



GREG PIPER MP
INDEPENDENT MEMBER
FOR LAKE MACQUARIE

LAKE MACQUARIE MATTERS

Parliament House. Photograph by Greg Piper

We need more police, better police stations

The Lake Macquarie Local Area Command deserves more staff and an improved standard of facilities.

I have worked for five years for such improvements and my submission to the recent review of Police resources can be found on my website, at www.gregpiper1.com

Our police deserve better workplaces than the cramped and outdated ones at Morisset



and Toronto and I am hopeful that there will be a major announcement in the near future.

Additional staff are essential for the large and challenging local command area spread around the lake.



Coalmining threat to Wyong valleys returns

The proposal for mining under the water catchment in the Wyong valleys has once again cast its shadow over the Central Coast community, part of which extends into this electorate.

The application was rejected by the previous Government because of its potential water, subsidence, ecological and heritage impacts.

The Liberal Opposition said at the time: "A NSW Coalition government will not permit any coalmining in the water catchment..." and that "if necessary, special legislation will be introduced ..."

With the new application planned for 2012, residents are waiting for the Government to fulfil its promise to protect the water supply by closing the door on this mine.

Helen's award for caring

Congratulations to Helen Baczynskij of Toronto, who has been appointed as an Ambassador (Caring Family or Parent) by the Minister for Ageing and Disability Services.

Helen provides round-the-clock care for her daughters and elderly stepfather in her home at Toronto.

She has chaired Newcastle Temporary Care Ltd, a community-based respite care service, and she coordinates support groups for mothers of autistic children.

Helen regularly attends staff induction programs for the Ageing, Disability and Home Care Hunter Region to share her insights as a carer.

NSW Carers Awards recognise outstanding individuals and groups, helping to raise awareness of the vital role carers play in communities across the State.



Award recipient Helen Baczynskij

DID YOU KNOW?

◆ There are about 850,000 carers in NSW.
See www.carers.asn.au or phone 0414 425 376



It's eight months since the people of NSW voted for a change of government and I think it is fair to say that the Government has been successful in making some significant changes in this time.

THE STATE OF THE STATE

While I have not supported the Government's entire program, it is inarguable that the massive majority gained in the Legislative Assembly conferred a mandate for change on the O'Farrell/Stoner Government.

The new government has been forthright in its approach to change and we can form

our own judgments on the results.

So far I'm pleased with Lake Macquarie's treatment under the new regime and I am hopeful that we will continue to do well.

The Government's overarching plan for the State is outlined in the document **NSW 2021 A Plan to Make NSW Number One**. Copies are available from my office.

Electoral Matters

Preferences

Every election brings much comment about preferences, with many people concerned about where their preferences will go.

Despite confusion about our preferential voting system, the fact is that only the voter can direct preferences – nothing any candidate says or does can change this.

At a polling booth you will be given candidates' suggestions in the form of 'how to vote' leaflets, but allocating preferences is your choice.

Animations explaining the processes for both Houses of Parliament can be found by visiting www.elections.nsw.gov.au and searching 'preferential votes'.

The short videos explain that if you don't give preferences you could unintentionally help your least favoured candidate to win.

Electorate boundaries

Residents in parts of the electorate within the Wyong Local Government Area understandably don't feel a strong association with Lake Macquarie.

People anywhere from Kulnura to Ourimbah Creek have a little more trouble than most in reaching their 'local' Member of Parliament.

Being mindful of the geographical 'divide' I have always provided the best service I can by visiting these areas each year or when required by constituents.

However, I feel that the electoral boundaries could better reflect 'communities of interest' when next determined by the Electoral Commission.

A review of electoral boundaries is due before the 2015 election and once more there will be the balancing act of defining 93 electorates with close to equal populations.

The public will be invited to lodge written submissions when the process begins.

Electorate Events

Morisset health facility meeting 17 March

The meeting called by Southlake Integrated Health Care Committee invited candidates in the State election to state their positions on a new public health facility for Morisset.

I was pleased to report on my participation in the committee and the progress we are making.



Making a point at the public meeting

Bonnells Bay Men's Shed opens 18 June

The new Salvation Army Men's Shed at Bonnells Bay is a great benefit to the local area.

NSW has over 180 Men's Sheds with a membership of over 14,000. A number of countries are developing programs based on the successful model of Australian Men's Sheds.



With Lt Col Kerry Haggar

DID YOU KNOW?

- The term NAIDOC comes from National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Flying the flag for NAIDOC

5 July

After flag-raising ceremonies at the Council chambers and Toronto Courthouse, there was a march down The Boulevard at Toronto, followed by a family fun day at the foreshore.



NAIDOC celebration

Kangaroos protected

22 August

After public outrage over a series of atrocities inflicted on kangaroos at Morisset Hospital, new gates have been installed in an effort to prevent further attacks.

Particular thanks should go to the Native Animal Trust Fund for its part in lobbying to stop the cruelty.

The NATF can be contacted at 0418 628 483.

Catalina Festival

5 November

This year's festival broke all records, with attendance increasing to 5,000 and the RAAF's stunt flying team, The Roulettes, thrilling onlookers.

There were displays of seaplanes and other aircraft, as well as military vehicles. Progress is being made towards restoring Catalina VH-CAT and basing it at Rathmines. Proceeds from the festival will greatly assist in this goal.

Information on this project can be found at www.catalinaflying.org.au





Road users see red over Woodrising traffic lights

The installation of the lights, although well intentioned, appears to disrupt the smooth flow of traffic on Toronto Road.

The lights fail to meet the needs of the vast majority of motorists and provide little benefit to the people of Woodrising.

I have received many complaints and referred these to the former RTA – now Roads and Maritime Services.

Southbound traffic can be held up as far north as Booragul and there have been many rear-end collisions.

I have pointed out to the RTA that a lot of traffic is delayed for a very few vehicles leaving Woodrising.



There would be a benefit in altering the timing of the lights and modifying the sequence so that left turns from Enterprise Way don't stop the through traffic on the main road.

I have asked the Minister for Roads to investigate the problem.

Well-deserved award for welfare worker



Anita Barker (left) is congratulated by Coral Allen

It is an absolute pleasure to support the efforts of community members who work selflessly to assist others.

This year I was delighted to nominate two people whose dedication and commitment to the community deserves to be acknowledged.

One recipient was Anita Barker, who is coordinator of the Toronto Aboriginal Community Justice Group and a number of other committees working on Aboriginal welfare matters. She is particularly interested in encouraging young people to take pride in their Aboriginal culture.

State honours for young sportspeople

This year I've had the pleasure of nominating a number of young sportspeople for State awards.

Congratulations to Dakota Thomas, Abigail Hamilton, Corey Hamilton, Sarah Petherbridge, Morgan Petherbridge, Thomas Stivano, Thomas Fraser, Michael Fraser, Isaac Fluery, Rees Wilde, Adam Metcalfe, Hayden Domanti and Jordan Johnson for winning State Representative Awards.

RIGHT: Dakota Thomas



\$400,000 for community projects

Lake Macquarie electorate was allocated \$400,000 under this year's Community Building Partnership program.

Twenty-nine community groups have nominated projects with a total value of \$1.5

million. This will mean that some projects miss out and some will be partially funded.

A list of successful applicants will be published soon on the Community Building Partnership website.

Smart meters cause concern

New smart meters and the introduction of time-of-use metering have proven a great concern for many electricity consumers, although shifting your usage to shoulder and off-peak times can help minimise your energy charges.

Some retailers will allow you to revert to your old tariff system even if you have a new meter, so if you are unhappy you may be able to change back.

Retailers don't advertise this option, so you would need to phone and ask.

Land values and rates

Many people are concerned at the effect of property values on council rates, so here's a brief explanation of how it works.

The Office of the NSW Valuer General has the responsibility of determining the unimproved capital value of your land, i.e. excluding the value of your house and other improvements.

This is done every three years and based principally on sales prices in your area.

Councils calculate rates in one of three ways:

- a combination of the land value of the property and a fixed amount per property
- entirely on the land value of the property
- entirely on the land value but subject to a minimum amount.

The process is intended to ensure fairness and equity for ratepayers.

You can object to a valuation, however you need to present a convincing argument.

Changed property values do not affect the total amount of rates collected by a council but they can affect the amount each owner will pay.



Season's Greetings

My staff and I wish you all the best for the festive season and a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year.

This year has seen significant changes that affect us all and we should expect more changes and challenges in 2012.

However, we can all look forward to a new year with optimism. This newsletter includes items on people whose efforts have improved the lives of those around them and I encourage others to follow their lead.

I look forward to serving you through 2012 and beyond.

Greg Piper MP, Member for Lake Macquarie

Your Merry Christmas may depend on what others do for you, but your Happy New Year depends on what you do for others.

– Anonymous

ELECTORATE OFFICE CLOSURE

My Electorate Office will be closed over the Christmas New Year period and I anticipate it will reopen on 9 January 2012.

Christmas Community Lunch

CHRISTMAS DAY 2011
11.30am – 3.00pm. Morisset Multipurpose Centre
143 Dora Street, Morisset

A Christmas Day Lunch is planned at the Morisset Multipurpose Centre for any person who might find themselves isolated or alone on Christmas Day.

WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO SPEND CHRISTMAS WITH US

Transport is available by arrangement. Collection times by Community Bus commences 11.00am. Return service commences 2.00pm.

Enjoy a 2 course Christmas lunch with trimmings, Christmas treats, decorations & entertainment

For more information call Southlakes Carers on 4973 3855

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL RSVP by 16th December

Main Road at Boolaroo saved

The former Pasmenco smelter's administrator proposed closing Main Road as part of the site's redevelopment.

A spirited public campaign erupted and I was relieved when the

developer and the RTA agreed to keep the road open with a new roundabout at TC Frith Avenue.

However, the developer has not agreed to connect the Munibung Road extension to the roundabout.

1200 sign up for pollution deal

Over 1200 households of the 1800 eligible have signed up to the strategy for dealing with properties potentially contaminated by the former Pasmenco smelter.

About one quarter of these

properties have been tested and the results show that around 25 per cent of those will require some abatement work. I congratulate those residents who made what I believe to be the best decision.

Help with mortgage stress

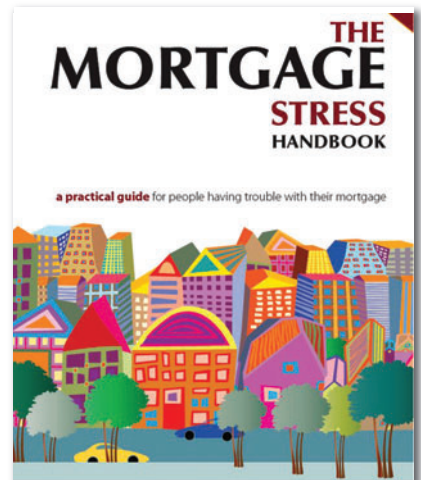
A second edition of the Mortgage Stress Handbook with up to date information has been published by Legal Aid NSW and the Consumer Credit Legal Centre NSW.

This handbook is a plain English guide covering:

- What the lender has to do to take possession of your home
- What you can do to stop the lender taking possession of your home
- How to negotiate a repayment arrangement
- What to do if the lender won't agree to a repayment arrangement
- Accessing your superannuation and mortgage assistance (if available)
- Getting a stay if the lender has a court order to evict you from your home
- Getting help.

Information is provided about government mortgage assistance schemes, financial counselling contacts and other useful services across Australia.

The book is available online at www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/mortgagestresshandbook or hard copies are available from my office.



Recycle your printer cartridges

In its nine years Planet Ark's cartridge recycling has seen over 15 million printer cartridges recycled.

A significant volume of material has been diverted from landfill and 6,900 tonnes of plastics, metals, ink and toner have been re-used.

The free program is coordinated through a network of over 30,000 locations nationwide. Locally, this includes Post Offices at Toronto, Morisset, Cooranbong, Sunshine, Teralba and Warners Bay, Officeworks, Warners Bay and Trash Converters at Teralba.



CONTACT

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

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Visit my website www.gregpiper1.com for current information