



A true winter's weekend around the Albury electorate, but good to see some further rain particularly for our farming communities where every drop is welcome.

Over recent weeks, I've continued getting out across the electorate, meeting with local businesses, farmers, students, volunteers and community leaders. Wherever you go, you see the same qualities that make our region strong: people prepared to have a go, create opportunities, support one another and contribute to their community.



Government has an important role to play in backing that effort, creating the conditions for businesses to grow, keeping our communities safe and ensuring regional voices are heard when decisions are made.

There is plenty happening across the Albury electorate and regional NSW, and I'm pleased to share some of the latest news with you.



Backing small business and regional jobs.

Strong economies are built when people with ideas, initiative and ambition have the confidence to invest, employ and grow.

That is why I believe so strongly in the role of small and medium businesses. Across our region they create jobs, train apprentices, sponsor sporting clubs, support community organisations and keep our towns thriving. When local businesses succeed, the benefits flow throughout the community.

But running a business in NSW is becoming increasingly difficult. Business NSW analysis of ABS data found NSW lost more than 3,000 businesses to other states over the past three years, while Queensland gained more than 4,000. Rising operating costs and our tax

settings are making it harder for NSW to compete.

We should be rewarding businesses for creating jobs, not penalising them for employing more people. That is why the NSW Liberals and Nationals have committed to delivering the most competitive payroll tax regime of any Australian state.

Our plan will:

- raise the payroll tax threshold from \$1.2 million to \$1.5 million;
- reduce the rate from 5.45% to 4.75% for businesses with an Australian payroll below \$10 million; and
- index the threshold to CPI, helping prevent businesses being pushed into the payroll tax system simply because of inflation.

Around 4,000 businesses would no longer pay payroll tax at all, while a further 25,000 would receive the lowest payroll tax rate of any Australian state. For some businesses, the reforms could mean annual savings of up to \$75,850.

The plan goes further, including doubling funding for Business Connect and developing dedicated strategies for key industries including agriculture, manufacturing, construction, healthcare, financial services, retail, hospitality and tourism.

For me, this comes back to a simple principle: government doesn't create prosperity, people do. Our role should be to create the conditions that allow individuals and businesses to have a go, create opportunities and build something for the future.

Backing small business means backing local jobs, stronger regional economies and thriving communities.

My speech in Parliament...

[▶ Watch the speech](#)

Borella Road corridor upgrade

Transport for NSW has confirmed the preferred option for the Riverina Highway–Borella Road corridor upgrade.

The proposal covers the corridor from Young Street to East Street and includes:

- new traffic lights at Keene Street, Electra Street and East Street
- two through lanes in each direction
- a continuous raised median
- access changes along the corridor
- improved pedestrian and cycling crossings.



This is an important step, but the focus now needs to be on progressing the remaining planning and detailed design so the project can move towards construction funding.

We also need to start planning beyond East Street.

With the continued growth of Thurgoona–Wirlinga, attention must also turn to the Riverina Highway east towards Albury Airport and the increasingly busy intersections at

Elizabeth Mitchell Drive, Table Top Road and Kerr Road.

Long-term transport planning must keep pace with the growth of Thurgoona & Wirlinga.

[► More information](#)

Giving police the tools to keep communities safe

People across our electorate deserve to feel safe—whether at a shopping centre, sporting event, community festival or transport hub.

Recently, I spoke in Parliament in support of legislation to strengthen NSW's knife-scanning laws. The changes improve the existing scheme by expanding the locations where scanning can occur, making declarations easier and extending them from 12 to 24 hours. These are sensible improvements and reflect concerns the Opposition has raised since the laws were first introduced in 2024.

However, the legislation still falls short of giving police the flexibility we believe they need.

The Liberals and Nationals sought to strengthen the legislation by allowing police to use handheld knife scanners anytime, anywhere when they reasonably believe there is a genuine public safety risk, while retaining existing safeguards. Labor did not support those changes, meaning police must still navigate a declaration process before these preventative powers can be used.

Knife crime does not occur only in designated places or at designated times. Our police make difficult operational decisions every day, responding to intelligence and changing circumstances. We should trust them with the practical tools and flexibility needed to help keep our communities safe.

The Government's changes are a step forward. But when it comes to community safety, I believe we can—and should—go further.

[► Watch the speech](#)



Water policy must support rivers and regional communities

Water policy has enormous consequences for regional communities, extending well beyond the farm gate.

During a recent visit to Leeton with Shadow Minister for Water Steph Cooke MP and Shadow Minister for the Environment the Hon. Jacqui Munro MLC, I met with local farmers, the Ricegrowers' Association of Australia, SunRice, Leeton Shire Council and community



leaders.

The Riverina has demonstrated for generations that it can produce world-class food and fibre while supporting regional manufacturing, local jobs and responsible environmental stewardship.

At the SunRice mill, we saw firsthand how agricultural production underpins an entire regional economy. Water supports not only growers, but manufacturers, transport

operators, suppliers, exporters and the many local businesses and families that depend upon them. Confidence and certainty around future water availability therefore matters to entire communities.

The choice should not be between healthy rivers and thriving regional communities. Good policy must deliver both.

Basin communities have generations of knowledge and practical experience. They deserve to be genuine partners in shaping the future of Murray-Darling Basin management, and I'll continue advocating to ensure regional voices are heard in those decisions.

Three milestones for Urana

It was a wonderful afternoon and evening in Urana, celebrating three important milestones for the community.

The opening of the new NBN fixed wireless tower, the reopening of the Friendly Grocer and the official opening of the new alfresco area at the Urana Bowling Club all point to a town with tremendous heart.



Following the devastating 2022 fire, Pat, Tosh and their family worked tirelessly to reopen the Friendly Grocer. Their commitment was about much more than rebuilding a supermarket. It was about recognising an important community need and responding.

The new NBN tower will deliver improved digital connectivity, while the Bowling Club's alfresco area has created another welcoming place for the community to come together.

Urana represents the best of country Australia: people backing one another, rolling up their sleeves when challenges arise and never losing sight of what makes their community special.

Congratulations to everyone who helped bring these projects to life.

Science in the House

It was wonderful to welcome Izzy, Emily and Ericka from Xavier Catholic College to NSW



Parliament for Science in the House.

They were joined by Mr Carl Pinson and Ms Sam Worthington for the event, which celebrates outstanding science education and showcases the work of students, teachers and STEM leaders from across NSW.

It was fantastic to see Xavier Catholic College representing our region and highlighting the quality of science education taking place in the Albury electorate.

Congratulations to Izzy, Emily and Ericka. You represented your school and our region exceptionally well.

Preserving the story of Bidgeemia Memorial Hall

Ahead of its upcoming centenary celebrations, I appreciated a preview of the restoration work that has gone into the Bidgeemia Memorial Hall with local Jenny McFarlane.

Built by returned Great War soldiers and their families, the hall is much more than a community building. It stands as a memorial to a generation who returned from war, rebuilt their lives and created a place where local people could come together.



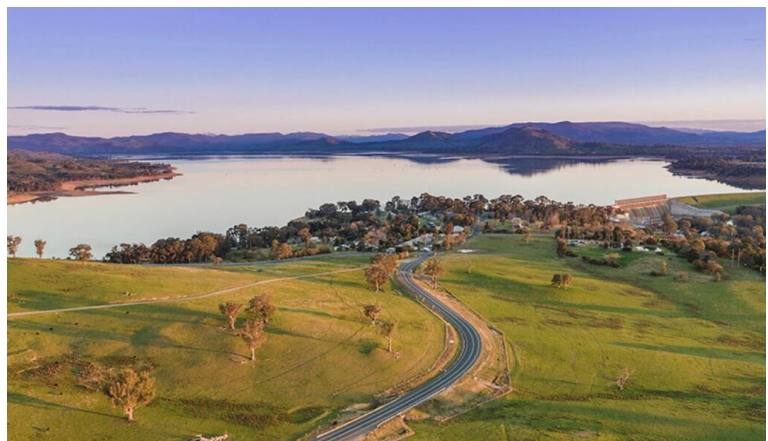
Nearly 100 years later, that community spirit remains strong.

The care and dedication behind the restoration are immediately evident. It is a credit to the local families, volunteers, businesses and tradespeople who have worked so hard to preserve this important part of Bidgeemia's history.

I look forward to joining the community for the centenary celebration on 4 October and recognising both those who built the hall and those who have protected its legacy.

Wymah pumped hydro — transparency and community must come first

Following concerns raised by local residents about WaterNSW's preliminary investigations into a potential pumped hydro opportunity in the Wymah Valley, I sought a briefing with WaterNSW alongside Greater Hume Council to get clearer answers about what is being considered.



Importantly, there is currently no development proposal and no decision has been made to proceed. WaterNSW is undertaking preliminary work to determine whether the Wymah Valley represents an opportunity that could ultimately be taken to market. However, while the briefing provided greater clarity about the process, it also raised issues that reinforce why our community needs to be involved from the outset.

Of particular concern is the transmission infrastructure that would be required for any future project. While no corridor has been identified, WaterNSW indicated the likely connection point would be the existing Jindera Substation. That could potentially mean more than 30 kilometres of transmission infrastructure crossing private land and affecting numerous landholders. It also means this conversation potentially extends well beyond Wymah to communities and property owners between Wymah and Jindera.

There remain significant questions around fluctuating water levels in Lake Hume, sedimentation, environmental and agricultural impacts, and ultimately the technical and economic viability of any proposal. These questions need to be properly examined before this opportunity progresses further.

The recent NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Renewable Energy Zones demonstrated the uncertainty, anxiety and division that can arise when communities feel major energy infrastructure is being planned around them rather than with them. We should learn from those experiences.

Any proposal would need to demonstrate not only that it is technically, environmentally and economically viable, but that its broader impacts — including transmission infrastructure — can be managed without imposing an unacceptable burden on local residents, farming businesses and landholders.

Social licence cannot be created at the end of a planning process. It must be built from the beginning through early engagement, transparency and respect for the people who may ultimately be affected.

With WaterNSW's pre-feasibility investigations expected to continue through to the end of 2026, I will continue working with Greater Hume Council and local residents to ensure our community is informed and its concerns remain front and centre.

Celebrating our communities



Congratulations, Nigel Horne

After more than three decades in real estate, Nigel Horne has concluded an exceptional career serving families across Lavington and Albury.

Nigel's contribution extends well beyond real estate. Many residents will know him as the longstanding Master of Ceremonies at Albury's Anzac Day services, where his respect for veterans and commitment to preserving their stories have helped make these commemorations so meaningful.

Congratulations, Nigel, on an outstanding career and thank you for everything you have contributed to our community.

How my office can help you

Best wishes also to Sue Ritchie as she takes the reins at Crossriver Property Group. Sue is the principal real estate agent for 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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Celebrating our local debutantes

It has been a pleasure to attend a number of debutante balls across Albury in recent months, including the Albury District Debutante Ball and, more recently, the Bella Debutante Presentation Ball.

These evenings are important milestones for the young people taking part, but they are also wonderful community occasions — bringing together generations of families and friends to celebrate, encourage and support them.

Congratulations to all of the debutantes and their partners who have taken part.



Traditions like these continue to have an important place in our community, creating memories for young people and bringing families together.

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