



## Mid Coast Uni Portal launched

Another milestone in our region's attempts to increase university participation rates was reached on Monday 29 November with the launch of the Mid Coast Uni Portal website. The website 'went live' at an official opening ceremony at the Port Macquarie Tertiary Campus.

Representatives from the partner universities, North Coast TAFE, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and local high schools attended. Sophie Bell and Luke Hadfield from Heritage Christian School formally 'launched' the website by revealing the screen to the assembled crowd. Students from MacKillop Senior College and St Columba Anglican School were also in attendance including Rebecca Hore (pictured below).

The website was designed and produced by a cross-institutional project team in collaboration with Port Macquarie based web development company Joyer Consulting, the Port Macquarie-Hastings Education and Skills Forum and local TAFE, university and Year 12 students. The web portal provides a one stop information shop on tertiary study options and pathways, financial assistance, special entry schemes and scholarships available through the University of Newcastle, University of New England, Southern Cross University, Charles Sturt University, University of New South Wales, the University of Sydney and North Coast TAFE.

The Mid Coast Uni Portal has its own Facebook page to enable local students to share their university plans and experiences and get regular updates on key dates, open days, information sessions and other news. The portal can be found at [www.midcoastuniportal.com.au](http://www.midcoastuniportal.com.au)



Figure 1 Photo supplied by Port Macquarie News



## **E3 Pathways – Education to Experience to Employment**

The E3 Pathways Program is set to become the Mid North Coast's newest pathway for students to augment their TAFE or university studies with local employment opportunities, by providing a direct link for students and employers. The program seeks to match students with local employers to gain short-term meaningful employment experiences while they complete their studies. The long-term aim of the E3 Pathway program is to increase local employment outcomes by retaining students locally. This also allows opportunity for those locals studying elsewhere to return 'home' to employment once they complete their studies.

The program is facilitated by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and funding assistance has been provided by Industry & Investment NSW.

A short survey has been developed in order to gauge interest in the program and to source potential host organisations.

The E3 Program should see the first student placements in Accounting in the New Year. To participate in the survey go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/E3program>

### **What's the 'Big Idea'?**

The NSW Business Chamber recently presented the 10 big ideas to grow the Mid North Coast at a forum held in Port Macquarie on December 2. Not surprisingly, the number one priority for this region was identified as 'Establish the region as Australia's first for Higher Education'. The 10 big ideas were developed by the NSW Business Chamber following roundtables with businesses held in Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Taree.

The NSW Business Chamber have endorsed the importance of retaining our young people and at the same time helping to attract skilled workers to this region. The presence of a university will help place the Mid North Coast firmly on the map as a destination for quality tertiary education.

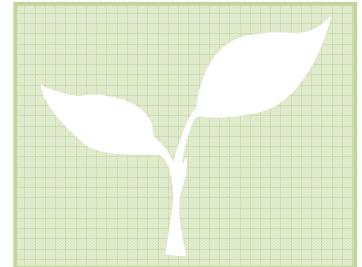
The 10 big ideas to grow the Mid North Coast are, in order of priority:

- 1. Establish the region as Australia's first for higher education**
2. Accelerate roll-out of the National Broadband Network
3. Fund upgrade of Port Macquarie Airport
4. Create a regional economic council
5. Implement new streamlined approvals and planning for local government
6. Establish a 'Mid North Coast' brand
7. Seek relocations of government agencies and major businesses
8. Develop a strategy with the Department of Immigration to attract younger skilled workers and their families
9. Funding for a major renewable energy project in the Mid North Coast
10. Provide six-monthly report cards to the community about progress on the rebuilding of the Pacific Highway



## Federal Education & Training News

**Robert Oakeshott MP**  
**Federal Member for Lyne**



### Conference presented a strong message for regional education leadership

The Strategic Regional Leadership for the Future Conference was held in Port Macquarie on 29 October 2010. The conference was hosted by Regional Development Australia (Mid North Coast) in partnership with The University of Adelaide and International Rural Studies Association, with the major sponsor being TAFE Directors Australia.

Over 300 delegates attended which showed the level of interest in and importance of leadership in regional and rural communities in Australia. Over 30 speakers presented on topics including education and training, social enterprise and demographic trends. Speakers included Pam Christie, Deputy Director General TAFE NSW and Community Education, Mark Burdack from Charles Sturt University and Steve Garlick from the University of Newcastle.

To find out more, go to:

<http://www.rdamidnorthcoast.org.au/articles/regional-leadership-future-conference-wrap>

### Rural Clinical School looks to the future

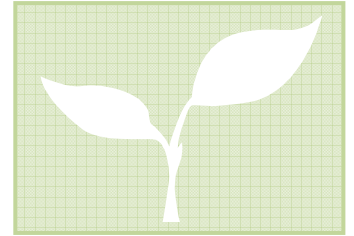
Members of the Education and Skills Forum met recently to discuss opportunities that may exist as a result of the Port Macquarie Base Hospital expansion and the proposed GP Super Clinic. Key areas of education and employment growth are related to medicine, nursing and allied health. Representatives from the University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, the University of Newcastle and Port Macquarie-Hastings Council met in Canberra to discuss the important role of the Rural Clinical School and other possible facilities.





## State Education & Training News

**Peter Besseling MP**  
**State Member for Port Macquarie**



### Government Announcements

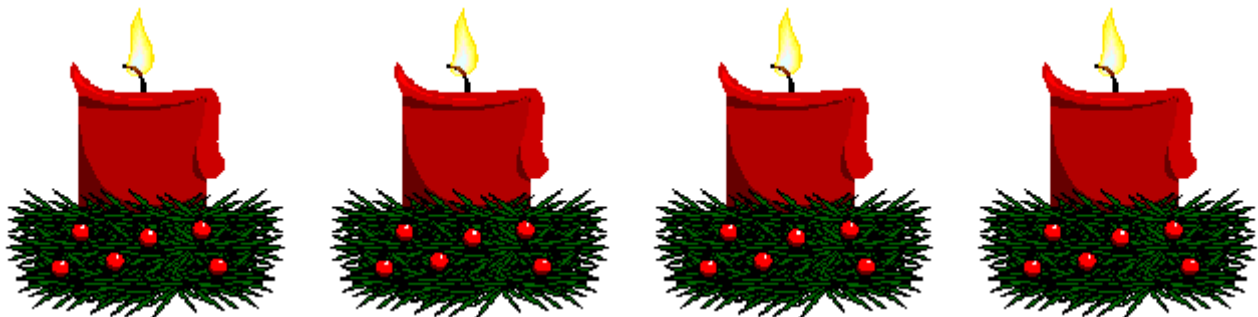
- Community Language Funding announced including subsidies for volunteer language teachers to gain professional accreditation, Community Language School start-up grants of \$2500 and textbook/resource grants totalling \$500 000
- Ethics classes to be rolled out in Primary Schools in 2011

### Skills and Training

- Funding guidelines and applications open for the 2010 funding round of the Industry and Indigenous Skill Centre Program. Closes 28 January 2011. This enables organisations to establish and operate VET centres which provide training in workforce and cultural skills development
- Call for training programs to support the rollout of the National Broadband Network
- Kickstart (pre- apprenticeship training courses) available in the Hastings next year are Cert III Electrotechnology (Electrician) at Port Macquarie TAFE, and Cert III Hospitality (Commercial Cookery) also at Port Macquarie TAFE

### Recent Parliamentary developments

- Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2010 (refers registration and regulation of VET organisations to the Commonwealth) introduced to Parliament
- Education Amendment (Ethics) Bill 2010 introduced to Parliament
- Asked a Question On Notice in Parliament regarding Distance Education and the sufficiency of counselling resources. The response is due prior to Christmas.



*On behalf of the Education and Skills Forum we take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy Christmas and New Year, and we look forward to another productive year for this region in 2011*



## Your feedback is appreciated

We welcome your feedback in order to make improvements to this newsletter. Please provide your comments in the space provided below and post to the address shown. Alternatively, phone or email your feedback.

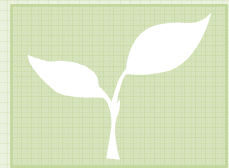
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## If you would like to raise an idea for the Port Macquarie-Hastings Education & Skills Forum, please contact one of the Forum members listed below:

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