



Scott Barrett MLC

Member of the Legislative Council

Fortnightly Wrap: November 14 – November 27

On Monday the 14th November, the Central West of NSW woke up to the news that communities like Molong, Cudal, Eugowra and Canowindra had experienced their biggest flooding event on record. While I still struggle to find the appropriate words, the following is from a [speech made in Parliament](#). All members should be aware of the terrible flooding that has affected much of the Central West at the moment. That area has been incorporated into the biggest flooding event and response in our State's history. Towns and communities such as Molong, Cudal, Canowindra, Forbes and Condobolin have lost their homes, businesses and key infrastructure to an unfathomable amount of water that swept through those towns at incredible force. Of course, Eugowra has been decimated, with very little of the town unaffected. I do not have the words to describe what these people have gone through, the impacts on the towns and communities, or the emotional stress and wounds this has caused.

But now we have to get our towns cleaned up again. This process is already underway. Australian Defence Force personnel, the RFS, the SES, local businesses and individuals, crews from Orange and other surrounding communities, and members of the Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council have come to those areas. Many of these locals are themselves affected by this horrific event. I thank all those people who have put their lives on hold to help out those in need.

I worry for our community groups, organisations and sporting clubs, and we must support them. They are absolutely critical to getting those towns back on track. We have lost infrastructure like the hockey fields in Molong, which is so very proud of its hockey. It is an incredible culture

there, and to see those fields lifted up like a wet piece of cardboard has hurt a lot. I will work incredibly hard to support those groups so we see our clubs come back better and stronger and so they continue to be the key thread in the fabric of our local communities.

All that physical damage and all the houses washed away are nothing but an emotional scratch compared with the horrific loss of at least one very loved community member in Eugowra. The unimaginable pain that must be causing out there is in all of our thoughts, as insignificant as that might seem. To those affected, I am sorry that I cannot articulate to this place what they have been through; nor can I adequately express what I and others are feeling for them. But they are in the thoughts of all of us here. I and others on every side of politics are here to do what we can to help them recover from this in the short term, the medium term and the long term. They and their communities are the key factor that makes regional New South Wales the best place to live, work and raise a family.



RFS was just one of the organisations assisting with the clean up.

Once the week of Parliament was finished, I was able to visit Eugowra in the first instance with Premier Dom Perrottet and Emergency Services Minister Steph Cooke. While the devastation we saw was heart-breaking, I was inspired by the resolve and unity of the community which gave me confidence we will get through this and see Eugowra thrive again before too long.

The Premier and Emergency Services Minister joined me in Eugowra and Cudal.



We helped to find the owners of this dog, separated by the floods.

Similar sentiments followed to Molong and Cudal, communities I have special connections with and have since visited several times. I have been able to assist in a few ways from sorting and cataloguing wet mail, arranging connections and meetings with decision makers to aid with the short and long term recovery and being visible for people to reach out for assistance.



Showing the Deputy Premier some of the infrastructure damage in Molong.

The Deputy Premier joined Steph Cooke and I for a look at the damage at Molong and one of the highlights for the week was the reopening of the Post Office in Eugowra. I was happy to play a small part in this as my wife and I spent time sorting and cataloguing the wet mail in order to see residents receive what mail could be salvaged. sorting and cataloguing the wet mail in order to see residents receive what mail could be salvaged.



Sorting and stacking mail at the Eugowra Post Office.

The day I spent at the Recovery Access Point in Cudal showed just how wonderful our regional communities are. Flood affected residents had the opportunity to sit down and speak to key service providers in order to understand what assistance was available for these people. I was able to lend a hand on the BBQ, support the locals and assist the organisers for the day. Supporting the whole day was the amazing Cudal community who all got behind each other and gave great confidence and optimism in the future of the town and the strength of the community.

One of the happy stories to come out of Eugowra was a photo I shared of a homeless cattle dog. Through our social media networks, we were able to find the owners of this lovely guy and I thank everyone who shared this post that helped make the reunion happen.

On Saturday night, I attended the Cudal Christmas Markets with my family. There was talk of this event not going ahead but to see the massive crowd and the smiling faces in this wounded community was an inspiring sight and a clear signal of recovery.

Obviously, the road to recovery will be a long one and the hurt will remain for some time but having seen the response of the relevant agencies and far more importantly the affected communities, I am confident we will build back better and these towns will once again become wonderful places to live, work and raise a family.

The Cudal Christmas Markets was such a lovely evening.



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for Regional NSW

