

# PAT CONAGHAN MP

## THE NATIONALS' FEDERAL MEMBER FOR COWPER



WIN A **\$100 FUEL VOUCHER!**

Complete and return my survey on Page 5 for your chance to win one of five \$100 fuel vouchers.



**SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIANS:** Federal MP Pat Conaghan, Port Macquarie RSL sub-Branch president Greg Laird OAM and Veteran's Affairs Minister Darren Chester.

## Port Sub-Branch President calls it a day

Port Macquarie's Greg Laird OAM is considered the heart and soul of Anzac Day services in the Port Macquarie-Hastings and a champion for veterans' welfare.

He has served as president of the Port Macquarie RSL sub-Branch for nearly 20 years and this year's Anzac Day services are destined to be his final act in the role.

When the Vietnam Veteran reflects on his own service and his work with the sub-Branch, he says his proudest memories will be of increased attendance numbers at Anzac Day and other services along with helping newcomers to the returned service's ranks.

He can remember the days when public interest in even acknowledging Anzac Day was waning.

"But now, with the wonderful support of all our local school

students, teachers and the wider public, Anzac Day crowds have been steadily rising over the last 10 to 15 years," he said.

"Attending Anzac Day or any other service is not a glorification of war but a reflection, an acknowledgement, of courage, of mateship and, for some, of the eternal sacrifice.

"It's part of the very spirit of who we are as Australians.

"I'm proud that I was part of the revitalisation of Anzac Day as a tradition, particularly here in Port Macquarie.

"Our focus on youth as guest speakers has brought a really modern look through their young eyes of what Anzac Day means to them. I love their perceptions and their efforts in bringing family stories to life through their speeches."

Greg's family has long links to service with both his maternal

and paternal grandfathers – and his father – all serving in different conflicts.

In 1969, Greg was called to serve Australia in the Vietnam War, spending nearly 12 months in Vietnam. He says he was "roped into" the Port Macquarie branch after arriving in town in 2003.

During his tenure as president of the Port Macquarie sub-Branch, Greg has seen membership climb to close to 450 members which includes a number of long-serving World War II veterans.

He says the camaraderie shared between veterans of all conflicts is something to be cherished, particularly during Anzac Day services.

With the cancellation of the 2020 services, Greg says he is looking forward to being able to acknowledge fallen soldiers,

friends and mates during this year's Anzac Day dawn and morning services.

"We are normally out of bed at 3.30am and heading down to the cenotaph to set up before the dawn service gets underway," he said.

"Then we may just enjoy some camaraderie at Panthers Port Macquarie before returning for the morning service."

Greg said he was planning to enjoy some travelling with wife Lynne once his commitments as president are complete.

"I'll still be around but I will be taking a back seat and letting some of the younger blokes take over for a bit," he added.





# Cenotaph ready for Anzac Day

The Dorrigo community will have double the reasons to acknowledge the 2021 Anzac Day services with the historic cenotaph back in pride of place.

The digger had stood for nearly 100 years before a motor vehicle accident in May 2020 saw the cenotaph destroyed.

RSL sub-Branch secretary Bob Denner says the accident stunned the ex-services members and the wider community.

"The town felt like it had been gutted," he said. "It was the centrepiece of our community.

"And I actually believe that we did not really appreciate the importance of the cenotaph until it was gone."

Rebuilt – and now including a roundabout – the cenotaph will be central to this year's 2021 Anzac Day services.

Federal Member for Cowper, Pat Conaghan, will be attending this year's services, and says he is looking forward to seeing the newly installed cenotaph.

"Importantly, the accident has enabled the sub-Branch to right a couple of wrongs in regards to missing names from the plaques.

"The names of two veterans that had been missed have now been added to the role of honour.

"Dorrigo played a major role during World War I with 460

servicemen and one female nurse enlisting. Of those, 47 men did not come home and they have their names inscribed on the column.

"As well, during World War II, 234 men and women enlisted in the armed services – 28 names of those who gave their lives are also listed on the main column.

"A Dorrigo man who was killed in the Korean War is also listed."

Mr Denner said the Dorrigo community supports its Anzac Day services every year, with crowds continuing to build over the years.

The Dorrigo Memorial RSL Club, which was established in 1947 and is now run by a co-operative, features one of the best memorabilia displays for a community the size of Dorrigo.

A community initiative, supported by Bellingen Shire Council, includes the installation of brass plaques on posts in and around the main shopping area acknowledging a war where Australia has made a contribution.

Trooper Mark Donaldson, who received the Victoria Cross for his actions during an ambush in Afghanistan, was raised in Dorrigo.

We thank all current and former ADF personnel for their service to our country.



**DORRIGO CENOTAPH REBUILT:** Dorrigo RSL sub-Branch members Bob Denner, Nevyll Cox and Barry Thatcher.

*From the early days of World War 1 to Vietnam and the present day, dogs have served alongside Australian military personnel for more than 100 years, initially as mascots and for carrying messages. Today, military personnel and their dogs work together in dangerous environments, with their handlers carrying extra food and water for their dogs, along with their normal operational load.*

## Did you know...

*Chaplains have supported Australia's defence force personnel for over 100 years providing comfort and pastoral care to those of faith, and non-religious alike. More than 2,000 Army Chaplains have served from Gallipoli to Afghanistan.*

*By the end of 1945, the military were operating meteorological flights with Australian forces between Borneo and the Solomon Islands, providing wind and temperature data for artillery, sea forecasts for small craft and cloud and visibility forecasts for food drops and close air support. Today's military meteorologists are trained to the highest standard and are an integral part of defence operations.*

## 2021 Anzac Day services

The 2021 Anzac Day services will be governed by the NSW Government's health advice. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way Australians can commemorate this Anzac Day.

RSL NSW has worked with the NSW Government to ensure commemorations can take place across the state this year, in accordance with current NSW Health advice and event guidelines.

For commencement times and information on marches, dawn services and all other commemorative services contact your local Sub-Branch, council or visit [www.rslnsw.org.au](http://www.rslnsw.org.au)

You can also participate in Anzac Day with #AnzacAtHome – for more information go to [www.awm.gov.au/anzacathome](http://www.awm.gov.au/anzacathome)

**Lest We Forget.**



# Coffs Harbour Bypass

Work commences on Coffs Harbour's billion dollar infrastructure project

Work is underway on the billion-dollar Coffs Harbour bypass project, which is jointly funded by the Federal and State Governments.

This is a major infrastructure project which could see local suppliers and contractors involved in the scope of works.

Some of the preliminary works have included: completed 16 property scoping inspections for at-house noise treatment; started North Boambee Road electrical relocations in the vicinity of Highlander Drive; started electrical utility relocation survey work at Englands Road; started water main relocations at the corner of Coramba and Spagnolos Roads; and, started house removals in mid-February.

Other works on the schedule include: water main relocations on North Boambee Road, within the project alignment, west of Highlands Estate as well as south along the east side of the existing



**WORK UNDERWAY:** Work is underway on the Coffs Harbour bypass at Coramba Road thanks to \$1.4 billion investment by the Federal Government.

Pacific Highway into Stadium Drive and north of Stadium Drive along the Pacific Highway (in the vicinity of the Englands Road interchange).

Electrical relocations on

Englands Road and in adjacent industrial park on Industrial Drive are also ongoing while works will continue on Aboriginal cultural archaeological and salvaging works at priority PAD sites.

I encourage businesses looking to be considered for contracts on this project to go to the Transport for NSW website here – <https://bit.ly/2QtDzHj> – to register their interest.

## Focus on Sawtell

Sawtell Chamber of Commerce president Clive Greenway says staying in close contact with community leaders, including Federal Member for Cowper Pat Conaghan, is integral to the ongoing success of the popular Coffs Coast village.

Clive said having the Federal MP visiting their main street and dropping into their businesses to say hello is welcomed.

"We work well with all levels of government," Clive said. "And keeping in touch with our civic leaders – including Pat – is a very important thing for us to do.

"And Pat hosting meetings with chambers across the electorate, via Zoom, is a real positive.

"It is good to have your local member dropping in to say hello. It's important to our business operators to see him in the village."

Clive said building a solid working relationship was also

important when it comes time to source funding for projects – like the proposed revamping of the local swimming pool.

The chamber is writing a letter of support to council and is hopeful of securing federal and state funding for the project.

"That's a great example of where a good working relationship can help," he added.

The Sawtell shopping strip – which is only about 200 metres long – packs plenty of punch when it comes to strategic advertising campaigns, and specialised events.

The Chilli Festival, which is normally held in winter attracting up to 15,000 people, has been postponed to 2022.

Another popular event is the monthly Summer Sessions which sees the street closed off to traffic and features bands and children's activities.



Clive says the atmosphere helps create plenty of good memories for everyone who attends.

"Our focus is on recreating that small local rural village atmosphere – we actually fight

very hard to maintain that sense here," he said.

"We've also got a few other things happening around Sawtell that are in the pipeline, and we are sure to be talking to Pat as the local member."



# COVID-19 VACCINATION

The roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination is continuing across the country and residents in Cowper are lining up for their jab.

A centralised national online appointment booking portal is part of the rollout strategy and it is anticipated that people will be able to make a vaccination appointment through the portal, or simply by phoning their nearest participating clinic.

Anyone can use the COVID-19 vaccine eligibility checker to determine when their turn to be vaccinated is coming up. Go to [www.covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility](http://www.covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility)

Phase 1a is continuing while Phase 1b vaccinations commenced late in March.

In these phases, COVID-19 vaccinations are being offered to those who are at highest risk and are being organised by employers or care facilities. Check with your employer or care facility if you feel you are eligible.

The rollout is expected to reach Phase 2a and Phase 2b around the middle of 2021.

The Federal Government has made it clear that the COVID-19 vaccination will be voluntary in Australia, however, strongly encourages people to get vaccinated. Vaccination is free for everyone.

## COVID-19 VACCINES Priority Roll Out

**Phase 1a:** Aged care and disability care residents and staff; quarantine, border and frontline healthcare workers.

**Phase 1b:** Elderly adults aged 70 years and over; other healthcare workers including drug and alcohol workers;



**COVID-19:** 100 year old Grace Symonds at Garden Village is keen to get her vaccination.

begin vaccinating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults; adults with a specified medical condition; adults with a disability who have a specified underlying medical condition; critical and high-risk workers including defence, police, fire, emergency services, and meat processing workers.

**Phase 2a:** Adults aged 60-69 years; adults aged 50-59 years; continue vaccinating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults; other critical and high-risk workers.

**Phase 2b:** Balance of adult population; catch up any unvaccinated Australians from previous phases.

**Phase 3:** Those under 16 (if recommended).

Further information on the COVID-19 vaccination and the rollout can be found at Australian COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and the COVID-19 Vaccines National Rollout Strategy.

Note: delivery timeframes for the vaccines in our area could be impacted by the recent flooding event.



**RADIATION TREATMENT CENTRES:** Executive Officer Macksville and Bellingen hospitals Ray Green, Federal Member for Cowper Pat Conaghan and Mid North Coast Local Health District board member Janine Reed at the announcement of almost \$5m for Radiation Treatment Centres for the Nambucca and Macleay valleys.

## Cancer support services

Federal Member for Cowper Pat Conaghan announced \$5 million in funding to enhance cancer support services in the Nambucca and Macleay valleys in February 2021.

The funding will be used to establish outreach services from the existing radiation oncology treatment centres in Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour. The new hub-and-spoke model of care will include radiation therapy planning and pre- and post-treatment consultations at Macksville and Kempsey.

At Macksville District Hospital, the funding will also enable the purchase and commissioning of a Computed Tomography (CT) scanner. At Kempsey, refurbishment will be undertaken to create a multi-functional space enabling greater connectivity with the hub locations and non-government partners such as Cancer Council NSW.

These support services will be an important addition to the radiotherapy cancer treatment delivered at the larger centres of Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour.

## COME & CHAT WITH PAT



**CHAT WITH PAT:** I recently addressed the Combined Seniors Group in Port Macquarie following an invitation from convenor Brian Bucket.

I love getting out and about in the electorate, meeting interesting people and listening to what's important to them.

My mobile offices have been hugely successful, and I will continue doing them each month. If you have an organisation, club or

social group that you would like me to come and talk to then I am more than happy to do so. All you need to do is go to my website [www.patconaghan.com.au](http://www.patconaghan.com.au) to make a request.

I look forward to seeing you for a chat.

# COMMUNITY SURVEY

## The issues

Please number the four National issues that concern you most:

- Building a strong economy
- Securing Australia's borders and keeping Australia safe
- Reducing the cost of living pressures
- Improving Education standards
- Improving and reforming the aged care sector
- Re-opening Australian Borders post the COVID-19 vaccine
- Supporting small business
- Improve the national road network
- Protecting our environment

Please number the four Local issues that concern you most:

- Condition of our local roads and bridges
- Mobile blackspots and internet connectivity
- Increased support for local businesses
- Suitability of local education and training opportunities
- Creating well-paid local jobs
- Support for local aged care services

## Cost of Living

Have the recent income tax cuts assisted you in managing your budget?

- Yes  No

Have the impacts of COVID-19 put greater pressure on your household budget in the past twelve months?

- Yes  No

Has the cost of fuel impacted your household budget?

- More  Less  About the same

Would you be concerned with any of the following Tax changes:

- Reintroducing a Carbon Tax?  Yes  No  Don't Know
- Removing Franking credits for retirees?  Yes  No  Don't Know
- Removing negative gearing on housing investment?  Yes  No  Don't Know
- Increasing superannuation guarantee?  Yes  No  Don't Know

What concerns do you have with local housing options?

- Lack of housing development
- Lack of available or affordable housing to rent
- Lack of available or affordable housing to purchase
- Homelessness in our community
- Other

## Health and COVID-19

Do you have private health insurance?

- Yes  No

What do you think is the most effective approach to handling any future COVID-19 outbreaks:

- State wide lock-downs and border closures
- Localised lock-downs and isolation
- Extensive testing and contact tracing
- Vaccinating our local community

Do you support the phased roll out of the COVID-19 Vaccine?

- Yes  No

What health services are a challenge to access locally?

- GP Services  Yes  No

Comments:

- Allied Health Services  Yes  No

Comments:

- Specialist Services  Yes  No

Comments:

Do you have to travel to access specialist health services?

- Yes  No

Comments:

## Jobs and the Economy

Are you concerned about job security?

- Yes  No

Which of the following do you believe is the best way the Government can support economic recovery and jobs growth?

- Reducing Taxes and Red Tape on businesses
- Building more infrastructure
- Spending on job training programs
- Government financial assistance for industry

Which of the following do you believe is the best way we can support our local economy?

- Supporting local products, providers and services
- Governments continuing to decentralise departments and services
- Increasing funding for traineeships and apprenticeships

Other

## Environment

What do you think of Australia's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 26-28% by 2030?

- Our emissions reduction is about right
- Our emissions reduction is too low
- Our emissions reduction is too high
- Don't know

If you could improve one aspect of your local environment what would it be?



**SCAN MY QR CODE TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY ONLINE**

Five lucky constituents will win a \$100 fuel voucher for taking the time to let me know their issues.



# COMMUNITY SURVEY

## Education

Which do you think is the most important for school education at this time?

- Greater focus on the basics and standards
- More emphasis on teacher quality
- More funding for facilities
- More teachers and resources

For households with school age children, what are your key concerns regarding their education?

For households with tertiary or vocational students, would you or your children prefer?

- Completing their education in their local region
- Completing their education in a metropolitan area

How do you feel about options for tertiary education or job related training in your area?

- Adequate
- Inadequate
- About right

Which of the following issues concern you the most?

- Cost of living pressures
- Housing supply
- Health support and services
- Financial information support for pensioners
- Disability access
- Mobility
- Aged care services
- More residential care places
- Additional Home Care Packages
- Lifestyle opportunities locally
- Other

## About politics

Please select one of the following options: (optional)

I ALWAYS support the following party

- Nationals  Labor  Greens  Independent/Other

OR I USUALLY support the following party

- Nationals  Labor  Greens  Independent/Other

OR  I DON'T support any political party

## Border Protection and National Security

Do you think the Government's Foreign Investment Review Board's decisions are?

- Too lenient  Too tough  About right

Is the Australian Government's role in protecting people and critical infrastructure against cyber security risk important to you?

- Yes  No

Do you support the Government's Border Protection Measures?

- Yes  No  Don't Know

## Seniors and Community Services

Which of the following applies to you (please tick all relevant)

- I am a senior citizen
- I have a disability
- I work in the aged care industry
- I work in the disability support industry
- I have a family member in aged care
- I care for a family member at home
- None of the above



## Your details

Please complete the following details so that I can stay in touch and keep you informed.

How do you prefer to be contacted?

Name

Address

Home phone

Mobile phone

Email

- Mail  SMS  Email

## Your work

Please select the option which best reflects your current situation:

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Self-employed
- At home parent
- Unemployed
- Student
- Age pensioner
- Self-funded retiree
- Small business owner
- Disability pensioner

Your Occupation

**Thank you for completing this survey**

Simply take a photo and email your completed survey to: [pat.conaghan.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:pat.conaghan.mp@aph.gov.au)  
Alternatively, you can post a hard copy to P.O. Box 2056, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

5 winners will be drawn on Fri 30 April 2021 and will be notified by phone – get your surveys in for a chance to win!



# Ministers visiting Cowper

It's been a busy couple of weeks for the Cowper electorate with visits from two ministers in March.

Minister for Veterans Affairs Darren Chester visited on March 3 and 4 while Minister for the Environment Sussan Ley enjoyed some of our beautiful forests during a visit on March 8 and 9.

Minister Chester took the opportunity to speak directly with sub-Branch members from Coffs Harbour right down to Port Macquarie. In a series of round-table discussions, local members were able to talk directly to the Minister about their experiences in dealing with the department.

These are important discussions and I welcomed the Minister's decision to visit Cowper and to meet with our ex-serving residents.

During the trip Minister Chester also dropped into the Frank Partridge VC Military Museum in Bowraville. This is a wonderful example of volunteers in action and I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all helpers at the museum, including curator Blew Maning.

Environment Minister Sussan Ley made a couple of announcements during her visit, but the highlight for me was the visit to see the work being carried out to save the Bellinger River Snapping Turtle.

I have to acknowledge the work of everyone involved in this project – the snapping turtles were virtually wiped out by a mysterious virus in 2015 which saw its recorded population drop to just a few hundred. However, those numbers are now turning around thanks to the efforts of the many people involved in this project.

I was pleased to see that Cowper received almost \$440,000 in grants under the Bushfire Recovery Program for Wildlife and Habitat.

Nambucca Landcare secured



**BUSHFIRE RECOVERY:** Minister for the Environment Sussan Ley talking with Pat Conaghan about the Bushfire Recovery Program for Wildlife and Habitat.

\$139,634 to implement priority natural resource management actions to help restore tributaries of the Nambucca River, enhancing biodiversity and reducing ongoing threats from weeds, stock pressure and erosion.

Macleay Landcare received \$149,975 to deliver a habitat recovery program, a nest box and constructed hollow program, and community education to support the recovery of wildlife.

Jaliigirr Wildlife and Habitat fire recovery in the Dorrigo region will use its \$147,650 to investigate and quantify the impacts of the bushfires on platypus populations in and around Dorrigo, as well as seeking to improve the condition and cover of riparian vegetation within the upper reaches of the Bellinger River.

Armidale Regional Council will use its \$150,000 to deliver a landscape scale feral animal (predator and herbivore), and pest weed, control program on private land in the Jeogla to Carrai Plateau area. This project borders the Cowper electorate.



**VETERANS SUPPORT:** Minister for Veterans Affairs Darren Chester with Pat Conaghan and sub-Branch members discussing their experiences and concerns with the Department of Veterans Affairs.



# March floods

What an extraordinary March we've had, and who would have imagined that after drought, bushfires and COVID-19 we would be experiencing another disaster, with such significant rainfall and flooding.

I continue to be amazed by the community spirit that is demonstrated during times of crisis, and to witness first-hand the generosity, spirit, and Aussie mateship that is ingrained in each and every one of us.

It's what makes me so proud to represent you as your Federal Member, and I will continue to advocate on your behalf for the things that matter to you, through the good times and bad, right across our wonderful Mid North Coast community.

The Australian Government is providing financial assistance through the activation of the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP) – a non-means tested payment of \$1,000 for eligible adults and \$400 for eligible children. This payment is available to people whose homes have been lost or directly damaged, and people who have been seriously injured, or are an immediate family

member of someone who has lost their life.

The Australian Government Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA) has also been activated. This is a short-term income support payment to assist individuals who have experienced a loss of income as a direct result of the storms and floods.

These payments are administered by Services Australia. For more information visit [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/disaster](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/disaster)

These assistance measures have been activated in the local government areas of Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Nambucca and Port Macquarie-Hastings.

Disaster recovery assistance is being provided under the jointly funded Commonwealth-state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). Assistance available may include: help for eligible people whose homes or belongings have been damaged, support for affected councils to help with the costs of cleaning up and restoring damaged essential public assets, concessional interest rate loans for small businesses, primary producers and non-profit organisations, freight



subsidies for primary producers, and grants to eligible non-profit organisations.

For information on personal hardship and distress assistance, contact Service NSW on 13 77 88. To apply for a concessional loan or grant, contact the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593 or visit [www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au)

Further information on disaster assistance is available on the Australian Government's Disaster Assist website at [www.disasterassist.gov.au](http://www.disasterassist.gov.au) and Service NSW at [disasterassistance.service.nsw.gov.au](http://disasterassistance.service.nsw.gov.au)

During challenging times it's particularly important to know that help is here, through checking in with your neighbours, mates and families, and not being afraid to put your hand up if you are struggling. If you have been impacted by the flooding, I urge you to access the advice and assistance that is available, and to remember that you are not alone.

Also, thank you to the emergency service personnel who responded during this severe weather event, selflessly putting their lives on the line to protect their communities.

## MOBILE OFFICES

Looking to raise an issue or discuss a topic with your local MP? Well, your federal representative Pat Conaghan is here to listen. Over the next few months, Pat will be providing a series of mobile offices – he's bringing Canberra to you – to some of our great communities throughout the Cowper electorate. These mobile offices are a great way to provide feedback to Pat on grassroots and national issues and topics.

Mobile office meetings are always popular, so it's best if you book your day and timeslot well in advance. Some of these meetings are held in neighbouring centres – if you can't meet Pat where you live, he will be hosting meetings close by. To book your spot call 5507 9555 or email [pat.conaghan.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:pat.conaghan.mp@aph.gov.au). The first mobile office is being held on Friday April 23 at Eungai Rail and in Stuarts Point.

Below is the list of upcoming offices:

<b>Friday, April 30</b>	Willawarrin, Bellbrook
<b>Friday, May 21</b>	Kempsey, Crescent Head
<b>Friday, June 11</b>	Bowraville, Nambucca Heads
<b>Wednesday, June 30</b>	Dorrigo
<b>Wednesday, July 21</b>	Sawtell, Repton-Mylestom
<b>Wednesday, September 15</b>	Urunga, Valla
<b>Wednesday, September 29</b>	Bellingen
<b>Friday, October 8</b>	South West Rocks
<b>Wednesday, October 13</b>	Macksville

Authorised by Pat Conaghan MP, National Party of Australia, 39 Little Street, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450  
 Printed by Axis IQ, 84-90 Industrial Drive, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

@PatConaghanCowper

**THE NATIONALS** *for Regional Australia*

@PatConaghanNats

**COFFS HARBOUR:** 39 Little Street, NSW 2450 (P.O. Box 2056) | **PORT MACQUARIE:** Suite 1, Level 4, JBC Building 41-47 Horton Street

[patconaghan.com.au](http://patconaghan.com.au)

[pat.conaghan.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:pat.conaghan.mp@aph.gov.au)

Coffs Harbour: 6652 6233, Port Macquarie: 5507 9555