



Occasional Child Care Funding

I am pleased to see that Royalties for Regions has once again stepped up to the plate to ensure childcare centres in regional WA remain open.

A number of occasional childcare centres faced the threat of closure as they did not qualify for the Federal funding.

Royalties for Regions will continue to fund 21 occasional childcare centres until the end of December 2012, to ensure regional communities do not have to go without this vital service.

I have recently highlighted this issue to the Federal Minister for Childcare, Kate Ellis, and she has agreed to

travel to WA and visit some of the centres in the electorate.

This is a great outcome, and I will continue to work with both the State and Federal Government to address issues such as this.



Digital Television Changeover

In 2013, Western Australia will make the switchover from analogue to digital television. Some areas have already started converting to digital and the satellite service will be available in the first half of this year.

The current analogue network will remain in place until the end of 2013.

The new digital TV network will provide access to more channels including high definition channels.

If you require more information about the digital television changeover, visit www.digitalready.gov.au or collect a brochure by visiting or calling my electorate offices in Kalgoorlie or Albany.

Youth Allowance Reform Promised

In a move that will bring benefits to many regional families, the Government has recently agreed to undertake an official Review into the Youth Allowance system.

This is a big first step towards reforming the Youth Allowance criteria to make a fairer and more accessible system for regional Australians.

I have received much feedback from regional families on this issue, and I look forward to making a submission into the Youth Allowance Review on behalf of the electorate of O'Connor later this year.

Any changes highlighted by the review are expected to be implemented by January 1, 2012.

There have been several endeavours to bring the implementation date forward to July 1 of this year without success, which is disappointing for those that miss out. If you have an issue that you would like to raise regarding Youth Allowance, please contact my electorate office and let me know about your concerns.

Coming Electorate Events

Cranbrook Show – 2 April

Kalgoorlie Boulder Community Fair – 8-9 April

Williams Gateway Expo – 9 April

Season Break Event – April 9-10, Kellerberrin

Narrogin Cup – 10 April

Albany Cup – 24 April

Nullarbor Muster – 29 April-1 May, Rawlina

Please visit my community calendar at

www.tonymcrook.com.au for more information

Electorate Office Details

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From Tony's Desk

Welcome to my second newsletter and the first for 2011. The year is off again to a busy start and the first Parliamentary sittings kicked off in early February.

My first "mobile electorate office" visits throughout the region were warmly received and I have just enjoyed a series of visits to Brookton, Narrogin and Wagin.

Flyers are sent out ahead of the mobile electorate office visits to advise venues and times, so keep

an eye out through the year for those updates. The mobile visits allow you the chance to come and speak to me in person about any constituent issues.

We are now approaching the Easter holiday, which this year is an extended break, due to Anzac Day falling immediately afterwards. I wish all of you a very happy and safe Easter.

Milk Price Wars Damaging Dairy Industry



On January 26, Coles made the decision to dramatically reduce the price of their home-brand milk, and other major supermarket chains were forced to also lower their prices to remain competitive.

While consumers may be benefiting from the low cost of milk, our local dairy industry is suffering greatly because of this move.

Many dairies were already doing it tough after the drought, and this move has seen some farms selling off stock and laying off workers to remain in the market.

I have recently made a submission to the Senate Economics Committee regarding the issue, and I look forward to reading the findings of the Committee when they report in April.

Bunbury to Albany Gas Pipeline on the cards

I am very pleased to see the State Government and Royalties for Regions getting to work on the Bunbury to Albany Gas Pipeline project.

This project will benefit the Great Southern Region immensely, and has been an election commitment from myself and The Nationals WA in previous years.

The Bunbury to Albany Gas Pipeline will create a more reliable power grid in the Great Southern and will lead to more diverse business opportunities.

Royalties for Regions has allocated \$20 million towards planning and securing the pipeline corridor.



Out and about in the community



Tony Crook meets with Craig Dew from the North Albany Football Club to discuss plans to upgrade Collingwood Park.



Tony Crook meets with Albany Primary School Dux 2010 Josh Altschwager and Principal John Goetze at the Albany Primary Graduation Ceremony.



Tony Crook presented Dylan Smallwood and Maggie Berente With the Sports Award at the Little Grove Primary School Graduation Ceremony.



Tony Crook visited the Albany Port Authority where he met with CEO Brad Williamson.



Tony Crook catches up with Jo Webb and Jayne Simpson from Great Southern Aboriginal Health.

Flood levy

My decision to vote in favour of the levy in the House of Representatives was only made after I negotiated a good outcome for Western Australians.

This includes guaranteeing exemption for disaster-affected residents from fire, flood and storm in WA from paying the levy; providing Disaster Relief Payments for residents of the Gascoyne, (even though this is not part of my electorate); and receiving guarantees that there are no plans for WA infrastructure funding to be cut or deferred.

Closer to home assistance is being provided to the local government area's of Laverton, Leonora, Menzies, Ngaanyatjaraku, Nungarin, Brookton, Pingelly, Cuballing, Narrogin, Quairading, Wandering through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) which is a

joint initiative between the State and the Commonwealth.

Whilst I realise that the thought of "a new tax" wasn't appealing to some, we need to remember that this is Australia's largest natural disaster in economic terms and it is beholden upon us to ensure we act swiftly.

I'd certainly like to think that if a natural disaster happened to a regional centre in WA, or to Perth, that the rest of Australia would come to our aid



Photos courtesy Alex Malloch, Plantation Caravan Park.



Tony's Office Opening in Albany



Above: Friends and supporters of Tony Crook attended the official opening of Tony's Albany Electorate office: Cameron Taylor with Bev and Paul Mulvihill



Above: Tony Crook took time out to catch up with Albany residents Brett and Leanne Turpin at the Albany office opening.



Right: Harry Hodgson and Catena and Ian Skalko enjoyed catching up for a friendly drink at the official opening of Tony Crook's Albany office.

Heywire winner

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Kalgoorlie-Boulder winner of this year's ABC Heywire competition during the February sitting of Parliament.

Heywire is a national competition held by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that gives young people living outside of major cities an opportunity to tell their stories about life in rural and regional Australia. Young people aged from 16 to 22 are invited to submit their stories online in either text, video or audio format, about life in Australia outside the major cities.

The winners came to Canberra for the Heywire Youth Issues Forum, where they joined leadership and community building activities and networked with Members of Parliament, government and community leaders.

In her Heywire entry, Samantha focused on landcare and climate

issues and how her eyes had been opened since she became passionate about protecting the environment. She related her experiences of being a regional Australian at an international climate change conference and also described Kalgoorlie-Boulder as "a friendly town" where mateship is a great weapon against global warming.

Between school and weekend work as metallurgical lab assistant, Samantha also finds time to be the city's Youth Mayor and is a very active member of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Urban Landcare Group. Samantha was really enthusiastic about visiting Parliament and particularly enjoyed the chance to observe Question Time.

