

# CLAYTON BARR MP

## CESSNOCK ELECTORATE NEWS - JUNE 2015

### THE WORK DOESN'T STOP

On Election Day the people of this Electorate put their faith in me to represent them in Parliament for another four years. I'm incredibly grateful for that confidence, and promise this: I have not stopped working, and will not stop working for the things this area needs. This brochure gives an updates on some of the issues we're facing at the moment.

As always, if there are any State Government issues I can help you with just call my office on 4991 1466 or e-mail [cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au). However I have no power to help with local Council or Federal Government matters, so your best bet for those issues is to contact your local elected Councillors or your Federal MP.



### WHERE ARE THE JOBS GOING TO COME FROM?

The Hunter Valley has a problem with jobs, it's as simple as that. Since 2011 our local unemployment rate has gone from 5.8% to 10.1%. It's the highest of any region in New South Wales. The State average is 6%. Worse still, our youth unemployment rate is around 20%. In practice, that means one young person in every five does not have a job.

There are many reasons for unemployment, and only some are in the Government's control. However on some of the factors they can control, they have completely failed to support our region's workers. In this environment, how can they possibly justify sending bus manufacturing contracts to Queensland and ferry contracts to Tasmania? Government procurement contracts are the simplest way the Government can support jobs, and they've refused to do it. Apparently their desire to cut costs outweighs the need for jobs in New South Wales.

I am also greatly saddened to report that Cessnock District Learning Centre will close later this month. The Cessnock District Learning Centre has been taking some really challenging students out of school for two days a week to let them learn in a different environment - it is about learning through doing. It is about life skills and life lessons. As a teacher at Mount View High School for nine years, I knew well some of the young people sent to the CDLC. It was often referred to as their last chance at education. It was their last chance before they were booted out of their local high school - told never to return.

Last year, through the new grants process rolled out by the Coalition Government, for the first time in 20 years the CDLC failed to secure grant funding. Statistics show that young people in our electorate struggle to get an education, and we know about the high unemployment. Short-sighted cost-cutting decisions like these only make things worse.

### TESTERS HOLLOW—ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

After all the drama of the recent floods, there is a question plenty of people are asking: how many times will Testers Hollow have to be closed off before the State Government takes action?

I've been chasing this issue up since the last major flooding of the area in 2013. I've written a number of letters to the Minister, and received pretty generic and non-committal responses. Last month the Leader of the Opposition, Luke Foley came up to see the issue and talk to local people about possible solutions.

I need your help to get something happening. If you are a regular traveller through Testers Hollow and want to see it fixed, then write to me at PO Box 242, Cessnock NSW 2325, or e-mail [cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:cessnock@parliament.nsw.gov.au). I'll pass your letter on to Duncan Gay, the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and each person who writes should get a personalised reply. The first step to stop the flooding is to flood the Minister's desk with letters.



*Clayton at Testers Hollow with Luke Foley, Leader of the Opposition.*

## WEST WALLSEND MOBILE OFFICE STARTS UP AGAIN

One of the challenges of having a vast Electorate is making sure that everyone can get an appointment with their State Member if they need one.

If you live at the eastern end of the Electorate (ie West Wallsend, Cameron Park, Edgeworth, Holmesville, Barnsley or Seahampton), it might be hard for you to come and meet with me at my Electorate Office in Cessnock. That's why I hold a regular mobile office at the Sugarvalley Neighbourhood Centre in Carrington Street, West Wallsend.

I'm available to meet with constituents just the same as I would be at my regular office. So if that suits you better, just call 4991 1466 and make an appointment.



## HEALTHY OILS FOR HEALTHY HEARTS

Here's a bit of good news: a collaboration between Hunter New England Health, the Heart Foundation, Coalfields Healthy Heartbeat, Cessnock Council and some local businesses has had strong success in getting more local food outlets to switch to healthier cooking oil.

We know that high cholesterol is a serious risk factor for Heart Disease, and we know that saturated fats and trans fats can increase 'bad' cholesterol in the blood. 26% of Hunter residents suffer high cholesterol, so this is a terribly important issue for our local people.



After four years of the 'Is it time for an oil change?' campaign, 42% of local businesses are now using oils which meet the Heart Foundation's guidelines for saturated and trans fats.

You can help make their work go even further. The group are encouraging local people to ask local food outlets what cooking oil they use, and to suggest that they join the programme.

The group have made a video of the experience of a local business participating in the programme. You can view it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pjHkwtD-OQg>. Businesses who are interested in joining the programme can call the Heart Foundation on 1300 36 26 87, or go to [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)

## THE TAFE REFORMS CONTINUE TO STING

I used my first speech in the new Parliament to talk about the Government's reforms to the TAFE system, which they ironically call 'Smart and Skilled'.

In previous brochures and letters I've told you about the damage these reforms will do to the educational prospects of our young people. Fees have blown out while contact hours have shrunk, meaning the students who can still afford to go to TAFE now pay much, much more for much, much less education.

The Electorate of Cessnock has the lowest proportion of people in the State who complete year 12. The most recent Census told us that our Electorate has the highest proportion of people in the State who have left school at year 10 or earlier. We have the lowest percentage of people in the State who go on to tertiary education. These cuts hurt us more than anywhere else in the State.

The existing TAFE staff have also been treated terribly. I have heard story after story about TAFE staff who have been forced out, as the organisation is cut down to bare bones. I will continue to keep you informed of the cuts which are happening and will continue to fight them. Our region needs more educational opportunities, not less.

