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NORTHERN BEACHES BULLETIN

Andrew Cripps MP State Member for Hinchinbrook *Proudly Representing Townsville's Northern Beaches*

LABOR BETRAYS EMERGENCY WORKERS

Unfortunately, the Bligh Labor Government has again betrayed our hard working emergency service workers by voting against an LNP proposal to introduce a 3 month mandatory minimum sentence for individuals who commit serious assaults against police, ambulance, fire and rescue and rural fire service officers.

It is regrettable that the Bligh Labor Government has refused to support efforts by the LNP to strengthen protections for our emergency service workers. It is a sad thing that such a proposal needs to come forward in Queensland, but the current consequences are clearly not a deterrent for those who commit these assaults.

Emergency service workers are asked to do very difficult jobs in our local communities. Serious assaults are increasing against emergency services workers when they are in the course of doing their duty, such as upholding the law, responding to medical and other emergencies. A clear message needs to be sent that this type of behavior will not be tolerated.

Congratulations!

I would like to extend my congratulations to Guides Qld – Bluewater Campsite & Training Centre on their successful application of \$4,518.03 through the Breakwater Island Casino Community Fund to upgrade toilet and shower facilities at the campsite. Committee and volunteers of not-for-profit organisations work extremely hard and it is satisfying and appropriate that their efforts are supported by the Breakwater Island Community Benefit Fund and recognised by the community. The fund disburses grants twice a year for capital expenditure projects or items up to \$5,000. Applications to apply for funding can be downloaded from www.biccbf.com.au or by contacting this office.

2010 NORTHERN BEACHES SENIORS LUNCH

I was very pleased to attend the 2010 Northern Beaches Seniors Lunch on Friday 13th August. I would like to acknowledge Townsville City Council for continuing to support this function for the Northern Beaches. It was great to see Deputy Mayor, David Crisafulli, in attendance.

Townsville's Northern Beaches are lucky to have a very hard working local Councillor in Sue Blom, who was also at the lunch. It is a pleasure to work closely with Sue. Congratulations to Sue Von Wald and the Rollingstone crew for hosting a successful function. It was great to see seniors from across the Northern Beaches in attendance.

I am pleased to have a good working relationship with a number of seniors groups, progress associations and community centres across the Northern Beaches of Townsville, which provide me with valuable feedback about important community issues in my electorate.

Working in cooperation with these local groups is an effective way of drawing attention to the needs of my constituents. I invite all community based groups on the Northern Beaches of Townsville in my electorate of Hinchinbrook to be in regular contact with me about issues that are of concern or are of interest to their members.

In respect of the circumstances of seniors, including those on the Northern Beaches, as I mentioned at the lunch, I am very aware that cost of living issues are cause for widespread concern among aged pensioners and self-funded retirees.

I am also aware that increasingly, for a variety of reasons and in a variety of circumstances, grandparents are being required to take on more and more responsibilities for the care and upbringing of their grandchildren and that this can create a number of legal and cost difficulties.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER MAPPING

As the Shadow Minister for Disability Services, I have been pursuing the issue of early intervention services of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The number of children being diagnosed with ASD is increasing across Queensland. However, I am very concerned that the Bligh Labor Government has failed to accurately map the prevalence of ASD.

Knowing where in Queensland families need the most help with ASD support services is surely essential before the State Government can make informed decisions about how and where to spend funds to address the problem. Apparently not! Considerable funds are being spent in a number of communities around the state of Queensland to try and address the needs of children with ASD and support their families.

This begs the obvious question - what funding model has the State Government been using up until now, how have these funds been spent and how many vital ASD support services that should have been funded, have missed out because no proper needs based mapping had been undertaken by the Bligh Labor Government?

Qld Master Builders Awards for Nth Qld

I was pleased to attend the Queensland Master Builders' Awards for North Queensland recently and witness 14 projects in the Hinchinbrook electorate win awards. Projects in the Northern Beaches area took out 11 of these awards in the Housing and Major Award categories.

The winning recipients for Northern Beaches are:

Finlay Homes

Sustainable Living Award - (Black River)
Individual Home \$551k - \$750 k (Bushland Bch)

Sanctuary Homes by Design

Best Bathroom – (Bushland Beach)
Best Kitchen – (Bushland Beach)
Individual Home over \$2 m – (Bushland Bch)
2010 Nth Qld House of the Year (Bushland Bch)

Austart Homes Townsville Pty Ltd

Display Home \$251k - \$400k – (Mount Low)
2010 Nth Qld President's Award – (Mount Low)

Vista Homes & Design

Individual Home up to \$250k – (Burdell)

KN Constructions

Individual Home \$251k - \$400k – (Burdell)

Brookfield Multiplex Constructions

Innovation in Environmental Management;
Townsville Water Supply Upgrade Project –
Northern Water Treatment Plant (Rollingstone)

BLUEWATER MEDICAL PRACTICE UPDATE

I would like to update my constituents on representations I have made on behalf of the local community regarding the potential loss of a further two doctors from the Bluewater Medical Practice. You will recall from the last edition of the Northern Beaches Bulletin that I had written to the Queensland Medical Board about the deregistration of Dr Olga Gonzalez and Dr Aileen Sarito, who had been practicing at the Bluewater Medical Practice for a number of years.

However, as of 30 June 2010, the responsibilities of the Queensland Medical Board in respect of registrations have been transferred to the Medical Board of Australia. Unfortunately, the Medical Board of Australia uses the same Pre-Employment Structured Clinical Interview process that was utilised by the Queensland Medical Board, which previously led to the deregistration of Dr Gonzalez and Dr Sarito.

More recently, it has come to my attention that Dr Prashanta Mitra and Dr Victor Mamawal, currently practicing at the Bluewater Medical Practice, will be required to participate in the Pre-Employment Structured Clinical Interview process, which could lead to their deregistration.

As I said in the last edition of the Northern Beaches Bulletin, I strongly support robust testing and close scrutiny of competence and qualifications of overseas trained doctors seeking to practice in Queensland, but the Medical Board of Australia must understand that in regional areas, the loss of a single doctor can have serious consequences for the ongoing health care and medical attention of the community.

The possible loss of another two doctors from the Bluewater Medical Practice is a real concern for my constituents on the Northern Beaches of Townsville. The Bluewater Medical Practice has been unable to meet the demand for appointments. As I have previously pointed out, this results in a heavier load on the Emergency Department at the Townsville General Hospital, which is a public health facility already frequently unable to cope with demand.

I have made representations on behalf of my constituents on the Northern Beaches to the Medical Board of Australia, in relation to the threat of Dr Mitra and Dr Mamawal being deregistered for bureaucratic reasons that have nothing to do with malpractice or incompetence.