

DPI gets a tongue lashing from Constance

STORY DENISE DION

NSW Treasurer and member for Bega Andrew Constance has called the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) proposals for netting in Merimbula's Top Lake "ludicrous and clumsy".

"I am dead set against this. I raised this with the Minister (Katrina Hodgkinson, Minister of Primary Industries) yesterday (Thursday, May 8)," Mr Constance said on Friday.

It is understood that Mr Constance is particularly angry about the way the proposals were slid out under the radar and not communicated to his office even though it could have a serious impact on a large section of his electorate.

"There has been a lack of



• NSW Treasurer and member for Bega, Andrew Constance, centre, receives petitions from Merimbula Big Game and Lakes Angling Club members, David Dulhunty, left and Chris Young.

foresight into how the community would react. "This is ludicrous and clumsy and I want this killed. For Merimbula Lake it needs to be ruled out straightaway," Mr Constance said.

He was in Merimbula to speak with protesters of the netting proposals, and will be returning to Parliament with around 2500 signatures from locals and visitors to present to Ms Hodgkinson.

He said: "The community has been highly agitated by the DPI's action. This is where the community is most exercised. This is a proposal but let's keep the pressure on. I am very unhappy with the way this

process has rolled out. The DPI needs to be put on notice."

There are believed to be about 40 commercial fishing licences along the coast between the border and Batemans Bay but at a

meeting on Thursday, May 8 between commercial fishermen and the fisheries officials at Eden it was clear that the commercial fishermen are not happy either.

dent of the Merimbula Chamber of Commerce said that the subject "was on everyone's lips" at the recent meeting of the Far South Coast Chambers of Commerce.

Merimbula meeting May 27, 6.30pm Lakeview Hotel

Mr Constance said: "There has to be a balance struck but the bottom line is no one wants to see netting in Merimbula Lake. The DPI has stirred every one up unnecessarily."

It is believed that NPWS is also annoyed about the proposals which include Bournda Lagoon.

Natalie Godward, presi-

The deadline for submissions to the DPI has been extended from May 19 to May 30 and Mrs Godward said that the Merimbula chamber would be making a submission.

The matter will also be discussed at the Merimbula Tourism open meeting at the Lakeview Hotel, May 27, 6.30pm.

New service for Pambula ED

Pambula Hospital is introducing a state-of-the-art point of care testing (PoCT) program that will give Emergency Department patients faster access to pathology results and improve overall care.

The hand-held PoCT devices look like TV remotes, and provide on-site analysis for blood gases, lactate, haemoglobin, troponin, chemistries and electrolytes and IVP/PT - some of the most common pathology tests emergency teams rely on. It means the emergency staff don't have to wait for results if pathology labs are closed overnight.

Heather Austin, general manager Bega Valley Health Service, said that until now Pambula Hospital had been using devices that produced results in hardcopy printouts that the nurses then have to enter manually into a patient record.

"Having this new point of care device within the ED means results are available in real time electronically so we have the most up to date information on the status of the patient," Ms Austin said. "We can

make quicker clinical decisions and improve time to treatment."

"It also means our nursing staff is saving time in record keeping and can direct more of their efforts into patient care."

NSW Health Pathology is leading the state-wide effort to introduce the managed point of care testing (PoCT) scheme in public hospital emergency departments that don't have access to 24-hour pathology laboratories on-site.

The aim is to provide ED teams, particularly in regional and rural areas, with access to on-the-spot results for certain types of pathology tests so they can deliver more timely care for patients.

The Southern Local Health District is the latest to adopt the program and is working with Pathology West (one of five NSW Health Pathology Networks) to introduce 14 devices across 11 emergency departments by the middle of May 2014.

Pambula Hospital will introduce one new device today, Wednesday, to support patient care.

Online story prompts help for cancelled cruise couple

STORY DENISE DION

A sharp-eyed Flight Centre staff manager spotted the News Weekly's story online about Paul and Patricia Martin's cancelled cruise and the angst it had caused and now the company has offered to repay some of the money.

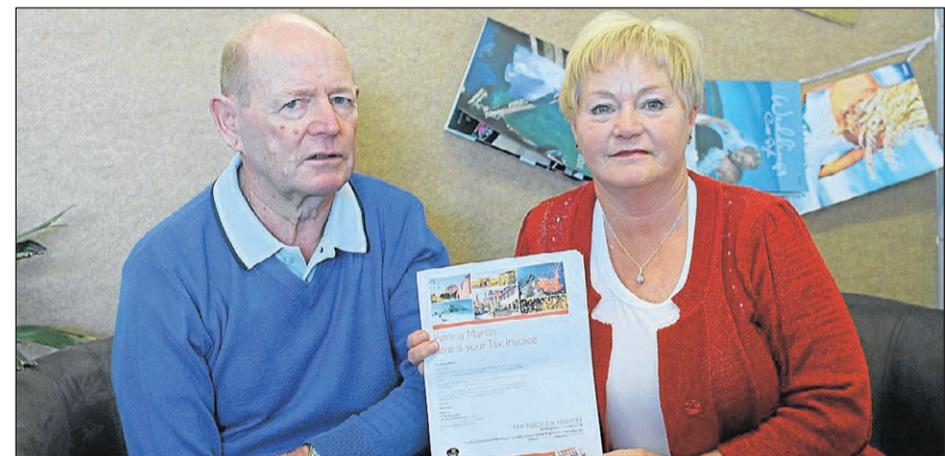
Following the story about Paul and Patricia Martin's cancelled cruise in the News Weekly, May 7, the newspaper was contacted by the Flight Centre's area leader for the ACT and south coast, Edwina Chambers, who was anxious to speak with Mr and Mrs Martin.

The couple, of Millingandi, had to cancel their cruise on the Queen Mary 2 after Mr Martin developed a brain tumour. They had hoped to get some recompense from the travel insurance they had with Zurich, through their Westpac Altitude Black credit cards, but were told that the condition was pre-existing despite Paul having been in remission for five years.

The Flight Centre, with whom Mrs Martin booked the holiday, refunded \$8.92 of the \$426 paid for a hotel in Hong Kong and retained \$351 of the 25 per cent the Martins were entitled to receive from Cunard for cancelling their cruise within a specified time period. The experience left the couple about \$6500 out of pocket and with a very sour taste in their mouths over the treatment they received when phoning.

But now there's been a turnaround in their treatment which Mrs Martin is putting down to "the power of the press".

Last week Sean Martin, the area leader of the Flight Centre's Woollahra office saw the News Weekly's story online and contacted his col-



• News Weekly story achieves a good result for Millingandi couple Paul and Patricia Martin with their out of pocket expenses now significantly reduced.

league, Ms Chambers to ask if the Martins were customers of one of the centres for which she was responsible. Ironically Ms Chambers discovered that the Martins had been put through to the Woollahra office when they phoned the number given in a Sunday newspaper advertising the cruise.

Ms Chambers said: "When I saw the article I really felt for Patricia and Paul. There are always things that big companies can miss and I'm only sorry that it had to come to this especially as customer service is so important to me."

She was convinced that the Flight Centre would be able to do something for the couple

and contacted the Martins to offer \$2000 credit each on a Cunard cruise, a refund of the Flight Centre's admin fee of \$351, and a full refund on the hotel in Hong Kong.

Ms Chambers said: "The hotel supplier gave a partial refund and we made up the difference. Usually we wouldn't do this but these were extenuating circumstances."

Mrs Martin said: "Edwina has been absolutely beautiful. It's a lot better than it was looking. This is the power of the press and it's pretty good."

Ms Chambers said: "They will still be out of pocket about \$1700-1800 but it's a lot better than \$6500."

★★★★★ One of the best rates in Australia

New Car Loan

6.99%
Interest Rate

7.20%
Comparison Rate

Fixed for 5 years

We specialise in quick answers and great rates. It's worth a call!

LENDERS AVAILABLE:
Bega: 184 Carp St @ 6499 1400
Merimbula: Shop 1/ 20 Market St @ 6495 1073
Bermagui: 2 Wallaga St @ 6493 3144

Apply or enquire online:
www.HorizonCreditUnion.com.au

* Comparison Rate based on \$30,000 over 5 years WARNING: This comparison rate is true only for the example given and may not include all fees and charges. Different terms, fees or other loan amounts might result in a different comparison rate. Loan is secured. Interest rate correct as at 1.4.14 Terms and Conditions, fees and charges apply and are available on request. Horizon Credit Union Ltd 27 Stewart Street Wollongong NSW 2500 ABN 66 087 650 173. AFSL/Australian credit licence number: 240573. Source: ^ Canstar.com.au