

# TUROSS HEAD PROGRESS ASSOCIATION NEWS

FEBRUARY 2025

## NEXT MEMBER MEETING

The next member information meeting will be held at **2pm on Tuesday 4 March 2025 at Kyla Hall.**

## WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT ON HEALTHCARE

The more individuals and community organisations who publicly support our healthcare campaign, the more candidates standing for the federal election will take notice.

We urge all individuals, businesses and community organisations to go to our health webpage [www.thpa.com.au/health-2025](http://www.thpa.com.au/health-2025) and add their names to the campaign form.

**We are not seeking monetary donations; we want your public support to campaign candidates to commit to action now.** Spread the word to friends, family and neighbours. Together, we can make a difference.

Articles will appear in the SHASA newsletter and Moruya Mail and ads will run in the Moruya Mail, online and on social media. You will also soon see posters with a QR code to sign up for the campaign around town. A new webpage and campaign form have been created at [www.thpa.com.au/health-2025](http://www.thpa.com.au/health-2025).

A critical element of the campaign is its strong **community focus**. The subcommittee recognised the value of bringing as many

## THPA LAUNCHES 2025 HEALTHCARE CAMPAIGN

With the federal election looming, the THPA's Health Subcommittee has launched a community-based campaign calling on all candidates for Eden Monaro and Gilmore to commit to fair access to healthcare and healthcare funding for the Far South Coast (FSC).

Since November last year, the subcommittee has been working hard to build a coalition of communities calling for action. Access to and funding of healthcare was a major item of the THPA's discussions with Kristy McBain, the federal member for Eden Monaro, and Jo van der Plaats, the Liberal Party candidate for Eden Monaro and is expected to be a hot topic at the 2025 candidate forum.

Arn Sprogis, Chair of the subcommittee, is the lead spokesperson for the campaign and is engaging with candidates for Eden Monaro and Gilmore, GPs and key community organisations.

To kick off the campaign, a [media release was issued](#) addressing a report on [10 January 2025 in The Daily Telegraph](#) that stated seniors face the highest risk where there is "inadequate access to healthcare" based on the percentage of the population aged 65 or older and the number of healthcare facilities within five kilometres. Based on this analysis, Tuross Head was rated as the second worst place to live for seniors to access healthcare in Australia. Arn was interviewed about the campaign on ABC radio and in the 24 hours from launch, more than 30 people had already signed up.

### TUROSS HEAD PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC.



#### Demanding fair access & funding for healthcare on the NSW Far South Coast

For over 40 years, Far South Coast communities have been short-changed by successive governments on fair access and funding for healthcare.

This has led to an \$80 million per year funding deficit leading to higher death rates, prolonged periods of illness and increased suffering compared to metropolitan communities.

With equal funding, we can have the best access and quality of GP and other primary care in Australia.

**We are past breaking point and deserve better**

The THPA is demanding that all 2025 federal election candidates for Gilmore & Eden Monaro commit to action on fairness of healthcare funding & access



[www.thpa.com.au/health-2025](http://www.thpa.com.au/health-2025)

Scan the QR code & add your support to our call for action today!

community organisations across the FSC on board as possible. Around 100 priority community organisations have initially been identified and ads and articles will call on community organisations and individuals across the region to form an Alliance to campaign for fair healthcare.

### **What are we asking for?**

We are campaigning for a bipartisan commitment from all candidates in Eden Monaro and Gilmore for the 2025 federal election to:

- Fix the 40-year history of neglect by all political parties when in government to access to healthcare in the FSC. This equates to an \$80 million/year funding deficit for the FSC and \$2.7 million for Tuross Head.
- Guarantee equality in healthcare funding in Far South Coast communities when compared to city populations on a per person basis.
- Fix the current healthcare financing system which has significantly disadvantaged rural communities for 40 years.
- Focus initial funding on increased access to medical care in each township to be delivered by teams of GPs and associated primary care providers.

### **ONGOING ACTION TO ADDRESS FIRE RISKS IN TUROSS HEAD**

So far this summer, Tuross Head and other parts of the FSC have been spared major bushfires, however, the wildfires in the middle of winter in Los Angeles are a stark reminder of this threat. The THPA continues to raise with Council, state and federal MPs and candidates the urgent need for fire breaks in key areas of Tuross and for Kyla Hall and Club Tuross to be designated as emergency shelters.

The THPA is still to receive a response from Council to correspondence highlighting the risk and potential for class action if property damage or loss of life occurred as a result of a major fire. To reinforce the THPA's case to council, we engaged an independent consultant to assess the fire risk for our town and the independent consultant's report will be delivered to the Council urging them to take action.

Gary Smith, Chair of the Bushfire and Emergency Subcommittee, has also responded on behalf of the THPA to the [NSW Rural Fire Service's Draft Bushfire Management Plan for the Far South Coast](#). The report includes 12 focus areas within the Far South Coast identified as requiring specific treatment strategies. Tuross Head is not included in these. Our submission highlights the high fire risk especially from airborne embers due to the steep sloping west facing overgrown council bushland in the residential area along Hector McWilliam Drive and Trafalgar Road and that recommends Tuross Head be included as a focus area. The report also prioritises Asset Protection Zones (APZs) and no areas of Tuross Head have been included as priority one APZs. The THPA submission calls for areas along Hector McWilliam Drive and Trafalgar Road to be designated as priority one APZs noting the refusal from Council to provide a thinned buffer in these areas. In the submission, the THPA has also noted the lack of clear information about what a Council is required to do to reduce fire risks in residential areas or any urgency or acknowledgement of weather extremes and predicted effects of climate change. We will keep members informed of any response from the Council to our requests on bushfire management and emergency shelters and from the RFS regarding our submission.

### **DISAPPOINTING DEVELOPMENT FOR COOPERS ISLAND**

After six long years, the THPA has learned no one can identify the original ownership of the disputed parcel of land on Coopers Island Road, including farmer, Council and Crown Lands. It appears that the disputed strip of land was missed in critical planning documents, and it has now been included in the title of the farmer. The Council continues to ignore requests for advice and action, and all fishing, boating and recreational activities

are now locked out of adjacent waterways, such as Trunketabella Lake. Led by Max Castle, the THPA invited the Hon Mark Banasiak (NSW MP), Stan Konstantaras (President, Recreational Fishing Alliance NSW), as well as local fishing club representatives to visit the location where they discovered new heavy-duty gates blocking access. Mr Banasiak is referring the matter to relevant agencies, and Crown Lands have been asked to advise of any other possible entry points, but so far, there has been no response. The outlook is grim and likely to be a very disappointing end to a long, exhausting battle for access to waterways that should be enjoyed by all.



*L to R: Sue Voysey (Malua Bay Fishing Club), Bruce Kennedy (Tuross Head Fishing Club), Hon Mark Banasiak, Stan Konstantaras (President RFA) and Max Castle (THPA Vice President and Chair, Fishing and Boating Subcommittee)*

## MAX CASTLE

Due to serious ill health, Max Castle has stepped down as the Chair of the Fishing and Boating Subcommittee and as the Vice-President of the THPA. Max has been a driving force on the THPA for many years and has represented the interests of fishing and boating enthusiasts and the broader community. We wish Max all the best and look forward to him returning to the THPA committee. Evelyn Ashcroft will take up the Vice President role and Tom Webster will lead the subcommittee until further notice.

## CANDIDATES FORUM

Planning is well underway for a candidate forum to be held ahead of the federal election. Subject to final confirmation of the election date, it is expected the forum will be held in the evening of the last week of March or early April at Kyla Park Hall. Further information will be provided once dates, times and candidates are locked in.

### **THPA News: Editor, Kim Ulrick**

*This newsletter aims to give members an inside view of THPA's current activity, its progress, why it matters and how members can guide THPA in its work.*

## COMMITTEE PROFILE GARY SMITH, BUSHFIRE AND EMERGENCY SUBCOMMITTEE



Gary Smith keeps a jar of charred leaves from the 2019 Black Summer bushfires that he shows to people who say Tuross Head is not a fire risk. As the Chair of Bushfire and Emergency Subcommittee, Gary draws on his extensive knowledge of bushfire and environmental management and safety, including his time as Deputy Captain of the Turlinjah Rural Fire Service. For two years before the 2019 fires Gary led THPA's efforts for the Council to put in firebreaks in key areas around town. The Council claimed they didn't have the funding to do this but when fire threatened, they quickly cleared some areas.

Gary continues to advocate the Council, state and federal members for fire breaks to be established in priority areas, noting there has been significant growth since 2019 that poses an ongoing, serious fire risk to the community. The Subcommittee is also advocating for Kyla Hall to become an emergency evacuation shelter. Council says No. With only one road into Tuross Head, if that or the highway is cut off, there is no access to other shelters.

Gary cares for his community. He's been a member of THPA for eight years, including serving as the President and Vice President, an active member of many community organisations, was a board member for the Moruya District Hospital and is currently the manager of Teensafe. Gary believes THPA is an important asset in representing members as a voice to all governments and advocating for the well-being, safety and future planning in the Tuross Head area.