

100% Independent

JUNE 2021

# THE CLARK INDEPENDENT

ANDREW WILKIE - YOUR INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MP



## Important council elections

### Glenorchy and Kingborough go to the polls

Glenorchy will elect a replacement alderman and a new mayor because Kristie Johnston has been elected to State Parliament. And in Kingborough there's an election for a new councillor and mayor because Dean Winter was also successful in the recent state election. So check your letterbox and have your say because ballot papers will be delivered this week.

Councils collect millions of dollars in rates and federal grants and run important community services. They are often described as the grassroots sphere of government but only about half of eligible voters bother to cast a ballot. While voting is not compulsory, it is time to get engaged and have your say.

It's easy to vote. The ballot paper is mailed directly to you, including a reply-paid envelope pre-addressed to the returning officer. Electors should return their ballot papers by post as soon as possible to ensure they are received by the close of poll at 2pm on Tuesday 20 July. As an alternative, electors can physically deliver their vote by placing it in the ballot box at the council office. However the ballot papers must still be sealed within the signed ballot paper declaration envelope.

### What do councils do?

- Road & footpath construction & maintenance
- Street lighting, rubbish collection & stormwater drainage
- Some traffic & parking regulations
- Public health - inspecting manufacturing premises, cafes & shops
- Sporting ovals, parks & public reserves
- Public swimming pools, community halls, arts facilities, festivals & events
- Economic development

**IMPORTANT** A person may not accept the office of mayor unless they are also an elected alderman or councillor. This means that a mayoral candidate who is not already a sitting alderman or councillor must also nominate and be elected to an alderman or councillor position, to take up the position of mayor if successful in that election.

## Boost for Tassie small businesses

There was good news for Tasmanian distillers and craft brewers in the recent Federal Budget – tax relief worth up to \$250,000 a year for small businesses. When Andrew heard Tasmania's whisky, vodka and gin producers were paying the third highest spirits excise in the world, he personally met with the Federal Treasurer to make the case for a fair go for the industry. The Government responded with a package for craft brewers and distillers that will allow them to grow, invest and employ more people.



Andrew joins Tasmanian Whisky and Spirits Association president Cam Brett (Spring Bay Distillery) and vice-president Kristy Booth-Lark (Killara Distillery) at the Gin Bar by Forty Spotted in Hobart

Reducing the whopping tax burden on Tasmania's award-winning whisky, vodka and gin producers will free up funds to help many local businesses flourish. Less than 10 years ago, there were 28 distilleries across Australia. Fast-forward to 2021 and there are 300 locally owned distilleries, including about 50 either established or planned in Tasmania. The state is also home to a flourishing craft brewing scene, which will also benefit from this tax reform.

Craft distilleries are mainly small and medium-sized family businesses in rural and regional areas, buying produce from local farmers, bringing in tourists and creating job opportunities for local communities. The future looks bright for Tasmania's world-class distilleries, which some predict could one day rival winemaking in the state.

# Planning matters



Hobart is facing many big planning decisions, for example the cable car, high-rise developments, the housing crisis and the university's proposed move into the city. In parallel the State Government has pushed ahead with significant changes to our planning system including the major projects law which means it can swoop in and remove decisions from local councils and fast-track developments. Residential planning standards have also changed, allowing proponents more leeway.

We should all care about planning because it impacts everyone and every landscape. Planning decisions are behind tall buildings and shaded streets in the city, in-fill housing and traffic, increased concrete and stormwater problems, sun being blocked into your back garden or to your solar panels, and buildings right on your side or rear boundaries.

Andrew supports sensible developments that meet strict social, environmental and economic criteria, and are

assessed in a transparent process that can be trusted. Unfortunately, Tasmanian state governments have a poor track record when it comes to doing deals with business at the expense of Tasmania's community and our unique environment. The community's alarm at proposals like the cable car and Cambria Green are heightened by the State Government's entrenched lack of transparency and the country's worst political donation laws.

Andrew agrees with Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania that we need better planning rules to preserve the Tasmania we know and love. The world has woken up to the unique charm and beauty of Hobart and there is unprecedented development, investment and interest in the capital. We can be one of the most liveable cities in the world, but we need the right planning to get us there.



# Gambling update



**Since the re-election of the Tasmanian Liberal Government in March 2018, losses on poker machines in the state have passed \$500m.**

Source Tasmanian Treasury

Tasmania is still waiting to see the State Government's new poker machine laws and find out just how big is the Liberals' thank-you gift to the industry that bankrolled its 2018 election win. As he rushed to last month's election, Premier Peter Gutwein repeatedly refused to tell the public what the tax cut on casino poker machines will be.

Incredibly, the State Government's gambling policy does "not propose any specific changes to the harm minimisation framework". So attention must now turn to convincing state MPs to insist on the measures in Andrew's Poker Machine Protection Plan including slower spins, \$1 maximum bets, tougher fines for venues and the removal of addictive features from the machines.

Nationally, Royal Commissions have begun in Victoria and Western Australia into Crown casinos in those states. This follows Crown being found unfit to open its Sydney casino

due to allegations of money laundering and links with organised crime. Andrew first revealed evidence of criminal conduct at Crown Melbourne four years ago and released key video evidence of a shopping bag stuffed with millions in cash.

Meanwhile AUSTRAC has launched money-laundering probes into Crown Perth, Star Sydney and SkyCity Adelaide and the casinos now face the possibility of multi-million dollar penalties. Crown Melbourne is already under investigation. Andrew has been pressing the financial regulator to target casinos since 2019 and is concerned it took so long to act.

Andrew is also pushing for laws to force gambling companies to pay back the proceeds of crime. Currently gambling companies have virtually no responsibility to keep an eye out for gambling addicts or stolen money and this needs to change. More on this can be found at: [andrewwilkie.org/thewilkiereport](http://andrewwilkie.org/thewilkiereport)

# Fixing the housing crisis

The median price of a house in Hobart has jumped an eye-watering \$90,000 in one year and the city now leads the state capitals in growth. Rents have also skyrocketed, pushing people further and further out, away from healthcare, jobs and education.

New research has revealed low-income earners in Hobart are unable to buy or rent the majority of properties on the market with the housing affordability crisis on a par with the country's most expensive cities. Indeed the National Housing Finance Investment Corporation found the bottom 40 per cent of income earners in Hobart are unable to afford to buy or rent 90 per cent of properties. No wonder thousands of Tasmanians are on the public housing waiting list.

Andrew is committed to lobbying for positive solutions including the provision of more social housing, improved grants and low-interest loans for first-home buyers, and returning Airbnb to its original model of locals renting out spare rooms and granny flats. A holistic solution would also include more crisis and supported accommodation, increased Commonwealth rent assistance and tax reform.



Out and about recently with former MP Sue Hickey. When she transformed Oakleigh Court in Glenorchy into a safe, clean and peaceful haven for 50 elderly residents she showed what can be achieved when you know what you're doing and you put your heart into it.

# Traffic jam



The State Government is obsessed with roads and Hobart is choking on traffic. And there seems to be no end to the mess with the Government pushing ahead with a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet that would only funnel more vehicles into choked Hobart, bulldoze beloved family homes and cost a whopping \$35m.

However there is no shortage of possible solutions to the congestion. For example while Hobart sits in peak-hour traffic, the State Government is sitting on \$25m in federal funds in the Hobart City Deal to reduce congestion and activate the northern suburbs rail corridor. But after years of talking and endless reports, the Government still can't figure out how to spend the money.

Only about one in ten journeys to work in Hobart are on foot. Yes, we will always need cars of some kind and we do need to invest in better roads, but imagine what some of that money could do for alternative modes of transport including light rail, ferries, park-and-ride facilities, cheaper and more frequent buses and improvements for cyclists and pedestrians. A city the size of Hobart should not be this congested.

## Hobart's work commute

- Around 70% travel by car
- 5.5% walk
- 5% take public transport

Source Hobart City Deal

# Federal Budget

Last month's Federal Budget is good so far as it starts to address serious problems in aged care, the NDIS, mental health, skilling workers, childcare and the treatment of women. It's a welcome change in direction. But it's regrettable that it's taken a global pandemic, looming federal election and shocking revelations of the abuse of women, older Australians and people with a disability to force such a budget.

Tasmania will benefit from a boost in GST and specific purpose payments, and improved programs supporting disadvantaged Australians. Moreover there is the tax relief Andrew helped deliver for small brewers and distillers. Hobart is also among the most popular destinations in the half-price airfare promotion that will include 800,000 tickets nationally.

However there are significant gaps in the Budget, for example the lack of action on the housing crisis, health funding more broadly and climate change. Government pensions and payments, in particular JobSeeker, Age Pension and Disability Support Pension, remain poverty by design.

## Mental health grants



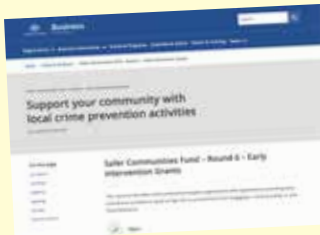
Australia Post is offering community grants of up to \$10,000 to boost mental health. Local organisations can apply for eligible projects that connect individuals and communities to improve mental health and wellbeing. Applications close Sunday 4 July.

[auspost.com.au/grants](http://auspost.com.au/grants) or 1300 765 772

## Safer communities

Round six of the Safer Communities Fund is now open and provides two grant opportunities. The early-intervention opportunity closes in July and offers grants to organisations that provide early-intervention activities for youth at high-risk of criminal activity or anti-social behaviour.

The security infrastructure opportunity closes in August and provides grants for CCTV cameras, fencing and alarm systems. Funding in previous rounds has gone to community organisations, schools, pre-schools and local councils.



[business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) or 132 846

## Elder abuse

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was on 15 June. It raises awareness about elder abuse and promotes ways to prevent and respond to this serious issue. Elder abuse can be financial, physical, psychological, emotional or sexual in nature.

If you experience, witness or suspect elder abuse please call the free and confidential National Elder Abuse phone line for support.

1800 353 374

## Mobile offices

Mobile offices paused during the pandemic but are now back during weeks when Federal Parliament isn't sitting. There's no need to make an appointment.

Just drop by and talk to Andrew. Times and locations can be found at [andrewwilkie.org](http://andrewwilkie.org) or in the Glenorchy Gazette, Hobart Observer and Tasmania Senior. Or you can contact Andrew's office.

**Andrew Wilkie**

**Independent Federal MP**

**Mobile Office**

## Want to get in touch with Andrew?

- Drop into the office at 188 Collins Street Hobart or post a letter to GPO Box 32 Hobart 7001
- Phone 6234 5255 or 6234 5861
- Email [andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au)
- Ask for a meeting

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

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## Community notice board

### Tax help

It's almost tax time, but don't worry help is at hand. The Australian Tax Office runs a free and confidential program for people who earn less than \$60,000 a year. A trained volunteer will help eligible people complete their tax return in my office from August until October. Appointments will be taken from August so please call my office.

[andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au) or 6234 5255

### Celebrating a milestone?

Turning 100? Have a 60th wedding anniversary coming up? You are eligible for a message from The Queen. Other eligible anniversaries and birthdays including 50th, 65th and 70th wedding anniversaries or 90th, 95th and 105th birthdays will receive messages from the Prime Minister, Governor General, the Premier and your local MP. Please contact my office.



[andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au) or 6234 5255

### Help for carers

Carer Gateway exists to make life easier for carers. Call the service to be connected to a new Australia-wide network of services and find local support and respite. You can also connect online with other carers or access counselling if you're feeling stressed, sad, anxious or overwhelmed.

[www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au) or 1800 422 737

## Covid vaccine

COVID-19 vaccination bookings are currently open for Tasmanians aged 40 and over, as well as some other groups of people such as those with underlying medical conditions and healthcare and aged care workers.

All Tasmanians aged 16 and over will have the opportunity to be vaccinated in coming months.

To book your free COVID-19 vaccination visit [coronavirus.tas.gov.au](http://coronavirus.tas.gov.au) or call the **Public Health Hotline 1800 671 738** or talk to your GP.

### Do I need a test?

Testing is still encouraged for people with cold and flu-like symptoms. It is important to get tested if you have or have had any of the following symptoms in the past 7 days, even mild:

- fever (or signs of fever), including chills or night sweats
- runny nose
- cough
- sore/itchy throat
- shortness of breath
- loss of taste or smell

To book a test visit [coronavirus.tas.gov.au](http://coronavirus.tas.gov.au) or call 1800 671 738.