

100% Independent

SEPTEMBER 2022

THE CLARK INDEPENDENT

ANDREW WILKIE - YOUR INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MP



Solving the housing crisis

Imagine being forced to sleep in a tent in the depths of a Hobart winter or living with your kids in a car. This is the reality for some Tasmanians sleeping rough as they battle to find safe and affordable housing. And the situation is getting worse. Indeed Tasmania's social housing waitlist has doubled in the past eight years, with almost 4,500 people on the books. Even for "priority" cases, it still takes an average of 67 weeks to get into a home.

Andrew recently raised the case in Federal Parliament of one family who have been on the priority list for almost seven years, despite living in a private rental riddled with black mould. Private rentals are also scarce, with Hobart's vacancy rate sitting at 0.6%. For those able to secure a property, the rent is so high that some people struggle to put food on the table or fuel in the car.

The Rental Affordability Index continues to rank Greater Hobart as the country's least affordable metropolitan area, with the median rent increasing by 50 per cent since 2016. And with interest rates creeping up, rental costs will only escalate as rate increases are handballed to tenants.

The situation is undeniably grim and we need a lot more than Band-aid solutions if we are to turn things around. The key lies in all three levels of government working together.

On a positive note, the Hobart City Council is investigating higher municipal rates for homes used as short-stay accommodation. This is smart, especially given Hobart has, proportionally, seven times more Airbnbs than Sydney.

For their part, state and federal governments are also making lofty promises. The State Government has pledged 10,000 new social and affordable homes will be built in Tasmania over the next decade, though many doubt their ability to deliver at a rate of almost three homes a day. The Federal Government, meanwhile, says it'll make good on its pre-poll promise to build 30,000 new social and affordable properties nationally, starting in 2023.

The heat is finally easing in Tasmania's red-hot housing market although aspiring homeowners remain largely locked out and mortgage stress looms large for some families.

What needs to be done

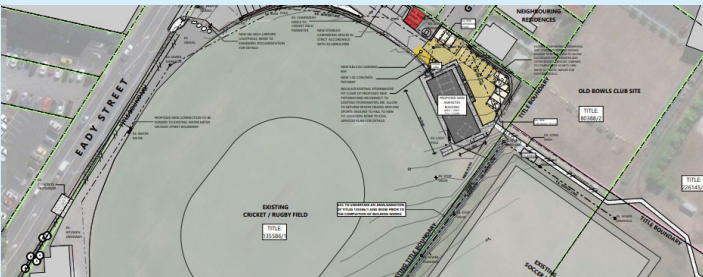
- ✓ **At the local government level, we need to free up land, facilitate sensible development applications and rein in the conversion of long term rentals.**
- ✓ **At the state level, we need more crisis and supported accommodation, more social housing and rent-to-buy public housing.**
- ✓ **Federally, we need an extension of the National Rental Affordability Scheme, an increase in Commonwealth Rent Assistance and investment property tax reform.**



Federal funding boost for sporting clubs



From left, Andrew with City of Hobart Access Advisory Committee's David Cawthorn and North Hobart Football Club General Manager Paul Curtain at the Plaister Stand at North Hobart Oval.



The Eady Street Sports Ground development has created new club houses and improved car parking.

North Hobart Cricket Club recently opened the stage one redevelopment of the HC Smith Stand at the historic TCA Ground. With the Club's facilities in urgent need of restoration, Andrew was able to secure \$405,000 for the Club to upgrade its kitchen, install an accessibility lift and upgrade and restore the memorabilia and social areas, staff rooms, bar, lounge room, scorers' box and office. The lift will be a huge boost for the Club, with members and patrons who use wheelchairs or with mobility issues now able to access the upstairs facilities.

The spiritual home of Tasmanian footy also received a facelift, with a new elevator installed in the Plaister Stand at North Hobart Oval. The Federal Government contributed \$50,000 towards the project, which was part of an \$830,000 grant that Andrew secured for the North Hobart Football Club. The lift means everyone will be able to access the function and viewing area at the top of the stand to watch the various sports that are played at the ground and other events.

Work on the Eady Street Sports Ground in Glenorchy has been completed with Andrew delighted to have attended the opening of the new facilities recently. Thanks to a \$1m Federal Government grant, the Wellington Cricket Club and Glenorchy Rugby Union Football Club will now enjoy the benefits that come with a new club house and improved car parking.

New Parliament gets down to work...

The new Federal Parliament is off to a strong start with the promise of significant reform and Andrew has been on the front foot in introducing legislation. His **Ending Indefinite and Arbitrary Immigration Detention Bill 2022** would effectively abolish offshore detention, and also provide alternatives to immigration detention by moving asylum seekers and refugees into the community almost always in preference to being behind bars.

Andrew's **Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Amendment (Making Gambling Businesses Accountable) Bill 2022** would ensure gambling companies do not profit from the proceeds of crime, and must financially compensate the victims of that crime when they do.

Already ticked off:

- ✓ **Climate Change Bill 2022**
- ✓ **Progress on aged care reform**
- ✓ **Cashless debit card scrapped**
- ✓ **National integrity agency legislation progressing at last**



...with some big changes



Now in his fifth term representing Clark (formerly Denison), Andrew made history during the opening weeks of Australia's 47th Parliament when he took to the Speaker's chair to oversee proceedings in the Parliament.

Appointed to the House of Representatives Speaker's Panel, along with crossbench colleague Rebekha Sharkie, Andrew will occupy the Speaker's Chair from time to time, but remain free to participate in all other aspects of parliament the rest of the time. According to Leader of the House Tony Burke, it is the first time that independents have occupied the Speaker's Chair in the history of the Australian Parliament, making this not only a significant development but a huge honour.

This change reflects the evolution of the Parliament as the major party vote eases and crossbench support grows. Indeed, at the May election, about a third of the country voted Labor, a third LNP and a third independents and minor parties. It just makes sense that some crossbenchers should now figure in the running of parliamentary business and assist the Speaker.

The Macquarie Point circus rolls on

When Andrew joined then Infrastructure Minister Anthony Albanese at Macquarie Point in 2012 to announce \$50 million in remediation funding, he called on the State Government not to "stuff it up". Sadly, they have done just that. It was devastating to see Prime Minister Albanese back here 10 years later to observe the place is a mess and the progress appalling.

Despite a promise that the Mac Point precinct would be thick with cranes and concrete trucks in 2022, we have to date received virtually no bang for our buck. Big-ticket, city-shaping projects like the world-class Antarctic and science precinct remain unrealised.

It's high time to get Mac Point moving. The Premier needs to get all stakeholders into a room and keep them there until they agree on a plan to quickly restart the project. The invitation list must include the ministers and secretaries of all relevant departments, the Lord Mayor of Hobart, and the heads of TasPorts, TasWater and TasRail.

To be clear, public servants are not to blame for this monumental mess. Mac Point could and should be the jewel in the capital's crown, but instead remains the plaything of politicians more interested in goal posts than tackling the state's big problems.

"Mac Point could and should be the jewel in the state capital's crown, but instead remains the plaything of politicians."



Any bid to boost poker machines must be rejected

A recent plan to expand the Claremont Hotel's opening hours has thankfully been withdrawn after being slammed by many in the community, including Andrew. The prospect of increasing poker machine operating hours through to 4am was, in Andrew's opinion, appalling and entirely at odds with the public interest.

There is currently more than enough access to poker machines at the Hotel. And anyone desperate to play after midnight can already go down the road a short distance to another venue. Any increase in noise and light pollution would also have affected local residents, some of whom say that existing noise-mitigation measures were already being ignored.

We all know the misery poker machines cause in the community. Gambling venues in the City of Glenorchy already account for some of the highest losses of anywhere in Tasmania, with millions lost each month. Much of this comes from people suffering from gambling addiction, the human cost of which is devastating.

The Glenorchy City Council has publicly committed to advocating for gambling harm-minimisation measures, including reducing the hours of poker machine operation, and this application from the Claremont Hotel was clearly at odds with that commitment. Surely the Council has no choice but to reject the application if it is resubmitted by the proponent.

Community notice board

Celebrating a milestone?

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



Please contact my office at andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au or 6234 5255

Cats in motion at Ten Lives

Helping non-profit and sporting clubs in Clark to access Federal Government grants is one of the many ways Andrew assists those doing great work in our community. Among them is Ten Lives, which rescues and re-homes lost, surrendered and stray cats and kittens. It also plays an important role in educating the community about responsible cat ownership.

Ten Lives secured more than \$15,000 under the Stronger Communities program to help buy a multi-purpose van that's now being used to support a range of projects. These include providing a pet ambulance service, assisting people with problems related to cat hoarding, taking cats and kittens to the vet for desexing and treatment, and transporting community volunteers with special needs.



Ten Lives is always on the lookout for more volunteers.

To find out more visit www.tenlives.com.au

Mobile Office

When Federal Parliament isn't sitting, Andrew is always keen to get out and about to keep his finger on the electoral pulse. Mobile offices are held regularly on a street near you, with dates and times found at www.andrew.wilkie.org or in the Glenorchy Gazette, Hobart Observer and Tasmania Senior. There's no need to make an appointment. Look out for the sign and just drop by for a chat.

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
- Ask for a meeting

www.andrewwilkie.org

"Mad cow" blood ban lifted

Australians once banned from giving blood because they had lived in the UK during an outbreak of the human variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD), also known as mad cow disease, have now been given the greenlight to donate after a ruling earlier this year by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Previously, people who lived in the UK for over six months between 1980 and 1996 were unable to donate blood in Australia. Australian Red Cross Lifeblood experts worked with the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales to research the risk of vCJD in Australia's blood donor population and this showed it was time to change the rules. The change finally took effect at the end of July.

To make a booking visit www.lifeblood.com.au or call 13 14 95

Latin community has a spring in their step

While always hoping to stay in step with his community, Andrew's also happy to admit he couldn't match the fancy footwork on display during a recent Colombian Independence Day event featuring the Latin Spring dance group. The talented troupe, established in 2018, includes 10 members united by their desire to share their knowledge and passion for Latin American folklore through dance.

The group rehearses in Hobart several times a week and is often joined by Latin American migrants living in the Hobart community, sometimes on a temporary basis.

To find out more email latinspringau@gmail.com



Callout to Sappers

The Royal Australian Engineers Association of Tasmania was founded in 1932 to provide ongoing mutual support to Sappers who had returned from the Great War and who were suffering through the deprivations and hardships of the Great Depression. The Association is now open to all Sappers, serving or retired, regular or reserve, and is keen to connect with veterans moving to Tasmania.

The role of the Association is to support its members, provide a means by which members can gather at events, and maintain contact with the Head of Corps RAE and RAE associations in other states. Annual subscriptions are only \$20.



To find out more, contact President Bogdan Michalkowski on 0419 282 814 or Secretary Andrew Montgomery on 0418 125 760

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