A Christmas Message from Stuart

The build up towards Christmas is a wonderful time of the year. Great for reflecting on the past year and remembering what is important to all of us.

For me it’s been a busy year of listening and doing. Listening to people across Penrith and getting on with the job making a better Penrith.

Already we have seen bushfires and storms in our suburbs which provides a timely reminder to be prepared for the upcoming season. As well as highlighting the amazing work volunteers of all walks of life contribute to our community.

It’s been a big year for Penrith. We have seen more jobs created and low unemployment, showcasing the strength of our local economy. Our schools are using record levels of funding to improve educational outcomes. The Nepean Hospital upgrade is on its way and annual funding to our Local Health District is up almost 50% from when I was first elected.

Northern Road and Mulgoa Road are both set to be widened and designs for new bridges over the M4 (Northern Road) and Railway Line (Mulgoa Road) are on public display.

Penrith Station is getting a major overhaul and a new multi-deck car park and the Nepean River Pedestrian Bridge are both under construction.

New group homes for people with a disability are opening and bringing dignity and independence, the like we have never seen. Our city skyline is changing as demand for a diversity of housing brings new opportunities.

We are not just building for now but for the future.

Bringing all that together is a wonderful community spirit that never ceases to amaze and inspire me. I fundamentally believe that Penrith, with it’s can do and never give up attitude, can be and do anything.

Enjoy the Christmas period with your family and friends. Take a moment to say thank you to people who have helped you throughout the year and I’ll see you all for a bumper 2017.

Merry Christmas!

PENRITH WIN WITH THE NORTHERN ROAD UPGRADE

The Australian and NSW Governments are funding a 10 year, $3.6 billion road investment program – The Western Sydney Infrastructure Program (WSIP) that will include the upgrade of The Northern Road.

The WSIP will deliver major road infrastructure upgrades to support an integrated transport solution for the region by providing quality road improvements that will deliver significant, ongoing safety and congestion-relieving benefits for customers.

The massive upgrade of The Northern Road/M4 Motorway Bridge will be a huge benefit to the local community.

Key features of the upgrade include:

- Replacing the existing Bridge over the M4 with a new, wider bridge (the existing bridge will be removed)
- Realigning and widening the motorway entry and exit ramps to allow for future M4 Smart Motorway Upgrades
- Replacing the two sets of existing traffic lights with one set of traffic lights

The latest report card along with updated interactive portal is now available online at www.rms.nsw.gov.au/thenorthernroad.
It was my pleasure to visit Cranebrook High School to announce that in 2017, Penrith electorate public schools will receive almost $12 million in funding under the Resource Allocation Model (RAM), an increase of more than $3.5 million on the 2016 allocation. These extra resources go directly to our Penrith schools allowing principals to better meet the unique needs of their students and our school community. I have seen schools in the Penrith electorate employ additional teachers with expertise to assist students who need extra support in key learning areas like literacy and numeracy.

In NSW public schools, needs-based funding is distributed under RAM which uses information about student need to deliver resources where they are needed most, consistent with the Gonski recommendations. Since 2014 public schools across NSW have received $504 million in extra funding helped by the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government signing up to the Gonski agreement.

The NSW Government is delivering on its commitment to deliver additional school funding based on student need.

It was great to welcome Attorney-General, Gabrielle Upton to Penrith and undertake a visit to Legal Aid. Penrith Legal Aid has 34 staff that provides services to clients in all areas of the law. The office provides legal services in Penrith, Blue Mountains, Mount Druitt, and parts of Hawkesbury and Wollondilly. Legal Aid NSW can assist in most areas of criminal, family and civil law, family dispute resolution, representation in NCAT and a number of specialist services.

They also assist people experiencing domestic and family violence through management of the Women’s Domestic Violence Program, which includes the Western Sydney Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS). The Western Sydney WDVCAS supports women and children attending the Penrith Local Court and Mt Druitt Local Courts on domestic violence matters. WDVCAS also employs a Specialist Aboriginal and a Specialist Multicultural worker.

If you or someone you know needs help, you can call LawAccess NSW on 1300 888 529 or go to www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/ to get started.

Wentworth Community Housing recently celebrated its 20th anniversary and it was great to see tenants, partners and community representatives all join together to acknowledge the occasion. It was inspiring to hear tenant Jane Magee tell her story of how Wentworth changed her life by re-instating her confidence and providing her family with long term stability. Wentworth provides specialist homelessness services in addition to social affordable housing across the Penrith, Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains and Blacktown Local Government Areas.
October marked Breast Cancer Awareness Month which provided me with the opportunity to join a group of local women at Penrith’s Lakeside Restaurant, Pink Ribbon morning tea to raise funds to go towards breast cancer research.

With breast cancer the most common cancer affecting women across Australia, it is estimated that 16,084 people will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016 alone. Breast cancer does also occur in men however it is rare.

Women aged between 50 and 74 are invited to access free screening mammograms every two years via the BreastScreen Australia Program. Women aged 40-49 and 75 and over are also welcome and eligible to receive free mammograms.

BreastScreen NSW has an office right here in Penrith and no doctor’s referral is required to book an appointment. Visit www.breastscreennsw.gov.au or call 13 20 50 for more information.

RSL LIFECARE HOMES FOR HEROES

It was my pleasure to join Melissa Neish, Manager of the recently opened RSL Lifecare Homes for Heroes at Governor Phillip Manor, Penrith.

The Homes for Heroes program in Penrith has the capacity to accommodate 9 veterans in a safe environment while providing them with individual focused support, counselling and re-skilling to allow them to live and function independently.

Special thanks go to the City of Penrith RSL sub Branch, Penrith RSL Club Ltd, volunteers from RAAF Glenbrook, volunteers from the Australian Public Service and Army volunteers who assisted in the preparation of Homes for Heroes.

MURU MITTIGAR COMMUNITY FINANCE HUB NOW OPEN IN HIGH STREET

It was a pleasure to join Mr Peter Chia, Chief Executive, Muru Mittigar and Mr Mike Quarg, Muru Community Finance Hub Manager at the official opening of the Muru Mittigar Community Finance Hub (CFH) in their new High Street Office.

Muru Mittigar has been successfully operating a Community Finance and Indigenous Money Mentor Program from its Castlereagh home since 2012, however public access has not always been easy therefore the decision was made to relocate to High Street.

The Muru Mittigar Community Finance Hub services include:
- Financial Counselling
- No Interest Loans NILS®
- Financial Literacy Education

The Muru Mittigar CFH can be contacted by phone 1300 6878 482, Email muru.nils@murumittigar.com.au or visit the office at 454 – 456 High Street, Penrith on Monday to Friday – 9am to 4pm.
NEW PENRITH MULTI STOREY CARPARK UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Following initial site investigations by contractor, AW Edwards in early November, the new Penrith multi storey car park is now under construction.

The new commuter car park, which will extend from the existing multi-storey car park on Lord Sheffield Circuit, will provide an additional 350 spaces for local commuters along with a new lift, stairs, lighting and CCTV surveillance.

The new Penrith commuter car park is being delivered as part of the NSW Government’s Transport Access Program, an initiative to deliver modern, safe and accessible transport infrastructure.

Since March 2011, more than 5,800 new commuter spaces have been provided to customers across the state with a further 7,900 on the way.

$500 MILLION FOR NSW’$ ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE

The NSW Government has announced a nation-leading $500 million environmental funding package that will support a range of innovative environmental programs with a focus on job creation and consumer savings.

The two draft plans, the NSW Government’s draft strategic plan for the $500 million investment package and the draft plan to Save NSW Energy and Money, plus accompanying policy framework have now been released.

The first draft plan sets out possible investment actions to stimulate investment in advanced energy in NSW, to build climate resilience and to help households and businesses use energy more efficiently.

The second draft plan is a more detailed savings plan that proposes ambitious measures to help households save up to $7.8 billion on their energy bills by 2050, while proposing ways to help vulnerable families save energy and money.

To view the documents or make a submission regarding the plans visit: https://engage.environment.nsw.gov.au/Environmental-Future-Consultation.

JANE STREET AND MULGOA ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE — HAVE YOUR SAY

I invite the community to have a say on the concept design and Review of Environmental Factors for the upgrade of intersections at Jane Street and High Street along Mulgoa Road and Castlereagh Road, Penrith.

Feedback on the concept design and Review of Environmental Factors is invited until 16 December and can be made via janestreetandmulgoaroad@rms.nsw.gov.au, on 1800 733 084, or mailed to Jane Street and Mulgoa Road Upgrade, PO Box 973 Parramatta NSW 2124.

Copies of the Review of Environmental Factors can be viewed at Penrith City Library, St Marys Library and St Clair Library. For more information please visit the www.rms.nsw.gov.au/JaneStreetMulgoaRoad.
The NSW Government is on track to deliver a cost-effective, best practice container deposit scheme with the introduction of the Waste and Resource Recovery Amendment (Container Deposit Scheme) Bill 2016 into State Parliament. Under the container deposit scheme:

- People in NSW will be able to return empty prescribed beverage containers between 150 ml and three litres to collection points for a 10-cent refund.
- A single Scheme Coordinator will be responsible for the financial management of the scheme and for ensuring the scheme meets state-wide targets.
- Beverage suppliers will be responsible for covering the costs of refunds through agreements with the Scheme Coordinator.
- The Environment Minister, Mark Speakman will appoint the co-ordinator in early 2017, as well as appointing Network Operators who will be responsible for the operation of the scheme.

Containers not eligible for the scheme are those generally consumed at home and not typically found in the litter stream. They include plain milk, wine, pure fruit juice (more than 1 litre), health tonics and large flavoured milk containers.


CONGRATULATIONS RENEE TOMKINS!

Big congratulations to Penrith Ramettes player, Renee Tomkins on being selected by the GWS Giants in the inaugural AFL women’s draft.

Following a 20 year successful soccer career, Renee went to watch an AFL game and decided to make the move and play AFL. Although only playing AFL for two seasons, her impressive skills on the field have been rewarded as Renee has become the first ever current player to be drafted by the AFL.

MISSION AUSTRALIA HOUSING FUNDING BOOST

Ms Natalie Curran of Mission Australia Housing welcomed a grant of $17,507 from Round 2 of the Social Housing Community Improvement Fund. The one-off grants of up to $50,000 are part of a three year, $20 million commitment to build stronger social housing communities. Round 3 of the grants will open in early 2017. For details please visit their website www.facs.nsw.gov.au/SHCIF.
Star Ratings puts Housing Maintenance in the Spotlight

Penrith residents living in social housing are now able to rate the performance of contractors called out to maintenance jobs.

The Tenant Experience Dashboard (TED) – is available at www.facs.nsw.gov.au/review and is part of a new approach to better maintain social housing in NSW.

Tenants can rate a contractor from one to five stars and it is an easy way to give feedback to make sure that the contractors are performing at a high level.

More than 600,000 work requests are carried out across NSW social housing each year, ranging from minor works such as adjusting doors and windows to major repairs and restoration of bathrooms and kitchens and modifying properties for tenants with disabilities.

Tenants requiring maintenance are encouraged to call 1800 422 322 to speak to the contractor for their area.

PENRITH THE NEW HOME OF ELITE FEMALE ROWING FACILITY

Another win for Penrith with the announcement that the brand new Rowing Australia Women’s National Training Centre will be based on the Nepean River.

The stunning Nepean River is one of the best stretches of training water in the country and has been selected over waterways across Australia as the preferred location for this exciting new training facility.

The facility will include a boathouse to accommodate a full fleet, a dedicated onsite Strength and Conditioning area plus amenities for athletes and coaches.

The NSW Government has committed $200,000 toward the facility with further funding matched from Rowing Australia.

The project also includes a Federal Government commitment of $270,000 towards a new landing on the Nepean River also available for use by the wider rowing community.

The NSW Government is committed to working in the creation of this first stage of the facility and to providing female rowers from across the country a professional pathway to reach the highest level of their sport.

NSW Government School Term Dates 2017

Term 1  Friday, 27 January to Friday, 7 April
Term 2  Monday, 24 April to Friday, 30 June
Term 3  Monday, 17 July to Friday, 22 September
Term 4  Monday, 9 October to Tuesday, 19 December

*School development days occur at the beginning of Terms 1, 2 and 3 and the last two days of the school year. Check with your school, as schools may vary some of these dates.