



JUNE 2015

Gillieston Heights Update

A NEWSLETTER FROM JENNY AITCHISON MP ■ YOUR LOCAL STATE MEMBER FOR MAITLAND

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Commemorating ANZAC Day 2015

It was great to be able to join you all in Gillieston Heights after the ANZAC Service – thanks to the SES.



Jenny with Sandy and Matthew Paul on Anzac Day.

I saw the community boats in operation at Testers Hollow as well as the Community Centre in action. Thank you to everyone who helped me to get around and talk to people on the day; it was extremely useful as I lobbied for services for you.

I was able to co-ordinate visits by Family and Community Services and Centrelink representatives to help people in sorting out their

next steps. They also **supported the many volunteers** who had been working so hard to help the community.

I worked with Rover Coaches to get the bus shuttle going. I know it didn't get everywhere you wanted it to, but I am already working with local bus operators to develop an emergency plan should the road be cut off again.

RECOGNITION FOR GILLIESTON HEIGHTS COMMUNITY CENTRE

In conjunction with the *Maitland Mercury*, I nominated the Gillieston Heights Community Centre for a grant. This was to provide them with assistance to repair and renew some of their facilities after they operated as a recovery centre during the storm.

I am pleased to say it was a success and the Centre has been awarded \$10,000.

Jenny writes...

It is now two months since the April Super Storms that devastated communities all over the Hunter and created "Gilligan's Island".

I am so impressed with the resilience and resourcefulness demonstrated by all of you during, and since, the storms and isolation. It was a hard time for everyone, but the community spirit you showed is inspiring.

In Parliament, I have given notice of motions calling on the Government to take steps to flood-proof Maitland roads and review the region's emergency plan, particularly with regards to communications and co-ordination.

Jenny Aitchison MP
MEMBER FOR MAITLAND

Help with any insurance issues

A few residents have spoken with me about having trouble making insurance claims.

It is important to take photographs of affected property and equipment damage before rectifying issues. If you are experiencing problems please contact my office by phone on 4933 1617 or email maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au so we can try to help.



LUKE FOLEY'S GILLIESTON HEIGHTS VISIT - TUESDAY 19 MAY 2015

Opposition Leader Luke Foley came to Maitland to meet with community members who were affected by the storms. There was a good cross-section of people there, including those from rural areas, Oakwood Village and the Community Centre.

Luke was very impressed with the great community spirit that has been demonstrated throughout the storms and the recovery.

We then joined Member for Cessnock, Clayton Barr, at Testers Hollow. It was a great opportunity for Luke to see first-hand the need for stronger approaches to flood mitigation in the area.

GILLIESTON HEIGHTS COMMUNITY MEETING - SUNDAY 24 MAY 2015

I convened a general community meeting in Gillieston Heights after the floods to review the issues that confronted our community.

One of the major issues that emerged during the meeting was the breakdown of lines of communication, especially for those not on Facebook. That is why I am contacting you by letter.

If you would like to receive my e-newsletters, please call my office on 4933 1617 or email: maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au

The meeting was an opportunity for residents to talk about what had happened. I have been relaying that information, and continue to do so, to the Regional Recovery Co-ordinator, Brigadier Darren Naumann AM. He will be finalising his report in the next month.

Community members resolved to form a committee to help build resilience, preparedness and flood management strategies.

I suggested that the committee could be based on those who had performed their roles so admirably during the isolation period. It will also look at covering all of the geographical areas of Gillieston Heights. **We will make sure communication is a priority** and that the message gets out to people in future events.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BUILDING COMMITTEE - UPCOMING JULY MEETING

I will be writing to all members of the Community Resilience Building Committee to invite them to a meeting in July.

I want this Committee to be truly reflective of our community and I intend to support, rather than direct, it.

If you were not at the inaugural meeting, but believe you have something to contribute, **please nominate yourself for membership.**



2015 RESILIENT AUSTRALIA AWARD

The Resilient Australia Awards are sponsored by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department in conjunction with state and territory governments.

The awards showcase projects and initiatives in NSW that are building community preparedness and resilience in the face of natural disasters. I want to properly recognise the outstanding community spirit displayed by so many of you during the April Storm.

If you know someone who did something wonderful for others during the storm and recovery period, let me know.

Please contact my office on 4933 1617 with the name and contact details of your special community member.

Nominations close on 9 August.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of those who have gone over and above to help their neighbours and wider community.

CONGRATULATIONS TO REGIONAL RECOVERY CO-ORDINATOR BRIGADIER DARREN NAUMANN

In June the Queen's Birthday honours were announced.

Brigadier Darren Naumann, Regional Recovery Co-ordinator, was recognised in the Military Division as a Member of the Order of Australia.

He received this for exceptional service as Director General Capital Facilities and Infrastructure, Infrastructure Division, Defence Support and Reform Group, Department of Defence.

While I have only known the Brigadier for a short period, the leadership and skill he has displayed as the Regional Recovery Co-ordinator is evidence that this recognition is well deserved.



Brigadier Naumann with Jenny.

Keep in touch

To give me feedback or to get assistance with any of these issues – or any other State Government matters – please contact my office on 4933 1617 or email: maitland@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Connect Online

I am connecting on Facebook and Twitter and promoting our community events there. If you would like to join my conversations go to:

f [www.fb.com/jennyaitchison](https://www.facebook.com/jennyaitchison) or

t [@jenny_aitchison](https://twitter.com/jenny_aitchison)