

THE LISMORE ELECTORATE

with Thomas George

A community newsletter from your local State Member of Parliament.

June 2005



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STOP PRESS

Second
Lifesaver
Helicopter
arrives for
Lismore
region

New Police Station for Lismore

Since being elected in 1999, a new station has always been on the list of priorities for the Lismore Electorate. In August last year, I inspected the premises with NSW Opposition Leader, John Brogden and Nationals Leader, Andrew Stoner. I was heartened by the visit in November last year, of a planning team from the Department of Commerce, who met recently with representatives of the Richmond Local Area Command. The business plan presented to the Minister at the end of the year finally received recognition and further strengthened the case of my call for a new police station in Lismore which was recognised early this year when it identified as one of the most rapidly expanding police operations in the State. This year's State Budget allocated \$1.6M to commence the construction of a new station that is set to commence early next year. When completed this new location will provide the Richmond Local Area Command with a facility to accommodate all facets of the command which will no doubt enhance the long term benefit of providing better police support for the whole community.



THOMAS George MP and The Hon Mike Gallacher MLC, Shadow Minister for Police.

Police and Emergency Service Awards



It is always a pleasure to attend the combined Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service Medals & Awards Presentation Service. This is a wonderful opportunity to recognise the long term service and bravery of officers, together with the commitment from volunteers and at the same time appreciating the support provided by their families, partners and friends.

Photo courtesy Ray Wood, Richmond LAC

Woman of the Year

This year, I was very honoured to call for nominations from the community and host a special function for nominees of the Lismore Electorate Woman of the Year. This celebration of the significance of Women in our community coincided with United Nations International Women's Day, 8 March 2005. This inaugural event was wonderfully successful for the Lismore Electorate, where 11 local women were nominated and recognised at a morning tea to appreciate their achievements and contribution to our electorate as a whole.

The NSW Office for Women coordinated this inaugural event that will again happen next year. The purpose of this event is to honour women for their contribution to our communities, which is an important means of building the confidence and pride of all women, and encourage other women and girls by publicly presenting role models. A nominee may be a teacher, nurse, a business woman, author, community worker or even a sports person. It is anticipated to happen again in February and should you wish to nominate someone, please do not hesitate to contact my office.



NOMINEES for Lismore Electorate Woman of the Year.

In Brief

Ambulance Service Medal Proposal

In Parliament, I took the opportunity to seek support of the Minister for Health to recognise Ambulance Officers in NSW who give great service to this State. The Service is only one of the three major emergency service agencies that does not offer its officers a medal for 10 years of diligent and ethical service. I believe encouragement is needed and I have urged the Minister to look at the possibility of a medal in appreciation of 10 years of service by ambulance officers.

Country Athletes

Each year I am pleased to be able to meet with the local successful applicants of the Country Athletes Scheme. These young athletes are given due recognition to their commitment and determination in their chosen sport by receiving this contribution towards expenses that they have incurred during representation at a State level.



COUNTRY Athletes Scheme Recipients.

Petitions

Petitions tabled in Parliament relating to electorate issues have been;

- Enclosed Road Permits
- Rocky Creek Dam
- IPTAAS
- Lismore Fire Station
- Department of Primary Industries closure of Wollongbar
- Rural Lands Protection Board



PRESENTATION of Petitions

Justice of the Peace updates

On 8 December legislation came into force under the new *Justice of the Peace Act 2002*, requiring existing JP's to reapply for appointment. This process will now need to be done every five years. By instituting this requirement it allows the Attorney General's Department to perform regular criminal and other probity checks to ensure that Justices remain "fit and proper" persons to hold that Office. Existing Justices of the Peace have until 1 December 2006 to lodge your first reappointment application and to re-establish either an employment or community based need for the appointment. Forms are available from my office and to ensure you are updated, contact my office on 6621 3624 to receive further information in this regard.

Northern Stars under the Big Top



With the marquee up, the stage set, many local students were ready and enthusiastic about performing in the 2005 Northern Stars Under the Big Top – The Sky's the Limit. I was honoured to be co-Patron and be present on this occasion to witness a truly spectacular event that provides students from public education the opportunity to be part of a wonderful showcase here in their own region. It offers a rare occasion for children to exhibit their talents in a variety of different segments. This chance to perform under a massive marquee and to be involved with fellow students, was an exciting, memorable event and one that they will treasure for the rest of their lives. Students with outstanding musical talents, also gain important and valuable experience to enhance their future aspirations in the production industry. The organisation team of Greg Cloak including school Principals, teachers, students, parents, friends as well as sponsors should be very proud of the show, the dedication, time and support so freely given is a testimony of what Public Education is all about. There is no doubt that after this experience, local students now believe that 'The Sky is the Limit'.



2LM Children's Appeal Charity Walk.

Academic Award - Youth Parliament

I was pleased to attend my first School Assembly for the 2005 year at Richmond River High School. Principal Neville Ryan and the school community organised a special presentation of the 2004 HSC Academic Award to Anna Jones following her wonderful achievement in the HSC last year. Anna will attend another presentation next week to receive the Premier's Award for All Round Excellence, achieving over 90% in all subjects. Congratulations Anna.



2004 HSC Academic Award Recipient, Anna Jones, with Neville Ryan, Principal Richmond River High School.



Premier's awards

All NSW MP's are entitled to endorse application for two constituents each year for a Premier's Community Service Award. This Award recognises outstanding service to the community. Nomination forms are available from my office. The individual or organisation proposing the nomination needs to provide documentation and supporting information.

Young Drivers Forum

I felt an important aspect of supporting youth is to listen to the opinion of our students and young drivers. Therefore, I arranged the Minister for Roads, Carl Scully to visit the electorate and participate in a Young Drivers Forum which was held at Kyogle High School in December last year. Representatives of all high schools in the Lismore Electorate attended to convey their views in relation to an Option Paper titled; "Improving Safety for Young Drivers". The Minister was keen to obtain a forum of varied opinion and I encouraged young drivers, learners and p-platers to pursue conveying their views in supplying copies of an Options Paper on Improving Safety for Young Drivers and making submissions.



YOUNG Drivers Forum.

New health services for Nimbin & Kyogle

After extensive lobbying, health services for the Nimbin's village received a major boost following the long awaited refurbishment of its hospital. In May, Minister Morris Iemma officially opened the new 15-bed multi-purpose service unit. A few years ago Nimbin was faced with the possibility of losing its ageing and rundown hospital. However, following numerous approaches supporting and highlighting the need for provision of health services in Nimbin, the totally revamped \$4.8M state-of-art facility, boasting medical and community health services was



COMPLETING work on the new Kyogle Health Service.

Supporting Operation Lifeblood

I was pleased to support the Australian Red Cross Blood Service and announce Operation Lifeblood, the biggest ever campaign to enlist 40,000 new Australians to give blood. The Lismore Blood Donor Centre aims to increase the number of new people giving blood to 343 by the end of July. Blood cannot be stockpiled. We need more Australians to give blood to ensure blood supplies are always available for those who need it. Every donation can help save up to three lives. One in three Australians will need blood at some point in their lifetime, but right now only one in 30 people actually give blood. The limited shelf life of blood, an ageing population and the ever-increasing need for blood, means more Australians are needed to give blood to meet Australia's regular blood needs. Giving blood takes just an hour or so of your time and could help save the lives of three Australians. Operation Lifeblood calls for 40,000 Australians to sign up to give blood by calling 1300 655 233 or going to www.donateblood.com.au



AUSTRALIAN Red Cross Blood Service campaign 'Operation Lifeblood'.



OFFICIAL opening of Nimbin Health Service: Thomas George MP, The Hon Morris Iemma MP, State Minister for Health and The Hon Ian Causley MP, Federal Member for Page.

opened this year in May. Included is a 24 hour emergency department, four acute care beds, an infectious diseases isolation room, seven high care nursing home-type beds, a physiotherapy treatment bay, dental clinic, medical centre and a modern radiology department. This facility is funded jointly by the State and Federal Governments.

Kyogle Hospital's redevelopment is ready for the official opening which is expected to be undertaken later this year. The 27-bed facility is costing \$10M.

'A morning tea was held recently for staff at Kyogle Memorial Health to acknowledge those staff that had worked for more than 10 years for the NRAHS. The morning tea coincided with the relocation of staff and patients into the new MPS building. The Chief Executive joined staff to present the awards and toured the new facilities.'

Mental Health Funding

The State Budget recently announced significant capital works funding for the next stage of rebuilding of the Richmond Clinic in Lismore. As well this rebuild includes an expansion in the bed numbers from 25 to 40 in the new purpose built facility. In addition, an 8-bed specialist child and adolescent unit will be build on the site.

The Minister for Health announced in the May budget, \$10.4M to begin

construction of the new Richmond Clinic and \$2M for the Child and Adolescent Unit.

It is important that there is a purpose built and staffed facility to deal with the younger age group who at present do not have any specialist inpatient services within the area.

Both services will have a positive impact on the provision of mental health care in the local area.

Youth Organisations receive Funding

I recently was successful in gaining support for some local youth organisations to assist in purchasing much needed equipment. The Clunes Girl Guides, Kyogle Girl Guides and Casino Girl Brigade each received money to buy additional camping equipment, whilst the CTC@Kyogle received funds to acquire a video camera for its numerous youth orientated projects to utilise.



Clunes Girl Guides



Kyogle Girl Guides



Casino Girls Brigade



Kyogle CTC

Sports grants available

The Department of Sport & Recreation have available the following funding programs to assist athletes and sporting organisations. Application forms and guidelines, including closing dates, can be obtained from my office or the Department website at www.dsr.nsw.gov.au.

- Athletes with a Disability Capital Assistance Program
- Country Athletes Scheme
- Country Coaches and Official Scheme
- International Sporting Events Program
- Regional Sports Facility Program
- Sports Development Program
- Women's Sports Leaders Scholarship Program

New electoral boundaries

Red Line: Current Electorate of Lismore

Blue Line: New Boundaries for Lismore Electorate commencing 2007



Tick forums & inquiry

Since being elected in 1999, I have had continual concerns regarding the Labor Government's tick control program and I have raised this issue in Parliament 107 times during debate of 11 matters. In April, I convened two meetings in Murwillumbah and Casino for local beef producers to discuss the growing concerns relating to cattle ticks. I organised these meetings following a number of enquiries, concerns and requests for information on recent tick outbreaks, policy, vaccinations and the loss of cattle due to tick fever. Approximately 300 local producers attended to discuss their growing concerns relating to cattle ticks. Representatives from the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Cattle Tick program were invited to advise its current position regarding tick control, outbreaks, vaccinations and the outline for the future. The meetings determined five motions, calling on the Minister for Primary Industries to – 1) create a buffer zone along the border with Qld, 2) not allow the use of vaccines except when moving stock into infected areas, 3) not allow the movement of Qld cattle onto NSW properties unless previously blood tested, 4) to fully fund the cost of chemicals for properties which are currently quarantined, 5) not pursue current policy in relation to the cattle tick program. Following these meetings the government announced the Inquiry to review the use of cattle tick vaccine, the introduction of Queensland cattle into NSW, the possibility of using electronic surveillance to enhance existing border control, and advisory mechanisms in State Government. I look forward to the results of this inquiry.



DISCUSSING Rural Crime Issues.

Mobile phone service for West

After a number of years and negotiations with various State Government departments, establishment of a mobile phone service has finally been approved and improved services should be available in the very near future.



Rural roads funding

In December last year, Minister for Roads, Carl Scully opened Bald Knob Road situated between Woodenbong and Legume (MR622). It was also announced that a further \$150,000 will be allocated towards the cost of improving the Legume to Woodenbong Road in the next financial year to widen, strengthen and seal various sections. Following my representations, the offer of additional funding to Tenterfield Shire Council was made and based on a 50:50 funding agreement. During the visit funding of another \$10,000 was provided to Kyogle Shire Council to undertake maintenance work on Lions Road. This is a local road and provides an alternative route to the Summerland Way for light vehicles. Over many years, the Kyogle Lions Club has raised many thousands of dollars for improvements to be made to this road.



OFFICIAL opening of Bald Knob Road, Woodenbong.



OFFICIAL opening Wiangaree Bridge: Thomas George MP, the Hon Eric Roosendahl MLC, State Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Roads, Ernie Bennett Mayor, Kyogle Shire Council.

Fighting ATLAS cuts



I travelled to Sydney to join a contingent of Northern Rivers residents to protest over State Government funding cuts to young adults with a disability.



West Of Range Visits

As part of my electorate commitments, I endeavour to visit West of the Range regularly, to provide constituents living in this region a more convenient opportunity to raise issues of concern with me direct. My trips to this isolated area is beneficial in becoming better acquainted and more informed of issues as they are happening and to personally speak with residents.

Land Tax

In this year's State Budget and following widespread backlash from the constituency and the Coalition, the Government has announced it will reintroduce a threshold of \$330,000 from 1 January 2006 for land tax. There is no threshold for non-concessional companies and special trusts. The land tax rate for 2006 will be 1.7 per cent (plus \$100) on the unimproved value of the land in excess of \$330,000. If your land tax liability is less than \$100, no land tax

will be payable. There are no changes to the current land tax exemptions. The concession for non-income earning land, however, will cease after this year and will be unavailable in 2006. The land tax liability for 2006 is based on all liable land owned as at midnight on 31 December 2005. There have been no changes for 2005 – all liabilities remain payable. Further details can be obtained via website www.osr.nsw.gov.au or by seeking professional advice.



OPENING of Taylor's new Mitre 10 hardware store, Woodenbong.



PRIMEX 2005: Thomas George MP, the Hon Warren Truss MP, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries, and the Hon Ian Causley MP, Federal Member for Page

We're here to help you!

THE TEAM WORKING FOR YOU:

Thomas George's staff Julie, Christine, Bronwyn, and Karen are always keen to help.



Thomas and his electorate officers are dedicated to making your business with state government easier and faster.

Get in touch with them for help in dealing with issues of State Government responsibility including:

- Contact details for State Government Ministers, Shadow Ministers, MPs and guidance on where to go for further information.
- Applications for Seniors Cards.
- Congratulatory messages for special birthdays and wedding anniversaries.
- Copies of speeches in the NSW Parliament.
- Information for school projects.
- Preparing and tabling petitions.
- Grants and funding opportunities.
- Electoral enrolment for first time voters and people who have changed their address or name.
- Voting enquiries.
- Certification by Justices of the Peace (JPs)
- State flags for approved community groups and organisations.