



## Maitland Matters

Jenny Aitchison MP

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

### Maitland Hospital is progressing well...

It was one of the most exciting days in my time as the Member for Maitland to visit the new Maitland Hospital at Metford. It will be a fully public hospital thanks to the efforts of everyone in our community who fought for it - the NSW Labor Opposition, the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, the Health Services Union, the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation and the community. Yes, every single person who signed a petition, or attended a rally, or wrote a letter calling for this new hospital can be very proud of this facility.

The building is looking fantastic: from the Cardiac Catherisation Lab, MRI and CT scanning spaces, 6 birthing suites with spas, ICU units, negative pressure rooms, spacious and state-of-the-art operating theatres, calm inclusive gathering/ waiting spaces and children's play spaces, the rooftop helipad and the incorporation of First Nations art and local flora in the building designs. These and many other aspects of the building are the result of extensive consultation with staff and input during the ten years we have waited for this new facility.

From a \$400 million promise in 2011, we now have a \$500 million hospital. The new building will have 339 beds, up from 188 beds at the current hospital, and has already attracted significant investment in radiation and chemotherapy services nearby, both at the existing Maitland Private Hospital and opposite the new hospital. We will have access to the oncology (cancer) services and even clinical trials that our growing community deserves.



### GET OUR FAIR SHARE Sign our ROADS Petition - P8

If you would like to sign our petition calling on the Government to provide proper funding for NSW roads, I have included one on page 8 in this newsletter. Please get as many people as possible to sign the petition so we can get action from the Government immediately.

## Maitland Men's Shed lifts off

Recently I had the pleasure of attending the official commissioning of the newly installed Maitland Community Men's Shed wheelchair lift, that was funded through the NSW Government's 2020 Community Building Partnership Program.



The Maitland Men's Shed secured **\$64,261** for a more inclusive accessible space for all ages.

I am pleased I was able to deliver funding for such an important and vital organisation in our community. It's a wonderful place for men to get together to work on meaningful projects, share skills and contribute to the wider local community.

If you are a member of a local group that needs funding, please contact me so that we can pass on future grant information to you.

## Maitland Youth - Invest in Tomorrow

In April, I sponsored the inaugural Maitland Youth Sector Cross-Training Conference to promote better outcomes for our young people.

The conference was designed for workers in education, justice, mental health, health, community and other sectors, to foster interagency understanding and collaboration on issues facing young people.

Thanks to Mary-Kate Ferguson from Rutherford Technology High and Richard Hershman from Hume Housing and their hard working committee who worked tirelessly to ensure the day was a success, sharing strategies and resources for the benefit of our young people.

The conference builds on a significant effort from all agencies to combat antisocial behaviour and provide young people in our region with re-engagement with education, healthy lives and employment opportunities.

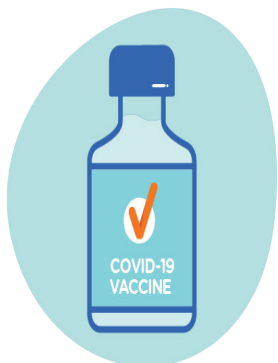


## COVID-19 Vaccines - Are you eligible?

People in Maitland will soon have access to the NSW Government's second mass vaccination centre that is expected to open in mid-July at the former Bunnings Warehouse site in Lake Macquarie (393 Pacific Hwy, Belmont).

**Remember, we aren't safe until we're all safe!**

Visit [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) or scan the QR code to check your eligibility, book your appointment or register your interest. You can also call **1800 020 103**



**Scan Me!**



## Crowds flock to Tocal Field Days

Tocal was the first agricultural field day held in NSW since COVID, and it was great to see so many people coming out in the gorgeous sunshine.

I caught up with NSW Farmers President James Jackson to discuss the mouse plague and spoke with Tony Hegarty, Chair of the Hunter Local Land Services Board and Past President of the Cattle Council of Australia and Clare MacDougal, Manager of Healthy Landscapes about some new initiatives to engage rural and semi-rural land holders.

Some of our local service groups were there and run off their feet! It was great to see the members of CWA -



Maitland City Evening, Rotary Club of East Maitland and Rutherford Telarah Rotary - Maitland providing information and meals for people.

## Local Sporting Grants Announced

I was delighted to inform nine organisations (some received multiple grants) of their success in the latest round of the 2020-21 Local Sport Grant Program. Normally \$50,000 is allocated to each electorate for the program but due to remaining funds available from undersubscribed electorates, I was able to secure funding for an additional two organisations.

The successful organisations were; East Maitland Athletic and Little Athletics Centre, Lochinvar Rovers Football Club, Maitland Croquet Club, Maitland District Motorcycle Club, Maitland Hockey Association, Maitland Junior Football Club, Maitland Meteors Softball Club, Maitland Rugby Blacks Netball Club, Majestic Netball Club. It is expected that another round will open later this year.

## Dine & Discover Vouchers Extended

After much pressure from industry and the Opposition, the NSW Government extended the date of the Dine and Discover Vouchers until 31 July 2021.

About two in every three adults across NSW have registered for the vouchers, but only 44 per cent of vouchers have been redeemed, so there are many people (and more importantly, businesses) who are missing out on the two \$25 dining vouchers and the two \$25 entertainment vouchers!

Remember to try and support our local hospitality and tourism businesses who have been doing it tough through the pandemic!

### How to access Dine & Discover vouchers:



If you're a NSW resident aged over 18, you can apply for the vouchers through the Service NSW website or through the Service NSW app. You'll need your MyServiceNSW account and two identity documents, like a Medicare card or licence.

Once you've successfully applied, the vouchers will appear in the Service NSW app. To apply, go to: [www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-dine-discover-nsw-vouchers](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-dine-discover-nsw-vouchers).

## Representing you in Parliament

My days in Parliament are spent ensuring the NSW Government knows your views and acts on them. Read my speeches at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/hansard](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/hansard)

## Questions ???

I can ask Questions on Notice each sitting week on your behalf, which must be answered by the relevant Minister in 21- 35 days. Please send any questions to me.

## Private Members Statements

Each sitting week, I try to raise one of the many issues that people in our community raise

with me. You can read these on hansard or ask my office for a copy of recent speeches.

## Community Recognition Statements

Every sitting day I acknowledge exceptional service through 60 second Community Recognition Statements. These statements 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 is a good way of ensuring the Government is accountable to its citizens. My office will keep you advised of the progress and any response from the Minister.

## Sign up for my E-Newsletter

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## Please Support Tourism Businesses!

Tourism was the first sector to be impacted by COVID, and with international tourism severely impacted, our state's tourism industry is still suffering. While some regions are booming, Sydney and Western Sydney are not, and we are seeing a massive loss of skills in the tourism sector.

After JobKeeper ended in March, the NSW Government promised they would pilot an accommodation voucher scheme for impacted hotels in the Sydney CBD and then roll it out to other areas that had been impacted such as Western Sydney and regional areas beyond a day's drive from Sydney.

Other states have provided tourism vouchers to residents to encourage tourism in impacted areas. For instance in the Northern Territory, accommodation vouchers of up to \$200 and up to \$200 fuel vouchers are available for residents visiting regional and remote areas.

Victoria has rolled out 80,000 x \$200 tourism vouchers for accommodation, attractions and tours in regional Victoria. Sadly NSW has failed to provide any similar targeted assistance to NSW tourism operators.

Please remember to support our local tourism businesses who have been doing it tough through the pandemic!

## Mouse Plague - Too Little Too Late

For over 8 months people in NSW have been battling the mouse plague. Incredibly, after sustained drought, catastrophic bushfires, COVID and flooding, the NSW Government has been very slow to act to protect our farmers and local communities from this plague.

When the CWA and the NSW Farmers came to the NSW Parliament in May to draw attention to their plight, the Agriculture Minister and the Deputy Premier labelled it a "PR Stunt".

This is despite evidence of people being bitten in their beds, in hospitals, and farmers losing up to \$150,000 in crops, after spending the same amount on zinc phosphide. Many regional areas report that they are low on stock for mice baits and traps.

Reluctantly, after much pressure from the Labor Opposition, the Government promised \$50 million, however nothing rolled out for the first month. Finally in June, the Government increased the package by another \$100 million, but there are still concerns about whether or not the Government will release Bromadiolone.



This toxic chemical requires approval from the Federal APVMA and if approved for use, will have significant impacts on our environment, and potentially kill many more animals than the mice it was intended to control.

Due to the Government's inaction, we have many people suffering health and mental health effects. Please take care using any baits or poisons to kill mice. We have had reports from people suffering ill health due to incorrect usage. Always follow the directions.

## 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](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au).



## Help with Cost of Living for families & seniors



### 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](http://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 137788 to make an appointment to see them or go to their website: <https://questionnaire.costofliving.service.nsw.gov.au/questionnaire>

### Regional Seniors Travel Card Year 2 Applications - Hurry!

Eligible Maitland seniors may qualify for a \$250 prepaid card to help ease the cost of travel. The card can be used at certain retailers to pay for prebooked NSW Trainlink Regional trains and coaches, fuel and taxis.

The travel card is valid for 14 months from the date the card is issued. Applications for 2021 opened on 18 January 2021 and will close on 30 November 2021.

Just recently the program was extended for an additional 2 years and from 2022 will include those eligible for the Age Pension and receiving either a Disability Support Pension or a Carer Payment from Services Australia.



### 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, three weeks advance notice is needed for processing. For more details please call my office.

## 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](mailto:maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au)



## Fed up with congestion on our local roads?

On 23 May I hosted a public meeting at Thornton regarding congestion on our roads. Whilst I have continued to ask Government to address the traffic issues at the Maitland Railway Station Roundabout, with the Government's half overpass; the local and regional traffic at Thornton has become increasingly congested over the last 10 years with massive population increases.

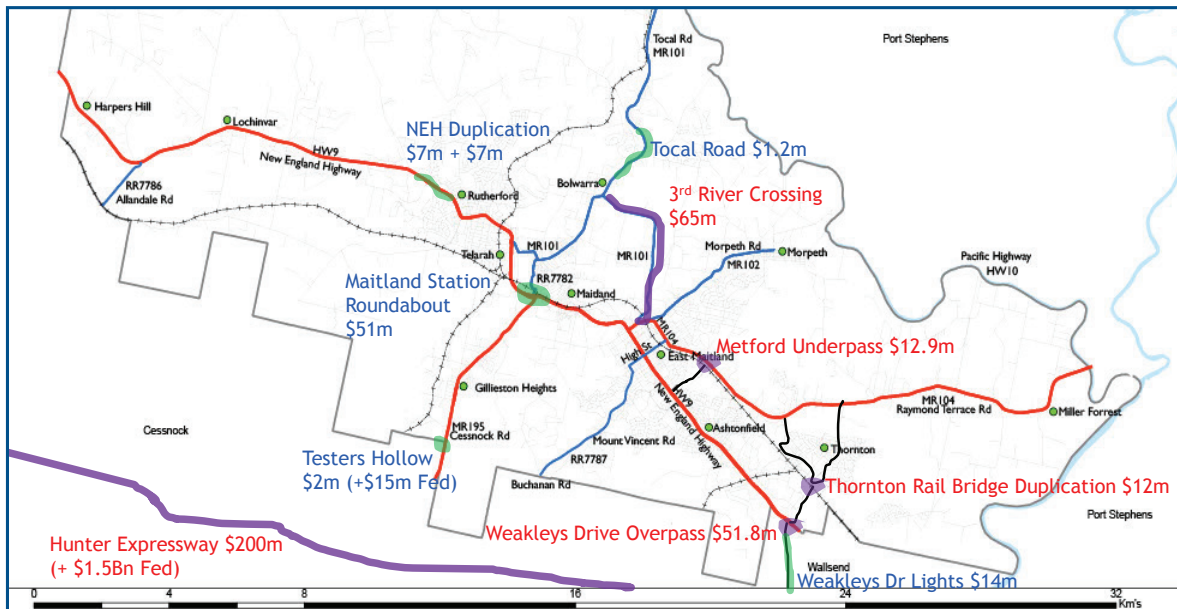
In 2010 Labor commenced a project to duplicate the bridge at Thornton but this work has not been completed by the Government.

In addition, the NSW Government received \$167 million from stamp duty in this post code area in 2018, but failed to approve a \$51 million grant application from Council to address the congestion caused by the population increase.

The meeting was well attended, with over 140 people registering to attend either at the venue or online. I have communicated the outcomes of the meeting to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads as well as drafting a petition. Maitland Mayor, Councillor Loretta Baker, as well

as Councillors Robert Aitchison and Ben Whiting addressed questions from the floor during the meeting. Other Councillors in attendance did not speak, and not all attended.

I raised these issues at a recent Traffic Committee Meeting and the with the Minister. Some issues are already under active investigation, and I urge you to go to <https://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au/projects/thornton-road-network> website to get the facts on what Council and the State Government have done to address congestion at Thornton.



### 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)
- ▶ 3<sup>rd</sup> 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**

# FIX OUR ROADS IN MAITLAND

## GIVE US OUR FAIR SHARE

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 in 2018, the Berejiklian-Barilaro government collected \$167 million in stamp duty from the 2322 postcode alone. In the same year, the Government refused an application from Maitland City Council to contribute \$51 million to a \$100 million road project to connect the New England Highway and Raymond Terrace Road at Thornton. This connection is vital to residents across Maitland, particularly in Thornton, Chisholm, Woodberry, Metford, East Maitland and Tenambit, as well as those to the north including Largs, Bolwarra and Lorn. The undersigned petitioners therefore ask the Legislative Assembly to provide the requested funding to upgrade the Thornton road network and upgrade Metford Road and Chisholm Road.

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