



For generations, regional communities have been built on a simple belief — work hard, contribute to your community and leave things better for the next generation.

For many families today, that feels harder than ever.

The recent Federal Budget, cost of living pressures, housing affordability, access to healthcare and the challenge of maintaining strong local services are placing increasing pressure on regional communities. Yet despite these challenges, our region continues to demonstrate resilience, leadership and determination to build a stronger future.

My focus remains clear: practical outcomes, stronger communities and ensuring regional NSW continues to have a strong voice.

There is much happening both in NSW Parliament and across our electorate, with the following providing just a snapshot of recent advocacy and community initiatives.



**Supporting Rural Families
Through Thriving Kids NSW**

Concerns have been raised with me by local allied health providers about barriers emerging in the delivery of the new *Thriving Kids NSW* program.

The program is intended to support children aged eight years and under with developmental delay and Autism who are not accessing the NDIS, delivering therapies and family support services closer to home from October 2026.

In regional communities such as Jerilderie and Oaklands, sole-practice and small business allied health practitioners are often the frontline providers supporting local children and families.

These clinicians have built trusted relationships with families, schools and preschools while delivering flexible services in communities already facing workforce shortages, long waitlists and significant travel barriers.

The current Expressions of Interest process opened by the Department of Communities and Justice is focused on non-government not-for-profit organisations, with private providers only considered under "exceptional circumstances".

That is deeply concerning for rural communities, and these concerns have been raised directly with the NSW Minister for Families and Communities.

Regional families deserve genuine choice when accessing support for their children, and healthcare delivery in rural NSW must reflect local realities rather than a one-size-fits-all metropolitan model.

Showcasing Regional Hospitality and Skills

Along with the Border hospitality sector, I recently welcomed renowned chef Luke Mangan OAM to Albury for a special Food & Hospitality Industry networking event alongside leading hospitality voices from Sydney.

The event brought together industry professionals, local businesses, students and community members to discuss career pathways, workforce development and opportunities within hospitality.

Importantly, Luke also spent time engaging directly with hospitality students from across the border region, reinforcing the importance of investing in local talent and building stronger pathways between education and industry.

Regional NSW has enormous potential in hospitality, tourism and workforce development, and events like this help showcase the strength and capability already present across our local communities

A Long-Term Focus on Boys and Men's Health

Leading men's health organisations from across NSW recently joined the Liberals and Nationals at NSW Parliament as Opposition Leader Kellie Sloane announced that a future Liberal-National Government would deliver a 10-year Men and Boys' Health Strategy.

The proposed strategy recognises the importance of improving health outcomes for men and boys across New South Wales — particularly in regional communities where health disparities often remain more pronounced.

We already have a statewide NSW Women's Strategy, and there is a clear need to strengthen the focus on prevention, early intervention and improved access to support services for boys and men.



As Kellie Sloane said at the announcement:

"A 10-year Strategy is about us saying that we don't accept the status quo and want to deliver a better future for every man and boy in NSW where they have access to the health and support services that will ensure they thrive."

Ensuring regional voices are represented in these conversations remains critically important.

Recognising the People Who Strengthen Our Community

One of the great strengths of our region is the willingness of people to contribute, often quietly and without recognition, to support others and strengthen local communities.

Recently, it was a privilege to attend the handover of a new VRA rescue vehicle from the NSW Commissioner to our local volunteers at Albury & Border Rescue Squad – VRA Rescue NSW.



This new vehicle will strengthen emergency response capability across our region while supporting the dedicated volunteers who work alongside our other emergency services to keep the community safe.

A particular highlight was recognising Peter Adams and his wife Jan with a special award acknowledging an extraordinary 60 years of service.

Whether through emergency services, volunteering, mentoring young people, supporting local events or running community organisations, these contributions make our region a stronger and more connected place to live.



New Thurgoona School and Preschool Progressing

Construction of the new school and preschool in Thurgoona continues to progress, with the preschool expected to open for Day 1, Term 1 2027 and the primary school scheduled to open in 2028.

Funded in 2022 by the former NSW Liberal and Nationals Government, the project will deliver:

- 18 modern classrooms with shared learning areas
- Specialist support learning facilities
- Sports field and multipurpose sports court
- Library, hall and canteen facilities
- Administration facilities and parking
- A public preschool with capacity for up to 60 children each day

As Thurgoona continues to grow, investment in schools and community infrastructure remains essential to supporting local families and ensuring strong long-term planning for the region.

Thurgoona Drive Interchange, Riverina Highway and Table Top

Last month, a motion calling for upgrades to the Thurgoona Drive interchange and continued investment in critical regional infrastructure was debated in the NSW Parliament.

Following discussions with Transport for NSW, I understand designs for both the Thurgoona Drive interchange and Riverina Highway upgrades east of the Hume Highway are now largely complete. Advocacy continues for these designs to be made public as soon as possible.

The next step will be securing funding for final detailed design work and delivery of the upgrades themselves, an ongoing priority as Thurgoona and surrounding communities continue to grow.

At Table Top, the intersection is currently closed while road pavement repairs are undertaken. Design work on long-term intersection improvements is continuing, with safety remaining the key priority following strong advocacy from local residents and the Table Top Interchange Action Group.

Recognition should also go to the Thurgoona Wirringa Community Action Group, whose sustained advocacy has helped keep these issues firmly on the agenda.



Community Safety and Supporting Young People

Community safety remains one of the most important issues raised by local residents.

Under the previous Coalition Government, the Murray River Police District had 197 police officers. According to the latest NSW Police Annual Report, that number has now fallen to 181. I have raised this in Parliament several times, recognising the impact reduced police numbers have on both our officers and the broader community.

At the same time, local organisations continue doing extraordinary work supporting young people at risk and helping break cycles of disengagement and disadvantage.



Recently, many in our community gathered to hear the powerful story shared by Ally Langdon and Alex about the life-changing impact Boys to the Bush has had on their family.

Programs like Boys to the Bush are changing lives through early intervention, mentoring and grassroots community support.

Strong communities require both clear boundaries and strong support systems. Investing in programs that help young people find a better path forward remains critically important.

To everyone involved in Boys to the Bush and the many local organisations quietly changing lives every day, thank you. Your work matters deeply to families and to the future of our community.

Albury Wodonga Health Continued Advocacy and Investment



Construction is underway at the Albury Campus of Albury Wodonga Health, with work on additional parking and the Northeast Building progressing ahead of the new seven-storey Clinical Services Building commencing later this year.

Albury-based firm Hansen Yuncken has been engaged to deliver the first stage of works for the \$558 million redevelopment — a significant investment secured in 2022.

Overall, the redevelopment will deliver major upgrades including:

- 110 additional overnight beds
- Expanded emergency care services
- New operating theatres and hybrid theatre capability
- A new Cardiac Catheter Laboratory
- Expanded allied health and outpatient services
- Enhanced maternity and birthing facilities
- A new 32-bed Mental Health Unit
- Expanded ICU capacity
- Additional parking and improved campus access

While this redevelopment represents significant progress, advocacy continues for additional investment to meet the long-term health needs of the Border region.

Late last year, sustained advocacy helped secure a \$4.45 million investment to expand renal dialysis services across Albury Wodonga Health. Once complete, dialysis capacity across the service is expected to effectively double, reducing the need for patients to travel long distances for treatment.

An important ongoing priority is implementation of an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system at Albury Wodonga Health. Modern digital health systems improve coordination of care, reduce duplication and support safer clinical decision-making. Communities across regional NSW and Victoria should not be left behind as healthcare becomes increasingly digitally connected.

Advocacy also continues for expanded cardiology services. I recently moved a Notice of Motion in Parliament calling on the NSW Government to work with Victoria to support staged expansion of cardiac catheterisation services at Albury Wodonga Health.

Strengthening local cardiac services means more patients can receive specialist care closer to home, improving outcomes for families across the Border.

Advocacy also continues for adolescent mental health services, the Multi-Purpose Service at Urana and implementation of the Clinical Services Plan guiding the future of health services at Corowa.



How my office can help you

My team and I are committed to assisting local residents with state government services and agencies. If you're experiencing difficulties, need guidance, or require support during disaster recovery, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We also offer Justice of the Peace services at the electorate office for document witnessing and statutory declarations.

Our office is here to support residents across our community.

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