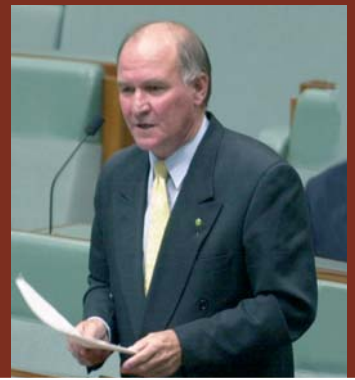


Tony Windsor MP

The New England Independent

Official Newsletter of the Independent Federal Member for
New England, Tony Windsor MP

October 2009



Commitment to National Broadband Rollout Announced



The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator the Hon Stephen Conroy, discussing the National Broadband Network rollout with the media prior to addressing a forum at Tamworth.

National Broadband Network (NBN) To Go Ahead

The announcement by Senator Stephen Conroy at a forum held recently in Tamworth that the Government is committed to rolling out the National Broadband Network is welcomed. The emphasis he placed upon regional and rural Australia is indeed encouraging as it is a further step in reducing the tyranny of distance and increasing the capacity of regional centres to compete in business and lifestyle matters with the larger metropolitan centres.

It was also pleasing to hear that the Minister would encourage those involved within the region to get together to work towards the New England-North West Region being considered as a suitable area for an early start in the National Broadband Network program rollout.

Our Region and the NBN would benefit greatly by being one of the first cabs off the rank as a major reason for the high cost of repairs to the telecommunications services is because the New England area is one of the hardest hit by lightning strikes that cause costly losses and repairs to services.

I am now looking forward to the announcement becoming an actual project.

To the Electorate

I am in the process of organising a third Vision New England Summit to be held on Saturday 14 November in Armidale.

Summits have been held in 2003 and 2005 with upwards of 100 people attending each meeting representing over 60 organisations from across the Electorate of New England.

The Vision New England Summits are apolitical gatherings of community groups and leaders at which the issues, suggested solutions and priorities of the people of New England can be raised and promoted for all levels of government to act upon.

It is now time once again to focus on what the people of the Electorate view as being the issues of importance, especially with a Federal Election approaching sometime in 2010, and a NSW State Election due shortly after in March 2011.

Political representatives from all three levels of government have been invited to attend regardless of their political persuasions. After all, all representatives can play a role in driving the resolutions of Vision New England so they will need to be present to understand and receive the messages from the community.

The Summit arrives at its resolutions by consensus so that the people of New England can be seen as supportive and united on ways of addressing issues to the benefit of all concerned. Vision New England is a great opportunity for the people of New England to give their political representatives their riding instructions direct from the community who, after all, elected them as their representative.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Windsor".

Tony Windsor MP
Member for New England

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Volunteers Help Premer Public School



Local resident Grant Chambers seen above helping the students learn about carpentry. Grant was helping the children construct bird breeding enclosures to place in the school grounds.

New England Aged Care Places Receive \$487,000

The Minister for Ageing, the Hon Justine Elliot, has recently announced 17 new aged care packages.

These are as follows:

HN McLean Memorial Retirement Village Ltd

- \$103,360 for eight Community Aged Care packages in the Liverpool Plains
- \$172,800 for four extended Aged Care at Home packages (two in Gunnedah, two in Liverpool Plains)
- \$190,560 for four Dementia packages (two in Gunnedah, two in Liverpool Plains)

McMaugh Gardens

- \$20,400 for one Low Care Residential Care package in Uralla

Glen Innes District to Receive \$146,000 for Landcare Work

The Glen Innes Natural Resources Advisory Committee will receive \$146,275 to help implement sustainable land and management practices.

The funding will help provide locally based staff to deliver skills and knowledge to develop and motivate landholder attitudes towards sustainable land management practices.

The project will provide the opportunity for on-ground funding for key Caring for the Country targets in the sustainable land management and biodiversity area.

It will also provide the opportunity for the local Landcare committees to continue to deliver natural resource management services. Congratulations to all those involved.

New England Electorate Gains \$1.35M for Indigenous Community Support Services

The Indigenous Community Support Services in the New England Electorate have been boosted with the announcement that BEST Employment (Inverell), Quirindi Aboriginal Corporation and Eastern Access Community Health (Glen Innes) have received a combined total of \$1.35M.

The funds will enable the above organisations to support indigenous community members by providing links and referrals to a wide range of mainstream and indigenous services.

These include welfare and social support, family violence, health (including drug and alcohol services), housing, child care and legal help as well as developing and fostering relationships with other service providers.

\$2M Investment in Kootingal Public School Provides Much Needed Resources for a Growing Population

Kootingal Public School is to be congratulated for being one of the first public schools to start work on new school facilities, funded by the Building the Education Revolution Program'

Kootingal currently has 197 children enrolled in eight classes. The extra resources will provide for the expanding population and greatly enhance the School's ability to cater for growth in a modern and constructive way.

Any improvements in the learning environment of our children can only assist to improve the educational outcomes for our children, families, the community and indeed for all Australians.



Kootingal Public School Captains, Jesse Flemming and Sophie Heeney, seen turning the first sod surrounded by students, Peter Draper, and Tony Windsor celebrating the commencement of the \$2M project.



Students at Tambar Springs Public School showing Peter Draper and Tony Windsor their playground facilities.

Small Country Schools are an Essential Part of Rural Communities

Recently, I accompanied the State Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper, on a visit to Tambar Springs (12 students), Premer (16 students) and Spring Ridge (40 students) Public Schools.

The importance of these schools to their local community and for the students and their families cannot be overstated. Travelling times to larger centres for younger children mean that local schools are an essential part of the Nation’s educational facilities.

I was very impressed by the various local individuals and groups who were helping the schools with fundraising and expertise.

A Further \$34M for New England Primary Schools

Following the \$67.57M for New England Primary Schools previously announced and reported in July’s Newsletter, Round 3 of the Primary Schools for the 21st Century Program has since been announced by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP.

The funding will be used for the construction and refurbishment of major infrastructure including libraries, multipurpose halls and other much needed upgrading of facilities. The following is a list of the schools that have received funding:

District	No. of Schools	No. of Projects	\$ Amount
Tamworth	5	9	10,001,000
Armidale	3	4	2,550,000
Manilla	2	4	3,057,000
Walcha	2	4	3,702,000
Barraba	2	3	1,807,000
Tenterfield	1	2	2,000,000
Werris Creek	1	2	850,000
Glen Innes	1	2	2,000,000
Ashford	1	1	850,000
Bingara	1	1	850,000
Bundarra	1	1	907,000
Guyra	1	1	2,000,000
Tingha	1	1	1,050,000
Uralla	1	1	2,057,000
Wallabadah	1	1	250,000
TOTAL	24	37	33,931,000

Full details of the various school grants can be obtained by contacting my office – see page five for contact details.

\$2.56M Boost to Community Education

The above funds have been allocated to five community organisations in the New England Electorate to go towards projects that will help improve teaching and learning opportunities across the region. The funds come under the Investing in Community Education and Training (ICET) Program.

The successful organisations are the Bingara Community College Inc, Tamworth Community College Inc, Community College–Northern Inland Inc (Barraba), Joblink Plus Ltd Tamworth and Best Employment Ltd (Inverell).

The organisations will benefit from the \$2.56M to establish new and upgraded training facilities.

Tingha Multi Purpose Service (MPS) Centre Official Opening



I was pleased to be present at the Official Opening of the Tingha Multi Purpose Service funded jointly by the State and Federal Governments. Congratulations to the community members who supported the MPS concept from initiation to its completion.

New England High Schools to Receive \$9.94M for Science and Language Centres

Eight schools from across the New England Electorate will share \$9.94M from the Science and Language Centres for the 21st Century Secondary Schools element of the Building the Education Revolution. These are as follows:

School	Centre	\$ Amount
Glen Innes High	Language	920,000
Guyra Central	Science	1,969,000
Inverell High	Science	1,290,000
Macintyre High	Science	1,014,000
Manilla Central	Language	920,000
Peel High	Science	1,014,000
Quirindi High	Language	920,000
Tamworth High	Science	1,885,000

The development of science and language skills by our students is of utmost importance to their employment and social opportunities in the future.

Taxation Reprieve For Farming/Small Businesses Welcomed

The decision by Assistant Treasurer, Senator Nick Sherry, to amend changes to Division 7A of the Income Tax Assessment Act means that the many farming and small businesses that would have been negatively impacted upon by the proposed changes will now not have to suffer. The changes would have meant that farmers were going to be subject to tax on the use of company assets, including land and farm residences, used in the normal course of farming. *Further information can be sourced by contacting my office or by discussing the matter with your accountant.*

Youth Allowance Gap Year Changes Welcomed

In my last newsletter, I stated that amendments were needed to the Youth Allowance eligibility, as a system based on proving financial independence would not work to reduce costs for the education of country students.

I am therefore very pleased to note that the Government has listened to students and their families about how the then proposed changes to the Youth Allowance eligibility criteria would have impacted on students already in the process of taking a gap year by exempting these students.

However, the issue of the requirement to work for 18 months out of two years for 30 hours a week is still to be sorted out. I am still concerned the proposed changes have not fully taken into account the fact that young people in country towns may have no choice but to move away to meet this requirement.

Bundarra Community Supports the Grace Munro Aged Care Centre

The announcement that the current managers of the Centre were not going to renew their management contract has galvanised the Bundarra Community into exploring all options to keep the Centre open.

A meeting was held in September and attended by community members and Uralla Shire Council representatives (the owners of the building).

I have also held discussions with the Minister for Ageing, the Hon Justine Elliot, and her senior staff as well as other service providers and relevant professionals.

After many years of local support, the community of Bundarra has again volunteered to work towards keeping this Centre open. In the end, it may come down to a community based organisation to achieve what the community wants. This is an ongoing issue and I will continue to keep you informed.

TAFE Students Combine with Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service to Renovate the Service's Fundraising Promotional Vehicle



Lindsay Maybury, Chairperson of the Quirindi Westpac Rescue Helicopter Support Group, organised five local Quirindi businesses to purchase a Landcruiser and TAFE has cooperated to renovate the vehicle so that it can be used for fundraising and promotion. Without this sort of cooperation, the job of supplying Westpac Rescue Helicopter's excellent service to the community would be measurably more difficult. I am proud to be Chairperson of the Advisory Committee to this wonderful organisation.

Lindsay Maybury, Barry Walton from Westpac Rescue Helicopter, Tamworth TAFE students and their panel beating teacher, Craig Emerson.

What Price Food in a Carbon Economy?

The CSIRO's recent projections relating to global food supplies in 2050 and how food production will need to increase, raises the issue of what price will food need to be to compete for land use in an economy that embraces food, carbon emissions and fuel energy.

In a global carbon economy, there may be substantial changes to land use driven by environmental factors and the so-called carbon market signals.

The collision point between food, fuel and carbon in the global warming debate, and how it could impact on the land use currently used for crop production, can be seen through the eyes of an Australian wheat grower.

It may well be more viable long-term for grain farmers to use their land to grow fuel from plant material such as ethanol, bio-diesel, or for forestry offsets for carbon purposes rather than grow the more traditional food crops.

In fact, the market signals from an Emissions Trading Scheme may well actively discourage food production in favour of energy or carbon benefits. In that circumstance, food may finish a distant third to energy and carbon.

The political implications globally on those who may face food shortages are yet to be played out, but it is imperative that the three are considered together rather than separately.

The Australian wheat grower has adapted to climate change through the use of no-till technology, where the

soil is not disturbed by cultivation. The residue of the previous crop is left on top of the soil to form a protective blanket of mulch.

With the global blowout in fuel and fertiliser costs and the impact of transport costs, the Australian wheat grower therefore stands at the farm gate with a dilemma - does he grow food or fuel?

Some suggest that Australia and the Australian wheat grower have a moral obligation to feed the world - the agricultural land should be used for food production, rather than fuel such as ethanol or bio-diesel.

Others would suggest that we should encourage renewable energy - bio-fuels - to lessen our dependence on diminishing fossil fuels, thereby replacing a finite energy resource with a renewable energy resource.

If the debate was only between these two alternatives it may keep it simple, however, we now have a third factor overarching both these - climate change and global warming, of which carbon and nitrous oxide (fertiliser) play a role.

The problem we therefore face in this debate is that if we deal with each in isolation, we are going to impact on one or both of the others, whereas each is as important as the other to achieve long-term sustainability.

To pit agriculture against the higher-priced energy and carbon markets would obviously drive food beyond the capacity for poorer countries to pay, and that is when the world will really see politics come into play.

Community Effort Saves the Glen Innes Ag Research Station

Congratulations to the community of Glen Innes for its united effort in saving the Agriculture Research and Advisory Station. The NSW Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon Ian Macdonald, has reversed his decision to close the Station.

This positive decision is a real credit to all those who took up the cudgels to keep the Station open, particularly the Glen Innes Severn Shire Council, Mayor Cr Steve Toms, Deputy Mayor, Cr Col Price, the Member for Northern Tablelands, Richard Torbay, Minister Macdonald and the working party members who collectively developed the strategy to keep the Centre open.

With the securing of the Station, the opportunities to develop new research programs will help ensure its longevity, particularly in the area of agriculture's positive contribution to addressing climate change issues.

A Tribute to John Tregurtha AM

I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Mr John Tregurtha AM.

He was a cornerstone of the Glen Innes community for as long as I remember. His contribution to the community was recognised by being made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2000 with the citation being as follows:

"For services to the community, particularly through support for a range of services, church and business organisations and to Australia's Celtic heritage through organising the construction of the Australian Stones Monument at Glen Innes."

His involvement with service organisations locally and internationally and his business involvements through his pharmacy shows that an individual can engage and make a real difference.

I know he will be sorely missed and fondly remembered by his family and the community.

Bingara Multi Purpose Service (MPS) Official Opening



Former State Minister for Health, the Hon John Della Bosca, seen opening the Bingara MPS, in the company of local citizens and elected representatives.

The Centre was funded by both the State and Federal Governments.

Retention of the Country's Voice in the Recent NSW Federal Electorate Redistribution Welcome

The retention of all NSW country seats under the recent redistribution is a positive sign that the voice of country people will not be weakened.

I was particularly pleased with the inclusion of the Gunnedah Shire Council area in the expanded New England Electorate boundaries. Gunnedah has major connections with the Liverpool Plains region and is closer in commerce, education, sporting, social activity, major health and other government services to the New England Electorate than with the seat of Parkes. In addition, Gunnedah shares with the Liverpool Plains Shire (already in the Electorate) significant issues relating to land use, water, coal mining and freight linkages to Newcastle. It cannot be said that it has the same close relationship with Dubbo and the Parkes Electorate.

I am looking forward to working closely with the Gunnedah community to further enhance their impressive progress.

CONTACT DETAILS • Toll free phone 1300 301 839

Tamworth office

Office address	Shop 5/259 Peel Street Tamworth NSW 2340
Phone	(02) 6761 3080
Fax	(02) 6761 3380
Toll free	1300 301 839
Mail	PO Box 963 Tamworth NSW 2340
Email	Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au
Web Site	www.tonywindsor.com.au

Inverell office

Office Address	88 Otho Street Inverell NSW 2360
Phone	(02) 6721 0144
Fax	(02) 6721 0288
Mail	PO Box 299A Inverell NSW 2360

Extra information on articles in this Newsletter • My Newsletter sometimes contains summaries of specific information. If you require further details on any of the items mentioned in my Newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact my office for assistance.

Congratulations

Congratulations to the following people who have celebrated special milestones over recent months.

90th Birthdays

- **Glen Innes:** Delsie Stumbles
- **Tamworth:** Joan Willis
- **Tenterfield:** Eileen Wilson, Bill Stalling, May Greene
- **Glen Innes:** Jessie Higgins

100th Birthdays

- **Quirindi:** Julia Benham
- **Tamworth:** Irene Wood
- **Guyra:** Marnie Duff, Bonny Ward

50th Wedding Anniversaries

- **Tamworth:**
Ray & Jen McDonald
David & Merle Tadman
James & Hazel Brand
Ken & June Bolton
Norman & Margaret Hill
John & Margaret Parker
Les & Pat Smith
- **Bundarra:** Gary & Julia Goldman
- **Manilla:** Victor & Wilma Ridley
- **Armidale:**
Robert & Janice Holloway
- **Bingara:** Charles & Val McKenzie
- **Ashford:** Lionel & Colleen Walsh
- **Glen Innes:** Leslie & Ettie Miller
- **Armidale:** Allan & Beryl Semple
- **Inverell:**
John & Jeanette Keightley,
Robert & Colleen Chappell
- **Dangarsleigh:**
Robert & Colleen Simmons

60th Wedding Anniversaries

- **Tamworth:** Owen & Patricia Jones
Jim & Jean McDonnell
Tom & June Curry
Bill & Myra Forrester
- **Inverell:** Bill & Cath Barry
- **Armidale:** Cliff & Lorna Wilcox
Roger & Patricia McRae
Kenneth & Laurie Witherdin
Jack & Patricia Woolaston
- **Liston:** Don & Coral Hurtz

65th Wedding Anniversaries

- **Quirindi:** Col & Bernie Saunders
- **Tamworth:** Jim & Betty LeCerf

70th Wedding Anniversary

- **Barraba:** Mo Witten OAM & Phyllis Witten

Reminder: If you know anyone celebrating a special milestone, please notify my office 6-8 weeks prior to the event so that congratulatory messages can be arranged.