

100% Independent

OCTOBER 2020

# THE CLARK INDEPENDENT

ANDREW WILKIE - YOUR INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MP



## The Federal Budget

The Federal Government sure has delivered on its promise of a jobs, infrastructure and business budget. And middle-class Australians will be delighted with the stage two personal income tax cuts.

But, again, the Government has forgotten that we live in a society and an environment, and not just in an economy. It beggars belief that it's spending hundreds of billions of dollars in additional budget measures and still there is no financial certainty for the unemployed, no lift in the paltry disability and carers payments, no resolution of the housing crisis, no childcare reform and no big boost for health and education. Older Australians in particular have been abandoned, for example there were no solutions for older unemployed nor improvement in the Age Pension.

Moreover, dealing with climate change should have been a top priority but this budget continues the Federal Government's dangerous obsession with gas.

Nor is this a good budget for Tasmania, because we have the most disadvantaged community of any state so any budget that ignores disadvantage ignores Tasmania. Yes the State will enjoy some good road funding, including in the greater Hobart area with money for the Sorell corridor, airport roadworks and the Tasman Bridge. But there is an abundance of other critical infrastructure that is still unfunded, for example the Antarctic precinct at Macquarie Point, Hobart Northern Suburbs Light Rail and the Hobart Aquatic Centre. Arts and tertiary education are all very important to Tasmania but are largely overlooked again.

In any case, the Tasmanian Government has a terrible track record of delivering infrastructure, so it urgently needs to lift its game and deliver the projects that have been funded or risk losing the federal contribution.

The Morrison Government's message to Australians is that it's got your back. Well yes there are some good measures in this budget. For example it's good to see better access to mental health, the extension of telehealth, efforts to revive manufacturing in this country and more funding for research, including at the CSIRO. But the truth is the Federal Government's blown this once in a hundred-year opportunity to create a much fairer Australia.



## Parliament

Just as other workplaces have adapted and required working from home, Federal Parliament introduced measures to reduce the movement of people and risk of spreading COVID-19. Many MPs remained in their electorates and participated remotely.

The strong feedback from the community was that Andrew should not travel to Canberra until the pandemic risk on the mainland had eased, reducing the likelihood of bringing the virus back into Tasmania. Working from his Hobart office, he has been able to continue to represent the Clark electorate in the Parliament, for example he challenged the prime minister in question time regarding inadequate safety checks of Tasmanian aged care facilities.

## Perfect storm

A perfect storm is heading straight for Tasmania's precious natural environment. The Federal Government wants to water down the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act and hand approvals for all developments to state and territory governments. At the same time, regrettably, the Tasmanian Government has succeeded in ramming its dodgy Major Projects Bill through the Parliament.

The two legislative changes combined spell real trouble for the Tasmanian environment, for example without federal oversight the State Government could fast-track projects like Cambria Green, badly-sited salmon farms, the cable car and inappropriate development in national parks.

And don't forget, Tasmania has the weakest political donation laws in Australia meaning developers can make secret donations of up to \$14,300 to political parties and candidates. This is a recipe for poor governance, favours for mates and downright corruption.

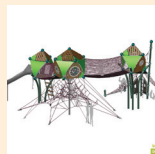
## Investment in our electorate

Since Andrew's election the extra-ordinary federal investment in the electorate of Clark (formerly Denison) has exceeded \$1.5bn. A large proportion of this funding, \$665m, has gone to health and the Royal Hobart Hospital.

### Here are some of the projects on the boil right now



**Southern City BMX Club** has installed lights at its Berriedale course thanks to a \$60,000 federal grant.



The Federal Government is contributing \$2m towards two **fantastic playgrounds at Goodwood and Montrose**. The Montrose park will be the largest sand and water play zone in Tasmania and both will feature nature play.



**Centacare** has opened 45 new homes in Abbottsfield Road Claremont. The \$8m project is a part of the \$30m social housing rescue package Andrew negotiated last year.



The historic **St George's Anglican Church** in Battery Point has been restored with a \$1.6m federal grant.



**Taroona Football Club** now has a fabulous new clubhouse, with the lions share of funding a \$350,000 federal grant.



**Supported Affordable Accommodation Trust** is using a \$6m federal grant to build 27 specially designed dwellings for people living with a disability. Andrew was delighted to attend the opening of the first home recently.

## COVID-19

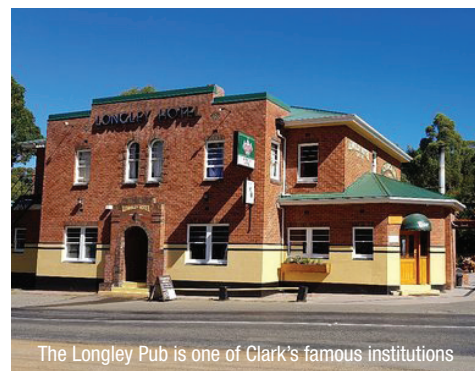
As we went to print Tasmania was continuing to do a good job managing COVID-19. However it's critically important that we don't become complacent because the last thing we need is a second wave and lockdown. Please remember to wash and sanitise your hands, practise physical distancing and get a test and stay home if you have symptoms. You should also be aware of, and follow, the gathering, business and travel restrictions.

If you have a fever, runny nose, cough, sore/itchy throat or shortness of breath you should be tested for COVID-19.

[www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au)  
or 1800 671 738

## Did you know?

Clark is a remarkable electorate that includes Glenorchy, Hobart and Taroona, and some post-codes that might surprise you. It also includes Glenlusk, Collinsvale, Bonnet Hill, Firthside, Neika and Longley.



The Longley Pub is one of Clark's famous institutions

## Buyer beware

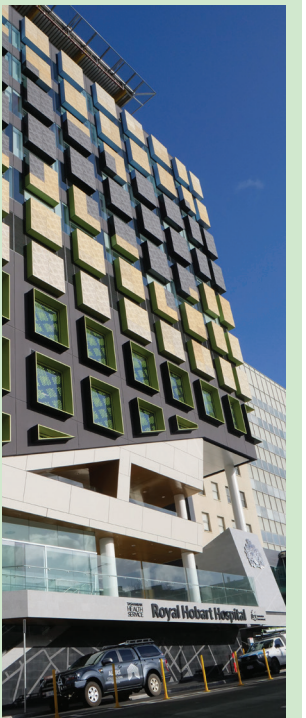
Andrew has been hearing increasingly from people who've fallen victim to Tasmania's inadequately regulated building sector. Whether it be pre-purchase building reports failing to show obvious defects, or problems with the standard of building or renovations, Andrew invites the community to contact him and tell their story.

## Medical emergency

As the last edition of the Clark Independent warned, hospital waiting lists have blown out even more due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed the Australian Medical Association's public hospital report card reveals waiting lists for elective surgery in Tasmania are among the worst in 20 years, and people are spending even longer in emergency departments. The health system was already buckling before the pandemic, which is no surprise when you consider the chronic underfunding of Tasmanian hospitals.

The latest State Government figures show that 11,342 people are waiting for elective surgery. Worryingly, category one patients, those who should be treated in 30 days, have to wait an average of 130 days for their procedures. The Government really needs to address this backlog because behind these waiting lists are people in pain who have often put their lives on hold while they wait for relief.

We have too many public hospitals in Tasmania and the health budget is spread too thin. One of the hospitals in the north west needs to be closed, which would leave enough money to run the other three properly. No wonder the Royal Hobart Hospital struggles to serve half the population in the south, when the budget has to stretch to three hospitals in the north and north west. Andrew has been long arguing for this reform and was pleased to see the Mercury newspaper focus on the issue recently.



## Where's the federal corruption watchdog?

In a healthy democracy the community has confidence in governance and public administration. And that's obviously more important than ever right now, when hundreds of billions of dollars are being spent on the pandemic response. So it's very concerning the Federal Government hasn't set up the National Integrity Commission it promised more than two years ago.

Every state in the country has a body already to investigate corruption, making the absence of a national watchdog deeply troubling. Frankly the community is sick of politicians protecting themselves and their mates. Think of the scandals of recent years, for example the sports rorts election pork barreling. And then there's the senior politicians resigning to work for firms that were beneficiaries of government decisions made while they were in parliament.

Australia urgently needs a federal corruption watchdog backed by enhanced whistleblower protections and political donation reform to finally restore public trust. Andrew and his cross-bench colleagues can be counted on to keep the pressure on the Government to finally deliver these reforms.

## JobKeeper & JobSeeker

At least 100,000 Tasmanians have relied on JobKeeper and JobSeeker. Payments must not be wound up too soon because we are in a deep recession and need to continue financial support for the people, businesses and sectors hardest hit.

The number of Tasmanians on unemployment benefits is up by 61 per cent this year, from 21,286 to 34,288. These people are all now relying on JobSeeker which replaced Newstart in the early days of the pandemic. And we can expect even more people to join the unemployment queue when the wage-subsidy JobKeeper ends. JobSeeker includes a Coronavirus Supplement, which last month was reduced from \$550 to \$250, creating a maximum payment of \$815 a fortnight. This supplement is due for review at the end of the year.

For those looking for work in a very tough jobs market, JobSeeker is a reprieve from the Newstart rate of \$40-a-day that forced people into poverty. The Prime Minister must commit to never return to anything so low, and instead guarantee a living income above the poverty line for all government payments including unemployment benefits, the Age Pension and Disability Support Pension.

There are 63,000 Tasmanians relying on JobKeeper, which was scaled back last month from \$1,500 a fortnight to \$1,200 and will fall again in 2021. From the start, the wage subsidy's eligibility was too narrow and excluded local government and universities, and many casuals and people in the arts. The Federal Government must tailor and continue this wage subsidy for the sectors that will take longer to recover including tourism, hospitality and aviation.



# Community notice board

## Anglesea Barracks

Tour Australia's oldest operating barracks and visit the Army Museum of Tasmania in the 1847 military gaol. A short walk from the city you will find 200 years of Tasmania's social and military history.



96-120 Davey Street Hobart. Open 9am to 1pm Tuesday to Saturday and 10am to 2pm Sunday. Please follow the instructions on the sign at the front gate to gain entry to the barracks. [armymuseumtasmania.org.au](http://armymuseumtasmania.org.au) or 6237 7160

## Dementia

There are an estimated 459,000 Australians living with dementia and this number is only expected to grow. The National Dementia Helpline is a free service that provides information and advice to people with dementia and their family, carers and friends, people concerned about changes to memory and thinking and people with mild cognitive impairment. The team also offers emotional support and guidance, and can connect you with community support and discuss government support including My Aged Care and the NDIS.

[helpline@dementia.org.au](mailto:helpline@dementia.org.au) or 1800 100 500

## Career expo



The Guilford Young College Careers and Community Expo is an opportunity for businesses to engage with the public and young enthusiastic students about employment in their industry. The Expo will take place at the Guilford Young College Glenorchy campus on Friday 12 March 2021 for students and Saturday 13 March 2021 for the general public.

To register as a stall holder or for more information [anutting@gyc.tas.edu.au](mailto:anutting@gyc.tas.edu.au) or 6238 4300

## Veterans

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This anniversary is an opportunity to recognise the service and sacrifice of the Australians who contributed to the war effort and defended the freedoms we enjoy today.

A Commemorative Medallion and Certificate of Commemoration are available, upon application, to every living Australian veteran who served in the Second World War.

Certificates of Appreciation are also available under the Saluting Their Service Commemorative Program to recognise the service and sacrifice of Australia's Defence Forces from the Second World War onwards.

Please contact my office on 6234 5255 to discuss your eligibility for these programs.

[www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au) or 1800 VETERAN (1800 838 372)



## Taste of Afghanistan

Cultural events have been launched at Zafira Fine Foods cafe in Moonah,

which employs and trains refugees from Afghanistan. Try the delicious food and learn about the rich culture of Afghanistan and the Hazara people.

35 Gormanston Road Moonah. Tours are 1.5 hours and are 11.30am Tuesdays and 4.30pm Saturdays. [zafirafoods.com.au](http://zafirafoods.com.au) or 6289 6633

## Rotary Foundation Alumni

Are you one of the many young people who have enjoyed a life-changing opportunity from Rotary over its 100 years in Australia? Rotary wants to hear from you and invite you to Rotary Reconnect Week events. Alumni include exchange students and participants from programs like the National Youth Science Forum, Model United Nations Association or the Windward Bound Youth Challenge.

[www.rotary9830.org.au](http://www.rotary9830.org.au)  
[alumni@rotarytasmania.org.au](mailto:alumni@rotarytasmania.org.au) or 0438 240 125



## Want to get in touch with Andrew?

- Phone 6234 5255 or 6234 5861
- Email [andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au)
- Post GPO Box 32 Hobart 7001
- Ask for a meeting

[www.andrewwilkie.org](http://www.andrewwilkie.org)

## Sports grants

Do you know somebody aged between 12 and 18 who anticipates travelling to compete, coach or officiate at a state, national or international sporting championship? They

could be eligible for a Local Sporting Champions grant to cover some of the costs. Grants of up to \$750 are up for grabs. A new round has just opened and closes at the end of the year.

[www.sportsaus.gov.au/lsc](http://www.sportsaus.gov.au/lsc) or 02 6214 1462



## Reading Writing Hotline

1300 6 555 06

Want some help with reading, writing, basic maths or computers? It's never too late to learn and it's easier than you think. The Reading Writing Hotline is a free national referral service for adults.