



Janelle's Page Report

YEARENDER 2011

> **Inside:** Health, Education, Community Infrastructure, Re-election Commitments

> **Back Page:** National Disability Insurance Scheme, Coal Seam Gas Policy, Clean Energy Policy

Getting on with the job

I have so much to say in my 2011 Page Report that it is hard to know what to leave in or out. I hope you have been able to see some of the things I have done through the local media, at community events, in my office, and out and about in the electorate.

When I was first elected in 2007 I promised to turn around the decade of political neglect of this region. I have succeeded in securing much needed infrastructure and services for Page, and there is more to do.

My re-election in 2010 has given me the opportunity to make further gains. This report highlights some of the funding I've been able to bring into our area and the local economy.

I know we face many challenges as the Global Financial Crisis effects continue to be felt locally, especially by small business, including our construction and retail sectors. The effects vary, and while some businesses struggle others are thriving. At the national level I am lobbying to have a Small Business Commissioner established.

Like you, I watch prices closely. The Australian Government's tax cuts over the past four years, and the pension increases and reforms have been key measures to offset price rises.

The Australian Government also brought in the first paid maternity leave scheme. I strongly supported the scheme, but made it clear that it was not to cost our small business sector. I am pleased to say that this is how it is structured.

My staff members and I get excited about wins, large and small. Big events are significant, but often the small victories are more meaningful. Not the things that make headlines, but things that make a difference to people's lives.

In Parliament my workload has increased. I chair the Parliament's Public Works Committee and the Trade Sub-Committee, as well as being a member of the Selection Committee among others. In Canberra I keep lobbying for our region and do my best to make sure opportunities are seized for us, whether large or small.

2012 is shaping up to be a busy and productive year. I am already planning a series of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) forums, developing a local mental health strategy, lobbying to bring the NBN north of Coffs Harbour, along with a list of other projects.

This report gives you an idea of what I've been able to do as your Federal Member. More information is available at www.janellesaffin.com.au

Janelle

Federal Member for Page
Janelle Saffin MP

'Seeing is believing'

> **Ballina Bypass open early for Christmas-New Year**

> **Bypass gives Alstonville a new lease of life**

> **Work starts on Devils Pulpit upgrade, Tabbimoble**



From sod turning to ribbon cutting, Janelle Saffin and Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Anthony Albanese have delivered on two major election commitments this year -- the Alstonville Bypass and the Ballina Bypass. Janelle secured the funding for both projects in 2007.

Stage 2 of the Ballina Bypass was opened to traffic on November 29 -- six months ahead of schedule and in time for the Christmas holidays. The Australian Government invested \$450 million in the \$640-million Ballina Bypass -- a major Pacific Highway project -- with the NSW Government investing \$190 million.

This major infrastructure investment has been an important boost to the local economy, with 1800 workers directly involved in the project and another 5700 jobs created indirectly.

The opening of Stage 2, the 4.5-km Cumbalum Road to Teven Road section, takes the highway traffic away from Ballina, removing about 1500 trucks and 6500 cars a day from the local streets. This improves road safety in Ballina and on the Pacific Highway and cuts travel time.

The Ballina Bypass was one of Janelle's key election commitments. It was something the

community had lobbied for over many years, particularly the Ballina Bypass Action Group led by Cr Alan Brown.

The final stage of the Bypass, from Teven to Bruxner Highway, is due to be completed in March 2012.

Alstonville celebrates

In Alstonville, it really was a case of 'seeing is believing' when Janelle and Minister Albanese opened the Alstonville Bypass in May. Almost 40 years after the first line on a map was drawn, the Alstonville Bypass became a reality-- a tribute to the persistence of all those in the local community who championed the project over many years.

Janelle secured the funding commitment in 2007. Minister Anthony Albanese said the \$97 million southern bypass of Alstonville and Wollongbar was one of the first road projects to be commissioned by the current Federal Labor Government. Janelle acknowledged the tireless efforts of Bob Wilson and the Alstonville Bypass Action Group and said she was delighted to have been able to deliver on a project that so many had promised in the past.



Top: Janelle cuts the ribbon to open The Ballina Bypass, accompanied by Federal Minister for Infrastructure Anthony Albanese, State Member for Ballina Don Page, Ballina Mayor Cr Phil Silver and Ballina Bypass Action Group members Cr Alan Brown and Neil Saines.

Inset: Pacific Highway General Manager Bob Higgins briefs Janelle on Devils Pulpit upgrade, near Tabbimoble.

■ **Continued next page.**



Airport, city hall upgrades

> Janelle & Simon open Casino Community Centre



Janelle was happy to host 'a good friend of the Northern Rivers' -- Federal Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government Simon Crean -- on two visits to the Page electorate this year.

In January, Mr Crean came to the Clarence Valley in the wake of major flooding to meet with affected residents, emergency services personnel and representatives from 15 Local Government Areas. In September, Mr Crean led a regional forum on the Government's Clean Energy Policy for the agricultural sector, business and community leaders in Lismore.

He also joined Janelle when she delivered on one of her major election commitments from 2007 -- \$3.3-million towards Richmond Valley Council's new Community and Cultural Centre in Casino. The 'modern art deco' two-storey building in Walker Street will have the Casino Neighbourhood Centre as its main tenant on the second floor

Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) Round 1

Lobbying in Canberra has again paid dividends with two of Janelle's 'Page Priorities' -- long overdue

Simon Crean and Janelle Saffin open Casino's new Community and Cultural Centre, the 'Manyweathers Building'.

upgrades of the Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport and the Lismore City Hall -- successful under Round 1 of the Australian Government's Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF).

Janelle and Minister Crean recently announced that they were among 35 projects of regional significance selected from more than 550 applications nationwide.

Ballina Shire Council will receive \$3.5 million towards a \$4-million upgrade and extension of the airport's apron parking bays, taxiway and hardstand area, allowing for three jet aircraft to be parked at one time.

Ballina is the gateway for holiday makers to Ballina, Byron Bay and other coastal towns, and this project will minimise delays, improve on-time performance and provide capacity for additional passengers.

Janelle has congratulated Lismore City Council on the high standard of its application for \$4.96 million in Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) funding towards a \$5.99-million in

improvements to the hall's access and performance support facilities.

Lismore City Hall is home to the Northern Rivers Performing Arts Group (NORPA) and this upgrade will ensure the hall can stage more diverse performances and remain a significant cultural asset for Lismore and the region for decades to come.

RDAF Round 2

Janelle wants all her 'Page Priorities' to eventually get support and will continue to work with community members, organisations and local government to realise these community infrastructure projects.

Applications for Round Two of the RDAF program, worth \$200 million, have opened.

Kyogle Shire Council's Cultural Hub, Richmond Valley Council's Redevelopment of Queen Elizabeth Park in Casino, Clarence Valley Council's Grafton Regional Airport Upgrade, and Ballina Shire Council's Ballina Biochar and Waste to Energy Project are all deserving of support.

Schools give BER the thumbs up

More than 200 school building and maintenance projects have been completed in Page under the Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

Janelle has joined school communities across the electorate to celebrate the opening of their new school halls, libraries, science and language centres, multi purpose classrooms and other facilities. Parents, teachers, staff and students have told Janelle how much they appreciate the new buildings-- in many cases these were facilities the school wouldn't have dreamed of getting without the BER. The BER program did what it was designed to do-- support local jobs and stimulate economic activity during the Global Financial Crisis, while providing modern school facilities.

Local builders involved have expressed their appreciation that the BER program has been a great support for the local construction sector. More than \$128 million has been spent on school buildings and maintenance in Page, with about 98 per cent of local projects now complete.

The Australian Government has also invested around \$12 million in Trade Training Centres in Page, providing industry standard facilities for secondary schools in Lismore, Kyogle, Casino and Bonalbo. Other schools are invited to apply under Round 5 of the Program in 2012.



School captain Matt Roberts and student Olivia Skinner Spiers with prefect Taylah Horne holding the ribbon for Janelle at the opening of the new Iluka Public School Library.

'Seeing is believing' ■ From front page.

The main street of Alstonville has a lovely village ambience and the streets are much safer now. The bypass makes for much easier travel between Ballina and Lismore.

Janelle continues to work with State Member for Ballina Don Page to resolve remaining noise issues for some Wollongbar residents.

Pacific Highway upgrade

In November, Pacific Highway General Manager Bob Higgins gave Janelle an on-site briefing at Devils Pulpit, south of Tabbimobile,

where preparations are underway for the new 7.3-km section of Pacific Highway upgrade. John Holland Pty Ltd has been awarded the contract for the \$77-million Devils Pulpit upgrade, with the Federal Government investing \$62 million and the NSW Government contributing \$15 million.

The Federal Government this year announced an additional \$1 billion for the Pacific Highway upgrade, on top of the \$3.1 billion committed for the highway since Labor

came to office in 2007. In November Minister Albanese announced bringing forward \$490 million to make sure the work now underway along the Pacific Highway can be completed under the Federal-State agreement.

Right: Janelle and Minister Albanese officially open The Ballina Bypass, accompanied by Don Page, Cr Phil Silver, Cr David Wright, and Bob Wilson, of the Alstonville Bypass Action Group.



Health reform on track

Janelle continues to work hard to ensure that local communities on the ground in Page share in the benefits of the Australian Government's health and hospitals reform agenda. May 16, 2011, was a landmark day for Clarence Valley health when one of Janelle's major election commitments from 2007 – the \$19.2-million Stage One redevelopment of Grafton Base Hospital -- went fully operational. Janelle was so pleased to see Stage One 'up and running' and to hear from Medical Staff Council Chair Dr Allan Tyson that her major re-election commitment from 2010 -- a new \$7-million X-ray Department, six orthopaedic beds costing \$3 million and a new kitchen -- is on target to be completed by August 2012. Ochre Health has opened the \$5-million Grafton GP Super Clinic to patients, and over time, this will take some pressure off Grafton Base's Emergency Department. The Stage Three Redevelopment of Lismore Base Hospital and a Community Health Centre for Yamba remain Janelle's key priorities, but both will need to have significant funding support from the State Government to have any chance of winning funding under the Regional Round of the Australian Government's Health and Hospitals Fund. There is \$475 million available for distribution across the country. Janelle has also welcomed funding boosts to St Vincents Private Hospital in Lismore -- \$884,414 for a new teaching and learning centre and \$157,000 towards purchasing equipment for a Urological Centre of Excellence.

Cancer care

More recently, Janelle has been busy with the team from Woolam Constructions, of Ballina, as they started work on the 20-unit 'Our House' cancer patient accommodation lodge in Lismore. Federal funding totalling \$3.6 million, \$500,000 in kind from the State Government towards purchase of the land, \$500,000 from the NSW Cancer Council, together with the enormous generosity of local people, have secured this great community project for the Northern Rivers region. The lodge is expected to be open by mid-2012. Woolam Constructions are also responsible for the works to accommodate PET/CT and MRI Scanners at Lismore Base Hospital, representing a \$6.5-million Federal investment in enhanced cancer care, something the city thought we would never get.

Mental health care and Aged care

Janelle invited Australia's first Minister for Mental Health, Mark Butler, to Southern Cross University's Health Clinic for a 'community consultation' on the Federal Government's mental health reform agenda earlier this year. Mr Butler heard from a wide cross-section of Northern Rivers local families and carers, who live with mental ill-health, health professionals, and Non Government Organisation representatives. Mr Butler, who is also Minister for Ageing, returned to Page in August to meet with local seniors to discuss healthy and positive ageing. This forum helped inform the Government's response to the Productivity Commission Final Report, Caring for Older Australians.

Healthy lifestyle

Following the success of the Active Kyogle project which started last year, residents of two more Local Government Areas in Page are now benefiting from the Federal Government's \$72-million Healthy Communities Initiative. Clarence Valley Council secured a grant of more than \$700,000 to promote new healthy eating and exercise programs, aimed at reducing overweight and obesity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the unemployed and older Australians.

Janelle has now just informed Lismore City Council that it gained \$566,000 under Healthy Communities to roll out its Move2Change project, including a mix of national and local programs to promote cardiac health, manage weight and learn to swim.

Clinical training

In May, Janelle announced a \$5.6-million Federal investment in clinical education and training infrastructure, including \$4.1 million for a multi-disciplinary clinical teaching facility on-site at Ballina District Hospital; \$1 million for a clinical training facility at the Northern Rivers University Centre for Rural Health, and \$440,000 for refurbishing student accommodation at Grafton Base. Grafton Base also has a McGrath breast care nurse. These grants come on top of funding for 20 new rehabilitation beds at Ballina District Hospital and \$1.4 million for a state-of-the-art mobile health clinic for Southern Cross University to provide training in more rural areas.



Janelle inspects Grafton Base Hospital's new operating theatres with, from left, Nurse-in-Charge Sheryl Rogan, specialist orthopaedic surgeon Dr Sam Martin, Northern NSW Local Health District Chief Executive Chris Crawford, Grafton Base Executive Officer Dan Madden, GBH Medical Staff Council Chair Dr Allan Tyson, Department of Commerce project manager Kevin Plummer, and Clarence Valley health advocate Ted de Roos.



Janelle works closely with the 'Our House' fundraising team, from left, Dr Chris Ingall, Suzette Pearce, Rebekka Battista and Malcolm Marshall.



Janelle chats with a local nurse Pam Murphy, patient care co-ordinator at Ballina Hospital's Rehabilitation Unit.

2010 RE-ELECTION COMMITMENTS – PROGRESS REPORT

Grafton Library

Some of Janelle's re-election commitments from last year's Federal election are being delivered and plans for others are well advanced. Janelle welcomed Clarence Valley Council's recent DA approval of the new \$8-million Grafton Library, which will be built over the western end of the Pound Street Car Park. Council can call for detailed design and construction tenders, with a view to starting work in late 2012 and final completion in 2014. This new library will have enough space for everyone – it will be a vibrant community hub where people can pursue their educational and cultural interests and enjoy recreation.



An architect's impression of the new Grafton Library.

Janelle praised Iluka Meals On Wheels and the Iluka community, including the Iluka Bowls Club, Iluka Golf Club, Sedgers Reef Hotel and the Iluka Friendship Club, for raising a total of \$77,000 from raffles, donations, a garage sale and cent auction sale. Janelle advocated strongly to secure the crucial \$240,000 FaHCSIA grant to make this dream a reality. Local builder Tony Smith used local sub-contractors on the project.

Football Institute

The \$2.5-million Asia Pacific Football Institute is gaining real momentum with APFI Operations General Manager Steve Hapgood guiding this exciting project. Janelle commended former Socceroo and SBS football commentator Craig Foster for his efforts to the start-up stage. Southern Cross University received \$2.5 million in Federal funding towards establishing what will be a regional centre of sporting and academic excellence.

WetlandCare

Ballina-based national organisation, WetlandCare Australia, has management plans in place for its Coastal 20 wetlands project, funded under the Australian Government's Caring for our Country Program. This national organisation over the next 2 ½ years will restore seven wetlands in New South Wales and a further 13 along the Queensland

Coast. Surf Clubhouse

Ballina Shire Council is fine tuning a development application for a new Ballina Lighthouse-Lismore Surf Life Saving Club at East Ballina, with construction anticipated to start during 2012. The clubhouse is shifting back to east of Lighthouse Parade, a move that will make it easier for our lifesavers to keep beachgoers safe.

Safer Suburbs

Ballina is one of five councils which will benefit from Safer Suburbs Program funding announced by Federal Minister for Home Affairs Brendan O'Connor during a flying visit to Kyogle, Casino and Lismore. Safer Suburbs funding includes:

- \$70,000 to Kyogle Shire Council for youth centre renovations, improved safety in Cenotaph Park and other crime prevention initiatives.
- \$70,000 to Richmond Valley Council for youth engagement in Casino, Coraki and Evans Head, and for a graffiti and broken glass clean-up crew.
- \$100,000 to Lismore City Council for a youth worker at Goonellabah Youth Plaza.
- \$90,000 to Clarence Valley Council for youth support programs in Grafton and Yamba.
- \$90,000 to Ballina Shire Council for crime prevention measures.



Janelle with Ida Johnson, Marion Kurz & Doreen Cupitt.

National Disability Insurance Scheme closer to reality

Meeting the challenges of CSG regulation

The issue of Coal Seam Gas (CSG) exploration and exploitation is gaining the momentum of the rare earth issue of a few decades back in our region, when thousands marched against a rare earth plant in Tuncester. Like many in the community I was initially pleased with news of a possible natural gas source in the region as an alternative to coal powered electricity. But I share the growing concerns about CSG and particularly the 'fracking' extraction process. The focus should be on renewable energy sources, but power and mining companies are slow to change. The mining companies have an obligation to tell us clearly the precise nature of their gas extraction methods, i.e. if they are using fracking, what chemicals they use, what studies they have done and any known impacts on our water, land and us. I have made many representations to Federal ministers and the Prime Minister on CSG, about what can be done at the Federal level to address community concerns.

In particular I asked the Minister for the Environment, Tony Burke, to explore the nature and extent of his power under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) and the Federal Water Act.

It is not an easy area, as mining and water management are covered by State powers and they have to take some form of permanent action beyond the New South Wales moratorium on fracking.

The Australian Government has listened to my representations and those of other MPs, including Independent Tony Windsor, and has announced a new scientific framework to better understand the impact of CSG on water resources, with an Independent Expert Scientific Committee to be established under the EPBC Act.

The Independent Expert Scientific Committee will commission and fund water resource assessments for priority regions and provide scientific advice to the Government on the impacts of CSG projects on water resources.

I will be ensuring that the Northern Rivers is classified as a priority area. The Commonwealth will establish a National Partnership Agreement with the states through COAG, so that the Commonwealth and States will have to take the Committee's advice into account in their decisions.

This is a good step but there is much more to do and unless we know our water is safe and our prime agricultural land is safe, the precautionary principle should apply. In this case it means, don't do it.



Celebrating progress on the NDIS at RED Inc in Lismore, from left, service user Luke Murray, support worker Rick Wilde, service user Brett Turnbull, RED Inc manager Jennifer London, service user Peter McDonald, Janelle, support worker Aaron Mort, and service user Liam Macpherson.

work with States and Territories.

- Establishing a COAG Select Council of Treasurers and Disability Ministers from the Commonwealth, States and Territories to lead reform in this area.
- Establishing an Advisory Group to provide expert advice on delivering the foundations for reform and

preparation for launch.

- The Select Council has already agreed to lay the foundations for the National Disability Insurance Scheme by mid-2013 -- a year ahead of the timetable set out by the Productivity Commission. We look forward to having the scheme in place.

A cleaner future for our kids & grandkids

The Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, Greg Combet, came to Page in June to discuss the Government's clean energy package with representatives from small business, farmers, local government, and youth groups.

The Minister also had the opportunity to speak to a TAFE carbon accounting class, visit a local business, and meet with representatives of Sustain Northern Rivers, an umbrella group of the community, local government, education, tourism, health and regional development sectors.

Janelle wanted the Minister to meet local people because the Northern Rivers community has a reputation for initiating and taking up clean and green technology.

The Federal Government's Clean Energy Future legislation passed through Parliament in November. It is an important economic and environmental reform for our nation.

Supporting rural and regional Australia

The farming, forestry, land and food sectors play an important role in reducing carbon pollution as Australia moves to a clean energy future, something they have been doing for some time.

The Carbon Farming Initiative offers farmers and other landholders the opportunity to earn new streams of income and contribute to the transition to a low carbon economy.

Around \$1.7 billion will also be invested in land sector measures over the next six years to support the



Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Greg Combet, who has strong family ties to the Lismore district, joined Janelle for a regional Clean Energy Policy forum hosted by Lismore TAFE.

Carbon Farming Initiative, maximise the benefits of storing carbon in our landscape, and reduce emissions.

Driving clean investment

The legislation will also give the renewables sector a major boost, creating the right combination of economic incentives, business certainty and Government support needed for new investment which will help drive down the costs of renewables. Under the Government's reforms around \$100 billion is expected to be invested through to 2050 in the renewable and clean energy sources of the future.

Supporting Jobs

There'll also be extensive support for jobs, competitiveness and innovation in Australia, as well as extra tax relief for small business. Small businesses will benefit from the increase in the instant asset write-off threshold to \$6,500 per item. Additionally, all businesses in the food processing, metal forging and foundry industries will be able to apply for grants for energy efficiency improvements under the \$200 million Clean Technology Food and Foundries Investment Program.

Assisting households

More than half the revenue raised from the carbon price will be used to assist households. Tens of thousands of households across Page will receive tax cuts, higher family payments or increases in pensions, benefits and allowances. Increases in family payments, pensions and allowances will start with lump sum advance payments of the new Clean Energy Supplement in May and June 2012.

Cutting pollution

From 1 July 2012, Australia's biggest polluters will have to pay for every tonne of carbon pollution they emit. This will cut pollution by at least 160 million tonnes a year in 2020 – the equivalent of taking 45 million cars off the road. The Clean Energy Future package is the right thing to do to protect our economy and our environment for our children and grandchildren and once it is implemented it will become self evident.

