



State Connection

By The Hon Thomas George MP, Nationals Member for Lismore
July 2012

55 Carrington Street, Lismore 2480

www.thomasgeorge.com.au lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au 02 6621 3624

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Local events
- 2 Government Review & Inquiries
- 5 NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards
- 6 NSW Ageing Strategy
Youth Opportunities
- 7 Northern Rivers Jobs Plan
Telstra Foundation Grants
- 8 Youth Parliament
CSG
- 9 New Home Grant Scheme
Working with Children Checks
- 10 National Community Housing Regulations
Half Price Licences
Mental Health Lines
- 11 Moratorium on Enforcement Fees
Easy Bus Service
- 12 Mothers Help Line
Rego Stickers Abolished
- 13 Local Govt Elections
National Parks Website
- 14 TARS Info Session
Suicide Prevention
Congratulations
- 15 Media Releases
- 16 Photos

Events around the electorate

Some events I have attended in the electorate and Sydney during the past month include -

- Mt St Patrick College Deb Ball
- Ticket Sales Launch for Tyalgum Festival
- Beef Week
- SCU VC Awards for Excellence Dinner Dance
- St Carthage's Community Care Celebration
- Presented a defibrillator to Clunes School & community
- Guest speaker at U3A meeting
- Richmond LAC Police Awards
- Presented funding certificate to Nature Conservation Trust NSW & Tweed Landcare
- Opening of Murwillumbah Agricultural Trade Training Centre
- Marist Brothers Rugby League Centenary Celebration Dinner
- Lismore Business Excellence Awards
- Primex
- Presentation of funding to Northern Rivers NILS
- Kids in Community Awards
- Cheque presentation to Murwillumbah Netball Club
- Tackling Domestic Violence Workshop
- Presentation to Helen Wynd of Hon Life Membership to Red Cross
- Lions Club of Lismore Annual Changeover Dinner
- National Service Association Reserve Forces Day Memorial Service
- Northern University Games opening Ceremony
- Lord Taverner's Breakfast with Adam Gilchrist
- Visits by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Fair Trading & Minister for Sport & Recreation

Functions whilst in Sydney -

- Plein Air Painting Prize Awards Ceremony
- Launch of Palliative Care NSW
- Australia's Biggest Morning Tea at Parliament House
- Go Red for Women Parliamentary Breakfast
- Youth Parliament

Government Reviews & Inquiries

Draft Native Vegetation Regulation

The NSW Government is reviewing the Native Vegetation Regulation and a draft Regulation, which proposes to cut red tape and allow farmers to get on with their business, is currently on public exhibition.

A draft Environmental Outcomes Assessment Methodology, draft Private Native Forestry Code of Practice and Regulatory Impact Statement have also been released.

The new regulation proposes a more streamlined approach to native vegetation management based on greater trust, flexibility and transparency.

The draft Native Vegetation Regulation, draft EOAM, draft Private Native Forestry Code of Practice, Regulatory Impact Statement and other material to help explain the proposed changes can be viewed or downloaded at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/ReviewofNVRegulations.htm.

To have your say on the proposed changes, send your comments to OEH by 24 August 2012 to native.vegetation@environment.nsw.gov.au or Native Vegetation Regulation Review, Conservation Policy and Strategy Section, Office of Environment and Heritage, Level 12, PO Box A290, Sydney South NSW 1232.

Support for Small Business Operators

Small business operators are encouraged to have their say on a Consultation Paper on proposed legislation to support the role of the NSW Small Business Commissioner.

It is important the Commissioner has the appropriate powers and responsibilities to assist our State's vital small business sector. The objective of the legislation is to help create an environment which allows NSW small businesses to grow and thrive.

Copies of the Paper can be found at www.smallbusiness.nsw.gov.au and comments close 27 July.

The Commissioner is also undertaking a Listening Tour of the state and will be in Lismore on Tuesday 24 July from 7.30-9.00am at NSW Trade & Investment office, Rous Water Building, Molesworth Street and in Murwillumbah on Tuesday 24 July from 12.30-2.00pm at Greenhills on Tweed, 131 River Street. RSVP is necessary for these events and can be also done on the website.

Planning Green Paper

A New Planning System for New South Wales - Green Paper, a bold step in the development of a new planning system for the State has been released by the Government.

The Green Paper outlines major changes in key areas of the planning system, these will result in reforms across a number of areas.

Community and industry feedback is welcome for a period of two months. Once the Government has received and considered the feedback from the community, a White Paper will be released, providing much more detail on how the new system will be implemented.

Copies of the paper can be downloaded from www.planning.nsw.gov.au/a-new-planning-system-for-nsw. Submissions close 14 September.

Funding of Emergency Services

The Government is seeking community feedback to develop a better, fairer and more efficient way of funding emergency services in NSW. Recent reviews of the state tax system, including the Henry Tax Review, have recommended we move to a property based levy.

Funding currently comes from three sources, with the bulk of funding (73.7 per cent) provided by a tax on insurance companies, while the remainder of the funds is provided by local governments (11.7 per cent) and the State Government (14.6 per cent).

Taxing insurance increases the price of insurance and can lead some people to under-insure and others not to insure at all. The system is also unfair because people who are either not insured or are under-insured do not contribute to the funding of our emergency services, but still receive the same coverage as those who do pay insurance.

A better and fairer system would spread the costs across the whole community. The Government is considering a number of ways to replace the current insurance-based levy to bring NSW into line with most States and Territories.

Whatever the final shape of the new levy, there will be no change to the total level of funds currently provided for fire and emergency services.

The Discussion Paper and public submissions can be found at www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/ESL and is open until 8 October 2012.

Going Home Staying Home

Going Home Staying Home - a program to reform the specialist homelessness services system in NSW has been launched. Going Home Staying Home will deliver system-wide changes to improve client outcomes, building on the good work already undertaken in the sector under the NSW Homelessness Action Plan and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

Central to consultation will be the formation of a Sector Reference Group to provide a perspective on reform. The Group will be comprised of the six main peak representative bodies involved in homelessness.

The Chief Executive, Housing NSW, has also invited experts in the field of homelessness to participate as part of a panel of experts to provide advice and guidance as required on reform directions.

A consultation paper which puts forward the case for reform and provides a platform to initiate stakeholder engagement and focus stakeholder input towards the reform directions has also been released.

A series of regional forums to discuss the consultation paper and seek feedback from local and regional stakeholders is currently being finalised.

Peak bodies, service providers, homeless people, consumers of specialist homelessness services and other stakeholders are invited to comment on the strategic direction for homelessness service reform and provide feedback on the consultation questions presented in the consultation paper.

Comments are invited before 31st August 2012. Copies of the paper can be viewed at <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/557AEF34-86ED-4D61-B62A-A7FF3324DFBC/0/GHSHConsultationPaper.pdf>

Inquiry into the management of public land in New South Wales

That General Purpose Standing Committee No 5 inquire into and report on the management of public land in New South Wales, including State Forests and National Park estate, and in particular:

1. The conversion of Crown Land, State Forests and agricultural land into National Park estate or other types of conservation areas, including the:
 - a. Process of conversion and the assessment of potential operational, economic, social and environmental impacts
 - b. Operational, economic, social and environmental impacts after conversion, and in particular, impacts upon neighbours of public land and upon Local Government
 - c. That the following cases be considered in relation to Terms of Reference 1(a) and 1(b):
River Red Gum State Forests in the Southern Riverina,
Native Hardwood State Forests in Northern NSW,
Yanga Station in Wakool Shire, and
Toorale Station in Bourke Shire.
2. The adherence to management practices on all public land that are mandated for private property holders, including fire, weed and pest management practices.
3. Examination of models for the management of public land, including models that provide for conservation outcomes which utilise the principles of "sustainable use".
4. Any other related matters.

Closing date for submissions is 3 August

Inquiry into the provision of alcohol to minors

That the Committee inquire into and report on matters relating to the provision of alcohol to minors by parents and guardians, specifically whether:

- a. provisions in the *Liquor Act 2007*, which make it illegal for persons to sell or supply alcohol to people under the age of 18 years, including in homes, parks, halls and public places generally, are sufficient;
- b. provisions in the *Liquor Act 2007*, which provide that a person must not supply liquor to a minor on any premises other than licensed premises unless the person is a parent or guardian of the minor, remain appropriate;
- c. the defence against prosecution for an offence of providing liquor to a minor if it is proved that the defendant was authorised by the minor's parent or guardian to supply liquor to the minor, remains appropriate;
- d. there is broad community understanding of the rights and responsibilities of parents, guardians and responsible adults regarding the provision of alcohol to minors;
- e. New South Wales can benefit from experiences in other jurisdictions in relation to the provision of alcohol to minors by parents, guardians or responsible adults; and
- f. any other related matters.

Closing date for submissions is 30 July

Inquiry into the adequacy of water storages in NSW

That the Standing Committee on State Development inquire into and report on the adequacy of water storages in NSW, and in particular:

- a. the capacity of existing water storages to meet agricultural, urban, industrial and environmental needs,
- b. models for determining water requirements for the agricultural, urban, industrial and environmental sectors,
- c. storage management practices to optimise water supply to the agricultural, urban, industrial and environmental sectors,
- d. proposals for the construction and/or augmentation of water storages in NSW with regard to storage efficiency, engineering feasibility, safety, community support and cost benefit,
- e. water storages and management practices in other Australian and international jurisdictions,
- f. any other matter relating to the adequacy of water storages in NSW.

Closing date for submissions is 3 August

Inquiry into the partial defence of provocation

That the Select Committee on the Partial Defence of Provocation inquire into and report on:

- a. the retention of the partial defence of provocation including:
 - i. abolishing the defence,
 - ii. amending the elements of the defence in light of proposals in other jurisdictions,
- b. the adequacy of the defence of self-defence for victims of prolonged domestic and sexual violence, and
- c. any other related matters.

Closing date for submissions is 10 August

Further information about any of these inquiries can be found at - <http://parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parliament/committee.nsf/V3Home>

NSW Volunteer of the Year Award

Nominations are open for the NSW Volunteer of the Year Award. These annual awards, run by the Centre for Volunteering, recognise and celebrate the outstanding contributions of the 2 million plus volunteers in NSW.

The awards recognise exceptional volunteers in several categories, including youth, senior, team, corporate and volunteer management.

Volunteers in NSW contribute more than 240 million hours of voluntary work each year, estimated to be worth a remarkable \$5 billion. They also play a vital role in promoting community harmony and strength.

For more information on the NSW Volunteer of the Year Awards and to nominate, visit www.nswvolunteerawards.com. Nominations close 31 August for individual and team categories, or 31 October for corporate and volunteer management categories.

NSW Ageing Strategy

The NSW Ageing Strategy - a whole-of-government approach to help seniors live healthy, active and socially connected lives has been launched. A number of initiatives will be delivered as part of the Strategy, including \$500,000 to fund low cost training programs to help seniors become 'tech savvy.'

We are living in an online world. Providing affordable training on how to use computers, smartphones and tablets will give seniors the ability to find information and the chance to connect with people here and around the world.

A new grants program will also be established as part of the Strategy to help local councils build age-friendly communities. The Local Government Shires Association will administer a funding pool of \$550,000 to assist councils with infrastructure, focusing on accessible town centres.

An ageing community has big implications for health, transport and urban planning and that a whole-of-government approach would be taken in implementing the strategy.

A new helpline focused on the abuse of older people will be established as part of the Strategy.

For a long time people have been calling for a helpline to tackle this issue, particularly financial and psychological abuse. The new service will help older people, front line service providers, families and carers end abuse and is a step towards preventing it before it occurs.

For further information the NSW Ageing Strategy can be viewed at www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/ageing

Youth Opportunities Funding

Grant applications for the Youth Opportunities program are now open. This is a new \$3.1 million program designed to support youth-led activities in local communities.

Funding is available for projects that use mentoring and other strategies to help young people feel more included in and give back to their communities.

Young people have a lot to offer society, when they have access to the right chances and the right choices.

Youth and community organisations and local government can apply for grants of up to \$50,000 for one-off, time-limited projects. A total of \$2.6 million in grant funding is available. A further \$500,000 in funding will be allocated to targeted initiatives, such as fostering local government and civic engagement among young people, linking young graduates with employers, and helping young Aboriginal people get the driver licenses that help them get jobs.

Grant applications close 30 July. For more information go to www.youth.nsw.gov.au.

Northern Rivers Jobs Plan

A Northern Rivers Jobs Plan will be developed to help Northern Rivers businesses create new jobs to support economic growth in the region. The Plan will outline how the creation of local jobs will be delivered. Incentives for eligible businesses will include direct grant assistance, payroll tax rebates, and contributions to enabling infrastructure that can support new employment.

The Northern Rivers Jobs Plan will work flexibly and responsively to the changing needs of regional businesses to help them expand and create new jobs.

Eligible businesses in the Northern Rivers region that can create at least two new jobs can now apply for funding from NSW Trade and Investment. All applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis on their potential to create jobs.

Priority will be given to businesses located in the Clarence Valley, but businesses located in the Tweed Heads, Kyogle, Lismore, Byron, Ballina and Richmond Valley local government areas will also be considered.

Applications for Round One of funding will open on **16 July 2012** and close on **24 August 2012** with successful applicants expected to be made public at the end of September after being assessed on a competitive basis.

Prospective applicants should discuss their proposed project directly with staff at the Lismore office of NSW Trade & Investment in the first instance to ensure they meet eligibility requirements. Application forms for assistance will only be issued following discussion of the proposed project.

Prospective applicants can contact Craig Jenkins, Business Development Manager in NSW Trade and Investment's Lismore Office, on 6622 6145 or via email on craig.jenkins@industry.nsw.gov.au.

Telstra Foundation Grants

To mark its 10th anniversary, the Telstra Foundation has launched the *Everyone Connected* Grants program.

The *Everyone Connected* Grants program is designed to assist disadvantaged Australians enjoy the benefits of modern communication technology.

One hundred \$10,000 grants are available to non-profit community organisations to support local activities that help enhance digital inclusion by connecting disadvantaged children and young people to the internet, build their online skills or promote cyber safety.

Non-profit community organisations can directly apply for a grant by visiting the Telstra Foundation website (www.telstrafoundation.com). Applications close on Monday 30 July 2012.

Youth Parliament

I had the privilege of again attending the YMCA NSW Youth Parliament in Sydney recently. The program, which comprises of 110 'Youth MPs' representing 92 of 93 state electorates, identifies State issues relating to young people and gives young people the opportunity to formulate legislative solutions in a mock Parliamentary setting.

Youth Parliament gives young people a fantastic opportunity to sit in the chamber of our own policymakers, and I was pleased to chair the group's debate on the issue of Coal Seam Gas.

The 'Youth MP's' battling it out in the 'bear pit' are not only identifying youth issues in their electorates, but are debating self written, legislative solutions that will be presented directly to the NSW Government at its conclusion.

Issues which were debated this year include salary and qualification reform for teachers, Indigenous mentor program development and limiting the market share of Australia's grocery-industry giants.

I was pleased the Lismore electorate was again represented by two excellent students Brendan Pearce from Kadina High School and Alice Fleetwood from Richmond River High School.



Coal Seam Gas

The Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner recently announced at The Nationals Conference that the NSW Government will appoint a new Land and Water Commissioner, end the royalty holiday for coal seam gas producers, and encourage producers to contribute funds to local projects under a new community benefits initiative.

A new Land and Water Commissioner to oversee the regulation of invasive exploration activity on Strategic Regional Land before this activity occurs. This will strengthen the position of affected land owners.

Standardised land access agreements for coal seam gas exploration on private land will be introduced to deliver greater consistency and fairness for landholders.

Regional Community Funds, will see local communities receive a share of their region's assets. Given the resource is owned by the public, it's important that local communities and the people of NSW benefit from the production of coal seam gas through royalties and investment in communities in which the industry operates.

Under the proposed framework, coal seam gas producers may elect to contribute funding into a Regional Community Fund. The NSW Government will refund \$1 for every \$2 committed by industry, up to 10 per cent of the royalty take.

The Government contribution will be funded by ending the royalty holiday for Coal Seam Gas producers.

These additional measures have been welcomed by the NSW Farmers Association.

New Home Grant Scheme

An innovative and comprehensive Building the State package was announced in our Budget to kick-start housing development and directly tackle the housing shortage across our State, including measures to better target incentives to new homes.

The NSW Government has introduced a new measure - the New Home Grant Scheme - which offers \$5,000 to all non-first homebuyers of new properties whether off the plan or newly built, up to the value of \$650,000.

Those buying vacant land up to the value of \$450,000 with the intention of building a new home will also receive the grant, which is available to investors as well as owner occupiers.

The stamp duty exemption increases to \$550,000 (up from \$500,000) with concessions to \$650,000 for first home buyers of new homes, while the exemption increases to \$350,000 (up from \$300,000) and concession to \$450,000 for vacant land.

From 1 October 2012, the *First Home Owner Grant* will more than double to \$15,000 and then continue at \$10,000 from 2014 for first time homebuyers of new properties.

Safer And Simpler Check For Working With Children

The NSW Government is modernising the Working With Children Check by making it simpler, safer and more widely available.

Under the new system, all people working with children will get the same check - whether they are paid workers, self-employed, volunteers, carers or other adults living in a foster carer's house.

When people apply there will be only two outcomes - they will be cleared to work with children, or they will be barred. If cleared, people will need to reapply for a check every five years and new criminal records will be continuously monitored.

Background checks on workers are an important safeguard for protecting children and young people, including kids at child care, school, and recreational activities.

As with the current Check, an adult convicted of a serious sex offence or serious violence against a child, or with pending charges for such an offence, will be automatically barred from working with children.

The new Working With Children Check will be phased in over five years for existing employees and volunteers, while new staff will undergo the new Check when it comes into force later this year. The new Check will be free for volunteers while paid workers will pay \$80 - which works out at just \$16 a year over five years and is below the national average.

Not everyone who comes into contact with children is required to undergo the Working With Children Check - it is reserved for people whose work is focused on children and whose work requires ongoing role-oriented contact with children. Regulations will outline definitions of child-related work and exemptions from the Check, including for parents volunteering with their own children.

Improved National Community Housing Regulation

A bill has been introduced in support of a uniform national system of registration, monitoring and regulation of community housing providers.

The National Regulatory System for community housing is a national initiative being led by the NSW Government. It will improve services by providing a regulatory framework that will give confidence to community housing providers, their clients and investors.

The *Community Housing Providers (Adoption of National Law) Bill 2012* is part of this Government's commitment to improved housing services by ensuring the viability, good governance and continued growth of the sector, now and into the future.

The new system aims to grow the industry, create a level playing field for housing providers Australia-wide, and better protect tenants through consistent national standards for providers and their services.

Half Price Licence

From 1 July motorists will pay half price for their licence if they have a good driving record for five years.

About 2.1 million motorists will be eligible for the cheaper licence out of 4.3 million unrestricted licence holders in NSW.

Safe motorists, who obey the law, stick to the speed limits and do the right thing, should be rewarded for their contribution to road safety.

The 'Fair Go for Safe Drivers' scheme aims to provide a financial incentive for people who do the right thing during a five year period.

From 1 July 2012 unrestricted driver licence renewal fees are \$52 for one year, \$122 for three years and \$162 for five years.

Mental Health Line

Every resident of NSW will have direct telephone access to expert mental health advice for the first time following the launch of a 24 hour telephone support service.

The NSW Government has established the *1800 011 511 Mental Health Line* to ensure that people with a mental health problem, their families and carers can access the care they need whenever and wherever they need it.

The *Mental Health Line* will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will provide a telephone triage assessment and referral service staffed by mental health clinicians.

Moratorium On Enforcement Fees For Overdue Fines

The NSW Government has put in place a moratorium until 31 July on enforcement fees for more than half a billion dollars in unpaid fines.

More than \$571 million worth of overdue fines have not been paid and the Government is giving people until the end of next month to pay them without being charged an enforcement fee.

This applies to all Government fines such as traffic, parking, car registration, license renewals, court orders and those imposed by NSW Police.

From 1 July 2012, most enforcement costs on overdue fines will increase from \$50 to \$65.

If fines continue to go unpaid, tougher penalties can be imposed like the suspension of a drivers licence, a garnishee of wages or even the seizure of assets.

If you can't afford to clear a debt with a one off payment, arrangements can be made to pay fines by instalments and this will also get the benefit of the moratorium.

Anyone who wishes to take advantage of the moratorium should visit the State Debt Recovery website at www.sdrc.nsw.gov.au.

In addition Legal Aid and the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) are running fine days across the Northern Rivers to assist those who owe money to State Debt. Clinics will be held at the following locations -

17/7/12	Tabulam Hall	9.30am-12.30pm
17/7/12	Bonalbo Aboriginal Community Centre	1.00-3.00pm
18/7/12	Casino Community & Cultural Centre	9.30am-12.30pm
24/7/12	Muli Muli Aboriginal Land Council	9.30am-12.30pm
24/4/12	Gugin Guddaba Local Aboriginal Land Council, Kyogle	2.00-4.00pm
25/7/12	Minjungbul Aboriginal Cultural Centre, South Tweed	9.30am-3.30pm
31/7/12	Rekindling the Spirit, Molesworth St, Lismore	9.30am-3.30pm

"Easy Bus" Service

A new shuttle service will operate between Casino and Lismore to entice more tourists to the Lismore and Richmond Valley shires.

Tweed Byron Transit has been provided funding from Destination NSW to provide a huge boost for tourism across the Northern Rivers region. The service will open up opportunities for international and Australian visitors arrive from Brisbane and Gold Coast airports to travel further and experience the lush countryside and warm hospitality of Lismore and Richmond Valley.

The shuttle service will provide day return trips from Byron Bay to both Lismore and Casino.

Reaching Out To Regional Mothers With Mental Illness

Women in regional and remote communities who are pregnant or have recently given birth and are experiencing mental health issues will have access to specialised support services under a landmark State-wide program.

The new State-wide Outreach Perinatal Service (SwOPS) will ensure that regional women are able to access vital support and advice previously only available in metropolitan areas.

Issues like postnatal depression can have a profound and devastating impact on a mother, her baby and her family, yet for far too long women living outside our cities have not had timely or expert support, and regional women have had much poorer health outcomes as a result.

This service will, for the first time, give regional women access to specialist clinicians and vital perinatal information including telepsychiatry, telephone consultation, supervision and outreach visits, without them having to leave their communities and their families.

SwOPS will link regional health workers to specialist services in Sydney to support women suffering from moderate to severe mental health problems, either during pregnancy or in the first year following the baby's birth, and reduce the need for women to be treated away from home.

NSW To Abolish Registration Stickers For Cars

Registration labels will be abolished from 1 January 2013.

The chore of getting off the old label and sticking on the new one will be no longer. This move is a simple yet practical one that will make life that little bit easier for car owners. The cut to red tape will also be of particular benefit to companies with large vehicle fleets, like car rental companies and delivery firms.

Despite the abolition of registration labels, current developments in NSW Police and RMS technology will still ensure the present levels of compliance and enforcement are maintained through for example automatic number plate recognition technology.

There is no excuse for driving a car unregistered and uninsured - you will be caught.

Vehicle owners will continue to receive notifications from the Roads and Maritime Services and from CTP insurers reminding them to renew their registration and insurance.

Motorists can also easily check the status of their vehicle registration using the RMS online Free Registration Check service at <http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/myrta/rego/free-registration-check.html>.

Local Government Elections

Business and property owners have until the end of the month to get on the non-residential roll for the local council elections.

The Local Government Act gives people the right to vote multiple times, therefore those who live outside a local government area are eligible to vote if they own a business or property in a shire.

The non-residential roll for each area lapses after each election, so you do have to apply to get on the roll before each election.

Further information contact your local Council or visit http://elections.nsw.gov.au/state_elections/enrolment/non-residential_roll.

New National Parks Website

The NSW Government has unveiled a new approach to promoting national parks with a state-of-the-art website that will help meet its commitment to double tourism expenditure in NSW over the next decade.

The new dynamic NPWS website www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au is a one-stop-shop highlighting 72 national parks with a full list of attractions which will expand to include 180 parks over the next two years.

This is the first phase of the rollout of our new website, starting with our most popular and unique parks and featuring our regional tourism destination campaigns.

It will include listings of all the must see and do experiences, including lookouts, picnic areas, cycling trails, horse riding and canoeing and will allow people, for the first time, to book accommodation in some of the State's most spectacular spots.

Also being launched today is the *Naturescapes Collection* iPad app, available for free download from the Apple Store and the new *Naturescapes* travel-style magazine.

The *Naturescapes Collection* iPad app is the first of its type in Australia, which allows people to browse the very best in accommodation and book instantly.

You can choose from heritage lighthouse accommodation with panoramic ocean views; an isolated cottage surrounded by wilderness; relaxed beach cottages; an island teeming with birds and native marine wildlife or one of Sydney's most fascinating heritage sites with amazing views across the harbour.

TARS Information Session

The Aged-Care Rights Service Inc (TARS) will be holding an information session in Lismore on 20 July at the Neighbourhood Centre from 10.00am-2.00pm.

TARS is a specialist community legal centre providing free advocacy and legal advice in NSW and incorporates the Older persons' Legal Service.

Regional Communities Driving Suicide Prevention

Regional communities throughout NSW will have the opportunity to shape the NSW Government's approach to suicide prevention at a series of upcoming community forums.

The forums in July and August will allow people to identify ways in which the Government could better support communities to both prevent acts of self-harm and suicide, as well as deal with the impacts when they occur.

Suicide and suicide prevention are community issues - they require all of us to work together to support those at risk around us. Nowhere is this more apparent than in regional parts of the State, where issues such as drought and flood pose great challenges to those forced to confront them.

While regional communities are renowned for the strength and resilience they continue to show in the face of overwhelming adversity, it is important that the Government provides the most appropriate help to those who need it, while learning from communities across the State who have overcome adversity.

The forums will be hosted by the recently established Ministerial Advisory Committee on Suicide Prevention, which has brought together key suicide prevention experts across the Government, non-government and community sectors, research bodies and business to determine ways to further decrease the rate of suicide in NSW.

A forum will be held in Lismore on Monday 23 July at Lismore Workers Club from 10.30am-2.00pm

Congratulations

- to local builders Derek Gellatly, John Henderson and Greg Clark on picking up awards at the Master Builders Association Awards.
- to award recipients from the Rotary Club of Lismore West - Clubman of the Year Ray Chilton; Paul Harris Fellows Doc Dorahy, Ian Hill, Norm Robinson, Bob Barnes; Vocational Excellence Lyn Chittick, Rhonda Hayes, Andrew Mitchell, Peter Fletcher; Hon Life Members Harry Shipway, Max Sidney.
- to all the recipients of awards at the Kids in Community Awards. This is a wonderful night to pay tribute to the excellent work youth are doing in our local communities.
- Arthur Holmes, Murwillumbah on being awarded an Order of Australia for his contribution to the arts.

- Robert Crawford, Kyogle for receiving an Australian Fire Service Medal for dedication to the Kyogle Fire Brigade.
- to all the winners at the Lismore Business Excellence Awards. It is great to gather to celebrate the achievements of local businesses in the area.
- Thomas Rann, Lismore came first at the Northern Rivers Regional Auto Mechanical competition and will later in the year participate in the Worldskills Australian National competition.
- Keith Hamilton, Lismore on Life Membership to Lions Club of Lismore Inc.

Media releases

Greater powers for principals and school communities

\$580,000 flood cheque for Richmond River County Council

Making life easier: NSW to abolish registration stickers for cars

\$40,000 for NORPA arts project for people with a disability

Funds on offer for local crown reserves

Lismore community groups to receive almost \$1 million for vital bush regeneration

\$44,000 facelift for Lismore electorate showgrounds

Local landcare receive \$250,000

George urges farmers and stakeholders to have their say on the draft Native Vegetation Regulation 2012

Public school upgrade program and extra minor maintenance budget

NSW Government tackles domestic violence

George delivers more funding for the people of Murwillumbah

Draft Native Vegetation Regulation information session in Casino

George chairs sitting of YMCA NSW Youth Parliament

Nominations open for 2012 NSW Carers Awards

\$3.1 million to support youth leadership

Aboriginal artists in Lismore have the chance to claim \$40,000 art prize

Government provides assistance for SES volunteer unit



Cheque presentation to Murwillumbah Netball Club with the Minister for Sport & Recreation, Graham Annesley & Fiona Mackie

Presentation of defibrillator to Clunes School for use within the community



Go Red for Women Breakfast

Primex with Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner, Chris Gumatpis MP, Melinda Pavey MLC & Bruce Wright.



Tackling Violence Workshop with the Minister for Sport & Recreation, Graham Annesley

The Hon Thomas George MP
 Deputy Speaker
 Member for Lismore
 55 Carrington Street
 (PO Box 52)
 Lismore NSW 2480
 Phone: 02 6621 3624
 Fax: 02 6622 1403
 E-mail: lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au

THE NATIONALS
for Regional NSW