WATER, OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCE

As we head into the Wet Season, water becomes less of a concern for many rural residents but it is an ongoing issue that is more complicated than most people realise.

For people who live in Darwin and Palmerston, water is not such a big issue. Those of us who live in the electorate of Daly and the rural area of Darwin deal with water issues on many levels.

“What are Banjo Lines? Are they lines of poetry or a mob of banjo players stretched out?”

The lucky ones have access to reticulated water, fed from Darwin River Dam. But for some, who do access water from the Darwin water supply, their connection is via 'banjo lines'.

What are banjo lines? Are they lines of poetry or a mob of banjo players stretched out?

Interestingly, some in Government have no idea either! ‘...it’s understood this relates to a fuel line/brake fitting.’

In all seriousness, those unlucky enough to be connected via ‘banjo lines’ certainly don’t see the humorous side of the issue.

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Message from Gary

As we say goodbye to the Dry and get ready for the Wet Season it is timely to start thinking about cleaning up the block in preparation for the cyclone season.

I thank our volunteer furies for their efforts during this fire season and sympathise with those residents who were victim to this horrific season, I know many are still dealing with the aftermath.

It is with great sadness Rhonda and I farewelled our dear friend Mr Wilson who was an inspiration to all those who knew and worked with him.

Mr Wilson, a proud Wadeye man worked in multiple supervisory positions within his communities before joining local government and becoming the Mayor of West Daly Regional Council.

Rest in peace dear friend,

Gary

CUTS TO COMMUNITY FUNDING

I was alarmed to discover, by chance, the removal of the popular Northern Territory Government Community Benefit Fund.

The Community Benefit Fund has delivered grants to support local non-profit organisations. Those local organisations are our volunteer fire brigades, sporting clubs, seniors groups and reserves who now have reduced options to apply for funding.

The $11 million fund is under review by the NT Government and I fear they plan to direct the funds to the Territory Non Government Organisation (NGOs) sector as part of their election commitment to provide long term funding.

While I support funding to NGOs, I don’t support funding them at the expense of our local associations and organisations.

I only hope Government seriously considers the impact any removal or reduction of this grant avenue will have on our clubs and organisations before making any rash decisions.

If you are part of a club or association, this could impact the ability of your club to run events or upgrade equipment or facilities. I urge you to let Government know this is detrimental to the future of local clubs.
As reported in my last newsletter, I asked a number of questions about the electorate and am pleased to advise most of them have been answered and are now available on the government website.

Rural Bus Services
As well as asking questions during the budget process, I also surveyed the Mala Plains community following representation from residents.

I was pleased to hear the school bus network has been expanded to include the new Mala Plains subdivision with the extension of route 430. A great win for residents!

While there are no immediate plans to expand the rural bus service, the Cox Peninsula Interchange is undergoing an upgrade this financial year.

Territory Wildlife Park here to stay!
In the draft infrastructure strategy there was a plan to move Territory Wildlife Park (TWP) to a site near Darwin. This caused widespread outrage and rightly so!

Government has now backtracked considerably and has said there are now no plans to move the TWP. The entry in the draft strategy came as a suggestion from a member of the public offered through the economic summit process. Seriously??

Regardless of this weak response I do thank the Minister for listening to the community. The Territory Wildlife Park is an important tourist attraction and a valuable part of our wider community.

Saddle Rail
Sadly, again the Government fails to understand Port Keats road flooding issues and when questioned, responded that it will be done as a medium term priority within their 10 year Infrastructure Plan. This is frustrating to say the least when I successfully managed to secure funding for both projects in the last budget of the former Government. Also knowing full well both need to be done at the same time to address access during the wet season.

For those living in the vicinity of the Livingstone Beef Abattoir, odour has been an ongoing issue.

AACo listened to the concerns raised and have invested $8.7 million on a new Waste Water Treatment Plant that is in its final stages of commissioning.

The final stage involves developing the biological communities within the two lagoons of the plant.

The biological communities remove the organic material from the wastewater, converting it to useable Biogas.

AACo are carefully monitoring the progress and are monitoring the broader wastewater management system for odour performance.

Residents should start to experience significant reduction in odour from the wastewater processing operations.

For more information residents are encouraged to contact the environmental team on 0428 096 952 or environmental@aaco.com.au
**INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE**

**YELLOW CREEK CROSSING UNDERWAY**

On a recent drive out to Woody I was pleased to see the $25.4 million Yellow Creek Crossing is underway. This is great news for the residents of this region though it will not address the access problems during the Wet Season without the much needed upgrade to Saddle Rail.

**LITCHFIELD PARK ROAD**

The remaining 15km of Litchfield Park Road continue to be sealed over the next 12 months, along with a new bridge across Lower Finniss River.

Stage One was due to be completed by November 2017 which included a 4km section of road.

Stage Two includes the last 11km of road and the new bridge at the Lower Finniss River.

**CARVETH/WILLIAM ROAD TO BE SEALED**

The Carveth Road/William Road saga has finally reached a satisfactory conclusion for residents living on these roads.

Following strong lobbying from Litchfield Councillor Doug Barden and residents, Council determined at their October meeting to seal both roads.

This follows a decision in August 2016 by Council to seal both roads with all residents contributing just over $4,000 under the Ratepayer Funded Seal Program.

This decision was rescinded in March of this year which sparked outrage amongst residents. A great result for the residents!

**DARWIN RIVER ROAD**

Another win for the Daly electorate is the announcement of increased funding to Darwin River Road.

In January of this year Government responded to my enquiry on repairs and maintenance to this road, advising they spend around $100,000 on the road each year. However, a second enquiry following further concerns from residents to my office resulted in the Minister committing $990,000 to Darwin River Road during the 2017-18 financial year - another great win for Daly!

**RELOCATION OF WATER HYDRANT VALVES**

Following ongoing lobbying from both volunteer fires and myself, Government have listened to concerns and agreed to relocate the water hydrant located on the Livingstone Road/Stuart Highway intersection.

The hydrant will be moved to a safer and easier accessible site along McHenry Road.

And after the recent horrific fire season which saw the need for water bombing planes, I asked the Government to consider relocating a watering point at the Hughes Airstrip. This will make refilling aircraft more efficient. Government has agreed and commenced discussions with Power Water Corporation.
Following strong lobbying from the Dundee Progress Association and concerned residents of the Dundee community, I presented a petition of 989 petitioners calling on government to provide a health service at Dundee. A further 189 online signatures were also tabled.

This follows the closure of the First Aid Post at Dundee Beach twelve months ago.

I also asked the Minister during Parliamentary Question Time if she would commit to the residents of Dundee that they will receive a permanent health service as soon as possible.

The Minister advised the Primary Health Network NT is undertaking a health needs assessment and analysis to look at the health needs of the residents in the region.

In the meantime, residents and visitors of Dundee are without any health services.

Mermaid Circuit at Dundee has been the subject of many complaints received through my office. It was good to see a tender released recently for the reforming and resheeting of various sections on both Mermaid Circuit and Balanda Drive.

Unfortunately Government has not committed to sealing Mermaid Circuit, residents would prefer to see this occur. In the meantime, these works should alleviate some of the issues.

Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) visited Batchelor during Neighbourhood Watch week. Senior Constable Tracy Dale-Middleton spoke to a small group of residents at an information night in early October and encouraged the community to join Neighbourhood Watch.

The meeting was organised by new councillor Deb Moyle who is now a member of NHW along with a number of residents. It was great to see local councillor Christian McElwee and Paul McInerney, CEO of the council, come along as well.

The meeting was informative and gave residents an idea of how they can work together to keep the community safe.

There were a lot of goodies handed out including the very popular invisible marking pens to mark your property.

Neighbourhood Watch is free to join and as part of your membership you can obtain an Ochre Card for free as well. Members are the eyes and ears of the community, there are no meetings to attend but as a group you can keep your community safe. For further information or to join, visit www.nhwnt.org.au or call 8999 0847. If you have Facebook, visit them at neighbourhood Watch NT.
Congratulations to Marty and Blue on 50 years of Marriage! It’s a great achievement to reach the Golden Wedding Anniversary, Rhonda and I are nearly there!

NT Education and Care Awards

Congratulations to our very own Natalie and Megan from Berry Springs Pre School for being recognised for their dedication and commitment to their students.

Berry Springs Pre School were finalists in the Outstanding Community Engagement Awards as part of the NT Education and Care Awards held in October.

The awards celebrate the achievements of early childhood educators and service providers and their commitment to achieving quality outcomes for children and families in the Northern Territory.

Regional Principal of the Year

I was extremely pleased to hear Robyn Thorpe was awarded the Palmerston and Rural Regional Principal of the Year Award during 2017 World Teacher’s Day.

I also learned Robyn is the first principal across Australia to receive national certification as a practising Principal.

Well deserved Robyn, your commitment to education in the Territory and our students is to be commended.

World Teacher’s Day

World Teacher’s Day is a day to celebrate and acknowledge the significant contribution our teachers and support staff have on our children and the community.

I thank you all for the work you do, you make a real difference to our children and for that we are truly grateful.

World Teacher’s Day was also Day for Daniel, it was fantastic to see so many students and teachers wearing red in honour of Daniel.
Hooning on the intersection of Jenkins and Finn Roads is a regular occurrence for those who travel to and from the city. Rural residents would agree it is unsightly and an every day concern.

I have raised this with the Humpty Doo Police who are well aware of the issue and working on addressing this dangerous behaviour.

If you witness hooning at this intersection or anywhere else, call 131 444 and if you can, take a note of the number plates of the offending vehicles.

Did you know it is illegal to drive a quad bike on a public road or public place including a park, beach or footpath unless you have a conditional registration? Fines can be up to $1,500 avoid a fine - obey the rules!

Nominations for the Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards are now open and it would be great to see local young achievers awarded for their achievements.

I urge you to nominate a young person who has made a positive difference in their community. There are many categories:

- Youth Leadership Award
- Small Business Achievement Award
- Young Carers Award
- Young Indigenous Educator Award
- Environment Award
- Arts Award
- Community Service Award
- Sport Award
- Indigenous Achievement Award
- Fashion Award
- Health and Wellbeing Award
- Regional and Rural Initiative Award

The purpose of the Northern Territory Young Achiever Awards is to acknowledge, encourage and most importantly promote the positive achievements of young Territorians up to and including 29 years of age as of 31st December each year.

Nominations close 6 December 2017. Visit www.awardsaustralia.com/ntyaa or call 1300 148 228

It was great to catch up with the Wadeye Magic boys back in September when they took on St Marys in a senior men’s practice match.

It was a great day but the only down was that Wadeye weren’t the winners this time round!

St Marys’ Vic and Steve Ludwig are great supports of the Wadeye connection with the Saints. Fabulous to have their support with the BBQ after the game.
WATER - OUR PRECIOUS RESOURCE

Continued from page 1

Banjo lines are private water mains that were constructed by landowners and developers prior to 1996. Unfortunately many of the lines were constructed with cheap pipes that are now deteriorating.

Sadly some residents bought in good faith unaware of the problems they would encounter.

Though due diligence should have been undertaken at the time of purchase, I don’t believe Government should ignore the issue and put the onus back on the residents.

We are constantly being told to find and fix leaks to protect our precious resource. However when private water mains go under roads and carparks it is beyond the capacity of most homeowners to be able to afford to fix this massive problem.

At the last election, the Country Liberals committed to replace these water mains over time.

I have asked Government to put this issue back on the table for a sensible discussion to find a solution.

Back to the issue of water, other than banjo lines, the majority of us rely on bores and water tanks for our water. There are many facets to the water issue and it is more complicated than most people realise.

In Southport for instance, there is no water infrastructure in place. Residents have either rainwater tanks or they cart water from a communal town bore, a very labourious task!

With the number of people preferring to live rural and two bad wet seasons in a row, the surface water and acquifers are under considerable pressure. As we’ve seen with the Berry Springs Dolostone Aquifer, levels have become dangerously low, putting at risk the existing bores and our precious Berry Springs.

A quick glance at the powerpoint presentation in my office window shows the number of bores in the early 80s and 90s, to the number we have now in the area.

Government needs to prepare a plan to:

- Address the problem of banjo lines including a timetable.
- Propose timetable to reticulate water in areas such as Southport, Dundee and Wagait.
- Prioritise the extension of reticulated water into the rural areas, such as Berry Springs, Noonamah, Weddell and Kenbi.

PRODUCT SAFETY RECALL

Polaris General and General Deluxe 2 seat and 4 seat side by side vehicle

What are the defects?
The upper steering shafts on 2016-2017 General vehicles may experience movement along the length of the power steering spline.

What are the hazards?
In extreme circumstances, this movement may ultimately result in separation of the shaft from the spline, which may lead to the loss of steering.

What should consumers do?
Affected owners will be contacted by direct mail. Owners should stop using the vehicle and contact their nearest Polaris General dealer to arrange for an inspection and repair.

For further information consumers can call the Customer Service Department on 03 9394 5610.

For assistance contacting or locating a Polaris dealer consumers can call 1300 654 142 or go to www.polarisindustries.com.au

For further information visit www.productsafety.gov.au
Berry Springs Primary celebrates 40 years!

Wow, it’s hard to believe 40 years have gone by since Berry Springs Primary School first opened its doors!

A trip down memory lane and a very special visitor to the 40th birthday picnic, the second principal of the school, Alan Taylor who worked at the school from 1984 to 1987.

It was great to be able to present Kori Spicer of Woolaning School and Adam Rogan of Berry Springs School with their new bikes. The bikes are awarded to the student with the best attendance. We purchase our bikes from local Palmerston business Spokes NT. Thanks to Ian and Simone.

LEFT: Batchelor Area School
ABOVE: Woolaning students with Principal Kokie Steward.
BELOW LEFT: Meeting President Joko Widodo in Jakarta
BELOW: Berry Springs students visit Canberra

ABOVE: Tumbling Waters Holiday Park’s Jenny and Darren
RIGHT: ABC’s Gardening Australia Costa Georgiadis visited the Mango Festival in Berry Springs

Berry Springs Primary celebrates 40 years!