

# Cash boost for childcare

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Federal Member for Parkes Mark Coulton welcomed the announcement that included funding for 15 services in the Parkes electorate, an extra \$3.3 million, to support the needs of local families.

“This funding will help local childcare services improve access to quality care, particularly in remote, rural and disadvantaged parts of the Parkes electorate,” Mr Coulton said.

“It will be good for our local kids, good for our hard-working families and ultimately for our community.

“It will also have a positive economic benefit by allowing more local parents to get back into work or to take on additional hours if they chose.

Nurruby Childcare Services’ managing director Prue Jamieson said the funding announcement, which will be rolled out over three years, was “absolutely vital”.

“It’s more than welcome,” said Mrs Jamieson.

“It’s utilisation funding recognising the unique difficulties of rural and

remote services

“It ensures the continuity of service provisions.”

Minister for Education and Youth Alan Tudge said more than 640 childcare services around Australia would share in more than \$100 million through the program.

“We are committed to giving every Australian family access to quality childcare, regardless of where they live or their circumstances,” Mr Tudge said.

“In some remote areas, there may only be one or two childcare services operating and it is critical we keep these open and help improve and expand facilities so more kids can attend.

“This program also helps services to run initiatives that reduce barriers which may otherwise prevent local kids from accessing care.”

Minister for Regional Education Bridget McKenzie said the CCCF would help ensure childcare continued to be available for many families in the Parkes electorate.

“These grants will have tangible benefits for childcare providers that will flow to local children and their families,” Ms McKenzie said.

“It means more families in the Parkes electorate can take advantage of our childcare subsidy if they choose to work, learn or volunteer,” she added.

Including this announcement, the federal government has allocated more than \$220 million to over 1000 childcare services through the Community Child Care Fund since 2018, according to a statement released by Mr Coulton’s office.

“The government is investing around \$10 billion in childcare this year to support around one million families.

“The 2021 budget delivered further support to reduce the out-of-pocket costs for parents with multiple children aged under six in care and a commitment to a \$2 billion preschool funding agreement for access to early learning for all children in the year before school.”



Member for Parkes Mark Coulton.

# High school gains second deputy principal

Wee Waa High School has welcomed a second deputy principal - Robert Eaton - who will have a key focus on building the digital literacy of staff and students.

Mr Eaton said the 18 month contract opportunity to join the high school was too appealing to miss.

After completing a Computer Science and Finance degree at the University of New England, Mr Eaton forged a successful early career in IT sales and management for well-known retail giant, Harvey Norman.

It was at UNE that he met his wife, Paula Wheeler of Narrabri, who was studying the same degree.

With a love of people, the service industry and finding solutions to people’s IT needs, Mr Eaton said there were strong parallels between the work he was doing then and teaching.

“Finding solutions to each customer’s unique needs is no different to understanding the way each student learns, then tailoring how you deliver information,” he said.

It was Mr Eaton’s talent for identifying and implementing efficient and workable solutions that saw him quickly move through management roles at Harvey Norman at various stores on the East Coast of NSW.

All the while his wife was building her IT career with Westpac, Mr Eaton decided to follow his growing interest in education and teaching young people, and embarked on a Graduate Diploma via distance education.

With small children and his wife working full time, “it was a juggling act,” and it paid off.

After teaching casually at Maitland High School, he was offered a permanent position in their computer faculty.

It was here that he taught technology and robotics as well as a gaming class for Year 10 students so that they could learn coding.

For Year 11 students, he taught software programming, IT processes and technology.

With a student population of 1100, for the last three years, Mr Eaton has been the head teacher of wellbeing and the Year 11 head teacher at Maitland High.

“It was hard leaving my Year 11 cohort as I have been with them since Year 7,” he explained.

“Touring Google headquarters a few years back was an ‘eye opening’ experience.


“To see how they approach employability skills really captured my interest, and from a teaching perspective it helped give me insight into how I can best prepare students for what industry needs into the future.

“The experience really helped me shape strategies to increase students’ digital literacy.

“Being able to tailor learning so that it is logical and replicable for each individual student is something that gives me a great deal of satisfaction.

“The opportunity to now do this for staff and students alike in a small school environment was really appealing to me.

“The time savings I can help our teachers achieve using the Microsoft One Note technology that the

 For students, the ultimate outcome is for them to be highly employable when they leave high school and to be comfortable navigating their way around different programs.

Department of Education has put in place will make lesson preparation more efficient, and it will be easier to tailor learning to each students’ individual need.

“I know from firsthand experience, this really helps us as teachers find our work more rewarding.

“For students, the ultimate outcome is for them to be highly employable when they leave high school and to be comfortable navigating their way around different programs.

“Whether a student is wanting to be a mechanic, a health care practitioner or almost anything else, digital literacy is essential.

“I’m already enjoying being at Wee Waa High and this new opportunity to stretch myself and students.

“I have a really great opportunity here to positively impact the school and I’m really grateful,” said Mr Eaton.



Wee Waa High School has welcomed a second deputy principal Robert Eaton.

# Schools to power NSW

Wee Waa High School and Public School will participate in an innovative new program being piloted to explore the potential for schools to use solar PV panels and batteries to generate electricity for themselves and create enough to supply electricity to the state’s energy grid.

Minister for Education Sarah Mitchell said the potential of the Schools Renewable Energy Infrastructure Pilot Project is limitless.

“In NSW, we have 2,200 public schools; combined they have a roof space of 8 million square metres,” said

Ms Mitchell.

“That is almost 2,000 football fields worth of space ready for power production.

“By producing solar energy, schools will benefit from lower energy bills, and batteries will store any excess solar energy for later use or can be sold to the energy grid.

“We estimate the 25 schools will save \$300,000 in power bills, money which can go back into education, and any unused power can go into the grid.

“It’s estimated that the 25 schools

will collectively generate approximately 2,400,000 kWh of electricity per year.

“NSW is leading the country in school design, and this pilot project is one innovative way we are looking at powering, cooling and heating our schools.”

The pilot project aims to assess the benefits and costs of the large-scale implementation of solar PV systems and batteries, together with other initiatives that can reduce demand on the energy network in regional and metropolitan schools.

# Body of missing man found near Namoi River

Police have located the body of a man reported missing from the state’s north-west.

The body of the missing man was located near the Namoi River on Friday morning following an extensive search.

Before discovering the body, police appealed to the public for information on the 31-year-old man’s disappearance.

He had been last seen in Narrabri on Wednesday, July 7.

Officers from Oxley Police District were notified of his disappearance on the following day and started inquiries.

The man’s vehicle was located near the Narrabri Creek on Thursday, July 9.

After further extensive discoveries, the man’s body was located in waters near the river.

Police are not treating the death as suspicious.

A report will be prepared for the information of the Coroner.