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FLINDERS e-NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2008

Welcome to the final edition of the *Flinders e-Newsletter* for 2008. First of all, I want to wish you and your family and colleagues all the very best for Christmas and a positive and prosperous New Year.

2008 was a year of enormous debate on both climate change and water issues. I have welcomed the opportunity to be part of these debates throughout the year and will continue to offer constructive new ideas on both.

Heading this edition, I outline the Government's back-flip on the unpopular solar panel means test and welcome progress on the Coalition's national water reforms which are so important for the Murray-Darling.

Locally, there are exciting new renewable energy and conservation projects underway in the electorate - these feature in my top ten stories for this newsletter.

1. Families face a solar short-change of up to \$5,000 after Garrett's solar back-flip

I am pleased to report that our 'Save Our Solar' campaign to get Peter Garrett to reverse his means test on the solar panel rebate has been successful.

But his new solar panel subsidy short-changes families by between \$2,000 and \$5,000 per unit. Read my media statements [here](#) and [here](#).

While we are talking about Government back-flips – I [welcomed](#) the Queensland Government's announcement that it had postponed going ahead with the controversial Traveston Crossing dam. But I fear it's only been put off until after the next election.

2. Getting the emissions trading scheme right for both Australia and the planet

Of course we must take action to tackle climate change. But there is no point in having an ETS that simply exports jobs and emissions overseas. That would only hurt the Murray-Darling and the Great Barrier Reef.

These are points I strongly argued in a series of interviews this week: [Watch](#) the discussion on ABC2; [Listen](#) to the interview on NewsRadio; and [read](#) the transcript with Ali Moore on ABC Radio in Melbourne.

Also, read Malcolm Turnbull's [statement](#) and [terms of reference](#) regarding the Coalition's plans to carefully review the White Paper and look at how we can make the emissions trading scheme better.

3. San Remo a world leader in tidal power

Locally, there is good news on the renewable energy front with a tidal energy facility being unveiled at San Remo, near Phillip Island. I inspected it recently - [Read more](#).

4. Green Corps revamping Hastings

Another great environmental effort underway in the Flinders electorate is delivering important conservation work to waterways and the foreshore at Hastings and Crib Point on the Mornington Peninsula.

It was terrific to [launch](#) the Warringine Links Green Corps project. This community effort demonstrates why the Government's decision to end the Green Corps program is wrong and misguided.

5. Government blocks Coalition and community efforts to stop the North-South pipeline

The controversial North-South pipeline is now Kevin Rudd's pipeline after he and his MPs repeatedly voted to block Coalition efforts to stop the pipeline.

A recent [CSIRO report](#) warned of falling inflows into the Murray-Darling Basin. It makes no sense to remove a further 75 billion litres of water a year from the Goulburn River which feeds into the Murray.

[Read](#) the transcript of my media conference after Labor backed the pipeline in a third and final vote.

6. Massive water-saving infrastructure project left in limbo

One of the most significant discoveries during my recent 3,500km journey through the Murray-Darling Basin was a plan to save 300 billion litres of water a year.

I met with proponents of the plan and they expressed frustration that the Government was more interested in buying up water licences from productive farms than helping to achieve on-farm water savings. [Read more](#) in this article in *The Australian*.

Mind you, when Federal Water Minister Penny Wong did finally get around to announcing some water projects, it turned out they were ones announced by the Coalition over a year ago! See for yourself [here](#).

7. Murray-Darling Basin tour video - and other video blogs

During the tour of the Murray-Darling Basin, I started filming video blogs. The videos provide a new alternative to simply reading statements, speeches and newspaper articles.

My early attempts at blogs have met with various levels of success and expertise, but I'm working on it!

The first two were filmed at Toowoomba and in the Macquarie Valley Marshes north of Warren in NSW. These and other videos can be found on my website by [clicking here](#).

8. Rudd Government drops international court action on whaling

Peter Garrett has [finally admitted](#) he was canning the whale surveillance operation. But he still won't come clean on the [promised](#) international court action. Commentators have pounced on this broken promise, as we read [here](#).

But the Environment Minister has a new weapon against whaling: a \$4 million research paper. See what the media said:

- [The article](#)
 - [The editorial](#)
 - [The cartoon](#)
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9. We must ensure Kakadu doesn't become Kakadon't

The Coalition scrapped entrance fees at Kakadu National Park. Peter Garrett waited until a proverbial media 'dump day' to announce he was re-introducing fees – with visitors to pay more than ever before. [Read more](#).

10. Supporting our kids

Many parents around Australia face the worry of finding a new childcare centre after Julia Gillard revealed the [closure](#) of dozens of ABC Learning Centres.

Mount Martha North, in the Flinders electorate, is among those on the hit-list. It's an extremely sad loss to the community. I know, my daughter Poppy went there. Read more [here](#).

Parents of children with autism also face difficult choices and need more help, especially when the children enter school. These are important issues, which I raised following a [recent visit](#) to the Biala Peninsula Early Intervention Centre.

Please have an enjoyable festive season with your friends and family. Be safe on the roads and in the water. If you are heading out on a holiday, do your best to leave the environment pristine.

And at a time when the pressures on budgets are tight, I encourage you to view Santa Rudd's pleading to run up the credit card with caution. The man who repeatedly warned of "extreme capitalism" is now urging you to rush out and embark on a spending spree. Sure, support the economy, but don't ruin your New Year with unnecessary debt.

Thank you to those readers who have provided me with feedback and suggestions. I welcome them all.

If you have colleagues or friends who would like to receive this newsletter on a regular basis, they can sign up through my website, www.greghunt.com.au. Feel free to make comments on my [blog](#) site.

If you do not wish to receive further editions of this newsletter, simply reply to this email with "unsubscribe" in the subject box or [click here](#).

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,



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