



MARANOA MAIL

One year ago yesterday, I was truly humbled to be elected your Federal Member for Maranoa.

It's been a very busy year and I have made it my mission to visit every corner of this vast and wonderful electorate so I know what matters to you, your family and business to enable me to be your voice and representative.

Here are some of my biggest wins for you during my first year as your voice in the Federal Parliament:

More than **\$1.7 billion in Federal Government funding** across the entire Maranoa electorate from Roads to Recovery projects, to Safer Streets Program with CCTV camera installations and Skills for Education and Employment programs to stimulate local economies.

- In one of the largest investments ever seen in regional Australia, this Coalition Government will fund the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project with an additional \$8.4 billion and this massive project is set to snake its way through the south-east corner of my electorate. Just three days after being elected, I attended an impacted landholders meeting – on the proposed Millmerran/ Cecil Plains alignment – and the lack of engagement with landholders was both obvious and concerning to me. That's why I secured an **Inland Rail Review** to make sure our community is heard during this nation-building investment, set to create 16,000 jobs.
- Ensured the **Blackall-Tambo region** is included under crucial funding under the **Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF)**. The NAIF offers up to \$5 billion, over five years, in concessional finance to encourage and complement private-sector investment in infrastructure that benefits communities in Northern Australia.
- Secured **\$8 million** to rebuild Winton's iconic **Waltzing Matilda Centre** after it was destroyed by fire. The

centre will be an Outback tourism hub and pays tribute to the folklore and history around the famous song penned in Winton by AB 'Banjo' Patterson in 1895.

- Held four **Community Ice Forums** in the Western Downs, Southern Downs and South Burnett working with the health, law enforcement and education sectors and communities to develop locally focused action plans to improve both preventative measures and treatment outcomes in Maranoa.
- Whether it was phone coverage, service obligations, data drought or cost – nothing was off limits at my **Telecommunications Forum** in Dalby where, for the first time, high-level decision makers from Telstra, Optus and Vodafone were in the same room with local communities to discuss the unique telecommunications challenges we face in the bush.

Targeting mobile phone black spots:

Earlier this month, it was exciting to announce Round 2 of the Coalition Government's Mobile Black Spots Program will deliver 19 new or upgraded towers – including 10 in Western Queensland – to increase connectivity across my electorate.

Breaks in our communications hinder emergency services, tourism and business – that's why this program is so important for Maranoa and why I've been advocating so hard on this issue.

The former Labor government didn't even invest \$1 to address mobile phone black spots or help build a single tower so I'm proud to be delivering better mobile coverage across Maranoa as this was a key election issue.

More information about the Mobile Black Spot Program, check out: www.communications.gov.au/mbbsp

NBN Update:

Better access to communications infrastructure was one of my key election commitments and the National Broadband Network (NBN) rollout sets out a clear message – NBN's superfast broadband will be soon coming to a location near you.

Earlier this month, the Coalition Government's multi-technology NBN rollout hit another milestone, with more than one million fibre-to-the-node (FTTN) connections ready-for-service.

We promised to speed up the rollout, deliver the NBN to households sooner and more affordably and this promise is being upheld. Rolling out FTTN not only saves time but also avoids damage and disruption outside and inside homes and businesses.

- Superfast broadband is set to be available in **Dalby** as residents will be able to connect to the NBN's FTTN technology from January next year.
- If you see NBN trucks around **Roma**, that's because the NBN has started its fixed-line construction in the region for the first time this month to connect 4600 premises.
- Survey and design work is underway to connect **Barcaldine** to NBN's FTTN network for about 800 premises. Construction work is set to get underway during mid-2017.

HEALTH UPDATE

McGrath Breast Care Nurses:

Vital care and support offered by McGrath Breast Care Nurses in regional Queensland will receive a boost with the Coalition Government announcing \$20.5 million in new funding.

In Maranoa, this funding will bolster the valuable work carried out by the McGrath Breast Care Nurses in **Dalby, Kingaroy, Warwick** and **Roma** to support these regions and broader communities.

The tyranny of distance between home and treatment is acutely felt for rural patients and this funding will go a long way to support and care for women fighting breast cancer across Maranoa.

McGrath Breast Care Nurses are specially trained and their support extends from patient care to their families and carers – starting from diagnosis and continuing throughout treatment.



(Left) I met with McGrath Breast Care Nurse Maree Wylie, who offers vital care and support for the Western Downs region.

Men's Shed funding:

The Dalby Men's Shed is a hub of activity in need of an update and, thanks to \$4000 in Federal Government funding, volunteers can continue with their fantastic community work.

Research suggests many men from the bush don't feel comfortable using structured health and support services, so Men's Shed helps them connect with local services to improve mental and general health as well as being involved in the community.

(Right) Here I am with Geoff McIntyre, Graham Holmes, Greg Nye and Terry Crank chatting about what this much-needed \$4000 grant will mean for the community organisation. Thanks for having me!



EDUCATION UPDATE

Breaking down barriers:

I was pleased to announce \$55,441 in Federal Government funding will be targeted to encourage young women in the **Western Downs** to break down barriers and enter into 'traditional blokey' fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Funding has been offered to Golden West Apprenticeships – specifically in the Dalby and Chinchilla regions – towards its *Engineering Girls on the Downs* program which aims to provide school-based engineering traineeships for young women.

Women are currently underrepresented in STEM related studies and professions, with only one in four IT graduates and fewer than one in 10 in engineering. So this announcement is a step in the right direction in addressing this imbalance.

STEM fields are often based on innovation so this area's in great need of professionals who bring a different perspective or look at a problem in a new way. That's why a lab or a male-only office is missing out and, as a nation, we can't be left behind and need to encourage and incentivise women to enter into these types of occupations.

Capital Grants Programme funding for schools in Goondiwindi & Warwick:



I'm here with Warwick's Assumption College Principal Kort Goodman, checking out the proposed area where new learning spaces will be constructed thanks to more than \$1.27 million in Federal Government funding.



Goondiwindi's Border Rivers Christian College Board Member/Treasurer Julie Hoffmann, Board Chairman Ivan Waldock and I explore the area where a new administration building and sporting facility will be constructed as a result of \$615,000 in federal funding.

Something to put a smile on your dial



Outback Kids is an action-packed music video spanning hundreds of kilometres and starring local kids from Longreach, Ilfracombe, Isisford and Yaraka. The song captures the highs and lows of Outback life and the fighting spirit of families facing extreme weather events of drought and flood. This production was created by Small Town Culture and proudly supported by the Longreach Regional Council and RACQ as part of the *Get Ready* awareness campaign helping communities in Queensland be prepared for natural disasters.

Support small business and shop local this Christmas

I've been on the road in Maranoa visiting you in your community so I've done all my Christmas shopping along the way to support small business.

Last week I was in Barcaldine, Longreach, Isisford, Yaraka, Blackall, Tambo, Augathella, Charleville, Morven, Mitchell, St George, Dirranbandi, Thallon, Talwood, Goondiwindi, Warwick (and in Kingaroy on Friday) so I've picked up some great gifts.

However please don't show my family this email as they'll all know what will be under the tree!

Here's a sneak peek into the swag of goodies I've picked up along the way:



(Left) Small businesses are some of the biggest employers in our communities, and even our young people looking for holiday work like Tom at the Barcaldine Newsagency, rely on your support this Christmas.



(Above) Left to right: Morven News and Country Store, Cottage Flowers and Gardens in Charleville, Leather craft from the Lost Arts in Blackall.

I wish you a very merry Christmas
and please be safe this festive season.

All the very best,
David



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