



Michael Johnsen MP
NATIONALS MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER



DECEMBER 2016

Upper Hunter Electorate Newsletter

Dear Friends,

As 2016 comes to an end, it is timely to remember that, as busy as our lives may be, as challenging as circumstances can be, we live in a wonderful part of the world.

The Upper Hunter electorate is blessed with much natural beauty, wonderful people and public services that auger well for a bright future. Our region is one of the most envied in NSW with world recognised industries that provide diversity and opportunity. We must always continue to work hard to maintain our lifestyle standards and participate as much as we can as individuals, in giving back to our community.

As we enter a new year, I wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a safe, happy and healthy 2017.



Michael Johnsen MP
MEMBER FOR UPPER HUNTER

New Website

We've launched a new website, visit www.michaeljohnsen.com.au and sign up for our newsletter

Notice of Office Christmas closure times:

The Upper Hunter Electorate Office will be closed from the afternoon of Friday 23rd of December 2016 and will reopen on Monday January 6th 2017.



NSW National Party Leadership

Last month saw the election of John Barilaro as Leader of the NSW National Party, succeeding Troy Grant in the role.

I would like to publicly and warmly thank Troy for his service to the National Party and to NSW during his period of leadership. Troy always said that leaders and politicians alike should own the issues that they take to the electorate, and that is what he has done.

John Barilaro is known to many in the Upper Hunter Electorate, as he has paid several visits to our electorate in his capacity as a Minister of the Crown, and we can look forward to the relationship between the new Deputy Premier and Upper Hunter to go from strength to strength.

I have no doubt that John Barilaro as NSW Nationals Leader, and Niall Blair as Deputy Leader, will provide fresh leadership to take us into the future. Both have the passion and the will and leadership to ensure that rural and regional NSW get its fair share, and to provide a focus for people's goals and aspirations, and allow them to reach their full potential.



Michael Johnsen MP and John Barilaro

News

Hunter Valley Cycleway

Coming soon. Wonderful to see The NSW Nationals in government delivering on announcements. More to do and more to come.



Rural Fire Service

Braefield Dury Rural Fire Brigade announce funding for new fighting equipment.

The total investment in the Upper Hunter region across emergency services & veterans is almost \$300,000.



Gloucester Business Survey provides direction for future growth

Michael Johnsen MP, Member for the Upper Hunter has welcome news that the NSW Government has given Gloucester business organisations and the MidCoast Council the opportunity to help make the region an even better place to run a business.



Delivering for the Upper Hunter



- **Score Bypass: \$10 million** continue planning for New England Highway bypass of Scone (State and Federal funded)
- **\$5.7 million for upgrade of bridge over Glennies Creek** on Middle Falbrook Road
- **\$4 million to continue planning the New England Highway upgrade** between Belford and the Golden Highway, including grade separation of the Golden Highway intersection.
- **\$3.1 million** to progress planning for the **New England Highway Muswellbrook Bypass.**
- **Total of \$7.7 million in health** including:
 - \$5.4 million for Singleton Hospital Upgrade and
 - \$2.3 million for Muswellbrook Hospital Redevelopment Stage 2
- **\$75,946 Funding secured for Upper Hunter War Memorials Grants Program:**
 - Gloucester RSL Sub-Branch: \$12,946 to upgrade Gloucester Memorial Clock Tower including installation of permanent seating.
 - Liverpool Plains Shire Council: \$60,000 to upgrade the Quirindi Town Clock & War Memorial. Works will include construction of a disabled access ramp, installation of a stage area and new stairs and landscaping, and an upgrade lighting around the clock tower.
 - Returned and Services League of Australia Scone Sub-Branch: \$3,000 to upgrade the Scone War Memorial including fitting of a new marble panel for WWII veterans and inscriptions of names.
- **\$1.469 million** towards construction of an all-weather **Recreation Sports facility at White Park, Scone.**
- **\$5,000 from the NSW Department of Industry Office of Regional Development** Newcastle to fund the Gloucester Business Prospectus and **\$30,000 in funding for the investment attraction implementation.**
- **\$2.752 Million** in funding under the NSW Government's **Regional Water and Waste Water Program:**
 - "The Council will receive \$1.312 million in funding for the Camberwell Water Supply Scheme, which will include a water treatment plant ensuring a safe, reliable drinking water supply.
 - "Further to that amount, Council will also receive \$1.413 million in funding to build a water treatment plant for Bulga, which would be connected to a reticulated water supply network for the town.
- **\$6 Million for Upper Hunter Tertiary Education Centre in Muswellbrook**, from the Resources for Regions program.
- **\$1.5 Million investment** in the extension and upgrade of the **Automotive Workshop at Muswellbrook** Campus between 2012 and 2015.
- **Dungog Shire Council \$10 million special purpose grant** to upgrade sections of Main Road 101 from Tocal through to Dungog.
- **SES Muswellbrook** \$5,000 grant for new equipment
- **Braefield/Dury Rural Fire Service Fire Service**, \$8,000 grant.
- **Barrington Bridge Replacement Project**, \$700,000 to improve safety and reliability of the bridge across the Barrington River.

Greyhound Racing to continue

The Greyhound debate is an issue that aroused conflicting views in our community, but from the start I made clear that I would stand with my community throughout this process. I therefore strongly welcomed the announcement in October, that the NSW Government will give in principle support for greyhound racing to have one final chance in NSW, subject to the industry agreeing to the strictest regulations in the country to clamp down on animal cruelty, which it did.

As part of that support, the Government invited the RSPCA and greyhound racing industry representatives to join a Greyhound Industry Reform Panel, to be chaired by former Premier Morris Iemma, to determine the new regime.

The greyhound industry's own commitments to having total lifecycle management, controlled breeding, zero tolerance for animal cruelty and eliminating avoidable injury will be the starting point for the Panel's work.

The government had listened to the community's concerns about the racing ban and the way it was implemented.

It is clear the community agrees we must put an end to the animal cruelty outlined in the Special Commission of Inquiry into the Greyhound Racing Industry - pure and simple.

But we underestimated the community's desire to give the greyhound industry one last chance to reform.

Based on the major shift in the industry's attitude and commitments since the announcement of a ban, the Government believes it is fair to give the industry one last chance, which is a view I not only agreed with, but also lobbied for, as I was well aware of the very real impact the ban would have on our Upper Hunter electorate involved in this industry and its support industries.

In August of this year, in the Parliament, I had spoken on the viability of the Greyhound racing industry, but this policy correction ensures that the Industry is the master of its own financial destiny.



I was particularly concerned that if any ban went ahead, then I wanted to ensure there was a proper supporting transition package that was going to help my constituents.

Greyhound racing will now be subject to the toughest regulations in the country. It is now up to the industry to demonstrate its commitment and put this into action to reform for the benefit of all involved.

As Member for Upper Hunter, I frequently met with my constituents and local representatives from the Greyhound Industry throughout the debate, and in October of this year, I joined with Upper Hunter electorate residents and greyhound trainers to visit Coonamble racetrack at the invitation of the Greyhound racing community.

Subject to the Panel's recommendations, legislation would then be introduced early in 2017 to repeal the ban and deliver the new regime under which racing would operate.

For more information, including my words spoken in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, please visit: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Hansard/Pages/HansardResult.aspx#/docid/HANSARD-1323879322-91745>

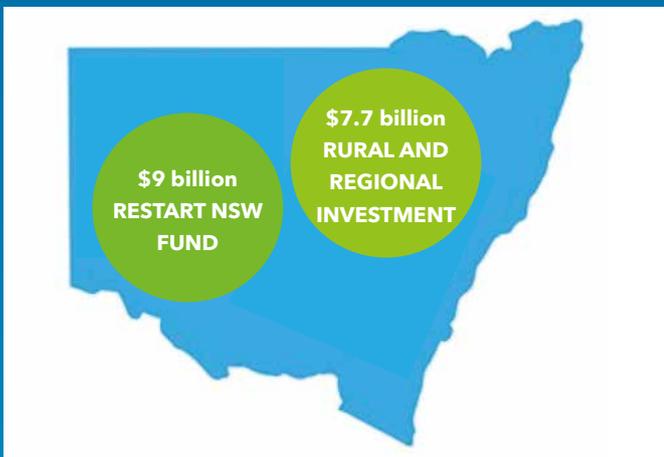
Restart NSW

What is Restart NSW?

Restart NSW is NSW Government's dedicated infrastructure fund. The fund was established in 2011 to improve the economic growth and productivity of the State.

Restart NSW funds are used for major projects that will improve the productivity and competitiveness across all of the State, and across all sectors. They also support investment in local infrastructure in regional areas.

By the end of 2014-15, more than \$9 billion had been deposited in the Restart NSW Fund. There is also currently \$7.7 billion in rural and regional investment allocated and reserved for programs and projects including the Rebuilding NSW program.



Thirty percent of Restart NSW funds are committed to projects in regional NSW (outside Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong). This includes an allocation of three percent to the Resources for Regions program, to address infrastructure constraints in communities affected by mining.

The regional programs supported by Restart NSW include:

- Resources for Regions
- Fixing Country Roads
- Water Security for Regions
- Regional Tourism Infrastructure
- Cobbora Transition Fund

Infrastructure NSW has sole responsibility for making recommendations to the NSW Government for use of the funds. Funds can only be spent on projects that are recommended by Infrastructure NSW, and then approved by the Treasurer.

Infrastructure NSW's independent assessment process ensures that funds are only allocated to projects that have proven strategic and economic merit through cost benefit analyses and objective assessment.

Proceeds from the poles and wires transaction will also be deposited into the Restart NSW fund for use on the NSW Government's Rebuilding NSW program, based on the priorities identified in the State Infrastructure Strategy Update 2014.

I look forward to sharing more information with you soon, and how they will benefit our Upper Hunter Electorate, and to show how your government is improving your community, using your money.

Sign up for the newsletter at
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