



**RICK
WILSON MP**
Federal Member for O'Connor



June 2015

GST win for WA



300 people attended a community morning tea with Prime Minister Tony Abbott

During the last three months I have been very busy in the electorate.

Firstly, we had two visits from Prime Minister Tony Abbott. In Northcliffe, we attended an afternoon tea with volunteers and community members affected by the February bushfire that burnt through approximately 95,000 hectares.

In Kalgoorlie, the Prime Minister and I visited a local business, Hahn Electrical, and attended a morning tea with over 300 people.

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With the team at Hahn Electrical in Kalgoorlie-Boulder

In May, we had a great result for WA when the Commonwealth Government announced a GST top-up of \$499 million via infrastructure projects in WA.

The WA federal members and senators have been working on the GST issue since September 2014 when we formed a coordinated approach to lobbying this issue in the party room.

After months and months of hard work it's pleasing to see the Prime Minister and Treasurer acknowledge the unusual circumstances WA faces as a result of their

GST revenue reduction and I applaud them for addressing the imbalance in the face of strident opposition from every other state.

The WA Government now has the opportunity to re-allocate the \$499 million they were going to spend on the infrastructure projects to other budget items - be it reducing the debt, on services or other infrastructure projects; items they would have spent their GST revenue on.

While this is a good outcome for WA, we still have more work to do to ensure a fairer share of GST for WA.

Also in May, we delivered the 2015 Budget and it was a big win for families, small businesses and farmers - all of which are in abundance in O'Connor so in actual fact, the Budget was a huge win for O'Connor.

One Budget measure I am particularly pleased with is the introduction of the Stronger Communities Fund - \$150,000 for each federal electorate each year for two years to fund small capital projects in local communities between \$1,000 and \$20,000.

When the guidelines are released I'll be promoting this programme in the electorate and encouraging eligible organisations to apply.



Rick Wilson MP
Federal Member for O'Connor





The Prime Minister being briefed on the Northcliffe bushfire by the Department of Parks and Wildlife's John Gillard



Chatting to Northcliffe farmers Max and Deb Rudd

Prime Minister Tony Abbott visits Northcliffe and Kalgoorlie



With John Paul College students Mark Collins and Kyra King



Prime Minister Tony Abbott with City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Mayor Ron Yuryevich



Selfie with the PM

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Denmark NBN forum

NBN in O'Connor

We've had some very exciting announcements about the NBN in the last few months including the announcement that Katanning, Manjimup, Denmark, Hopetoun and Esperance will all receive fixed-line NBN and construction on the infrastructure will start between now and September 2016.



Discussing the benefits of the NBN with Ross Major from Williams

I held an NBN forum in Denmark where more than 60 enthusiastic Denmark residents attended to hear from NBN Co Lead Community Affairs Manager Peter Gurney, Telstra Area General Manager Boyd Brown and Chamber of Commerce board member Clem Wright.

Due to the undulating terrain and thick forest canopies, wireless services at the moment in the Denmark area are patchy at best and this is a perfect example of the government shifting focus to areas of highest need versus the former government which targeted areas where they needed votes.

I also celebrated the launch of fixed wireless towers in Kendenup, Cranbrook and Williams with Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications the Hon Paul Fletcher MP.

Towers are now live in Mt Barker, Cranbrook, Tenterden, Kendenup, Kojonup, Williams and Narrogin.

Albany pre-schoolers learning language thanks to ELLA

With Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Training Senator Scott Ryan we launched the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) trial at Little Grove Primary School.

Little Grove pre-schoolers are now learning Japanese through a play-based app to prepare them for future Japanese studies at primary and secondary school.



Tessa Hinchcliff (5) and Nathan Cameron (4) showing us how they learn Japanese

Great Eastern Highway upgrade

Travelling on Great Eastern Highway between Bullabulling and Coolgardie is now safer with improvement upgrades now complete. Along with Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport Hon Jim Chown MLC, I officially opened the project on Friday 22 May.

The 35km upgrade included the overlay, widening and reconstruction of the road, construction of three new passing lanes and the upgrade of drainage, intersections, signage, road safety barriers and line marking.

The Australian Government committed \$29.6 million and the Western Australian Government \$17.5 million towards this essential upgrade.



Cutting the ribbon with Main Roads WA project director Chris Raykos, Member for Mining and Pastoral Hon Mark Lewis MLC, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport Hon Jim Chown MLC, Shire of Coolgardie Deputy President Cr Tracey Rathbone and Member for Eyre Dr Graham Jacobs MLA

Ravensthorpe forum

More than 100 Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun residents attended a forum co-hosted by Dr Graham Jacobs and myself. There was healthy discussion on issues affecting the two towns including police response to drug problems, roads and infrastructure updates and the condition of the local hospital.



With Richenda Goldfinch, Ian Goldfinch, Dr Graham Jacobs and Keith and Christine Rowe



More Affordable Child Care

The Australian Government's new child care measures will make child care more affordable. From July 2017, the new Child Care Subsidy will help more families get into work and stay in work.

- Working families with incomes between \$85,000 and \$170,000 will be around **\$30 per week better off**. And we're removing the \$7,500 cap for families earning less than \$185,000.
- A Home Care (Nannies) Pilot will help people like shift workers access child care.
- Our "no job, no pay" rule will remove access to child care subsidies for parents who don't immunise their children (with exemptions only on medical grounds).
- Working families earning less than \$65,000 will get an **85% subsidy of child care fees** (up to an hourly cap). A Child Care Safety Net will help those families earning less than \$65,000 that don't meet the activity test.

Changes to Youth Allowance

I've been campaigning for changes to Youth Allowance since my election and I welcome the changes announced recently by Minister for Social Services the Hon Scott Morrison.

From 1 July 2016, the Family Asset Test and Family Actual Means Test will be removed from the Youth Allowance Parental Income Test. The changes will mean farming families will not have farm assets counted towards the test for their children accessing Youth Allowance.

Also being changed is the Youth Allowance parental income testing arrangements. It will now include all Family Tax Benefit children in the

family pool. The current test only includes children over 16. Counting all children will soften reductions in Youth Allowance as the family's income increases.

These changes are great for rural and regional families and specifically students aiming for dependent Youth Allowance. As more students achieve dependent Youth Allowance status, they won't have to take a gap year which will decrease University deferral rates.

While these changes are a step in the right direction, I will continue to campaign for greater fairness for rural and regional students.



Eleanor placed second in the 400m final at the WA State Track and Field Championships

National Stronger Regions Fund

Congratulations to the City of Albany on their successful National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) application. The City of Albany will use the \$997,000 to relocate the current visitor's centre from the Old Railway Station to York Street. This is a project I fully support because of the potential to increase tourism and economic development.

Round two opened on 15 May 2015 and will provide organisations with between \$20,000 and \$10 million and covers up to 50 per cent of project costs, giving local communities the power to identify projects that meet local needs and ensure communities are investing in their own future.

I encourage those who applied in round one to get feedback on your applications and apply again in round two. Please contact my office via Rick.Wilson.MP@aph.gov.au so I can support your application.

To access the NSRF guidelines visit - www.infrastructure.gov.au/nsrf.

Local Sporting Champions

The Australian Government's Local Sporting Champions program provides eligible athletes with a \$500 grant to help cover the cost of travel, accommodation, uniforms or equipment when competing, coaching or officiating at an endorsed event.

It is hard enough for athletes and officials living in regional areas to participate in events at a high level, let alone fund their travel to training and competition.

In the last round of grants, 11 athletes from O'Connor were successful in gaining funds through the program.

One of those successful athletes was Eleanor Barnett from Albany who competed in the WA State Track and Field Championships in March. Eleanor won a silver medal in the 400m final - a huge accomplishment for any athlete.

Eleanor's parents took the time to tell me, 'as a regional family it is wonderful to have support such as this to help Eleanor achieve her goals in athletics'.

The next funding round (Round 1 2015/16) is now open and closes on 30 June 2015. Information on the Local Sporting Champions program can be found at http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/schools_and_juniors/local_sporting_champions.

Coffee catch ups

My 'coffee with Rick' events have been very well received by communities across the electorate. Since the beginning of 2015 I've held 'coffee with Rick' events in Bridgetown, Darkan, Leonora, Kendenup and Brookton. If you'd like one in your community contact my office.



Leonora 'coffee with Rick' event



Helping Small Business Grow

The 2015 Budget backs small businesses, to help grow the economy and create jobs. Small businesses with less than \$2 million turnover will get more support.

- ✓ Immediate tax deductions for every asset purchased with a value up to \$20,000 (each).
- ✓ Tax relief – a 1.5% tax cut for incorporated small businesses. A 5% tax discount (up to \$1,000 a year) for unincorporated small businesses.
- ✓ Start-ups can immediately deduct professional expenses for starting their business.



DR CHRIS BACK
Senator for Western Australia



Opening of Esperance office

The official opening of my Esperance electorate office was well attended by Esperance locals and business owners. The office has been staffed since November, but this was a great opportunity for Rick Wilson MP, Dr Graham Jacobs MLA and me to gather to commemorate the event.

Call in and meet Jennifer Obourne from 10am to 3pm Monday to Wednesday.

While we were in Esperance, Rick and I took the opportunity to learn about changes at the Esperance Port. We attended a briefing on the new structure with the Southern Ports Authority.



Touring Southern Ports Authority Esperance with Chief Operating Officer David Horton and Rick Wilson MP



With Rick Wilson MP and Dr Graham Jacobs MLA

Current GST distribution method flawed

In mid-May, WA Treasurer Mike Nahan brought down a budget with the first state budget deficit (\$1.3 billion) in recent memory.

I argue against the circumstances that have caused WA to go into deficit and putting our AAA credit rating at risk.

Every WA man, woman and child contributes some \$2,370 per year to GST and next financial year, as WA's GST share plummets to historic depths, they will get back a measly \$714 per head.

WA will retain just \$1.9 billion of the \$6.4 billion contributed by WA taxpayers - that's more than double the state's deficit!

Tasmania, a state with only 20 per cent of WA's population, will receive \$300 million more next year than WA.

How robust is our Federation given the distortion of the current GST distribution?

If the objective of creating a federation was to create stability and encourage common interests, reduce differences across territorial boundaries and deliver mutual benefits to the community, then we have fallen well short of those worthy principles.

The Commonwealth Grants Commission's horizontal fiscal equalisation process is flawed. It is crooked; it is not equalisation; it is discriminatory.

The idea of one state receiving 30c in the dollar when another territory (NT) gets \$5.66 is unfair.

Under the current Grants Commission formula it is possible that Western Australia's share of the GST could reduce to zero dollars.

If we do not get rid of this Grants Commission formula and if we do not go back to the drawing board, the future of Australia's Federation, for me, is at risk.

Sir David Brand Scholarship

Congratulations to Louise Fraser from Bakers Hill who was the recipient of the 2014 Sir David Brand Scholarship sponsored by myself and four federal Liberal colleagues (Rick Wilson MP, Nola Marino MP, Melissa Price MP and Christian Porter MP).

This is one of two David Brand Scholarships offered to students at Muresk Institute; the other scholarship is sponsored by a group of state Liberal MPs.



With John Scott, Louise Fraser and Bernard Brand

Bill to protect animals against cruelty

As a veterinarian, I am as appalled as anyone else when animals are subjected to malicious cruelty but I am even more appalled when activist groups present visual images taken sometimes up to 12 months prior effectively preventing authorities from accurately investigating animal cruelty allegations in a timely manner.

That's why I have introduced to the Senate an Animal Protection Bill aimed at reducing malicious cruelty to animals and making a provision to protect lawfully operating animal enterprises.

The Bill is an amendment to the Criminal Code and has two parts. It does not censor or restrict the media, media coverage or any person in any way.

The first part of the Bill stipulates if a person takes visual images of what they believe to be malicious cruelty to animals they must report this to the responsible authority without delay.

Authorities are then empowered to investigate swiftly ensuring further cruelty is averted and to prosecute the perpetrators if proven guilty.



At the Wagin Woolorama with Senator Linda Reynolds

The second part of the Bill is directed at anyone who intimidates, threatens or attacks anyone associated with operating a lawful animal enterprise. It also prohibits trespassing onto or vandalism of such enterprises.

Such actions are criminal in nature, invade the privacy of affected persons and can place animals at risk from a welfare, biosecurity, health and safety point of view.

The motives of many animal activists are clear by their own published statements - they want to see the end of Australia's livestock industries with many opposing any form of animal production and wanting to drastically reduce meat consumption.

In doing so, they are directly attacking Australia's international reputation, export trade and the general profitability of agricultural and rural communities.

Eucla

I visited the most eastern and isolated town in my electorate – Eucla – where I officially opening the new \$2.5 million Silver Chain Multi-Purpose Health Centre.

One of the highlights of the trip was meeting the Eucla community members who keep this border-town running.

Credit is due to the police officers, Department of Agriculture border officers and local business owners who service the Eyre Highway but I think the most deserving praise was directed at two local heroes – Wendy and Ardan McGuinness.

The couple have been in the small town for six years, and their hard work is the foundation on which the health centre rests. As the town's remote area nurse, Wendy is at the front line of health care in Eucla. Wendy's husband Ardan, meanwhile, is usually close by her side in an emergency, driving the ambulance. It is couples like Wendy and Ardan that



With Silver Chain CEO Chris McGowan, Primary Health Regional Manager Lesley Pearson and champion Remote Area Primary Health Nurse Wendy McGuinness

keep communities like Eucla functioning and I can assure you, if you happen to fall ill along the Nullarbor, you want Wendy McGuinness caring for you.

Along with Wendy and Ardan the 40 person community includes six police officers led by OIC David Snowball, a roadhouse and motel owned and run by the amazing Rasa Patupis and 10 Department of Agriculture and Food officers manning the Eucla Quarantine Checkpoint.



With Department of Agriculture and Food officers Louise Smith and Nick Jackson who keep WA free of the biosecurity threats that are common in other parts of Australia

The border checkpoints are a first line of defence against incursions of unwanted pests, weeds and diseases, which could arrive on freight, cargo and other items brought in from interstate.

OUT AND ABOUT



Being presented with membership to the Rural Movie Museum Inc. in Wagin by Chairperson Michael Ritchie



With Heywire winners Tekura Irvine from Beacon, Eloise Skoss from Manjimup, Katie McAllister from Albany and Brittany Reinke from Esperance



Congratulating Popanyinning local Christine Eales on receiving a Federal Government Women Leaders in Sport grant



Visiting Rawlinna Station and checking out some of the sheep with Station Manager Michael Simons



With the Kelliher family of Wandering and Matt Daubney from Bannister Downs Dairy Northcliffe