

Minister's flying visit



Guyra CWA President Bev Moore, Federal Minister for Agriculture Tony Burke, Member for New England Tony Windsor and Northern Tablelands Group CWA President Iris Willoughby-Reynolds

Federal Agriculture Minister Tony Burke was in Guyra last Friday where he had morning tea with local Country Women's Association (CWA) members, visited the Tomato Farm and finished with lunch at the Lamb and Potato Festival.

Each January he undertakes a substantial road trip and Guyra was

part of this year's eight day tour of Southern Queensland and Northern NSW. He was accompanied by Member for New England Tony Windsor.

"In order to elevate rural issues in cabinet I try to spend as much time in the bush as I can keep up to date with issues that arise," he said.

"Groups such as the CWA and the

Isolated Childrens & Parents Association (ICPA) are really valuable sources of information – much better than any newspaper."

Mr Burke enjoyed morning tea at the CWA with local and visiting members from within the Northern Tablelands group and thanked those present for all the work you do 'officially and unofficially.'

A visit to the Blush tomato glasshouse saw Mr Burke 'blown away' by what he saw. "To have a state of the art facility like this in Guyra is impressive," he said.

"The science behind it, right through to the incredible quality of the tomatoes, which actually taste like tomatoes, is a credit to the whole community."

Tony Windsor took the opportunity to push the case for a trial of bumblebees in the glasshouses.

"I wanted the Minister to have a look at the tomato exchange to see what is going on and to highlight the need for a trial of the bumble bee to assist with pollination," he said.

Glasshouse Manager Godfrey Dol said that it would increase the yield by 10 to 15 per cent and improve quality. Work has taken place to allay fears that bumble bees could take over from the native honey bee and the visit gave him an opportunity to convince the Minister to reopen the door for their

introduction.

Mr Burke said that he would not be making any policy decisions on the tour, but welcomed the opportunity to hear concerns.

Despite a tight schedule, he met with local councillors at the Lamb

and Potato Festival where he toured the site and inspected the recently completed toilet complex, took a look around before enjoying a lunch of lamb and potatoes.



Guyra Mayor Hans Hietbrink, Tony Burke and Tony Windsor at the Lamb and Potato Festival

Local councils under review - again

Minister for Local Government Barbara Perry, has appointed Gabrielle Kibble AO to conduct an independent review of local government services in the New England area.

The review will look at the way local services are currently provided by Armidale-Dumaresq, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha Councils and ways in which these services can be improved.

Mrs Kibble's review follows last year's breakdown of the New England Strategic Alliance (NESAC) and will consider whether current service arrangements are appropriate to meet the needs of the local community.

Residents and ratepayers will have the opportunity to participate in the review via public forums as well as an open submission process.

"Extensive discussions with community groups, councils, individuals and government agencies will be undertaken as part of the review process," Ms Perry said.

"Community input is important. We all have an interest in maximising the efficient delivery

of local government services in this vital rural area and in minimizing costs to residents and ratepayers."

Mrs Kibble has broad experience in the public sector, particularly in infrastructure development and urban planning.

She has previously held the role of Director General of the Department of Housing and was CEO of the former Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.

More recently she has been an administrator of Wollongong Council.

Guyra Shire Mayor Hans Hietbrink has welcomed the notification of the review. "We look forward to the outcomes from the review, he said. "We have proposed robust reform that will deliver efficiencies and effective decision making and are confident that the facilitator, Mrs Gabrielle Kibble, will recognise the advantages of a single executive structure."

Member for Northern Tablelands Richard Torbay said he was not surprised the govern-

ment had called for a review.

The collapse of NESAC had been costly to rate-payers through the wind-back of the shared services model, he said.

"The model has not delivered the outcomes that were promised when the Alliance was established and constant infighting between the Councils has hindered the progress of the Alliance," he said.

"The Kibble Review will give members of the communities involved in the four local government areas an opportunity to express their views on the best way to take the region forward.

The published review (January 2010) was critical of some Councils' decision to withdraw from the alliance and has recommended strong reform in reducing duplicated administration and management. It proposes under the terms of reference that the review:-

- 1.Examine the current arrangements for local government in the following local government areas: Armidale Dumaresq; Guyra; Uralla;

Walcha.

- 2.Consider whether the current arrangements in these local government areas represent the most effective and efficient way of delivering local government services to the community.
3. Identify and consider opportunities for local government to better serve the community in these areas.
- 4.Report to the Minister for Local Government on these matters by 31 May 2010.

Guyra General Manager David Cushway believes that Guyra's proposal for the single executive structure with Armidale Dumaresq will address these issues.

•Council encourages all residents and ratepayers to have a say in their future by accessing the review web page at www.dlg.nsw.gov.au/nesacreview/index.asp or through written submissions to; The Facilitator, New England Regional Review, Locked Bag A5045, South Sydney 1235.

Butcher shop changes hands

Greg and Lorraine Brazier have taken over the business of McLeod's butchery and from Wednesday of this week commenced trading as North End Butchery. They are looking forward to servicing both the business and private customers that have been regulars with former owner Scott McLeod.

"It has been a busy time over Christmas and with the Lamb and Potato Festival and we are looking forward to a quieter period over the next six month to settle in," said Greg.

No major changes are planned at this stage and Greg, along with employee Ben Vidler, hopes to continue the tradition of friendly service that Scott has provided to the local community.

New owners Lorraine, Tori and Greg Brazier with Scott McLeod and Ben Vidler



New Principals Conference

Guyra Central school's new principal Joanne Burgess yesterday began her first full year as principal after starting at the school late last year.

Ms Burgess joined other Principals from across the state, including Thalgarrah Environmental Education Centre principal Matthew McKenzie and Yetman Public School's Charna Wood, in attending an induction course and conference for new principals held in Sydney on January 19.

The conference covered issues such as, ways to improve students results, ways to improve the quality of teaching, student and staff management, physical and financial management, school and community partnerships, school planning, performance, reporting and accountability and customer service.

Apology

In last week's Honour Roll of Guyra Citizens of the Year the entry for 1995 Cynthia Williams should have read Cynthia Williams OAM. We apologise for the omission.