

# CLAYTON BARR'S State News

Winter 2022



CLAYTON BARR MP | YOUR LOCAL STATE MEMBER FOR THE ELECTORATE OF CESSNOCK

Office: 118 Vincent Street (PO Box 242), Cessnock NSW 2325 Phone: 4991 1466 Email: [cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au)  
Facebook: ClaytonBarrMP Website: [www.claytonbarr.com.au](http://www.claytonbarr.com.au)

## Building schools for a better tomorrow

### Investing in Education

The NSW Government continues to push new housing into greenfield sites (undeveloped areas) across NSW. As these sites are developed the Government must also accept and take responsibility for providing the necessary infrastructure needed.

It is important for the successful development of these communities to have access to public facilities such as parks, playgrounds, schools and hospitals.

Over the last decade we have seen many of these sites being developed across the Electorate. These include Cameron Park, Huntlee/Branxton/North Rothbury and Heddon Greta/Cliffleigh without the NSW Government providing the necessary public facilities for these areas.

These areas are in desperate need of educational facilities. Cameron Park is one such area where excessive pressure is being put on the existing schools including Edgeworth Public School, Edgeworth Heights Public School and West Wallsend Public School. They are all wonderful schools but are bursting at the seams as student population continues to grow as more homes are built. Despite numerous representations being sent to various NSW Government Education Ministers regarding a need for a school for Cameron Park, the Government does not accept the need for a new school.

When the Cameron Park area was first proposed some 20 years ago, the developer had promised a school in the future. The houses continue to be built and the land for a school has been sitting there empty.

As our areas continue to grow we need to have the infrastructure to support their growth. Huntlee/Branxton/North Rothbury and Heddon Greta/Cliffleigh are also similar developments where there are new residential lots, occupied primarily by young families. We need to have the planning and conversations about these schools now, not once these areas are already built up. The Government cannot sit on its hands when there is a current and future demand for these schools to be built.

We need to be investing in education, in facilities for students to learn, in teachers and in our communities for a better community and for a better tomorrow for us all.



ABOVE: site at Cameron Park which has been set aside for a school.

### Barr-beques



are back  
see back page  
for details

**INSIDE** Local Woman of the Year (P2)  
Electric vehicles the future (P5)

Lower Hunter Freight Rail Corridor (P6)  
University funding problems (P7)

# Abermain traffic lights switched on

In great news for the Electorate the upgrade to the intersection at Orange and Charles Streets, Abermain has finally been completed.

I began campaigning for something to be done about this intersection over 10 years ago when concerned locals, including those from the local primary school, approached me with concerns for their safety.

The \$3.7 million upgrade was announced in September 2021 under the Road Safety Program, jointly funded by the Federal and State Governments. The upgrade included the installation of traffic lights at Orange Street, which included pedestrian crossings, dedicated turning lanes into Orange and Charles Streets and other traffic management measures.

I had only been a member for a matter of months when I received a call asking me to attend a meeting with Year 5/6 class at Abermain Public School to discuss traffic issues on the main road. The students had prepared a presentation for me and I kept this in mind every time I raised the issue with RMS (now Transport for NSW) 3 or 4 times a year for the last 10 years. The upgrade would not have been made possible without the dedication and campaigning of the students at Abermain Public School and locals who were so passionate about making a difference. Abermain legend Catherine Parsons is one such awesome local who has been instrumental in campaigning for the lights.



## Local Woman of the Year

**Volunteers are the heartbeat of our local communities which is why it was an absolute pleasure to recognise this year's Local Woman of the Year, Helen Scott. Helen was named as the Cessnock Electorate nominee at the NSW Woman of the Year awards in March. The awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution made by women across NSW to industry, communities and society.**



Branxton's Helen Scott was recognised for her tireless volunteering efforts for many organisations for the past 40 years. Her contribution to our local community is immeasurable.

Through her volunteer work Helen has raised thousands and thousands of dollars for local and national charities including local schools, sporting organisations, churches, the Royal Institute for Deaf & Blind Children, Branxton Lions Club, domestic violence charities, the Cancer Council and Palliative Care.

Helen began volunteering in 1980 as a driver for Meals on Wheels, before volunteering for a variety of other groups including Cardiff Junior Soccer, Branxton Lions Club and Anglican Opshop.

Helen has also organised many fundraisers for various local and national charities including the Black Dog Institute, Jodie's Place and Friends of Palliative Care, as well as assisting Branxton/Greta Country Women's Association to run the annual Biggest Morning Tea event fundraiser for the Cancer Council.

Since 2017 Helen has been an active member and then Secretary of the Central Hunter Business Chamber (formerly Branxton Greta Business Chamber.) Her work with the chamber has included organising markets, assisting with the Expo and organising the Governor's Morning Tea event at Branxton Community Hall.

Over the past 10 years and currently, Helen holds the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, Caretaker and Booking Officer of the Branxton Community Hall, fighting hard for funding for improvements for the hall. Helen's extensive volunteering record is a tribute to a remarkable woman who is always willing to lend a hand for her community.

Helen embodies community spirit and a willingness to help others. It was a privilege to be able to acknowledge Helen's hard work and thank her for her efforts on behalf of our community.

# Importance of Early Childhood Education

## Investing in Education

Quality early childhood education is essential for the social and learning development of children. It is often the bridge that helps children step from preschool to primary school.

Access to early childhood education (ECE) should be available to every child. Access to early learning gives children the best start. Proper funding of the sector will ensure that every child regardless of finances in the house, is given the same opportunity for a terrific early start in education.

Research from around the world has shown that children who participate in preschool programs are more likely to arrive at school equipped with the social, cognitive and emotional skills they need to help them learn. It is well documented that Australia has a poor record of investing in early childhood education.

In comparison to other smaller countries, the amount of money invested into early childhood education in Australia is relatively small. Countries like Finland, Sweden and Norway frequently lead rankings for education and early childhood education due to the funding that is put into its education system. In these countries preschools help to ensure children get a strong start in life, especially those from low-income or disadvantaged households.

In a recent study Australia has been ranked 28 out of 45 countries in the developed world, in its commitment to quality, affordability and accessibility of early learning.

Children deserve the best start in life that we as parents and citizens can give them. That means access to quality, affordable early childhood education.

## Heddon Greta roads update

**There is no doubt that the Hunter Expressway (HEX) has been a wonderful thing for the Hunter. But we all need to spare a thought for those that live along the roads that have become major entry/exit points of the HEX.**

For residents in and around Heddon Greta and Cliftleigh the size of the problem created is hard to get your head around unless you have seen it with your own eyes. There is a seemingly endless stream of traffic moving between the HEX and Maitland.

Works are underway to provide first step solutions in the way of traffic lights. Unfortunately, the works feel like they are taking forever. There is no doubt that we have been poorly served by the developer with responsibility for the construction of the lights, not to mention weather disruptions and additional complications with old water pipes.

Works had been scheduled to finish late in 2022 but recent news has come that it looks more like early 2023 for completion of works. None of us can click our fingers and make it all happen as quickly as we would like but you can rest assured that I will be nagging Transport for NSW to get things done as quickly as possible.

## Funding received for Branxton and Greta RSL Memorials

In early May the Branxton RSL sub-Branch and Greta RSL sub-Branch secured funding under the NSW Community War Memorials Fund through the NSW Office of Veterans Affairs.

It is important to protect, repair and maintain our community war memorials as they serve as recognition of the sacrifices of our brave men and women who have served.



The Greta RSL sub-Branch secured \$6,500 in funding to support the conservation of the Greta Memorial Cenotaph.

The Branxton RSL sub-Branch secured \$10,000 in funding for the conservation of the Branxton RSL Memorial Hall.

Community organisations including memorial trusts, veteran groups and local councils can apply for funding to support the repair, protection and conservation of community war memorials listed on the NSW War Memorials Register.

# Cessnock Hospital update



I am sure that many of us were very excited when the Perrottet Government announced Cessnock Hospital has been allocated \$111.5 million for a major redevelopment. Funding of this size is rare and very welcome for our rapidly growing community. I have been lobbying on behalf of Cessnock and Kurri Kurri hospitals for 10 years. Its great to see the message has now been heard.

The funding provides an opportunity for much needed improvements and to 'think big' about the hospital's future. I will be working with the Minister for Health and Hunter New England Health to help plan a redevelopment that will be of benefit for our community.

Now that the announcement has been made we turn our attention to holding the Perrottet Government to account for their \$111.5 million promise.

At the time of writing this newsletter the NSW Budget for 2022/23 has not been handed down but I would expect to see some of the \$111.5 million allocated for planning and consultation for this redevelopment project.

## Community Building Partnership Program completed projects



I always enjoy visiting and viewing completed Community Building Partnership Program (CBPP) projects. Late last year I was able to announce \$400,000 in CBPP funding across the Cessnock Electorate. A total of 22 groups received funding for a variety of projects including outdoor fitness pods, flood lighting, security fencing, shade for a children's play area, security doors, a mobile sawmill, electronic billboards, and a bathroom refurbishment.

The CBPP has provided funding to thousands of community groups, sporting clubs and councils across NSW to build or upgrade local facilities.

In March this year I met up with Ellice from the Cessnock Country Women's Association to check out their new security doors and storage space. The CWA Cessnock Branch secured \$5,071 in funding through CBPP in 2021.

In April I caught up with Cessnock Woodturners who were able to demonstrate their brand new mobile saw which was purchased after the group secured \$29,897 funding through CBPP 2021 funding.



In another project work was completed recently with the installation of shade sail at Brunner Park East Branxton. Cessnock City Council received \$10,000 in funding for sails as part of the 2021 CBPP.

Applications for the 2022 CBPP closed in early June 2022.



# TAFE in need of a funding injection

## Investing in Education

**It is no secret over the last decade that the TAFE system has continually had its funding decreased (in real terms), course budgets have been slashed, campuses have been closed and sold off, teaching hours have been cut and staff workloads increased.**

**The result of these cuts is under-staffed TAFEs, over-worked teachers, students education suffering, and severe skills shortage in our communities.**

Once the backbone of Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system, TAFE is seriously underfunded. TAFE's training options have been depleted due to the lack of funding for students and courses and TAFEs are forced to do more with less resources.

In a recent survey on the "State of our TAFEs" data showed 83% of TAFE teachers report that their institution had closed courses in the past 3 years, with the lack of funding as the most common reason cited. 80% of TAFE teachers report that they do not believe students studying today are receiving the same quality of education as they did 2 years ago.

With the Governments not adequately investing in TAFE, students are left to cover the costs of courses themselves with little or no financial support which is leaving them with huge debts before even starting work.

Cuts to TAFE has come at a cost as our gap in skills is widening - areas hit hard by the skills shortage include hospitality and tourism, aged care, disability care, nursing and community services. We need a properly funded TAFE system in order to fix the current and looming skills crisis.

## Electric vehicles the future is coming

**As more people choose to purchase electric vehicles across Australia, we need to be looking at where we are heading in regards to the infrastructure needed to support their roll out, such as charging stations.**

**Throughout the world we are in the middle of the biggest revolution in motoring since Henry Ford's first production line started back in 1913.**

Some of the world's biggest car makers have taken steps to sell only electric vehicles in the coming years with Jaguar planning to sell only electric vehicles from 2025, Volvo from 2030 and Lotus from 2028. In Europe General Motors says it will make only electric vehicles by 2035, while Ford says all of its vehicles in Europe will be electric by 2030.

Once the idea that each of us would be driving electric vehicles would have seemed far away into the future. But in reality it is now only a few short years away.

Governments around the globe are setting targets to get people to move away from traditional petrol and diesel vehicles and encouraging the purchase of electric vehicles.

In NSW the Government has also set a goal of 52% of all new car sales being electric vehicles by 2030-31.

Across the Cessnock Electorate one of our biggest employers is the tourism industry. In order to make sure we are ready for the new frontier of electric vehicles, we need to be considering and installing infrastructure which will be of benefit for our future. Our tourists, most of whom are from Sydney, will need to be able to charge their vehicles in public places so that they can enjoy our wonders and still be able to get home.

For some, the move away from petrol and diesel vehicles to electric vehicles is still a few years away but if we do not have a plan in place we could very well be left behind.



# Lower Hunter Freight Rail Corridor

The idea of a freight rail corridor for the Lower Hunter, to take freight around the cities of Lake Macquarie and Newcastle instead of through them, has been on the drawing board for more than 20 years.

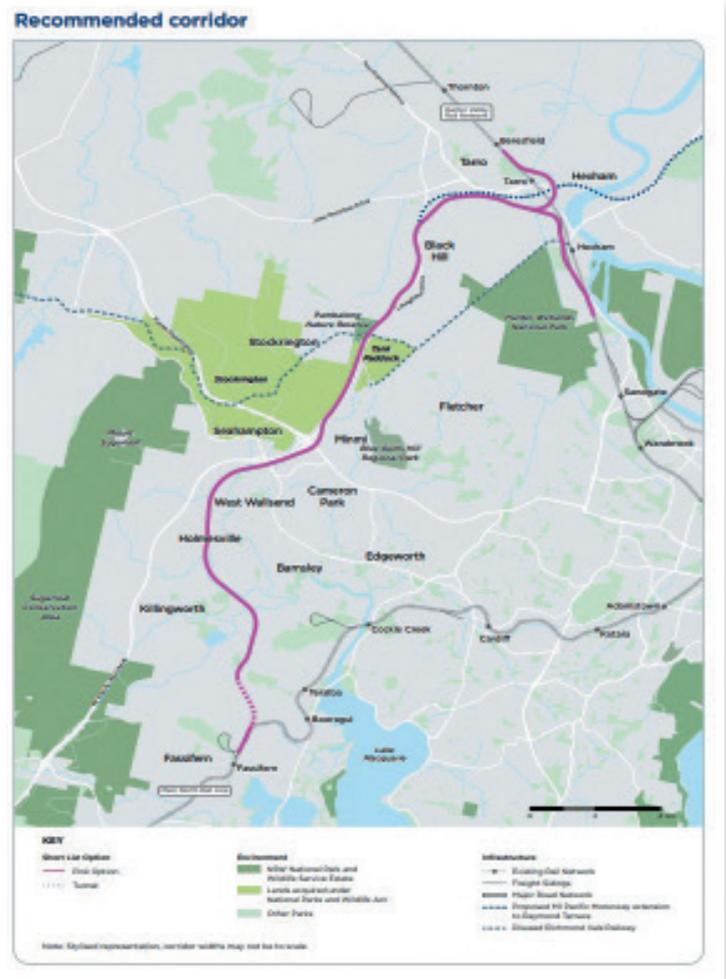
And by the Government's own admission, construction of the rail corridor (bypass) will not start for at least 10 years.

Given the long time lines, it was very frustrating that the Government tried to ram through "community consultation" during the COVID lockdowns, when communities essentially couldn't meet!

Pleas from myself and the wider community to push the pause button on community consultation, until a time when we could all meet face-to-face in a community hall style meeting, fell on deaf ears and the government pushed on.

To participate in the consultation people had to register and then try to log in to the online events. Technology being what technology is, things didn't go smoothly for plenty of people, leaving them left out of this important conversation.

I organised for the Minister responsible to be asked about this, in Budget Estimates. The Minister would not commit to the pause, but he gave an assurance that there would be future opportunities for community to have their say. We need to hold the Government to this.



# Justice of the Peace services available

Local residents often require the services of Justices of the Peace (JP) but sometimes find it difficult to locate or identify members of the community who serve as a JP.

You can find a local JP several ways including by visiting [www.jp.nsw.gov.au](http://www.jp.nsw.gov.au) for your nearest JP.

If you are looking for a JP in the Cessnock area, the Community JP Desk operated by the NSW Justices Association Inc. is available **every Thursday between 10:00am - 1:00pm at Cessnock City Library, 65-67 Vincent Street, Cessnock.**

Any JPs in the Cessnock area who would like to volunteer, please contact the JP's community desk for more information.

For people who live in the eastern end of the Cessnock Electorate, the Morisset and Lake Macquarie Branch of the NSW Justices Association regularly provide JP services at Cameron Park Shopping Centre (outside the Chemist) and at Edgeworth Town Square Shopping Centre on the following dates between 10am and 12pm:

## CAMERON PARK

### Thursday

- 21 July 2022
- 18 August 2022
- 15 September 2022
- 20 October 2022
- 17 November 2022
- 15 December 2022

### Saturday

- 2 July 2022
- 6 August 2022
- 3 September 2022
- 1 October 2022
- 5 November 2022
- 3 December 2022

## EDGEWORTH

### Thursday

- 7 July 2022
- 4 August 2022
- 1 September 2022
- 6 October 2022
- 3 November 2022
- 1 December 2022

### Saturday

- 16 July 2022
- 20 August 2022
- 17 September 2022
- 15 October 2022
- 19 November 2022
- 17 December 2022

# University funding problems

## Investing in Education

**Universities play a crucial role in our society. We need hundreds of thousands of people to gain university based qualifications to do fundamental jobs in our society like building bridges and tunnels, healing people in our hospitals and teaching our students at school.**

With this in mind, it is pretty obvious that our universities need to be properly funded. Sadly though, they are currently underfunded and the recent COVID crisis has highlighted just how much we rely on the dollars of foreign students.

Let's say, on average, it costs \$15,000 per year to properly train each student (this actually varies enormously depending on the course being studied, but let's work on averages). Government funding, including the HECS debts that students take on, covers about \$12,000 per year. This leaves a funding gap.

To cover the funding gap International students might be charged \$30,000 per year to study the same course and they have to pay upfront, no HECS debt for them. This means that the international students pay for their own study, plus they cover the gap in the funding for our own Australian students, plus the left over money from student fees goes into incredibly important research.

When our international borders were shut due to COVID, the entire university sector started to fall apart. This wasn't a failure of the universities themselves, or the people that work there, or the students that attend. It was a failure of Government funding!

Not everyone wants to, or needs to go to university. But we absolutely need more students attending and getting an education so that our society continues to grow and prosper. This cannot be put at risk by a global pandemic or any other disruption that might come our way.

## Student leaders visit Parliament House



**I was thrilled to meet students from 3 of the High Schools in our Electorate when they visited Parliament House in late March as part of the Secondary Student Leadership Program.**

Montana and Lebi from West Wallsend High School, Sarah and Lennox from Cessnock High School and Paul and Sharra from Kurri Kurri High School were participating in the NSW Parliament's Student Leadership Program which aims to equip young leaders with skills and knowledge to make a positive contribution to their communities.

During the program students hear from MPs and Parliamentary staff, view proceedings from the public galleries and visit Government House to meet with her Excellency, the Governor.

It was a pleasure to meet these 6 student leaders and all were fantastic ambassadors of our area.

## Here to help

**As your local State Member for the Electorate of Cessnock I can help by:**

- Advocating on your behalf with issues such as public housing, police, education, public health, state roads, transport, youth and community services.
- Helping you to voice your concerns to Ministers as you seek their assistance in resolving issues you may have with the NSW Government or its departments.
- Arranging milestone anniversary and birthday congratulatory messages.

## Connect with me

**ADDRESS:** 118 Vincent Street, Cessnock NSW 2325

**POSTAL ADDRESS:** PO Box 242, Cessnock NSW 2325

**PHONE:** 4991 1466

**FAX:** 4991 1103

**EMAIL:** [cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

**WEBSITE:** [www.claytonbarr.com.au](http://www.claytonbarr.com.au)

**FACEBOOK:** ClaytonBarrMP

**TWITTER:** @ClaytonBarrMP

# Winter 2022 Barr-beques

Now that restrictions have been lifted we can now get back to having my "world famous" Barr-beques across the Electorate. I will be holding the Barr-beques in every corner of the Electorate from Edgeworth to Broke, Abermain to Branxton, Wollombi to Cameron Park, Pelaw Main to North Rothbury, Bellbird to Barnsley and more. It is always great to see members of the community come together to talk and look at solving problems that have arisen in their neighbourhoods.

## Tuesday, 19 July 2022 EDGEWORTH

**Where:** Turnbull Street Reserve,  
Turnbull Street  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Thursday, 21 July 2022 BROKE

**Where:** McNamara Park,  
Wollombi Street  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Tuesday, 26 July 2022 ABERMAIN

**Where:** vicinity of Jeffries Park,  
Cessnock Road  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Thursday, 28 July 2022 BRANXTON

**Where:** vicinity of Miller Park,  
Maitland Street,  
East Branxton  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Wednesday, 3 August 2022 WOLLOMBI

**Where:** vicinity of  
Tennis Courts,  
Negro Street  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Sunday, 7 August 2022 CESSNOCK

**Where:** vicinity of Turner Park,  
Aberdare Road  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Sunday, 14 August 2022 CAMERON PARK

**Where:** Pasterfield Sports Complex, vicinity of playgrounds and skatepark, Billabong Drive  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Wednesday, 17 August 2022 BELLBIRD

**Where:** vicinity of  
Bellbird Miners  
Memorial Park  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Sunday, 21 August 2022 WESTON

**Where:** vicinity of Maybury  
Peace Park  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Wednesday, 24 August 2022 GRETA

**Where:** vicinity of  
Rural Fire Station carpark,  
Nelson Street  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Tuesday, 30 August 2022 KEARSLEY

**Where:** vicinity of George  
Jeffrey Park,  
Caledonia Street  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Tuesday, 6 September 2022 PELAW MAIN

**Where:** vicinity of the Log of  
Knowledge Park  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Sunday, 18 September 2022 NORTH ROTHBURY

**Where:** vicinity of the Rothbury Riot Memorial on  
Wine Country Drive  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Sunday, 9 October 2022 BARNSELY

**Where:** Taylor Park,  
Appletree Road  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Sunday, 20 November 2022 KURRI KURRI

**Where:** vicinity of  
Margaret Johns Park,  
corner of Northcote and  
Boundary Streets  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Wednesday, 30 November 2022 KITCHENER

**Where:** vicinity of the  
Poppethead Reserve,  
Cessnock Street  
**Time:** 11:30am-1:00pm

## Wednesday, 30 November 2022 HOLMESVILLE

**Where:** Joseph Holmes Memorial  
Park, Appletree Road  
**Time:** 4:30pm-6:00pm

## Are you a senior?

### Seniors Card

Are you aged 60 or older and working 20 hours or less of paid employment a week and a resident of NSW?

If yes, then the Seniors Card may be for you! With this card, you will be eligible for discounts at participating businesses.

### Senior Saver Card

If you are over 60 but still working 20+ hours a week and a resident of NSW you are entitled to a Senior Saver Card.

With this card you will be eligible for discounts at participating businesses.

For more information visit [www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au](http://www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au) or call Service NSW on 13 77 88.

