

100% Independent

December 2023

THE CLARK INDEPENDENT

ANDREW WILKIE - YOUR INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MP



Keep safe this bushfire season

With temperatures soaring and the planet confronting an El Niño that is likely to last until at least April, Australians need to be on high alert for bushfires. The Tasmania Fire Service provides tips and advice at bushfire.tas.gov.au.

1. Create or update your Bushfire Plan.
2. Talk about your Bushfire Plan with family, neighbours and friends.
3. Clear your property and prepare an emergency kit.
4. Know when to leave and where to go.
5. Check ABC local radio, TasALERT (www.TasALERT.com), TFS Website (fire.tas.gov.au) and TFS Social Media for the latest news, warnings and alerts.
6. Monitor the weather (bom.gov.au) and know if a total fire ban is in place.

Understand bushfire warnings and alerts



ADVICE: A fire is burning. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes. (May also be used to advise that a threat has reduced.)



WATCH AND ACT: A fire is burning and conditions are changing. Start taking action now to protect yourself and others.

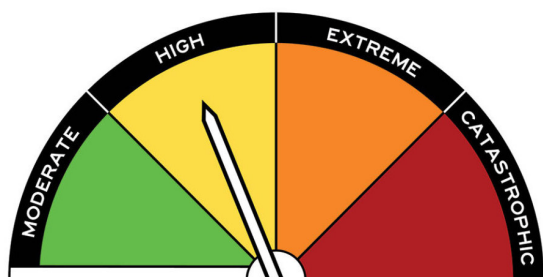


EMERGENCY WARNING: An Emergency Warning is the highest level of warning. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay may put your life at risk.



SMOKE ALERT: Provides information about smoke from a fire, bushfire or fuel reduction burn that may impact a community or areas of Tasmania.

The Australian Fire Danger Ratings (AFDRS) levels are:



MODERATE

Plan and prepare

HIGH

Be ready to act

EXTREME

Take action now to protect life and property

CATASTROPHIC

For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas

It's important to understand bushfire warnings, alerts and Australian Fire Danger Ratings so you can stay up to date with the bushfire situation. The best way to access this information is to visit TasALERT.com.



Andrew's Canberra report card for 2023

Animal welfare: The Federal Government intends to phase out live sheep exports to the Middle East. But live cattle exports will be ongoing, and there is still no body to effectively oversee animal welfare generally.

Asylum seekers: Approximately 19,000 refugees on Temporary Protection Visas and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas have been provided a pathway to permanency. However, about 12,000 people are still languishing on temporary visas, and we still have mandatory detention, offshore processing and boat tow-backs, all immoral and illegal under international law.

Environment: Renewable energy ramping up and action on the Murray-Darling Basin. But overshadowed by a commitment to approve more coal and gas projects, legislation allowing carbon pollution dumping at sea and poor progress on environmental law reform. Carbon reduction targets still inadequate.

Foreign policy: The Government has bolstered Australia's relationships with allies and partners, repaired Pacific relationships and stabilised the Australia-China relationship. Some serious missteps though over the war in Gaza.

Gambling: Good progress with the introduction of BetStop that will let people exclude themselves from online gambling, as well as a bill to ban the use of credit cards for online wagering. Mixed signals on gambling advertising reform.

Health: The rollout of Urgent Care Clinics and 60-day medicine dispensing are potentially positive reforms. But the health system is in perpetual crisis and critical reforms, like restoring the value of the GP Medicare rebate by doubling it, remain unaddressed.

Housing: Although the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund and the additional \$3 billion directly towards social and affordable housing will provide some relief, there's been no progress on tax reform and other measures to address the housing crisis. Moreover, Australia's record high migration intake might be boosting the economy, but it's also turbo-charging the housing crisis.

Integrity: The creation of the National Anti-Corruption Commission is a huge step forward in restoring trust in politics. However, effective protections for whistleblowers are still lacking, media freedom laws remain inadequate and it remains to be seen where the Government goes with political donation reform.

Antarctica on thin ice

Hobart is the gateway to the Antarctic, serving as the nerve centre for international scientific research and conservation efforts in the area. But the recent push for \$25 million in savings in the Australian Antarctic Division is galling. Reports suggesting that field research on the continent is being reviewed, and that two of our permanent bases will be under-staffed this summer are alarming to say the least. This comes at a time when Antarctic sea ice is at record lows, Antarctic temperatures are at record highs and the increased impacts of climate change are being felt across the globe.

Macquarie Wharf is also in a terrible state of disrepair on account of years of State Government disinterest and underinvestment. This is undermining Australia's ability to meet current Antarctic research needs, let alone support the growth of the sector.

Moreover, our new \$528 million ice breaker, the RSV Nuyina, can't fit under the Tasman Bridge to be refuelled at Selfs Point, instead for now having to travel the 1,200 kilometre round trip to Burnie to refuel.

Tasmania has the world's best Antarctic scientists and experts. But they're skating on thin ice right now due to years of poor government policy and planning, and chronic government underinvestment. Andrew believes this must be turned around as a national priority, and has called on all levels of government to make meaningful decisions and investments to enhance our Antarctic infrastructure, significantly bolster on-ice and at-sea research, and demonstrably honour Australia's Antarctic Treaty obligations.

Clark swimming in shallow waters

The Glenorchy War Memorial Pool has been a great source of pride for the community for some 60 years, providing people with a place to exercise, convalesce and have fun with family and friends. It's no surprise then that many in the community are dismayed to hear that the pool is closed indefinitely due to safety concerns, and quite possibly is set to close permanently. Glenorchy City Council is currently assessing its options. Andrew raised the matter in the Federal Parliament recently and called for all levels of government to work together to find a solution to save the Glenorchy Pool.

The much needed upgrades at the Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Centre have been put on pause due to steeply rising costs. The Centre was set to receive a new warm-water hydrotherapy pool thanks to joint funding from Hobart City Council, the State Government and the Federal Government, but rising prices has meant there is a \$7 million shortfall compared with the original funding of the project.

Greater Hobart is in dire need of good pool facilities, especially therapy pools, and it's vital the Glenorchy Pool is saved and fixed, and that the Doone Kennedy upgrade goes ahead. While ultimately these are decisions for councils, Andrew will continue to look for ways to help.



Out and about in the community



Andrew recently visited **Tassie Mums** to check out the new shelves, workbench and storage baskets that were purchased through a federal grant. The organisation provides essential baby and children's items to social service organisations across Tasmania who are working with vulnerable and at-risk children. On average, Tassie Mums help five children every day of the year, sending out more than \$700,000 worth of children's items annually.

New pedestrian crossings, garden beds, benches and bike stands have all been installed as part of the upgrades to the **New Town shopping precinct**. The finished project, which was largely funded by the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, was launched recently with a street party. The upgrades will make the area safer for pedestrians and support businesses.



Using the \$17,900 it received from a Queen's Jubilee Grant Program, Taroona High School has planted an orchard for students and staff to use. It's named **Grace's Orchard** in memory of the Dixon family of George and Amelia Dixon and their daughter Grace, who were the former owners of the 22-acre property.



Credit: City of Hobart

Australians need a service they can rely on

Many people in the community have approached Andrew to raise concerns about how hard it is to deal with Centrelink. This includes diminishing face-to-face services at Centrelink offices, phone systems that are being constantly overwhelmed by calls and confusing digital services. This is why Andrew was pleased to hear the Federal Government announce \$228 million to fund a further 3,000 jobs at Services Australia.

However, this is only a stop-gap measure and more needs to be done to restore trust after Robodebt had people terrified of incurring debts. Robodebt was a catastrophic failure of government administration that destroyed the lives of countless Australians and all eyes will be on the Federal Government as it implements all the recommendations of the Robodebt Royal Commission. This is particularly important when it comes to the recommendations on face-to-face services, increasing the number of social workers and reinstating the limitation of six years on debt recovery.

Community notice board

School visits

Andrew is always keen to visit schools in the electorate and share his knowledge of the parliamentary process. He can talk about life as an MP in Canberra, participate in mock Parliaments and join classes on democracy, governance and public policy.

During Parliament sitting weeks, Andrew can meet with school groups in Canberra and give them a tour of Parliament House.

Schools are encouraged to get in touch with Andrew's office.



Scouts call out

Do you want to get your kids outdoors having fun with other kids on adventurous activities, and develop their leadership skills and independence? Scouts Tasmania is for all children aged five (and in full-time school) to 25 years old and there's a Scout group near you. For more information call 1800 SCOUTS (1800 726 887).



Support over Christmas

While Christmas and the holiday period is a time to celebrate, for many it is a difficult period. There are many services available for those who need it.

Lifeline is a free 24/7 service and can be reached at 13 11 14. A Tasmanian Lifeline is also available from 8am to 8pm for free, confidential mental health support on 1800 984 434.

If you have experienced sexual assault or family violence, the Sexual Assault Support Service is a free and confidential service for people affected by sexual trauma that is available 24/7. Phone 1800 697 877.

More 24 hour services include Safe at Home Family Violence Response and Referral Line (1800 633 937), 1800Respect (1800 737 732) and Housing Connect (1800 697 877). Anglicare (1800 243 232) is also available 9am to 5pm on Monday to Friday.

If you're in need of any other support or assistance over the holiday period, FindHelpTAS (findhelptas.org.au) – Tasmania's largest online directory of community services – can connect you with local services in your area. The FindHelpTAS directory is searchable via region and service type (eg emergency, housing, mental health, etc). Over the holiday period it is recommended you give service providers a call before presenting in person as operating hours and service capacity may vary.

Remember that if it is an emergency to always call Triple Zero - 000 - and get in touch with the Police, Ambulance Tasmania or the Tasmania Fire Service.

FindHelp
TAS

Colony 47 Christmas lunch

Colony 47 will host its annual Community Christmas Day Lunch at In the Hanging Garden (112 Murray Street). The community-led event continues to grow and provides a traditional Christmas lunch to those who are doing it tough or seeking company on Christmas Day. To find out more, register to attend or make a donation, please head to colony47.com.au/christmas.



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

Remembrance Day

People across the country observed a minute's silence at 11am on 11 November to commemorate the Armistice towards the end of

World War One in 1918. The day has become an important annual event honouring veterans from all wars and remembering the impact on their families, as well as the broader population.

Andrew was honoured to be invited to speak at the Taroona Ex-Services and Community Remembrance Day Service.



Mobile Office

While 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.andrewwilkie.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.

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Independent Federal MP
Mobile Office

Printed on 100% environmentally-responsible paper
Authorised by Andrew Wilkie MP 188 Collins Street Hobart 7000
Printed by Mercury Walch 5 Bowen Road Moonah 7009