

Talking Tablelands

with **Adam Marshall MP**
your Member for Northern Tablelands



\$102 million spend in state budget for our region

WITH the state budget handed down late in June, I welcomed a record \$102.4 million of capital expenditure for the electorate in the 2015/2016 financial year, including the first funding allocation for the redevelopment of Armidale Rural Referral Hospital. This is the first time ever a State Budget has committed funds to this essential project, which will be completed by July 2019.

The remainder of the \$60 million funding commitment will be allocated in subsequent budgets, when the bulk of construction activity will occur. The \$30 million redevelopment of Inverell District Hospital, as anticipated, was not factored into this year's budget as Hunter New England Area Health has only just begun the planning process.

Funding of more than \$74 million will be spent on major projects and upgrades on the Newell, Gwydir and New England Highways, including bridge

upgrades along Fossickers Way and Thunderbolts Way, and funding to construct a new roundabout near Armidale Regional Airport. There is also \$14.2 million allocated to routine maintenance and upgrade of our regional roads and \$10.3 million for our local councils to undertake improvement works on their local roads.

It will be a busy year and I'm looking forward to working with the community to ensure all these projects are successfully delivered.

Adam Marshall MP
Member for Northern Tablelands

Inverell Hospital redevelopment planning begins

LAST month I met with Hunter New England Health Services Planner Louise Evans who has begun work on the clinical services planning for the \$30 million redevelopment of Inverell District Hospital.

I'm very excited to see someone with Louise's experience and background appointed and the clinical services planning getting underway. This is another significant step forward for the long-awaited redevelopment.

During the development of the plan, consultation would occur with hospital staff, local clinicians, Inverell health service providers, Inverell Shire Council, health stakeholders and the community.

Louise has already commenced discussions with hospital staff and has meetings planned with local doctors and community stakeholders early next month. Everyone will be given a chance to have their say to ensure the plan captures the health needs of the community now and well into the future.

I'm looking forward to working with the community and Louise in the development of the Clinical Services



Hunter New England Health Services Planner Louise Evans begins work on planning for the \$30 million redevelopment of Inverell Hospital.

Plan, which is a key part of the final design and what expanded and new services and infrastructure the redevelopment will deliver to the community.

Budget highlights for the Northern Tablelands include:

- **\$3.8 million** to complete final stage of the **Moree Newell Highway** bypass
- **\$4 million** for Nee Nee Creek Bridge repairs, 46km north of **Moree** on **Newell Highway**
- **\$2.07 million** to **Moree** Plains Shire Council for road maintenance
- **\$4 million** to upgrade Newell Highway road pavement from **Mungle Back Creek to Boggabilla**
- **\$10.1 million** to continue the **Moree East Public School** redevelopment
- **\$2 million** to upgrade **Newell Highway** at **Gurley**
- **\$1.8 million** to upgrade **Newell Highway** 14km south of **Moree**
- **\$3.09 million** to **Inverell** Shire Council for road maintenance
- **\$1.7 million** for **Moree** Remote Indigenous Housing
- **\$2.8 million** to upgrade **New England Highway** between **Uralla and Armidale**
- **\$1.3 million** to upgrade the **Guyra to Ebor** Road
- **\$677,000** to **Armidale Dumaresq Council** for road maintenance
- **\$1.3 million** to upgrade **Waterfall Way** from **St Helena Creek to Four Mile Creek**
- **\$1 million** for the commencement of the redevelopment of the **Armidale Rural Referral Hospital**
- **\$470,000** for a new Aboriginal Housing unit in **Armidale**
- **\$1.8 million** to upgrade **Gwydir Highway** west of **Glen Innes**
- **\$579,000** to **Glen Innes Severn Council** for road maintenance
- **\$1.4 million** for New England Highway pavement upgrade north of **Glencoe**
- **\$1.3 million** to upgrade the **New England Highway** east of **Delungra**
- **\$1.2 million** for **New England Highway** pavement upgrade south of **Uralla**
- **\$1.1 million** to **Uralla** Shire Council for road maintenance
- **\$710,000** to replace **Abington Creek Bridge** on **Thunderbolts Way**
- **\$600,000** for **Gwydir Highway** drainage upgrades on the **Gibraltar Range**
- **\$1.03 million** for **Bingara, Inverell** and **Tablelands** Community Transport Services
- **\$1.45 million** for social housing upgrades across the electorate

Adam Marshall MP

Address: Suite 1, 175 Rusden Street, Armidale NSW 2350 **Mail:** PO Box 77, Armidale NSW 2350

Phone: 02 6772 5552 **Fax:** 02 6772 5026 **Email:** northerntablelands@parliament.nsw.gov.au



@a_j_marshall



adamjmarshall

Support for renewable energy industry

ONCE again I'd like to offer my strong support to the renewable energy sector and the development of renewables projects in the electorate. The region has huge potential and there are enormous obvious environmental benefits and importantly, some huge economic gains as well – millions of dollars of investment, job opportunities and diversification of our local economy.

This is why the Zero Net Energy Town (ZNET) pilot at Uralla is so exciting for our region. We are attempting to create an Australian-first – generating 100 per cent of the community's energy needs from renewable sources. The project has overwhelming support in the community and council and is being backed financially by the State Government.

The Moree Solar Farm and the Glen Innes White Rock Windfarm projects are tangible examples of progress being made and it is vital that governments continue to support the development of these and other projects. I realise people have varying views on aspects of some renewable technologies and projects, but I can also see the huge benefits these sort of projects can bring to our region.

Wind monitoring project launched

I WAS proud to launch an exciting new national wind monitoring program in Armidale which will see local community wind farm proponent, New England Wind (NEW), collect wind speed data for several possible windfarm sites throughout the high country.

This is a year-long project that received \$43,000 funding from NSW Government as part of the Office of Environment & Heritage's Growing Community Energy Program.

For the first time, NEW will be using a state-of-the-art SODAR (Sonic Detection and Ranging) wind monitoring unit – a trailer mounted device that uses sound, reflected off the atmosphere, to measure wind speed and direction at varying heights up to around 200 metres. It's an affordable and reliable method of wind monitoring which provides sufficiently accurate data for pre-feasibility site assessments.

We will be the first region to make use of the unit and at the beginning of what is likely to be a 10-year program supporting projects right across the country.



NEW Technical Director Dr Chris Blanksby, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage officer Lauren Zell, former Armidale Dumaresq Council Mayor Laurie Bishop, Project Director Adam Blakester and NEW Chair Barbara Finch at the Armidale launch of the New England Wind (NEW) wind monitoring program.



Glen Innes helipad - \$20,000 for design plans

ONE of the final roadblocks hindering the construction of a helipad at the Glen Innes District Hospital has been removed, with Minister for Regional Development John Barilaro announcing a \$20,000 grant for the Glen Innes United Hospital Auxiliary to cover the cost of developing a detailed design concept plan for the project.

This is fantastic news for the Glen Innes community and I'm delighted the Minister saw merit in our case.

The community has demonstrated it is willing to do the heavy lifting on this important project and this funding support for the preparation of the design plans is a very welcome boost.

I want to thank President Jan Sharman and Auxiliary members for spearheading this campaign for almost the last two years and everyone else in the community who has been so patient and never given up – we are very close now.

To raise \$80,000 so far is a tremendous effort and after this week's announcement, I'm sure more will be forthcoming. I wasn't going to have the community using a single dollar of the money raised to do design plans – it should all be put towards constructing the helipad – and now it can be.

Service NSW centre for Inverell

FINANCE and Services Minister Dominic Perrottet joined me recently in Armidale to officially open the Service NSW Centre in Rusden Street. Since its opening earlier in the year, the one-stop shop has been hailed a great success by staff and customers alike.

In six months the centre has served an impressive number of customers and is delivering services to a very high

standard – customer satisfaction is running at an incredible 98 per cent. The Centre also had the benefit of creating six new jobs for the community.

The great news is the Minister confirmed that the State Government will locate a Service NSW one-stop-shop in Inverell, as part of the next round of new service centres to be rolled out over the next 18 months.



Minister for Finances Dom Perrottet officially opened the Armidale branch of Service NSW.

Working for the Northern Tablelands

Public Reserve Management Fund grants – July 2015

- ✓ **\$26,318** for the **Warialda Racecourse** to build a new ablution block
- ✓ **\$24,200** for the **Warialda Showground** trust to paint the exterior walls and roofs of the wooden buildings



- ✓ **\$83,000** for the **Moree Showground** trust to build a new perimeter security fence
- ✓ **\$25,606** for **Moree Homes for the Aged Moreena Units** to convert three small units into two larger ones and replace old power board



- ✓ **\$17,160** for the **Glen Innes Land of the Beardies Museum** trust to remove asbestos from the roof of the old nursers' quarters
- ✓ **\$27,265** for the **Glen Innes Showground** trust to repair the old pavilion and replace the roof on the caretakers cottage
- ✓ **\$18,872** for **Nullamanna Public Hall** trust to extend the portable safety barriers for the campdraft arena and upgrade grounds existing water system



- ✓ **\$157,546** for the **Inverell Showground** trust to replace the floor of the main pavilion
- ✓ **\$7,326** for the **Inverell Shire Council** to upgrade the entrance to the Austral Band Hall

- ✓ **\$4,660** for the **Gilgai Public Hall** trust to install a new hot water system for female showers and repair the footpath around the war memorial



- ✓ **\$49,999** for the **Guyra Recreation Ground** trust to construct a new multiuse amenities block between the showgrounds and the recreation grounds
- ✓ **\$12,000** for the **Ashford Showground** trust to upgrade and replace timber cattle yard and loading ramp



- ✓ **\$1,100** for the **Inverell Motorsport Complex** trust to repair amenities block and spray noxious weeds on the reserve
- ✓ **\$4,980** for the **Black Gully Reserve** trust to eradicate Mexican waterlily from the reserve waterway
- ✓ **\$29,000** for the **Delungra Recreation Reserve** trust to rebuild the arena fence and holding yards



NSW Fair Trading Financial Counselling Service

- ✓ **\$47,701** for the **Armidale** Salvation Army
- ✓ **\$19,771** for the **Moree** Salvation Army ATSI service

Sport and Recreation Disability Grant

- ✓ **\$75,000** for **Uralla Shire Council** to upgrade sporting complex

Rural and Remote Preschool grants - \$7,000

- ✓ Ashford Preschool
- ✓ Glen Innes Preschool
- ✓ Glen Innes Outreach Program
- ✓ Grace Lutheran Preschool Moree
- ✓ Moree Preschool
- ✓ Kiah Preschool Moree
- ✓ Kindamindi Preschool Inverell
- ✓ Tingha Preschool
- ✓ Jack & Jill Preschool Inverell
- ✓ Bundarra Preschool
- ✓ Bingara Preschool
- ✓ Warialda Preschool
- ✓ Inverell NRAV 2

NSW Community War Memorial Grant

- ✓ **\$7,524** to enhance the **Dangarsleigh War Memorial**

Responsible Pet Ownership programs

- ✓ **\$15,000** for the **Moree Plains Shire Council** to work in Mungindi
- ✓ **\$14,998** for the **Inverell Shire Council**
- ✓ **\$25,000** for the **Uralla and Walcha Shire Councils** to work together to deliver the 'Animals are our Companions' program.

Tech Savvy Seniors program

I HAVE welcomed the expansion of the popular Tech Savvy Seniors program, which will provide access to free or low cost technology training to seniors right across the Northern Tablelands. The program began in 2012 and is changing seniors' lives – from how they shop and get information to how they connect with family and friends.

We want to make sure that no one is left behind because everyone, no matter where they live, should have an opportunity to participate in the digital world.

The course covers topics such as setting up email, going online shopping, using internet banking and an introduction to social media.

For further information on training topics, dates and locations for Glen Innes, Armidale, Uralla and Guyra call the Guyra Adult Learning on 02 6779 2132. For Moree, Inverell and Warialda call the Northern Inland Community College on 02 6782 1221, or visit the Tech Savvy Seniors program site at www.telstra.com/seniors

Social housing crack down

I WELCOMED the recent introduction of legislation to reform social housing which will see a crackdown on anti-social and illegal behaviour. This will make social housing across the state safer, better and stronger.

The legislation includes:

- Introducing a One Strike policy for those who seriously breach their tenancy agreement;
- Implementing a Three Strikes policy so officials can issue a Notice of Termination if a tenant has received three Breach of Tenancy Agreement notices in a 12 month period;
- Introducing confidential Neighbourhood Impact Statements so that neighbours are protected from recriminations; and
- Changes to increase the likelihood that tenants who fraudulently claim a rental subsidy pay the money back by classifying the debt as rent arrears. If they do not pay, they can be evicted;
- Probationary leases for public housing tenancies of two years or longer.

More help for isolated patients

PATIENTS who have travel to access high-quality medical care, will now receive significantly more financial assistance, with a boost to the Isolated Patients Transport and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS). Some of the changes include:

- a 15% increase in the fuel subsidy from 19 cents to 22 cents per kilometre;
- an increase in the commercial accommodation subsidy for eight to 14 night stays:
 - from \$43 to \$80 – an 86% boost (single room) per night
 - from \$60 to \$105 – a 75% jump (double room) per night
- an increase in the commercial accommodation subsidy for 15 night-plus stays:
 - from \$43 to \$105 – a 144% boost (single room) per night
 - from \$60 to \$120 – a 100% jump (double room) per night.
- travel for prosthetic/orthotic services from qualified practitioners will now be eligible for IPTAAS as the first part of a move to subsidise travel to access certain highly specialised allied health services.

MERIT program gains traction

LAST month I had a very positive meeting with Attorney General Gabrielle Upton regarding the possibility of seeing the expansion of the successful Magistrates Early Referral into Treatment (MERIT) program to the Moree community. The program is available in some local courts in NSW and provides the opportunity for adult defendants with substance abuse problems to work, on a voluntary basis, towards rehabilitation as part of the bail process.

I presented the Minister with an almost 3,500 signature-strong petition from the Moree community and she is now looking at the possibility of adding it to a list of communities where MERIT could be expanded, subject to additional funding being secured from the Federal Government. MERIT is currently funded by the Commonwealth Government as a health initiative to NSW Health and is administered by the NSW Attorney General via our local courts.

Congratulations

Community award

I WAS delighted to present Armidale police Senior Constable Cheryl Hall with a State Government Community Service Award in recognition of her many years of service to the community, particularly those impacted by domestic violence and Aboriginal young people. Cheryl is a fine example of community policing.



Cheryl Hall and New England Area Commander Superintendent Fred Trench

Dundee's arts scholarship winner

IT WAS my genuine pleasure to meet and congratulate Dundee-based young artist Ashley Hansell. She was selected as one of only 16 recipients of the State Government's inaugural \$10,000 Young Regional Artists Scholarship program.

Ashley operates her own small business designing and making clothing from recycled materials – Spunkit Designs. Congratulations Ashley – with your passion and persistence, you are an inspiration to many young (and not so young) people.



Premier's teacher scholarship

HUGE congratulations to Armidale's Stephen Chapman on being awarded a prestigious Premier's Teacher Scholarship. The O'Connor Catholic College Mathematics Co-ordinator is one of only 19 scholarship winners from across NSW out of more than 320 who applied.

Next year Stephen will embark on a 5-week study tour to learn more about financial literacy and bring back his new skills and enhanced knowledge to impart on his students and also benefit his teaching colleagues. Very exciting and a credit to Steve's passion for education.



NSW puppy factory inquiry reports to Parliament



The first public hearing of the NSW Parliament Joint Select Committee inquiry into companion animal breeding practices was held in Armidale.

AS CHAIR of the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in NSW, I was pleased to hand down our unanimous report which aims to stamp out rogue and unscrupulous puppy factory operators in NSW. The report contains 34 recommendations and first and foremost, we have recommended the introduction of a breeders' licensing scheme for all commercial dog and cat breeding in NSW.

As a key component of this scheme, we are keen for the government to legislate the requirement for all pet sale advertisements, whether in shops or markets, newspapers or online, to include the breeder's identification and animal microchip numbers so that buyers can verify the breeder and trace the animal's history.

This will also provide a mechanism, which currently

doesn't exist, to capture information about all commercial breeding facilities across the state, which will allow enforcement agencies to better manage compliance and work with breeders to achieve breeding best practice.

The NSW Government has six months to consider and respond to the report. For the full report visit www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/cabinquiry.

Minister opens Glen Innes Remembrance Walkway



Minister David Elliott with Glen Innes RSL Sub Branch President Gordon Taylor and Mayor Colin Price.

IN JULY I had the pleasure of welcoming the Minister for Corrections, Emergency Services and Veterans Affairs, David Elliott to the Northern Tablelands and joined him on a two-day tour of the region.

While in Glen Innes we met up with the Glen Innes RSL Sub-branch and opened the new Remembrance Walkway in ANZAC Park. We also visited the impressive Glen Innes Correctional Facility and spoke with staff and inmates working in the sawmilling plant.

In Armidale, the Minister was presented with plans to relocate the New England Zone Rural Fire Service headquarters from its Mann Street site to the Armidale Regional Airport.

The \$3.4 million proposal would see the headquarters located adjacent to the new \$340,000 aerial firefighting base, which will begin construction shortly. The Minister was very positive about the plans and I'll continue to push hard to secure the required funds to see this happen.

ACCC investigates Armidale fuel prices

THE Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) recently selected Armidale for a regional fuel price market study. This is long overdue but is very good news – Armidale motorists have been ripped off at the bowser by unscrupulous local fuel retailers for far too long.

As I have repeatedly said in Parliament and in public, I am in no doubt that local retailers are engaging in price gouging – there is no other explanation for why fuel is so much more expensive in Armidale than almost any other centre in rural and regional NSW.

Due to a concerted community campaign and the intervention of Senator John Williams, the ACCC was eventually forced to conduct an investigation late last year

and early this year and while that didn't yield any proof of cartel practices by retailers, it did acknowledge the consistently high prices relative to other parts of the State.

Not finding evidence doesn't mean it's not happening though and I sincerely hope the extra scrutiny placed on retailers in Armidale will see local motorists finally given a fair go at the bowser. Fuel is still much cheaper at every other centre in our region, even small outlets like Black Mountain, Invergowrie and Delungra.

I'm glad our lobbying for Armidale to be included as one of the three regional market studies has been successful and we will continue to watch this issue very closely.

Well done to Gwydir Shire Council

I WOULD like to commend Gwydir Shire Council on successfully completing, on budget and on time, a major upgrade of the Fossickers Way, north of Bingara.

The \$2.6 million project, which council undertook on behalf of the State Government, involved the replacement of a 3.3 kilometre section of Fossickers Way between Bingara and the Delungra Road turnoff. Fossickers Way is a well-used road with many heavy vehicles carrying primary produce from our region to market so I'm very pleased to see this section upgraded.

This year is actually shaping up to be a very busy time for council with almost \$6 million allocated in the

budget for road and bridge works in the Gwydir Shire this year.

The projects and allocations in the budget include:

- ✓ **\$1.74 million** to Gwydir Shire Council for road maintenance across the shire;
- ✓ **\$1.5 million** to upgrade the Gwydir River Bridge at Bingara;
- ✓ **\$1.1 million** to upgrade Fossickers Way between Bingara and the Gwydir Highway;
- ✓ **\$800,000** to upgrade Halls Creek Bridge north of Bingara; and
- ✓ **\$800,000** to upgrade Cobbadah Creek Bridge on Fossickers Way.



Gwydir Shire Council's Technical Services Director Richard Jane on the recently-completed Fossickers Way upgrade works north of Bingara.

Out and about in the electorate



Community Partnership presentations: Community Groups in Inverell were the recipients of over \$30,000 in donations thanks to the generous support of New England Mutual.



More Bypass opening: Not even blunt scissors could hold up the official opening of the bypass. NSW Roads Minister Duncan Gay and Federal Member for Parkes Mark Coulton performed their duties without a hitch.



Garah Public School



Waste less, recycle more: The opening of the new \$103,000 Uralla Community Recycling Centre.



Lunch time: Pallamallawa Public School.



Land of the Beardies Museum funding: Another step towards a new roof for old Nurses Quarters at Glen Innes.



Selfie: Inverell High School student leaders.



North Armidale Tennis Club: Members are now enjoying playing on the new artificial turf court.