosty' reception at the inaugural Chillin in Glen festival with Mayor Steve Toms.*

# Out and about in the electorate



**Glen Elgin NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)** volunteers had a lot to celebrate when they were handed the keys to their new fire tanker.



**Turning sods** to kick off the construction of a new Homes North social and affordable housing complex in Armidale.



**The Glen Innes community** hosted another successful Australian Celtic Festival in May.



**Announcing funding** for Bingara Cricket Association's new practice nets provided me a great opportunity to pick up a cricket bat!



**Visiting the small schools** in my electorate is always a pleasure.



**It was good to get the Police Minister Troy Grant** out to Moree to announce funding for Miyay Birray Youth Service.



**It's always a pleasure** to catch up with the Northern Tablelands High School captains when they visit NSW Parliament each year.



**Deputy Premier John Barilaro** inspecting drone equipment at AgSkills in Moree.



**Catching up** with the students at Gravesend Public School.