

# The Charlton News



Australian Government

Greg Combet AM MP Federal Member for Charlton

November 2008



## Rudd Government delivers for pensioners and families

**The Federal Member for Charlton, Greg Combet, has welcomed the huge boost delivered by the Rudd Government to seniors, families and first home buyers.**

In December single pensioners will receive a one-off payment of \$1,400 while couples will be paid \$2,100. The payments will provide financial support to pensioners while the Government conducts a review of the adequacy of the pension.

Greg said that people receiving the Carer Allowance will also be paid \$1,000 for each person in their care.

'The payments are a response to pensioners' requests for more financial support,' said Greg, 'but they are also part of the Government's strategy to maintain strong economic growth amidst the international financial crisis.'

'With 23,000 pensioners, disability support pensioners, and people receiving the carer payment in the Federal seat of Charlton, this financial support will help a large group of people in my electorate who are extremely vulnerable to the rising cost of living,' said Greg.

Eligibility for the one-off pension payments will apply to age pensioners, disability support pensioners, carer payment recipients, a range of Veterans Affairs and widow pensioners, and self-funded retirees holding a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

'The Government's decision follows a pensioner's forum I recently convened at the Wallsend Diggers which was attended by the Minister responsible for the pension, Jenny Macklin, and the Treasurer, Wayne Swan,' said Greg.

Jenny Macklin emphasised that the Utilities Allowance has already been increased from \$107 to \$500 a year, and that the \$500 senior's bonus has also been paid this year.

'I am proud to be part of a Labor Government which is committed to delivering a better deal for seniors. Within the Government I will continue to argue for long-term improvements to the pension,' said Greg.

For full details on who is eligible for the payments contact Greg's office on 4958 7111.



Treasurer Wayne Swan, Minister Jenny Macklin and Greg Combet at the pensioner forum.

### Good news for Charlton families

**'Under the Rudd Government's new economic package, 12,000 Charlton families will receive a one-off payment of \$1,000 for each eligible child in their care,' said Greg Combet, Member for Charlton.**

Families who receive Family Tax Benefit (A) and families with dependent children who receive Youth Allowance, Abstudy or a benefit from the Veterans' Children's payment are eligible.

'Lower and middle income working families are the driving force of the Australian economy.'

'It is vital that in times of global financial crisis they have our full support,' said Greg.

Most families will receive their full payment automatically in the fortnight beginning 8 December 2008.

### First home buyers grant doubled & trebled!

**First home buyers in Charlton will receive \$14,000 for purchasing an existing home and \$21,000 for purchasing a newly built dwelling.**

# Walk to Beijing

**Greg Combet joined Morisset Primary School students on their “Walk to Beijing” during the Olympics.**

They donned their pedometers and jumped, ran, hopped and skipped a theoretical journey to China’s capital.

‘This was a good opportunity for children to get active and get into the spirit of the Olympic Games,’ said Greg.

Morisset Primary School reported that the “Walk to Beijing” initiative was a great success with the students having fun and being healthy.

Hundreds of children from Lake Macquarie took part in the “Walk to Beijing” – part of the Australian Government’s Active After School Communities program.



Greg enjoying the “Walk to Beijing” at Morisset Primary School.

# Local schools get healthy



Greg at Rathmines Public School with Principal Nick Walker.

**Rathmines Public School will receive \$108,000 from the Rudd Government to promote healthy activities in their school.**

‘The school is very excited to receive this funding and it will go towards building an activities circuit and employ a part-time physical education teacher,’ said Principal Nick Walker.

Other local schools to benefit from the Healthy Active Australia Community and School Grants Program include:

Blackalls Park Public School	<b>\$57,315</b>
Toronto High School	<b>\$90,000</b>

‘Our children deserve the best start and these programs will foster a healthy lifestyle,’ said Greg Combet.

## Education Tax Refund

**Parents want to give their children the best possible education.**

That’s why the Rudd Government is providing help for working families to meet education costs by introducing the Education Tax Refund.

Eligible families will be able to claim education expenses up to:

- \$750 for each child in primary school (maximum refund of \$375 per child); and
- \$1500 for each child in secondary school (maximum refund of \$750 per child).

Parents need to keep receipts for educational expenses and can then claim 50% of these expenses through their tax return at the end of the financial year.

Eligible expenses for the Education Tax Refund include:

- laptops
- home computers and associated costs
- home internet connections
- printers
- education software
- trade tools for use at school
- school text books
- stationery.

## GP Super Clinic a step closer

**Greg Combet is working to ensure the local GP Super Clinic is up and running as soon as possible.**

Funding applications for the development of the Charlton GP Super Clinic opened on 19 September 2008.

This is another step towards providing the south-western side of Lake Macquarie with appropriate and accessible health care. The \$2.5 million GP Super Clinic should help

encourage locally trained GPs to stay and work in the area.

The precise location of the Clinic will be determined by the successful applicant organisation.

All applications will be scrutinised to ensure they can deliver accessible care to residents.

The successful applicant will be announced in November. After that the real work to establish the Clinic will start.

## Australian Hearing Centre in Toronto

**Greg Combet and Joe Ludwig, Minister for Human Services, opened the new Australian Hearing Centre at 65 The Boulevard, Toronto.**

The Toronto centre provides free and subsidised hearing services to a variety of people, including aged pensioners, veterans and Australians under 21.



Greg with Janet Ahrens at the Australian Hearing Centre.

## Black spot funding for local roads

**The Rudd Government is spending a further \$330,000 to fix three dangerous black spots on local roads. The three projects in Charlton are:**

- \$170,000 to make a number of improvements to the roundabout on the Newcastle Link Road and Cameron Park Drive intersection in Cameron Park;
- \$100,000 to install a concrete median strip on Excelsior Parade to prevent right turns out of Jindalee Street in Toronto; and

- \$60,000 for works on Cary Street to prevent through/right movements out of James and Donnelly streets and right turns into Donnelly Street in Toronto.

The Rudd Government is serious about reducing crashes on local roads. Accidents take a huge toll on families, communities and the economy.

Work is expected to begin on these three projects in the near future.

## Bill Turner Cup celebrates 30 years

**The final of the 30th Bill Turner Cup for boys and the 18th Bill Turner Trophy for girls were played on Wednesday 10 September at Jack McLaughlin Field, Edgeworth.**

Among the enthusiastic crowd was Patron of Northern NSW Football, Greg Combet.

'The Bill Turner Cup has gone from strength to strength over the past 30 years. The quality of football is of the highest standard. I congratulate the organisers, Northern NSW Football and of course, Bill Turner. This is a first class event,' Greg said.

Illawarra Sports High won the Bill Turner Cup, after a well-deserved 1-0 win over Westfields Sports High.

Westfields Sports High won the Bill Turner Trophy. They beat reigning champions, Hunter Sports High, 2-1 – a result that did not truly reflect the flow of the game.



Greg presents a trophy to runners up captain Hannah Brewer of the Hunter Sports High Team.

# Boost for our local Veterans

**Recent Federal Government grants will provide a boost to several local Veterans' groups.**

- **Rathmines Catalina Memorial Park Trust** has received \$4,000 from the Saluting Their Service commemorations program. The Trust will extend the monument and memorial walls at Rathmines Park RAAF base to display wartime memorabilia.
- **Sugarloaf & Districts Action Group Inc and Holmesville Progress Association** will receive \$4,000 to update the West Wallsend War Memorial. Over 290 servicemen and women's names will be added.
- **Toronto RSL Sub-branch** received \$6,627 to purchase equipment to produce a quarterly member newsletter.

Local organisations also benefited from the Building Excellence in Support and Training program:



Greg receives recognition of his ongoing support for the Catalina Trust from Don Lowe.

- **Toronto RSL Sub-branch:** \$10,045
- **Newcastle and Hunter Region Vietnam Veterans:** \$7,926
- **Wallsend RSL Sub-branch:** \$710
- **Boolaroo-Speers Point RSL Sub-branch:** \$3,874.

For more information on these grants please contact Greg Combet's office on 4958 7111.

## Schools go solar & save water

**Local schools can now apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to install water and energy efficient appliances such as solar panels, rainwater tanks, insulation and awnings.**

It's all part of the Government's \$480 million National Solar Schools Program to help Australian schools become solar schools.

'I would encourage all schools in Charlton to consider applying for these grants, look at what might work best for their circumstances and take advantage of the opportunities available through the program,' said Greg.

More information about the program, including funding guidelines, is available from Greg Combet's office on 4958 7111.

# Youth Forum asks – Is the Australian Defence Force a responsible citizen?



Greg at the Defence 2020 Youth Challenge Forum which aimed to demystify the workings of the Services.

**Greg Combet praised the work of around 80 senior secondary school students who attended the Defence 2020 Youth Challenge Forum at Newcastle University.**

Greg was the special guest of the event, which asked students to deliberate on the question, 'Is the Australian Defence Force a responsible citizen?'

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