



A news update from Jenny Aitchison MP, Member for Maitland - Summer 2021

Government must invest in Gillieston Public School



Jenny met with concerned parents, carers, students and community members recently at Gillieston Heights Community Hub to hear their concerns and pressure the NSW Government to act.

Recently I invited NSW Premier, the Hon Dominic Perrottet MP and Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning, the Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC to attend a meeting to hear first-hand from concerned parents and carers about the significant infrastructure issues at Gillieston Public School.

Unfortunately neither could attend, however Minister Mitchell has promised to listen to all of the issues raised.

For some years now I have been campaigning for the Government to take urgent action to upgrade the school. When I was first elected in 2015, there was still a dirt floor in the boy's ablutions block, the school zone didn't cover the school gates and the school is still not connected to town sewer.

It is simply not good enough that over 260 students are learning in a school with only two permanent buildings. Students and teachers deserve to be learning and teaching in 21st century permanent, flexible and innovative learning spaces.

Please continue to write to my office so I can pass on your feedback to the Minister. We need everyone to pressure the NSW Government for these much needed upgrades.

Happy Christmas!

Sadly 2021 will be forever etched in our minds as a year that people in our community become sick and ill with COVID, and I pass my deepest condolences to those who have lost family and friends, and I pay my respects to those we have lost. COVID brought challenges to all of us, in mental, physical and economic aspects, and it is only through our collective efforts that we have been able to address these challenges, and it is only through caring for others that we will make our way to recovery.

As this tumultuous year draws to a close, I want to give thanks.

Thanks to everyone who has gone out and got vaccinated. At the time of writing, our electorate's vaccination rate for 1st and 2nd doses is greater than 95% - a fantastic effort!

A huge thank you - to all of our essential workers who have kept our community open throughout these challenging times, including health, emergency services, transport and logistics, retail and cleaning workers and any one of a plethora of often invisible roles - we all value you and thank you for all you do, every day for us.

I wish you and your loved ones a happy and safe holiday season. Like so many, I am eager to close the book on 2021, and move onto 2022, which I hope is a better year for all of us.

Jenny

\$400K Boost For Maitland Community Organisations

It has been an extremely challenging year for many organisations with their capacity to raise funds severely limited due to COVID.

Recently I had the pleasure of announcing \$400,000 for 19 projects through the NSW Government's 2021 Community Building Partnership Program.

Congratulations to all the many volunteers from a broad range of sporting, social, cultural, childrens and charitable organisations who received funding to directly help create a more vibrant and inclusive activities in Maitland, and thank you to those who applied. I encourage those who were not successful to try again in other grant programs. The successful projects were:

Maitland City Council - \$20,000
- Reconstruction of a Tennis Court at Victoria Street.

Maitland Hockey Turf Association - \$12,121 - Installation of safety netting.

Awabakal Ltd - \$48,978
- Health Care in the home Maitland transport vehicle.

Scout Association of Australia NSW Branch - \$34,839 - Hall and bathroom upgrade, Den extension, Roof and plumbing repairs.

Hunter River Agricultural & Horticultural Assoc - \$15,000
- Cattle Parade Area Fence Replacement.

East Maitland War Memorial and Rest Park Land Managers - \$10,284 - Energy Management.

Carries Place - \$20,000 - Creation of Carrie's Place Community Hub.

Maitland Gilbert & Sullivan and Musical Society - \$11,400 - Maitland Musical Society Sound and Lighting Project.

Rotary Club of East Maitland - \$62,000 - East Maitland Rotary caters to the local community.

CWA of NSW Maitland Branch - \$19,600 - CWA Hall Renovate Repair and Install Project.

Maitland Hockey Turf Association - \$9,000 - Essential Hockey Equipment.

Men's Shed Maitland - \$15,056 - Outdoor Community Area Upgrade.



The Rotary Club of East Maitland will use their funding to upgrade their catering trailer to assist other groups

Girl Guides - \$17,518 - Maitland-Rutherford Guide Hall.

Maitland Park Bowling and Sporting Complex - \$15,743 - Update equipment.

Hunter Community Legal Centre - \$8,011 - Maitland Telepresence Outreach Project.

Rotary Club of East Maitland - \$14,377 - Lasting improvements to Cinders Track shared walkway.

Millers Forest Progress Association - \$10,803 - Solar Energy System with Battery Storage.

St John Ambulance - \$45,270 - St John Ambulance Maitland Vehicle.

Regional Seniors Travel Card

Disability Support Pension & Carer Payment recipients - NOW ELIGIBLE

It was welcome news for so many age pension age seniors living in the Maitland electorate who are receiving either a Disability Support Pension (DSP) or a Carer Payment from Services Australia that they have finally been included in the Regional Seniors Travel Card Program (RSTC).

Thank you to everyone who phoned, sent facebook messages and emailed on this issue as it allowed my NSW Labor colleagues and I to strongly advocate to ensure RSTC was accessible for more regional seniors living in Regional NSW.

The NSW Government has finally recognised the thousands of seniors on a DSP or Carer Payment who face daily challenges living in regional NSW.

To apply for a RTSC or for further information call 13 77 88 or visit www.service.nsw.gov.au



NSW Government Disregard for Morpeth Heritage

I have been working with a number of community groups including “It Must Be Morpeth” business chamber, the Morpeth Heritage Conservation Group and members of the Morpeth Bicentennial Committee about the NSW Government’s failure to properly maintain the Morpeth Railway Station.

This has included letters to a number of Ministers and meeting with stakeholders at the site a few weeks ago. ‘It Must Be Morpeth’ is hoping to convert the premises into a commercial enterprise to provide Morpeth with an important tourist attraction and provide additional economic benefits to local businesses. It was good to connect some of those interested parties.

The Soil Conservation Service of Local Land Services is using part of the building however it has fallen into a state of disrepair. Morpeth relies on tourism and has been significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic.

I have written again to the Minister for Agriculture, the Hon. Adam Marshall MP and hand delivered photos that I took at the site. It was disappointing to see recent damage which needs to be rectified. The NSW Government has neglected this important heritage site for over a decade and it should be restored as a matter of priority!



APPLY NOW: New Vouchers & Old Vouchers Extended

After much pressure from industry and the Labor Opposition, the NSW Government has extended the date of the Dine and Discover Vouchers until 30 June 2022 and added two new Dine & Discover vouchers, one for Dine NSW and one for Discover NSW venues.

If you have already applied for the Dine & Discover NSW, the additional vouchers will be added to the Service NSW app by 1 December 2021. Go to the Service NSW app or www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-dine-discover-nsw-vouchers to apply.

Please use your vouchers to support our local hospitality and tourism businesses who

have been doing it tough through the pandemic!



Stay & Rediscover - Too little too late: What about the Regions?

The NSW Government’s new \$50 Stay & Rediscover vouchers will not commence until a pilot for the City of Sydney is undertaken in March 2022.

What about our regional tourism businesses who have been struggling to attract customers with the lockdowns? Other states have had vouchers of up to \$200 a year ago!

Representing you in Parliament

As your representative in Parliament I work to for everyone in Maitland.

Private Members Statements

My private members statements raise important community issues like contamination at Rutherford and Gillieston Public School upgrade. Read more here: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/hansard/Pages/member-speeches.aspx?pk=120>

Questions ???

Each sitting week I ask Ministers Questions on Notice each sitting week, which must be answered within 21-35 days. Please email me any questions you'd like asked.

Petitions

Getting 10,000 signatures on paper or 20,000 online can generate a debate in the Parliament. Less can get a response from a Minister. Please ask me for advice.

Community Recognition Statements

Community Recognition Statements acknowledge exceptional service and are recorded in the Hansard of the Parliament. It's a great way to acknowledge or congratulate groups and individuals on their achievements or contributions. If you know of anyone in Maitland who deserves this kind of recognition, please contact me so I can acknowledge their service.

Writing to Ministers

If you have an issue with a State Government Department or Agency, please send me a letter or e-mail and I will make a representation to the relevant Minister. This ensures you get an answer and keeps the Government accountable. My office will keep you advised of the progress and any response from the Minister.

Sign up for my E-Newsletter

If you need information on Government changes and programs, you can sign up to receive my e-newsletters by calling my office during office hours on 4933-1617 or send an email to: maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au.

State, Federal or Local - How to get help for your issues

NSW Government

As your local State Member I can help with the following issues:

- Community Health & Dental
- Public Hospitals & Ambulances
- Education - Schools & TAFE
- Preschools
- Land & Water Management
- Industrial Relations
- Agriculture
- Fisheries
- Public & Social Housing
- Main Roads & Public Works
- Emergency Services & Police
- National Parks
- Transport (buses, trains, taxis)
- Attorney-General
- Ageing & Disability
- Community Services
- Fair Trading
- Medical Research
- Pollution & EPA

Federal/ Commonwealth

Your local Federal Member (either Meryl Swanson MP in Paterson or Dr David Gillespie MP in Lyne) can assist you with Federal matters:

- Centrelink Pensions
- Medicare
- Seniors Health Cards
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- NDIS & Disability Pensions
- Federal Flags
- Citizenship & Immigration
- Telecommunications & the NBN
- Broadcasting laws
- Childcare
- Family Court
- Headspace
- Higher Education - Universities
- National Road Funding
- Currency
- Trade, Imports & Exports

Maitland City Council

Maitland City Council deals with a number of local issues including:

- Local roads
- Rubbish collection
- Council rates
- Sporting fields and parks
- Footpaths & cycleways
- Street lighting
- Development applications
- Council By-Laws
- Animal Control
- Signage
- Illegal Dumping

If you have queries about Council issues it's best to call them directly on 4934 9700, email them on: info@maitland.nsw.gov.au or go their website and report it online: <https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/forms/report-it>. If you report a matter online, you can opt in to receive an email of your report for your records.

Government Fails Local Communities on Taxis

As Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, many people have contacted me to raise their concerns about the NSW Government's proposed point-to-point transport reforms.

These "reforms" would see taxi licences scrapped, with the Government considering compensation of around \$50,000 for a maximum of only 2 plates, regardless of how many taxis are operated, despite plates being purchased in some cases for nearly \$400,000.

This will leave regional communities without taxis when surrounding cities have peaks such as weekends and during festivals. In communities where public transport is patchy, taxis are vital to overcome transport poverty.

In budget estimates hearing NSW Labor called on the Deputy Premier and Leader of the Nationals, the Hon. Paul Toole MP to reveal which towns will lose taxis due to the

Government's botched reforms of the point to point industry, however he has so far failed to produce the report.

At the hearing Labor uncovered the shocking fact that \$100 million of the \$142 million support package that was promised five years ago, is still sitting in Government coffers. It is clear the NSW Government either doesn't understand or doesn't care about the pain and hardship licence holders have experienced over the past six years.

I am very concerned about any plan that does not deliver fair compensation to taxi plate licence holders and will continue to meet with taxi plate holders and industry representatives. NSW Labor will continue to monitor this situation closely and advocate on behalf of all taxi plate licence holders in NSW.

Hard working small business owners in Maitland and across the state deserve more!

Level Crossing Safety - #WhichCrossingNext

I recently spoke on a petition debate after 20,000 signatures were received calling for level crossing safety improvements.

Sadly Maddie Bott lost her fiance Ethan Hunter and his work colleague Mark Fenton in a tragic level crossing accident earlier this year.

Maddie's bravery in advocating on this issue at a time of her most personal grief is inspiring and courageous. Maddie spent weeks door knocking and attending local shops and stalls to collect the 20,000 signatures needed to bring on a debate.

Shamefully the Government wouldn't let many other members who wanted to contribute to the petition debate speak. This issue should have been above politics as many communities in NSW have seen, serious injuries or even fatal accidents at these sites.

The NSW Government must address the

dangers of level crossings, and put in place a targeted risk mitigation strategy to increase safety at level crossings.

NSW Labor has committed to working with impacted families and the relevant stakeholders to improve the safety at level crossings. As Maddie would say 'It doesn't matter how long this takes, we will tackle this one track at a time, for Ethan and Mark'. #WhichCrossingNext



With Maddie Bott at the Eurabba Lane Rail Crossing site

Do you need a JP or want to become one?



My office can help with JP services, Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

Justices of the Peace (JPs) provide a valuable and important service.

If you want to become a Justice of the Peace, you can scan the QR code (right) or visit www.service.nsw.gov.au.



Apply for Seniors Card

Are you 60 or older and working less than 20 hours a week? Have you applied for your NSW Seniors Card? Call 137788 or visit www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au.

Cost of Living Rebates

Service NSW can help you find any Government rebates that are available to help you reduce your cost of living. Call 13 77 88 to make an appointment to see them or go to their website: <https://questionnaire.costofliving.service.nsw.gov.au/questionnaire>

Congratulatory Messages

My office can organise Congratulatory messages for 50th, 60th, 65th, 70th Wedding Anniversaries and for 80th, 90th & 100th birthdays from the Governor, Prime Minister, Premier and Federal MPs. The Queen and Governor General will also send special messages for 60th Wedding Anniversaries and 100th birthdays. To ensure messages arrive in time for the special celebration, four weeks advance notice is needed for processing. For more details please call my office.

Who will be Maitland's 2022 Local Woman of the Year?

The Local Woman of the Year Awards recognise and celebrate the contribution women make to our local communities across NSW.

I am always inspired by the many women in our community of all ages and interests who make immense and valuable contributions to our community, and these annual awards are an opportunity to publically acknowledge and celebrate these inspirational women.

I pay special tribute to the eight women who have won the award in previous years: Pennie Kearney, Samantha Meyn, Michelle Davies, Yvette Cavanagh, Amorelle Dempster, Tara Dever, Karen Stackman and Melita Chilcott.

Nominations for the 2022 Local Woman of the Year Award are now open. This award is presented in conjunction with the NSW Women of the Year Awards.

L-R: Jenny Aitchison MP, Meryl Swanson MP, Melita Chilcott (2021 winner) Kate Washington MP, Clr Loretta Baker, Nada Vujat (President of the Women's Network NSW)



Jenny Aitchison MP

Member for Maitland
Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

“I’m always here to help you”

If I can help with any State Government matters please call my office on 4933 1617 or send an email to maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au



UPDATE - Congestion on our local roads

Thank you to everyone who signed the 'Fix Our Roads in Maitland - Give Us Our Fair Share' petition to date and attended the community meeting earlier this year.

Due to COVID, although Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional Roads has agreed to attend another community meeting, we have been unable to confirm a date.

We need the Deputy Premier to see first-hand the challenges experienced by people in Maitland as a result of delays in addressing our poor state roads infrastructure.

I hope a community meeting can be scheduled in early 2022 but in the interim, I have raised concerns from the community meeting earlier this year through a Notice of Motion and a Private Members Statement in the Parliament.

In the meantime, Transport NSW (TfNSW) has advised that they will conduct a study covering Thornton Road, Metford Road and Raymond

Terrace Road between McFarlanes Road and Melbourne Street.

TfNSW will be working with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Maitland City Council and developers to assess potential land use changes and identify necessary transport infrastructure and service improvements, including public transport initiatives to encourage mode shift, to accommodate future demand.

TfNSW are also exploring short-term upgrade options at

the busy intersection of High Street and the New England Highway to reduce congestion on the surrounding road network, as well as long-term solutions to issues at intersections on Melbourne, Lawes and Cumberland Streets.

Please continue to share your issues and congestion stories with me so we can flood the Deputy Premier's office with representations from concerned members in our community to achieve much needed funding for our roads.



Delivering a Notice of Motion in the NSW Parliament



Major Upgrades to Maitland's State Roads

NSW Labor - 2011

- ▶ Metford Underpass \$12.9m (2004)
- ▶ Weakleys Dr Overpass \$51.8m (2008)
- ▶ Thornton Rail Bridge \$12m (2011)
- ▶ 3rd River Crossing \$65m (2011)
- ▶ Hunter Expressway \$200m (2013)

TOTAL: \$341.7m

NSW Coalition - 2021

- ▶ Maitland Railway Roundabout \$51m (2016)
- ▶ Total Road \$12m (2016)
- ▶ Weakleys Dr Lights \$14m (2018)
- ▶ New England Hwy Duplication \$14m (2020)
- ▶ Testers Hollow \$2m (2021)

TOTAL: \$82.2m

Please give us a new MBS Licence for Maitland's MRI Machine

To the Honourable Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. This Petition of the citizens of New South Wales brings to the attention of the House that the \$500 million New Maitland Hospital which is due to open in early 2022 includes a state-of-the-art 3T Tesla Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine that does not have a Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) licence to use it.

If the Federal Government doesn't open a funding round, and approve the New Maitland Hospital for a licence, Maitland's brand new MRI machine will only be accessible to inpatients and emergency cases via the Emergency Department.

We call on the NSW Government to urge the Federal Government to immediately open Invitations for an MBS licence for the New Maitland Hospital MRI's machine, so that everyone across the region can access and afford this life saving imaging.

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Federal Member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson and I are working with our community to ensure we get an MBS Licence.

Please return completed petitions to: Reply Paid 89982, 2/12 Elgin Street Maitland