



Steve Irons MP

your local member for Swan



ISSUE 17

COMMUNITY REPORT



Steve breaks 40-year impasse to get Queens Park man his day in Parliament

In 2009 Queens Park resident Max Scott approached me for help with a health issue affecting him and an estimated 60,000 Australians across the country, which we found out would be a real challenge.

For over 40 years sufferers of the condition Adhesive Arachnoiditis have been trying to have their condition recognised by doctors and Australian Health Authorities. Many have been misdiagnosed many times by doctors and live in great pain. Support groups have tried in the past to have the matter looked at by Parliament but all previous attempts had failed.

We pursued Max's case with Australian health authorities and the Ombudsman but in the end it became clear that a Parliamentary Hearing was needed – for Max and for all sufferers across Australia. For this hearing to take place, we would need to secure bipartisan support.

In my role as Deputy Chair of the Health and Ageing Committee I worked to secure bipartisan support for a hearing with the help of Jill Hall – the Member for Shortland in NSW. It took some negotiating but on 21 September Max was able to appear as a witness before a full Australian Parliamentary Committee and his words are now recorded in Hansard.

It was an emotional day and many of the sufferers and their families displayed that emotion during the hearing. However they did not let the occasion overwhelm them and the sufferers provided some very clear evidence, which

was supported by medical experts and professionals.

Mr Scott has fought for this day over many years and I am pleased he has now been able to provide evidence to the Australian Parliament. After twisting his back at work in the 1970s Max could never have imagined that the resulting medical treatment would change his life.

His evidence has been taken and a report will be drawn up with recommendations and will be tabled before the end of the year. To view the Hansard and Max's comments you can visit www.steveirons.com.au

As your Federal MP I help constituents with Federal issues wherever possible and hold regular constituent surgeries and mobile offices to give everyone a chance to have their say. You can contact my office to request an appointment or email me at steve.irons.mp@aph.gov.au



Steve Irons and Committee members at the Hearing.

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Campaigning for community services in Swan

– sports mall; family services hub; sports hub; and health facilities

With the support of Swan residents I have been running local campaigns to improve community services across the electorate. We have had some good success in the past with our campaigns for community facilities, including the reopening of Belmont City Medical Centre (formerly Belmont Healthpoint) and will continue with this work on behalf of the community. Here is an update on some of our local campaigns

Aquatic centre update - Sports Mall Concept Presentation -



Residents, Councillors, John McGrath MLA, Senator Eggleston and Aquatic Sports Organisations attended the Aquatic Centre Community Meeting in July.

In response to community demand for an Aquatic Centre in the City of South Perth we held a special community meeting with sports entrepreneur, tennis star and MP John Alexander in July.

Mr Alexander spoke about the exciting potential for an aquatic centre to be incorporated as part of a Sports Mall at the proposed George Burnett site in Karawara to create a financially viable facility which could be a fantastic addition to our area.

The idea of the Sports Malls is similar in concept to that of a shopping Mall. A sports Mall combines sporting facilities such as an aquatic centre with Health facilities and other Recreation facilities such as restaurants together in one place. This mix of activities creates operational and infrastructural efficiencies that ensure commercial viability is achieved through attaining a critical mass of participation.

This is ideally achieved through public-private partnerships initiated by local government, which are possible under WA law.

It is clear that there is a high demand for aquatic facilities in the City of South Perth, as demonstrated by the results of two community surveys, including one undertaken by the council. This has taken on further significance given the recent loss of the 50m pool in Bentley.

To proceed with such an idea the local government would have to be on board. Councillors Trent, Haselby and Zeeb-Hawkins attended the meeting but the City of South Perth Administration said they did not see this as a priority. Let the council know what you think.

Potential activities in a viable sports mall

Gyms, swimming pools, running and athletic tracks, courts for squash, tennis or badminton, ovals for football, soccer or cricket, fencing pieces, gymnastics centre, archery ranges and many more.

In addition they can include commercial facilities for reception, locker rooms and showers, restaurants, bars, equipment shops, crèches, and health spas to name a few. The Sports Mall uses this mix of activities to create operational and infrastructural efficiencies

Belmont family services hub

A family services hub for Belmont is now a step closer thanks to the support we have been given by Premier Barnett.

With the funding received the buildings at Centenary Park will now be redeveloped to cater for a range of family groups, including:

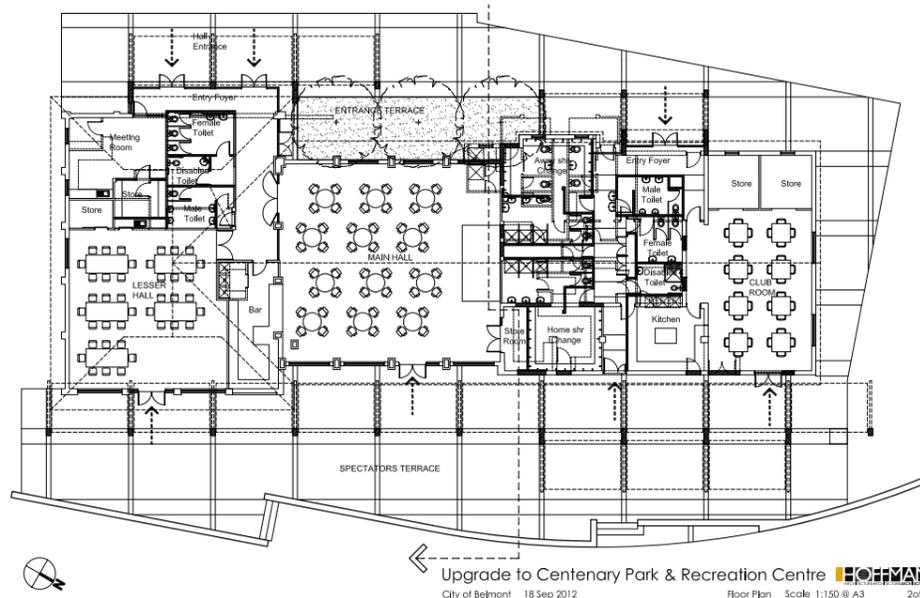
- Wanslea
- PCYC
- Playgroup WA

It may also be possible for the Belmont Toy Library to relocate to

these new premises. The Toy Library has reached its capacity in its current location and would like to relocate so it can expand its services. I have been working with the Toy Library Committee, Cr Godfrey and the City of Belmont to try and facilitate this.

Thank you to the many people who returned my survey on this issue. There were some wonderful comments and the results have been presented to the City of Belmont, which is supportive of an expanded Toy Library that can serve Belmont families.

Construction is scheduled to begin in September 2013.



A community health facility for Belvidere Street

I have been working for some time with the Canning Division of GPs on a plan for a multi-health community facility in Belvidere Street and am pleased to say that this project is finally coming to fruition.

The new centre at 39 Belvidere Street will include:

- After Hours GP Service
- Mental Health Services
- Respiratory and Podiatry specialists
- Aboriginal Health Services

The project was put at risk at one stage when the Gillard Government tried to partition our local health board. However we managed to have that decision overturned and now the fit out is almost complete.

The opening was put back by a number of weeks due to a break-in at the site but all is now back on track and it should be open imminently. I hope the community will gain great benefit from this facility once it is open.

Queens Park Sports Hub and Gymnastics proposal



There has been massive community support and genuine excitement for our local community campaign to establish an artistic gymnastics centre at the former Queens Park Recreation Centre as part of a Queens Park sporting hub.

Thank you to everyone who indicated their support by returning the survey.

The Queens Park Recreation Centre has been made vacant by the relocation of groups to the new Cannington Leisureplex and the Council is looking for a new tenant. We have been working with the Contemporary Gymnastics Academy on a plan to establish an artistic gymnastics centre

in the vacant centre and a proposal was submitted in July.

The Contemporary Gymnastics Academy runs classes for all ages and would be a terrific addition to the area as there are few opportunities for people wanting to get involved in artistic gymnastics in the Canning area. In addition to the support of the community there is support from Gymnastics WA.

I want to see Queens Park become a hub for sporting facilities for the Canning Community that is why we successfully campaigned in 2010 for Federal support for the Cannington Leisureplex in its location adjacent to the Coker Park athletics facility.

Having been involved in community sport for many years through Perth Football Club I have seen first hand the social and health benefits of sport and the need to have sustainable sporting infrastructure in every community.

We have presented the results of the survey to the council and they have resolved to commence negotiations with prospective lessees..

AIRCRAFT NOISE UPDATE:

Government votes down Moylan- Irons Bill 68-67

Aircraft noise Bill rejected

■ Geoffrey Thomas

Federal Parliament yesterday defeated a WA-sponsored private member's Bill that would have created the position of an aircraft noise adviser to give impartial advice to residents and guarantee public consultation processes.

The Bill was introduced by Judi Moylan and Steve Irons last year after the Federal Government rejected the recommendations of the Senate inquiry into Perth aircraft noise.

It would have reopened the planning process for Perth's flight paths.

West Australian 12-Oct-2012

Our Moylan-Irons Private Members Bill that would have reopened the planning process for Perth Flight Paths and allowed communities to have their say on flight paths was voted down by the Labor Government in Canberra.

While the Coalition, the Greens and the WA Nationals supported the legislation, Labor did a deal with Independents Rob Oakeshott, Tony Windsor and Andrew Wilkie, who had previously indicated their support for the Bill, to have it voted down by 1 vote.

This, unfortunately, is a final indication that Labor will do nothing to help residents affected by aircraft noise.

Labor and the Independents now stand alone as the only party that is not prepared to address the aircraft noise situation in Perth.

We got the Royal Commission

As patron of the Care Leaver's Australia Network (CLAN) and Forgotten Australians Coming Together (FACT) I welcome the news that there is going to be a Royal Commission into instances of Child Abuse in Institutions in Australia. CLAN has been pushing for a Royal Commission for some time on behalf of its many members.

I thank all parties for agreeing to this. This announcement was well received by CLAN members at a celebratory picnic to mark the 3rd anniversary of the Forgotten Australians in Perth, where I gave a keynote speech.

Visit www.steveirons.com.au/forgotten to read my Opinion Editorial on 3 years since the Federal Apology.



Alan Eggleston

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New medical school to ease doctor shortage burden if approved

A medical school that would enable school graduating students to immediately start their medical degree, unlike graduate-entry pathways, could soon be a reality at Curtin University if it receives Commonwealth approval.

As a former medical practitioner I am aware of the severe doctor shortage faced in Western Australia, with the State having the highest vacancy rate of GPs, the highest rate of overseas trained doctors working in rural and remote regions, the lowest number of medical student places per capita and is the only State without an undergraduate medical school intake.

If approved, this five-year direct-entry undergraduate Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree could help fill this shortage which is now at breaking point.

Exciting long term plans to build a private hospital at the university campus would also be a welcome addition.

According to Curtin University, a *Health Workforce 2025 – Doctors, Nurses and Midwives* report claimed that Australia is in the midst of a severe doctor shortage, with six of the eight scenarios presented in the report projecting a shortage of doctors ranging from 2,701 professionals to as

high as 26,124 professionals by 2025.

By establishing a medical school at Curtin University, this could also create a stronger case for retaining Bentley Hospital's maternity ward to provide internships or other educational links with the university once Fiona Stanley Hospital opens in 2014.

The former Labor Government originally planned to close the maternity ward in 2014, but thanks to a community campaign by Federal Member for Swan Steve Irons, the Barnett Government has committed to reassessing demand once Fiona Stanley Hospital opens. Approximately 1,000 deliveries a year compared to the current level of 890 will be needed for retention.

If Bentley Hospital's maternity ward were to close down, the commute to Fiona Stanley Hospital for

low risk, normal births and post-natal care could be a significant hindrance to the local Bentley community and surrounding areas.

The establishment of Curtin University's medical school would be a significant step forward for Western Australia in dealing with this doctor shortage, particularly in rural and remote areas, who are struggling to cope with this crisis.



Senator Alan Eggleston, Curtin University Vice-Chancellor Professor Jeanette Hackett, Professor of Medicine William Hart and Federal Member for Swan Steve Irons at the university's biosciences research precinct.

Labor cooks the books with failed mining tax

There is no doubt that the Gillard Government anticipated huge revenues from the mining tax, and that their estimates of revenues which would come in has varied enormously – in fact the tax has raised no money at all.

This was obvious to the Coalition from the beginning, because the big three companies (Rio Tinto, Xstrata and BHP Billiton) who negotiated the tax are able to offset their tax liability against the development costs of their huge mines.

This uncertainty has increased Australia's level of sovereign risk and decreased our perception of being a safe place to invest.

In July 2010 the Labor Government estimated the tax would raise \$10.5 billion over the first two years. This amount has been downgraded and upgraded at every review since, but it seems that the true result is that no tax has been paid at all.

It is a tax that should never have been introduced and one that the Australian people can now see for what it truly is – a farcical attempt by Wayne Swan to cook the books.



Bureaucratic ineptitude a threat to medical internships

The failure to fund medical intern places for the current group of medical graduates is a serious case of bureaucratic ineptitude on behalf of the Commonwealth, states and territories.

I am appalled that the Australian Medical Association's (AMA) warnings that this situation would occur have been ignored because of bureaucracy at all levels. Bad planning by the Labor Government in its agreement with the states and territories has meant that there are not enough internships for the tidal wave of

students coming through medical schools. Regional areas are continually faced with a shortage of GPs, yet here we have graduates who could have filled these places but are unable to complete their training because of a lack of agreement between governments.

The Commonwealth, states and territories need to act in good faith to resolve this funding issue to ensure that Australians, particularly those living in regional areas, can be provided with adequate health care.