

# Tony Windsor MP

## The New England Independent

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

November 2011



### New England Northwest Cancer Centre Construction Commences



*It was a great pleasure to attend the official ceremony to mark the turning of the first sod of the New England North West Cancer Centre with the State Member for Tamworth, Kevin Anderson, and the enthusiastic Hunter New England Health Team.*

The \$41.7M New England North West Cancer Centre is being built within the Tamworth Hospital's precinct by contractors Richard Crookes Constructions. The Centre has received Federal Government funding of \$31.7M and \$10M from the NSW Government. I would particularly acknowledge the work of the former State Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper, in securing the State Government funding and the New England North West community for their great efforts. The facility will allow the region's patients to receive both chemotherapy and radiation treatments in Tamworth rather than having to travel to Newcastle or Sydney.

The strain caused by this travel has unfortunately led to country people having a lower survival rate than cancer sufferers in the city. The Centre will improve health outcomes and relieve some of the strain on regional families. Services will include two radiotherapy bunkers, one linear accelerator, an additional four chemotherapy treatment chairs in Tamworth, two chairs in Armidale and a range of diagnostic equipment and care accommodation. The facility will be able to treat 414 radiotherapy patients per year and will expand chemotherapy service by an additional 3,000 treatments per year.

### National Broadband Network to Expand in New England

Armidale has led the way on mainland Australia by being a first and second release site for the roll out of fibre optic cable. To have a commitment to connect the entire community of Armidale by Christmas 2012 is great news and certainly augers well for the connection of other communities in New England.

In addition, the selection of villages around Tamworth to be among the first in Australia to receive fixed wireless NBN broadband services is welcome as it paves the way for the further spread of the fixed wireless services to areas previously disadvantaged by slow dial-up connections or non-existent mobile networks. Residents, schools and businesses in these villages will be among the Nation's first to connect to the fixed wireless network with connection proposed to begin midway through 2012. The list of villages to be connected can be obtained from my office, details of which can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

### To the Electorate

The 2010 Election, as we all know, resulted in a hung Federal Parliament for the first time in around 70 years.

In previous Parliaments, the party with the most numbers could put through their legislative program with a minimum of fuss and, whilst debate took place, the number of amendments that got through were few. However, in this current Parliament a good idea, regardless of who has it, can be put forward and even passed on its merits rather than be dismissed off hand simply because it is not what the cabinet of the day has decided.

Some examples of this are as follows:

- Changes to the Clean Energy Bills were negotiated so that heavy vehicles fuels were not included in the proposed carbon price as the transport industry had already made significant emission reductions in the past decade and imposing a carbon price on transport fuel would not reduce fuel consumption.
- A dedicated Department concentrating on Regional Development has been formed, being the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government.
- The hung Parliament has allowed real input into the processes associated with the proposed Murray-Darling Basin Plan.
- The removal of the distinction between students in inner regional and outer regional and remote areas in regard to eligibility for the independent Youth Allowance has been approved and will apply from 1 January 2012 thereby reducing the barriers facing regional students accessing a university education.

As the year draws to a close, I hope that everyone has the opportunity to relax for a few days with family and friends during the Festive Season. My wife Lyn, our family and my staff join me in wishing everyone in the New England Electorate a Merry Christmas and all the very best for a safe, healthy, happy and prosperous New Year.

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

Tony Windsor MP  
Member for New England



## Aeronautical Training in Tamworth

John Michael, Assistant Director, New England Institute of TAFE Trades and Primary Industries Faculty with Tony Windsor and Charles McCarthy inspecting the Australasian Pacific Aeronautical College (APAC) at Tamworth Airport.

## \$88,000 for Healthy Eating Programs Granted to Two New England Electorate Schools

School children at the Kentucky and Chandler (Wollomombi) Public Schools have been successful in obtaining funding (\$39,650 and \$48,500 respectively) under the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program.

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, announced that fifty schools across Australia were successful so it is pleasing to see that two schools in the New England Electorate were included.

The program funds the establishment of gardens and kitchens so that the children can grow, harvest, prepare and share fresh food and develop healthy eating habits.

More information about this Program is available at: [www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)

## Congratulation to Fiona Simson - New NSW Farmers' Association President

I congratulate Fiona Simson for being elected as the President of the NSW Farmers' Association. I believe that choosing a person as dynamic as Fiona Simson to lead the Association represents a great leap forward for the organisation.

I have been impressed by her ability to engage with a broad range of interests and to develop a fresh and nuanced view that is free of party politics.

## \$8M to Help Rebuild Armidale's Freeman House

This \$18M project will rebuild Armidale's specialist Homeless, Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre. Freeman House provides an integrated service that helps people tackle a range of associated issues including health, homelessness, disability and secondary health problems arising from drugs and alcohol. However, for many years it has been in need of rebuilding to meet the needs of the community.

I congratulate the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW for their successful application to the Regional Development Australia Fund from which they will receive \$8M.

## Barraba Pipeline's \$6.55M

The Barraba community has needed a secure reliable quality water supply for many years. The recent funding announcement by Simon Crean, Minister for Regional Australia and Tony Burke, Minister for Water, was very welcome as without water communities like Barraba will struggle to survive let alone have an opportunity to grow.

The community can now look forward to the planning, design, and implementation of the project proceeding which in turn will enable future growth in local industries and employment.

## \$500,000 to Inverell's Evans Street Surgery

The grant supplied under the New Primary Care Infrastructure Grants – GP Program will enable the surgery to move to a new and enhanced facility away from the floodplain rather than a refurbished older facility which is in a flood prone location.

The initial application outlined a need for better facilities at the existing premises, however on further investigation the owners felt that a new and enhanced facility out of the floodplain would make better use of the funding.

I congratulate the Evans Street Surgery upon its successful application and commend the facility for its ongoing commitment to providing quality local health services.

## \$322,000 for New England Volunteer Organisations

\$322,000 has been allocated to 101 organisations in the New England Electorate under the Federal Government's 2011 Volunteer Grants Program.

Volunteers are the backbone of our communities both large and small and without them many services that communities depend on would not be available. They contribute greatly to the quality of life.

The grants are a way of recognising the wonderful efforts of many volunteers and assisting organisations to enable them to purchase small equipment items, help volunteers to attend training courses and defray other costs that are incurred in the delivery of their services.



## South Tamworth Public School Students Visit Parliament House

I was recently pleased to meet with a group of students from South Tamworth Public School during their visit to Canberra.

Schools in the New England Electorate wishing to visit Parliament House can make appropriate arrangements by contacting my Tamworth office.



## Armidale's Sustainable Living Expo Opening

I was pleased to recently attend the opening of the Sustainable Living Expo in Armidale. I joined Rene Dasey, slex Event Manager, Richard Torbay, Member for Northern Tablelands, Cllr Peter Ducat, Mayor Armidale Dumaresq Council and Prof Annabelle Duncan, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) UNE at the opening.

## Low to Middle Income Earners and Pensioners Shielded from Impacts of Carbon Tax on Top 500 Polluters

Treasury modelling presented to the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee indicated that the overall economic impact of the carbon pricing mechanism is expected to be small and the majority of Australians will receive compensation to offset any price increase that may occur.

The modelling shows the following:

- Low income earners will receive full compensation, along with a 20% buffer above the expected impact of the price rises.
- Those who use large amounts of electricity due to a medical condition or disability will receive further assistance.
- Low income households are defined as all pensioners, singles earning less than \$30,000 per year or couples earning less than \$45,000 per year and parent/s earning less than \$60,000.
- Middle income earners will receive partial compensation. Middle income is defined as singles earning between \$30,000 and \$80,000, couples earning between \$45,000 and \$120,000 and parent/s earning between \$60,000 and \$150,000.

## Support for the Blockade of Coal Seam Gas Well on the Liverpool Plains

The move by Santos to proceed with "pilot production" of coal seam gas before the results of the Namoi Water Catchment Water Study are known has led to many of the landholders on the Liverpool Plains losing faith in the planning process. What is planned is not a "water monitoring" drill hole but rather a "pilot production" drill hole.

We continue to hear that governments, both State and Federal, do not have the financial capacity to carry out appropriate regional assessments in "sensitive" areas such as flood plains, productive agricultural land and areas with water issues.

Currently, this process is undertaken by the mining companies during the exploration licence phase. It is obviously failing as a process.

This is primarily a State issue but as the Federal Government does oversee Murray-Darling water issues it is obvious that the issues concerning coal seam gas and mining, especially in relation to water, should have both State and Federal jurisdiction.

This is why I have taken the stand I have with the Government regarding the proposed Mining Resources Rent Tax. The establishment of a more transparent process could well be funded by revenue from the Tax.



Inspecting a map of the Liverpool Plains before viewing the area by air with Simon Crean, Minister for Regional Australia.

## "headspace" Program Coming to Tamworth

Young people aged between 12 to 25 in need of counselling in general health, mental health, education, employment, alcohol and other drug services, will soon have access to these services in the New England North West region following the expansion of the Federal Government's "headspace" Program.

The headspace centres will be independently managed by the selected lead agency which will establish partnerships with local service providers.

Young people can be very vulnerable and need access to services that can help them negotiate through their early stage of life.

## Youth Allowance Changes Welcomed

The decision to remove the distinction between students in inner regional, outer regional and remote areas from 1 January 2012 delivers on an agreement I made with the Government in February this year. Country students face significant barriers to accessing a university education, no matter where they are from, so it made no sense to penalise students from inner regional areas. The Relocation Scholarship for Students has also been increased to \$4,000 in the first year of study, \$2,000 in years two and three and \$1,000 for each year thereafter. These initiatives will help reduce the problems that students from regional and rural areas face in attending university.

## Search for New Bundarra Post Office Licensee

Australia Post has indicated that the search for a new Licensee is continuing. This issue does arise from time to time in small communities and I will continue to work with the Bundarra community and Australia Post so that residents continue to have easy access to Post Office services.

## \$5.9M for Rural Financial Counselling Services NSW - Northern Region

The call for recurrent funding has been made by rural groups for many years. It was only when the balance of power was used that for the first time the Rural Financial Counselling Service received a commitment for recurrent funding. Previously the funding has only been from year to year. The announcement means that out of a national commitment of \$54.9M, eleven offices in Northern NSW will receive \$5.9M over the next four years.

## \$4,000 to the Tenterfield Men's Shed

The Tenterfield Men's Shed received a grant (one of only 25 awarded in the second round of funding for this year) to assist with the purchase of additional tools and equipment and enable the organisation to expand its range of activities.

The Men's Shed movement is a great model for blokes, not normally known for talking about their issues, to air their problems in a supportive environment and obtain information about health and wellbeing services so that members can enjoy their lives to the fullest.

## \$270,000 Black Spot Funding for Two Problem Roads

Black Spot funding has been provided for the following projects:

- Intersection of Dumaresq and Markham Street, Armidale. \$20,000 granted to install traffic calming infrastructure and upgrading of the road surface.
- A section of Daruka Road Tamworth. \$250,000 granted to improve existing batters, install wire rope or guard rails at hazardous locations and remove objects from the clear zone.

The Black Spot Program is assessed by a panel of independent road safety experts and it is pleasing to see this announcement so soon after the considerable amount of funds for road improvements that came out of the recent Budget such as the \$6M grant for the New England Bolivia Hill realignment and Tenterfield Heavy Vehicle Bypass.

## Walcha Tax Forum

A Tax Forum to consider the recommendations made by the Henry Tax Review was one of the conditions the Prime Minister agreed to as part of the negotiations with independents in forming government.

Resolutions agreed to at the Walcha Regional Tax Forum were noted and taken to the Treasurer's Tax Forum held in Canberra in October.

The Henry Tax Review identified reforms that could boost productivity by encouraging more people into work, foster new business activity and thereby increase national output by around 2 to 3% each year, slash red tape, simplify the tax and welfare systems and abolish annoyance taxes like stamp duty.

I was worried the government was passing up a golden opportunity to strengthen our economy by putting the Henry Tax Review on the backburner, however I'm pleased the hung parliament has given us a chance to more fully consider its recommendations.

## CONGRATULATIONS

### 90th Birthday

Mr Ernest George Lowrey, Inverell  
Mrs Miriam Jean Callcott, Armidale  
Mrs Merle Stevens, Barraba  
Mr Fred Mumford, Uralla  
Mr Angus John Leahy, Armidale

### 95th Birthday

Mr Nigel James Riordan, Quirindi

### 100th Birthday

Mrs Mary Ellen Jones, Guyra  
Mrs Edna May Levingston, Armidale  
Mrs Joyce Phyllis Irene Connell, Tingha

### 102nd Birthday

Mrs Julia Arabella Benham, Quirindi

### 50th Wedding Anniversary

Mr & Mrs Fred & Deanna Knight, Armidale  
Mr & Mrs Ross & Roxy McKinnon, Tamworth  
Mr & Mrs Kelvin & Elaine Archibald, Gunnedah  
Mr & Mrs Rodney & Yvonne Wicks, Armidale  
Mr & Mrs Geoff & Rita Baker, Barraba  
Mr & Mrs John & Fay Griffith, Armidale  
Mr & Mrs Paul & Helen Kennedy, Gostwyck  
Mr & Mrs George & Jean Watton, Gunnedah  
Mr & Mrs William & Elsie Kirsop, Gilgandra  
Mr & Mrs Grahame & Kay Goff, Gunnedah  
Mr & Mrs Gordon & Jean O'Brien, Inverell  
Mr & Mrs Bert & Janet Makepeace, Inverell  
Mr & Mrs Ronald & Gwenneth Jackson, Armidale  
Mr & Mrs Peter & Yvonne Botfield, Duri  
Mr & Mrs Ken & Velma Lysaght, Tamworth  
Mr & Mrs Terence & Janelle Mullens, Bective  
Mr & Mrs Wally & Judy Stewart, Tamworth

### 51st Wedding Anniversary

Mr & Mrs Neil & Joy Jarrett, Deepwater

### 60th Wedding Anniversary

Mr & Mrs Max & Kathy Heywood, Barraba  
Mr & Mrs Jim & Vera Coupland, Manilla  
Mr & Mrs Geoffrey & Jean Reardon, Dungowan  
Mr & Mrs Val & Kath Scholz, Inverell  
Mr & Mrs Roy Colin & Edna Lillian Wells, Emmaville  
Mr & Mrs Richard & Joan Pearson, Armidale  
Mr Bill Forrest OAM & Mrs Ruth Forrest, Tamworth  
Mr & Mrs Daniel & Colleen Capel, Barraba  
Mr & Mrs Leonard & Moya Koch, Gunnedah  
Mr & Mrs Kevin & Joan Bower, Uralla  
Mr & Mrs Phillip & Audrey Tull, Tamworth  
Mr & Mrs Norman & Gladys Johnson, Tamworth  
Mr & Mrs Owen & Shirley McMahon, Tamworth

### 63rd Wedding Anniversary

Mr & Mrs Peter & June Mansfield, Inverell

### 65th Wedding Anniversary

Mr & Mrs Joe & Pearl Trindall, Attunga  
Mr & Mrs William & Elizabeth Southcott, Armidale

### 70th Wedding Anniversary

Mr & Mrs Leslie & Sybil Keelan, Glen Innes

## CONTACT DETAILS • TOLL FREE PHONE 1300 301 839

### Tamworth Office

Shop 5/259 Peel Street,  
Tamworth NSW 2340

Phone: (02) 6761 3080

Fax: (02) 6761 3380

Mail: PO Box 963 Tamworth NSW 2340

Email: Tony.Windsor.MP@aph.gov.au

Website: www.tonywindsor.com.au

### Inverell Office

88 Otho Street,  
Inverell NSW 2360

Phone: (02) 6721 0144

Fax: (02) 6721 0288

Mail: PO Box 299A Inverell NSW 2360

Please contact my office so that an appointment can be made. Don't hesitate to inform my staff of your enquiry as they may be able to help you on the spot.

### Extra details regarding the 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.

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