

The Bottom Line



Sid Sidebottom *...for a fair go*
Federal Member for Braddon



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Success for 2009 North West gap year students

Sid, along with North West student Alan Nicholas and others, have been successful in their bid to delay changes to parts of the Youth Allowance scheme.

Youth Allowance provisions for students currently taking a gap year have been extended to mean they remain eligible for the independent rate of Youth Allowance.

The decision by Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard to delay the introduction of the new scheme was thanks largely to the strong lobbying Sid did on behalf of North West students and their parents.

The delay means students who left school in 2008, have taken a gap year in 2009 and who must leave home to attend university, will now be entitled to apply for independent status under the existing system.

While supportive of the Youth Allowance reforms overall, Sid made no secret of his concern about the timing of this particular change. He met with Minister Gillard on a number of occasions to ask her to delay its introduction.

Sid also hosted 18-year-old Wynyard gap year student Alan Nicholas at Parliament House in August where Alan was able to directly lobby the Minister on the



Wynyard gap year student Alan Nicholas (centre) was Sid's special guest at a Roundtable discussion on Youth Allowance held by Federal Education Minister Julia Gillard. Sid and Alan were successful in helping to persuade the Minister to delay the introduction of the new scheme.

issue at a Roundtable discussion on the matter. Sid said he was delighted the Minister had listened to the needs of students like Alan.

For more information on Youth Allowance changes turn to page 2.

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More than \$100m delivered to North West schools under BER

More than \$100 million will be injected into North West and West Coast schools through the Rudd Government's Building the Education Revolution program.

Work has begun on numerous new libraries, multi-purpose halls, science labs and language centres across the region. Millions of dollars worth of school upgrades are also underway - all helping to create better teaching and learning areas and sustaining jobs.

"The funding for our science centre will give our school a fantastic boost and will provide students with many varied opportunities for real authentic learning. National School Pride funding will give us a dance space that we don't have currently but desperately need."

- Ulverstone High School Principal Glen Lutwyche

"The BER funding has provided much needed capital to enable Marist to bring forward the development of its strategic plan for middle years' learning. Stage 1, to be built in the next few months, is a state of the art facility for our Year 7 students with large, flexible learning areas incorporating science and language."

- Marist Regional College Principal Sue Chen



Sid is pictured with Latrobe High Principal Phil McKenzie and grade 7 students. Latrobe High has received \$200,000 under the National School Pride program to refurbish its MDT block and gymnasium. Below: Penguin High School has received more than \$2m to upgrade its science centre and complete refurbishments.



From Page 1: Youth Allowance - how do the changes affect me?

Families are encouraged to log on to:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Programs/YouthAllowance/Pages/Disclaimer.aspx>

to access the new Student Income Support Estimator. The Student Income Support Estimator allows parents to insert their annual earnings to find out if their children are eligible for Youth Allowance (dependent) under the new system

Relocation Scholarship: eligible students will receive \$4000 in their first year and \$1000 each subsequent year if they have to move to study.

Parental Income Threshold: Parents with two students living away from home can now earn up to \$140,729 per year before benefits are cut off under the new system.

Student Start-Up Scholarship: \$2254 (indexed each year) for each year they receive income support.

More information on digital TV a must

Television viewers crying out for new digital services in the far North West deserve more information about what is happening and when it will arrive.

Sid was recently presented with a copy of a petition to commercial broadcasters calling for digital services to be delivered to the Wynyard and beyond soon.

Sid's office had been inundated by calls from people in Wynyard and Circular Head areas asking when commercial digital television will be available.

Sid has written to and met with commercial broadcasters to highlight the situation for people in the region.

Sid pointed out to them that people are feeling quite uninformed, and as service providers they should be letting their customers know about their roll-out timeframe.

Sid said that because some digital services from ABC and SBS had been available from Table Cape and in Circular Head for a long time many people expected commercial services to soon follow.

He said he was pleased to see people like Wynyard's Travis Bugg organising themselves to make their voice heard on the issue, through the petition.

Darryl Bessell from Smithton has also organised a petition for people in Circular Head, to help make their voices heard on the digital TV subject. Sid has urged people in the district to sign and make their feelings clear.



Wynyard's Travis Bugg (right) recently presented to Sid a copy of a 900 signature petition supporting the push for better digital TV services to the Waratah-Wynyard region. The petition was then sent to commercial broadcasters.

STOP PRESS - Sid has received feedback from WIN and Southern Cross that they are planning to have the Table Cape commercial service transmitting by March next year.

He said that while this still seemed some time off, it would give people some indication when they may receive more digital services.

ENVI paper to be available to House of Reps

Tasmanian-made Reflex Carbon Neutral ENVI paper will now be available for use in the offices of Parliament House thanks to the Sid.

Sid wrote to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Harry Jenkins, and other senior ministers responsible for Government purchasing earlier this year, to ask them to use ENVI, which is the only 100% carbon neutral range of paper made in Australia.

The ENVI range is produced at the Burnie paper mill.

Sid said he was delighted to be able to do his bit to support local manufacturers as well as the environment.



It's blowin' in the wind...

The success of the Rudd Government's Renewable Energy Target legislation has paved the way for billion dollar investment in Tasmania and particularly the North West and West Coasts.

The potential for investment in renewable energy in Tasmania is exciting, with Sid already aware of more than \$1 billion worth of investment in wind and wave technology planned for our part of Tasmania, with more to come.

Tasmania has considerable expertise and some very talented people in the field of renewable energy - something already evident in the development of the Woolnorth wind farm.

Woolnorth is a shining light to what can be achieved by the renewable sector and will be the foundation for a major development of wind energy for Tasmania and beyond.

Woolnorth will serve as a template for new wind farms in the state with work already underway by Roaring 40s on its new project at Musselroe Bay in the North East.

Tasmania has a great potential for renewable energy, not only in wind, but wave and geothermal to name a few - of course building on decades of clean energy production from our world class hydro-electric schemes.



Jobs Fund delivers four projects so far

More than 350 local jobs, traineeships and work experience places have been retained or created so far under the Rudd Government's \$650m Jobs Fund

Four North West projects have been funded so far under the scheme.

Burnie City Council will receive \$1.26 million for the Waterfront Boardwalk project which will link West Park to the waterfront and CBD – generating up to 10 jobs.

Mersey Natural Resource Management Group Inc will receive \$267,000 for the Weed to Assets Commercialisation project – generating up to seven jobs.

Devonport City Council has been awarded \$1.87 million to restore Tasmanian tall ship – the Julie Burgess.

Devonport-based employment firm the O-Group has also been awarded \$910,000 for a range of community-based projects.

More Jobs Fund projects will be announced in coming weeks and months.

The Jobs Fund is just one strand of stimulus set up by the Rudd Government to cushion our economy from the Global Financial Crisis. The North West and West Coast regions have so far received more than \$120 million in funding to support infrastructure and local jobs.

For more information visit www.deewr.gov.au.



The Devonport City Council and O-Group were recently announced as the successful applicants in Round 1 of the Rudd Government's Jobs Fund. They are pictured with Sid and Senator Nick Sherry.



Sid and Burnie Dockers Football Club president Peter Vincent overlooking work on the new West Park Sporting facility of which the Rudd Government has contributed \$2.35m.

Timber Communities unite to help Vic fire victims

Tasmanians continue to do their bit to help Victorians recover from the February bushfires and Timber Communities Australia are leading the charge.

TCA has organised a number of teams to help with the replacement of 4000km of fencing destroyed by the Churchill fire near Traralgon.

Leigh Gardam from the North West is on his second trip to Victoria along with family, and others from the Hite, Potter, York and Dunnings families who are helping with the fencing effort.

Sid says it is a great example of the generosity of spirit of people in our community that they would go out of their way to go and help in Victoria.

The TCA effort has also received strong support from Gaffney Machinery, which has supplied a tractor to the effort, TT Line for providing free passage to the volunteers and their vehicles, and Health Care Insurance providing first aid kits.

Rudd Government delivers on pension reform

Our region's pensioners have been instrumental in building our nation throughout the years.

They deserve a pension system that provides them with adequate support and security.

That's why the Rudd Government made the decision in May to increase the pension for the first time in 12 years.

As well as the general increase, there are a number of other changes which may affect you. In particular, a new Pension Supplement has been introduced which rolls together all existing quarterly-paid pension allowances, such as the Utilities Allowance and Telephone Allowance. These payments will now be paid fortnightly, **and will come on top of the base rate pension increase.**

If any of the information below doesn't make sense to you, please give my office a call and my friendly staff can point you in the right direction.

WHO WILL GET THE RISE?

Age pensioners

Disability Support Pensioners

Veterans' Service Pensioners

Recipients of Carer Payment

Recipients of Income Support Supplement

War Widow/ers Pensioners

Recipients of Bereavement Allowance

Wife Pensioners

Widow B Pensioners

HOW MUCH WILL I GET?

SINGLE PENSIONERS (including new pension supplement)

Currently – \$569.80 per fortnight (full rate)

From 20 September 2009 - up to \$671.90 per fortnight (full rate)

COUPLE PENSIONERS (including new pension supplement)

Currently – receive \$951.80 per fortnight combined (full rate)

From 20 September, 2009 - up to \$1013 (full rate)

EXTRA SUPPORT FOR CARERS

In addition to the pension rise, carers will also receive a new Carer Supplement

\$600 per year for Carer Payment recipients

\$600 per year for Carer Allowance recipients (for each person in their care)

HOW OFTEN WILL MY PENSION INCREASE?

All pensions will be indexed at a higher rate, meaning bigger quarterly increases

PENSION SUPPLEMENT

The new fortnightly Pension Supplement will roll together and simplify all existing pension allowances. It will include:

INCREASE IN NEW PENSION SUPPLEMENT (single: \$2.49, couple: \$10.14)

GST SUPPLEMENT

UTILITIES ALLOWANCE

TELEPHONE ALLOWANCE

PHARMACEUTICAL ALLOWANCE

When combined, the Pension Supplement will be worth up to \$1,462.70 per year for singles (or \$28.13 a week) and \$2,199.60 per year for couples (or \$42.30 a week).

Solar Credits Scheme Commences

A new scheme providing support to North West Coasters who install rooftop solar panels is now up and running.

The Solar Credits Scheme is part of the Renewable Energy Target (RET) legislation which requires electricity retailers to purchase Renewable Energy Certificates (REC).

Through solar credits, households installing rooftop solar panels can receive five times as many RECs for each megawatt-hour of solar energy produced by their solar panels.

Suppliers of solar panel systems will, in most cases, offer a discount on the price of the system in return for Solar Credits.

Solar Credits are available to households, businesses and community groups for eligible small-scale renewable energy systems.

The scheme will be backdated to include eligible systems installed from 9 June 2009.

For more information visit oow.orer.gov.au



Rudd Ministers flock to North West Coast

Sid has brought 11 Rudd Government ministers and senior figures to the North West Coast so far in 2009.

As well as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's April visit, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Tony Burke visited in September to officially open a new laboratory at local agriculture business Agvita, before taking a tour through innovative horticultural works at Gunns Somerset Nursery.

Minister for Finance Lindsay Tanner visited in August to speak to local business people about Australia's economic outlook.

Minister for Employment Senator Mark Arbib, and Parliamentary Secretary for Employment Jason Clare visited in July as part of a Keep Australia Working forum.

Minister for Tourism Martin Ferguson visited in June to officially launch refurbishments at the Table Cape Lighthouse.

Minister for Youth Kate Ellis visited in May to participate in a Youth forum in Devonport.

Attorney-General Robert McLelland and Minister for Rural and Regional Health and Regional Service Delivery Warren Snowdon have also visited in recent months.

Sid said it was important to bring Rudd Government Ministers to Braddon to give them a first-hand experience of the issues which are important to our region.



Top left: Haulmax Managing Director Jon Riley shows Federal Finance Minister Lindsay Tanner (centre) and Sid through some of the equipment at their mining machinery business.

Top right: Minister for Youth Kate Ellis (right) and Sid speak to students at a Youth Forum. Bottom left: Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Tony Burke (left) and Sid look over seedlings at Gunns Somerset Nursery with manager Chris Dare. Bottom right: Sid and Federal Minister for Tourism Martin Ferguson officially launch the \$185,000 refurbishments at the Table Cape Lighthouse.

New grant program for community environmental groups

Local environmental and land management groups can now apply for grants up to \$20,000 to assist in their conservation projects.

The **Community Action Grant Scheme** is funded through the Rudd Government's Caring for Our Country program, and will provide up to 500 grants of between \$5000 and \$20,000 to support smaller, local projects run by groups such as Landcare and Coastcare.

Eligible groups may include:

- Community groups involved in coastal rehabilitation, restoration and conservation

- Groups of farmers or land managers working on sustainable farming or improving natural resource management
- Community groups involved in biodiversity, environmental protection or managing natural resources

A new online application process will be launched for this program, making it easier for groups to apply.

Applications and guidelines will be announced in the next month.

Telstra billing charge no joke

Sid has reminded Coasters to sign his petition against Telstra's proposed new \$2.20 billing fee.

Sid has spoken out strongly against this new charge, both in Federal Parliament and in a letter to CEO David Thodey.

Telstra proposes to charge customers an "administration fee" for each bill payment sent through the mail or made in person at a Telstra Shop or Australia Post.

The company has also announced increases to the existing payment processing fee for credit card payment.

Sid has labelled the proposed charge is not. His office has been inundated by phone calls, letters and emails from angry constituents across Tasmania who are furious and astonished by such a move.

Sid said the proposed charge was difficult for consumers to swallow considering the company paid a total of \$9 million for just 10 months work to its recently departed CEO Sol Trujillo.

Sid has described the move as a "tax on poverty" saying that while some customers may be exempt through concessions, many will fall just over the threshold, but have to cope with this cost if they do not have the option to pay electronically, or over the internet.

Sid will present the petition to the House of Representatives.

YOU CAN SIGN SID'S PETITION AT:

- **Sid Sidebottom's Burnie office: Shop 2/32 Wilmot St.**
- **Senator Nick Sherry's Devonport office: 69a Best St**
- **Latrobe Newsagency: 90 Gilbert St**
- **Devonport Mall Newsagency: Rooke St Mall**
- **East Devonport Newsagency: 71 Wright St.**
- **Upper Burnie Newsagency: 201 Mount St**
- **Somerset Festival IGA: 53 Wragg Street**
- **Wynyard Newsagency: 96 Goldie St**
- **Wivenhoe Newsagency: 22 Main Rd**
- **Smithton Newsagency: 49 Emmett St**
- **Forth General Store: Forth Rd**

Do Not Call Register

Remember you can log your home or mobile phone number on the Do Not Call register to opt out of receiving certain telemarketing calls.

If a telemarketer calls a number on the Do Not Call Register they may be in breach of the Act, and may face penalties.

To register, visit <https://www.donot-call.gov.au> or phone 1300 792 958.

5 simple tips to ensure your internet is secure

- 1) **Update your password** to make it stronger – include capital letters and numbers and change it at least twice a year
- 2) **Get security software**, and update and patch it regularly
- 3) **Stop and think** before you click on links or attachments from unknown sources. When in doubt - DON'T!
- 4) **Information is valuable**. Be careful what you give away about yourself to others online
- 5) Log onto www.staysmartonline.gov.au for more information and to sign up for the Federal Government's email alert service



Smithton leads broadband rollout

Smithton will lead the nation onto the information superhighway as the first location to be connected to the new superfast National Broadband Network.

Sid said it was exciting to hear that Smithton, in the western end of Braddon, would be one of three start up locations for the network, as announced by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in late July.

Once established in Smithton the superfast broadband network will be expanded along the Coast and across Tasmania.

The first stage of the rollout has already begun. Aurora has conducted an open competitive tender for fibre optic cable, and further tenders will be conducted in coming weeks.

Physical work on the NBN will begin shortly :

- digging new trenches will begin in October



Smithton was recently announced by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd as one of the first start up locations for the National Broadband Network.

- Connection to the first homes will begin before the end of the year; and
- the objective is for new services to be switched on come July next year.

Burnie Call Centre Jobs Secured

Some 250 jobs at Burnie's Excelior call centre were secured in August, after the company was approved as a successful tenderer of Sensis'Voice business support services.

Sid wrote to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, senior Ministers and Telstra to emphasise Excelior's services and value to the Burnie community, and suggested they be considered for other Government work.

Sid has also congratulated Excelior's employees on their reputation as a high-skilled, dynamic workforce.

"I'd like to personally thank you for your assistance in securing more than 200 jobs at Excelior in Burnie for at least the next three years."

Excelior Chief Executive John Watkinson, August 27, 2009

Excelior chief executive John Watkinson wrote to Sid last month to thank him for his support during a difficult few months.

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