



OAKESHOTT

INDEPENDENT

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PROGRESS REPORT - 2



YOUR CHANCE TO BUILD THE NBN

Meeting in Taree with Ian Hudson and Gregory Mann from the Industry Capability Network to discuss job opportunities for local businesses. They can be contacted on 1300 961 139 or at www.icn.org.au.

Jobs - National Broadband Network rollout

- ✓ REGISTER TO BUILD
- ✓ REGISTER FOR JOBS

A Ballina-based company is building the broadband network in Armidale right now. Why? Because they registered online with the Industry Capability Network (ICN).

It is up to you to get registered at www.icn.org.au. The work is coming and it's a big build. To be considered, please register your business and make sure, where possible, that your skill set is right for the job. I repeat, www.icn.org.au. This is your chance to participate.

Health - Projects and lobbying underway now

The next six months will be critical for local health services and work continues in a number of areas;

- + Our region is lobbying to be an 'early adopter' of Medicare Locals, seeking the inclusion of the North Coast and Hunter Rural organisations among 15 Medicare Locals to be announced in the 'first round'.
- + We continue to push on health and hospital reform more generally. Structural and financial agreements will be finalised on February 14th and the Commonwealth and States must get this right. We continue to push for local efficiency gains and equity in funding. Watch this space.
- + A third priority will see more funding into our region from infrastructure grants for GPs and community health services. I have asked the minister to promote these grants and help where required when the next round opens in April.
- + We are working hard to increase training opportunities in medical and allied health services. The University of Newcastle will begin operating in Taree this year and The University of NSW is considering expansion options in Port Macquarie.
- + Local building projects, including a \$110 million application for work at Port Macquarie Base Hospital, have now been submitted to the \$1.8 billion regional priority round of the Health and Hospitals Fund and I am lobbying for successful outcomes.
- + Tenders have also closed for the \$7 million GP Super Clinic in Port Macquarie, with a decision due early this year.
- + And finally, we continue to invest time and effort in a coordinated mental health push for the region. Only five MPs - myself and four other non-aligned members - voted for better regional mental health services in November, so this is an important policy battleground in 2011. Watch the budget in May for possible improvements.



Emma Threadgate, Valda Royce and Brenda Payne take a break at The Meeting Place mall in Gloucester, which is in for a \$43,000 facelift.

Jobs - \$1 million for community projects

At least 50 new jobs will flow from 11 projects approved for the Lyne electorate in the latest round of federally funded community infrastructure grants. They include;

Gloucester (\$93,000):

Upgrades to the Farley Gates Playground and 'The Meeting Place' community mall and the establishment of a 'model creek ecosystem' at Billabong Native Garden.

Greater Taree (\$434,000):

Development of the former Taree Pool site into a visual and performing arts space, completion of the new town entrance signage throughout the Manning and significant funding for the Wingham Town Enhancement project.

Port Macquarie-Hastings (\$506,000):

Construction of a regional skate park, improvements to Rotary Park and construction of a pontoon and jetty at McInherney Park in Port Macquarie, as well as the installation of flood lighting at Laurieton's Vince Inmon Sporting Complex.

Jobs - Progress on \$22 million airport plan

Thanks to those who voted Independent, work on the Mid-North Coast Regional Aviation Plan continues, with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council deciding last month to issue tenders for its airport upgrade. Upgrades at Kempsey, Port Macquarie and Taree airports are being prioritised as part of the formal agreement entered into with government.

Taree Jobs and Skills Expo – 117 get work

Thanks to those who voted Independent, Taree's Centrelink Jobs and Skills Expo placed 117 jobseekers straight into work – an outstanding result for all involved. Hundreds more were signed up for job interviews or set on a pathway to new training. More than 1000 people attended the event and I congratulate all in the Manning community who got behind it, particularly the business owners and organisations who turned up on the day looking for new employees. The staging of this jobs and skills expo followed an extension of the Mid-North Coast's priority employment status, which was part of the agreement reached in the formation of government.



Rugby League Immortal and Jobs Expo ambassador Arthur Beetson was 'up for a chat' with all comers at Taree's Jobs and Skills Expo.

Jobs - \$5.6 million for aged care

ADDITIONAL aged care services worth \$5.6 million have been announced for the Lyne electorate. They include an extra 130 residential places, 20 Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) and 39 Extended Aged Care in the Home (EACH) packages. This is welcome news on the back of good work done over the past 12 months to develop a Mid-North Coast Dementia Action Plan, which is helping to further improve the coordination of local services for people with dementia and their carers. Of course we can always do with more and lobbying continues on this front.