

Dr Joe McGirr MP

Independent Member for Wagga Wagga

Your Community Newsletter January 2019



IN FOCUS: At the opening of the new amenities building at The Rock War Memorial Swimming Pool Complex.

A BIG, BIG THANK YOU!

Hello and welcome to my first newsletter.

I would like to start by wishing you all the best for 2019. Since being elected in September it has been a busy but very rewarding time. In addition to raising community concerns in parliament and with ministers I have:

- ✓ Pursued the government on its promises to our electorate, including the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital car park and Tumut Hospital redevelopment
- ✓ Met with many community groups and organisations
- ✓ Announced \$330,000 of funding for local projects
- ✓ Launched a volunteer recognition program and my Meet the MP community engagement initiative

It has been a privilege to serve the electorate these past three months and I would like to thank everyone for their support. By working together we can grow our communities and I look forward to continuing to make sure your needs and concerns are brought to the attention of the state government.

This newsletter will provide you with a brief update on what has been happening across the electorate, what is to come and how you can benefit from funding, rebates and resources.

I encourage you to visit my website and sign up to my newsletter for future electorate announcements. You can also follow me on Facebook or Twitter.

By staying in touch, I can keep you informed of local issues within our community and provide you with useful advice and assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Joe McGirr MP

CASH SPLASH A WIN FOR THE ELECTORATE

Last year I was pleased to announce 17 community, sporting and cultural organisations had received a share in \$330,000 of state government funding as part of the Community Building Partnership Program.

But that's not all our electorate has received in recent months.

I was encouraged to learn that \$50,000 worth of grant funding had been allocated to sporting groups and clubs across the electorate as part of the NSW Government's Local Sport Grant Program. As a result, the Wagga Wagga Branch of Sporting Shooters Association of Australia was successful in applying for \$16,710 to assist in the construction of its reloading shed.

In addition to this, the government's

\$400,000 Back to Track Program brought \$20,000 to the Wagga Harness Racing Club for the design and launch of a future family-friendly event.

Lockhart Shire Council was also successful in its application to the Stronger Communities Fund, receiving \$250,000 to build a second oval and upgrade amenities at The Rock Recreational Ground and to build The Rock's Regional Observatory Lecture Theatre. Heritage properties across the shire are also set to be restored, with an additional \$100,000 allocated to help keep history alive along Green Street.

It is wonderful to see organisations, clubs and not-for-profit groups across the electorate taking the initiative to apply for NSW Government grants, to make their communities better.

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Check out what's happening around Wagga Wagga #visitwagga

WAGGA WAGGA BASE HOSPITAL WIN AMID PROMISES WAITING GAME

BELOW: An artist's impression of the finalised ambulatory care building, next to the current Wagga Wagga Base Hospital, as seen on the NSW Government Health Infrastructure website.



In my Maiden Speech to Parliament last September, I assured residents I would be relentless in making sure the government delivered on the many promises made during the by-election campaign.

During Question Time in Parliament the following month, I asked NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian to finalise the state's commitment to invest close to \$130 million across the electorate. I was assured all projects would receive the funding as pledged.

While a number of projects are still in the planning phase, I was pleased to learn the \$30 million multi-story car park at Wagga Base Hospital would be going ahead in 2021, following the completion of the hospital redevelopment. The construction tender for the third and final phase was awarded last December, with work set

to begin this year. I will be monitoring concerns regarding interim parking.

Other by-election announcements included \$14.4 million for the freight and logistics hub, a \$7 million cycling complex, a \$12 million performance hall, \$30 million to add turning lanes at Gobba Bridge and widen the four lanes at Marshall's Creek Bridge; and \$50 million to rebuild Tumut Hospital. Other, smaller grants were also promised to a number of groups across our electorate.

My top priority is to hold the NSW Government accountable for the promises it gave our electorate. It is vital our community has access to modern facilities to host and attract large events and provide top quality services across the region. For more information and updates on these, head to my website.

Addressing Coronial Autopsy Delay Pain

An ongoing hold-up in autopsy proceedings is causing great distress for people across the electorate and I am determined to see a solution found.

The issue was last year placed back in the media spotlight, after grieving families revealed they were waiting up to three weeks for a loved one's body to be returned from Newcastle.

According to legislation, coronial autopsies are required when a person dies unexpectedly, suspiciously or from unexplained circumstances. A call to centralise the workforce in 2016 resulted in deceased persons from regional areas being transported to Newcastle.

After a meeting with ministerial staff and Health Pathology, I identified points of action moving forward.

These included urging NSW Health Pathology services to review its triage method for priority cases, to better serve both rural residents and the Department of Health; and encouraging the Department of the Attorney General to streamline its

process of transporting bodies from rural and regional areas to Newcastle. This has been identified as a contributing factor in the reported delays across the Wagga Wagga electorate.

I want the Department of Health to investigate alternative recruitment and training strategies, to boost the number of qualified coronial autopsy specialists, especially in regional areas across NSW.

In the meantime, I will personally be taking any future concerns to NSW Health Pathology directly. If coronial autopsy delays are causing distress to members of the electorate, I encourage them to contact my office. Email waggawagga@parliament.nsw.gov.au or call the office on (02) 6921 1622.



Tumut Hospital Funding MIA

The local health district has indicated planning is under way for the new Tumut Hospital, but my concerns remain. This well-overdue project will be a critical development for residents of Tumut and surrounding areas.

The Health Minister, who promised \$50 million to the project last August, said work would begin in 2019. I have since called on the NSW Government to commit to a timeline. The clinical services plan has been completed and the Murrumbidgee Local Health District indicate building planning is continuing. I am determined to see the promised \$50 million allocated and construction commence without delay.



IN OTHER NEWS...

Alongside the Deputy Prime Minister, Riverina MP Michael McCormack and federal Infrastructure Minister Bridget McKenzie, I welcomed the \$17 million funding for Wagga Wagga's long-awaited Rural Medical School. Having previously worked to negotiate the original site for the school, I am excited to see the next phase going ahead. For the first time, students will be able to start and finish their medical training here in Wagga Wagga.

Do you know someone over the age of 50, whose community efforts deserve to be celebrated? I encourage you to nominate them for the Wagga Wagga Local Achievement Awards, before February 4. Co-presented by Wagga Wagga City Council and myself, the awards pay tribute to selfless residents, who give their time to various clubs, groups and causes. The five award categories include: Diversity and Inclusion; Education; Healthy and Active Living; Arts and Culture; and Intergenerational Leadership. Visit wagga.nsw.gov.au/laawards for more information.

The State Government in November announced it would fund 1500 extra police officers across four years, which was a great result. The arrival of six additional probationary constables within the Riverina Police District in December was even more encouraging. I welcome the new officers and look forward to seeing the electorate's ranks boosted into the future.

The NSW Return and Earn scheme has not been without its problems, but we are clearly seeing its benefits across the electorate. Charities in Wagga alone could benefit from more than \$360,000, with the option to donate earnings when depositing drinking containers.



'Local Legends'

DAVID OLSEN wears his Sunflower House volunteer badge with pride. Having experienced its benefits firsthand, Mr Olsen said he was determined to give back to the facility, helping and supporting others on their mental health journey.

ROBERT GANNON and **PHIL HORWELL** of Wagga Wagga Train Museum were the first to receive certificates of appreciation as part of my Local Legends initiative. The program honours homegrown crusaders, who give up their time, resources and expertise to help build their community. With a combined 100 years of service to rail heritage, these men have gone above and beyond to keep a fascinating part of the city's history steaming along.

Midwife and specialist nurse **MAVIS GAFF-SMITH** has made it her mission to provide dignity to the region's most vulnerable, supplying Wagga Women's Health Centre with more than 1000 handbags that containing personal care items, across a number of years. To women impacted by domestic violence, these handbags can mean the world.

...Thank you

BENEFITS TO LOOK OUT FOR



ABOVE: Visiting Henschke Primary School

Driving Support

Last year, I made a commitment to stand alongside the Regional Disability Advocacy Service, to make sure vital funding was continued. The NSW Government previously agreed to extend the financial support of advocacy services for a number of years, following the NDIS changeover, but I do not believe there should be a deadline. I will be calling on the State Government to maintain funding for advocacy groups, assisting our electorate's most vulnerable.



ABOVE: Driving support for Regional Disability Advocacy Service, alongside its chief executive Martin Butcher.

- ✓ From January 1 this year, children involved in creative pursuits like drama, music, languages or coding can receive a \$100 voucher as part of the NSW Government's Creative Kids Rebate. This boost comes in addition to the Active Kids program, with \$100 available for school students enrolled in sporting activities. Visit my website for more details.
- ✓ The Seniors Card Directory and the 2019 Seniors' Diary is out and I have a number of free copies in my Wagga Wagga

electorate office. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please call 02 6921 1226.

- ✓ Parents will now receive a Baby Bundle valued at \$300 to help take care of newborns, containing products like a sleeping bag, toothbrush, change mat and parents can also jump online to complete a free first aid course.
- ✓ If you are looking to install an air conditioner with a high-star rating, you could be eligible for a discount of up to \$1000. Visit energysaver.nsw.gov.au for more information.

Wishing everyone in the electorate a happy and safe New Year, from the McGirr family.



BACKING COMMUNITY PROJECTS

I was delighted to announce Wagga Women's Health Centre as one of 17 community, sporting and cultural organisations to receive a share in \$330,000 funding across the electorate.



ABOVE: Wagga Women's Health Centre manager Gail Meyer and Julie Mecham receive Community Building Partnership Program funding.

The \$14,455 cash injection is set to help the not-for-profit battle energy bills and upgrade its security software. Community Building Partnership grants provide the means to improve or build facilities that deliver positive social, environmental and recreational outcomes.

Talbingo Country Club and Tarcutta Campdraft Club Inc were also successful applicants this year, both receiving more than \$30,000 in funding for their community projects.

Tarcutta Campdraft Club's David West and fellow committee members share a vision to become a major centre for the sport and other equestrian events. Centered perfectly between Melbourne and Sydney, the creation of a great sporting venue and a modern entertainment facility will certainly add to the region's treasure chest and I look forward to seeing the finished product.



A full list of grant recipients is available on my website at joemcgirr.com.au

Grant Application TOP TIPS

There are a number of State Government programs that could benefit projects within your group, club, organisation or business. However, planning, writing and submitting successful applications can be complicated.

Below are some handy hints that may help:

- Make sure you are eligible to apply for the program.
- Know the ins and outs of your project.
- Consider how you will address the selection criteria.
- Be realistic and accurate with your project plan timeline, budget and community benefits.
- Start the application early, and take the time to be thorough.
- Make sure your main points are clear.
- Check your application and have someone else check it as well.

Visit my website to find out more about current NSW Government funding opportunities. If you require support with your application, please contact my office.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT



Officially opening the Allegro Ballet School Performance Company in Wagga Wagga.



Touring the Softwoods plantation in Tumut, with Softwoods Working Group chair Peter Crowe and Visy forest operations manager Rodney Anderson



Congratulating Miss Wagga 2019 Stina Constantine and Community Princess Presslea Cowan, following the Miss Wagga Wagga Quest crowning.



Officially launching Carevan in Wagga. I'm proud to say I am now a volunteer of this great initiative.



Meeting RAAF ex-serviceman Nathan Dean and his assistance dog Bailey. I look forward to helping support other former, and current members of the Australian Defence Force, like Mr Dean, into the future.



Presenting sporting champions from Koorringal High School with NSW State Government Representative Awards. These awards recognised Troy Piercy, Ellen McIntyre, Mindy Quade, Sophie Crouch and Campbell Mattingley, who represented the State of NSW in their chosen field.



Signing off on the Main City Levee Upgrade Stage 2 in December.



As part of my new Meet the MP program, I have been setting up a stand across the electorate to greet and chat with local residents. If you see me out and about, please come say hello. I look forward to hearing from you.



Not only did I have the opportunity to personally congratulate TAFE NSW awardees at the Riverina's graduation ceremony, I was also able to meet amazing graduates, like Mehwish Adnan, who took out the 2018 Rotary Leadership Award.



Presenting awards to Batlow Technology School students at the end-of-year presentation, alongside principal Greg Hodges.



Awarding Premier's Volunteer Certificates to students from Wagga Wagga High School.



Thanks to the Independent Member for Lake Macquarie Greg Piper and Independent Member for Sydney Alex Greenwich, who became my friends and Parliamentary colleagues last year. Their assistance and support these past three months has been invaluable.

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