

2010 Electorate office visits

I will be visiting the Central Coast area of the electorate to meet with constituents in:

- Yarramalong, Wyong Creek, Kulnura and Palmdale on Tuesday 20 July.
- Alison, Jiliby, Mandalong, Dooralong, Kiar and Wyee on Wednesday 28 July.

To arrange an appointment please phone my office before Friday 16 July.



Helping out with animal rescue

This non-profit incorporated association is licensed by the NSW Department of Conservation and Climate Change to rescue, rehabilitate and release injured, sick, orphaned and distressed native fauna, other than marine mammals, in the Hunter Region.

It operates throughout the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock, Maitland and Port Stephens local government areas.

The NATF is looking for volunteers to become accredited rescuers/carers. Members can be actively involved in: rescuing, rehabilitating and releasing, sewing/knitting pouches and wraps, information technology support, answering the 24-hour hotline, making possum boxes, farming live foods, disaster relief, fundraising and education.

Contact the Secretary, PO Box 1052, Toronto NSW 2283, secretary@hunterwildlife.org.au, www.hunterwildlife.org.au
24 Hour Emergency Rescue Hotline 0418 628 483. In other areas, including Jiliby, Yarramalong and Kulnura, WIRES is the rescue service to call: 1300 094 737.

New hall for Biddibah School

It's been four years since funding was first approved, but construction has finally started on Biddibah School's hall.

Enrolments are now close to 400 and there have been recent upgrades including classrooms, canteen and a covered walkway.

The hall will provide the first indoor area for physical education, assemblies and creative and performing arts.

Until now, these subjects have not been taught to their full potential due to lack of facilities.



With Principal Graeme Mason and pupils.

More consultation on school site future

There has been much concern in the Yarramalong community over the future of the former school.

I met with the Parliamentary Secretary for the Central Coast and Member for Wyong, David Harris, to discuss options for continued public ownership and community use.

Those discussions included a representative of the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the

Land and Property Management Corporation (formerly Department of Lands).

I am pleased that DET has indicated it will not rush into disposal of the land and that it has some sympathy to the wishes of the community.

There will be further consultation in the near future, including local residents, Government agencies and Wyong Shire Council.

Police Minister visits Toronto

Police Minister, the Honourable Michael Daley, accepted my invitation to visit the electorate on 24 May.

At Toronto Police Station he was able to see the poor quality of station facilities and hear about the lack of police that Lake Macquarie endures.

Our police/population ratio is 1/938, which is less than 48% of the State average. This is despite the Local Area Command having a population of around 200,000 and an area geographically difficult to police covering 92 villages spread around both sides of the lake. I



With Commander Craig Rea and Minister Daley.

congratulate our police for doing their best under difficult conditions. I'm sure that the community shares this view, but I know we deserve a more equitable share of the State's police workforce.

FREE TOURS OF PARLIAMENT HOUSE

VISIT BEFORE YOU VOTE: This interactive workshop demystifies voting for Federal and State elections. Watch Question Time if it is a sitting day.

A LITTLE NIGHT SITTING: Find out about Parliament on a sitting evening. Watch the Houses sitting and meet Members. Light refreshment included.

BEHIND THE SCENES: Visit not only the chambers and public places, but also dining rooms, gardens, offices and press gallery.

ART TREASURES: Explore the artworks and artefacts not usually seen by visitors.

Bookings are essential for these tours and can be



arranged by phoning 9230 3444 or e-mailing education@parliament.nsw.gov.au
LUNCHTIME TOURS: 1.00pm 1st Thursday each month. No booking required. Meet in the Legislative Assembly foyer and visit the historic chambers and other areas of Parliament. View the House in session if it's a sitting day.



JUNE 2010

LAKE MACQUARIE MATTERS



GREG PIPER MP
INDEPENDENT MEMBER
FOR LAKE MACQUARIE

Watagan sunset.

Surface mining ban unresolved

The prohibition of surface mining in Lake Macquarie remains unresolved.

The Government says it won't support my Private Member's Bill to permanently ban surface mining.

I am confident that the Bill will prevent open cut mining without affecting traditional mining within the area but I have invited the Government to suggest any amendments if they have any concerns.

It has already set a precedent by banning open cut mining in this rapidly developing area – and rightly so!

What I am trying to achieve is more certainty in what was left as a grey area.

The people of Lake Macquarie deserve guaranteed protection from the health problems and environmental impacts of surface mining.

Rebates won't cover rise in cost of electricity

The Government is pushing on with electricity price rises, even though the Auditor General reported last year that the cost of producing electricity had gone down 6.7%.

The boost in income would increase the sale value of the State's electricity retailers, but at the expense of consumers.

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal approved electricity price increases of \$68 per annum for low-usage customers, but the Government's energy rebate for pensioners provides an increase of only \$16 for the 2010-11 period.

I raised this matter in Parliament and was advised that the Government anticipates an increase in consumers asking for assistance.

If you have difficulty making payments contact your electricity supplier to arrange a hardship agreement.



Governor-General Quentin Bryce chats with Mr Cullen.

A very special day for centenarian

The Governor-General, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, visited the Don Geddes Catalina Memorial Aged Care Centre on 29 March to personally present centenarian Mr Albert Cullen with the Australian Service Medal 1945-75 and Australian Defence Medal for his service as a member of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) during WW2.

The formal ceremony commenced and concluded with an honour guard, comprising members of the RAN forming the Federation Guard. Following the presentation the Governor-General attended a morning tea.

Her Excellency, accompanied by her husband, His Excellency Michael Bryce, members of the RAN and Her Excellency's staff spent a considerable time chatting with Mr Cullen, his family and residents and staff at the Centre.

It was undoubtedly a memorable occasion for all of us present and further demonstrated the Governor-General's graciousness and charm.

CONTACT

If you need help with any State Government matter please contact me.

Office Hours: Monday to Friday, 9am-1pm and 2pm-5pm

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Phone: 4959 3200 Fax: 4950 4076 Email: lakemacquarie@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Visit my website www.gregpiper1.com for current information



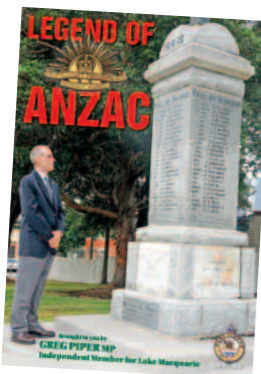
A National Public Toilet Map showing the location of more than 14,000 public and private public toilet facilities across Australia is available online at www.toiletmap.gov.au

You can search by postcode or by clicking on a map, or by using the trip planner. You can use the service to find caravan dump points. If your mobile phone has an internet browser you can search at m.toiletmap.gov.au and there is a downloadable application for iphones as well.

The service is provided by the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing.

ANZAC booklet proves popular

I've had a lot of positive feedback on this year's ANZAC booklet.



Its stories apparently stirred a lot of emotion with those associated with the diggers. Next year I hope to feature other stories with local interest, such as Kokoda and the Battle of Long Tan.

There have been some complaints from people who didn't receive a booklet in the post. If a copy was not delivered to your address, please contact my Electorate Office.

The booklet is also on my website www.gregpiper1.com

Gas, not coal, is the best fuel option

At the "No New Coal" rally outside Parliament on Thursday 25 February I endorsed development of alternative energy sources such as solar, wind and geothermal. I also argued that natural gas must be the alternative to coal for increasing base load power output.

Gas combined cycle technology produces 60% less carbon dioxide emissions than coal and I believe that the Government should have made gas the mandatory fuel when it gave concept approval for new base load

generators at Bayswater and Mt Piper.

The risk now is that developers of these generators will simply opt for coal as the cheaper fuel under the Government's 'fuel neutral' policy.

It appears hypocritical for the Government to subscribe to a 20% reduction in greenhouse emissions by 2020 while considering two new 1200MW power stations at Bayswater and Mt Piper that would produce double the emissions of all the cars on NSW roads. Clearly gas is the answer.

'Sailability' wharf dedicated

The new 'Sailability' wharf at Toronto Amateur Sailing Club was dedicated on 30 May and is a great boost to facilitating participation in activities.

I was pleased to help facilitate and support some of the Government funding for this project and I thank those who generously donated boats.

Sailability is a group that uses recreational and competitive sailing to enrich the lives of the disabled, the elderly and the financially and socially disadvantaged.

The new wharf is a great addition to our maritime precinct.

If you wish to know more about Sailability in Lake Macquarie contact Geoff Thornely on 4959 9273 or 0418 669 570.



At the wharf dedication, (left to right, rear) Geoff Thornely, Greg Piper, Neil Petherbridge, (front) Maryanne Ireland, Wendy Evans.

Petition to fix electorate's most dangerous road

Main Road 217 from Morisset to Wallsend is the major State road serving residents in the Lake Macquarie electorate.

It is the major route for an increasing number of commuters, the only direct connection between many suburbs and the only alternative to the limited access F3.

One of the road's worst problems is on Cary Street, Toronto, between The Boulevard and Bay Street, where there are five intersections within 400 metres and inadequate turning and merging lanes.

Over the past three years the intersection of Cary Street and Victory Parade has had 64 collisions.

This short stretch of road is causing growing traffic delays and dangerous driving, yet most of the land needed to fix this problem has already been acquired by the RTA.

Watch my website and local businesses for a petition calling on the Government to fund this road upgrade.

Review of Tillegra Dam needed

The need for Tillegra Dam is still a clouded issue, with the Government recently making references to it meeting Gosford's water needs.

This is despite the \$477 million dam being paid for entirely by Hunter consumers. People are wondering where their millions of dollars in dividends paid into government revenue by Hunter Water over the past decade have gone.

Gosford and Wyong councils say they will not be purchasing water from the Hunter because of the \$132 million investment in works, including the

Mardi-Mangrove pipeline, which will meet their needs well into the future.

The University of Technology Sydney's Institute of Sustainable Futures is harshly critical of Hunter Water's plans because of poor community consultation, under-reliance on efficiency and demand management and its skewed assumptions on rainfall and drought.

In April a *Sydney Morning Herald* poll asked "Should the Tillegra Dam be built?" and 79% of voters out of 1107 answered NO!

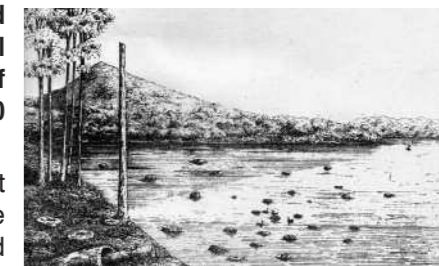
The Hunter survived the recent protracted drought without water restrictions and many people question why they are being forced to pay for a dam they believe they don't need.

The Opposition has implied that it would scrap the dam, by asking the Minister for Water whether he would guarantee that taxpayers would not be locked into any contracts before the election.

The time has come for the Government to either dump Tillegra dam or, as I have requested, commission an independent report.

Fennell Bay fossil forest

The "Petrified Forest" in Fennell Bay is a remnant of at least 500 silicified trees.



An 1842 drawing of Fennell Bay by Rev. WB Clarke.

The trees grew at a level between the Great Northern and Fassifern coal seams and it is believed that they were preserved by a volcanic ash fall.

The tree fossils are not easily visible, but they are most evident just below water level in the shallow bay near Blackalls Park.

The site was significant to Aboriginal inhabitants at the time Rev Lancelot Threlkeld first documented the forest's existence.

The Rev WB Clarke, who became known as the "Father of Australian

Geology", wrote his first geological paper on the forest.

Anecdotal accounts say that much of the fossilised wood was removed for use in landscaping.

The site has been nominated as being of State heritage significance because it is the first described and by far the best known fossil forest in New South Wales.

Information provided by John Byrnes



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LOUD SHIRT DAY: The dress code for Question Time was relaxed on Thursday 13 May to allow Members to enter into the spirit of Loud Shirt Day in support of the work of the Shepherd Centre. Members were encouraged to promote the Shepherd Centre's work in helping children who are deaf or hearing impaired to speak and to enter mainstream schooling. The Centre's programs include early intervention to develop spoken language skills, cochlear implants and workshops for rural and remote areas.

New social housing for Toronto

On 12 February I was pleased to welcome the residents of a new development in Toronto.

The five "Seniors Living" units were built by the Department of Housing and will be managed by Compass Housing Services.

The building was designed for the location and is sympathetic to the existing streetscape.

The project was well planned before the funding was announced. This is in stark contrast to the way in which other Department of Housing projects have been fast tracked with little regard to local issues and Council advice.

This is a good news story – one that shows that social housing can be embraced by existing communities when they are properly considered.



With new residents and staff of Compass Housing.