

October 2014

# Community News

from **Leslie Williams** MP

Member for Port Macquarie  
Parliamentary Secretary for Renewable Energy



## Wrights Road Roundabout Upgrade



Leslie Williams and Duncan Gay inspecting Wrights Road Roundabout

One of the busiest intersections in Port Macquarie will be upgraded following an announcement by the Minister for Roads, Duncan Gay MLC.

Improvements to this intersection are vital to improve accessibility for the community and businesses of the Port Macquarie region. In the first half of next year \$7 million will be spent to deliver a fully signalised intersection.

A traffic light controlled intersection will help to accommodate the increase to traffic resulting from planned developments including residential precincts, Charles Sturt University and the expanded Port Macquarie Base Hospital.

I am delighted the Minister was able to see firsthand the importance of upgrading the Oxley Highway, John Oxley Drive and Wrights Road roundabout.

This project is planning for the future and is infrastructure the community and businesses expect and deserve.



I was very pleased to welcome NSW Premier Mike Baird back to Port Macquarie at the beginning of September for the launch of the Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail.

The Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail is a public art community project that will culminate with the installation of fifty one-metre high fibreglass koala sculptures across the region's landscape.

The NSW Government has sponsored one of these creative Koalas which features an artist's innovative design to raise awareness of dementia in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region. I am pleased the Premier had the opportunity to see this outstanding exhibition first hand and to meet many of the artists who have produced the original designs. I encourage everyone to explore the trail and get a photo with each of the unique and iconic koalas.

One of my favourite designs is the Dementia koala and it is fitting that it was relocated to its new home at Westport Club during September – Dementia Awareness Month.

As Chair of the Port Macquarie Dementia-Friendly Community Steering Committee it was a pleasure to welcome Steve Milton to Port Macquarie to launch the Guide To Becoming A Dementia-Friendly Community – a new publication by Alzheimer's Australia which is centred around the work being done locally. Stephen is one of the United Kingdom's leading experts on dementia and his visit to launch the Guide and share his knowledge was well received.

The Guide provides the community with a practical and easy to follow template to facilitate the creation of a dementia friendly community through building relationships with key stakeholders and local businesses.

I'd like to personally thank Gary Thomas and Judy Bartholomew from Alzheimer's Australia (NSW) and all of the Committee members for their contribution to this project which has developed from a simple idea but one that sees Port Macquarie one step closer to becoming the first dementia friendly community in Australia.

Copies of the Guide are available from the Alzheimer's Australia NSW Port Macquarie office in Lord Street or from my office in Grant Street.

**Leslie Williams**  
Member for Port Macquarie  
Parliamentary Secretary  
for Renewable Energy



Margret Meagher, NSW Premier  
Mike Baird, Anthony Westman,  
Leslie Williams, Gary Thomas at  
the Hello Koala Launch  
(Koala photos courtesy of  
Lindsay Moller)



Carers Jan Dennis and Dawn Davies with Leslie

## Supporting Local Carers



Through my own personal experience I know how much pressure is placed on carers and how much time, effort and love they provide to the person in their care.

The Carers Group is made up of people from all walks of life who care for someone and most have family members involved in the programs of local disability service provider ACES.

The Carers Group originated in response to the realisation that carers in our region felt isolated and disempowered and had poor quality of life and health expectations.

The idea for the Carer Profile project originated from local carer Jan Dennis who could see the benefits of compiling a collection of carer profiles that were honest, concise and heartfelt. She believed the project could be used to raise awareness about the challenges carers face.

Last year when I launched the first book I spoke of the importance of acknowledging the dedication and commitment of carers. They play an important role not only in the lives of individuals but also throughout the community. Erica Lake coordinated the project, supported by Dawn Davies and Jan Dennis.

I thank all those who contributed to the Carer Profile Project, which was an excellent initiative and one that will be well sourced throughout our community and more broadly.



Minister Stuart Ayres, Superintendent David Gray and Leslie Williams

## Work Commences on New \$3.9 Million Fire Station

Construction work on the new Port Macquarie Fire Station is well underway.

The new fire station will provide firefighters with state of the art facilities worthy of a modern fire service. The NSW State Government has invested \$3.9 million in this new fire station, which is being built within Port Macquarie's emergency services precinct.

The site is ideally located to provide firefighters with easy access to and from main roads in Port Macquarie and the new station will service the needs of firefighters and the community well into the future.

This is an important investment in our firefighters and the local community. The new fire station, and the emergency services precinct itself, is a huge boost for the people of Port Macquarie, and for our emergency services personnel.

Work on the new fire station is expected to be completed mid-2015.



## A Surprise Catch For Hastings Baseball

Hastings Baseball has been given a surprise funding boost from the NSW Government allowing them to purchase much needed safety gear for team catchers.

Last month I presented Senior Vice President David Boyton and Committee Member Mark Marino with a cheque for \$900 at a game at Blackbutt Park.

It's great to see baseball back in the Hastings and it's a credit to each of the organising committee that it is enjoying such rejuvenation.

When my son was playing over a decade ago baseball was so popular, particularly among teenagers and I have wonderful memories of Sunday games in Port Macquarie, Wauchope and Kempsey.

I have no doubt the enthusiasm of the players in each of the five local teams will ensure that next year's program of games will be bigger and better.

For further information or if you'd like to join a team direct inquiries to David on 0419 218 575 or email [info@hastingsbaseball.com.au](mailto:info@hastingsbaseball.com.au)

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## Harrington Meetings



Phil Miles, Garry Durrant,  
Steve Atkins, Leslie, Bob Downing

During the past month I have attended a number of meetings in Harrington and at one of those was joined by the Minister for Lands and Water, Kevin Humphries MP to meet with members of the local Action Group to discuss the entrance to the Manning River.

Over the years there has been ongoing discussion about the construction of a southern breakwall but before any funding is allocated for such a sizeable project a feasibility study would need to be carried out. I have asked Minister Humphries to consider this option.

I recently attended a breakfast meeting of the Harrington/Crowdy Head Chamber of Commerce at Club Harrington to discuss improvements to the Harrington Foreshore and State Park which I also inspected with Minister Humphries during his visit. The proposed upgrades and enhancement of the foreshore will be welcomed by the community and visitors and I am seeking funding to progress the projects in stages.



Camden Haven Bravehearts Chair Dale Symons, Leslie and Ditto

## Funding For Shared Cycleways On Track



An ambitious plan to link shared cycleway/pathways in the Camden Haven has taken a step forward with the NSW Government announcing \$420,000 will be provided for the planning and commencement of the projects.

These projects have the strong support of the local community and I am looking forward to seeing work commence now there is significant funding available.

Two projects are being developed by the Beach to Beach and the Schools to Schools committees which, when completed will see around 24 kilometres of shared cycleway/

pathways constructed in the Camden Haven.

The Beach to Beach initiative will include 5.5 kilometres of new cycleway/pathways as part of an 11km circuit that will connect Dunbogan, Laurieton and North Haven. The Schools to Schools project will link Kendall Public School to Laurieton Public School.

These are ambitious and extensive projects that will both vastly improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and will also allow for school children to walk to and from school on a footpath rather than traversing undulating road verges along Ocean Drive.



Bob Wells, Phil Higgins, John Cooke,  
Leslie, Andy McCoubrie and Steve Martin.  
Photo courtesy of Camden Haven Courier



## Bravehearts

The Mid North Coast and Camden Haven Bravehearts Committees are excited about the recent roll-out of the Bravehearts education resource *Ditto in a Box* to all public primary schools.

Thanks to the generosity of the NSW Government a *Ditto in a Box* was distributed to 1,799 public schools enrolling students from Kindergarten to Year 3 to support Bravehearts vision to make Australia the safest place in the world to raise a child.

Our local Bravehearts Committees believe it is critical to provide young children with personal safety tools so they can stay safe in a range of situations from sexual assault to bullying.

The *Ditto in a Box* resource uses colourful posters, flashcards, a fun activity book and a DVD of the Ditto Show to help teachers and parents engage with students and explore personal safety messages with young children.

Bravehearts mascot Ditto joined me on recent visits to Hastings Public School and North Haven Public School to present the *Ditto in a Box* to Principals Grant Heaton and Jock Garvan.



Port Macquarie Bravehearts Chair  
Malcolm Neale, Ditto, Sierra Cummins,  
Zane Smart and Leslie



Minister Stuart Ayres, Leslie Williams, John  
Manderson, Wendy Hudson, Caitlin Rogers,  
Gabby Coles, Phil Robinson

## Kendall Tennis Club Scores A Special Visitor

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Sport and Recreation, Stuart Ayres MP visited the Port Macquarie electorate earlier this month to meet with local police and emergency services officers and to inspect the construction of the new Port Macquarie Fire Station.

Minister Ayres also accepted my invitation to meet with the Kendall Tennis Club Committee to discuss their plans to expand their facilities to accommodate growth in membership.

The Kendall Tennis Club is much more than the name implies and I have witnessed first-hand the expansive

opportunities the facility offers to individual members, wheelchair athletes, young people, seniors and the broader community.

Their expansion plans have been talked about for many years and I am determined to make sure the proposal comes to fruition in the short term.

## Focusing On Mental Health

The improvement of mental health services locally is an ongoing priority and while there has been significant investment in this area there is more to be achieved.

In this year's State Budget, the Mid North Coast Local Health District had an allocation of \$26.5 million for admitted and non-admitted mental health services which is an increase of \$600,000 over the previous year's budget. This includes funding for an additional 1,148 admitted mental health patients.

The Budget also reflects an increase of \$1.3 million (or 42 individual support packages) for provision of the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) for people with mental illness as well as \$600,000 for two Non-Government Organisations to provide key mental health and support services in the community.

I will continue to advocate for an increase in acute mental health inpatient beds and improvements to existing facilities at Port Macquarie Base Hospital as well as community mental health services.

In the meantime, everybody in our community has a role to play in reducing the impact of mental health by increasing their awareness of those vulnerable people in our community.

Mateship is one of the great Australian qualities, but many of us overlook the importance of asking our mates one simple question – "are you OK?"

That's why I was so pleased to be able to take part in an event at Parliament House to recognise the national suicide prevention initiative 'R U OK?' Day with Australian Rugby legend and 'R U OK?' Day Ambassador, Phil Waugh.

'R U OK?' Day reminds us all of the importance of having a meaningful conversation with those that we care about to check on their state of mind and provide support when they need it.



Leslie with Dr Brian Ironwood from Beyond Blue's "Man Therapy" mental health initiative, Minister for Mental Health Jai Rowell and Former Wallaby and 'R U OK?' Day Ambassador Phil Waugh.

## Williams Welcomes Blackspot Funding

Recently, I announced that \$650,000 in Blackspot funding will be spent to improve traffic conditions on two local roads.

The local community including businesses in the Port Macquarie industrial area have made it very clear to me that something needs to be done to improve safety and traffic flow particularly on Lake Road. I have taken both the Minister for Roads, Duncan Gay and Treasurer Andrew Constance to inspect this site on several occasions to discuss ongoing safety and congestion issues.

\$400,000 has been allocated to improve the intersection of Lake Road and Blackbutt Road at Port Macquarie. In addition \$250,000 will be spent to improve the road surface of the Oxley Highway near the Rawdon Island road intersection.

Black spot projects target dangerous roads to save lives, reduce road trauma and ensure our roads are made safer and more productive for all road users.

