Dear Friends,

Welcome to my June 2017 Budget Newsletter. Like many in our community, I welcomed the great news for our Upper Hunter electorate that came from the Coalition Government’s 2017-18 Budget. I am proud to be a Member of the Government which provides investment for essential services including health, education, family and community services, as well as vital infrastructure for our roads and road networks.

The last six months have been months of hard work, as I advocated for better resources and delivered outcomes for our electorate as a whole. Some of those outcomes were announced over those last six months, whilst others arrived in this Budget, and I am proud to share those funding benefits with you now.

As I have said before, it is important that the voice of the Upper Hunter is being heard, which is why, once again in this newsletter, I ask a ‘Tell Me What You Think’ question. I look forward to hearing your responses.

Kind regards,
Michael Johnsen MP
Member for Upper Hunter

Sign up for the newsletter at www.michaeljohnsen.com.au
"Tell Me What You Think"

Your voice is so important. That's why, in each newsletter, I want to explore a big state-wide issue together and hear your thoughts on that issue.

Energy prices are, for some, a real concern, not only in NSW but across Australia. But Australia is of course a nation blessed with huge uranium deposits.

My question to you is:

Would you support the NSW Government creating a nuclear power industry as part of a broad mix of energy sources for NSW if there were appropriate environmental safeguards, and if that industry created inexpensive, reliable energy for our communities?

Email me at: upperhunter@parliament.nsw.gov.au or write to me at: PO Box 493 Muswellbrook NSW 2333

"Upper Hunter electorate parents will be able to claim $100 per child for sport participation with the introduction of the Active Kid Rebate from next year. The rebate won't be means-tested, so parents of all school-aged children will be eligible for the reimbursement per year."
The NSW Budget 2017-18 shows our state is expected to record a surplus of $4.5 billion in 2016-17. There is also a forecasted surplus of $2.7 billion for 2017-18 and forecasted surpluses of $2 billion on average over the four years to 2020-21. This is great news for the Upper Hunter, giving us a sturdy foundation for continuing to invest in our local communities.

Overleaf is an overview of the 2017-18 Upper Hunter Electorate Budget and funding highlights for projects across our region. Over the next fiscal year, we will invest in building, maintaining and improving local infrastructure like hospitals, housing, roads and public transport. By using funding wisely and strategically, we can ensure the Upper Hunter continues to be a flourishing place for people to live and work.

For more information about the NSW Budget 2017-18 and continued improvements to building and service infrastructure across the Upper Hunter region, please visit: myinfrastructure.planning.nsw.gov.au
$96 million to continue improving and maintaining our local roads, including upgrading pavement, intersections and overtaking lanes on the Golden Highway and New England Highway, commencing construction of the New England Highway Bypass of Scone, and planning construction for the New England Highway Singleton bypass and Muswellbrook bypass.

to continue maintaining and improving our bridges, including upgrading the bridge over Glennies Creek on Middle Falbrook Road and planning for the upgrade of the Clarence Town Bridge over Williams River on Limeburners Creek Road, among others.

$250,000 to continue improving fire and rescue infrastructure in Murrurundi

$100 per child yearly reimbursement for parents whose children participate in sporting activities (note: the Active Kid Rebate will not be means-tested)

$432,000 to continue upgrading the Dungog Wastewater Treatment Works

$17.2 million to continue upgrading Muswellbrook and Singleton hospitals

$7.8 million to support social housing in Hillsdale, Singleton and elsewhere

$6 million + to continue improving and maintaining our local rail and bus services, and to provide more accessible transportation services for the elderly, people with disabilities and their carers, and those disadvantaged by physical, geographical or social factors

$3.8 million + to improve and create new highway rest areas, including along the Golden Highway at Denman and Warkworth, and a heavy vehicle rest area at Willy Wally Road

These funding projects and more will take place over the coming fiscal year across the Upper Hunter region, helping our local communities continue to thrive. We look forward to keeping you informed as the projects unfold.
In Other News

**Fire and Rescue NSW Graduates**
We recently celebrated our Community First Responder graduates from the Fire and Rescue NSW. These people are first to an accident and provide life-saving assistance until paramedics arrive. Thank you for all that you do to look after our community.

**Lobbying for Muswellbrook and Singleton Bypass Funding**
There are many things on my agenda for which we need to lobby further. This includes lobbying the federal government to include its share of the Muswellbrook and Singleton bypasses in the next round of national roads funding which starts 1 July 2019.

**Our Beautiful Old Bridges**
With so many waterways, roads and people relying on local bridges for transport, it is critical that we invest in their repair and maintenance. We are pleased to announce that maintenance work has restarted on the Brig O’Johnston bridge at Clarence Town. The NSW Government is funding this essential maintenance work on the historic bridge.

**Our Young Local Talent**
A young artist and talented comedian from Singleton, Ethan Andrews, has been awarded a $10,000 scholarship under a major NSW Government initiative to develop emerging artistic talent in the Upper Hunter.

**New TAFE Facility for Quirindi**
The new Connected Learning Centre will provide our students with access to a greater range of learning and course options. It will also provide hands-on training to local businesses and a versatile space for community-run events. The new campus remains at the heart of our local region.

**Singleton Regional Livestock Market Upgrade**
Businesses in the Upper Hunter electorate are preparing for a major economic boost with construction commencing on the Singleton Regional Livestock Market upgrade.

**Merriwa - Willow Tree Road Funding**
An investment of $5.57 million will see the complete sealing of the Merriwa-Willow Tree Road. This is a great example of how NSW Nationals are delivering great improvements to the Upper Hunter.

**Stage Two of the Muswellbrook Hospital Redevelopment**
The Nationals are committed to delivering the best healthcare and healthcare facilities to rural and regional Australia. I recently joined Sharon Eriksson, acting health service manager of Muswellbrook Hospital, to publicly present the artist’s impressions for the $21.5 million Muswellbrook Hospital stage two redevelopment.

Funded by the Restart NSW Resources for Regions Program, stage two redevelopments will deliver a range of health service improvements, including:

- Larger treatment spaces and additional treatment chairs for renal dialysis and chemotherapy
- Improved spaces for medical imaging and pathology collection
- Refurbished outpatient areas
- Oral health facilities
- An enhanced space for patients attending Muswellbrook hospital for day surgery
- Improvements to the main entry, reception and admission areas
Since 2011, the Nationals have commenced or delivered $1 billion worth of projects for our local Upper Hunter electorate roads. As a Member of the NSW Government, I am proud of what we have been able to achieve for the Upper Hunter as a Coalition Government, both before and now during my time as your local Member.
I am a great supporter of our local Cancer Council Offices and the great work they do throughout our electorate. I strongly believe that when a member of our family or community is diagnosed with an advanced or terminal illness, they deserve the best possible palliative care our community can offer.

Are you living with an advanced or terminal cancer? Do you have a loved one who has experienced advanced or terminal cancer, or accessed palliative care, in the last five years?

If so, please call Cancer Council NSW on 13 11 20 from 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday (8am - 6pm on Thursdays) during April. All calls are confidential and will be answered by a qualified health professional.

If you are online, then you can email info.hunter@nswcc.org.au, or visit their Hunter Region Facebook Page using @CCNSWHunter.

The frontline health staff of the Upper Hunter electorate will be eligible for training in palliative care following an investment of $100 million over four years. The record funding package for palliative care services is a state Budget initiative.

This Budget measure means that our health staff can upskill their training in palliative care, as well as pay for additional specialist nurses and doctors to be recruited. We want the community to have confidence and choice in their end-of-life care and this step is a huge help towards that outcome.

The announcement follows a series of nine palliative care roundtables held across NSW in recent weeks, during which healthcare workers, service providers, family members of people who experienced palliative care and health administrators discussed ways to improve the delivery of end-of-life care.

I have listened to the views of communities within our electorate. We know that the need is to expand our palliative care resources and choices at a local level. We are asking nurses and other allied health staff to apply for scholarships and for training. This is a win for the professional development of our local healthcare workers and for our communities.

The 2017-18 NSW Budget includes palliative care training for 300 nurses and allied health staff, 300 scholarships for rural and regional staff to upgrade their palliative care skills, an additional eight palliative care specialists for rural and regional areas and an additional 30 palliative care nurses providing care in hospitals, homes and nursing homes.

Upper Hunter Electorate to Benefit from Record $100 Million Boost to Palliative Care