

The Bottom Line

Sid Sidebottom MP - Federal Member for Braddon

... for a fair go in Braddon

1300 135 547 | Ph 03 6431 1333 | Fax 03 6431 5680 | Email sid.sidebottom.MP@aph.gov.au
Shop 2, 32 Wilmot Street, Burnie 7320 Tasmania | PO Box 908, Burnie



May 2008



Mersey Hospital - The Facts



Sid and Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon talk to High Dependency Unit nurse Jackie vanden Berg about the new unit.

Much has been written in the past few weeks about what "is" or "isn't" planned for the Mersey Community Hospital.

The Rudd Government is committed to continuing funding for the Mersey, and we are 100% determined to honour that pledge.

We are also committed to ensuring the safe treatment of patients and the sustainability of clinical services at the hospital into the future.

Federal Minister for Health Nicola Roxon MP recently called for **Expressions of Interest** from religious, charitable or private sector organisations experienced in managing public hospitals to operate the Mersey as a **public hospital** from July 1.

This period has now closed, and is in the hands of the Department of Health and Ageing for their decision.

While it may be managed

privately, the Mersey will continue to be operated as a public hospital – funded and controlled by the Federal Government.

During Minister Roxon's recent visit she announced the opening of the Mersey **High Dependency Unit (HDU)**. The HDU will allow for more surgery procedures to be performed at the Mersey and will help attract and retain skilled staff.

There has also been an extensive investigation in progress to determine the feasibility of offering further acute care services at the Mersey and the Minister is currently awaiting its conclusions.

Be assured that the Rudd Government is committed to making the Mersey Community Hospital work the best it can with the dedicated staff it has to provide safe, sustainable, practical health outcomes for the region it serves.

Sid's View

Welcome to the first edition of The Bottom Line for 2008 - I hope you find it interesting and informative.

In November I was honoured to be elected again as your representative for this wonderful region in the Federal Parliament and to be a member of a new, energetic, positive Labor government led by Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard. I thank you for placing your trust in me and Labor - a government that will work hard and fairly for all Australians.

Being in government brings with it great opportunities, responsibilities and challenges. My hard working team is already busy dealing with numerous enquiries ranging through a whole range of issues - local, State and National. Please contact us if there is anything we can help you, your family or organisation with.

Our region will be the beneficiary of significant commitments by Labor and we are currently working our way through the various projects - liaising with relevant departments and ministerial offices. Major projects throughout the region will include roads and rail, a number of community precincts, shared pathways and sporting and recreational facilities, telecommunications, manufacturing support services, and a variety of health services and facilities. Many of these will begin to take shape after Labor's first budget in May.

Kind regards

BONUS PAYMENTS DEFINITE

Attention carers and seniors - you will definitely receive your lump sum payments, equivalent to the amount you received last year, by the end of June 2008.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has given a clear commitment to carers, pensioners and seniors that no eligible person will be a dollar worse off in terms of bonuses, compared to last year.

Seven Decades of Bliss for the Woolleys

While all significant anniversaries and birthdays are special, Sid came across a couple recently who were celebrating a very special anniversary.

Ellis and Barbara Woolley, both 88, of Wynyard, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on March 4, surrounded by family and friends.

"I have never heard of a 70th anniversary before ... this was just so rare and amazing," Sid said.

Sid presented the Woolleys with flowers, and thanked them for being such fantastic role models for the North-West Coast's younger generation.

While visiting, Sid spent time reminiscing with Ellis and Barbara about their seven decades of marriage.

"What amazing people the Woolleys are – I hope to visit them again for their



Ellis and Barbara Woolley, both 88, of Wynyard, recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. Sid visited the couple to present them with flowers to mark the special occasion.

80th anniversary," Sid said.

Sid does his best to personally congratulate all North-West married couples on their significant anniversaries.

Official messages make anniversary that little bit more special

Celebrating a significant birthday or wedding anniversary soon?

Did you know you can receive a personal congratulation from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, the Governor-General, The Queen, and of course Sid!

You can make a special milestone even more special for family members by ordering these messages for them.

Who is entitled to a letter from whom?

Birthdays

90th birthday – Sid, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd

100th birthday – Sid, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Governor-General, The Queen

Anniversaries

50th wedding anniversary – Sid, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Governor-General.

60th wedding anniversary – Sid, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Governor-General, The Queen.

To apply for a message, drop into our office at Shop 2/32 Wilmot St, Burnie. You will need to show a marriage certificate/birth certificate to Sid's staff.

Application can be made up to two months before the celebration. You can also request a belated message up to one month after the birthday or wedding anniversary has passed.

Medicare - Immunisation Online

Stay up-to-date with your child's immunisation history

North-West parents can keep track of their children's immunisation history on the internet, through a free service offered by Medicare Australia.

The Australian Childhood Immunisation Register records details of vaccinations given to Australian children who are aged under seven.

The register makes obtaining proof of immunisation easy – a copy is automatically sent to parents by post when their child turns one, two and five.

As many primary schools and pre-schools require a proof of immunisation statement before a child can enrol, this service is very helpful.

To register for Medicare's online services visit www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online

You can then view and print a copy of your child's immunisation history online. People who are not registered with Medicare can sign up either online or by visiting their nearest Medicare office.

Other online Medicare services:

- view your Medicare Safety net balance
- view your organ donor registration details
- view and update your Medicare personal details
- view your Medicare benefit tax statement
- request a duplicate or replacement Medicare card.

The Ticking Clock

Sid and the Rudd Government have already begun to deliver on their election promises. The first major project to receive funding is the Sisters of Charity Outreach, based in Devonport.

The service specialises in grief and trauma recovery, the only such service in Tasmania. The Sisters of Charity will receive \$1.25m over four years, to allow the employment of another psychologist to meet the needs of hundreds of more people.



Strengthening relationships between police and youth

An innovative program based on strengthening the relationship between police and youth at risk was recently launched on the North-West Coast.

The “Youths at Risk” Program is an initiative of the Mersey Police and Community Youth Club (PCYC) – the same group responsible for Operation Re-Wind.

The program sees 12-17 year old youths from the North-West Coast undertake low-cost vocational, recreational, sporting and social activities under the guidance of police constables David Quinn and Steve Orme.

Over a ten-week period, the youths will try their hands at a range of activities, including automotive mechanics, martial arts, abseiling and kayaking.

The program will then culminate in a three-day camp at Paton Park, at North Motton.

PCYC Activity Coordinator Tim McLaren said the program was about providing positive mentoring to youth at risk, while encouraging them to build resilience and self-reliance.

As well as Federal Government funding, the program is also supported by Tasmania Police, the National Community Crime Prevention Program, the Devonport Council, the Kentish Council, the Tasmanian Community Fund and the Lighthouse project.

Sid was so impressed by the program he spoke about it in a recent speech in Federal Parliament, commending those involved and emphasising its benefits to the Parliament.



Mersey Police and Community Youth Club Activity Coordinator Tim McLaren with Sid.

Having trouble picking up ABC Northern Tasmania Local Radio Services?

Each region operates on a separate frequency, so finding a clearer reception may just be a matter of switching to a more appropriate station.

Burnie – 102.5 FM
Devonport – 100.5 FM
King Island – 88.5 FM
Lileah – 91.3
Northern Tasmania – 91.7 FM
Queenstown/Zeehan – 90.5 FM
Rosebery – 106.3 FM
Savage River – 104.1 FM
Strahan – 107.5 FM
Waratah – 103.3 FM

Other tips for better reception

- extend the antenna as far as possible and point it towards your nearest transmitter
- switch the radio to mono to reduce any hissing
- install an external antenna
- when travelling, re-tune to the best local frequency

If reception is still unsatisfactory, contact ABC Reception Advice on 1300 13 9994 or visit the website at www.abc.net.au/reception/radio

Digital TV Rollout

Digital television is making its way further along the North West Coast.

Penguin and Ulverstone have joined the digital era, with commercial stations Southern Cross, WIN and Tasmanian Digital Television extending their services to the towns.

ABC and SBS also offer a number of digital services in those two towns, and further along the North-West.

Digital television has many significant advantages over traditional analogue television including superior image, improved audio quality, and better reception.

In addition, because digital television requires less band-width than traditional television, it offers broadcasters the possibility of providing more digital channels in the same band-width as required by traditional television.

Digital television requires viewers to have either a set-top box or a television with a built in digital tuner, and may require you to buy a new antenna – to help ensure you get the best signal possible.

Sid's office is also working with commercial stations and other groups to see digital television extended to the Burnie area as soon as possible. Some technical difficulties are currently delaying the roll-out, but it is hoped these can be overcome in the very near future.

More information on digital television is available online at Digital Broadcasting Australia's website www.dba.org.au or from television stations on their websites.



Friendly staff here to help

Sid has a knowledgeable and enthusiastic team at his office who are ready and willing to help you with any issue.

Luke – Chief of Staff/Adviser

Eliza – Research/Media

Kay – Office Manager

Phil – Constituent/I.T. Manager

Tresa – volunteer

Elizabeth – casual

Luned – casual

As Sid is often away – either in Canberra or at numerous public events – his helpful staff are your first port of call for any enquiry.

Call them on 64 311 333 or drop into Shop 2/32 Wilmot St, Burnie anytime.



Staff Members(left-right): Phil, Kay, Luke and Eliza

Dob in the Frequent Flinger

Everyone knows a Frequent Flinger – someone who turfs rubbish out their car window while driving.

It's a terrible habit, and now you can dob them in and put a stop to it.

Call 1300 135 513

or visit

[www.environment](http://www.environment.tas.gov.au/litter)

[tas.gov.au/litter](http://www.environment.tas.gov.au/litter)

and report them.

Do your bit to keep the North-West Coast beautiful and litter-free.



Look for home-grown logo

Look out for this logo when you are next shopping for vegetables.



The "Tassie Vegetables: Taste is in our nature" campaign began in March and will run until June 2009.

The campaign will feature a range of advertisements in magazines, newspapers and on selected Tasmanian produce in Tasmania and on the mainland.

The campaign aims to further increase the already strong sales of Tasmanian vegetable products.

The campaign is also supported by a new logo which will appear on an increasing number of Tasmanian grown vegetables during the campaign. The logo will come in many different forms including stickers, banners, ties and tape.

It will make it much easier to locate and identify local products.

Find police help on a better number

Remember for non-emergency police matters there is a better number to call than 000.

Contact 131 444 and an operator will attend to your call.

Calling this number frees up the 000 line for immediate and life-threatening situations.



Sid opens upgraded factory at Anvers

Sid had the pleasure of officially opening the expansion of the House of Anvers Chocolate Factory at Latrobe recently.

The project, which involved an upgrade and extension to existing facilities, was launched on March 7.

The project was supported by the Australian Government through a \$100,000 *Australian Tourism Development Program* grant.

Sid represented the Federal Minister for Tourism Martin Ferguson at the launch.

He presented Anvers owner Igor Van Gerwen with an AusIndustry certificate in recognition of his contribution to tourism development in Tasmania.

The refurbishments will provide tourists with the opportunity to see more of the chocolate making process, and includes a video commentary of chocolate making, and memorabilia of the history of chocolate making.



Sid with Jocelyn and Igor Van Gerwen. He presented Igor with an AusIndustry Certificate in recognition of his contribution to tourism development to Tasmania.

Centrelink increase to ease family financial woes

Seniors, veterans, carers and people with disabilities on the North-West Coast are now benefiting from large increases in a number of Centrelink benefits.

As of March 20, The Utilities Allowance was increased from \$107.20 per year to \$500.

It is now paid in quarterly instalments, as opposed to the former twice-yearly payment scheme.

Who gets the Utilities Allowance increase?

Recipients of:

- Carer Payment
- Disability Support Pension
- Widow B Pension
- Wife Pension
- Bereavement Allowance
- Invalidity Service Pension
- Partner Service Pension
- Income Support Supplement

The Seniors Concession Allowance and Telephone Allowance also increased from \$218 per year to \$500. It is also paid quarterly.

The increase to the Senior Concession Allowance will be received by all Commonwealth

Seniors Health Card and Gold Card holders.

Who gets the Telephone Allowance increase?

The increase from \$88 to \$132 (for people with home internet) will go to:

- veterans
- recipients of the Aged Pension
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders
- recipients of the Carer Payment
- recipients of the Disability Support Pension

Adult pensions and allowance rates have also increased at various rates.

Who gets these increases?

Recipients of:

- Aged Pension
- Special Payment
- Disability Support Pension
- Newstart Allowance
- Partner Allowance
- Parenting Payment (partnered)
- Mature Aged Allowance
- Widow Allowance
- Sickness Allowance

Did you know?

Is it a major hassle to get yourself to Medicare to claim your rebate after visiting the doctor?

Did you know you can do it over the phone instead?

You will need to pay the medical account in full the day you visit your doctor.

But then you can phone 1300 360 460, quote your medicare number and bank account details and the amount will be reimbursed either into your bank account or a cheque posted to you.

After this is set up, all you need to do is post your medical account to an address given and attach your personal details to the back.

Claim forms can also be downloaded at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

A REAL CHOICE AT WORK

Workers in Braddon will now have greater security in their jobs and conditions after the passing of the Rudd Government's new Workplace Relations Amendment Bill.

The passage of the bill delivered on one of the new Government's major promises to the people of Australia at last year's election.

The battle against the Howard Government's Work Choices legislation was a key to the 2007 election, and something Sid and his Labor colleagues were very active on during the campaign.

In Parliament during March, as part of the Bill's passage, Sid spoke in support of the legislation.

He used the speech to highlight the struggle of two North-West workers who refused to let Work Choices override their rights at work.

"Allison Adkins and Ellen Speed are two hardworking people from my electorate, who became a graphic example of just how callous and uncaring the Howard government's unmandated Work Choices legislation could be," Sid told Parliament.

"Both these women were dedicated and long-serving employees of a video rental company, Allison working in Devonport and Ellen in Burnie. They were sacked last year, on 14 March, without any real explanation.

"They were later told in a lawyer's letter that the sacking was for so-called 'operational reasons', despite never having anything like

a performance issue with their employer.

"Their problem, under the Work Choices system, was that they chose their union to represent them and refused to sign an Australian workplace agreement. These are not highly paid employees or people looking for some huge advantage over their fellow workers.

"All they wanted was to stay on the conditions they had worked under for a long time and keep working at a job which they enjoyed and which suited their own lifestyle. Allison and Ellen were protected by Tasmanian legislation but, as soon as Work Choices came into force, they were effectively shown the door.

"Work Choices gave the green light for employers who wanted to exploit workers the chance to do so."

The pair is currently fighting their sacking with the help of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union.

Sid also moved during his speech to reassure employers that the new legislation won't impact on their businesses, with time for transition to the new system.

"For those who, in good faith, have set up an agreement with their workers, there is protection and time for a change to the new system, a time to again join with their employees and together find a solution for all parties," he said.

He said the aim was to restore some fairness to the system for all, and make it something everyone could work with, and toward a better future.

Be wary of scams

North-West consumers should always be on the lookout for scams and frauds.

The release of consumer watchdog ACCC's Little Black Book of Scams will help people protect themselves from potential scammers.

Scams come in all shapes and sizes, including chain letters, lotteries, competitions, and even charity scams.

The book highlights the latest scams and offers consumers tips on how to avoid being scammed, what to do to minimise damage if you are scammed and most importantly, how to report a scam.

Copies of the Little Black Book of Scams can be found online at SCAMwatch at www.scamwatch.gov.au, by contacting the ACCC Infocentre on 1300 302 502, or call into Sid's office.

Protect yourself from scams with these tips

- 1) **Avoid rip offs – treat all unsolicited promises and requests for your details carefully.**
- 2) **Never send money or give credit card, account or other personal details to anyone who makes unsolicited offers or requests for information.**
- 3) **Don't rely on testimonials – find solid evidence from independent sources on individuals/companies who seem too good to be true.**
- 4) **Never click on a link provided in an unsolicited email as it will probably lead to a fake website designed to trap you.**
- 5) **Never use phone numbers provided with unsolicited requests or offers as it probably connects you to fakes who will try to trap you with lies.**
- 6) **Destroy old bills, records and expired cards – don't just bin them.**
- 7) **Check your credit card report at least once a year.**

Good news for Cataract Patients

North-West patients waiting for cataract surgery will be pleased to hear surgery is about to start up again at the Mersey Community Hospital.

Surgery was halted last year when the old microscope broke down and could not be repaired.

Since coming under Federal Government ownership, a new microscope has been purchased and is expected to arrive at the end of April.

Patients on the waiting list will be contacted when surgery resumes.



Local mills dedicated to being environmentally friendly

Australian Paper Tasmania is leading the nation in its commitment to reducing global warming.

The company, with mills based at Wesley Vale and Burnie, has undertaken a massive carbon reduction strategy in the past year, resulting in the release of a new carbon neutral range of papers.

Called ENVI, the carbon neutral papers are suitable for catalogues, books and general printing.

ENVI has gained accreditation through the national Department of Climate Change Greenhouse Friendly Program.

The new range is already being printed at Wesley Vale, with production to begin at the Burnie Mill soon.

General Manager of Paperlinx, Printing and Publication Papers Jon Ryder spoke to Sid recently about Australian Paper's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint.

"When you really think about it, our company is definitely influencing the world's future in my opinion," Jon said.

"I look at the big picture – I think there are school children now buying

texts books who are contributing to global warming.

"If schools and parents are serious about global warming ... it doesn't cost huge amounts more to buy carbon neutral paper, but it will make the world of difference."

The carbon neutral paper is currently available to businesses, but will be available to households and individuals around August.

So look out for the logo below in the next year and ENVI paper.

What is carbon neutral paper?

Carbon neutral paper means the carbon dioxide used in the entire production of the paper – from the tree – has been reduced to a level designated by the Department of Climate Change.

What processes omit carbon dioxide?

- chainsaws
- burning of excess wood
- trucks used to transport wood/paper
- chemicals used to make paper
- boats used to ship paper



General Manager of Paperlinx, Printing and Publication Papers Jon Ryder and Sid check out a sample of the new carbon-neutral paper.



Small changes make for environmentally friendly home

STANLEY mum Shelley Coombe believes all North-West households can and should be plastic bag free.

The mother-of-three, who is also the founder of Blu-C Bags – environmentally-sound shopping bags – says even if you don't use these bags you can still eliminate using plastic shopping bags around the home by following these simple tips:

Don't throw out:

- cereal boxes
- cereal bags
- bread bags
- washing powder boxes
- packaged fruit bags

These boxes/bags make for perfect "bins" under your sink.

If you have to use plastic bags from other retail outlets, save them for your bins, rather than plastic grocery bags.

Shelley has spent the past 18 months campaigning across the State to eliminate plastic shopping bags, after creating her own compact and versatile re-useable shopping bags.

For more information contact enquiries@blu-cbags.com.au

You can also visit the website at www.blu-cbags.com.au



Sid's office manager Kay checks out an environmentally-friendly blu-c bag.



Sorry: A proud day for Sid

The historic apology made by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was a very proud day for Australian politics in Sid's mind. He was so moved by the gesture he chose to give a speech to voice his own personal apology to Australia's Indigenous population.

'Sorry' is such a small word but the sentiment and psychology that complement it are more powerful than any other word I can think of, except perhaps the word 'love.'

'Sorry' is more powerful than regretfulness; 'sorry' is more powerful than remorse. These words are all components of what it means to be sorry, but they cannot replace that one five-letter word.

Forgiveness is so much easier when someone has looked you in the eye and said, "I'm sorry."

That is exactly what our Prime Minister Kevin Rudd did in this place.

Nationally, between one in three and one in 10 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities between 1910 and 1970.

Forceful removal began in the mid 1800s and continued until 1970, only some 38 years ago.

Indigenous children were placed in institutions or church mission, were adopted or fostered and were at risk of physical and sexual abuse. Many never received wages for their labour.

Along with thousands of Australians, over many years of contemplating the sad events surrounding the forceful removal of Aboriginal children from their families, I can only try to imagine the pain and suffering associated with this policy. I can barely comprehend the gut-wrenching devastation each and every mother would have endured, for instance, upon having a child or children taken from her in such dramatic and sudden circumstances.

I can only try to understand the plight of a child being taken and thrown into a foster home or institution where it is forbidden to speak their native language.

In one swift move, these children lost their family, their culture, their connection to traditional land and their entire sense of identity.

Personally, I have always struggled to understand why there has ever been an argument over whether a federal government apology to the stolen generations was necessary. Each and every state and territory issued a formal apology more than a decade ago. Our country has held a National Sorry Day for almost a decade. We have also had a national Sorry Book for the same period of time.

This apology is about moving forward into the future together as a country. This apology means acknowledgement. It means regret. It means remorse. But, most importantly it means we will work together to ensure these terrible events and individual and family experiences never ever happen again. I am proud to say, "I am sorry" and to be part of a parliament that has finally said, "We are sorry."

2020 – Today's students are 2020's leaders

Sid had the pleasure of attending a number of School Summits in recent weeks, in the lead up to the Australia 2020 Summit.

Sid wrote to all North-West Schools (primary, secondary and colleges) in February, inviting them to host their own School Summit.

He was thrilled to hear that many had taken up the challenge.

Sid spoke to students about their role in 2020 Australia, telling them they were the future of the country.

Sid believes North-West Schools are jam-packed with intelligent and creative-thinking teachers and students.

He says their ideas are crucial to any discussion about Australia's future.

Topics discussed at the School Summits included:

- Australian Economy
- Economic infrastructure
- Population, sustainability, climate change and water
- Future direction for rural industries and rural communities
- A long-term national health strategy
- Strengthening communities, supporting families and social inclusion
- Options for the future of Indigenous Australia
- The future of the arts, film and design
- The future of Australian governance
- Australia's future security and prosperity in a rapidly changing region and world.

Students also watched DVD messages from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard as part of their summit.

All 2020 discussions at all North-West School Summits were recorded, sent to Canberra and discussed at the National Youth Summit in Canberra on April 12-13.

Below: Sid speaks to students at the Burnie High School Summit.



The Bottom Line

Sid Sidebottom MP - Federal Member for Braddon
... for a fair go in Braddon

1300 135 547 | Ph 03 6431 1333 | Fax 03 6431 5680 | Email sid.sidebottom.MP@aph.gov.au
Shop 2, 32 Wilmot Street, Burnie 7320 Tasmania | PO Box 908, Burnie