



State Connection

By The Hon Thomas George MP, Nationals Member for Lismore
November 2011

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Events around the electorate & in Sydney

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

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- NSW Carers Awards Ceremony
- Lismore Show
- Opening of Clinical Unit for Skills & Simulation & Lecture Theatre at Murwillumbah Hospital
- Address senior students at Clunes Public School
- Presentation of flood rescue boat to Lismore SES
- RTA Camera Location Review meeting at Clunes
- Rotary Club of Summerland Sunrise Pink Ribbon Breakfast
- Cathedral Parish Dinner at St John's College
- Blue Knob Farmers Market
- Our Kids Melbourne Cup lunch
- Turning of the sod for Murwillumbah Hockey Fields
- Premiers Volunteers Awards presentation at Richmond River High
- Morning tea with Southern Cross Community Care
- Guest speaker at Rotary Club of Summerland Sunrise
- LHPA Review at Casino
- Mental Health Support Group Quilt Handover
- Murwillumbah Show
- 2LM Christmas Appeal Charity Walk
- Mt St Patrick College Year 12 Formal
- McHappy Day
- RRSIK Seminar
- Turning of the sod for new MRI & PET building at Lismore Base
- Opening of Summerland Christian College BER Project
- Public meeting at Bonalbo

In Sydney I had the honour of attending the -

- Life Education NSW reception
- Aboriginal Art Prize Award Ceremony
- Remembrance Day service
- NSW Tourism Awards Ceremony
- Royal Far West Celebration Dinner

Energy Savings

A statewide power saving blitz kicked off last month with pensioners, veterans and low income families encouraged to take advantage of a free program to save power and money on bills.

Through the Home Power Savings Program, energy experts can help households save an average of \$265 on their power bills.

This program provides real benefits to households to help them reduce living costs and we want as many eligible households as possible to take up the opportunity.

A letter box drop inviting households to take part has rolled out in our areas as the blitz date gets closer.

As well as providing free, practical and tailored advice, the Home Power Savings Program energy experts also install a free power savings kit, including a standby saver power board, energy efficient light bulbs, draught proofing, a water efficient showerhead and shower timer.

The Home Power Savings Program is available to 220,000 Centrelink and Veterans' Affairs cardholders across NSW, as well as social housing tenants and energy utility hardship customers.

Eligible households can access the program at anytime by calling 1300 662 416 or go to www.savepower.nsw.gov.au/freehelp

The Energy Experts will be visiting between Tweed Heads to Maclean from 28 November - 9 December.

Scam Buster App

The Office of Fair Trading has launched a free mobile app as a part of the Government's fight against scammers and conmen.

The Scam Buster app is designed to help NSW residents stay one step ahead of cheats and conmen and assist Fair Trading by gathering valuable intelligence about scams.

The app also informs consumers and keeps them up-to-date with the latest scams targeting consumers.

Scam Buster can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Android Market.

Parliamentary Inquiry

Inclusion of Donor Details on the Register of Births

The Law & Safety Committee is seeking submissions until 21 December.

Its terms of reference are as follows -

That the Committee inquire into and report on whether there should be provision for the inclusion of donor details on the register of births maintained by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Further information is available at

<http://parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parliament/committee.nsf/0/7E4018E851966190CA25792D0017F32F>

Government Reviews

Young Offenders Act 1997 & the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987.

A consultation paper has been released seeking public comment on whether changes are needed to key laws for juvenile offenders. The review will determine whether the laws are effective and consistent with the NSW Government's commitment to reducing recidivism among young offenders.

The issues raised include whether:

- any changes are needed to the laws governing the issuing of warnings and cautions and the directing of young offenders into youth conferencing;
- the Children's Court should be responsible for hearing all traffic matters involving juvenile defendants (currently young people must face the Local Court if they were old enough to legally drive at the time of the incident);
- the Young Offenders Act and the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act should be amalgamated.

The Department of Attorney General and Justice is conducting the review, with assistance from legal groups, criminologists, experts in young offending and advocates for victims of crime and people with a disability.

The consultation paper is available at: www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lpd. Submissions can be sent to lpd_enquiries@agd.nsw.gov.au and must be made by 9 December 2011.

SEPP 65

The Government is inviting residents and industry to have a say on how apartment blocks are built and renovated in NSW. A discussion paper has been released asking councils, residents and industry for feedback on the current *State Environmental Planning Policy 65 - Design Quality of Residential Flat Development (SEPP 65)* and the related *Residential Flat Design Code*.

A copy of the paper can be found on the Department of Planning & Infrastructure website at <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Development/Onexhibition/tabid/205/ctl/View/mid/1081/ID/62/language/en-US/Default.aspx>. Submissions are open until 24 February 2012. Information sessions will also be held, including on at Ballina on 30 November.

Industry Action Plan

The NSW Government has established Industry Taskforces to develop Industry Action Plans to position key sectors of the NSW economy for growth, innovation and productivity, exports and global competitiveness, and new investment over the next decade and beyond.

Industry Taskforces are now underway and are calling for public submissions and input to help develop Industry Action Plans for the following key sectors of the NSW economy:

- Manufacturing - with a focus on processed food and beverage manufacturing; metal manufacturing; and machinery and equipment manufacturing including biomedical and medical devices, renewable energy technology, and defence equipment.
- Professional Services - focused on finance and insurance; legal and regulatory services; and engineering services.
- The Digital Economy - focused on digital content and applications; information services and analytics; and smart networks and intelligent technologies.
- Tourism and Events - with a focus on developing a tourism and events strategy to double tourism expenditure to NSW by 2020.

The NSW Government's 'Have your Say' website is now open to receive online comments and submissions at <http://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/iap>. The closing date for these is the following week, on 25 November 2011. Public forums are also planned for industry participants in both metropolitan and regional areas in February and March next year.

LandLearn NSW Speech Spectacular

School students are encouraged to have their say on important issues in rural communities by entering the LandLearn NSW Speech Spectacular public speaking competition.

Topics choices for 2011 entrants are -

- Social media is good for farmers
- Farmers can't help climate change
- The environment is what we eat

Visit www.landlearn.org.au for more information or to enter online.

Nursing Scholarships

Nurses who want to return to the public health system can now apply for scholarships to help them pay for refresher courses. 25 scholarships valued at \$6000 each are available through Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks.

Successful applicants will need to be prepared to take up permanent part-time or full-time employment in the public health system on completion.

Applications close 29 November and can be made via www.seek.com.au and information is available in the Nursing & Midwifery section at www.health.nsw.gov.au.

Bush Regeneration Funding

Community groups are invited to apply for funding for large-scale bush regeneration projects under a new Environmental Trust program. The \$8million Community Bush Regeneration Large Project Stream is offering grants of between \$20,000 and \$250,000 for projects which will run for up to six years.

Applications, which include partnerships, collaboration, other funding sources and in-kind contributions are encourage. Closing date is 31 January 2012.

For full details visit - www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants.envtrust.htm.

Plumbing Industry Changes

Reforms contained in the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011* will establish NSW Fair Trading as the single regulator in NSW. Currently the plumbing industry has over 100 separate regulators, so this will improve efficiency and enable more effective compliance programs and prosecution of unlicensed plumbers. It will also deliver greater certainty for industry and consumers by cutting red tape and updating regulations to bring NSW into line with national standards.

Nominations Open

Wonders of Women

The Tweed Shire Women's Service presents the annual Wonders of Women Outstanding Achievement Awards to acknowledge and honour women in the Tweed Shire.

Nomination forms close on 10 February 2012 and are available on the Tweed Shire Women's Service website www.rswomen.org.au or by calling 66724188.

Australia Day Awards

Local Councils are currently seeking nominations for various Australia Day Awards. For further information visit the websites -

Tweed Shire closing date 2 December - www.tweed.nsw.gov.au

Richmond Valley - 9 December - www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au

Tenterfield - 23 December - www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

Lismore - 30 December - www.lismore.nsw.gov.au

Kyogle Shire - Kyogle 16 January - nomination available at Council 66321611

Woodenbong 31/12 - applications available at local businesses

Bonalbo 16/12 - contact Bronwyn on 66661240 (a/h)

Electorate Woman of the Year

I will shortly be calling for nominations for the Lismore Electorate Woman of the Year, so start thinking about who you think is a worthy candidate.

Congratulations

- to the Kyogle Tidy Towns Committee for winning the 2012 Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Overall Tidy Towns, Sustainable Communities Award.
- to the Lismore & Nimbin Visitor Information Centre for taking out silver at the NSW Tourism Awards.
- Helen Trustum, of Bentley, Helen Wynd, of Goonellabah, Felicity Cahill, of Drake, Dorothy Sullivan, of Casino and Barbara Steffenson, Lismore who were all recently recognised in the 2011 Hidden Treasures Honour Roll.
- Heather Cole, Wyrallah, for being a finalist in the National Excellence in Teaching Awards.
- Jim Hurley, Kyogle was inducted into the Queensland Road Transport Legends Hall of Fame.
- Dr Mark Biltoft, Murwillumbah received a Chevron Award for 50 years as a member of the Murwillumbah Lions Club.
- Alan Foley, Dunoon was named Northern Rivers Volunteer of the Year for his work at the PCYC.
- Sue Charlier, Mt Burrell was the recipient of the Tweed Shire Council's Carers' Award.

Media Releases

Following is a list of media releases I have issued during the past month. Follow the link to my website to view in full.

Plan Ahead for a safe Festive Season

Lismore receives Recycling Grant

Funding Boost to Northern Rivers Conservatorium

Local Hidden Treasures Honoured

Families urged to celebrate inaugural Grandparents Day

Energy experts help low income Aussies save money

Launch of National P Drivers Project aiming to improve Young Driver Behaviour

Families urged to celebrate inaugural Grandparents Day

Thomas George announces \$35,000 for the Lismore environment

Search for Cross Border Commissioner Begins

Extra Improvement Works and Maintenance for NSW Public Schools

Parliament

Parliament will be in recess from Friday 25 November for the Christmas break and resume on Tuesday 14 February.

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