



Melissa Price MP

Federal Member for Durack

Your strong voice for regional Western Australia

Important tasks of Government

We are well into the 2015 parliamentary year following the summer recess, which provided more time for members to reflect on the Government's plans to rebuild the nation. It is clear that systemic change must be borne out in our policy and legislative timetable.

Only major change can reverse the downward spiral of debt that Labor created, repair communications and education, rebuild our international reputation and revive trade - the list goes on. On a positive note, we have already halved the projected deficit.

In 2015 my focus is the bookends of life - that's youth and senior citizens. We must find a resolution to aged care provision and I will continue my aged care forums in Durack,

namely in the Kimberley and Pilbara. We must be innovative in our efforts to move young people into a future that promises equitable access to education, training and jobs.

I was pleased to host the Hon Tony Abbott MP, Prime Minister of Australia, to Durack earlier this month where he met with many locals.

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Melissa Price MP welcomes the Prime Minister to a community event in Geraldton, 8 March

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Melissa Price - Durack

Prime Minister listens and learns

Around 100 members of community groups and local government joined the Prime Minister for afternoon tea on 8 March where he spoke with, and listened to the challenges, concerns and suggestions of constituents from Geraldton and the Mid-West.

Member for Durack, Melissa Price has been forthright in promoting Durack in Canberra, and has attracted Ministers and influential Members to the electorate.

“My aim is to make Durack relevant in the east - when those in Canberra know all about us, then we can be more successful in attracting both attention and funding.

“The Prime Minister listened and said that he had learnt about the trials facing the people of the Mid-West, as well as the diversity and opportunities in the region.

“The bed capacity of the Geraldton Regional Hospital remains an issue. As it sits with the State government, we shall work with them to seek a solution for sufficient capacity and services,” Ms Price said.

The Prime Minister was taken by the economic diversity and presence of business in the Mid-West, including the Geraldton Fishermen’s Co-operative, the largest live rock lobster exporter in the world, and the CBH Group, both local businesses that are internationally relevant.

The Prime Minister received strong feedback on the positive impact of the recently signed Free Trade Agreements.



Support for small business

The Australian Government provides multiple avenues of assistance and support to grow and strengthen small business.

I would encourage you to make use of the helplines and programmes.



PM joins hands with Richard Nelly; with Ross Oakley of Bundiyarra, Geraldton and Melissa Price.

Business.gov.au
13 28 46

Austrade
13 28 78

Australian Taxation Office
ato.gov.au

Dept. of Communications
Digital Business
digitalbusiness.gov.au

In Brief...

We're lowering taxes

I am fighting for more tax relief.

Small business is at the heart of the Australian economy, and nowhere more so than in Durack. The Liberals are committed to reducing tax on small business – so owners can keep more of what they earn or reinvest profits to grow their businesses.

On July 1 this year company tax for small business will be cut by at least 1.5%. This follows the scrapping of the Carbon Tax, which reduced power bills and gas prices.

Lower interest rates

Interest rates are at a record low, providing some relief to small businesses.

The Australian Government will continue to do its part to keep the rates down by cutting waste and taking pressure off inflation, thereby reducing the Government’s budget deficit.

More trade, lower costs for small business

The Abbott Government has signed Free Trade Agreements with China, Korea and Japan, bringing export opportunities and lower costs for some businesses.

The Korean and Japanese agreements are already realising tariff cuts and enhancing competitiveness. In addition to agriculture and mining, small manufacturers and service providers will benefit. Goods such as vehicles, electronics and IT equipment will be cheaper.

For more information:
www.dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements

Rural and regional families want the best education for their children.

They are no different to their city cousins. But government policies often lead to unexpected outcomes. Grade 7 students in WA who have commenced in high school provide an example. Children destined for boarding school are leaving home 12 months earlier. Consequently, the family incurs an extra year of fees.



IRON HEART: Newman Senior High School teachers Damon Jeffery and Rita Bourgy with their students during a visit with Ms Price in Parliament House.

Boarding school is not mandatory but is often the only option for regional families. I hope students commencing high school a year earlier will benefit from better educational outcomes, because these families are feeling the strain on the purse strings and the heart strings.

Turning to tertiary, the Review of Regional Loadings: Final Report, published by the Commonwealth, found, unsurprisingly, that regional higher education differs from metropolitan, for example.

- higher education participation rates are lower in regional areas
- regional secondary-school graduates are much less likely to plan to undertake higher education
- potential students face greater disincentives due to costs and distance
- higher deferral rates

This is a big issue in Durack - The Big Divide - and it is shameful. In WA we do not have regional universities, unlike the NT and Queensland. The Geraldton University Centre, effectively a cooperative of universities, provides courses in the Mid-West. The University of Notre Dame with a campus in Broome, is scaling back its degree offerings and providing more vocational courses. I have not given up hope that we will see an offering of first-year courses in the Pilbara, and I will continue to vigorously prosecute the case.

The federal education reforms which were blocked in the Senate on 17 March would have seen universities with more money to offer scholarships to rural, regional and remote youth, including for costs of accommodation; and, for loan schemes for students undertaking diploma and pathway programs, which provide an alternative route to tertiary entry. This is pertinent and relevant to

young people from Durack.

However, now, following Labor's blocking of the Bill in the Senate - this is all at risk.

My view is that the federal government must ensure all young people have access to financial assistance for the cost of their education. As one in a group of regional MPs, I am lobbying the Minister for Education and Minister for Social Services to bring about change. The group has met recently with the Ministers to continue to put the case. I am pleased that they have listened and are taking action to investigate this inequitable state of affairs.

I am determined that rural and regional young people, particularly those in Durack, enjoy the same educational opportunities as urban students - nothing more and nothing less.

Reference: <http://melissapricemp.com.au/Newsroom/Videos/ID/366/Adjournment-Rural-and-regional-families-want-the-best-for-their-children-050315>

Carnarvon...

Battered by Tropical Cyclone Olwyn on 11 March, eligible people from Ashburton, Carnarvon, Exmouth and Shark Bay shires have access to Australian Government support.

- ✓ Jointly-funded Commonwealth-State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements <http://www.dpc.wa.gov.au> or <http://www.disasterassist.gov.au>
- ✓ Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA)
- ✓ Farm Household Allowance (FHA)
- ✓ To lodge a claim for DRA or FHA call 180 22 66
- ✓ More information www.disasterassist.gov.au



Melissa Price in Carnarvon in wake of TS Olwyn

Canberra ...

Durack friends, colleagues and constituents are always welcome to visit with me in Parliament House, whilst in Canberra.

Regional Development Australia:

Board members from eight northern RDAs met with Members at a reception in my Canberra office to discuss the sustainable development of northern Australia.

Durack was represented by RDA Pilbara chair Fiona White-Hartig; RDA Kimberley chair Graeme Campbell, and RDA Midwest Gascoyne chair Vicki Hablitz.

Philip Hams, Gogo Station, Fitzroy:

Philip visited Canberra to push for development of agriculture in the Fitzroy in conjunction with the local Indigenous people.

On the road in Durack

Cue, Camelman Products:

Being invited to open their new store recently, afforded me the chance to return to the historic town of Cue and to meet with Shire and community members.

Geraldton, Pollinator's Inc:

With Federal funding secured for their August science week project, the Goodness, Sustainability and Innovation Festival, I met with members of Geraldton's Pollinators at City Hive to discuss innovation, particularly in regard to sustainability and resilience in the Mid-West.

Moora, Central Midlands Speedway Association:

Eager to participate in the Ice Challenge and a speedway race, meant a welcome trip to Moora to help raise money for the Farley family and the Motor Neurone Association of WA.

Newman, Trade Training Centre:

Opening the new facility in the Iron Heart of the Pilbara, is giving students the best chance to learn workplace skills, thanks to a \$1.5 million Federal Government investment.

Geraldton, Restoration Railway Building:

Joining with the community, we celebrated the restoration of the first ever railway station in WA, now the magnificent, Geraldton Visitors Centre, bringing more visitors to town, and more dollars flowing into local businesses.

Carnarvon, Granny Glasgow Education and Care:

Seeing up close the progress of the \$420 000 Federal investment for extensions to Carnarvon's only long day care centre confirmed the project is on time and on budget with 17 new places available mid-year.



Pollinator's Chair Paul Dyer, Director Melissa Hadley and CEO Andrew Outhwaite at the City Hive in Geraldton.



OUR FUTURE - young students benefit from quality training and facilities at the newly opened Newman Trade Training Centre at the Iron Heart, Newman Senior High School.



MOORA: Thanks to Donna Vanetti for her speedy and safe driving.



Granny Glasgow Director Fawn Law-Davis, (l to r) Management Committee Chair Sue Jordan and team member Angela Bleasdale update Melissa Price on the progress of the extensions.

Roads and more ...

Construction of 107km upgrade of North West Coastal Highway - between Mia Mia and Barradale opened last month, with Federal funding of \$174 million.

After eighteen months of lobbying, I scored a win with funding of \$32.2 million to construct a bypass of New Norcia and floodways between Meekatharra and Newman on the Great Northern Highway, under the National Highway Upgrade Programme.

Roads to Recovery funding has flowed to Durack shires this past month.

We won the lion's share of Federal funding at \$4.3 million to make heavy vehicle operations more productive and safer: road and intersection upgrades at Great Northern Highway and North West Coastal Highway; and, at Great Northern Highway and Marble Bar Road.

View all announcements at:

<http://melissapricemp.com.au/Newsroom/Media-Releases>

