



Welcome to the October issue of the *Cunningham Examiner*:

Its purpose is to keep you updated on issues affecting our local community. I want to hear from you too. If you want to promote a community event or just make a comment, my contact details are:

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Previous editions of the *Cunningham Examiner* can be found on Sharon's website.

Thank you – we've won the MRI licence!

A FIVE-YEAR CAMPAIGN BY SHARON BIRD



*Peter Edwards and Sharon Bird with MRI petition. 18,000 signatures on petitions were vital to the success of the campaign.
INSET: Sharon Bird and Julia Gillard with some of the petitions.*



A five-year campaign by Sharon Bird and community members has been successful, with Wollongong Hospital to receive an MRI licence.

"I am very happy that our long campaign with strong community support has finally broken through and convinced the Howard Government to allocate an MRI licence to Wollongong Hospital," Sharon Bird MP said.

"We've been calling on the Howard Government to allocate the licence since October 2002," she added.

The allocation of an MRI licence to Wollongong Hospital has been Federal Labor policy for the last five years. The Howard Government has finally matched Federal Labor policy.

About 18,000 Wollongong residents signed petitions lending their support to the campaign, which also included speeches in Parliament, information stalls and letter writing.

The MRI licence means that concession card holders, pensioners and children in Wollongong will no longer need to fund out-of-pocket costs when they use the life-saving technology.

This important new medical service would not have been achieved without the hard work and commitment of many local people who supported Sharon Bird's campaign.



Kevin Rudd & Sharon Bird New Leadership

Authorised by Sharon Bird MP, Shop 501, Globe Lane, Wollongong

Federal Labor to brush up dental care

Federal Labor has announced that it will fund up to one million additional dental consultations for Australians needing dental treatment by establishing a Commonwealth Dental Health Program.

“This is a \$290 million plan to improve dental care by re-establishing the Commonwealth Dental Health Program which was scrapped by the Howard Government in 1996,” Sharon Bird MP said. “This is the first instalment of Labor’s Commonwealth Dental Health Program,” she added.

The program comes as a breath of fresh air to the 650,000 Australians on public dental waiting lists and was welcomed by local dental health campaigners and pensioner groups.

Over the past 11 years the Howard Government has withdrawn \$1.1 billion in dental services.

Under a Rudd Labor government, over three years up to one million Australians will finally receive much needed dental treatment.

Federal Labor will fund this program by re-directing funding from the Howard Government’s non-performing dental services program.

AUSTRALIA’S DENTAL HEALTH IS GETTING WORSE

- Tooth decay ranks as Australia’s most prevalent health problem.
- 25.5% of the Australian adult population has untreated dental decay.
- One in six Australians aged over 15 have avoided certain foods because of problems with their teeth during the last 12 months.
- 50,000 Australians a year are hospitalised for preventable dental conditions.
- Between 1996 and 1999 five year olds experienced a 21.7% increase in deciduous (falling out) tooth decay.



Honouring our service personnel



(L to R) Major Brett Cooper with medal recipients Robert Arnold Bydder, Denis Bramwell Jackson, Raymond Robert Morgan, Garnet Trevous Nightingale, Hilton Leonard King, Marion Judith Beard, Ross Hulse Edmondson and Sharon Bird MP.

SHORT SPEECH BY MR GARNET TREVIOUS ‘GT’ NIGHTINGALE AT MEDAL PRESENTATION

I accept this medal in honour and appreciation of my fellow defence personnel many of which paid the ultimate sacrifice and became superheroes.

Many returned to suffering, still willing to strive for a better way of life in our country. Lord may age not weary them, nor the years condemn, God bless.

Appreciation for our armed services personnel was on display at a recent medal presentation in Wollongong.

Seven former armed service personnel received the Australian Defence Medal (ADM) from local MP Sharon Bird and Major Brett Cooper.

The presentation at the City Diggers Club

in Wollongong also heard a moving speech penned by a Wollongong local Mr Garnet “GT” Nightingale (see box on this page).

The moving tribute was well received by the recipients and their families.

Speaking after the function, Sharon Bird MP praised our service personnel. “Their sacrifice and their willingness to serve in the armed

forces to protect our Australian way of life is a shining example.”

The ADM was been established to recognise Australian Defence Force Regular and Reserve personnel who have demonstrated their commitment and contribution to the nation by serving for an initial enlistment period or four years service, whichever is the lesser.

Don’t risk a fine, make sure you are correctly enrolled to vote

If you are eligible to vote, under the Commonwealth Electoral Act, and you are not enrolled correctly at your current address you may be fined up to \$110.

For more information call 1300 135 736 or visit the website - www.aec.gov.au

Hockey to Wollongong unemployed: 'You're just lazy'

Wollongong's unemployed are being blamed for not having a job by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Joe Hockey.

Mr Hockey – who has a holiday house at Stanwell Park – told The Australian that "...there were areas near beaches with stubbornly high levels of unemployment..." and a "...tendency for unemployment to be higher in warm weather coastal seats [including] Wollongong."

Local MP Sharon Bird responded to Mr Hockey's comments with disbelief and anger. "I find it incredible that the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations has now decided to blame the unemployed in Wollongong for not having a job," she said.

"His comments are an insult to Telstra workers who have been made redundant, BlueScope Steel workers who have been made redundant, and mothers with children who are actively looking for work."

The August unemployment rate for Wollongong has increased to 7% from 4.9% in July following ABS data released last week whilst teenage full-time unemployment remains stuck at 44.5% in June and July – the highest unemployment rate in a decade.



Illawarra Mercury 14/9/07

Local Church helping kids



Sharon Bird MP meeting members of the Gateway Church.

Local young people have been benefiting from a youth program run by the Gateway Church in Wollongong.

Local MP Sharon Bird praised the Church's efforts to build a sense of community amongst young Wollongong residents. "Building our kids' self esteem and giving

them space to grow and express themselves makes for better adults," she said, following a visit to the Church recently.

The Gateway Church currently runs a series of youth services and is keen to expand its support of our young people. To contact the Gateway Church please call 4226 4466.

Historic Bulli Painting Commissioned

Sharon Bird MP congratulated Illawarra coal company Gujarat NRE for funding an historic painting of the Bulli Coal Jetty by local artist, Michael Nay.

Mihir Dave, Gujarat NRE company secretary, was on hand for the well-received announcement, along with Don Gray from the Thirroul Village Committee.

"I'm delighted by the Gujarat NRE offer to fund the artwork given the former Bellambi West Colliery's historic association with Bulli Coal Jetty," said Sharon Bird MP.

Gujarat NRE will contribute \$1200 to commission the painting of the Bulli Coal Jetty in partnership with the Thirroul Village Committee.

The village committee also received small contributions from the Rotary Club of Bulli and from Peabody Helensburg Coal.



Thirroul Village Committee's Don Gray, Sharon Bird MP, Paul Tuckerman from the Thirroul Railway Institute Preservation Society and Gujarat NRE company secretary Mihir Dave with a photograph of Bulli.

Authorised by Sharon Bird MP, Shop 501, Globe Lane, Wollongong

Labor tackles childhood obesity

FEDERAL LABOR IS SERIOUS ABOUT TACKLING CHILDHOOD OBESITY.

The Kitchen Garden Program is a fun and engaging way to give children hands-on experience with healthy eating, and to help them form life long healthy eating habits.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program was established at Collingwood College in Melbourne in 2001 with funding from donations and philanthropic organisations.

Children spend one period per week in the garden growing and tending vegetables and learning about water conservation and environmental sustainability. A further two periods are spent preparing and eating the produce the kids have grown.

Federal Labor's plan will provide 190 schools across Australia up to \$60,000 to establish kitchen and garden facilities. Schools will be supported in running the program by the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation.

Federal Labor supports the Kitchen Garden Program because:

- One in 4 Australian children are overweight or obese;
- Obesity is a precursor to heart disease, respiratory problems, diabetes, joint and kidney problems and other chronic illnesses;
- Children's fruit and vegetable consumption has decreased over the past 20 years;
- Children's physically active time has also decreased.

The Kitchen Garden Program can help reverse alarming obesity trends by teaching our children about healthy food, from its cultivation in the garden to its production in the kitchen.

Free information kits, factsheets and DVDs

My office provides information kits on many different areas. If you wish to order any of the kits below, please fill out the form below and return to: Sharon Bird MP, PO Box 387, Wollongong 2520.

To order your free copies, please tick the items you want ...

- Child Support Scheme
- You and Your Government
- Guide to Australian Government Payments
- Pensioner Kit
- Veterans Kit
- Environment Kit
- Superannuation Kit
- Families Kit
- Youth Kit
- Do Not Call (Telephone) Kit
- Banking Information
- Water Safety
- Net Alert (CD)
- Goals for Aussie Kids
- Safe Toys for Kids
- Dealing with Separation (CD): Experiences, Tips and Tools



- Keeping Baby Safe
- Cot Safety
- Fire Safety at Home
- Managing Your Money Booklet
- Safe and Secure Kit
- Labor's IR Taskforce Report
- Labor's 5 Point Plan for Small Business
- Join my Email List

Your contact details

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Please mail to: Sharon Bird MP, PO Box 387, Wollongong, NSW 2520.
For more information please phone Sharon's office on 4228 5899.

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