

100% Independent

December 2024

# THE CLARK INDEPENDENT

ANDREW WILKIE - YOUR INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MP



## Protecting our environment



Swift Parrot  
Credit: Brendan Sydes

Tasmanians are rightly proud of our beautiful and unique environment. No wonder there is such community concern when we see governments failing in their duty to protect, conserve and restore it.

The recently released, and long overdue, State of the Environment Report in Tasmania found only two of the 29 environmental indicators tracked in the report are getting better, while 16 are getting worse. And it's sadly no surprise.

The Tasmanian Government and Labor Party cheer on unrestrained salmon farming which is helping drive the Maugean skate to extinction. They increase quotas and release more native forests for the logging industry which is decimating critical Swift Parrot habitat. And they recklessly push ahead with destructive luxury tourism and mining projects in World Heritage Wilderness Areas and the precious takayna/Tarkine. What's more, successive federal governments have failed to properly reform our clearly outdated national environmental laws.

Alarming, about a third of Tasmanian plant and animal species are listed as threatened. In the Clark electorate alone, we have 62 threatened species, with six of those added within the last two years. The State of the Environment Report also made clear that Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions reductions fall well short of what scientists say is needed to secure a safe climate. And that's in the best-performing state in the country.

It's clear we're facing twin climate and extinction crises. Indeed Australia is a global hotspot for extinctions and deforestation, and both climate change and our weak environmental laws are adding to this problem. To reverse this, we need more urgent action on climate change, and we need better environmental laws which actually protect nature and which account for the impacts of climate change.

This Federal Government has made some moves on environmental law reform, and Andrew welcomes the progress. But sadly, they've also kicked a lot of the hard work out into the long grass.

Andrew worked with environmental organisations to propose changes to the Government's recent environmental reform package, including strengthening the proposed environmental protection agency and introducing a climate trigger for development assessments. While the amendments were voted down by the major parties, Andrew will continue to work with the Crossbench to push for genuine reform which protects the environment now and into the future.



# Progress on education

Thousands of Australian university students will be given much-needed relief after the *Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024* passed Parliament. Andrew has been lobbying for these changes for years. The Bill will see retrospective changes in indexation rates, returning \$3 billion to university students. It is a welcome first step in alleviating some of the unfair and unnecessary pressures facing Australian students and those with ballooning HECS/HELP debts. However, Andrew has long advocated for more to be done by the Federal Government to make higher education accessible and affordable for any Australian, including a return to fee-free first degrees for Australian citizens.

The Federal Government has also reached an agreement with the Tasmanian Government to fully fund all public schools in the state to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). Since the Gonski reforms set up the SRS in 2011, Andrew has consistently advocated with successive federal governments to work with the Tasmanian Government to reach 100 per cent funding for public schools. This funding should allow public schools to reduce class sizes, increase one-on-one support for students and provide more assistance for teachers in the classroom.

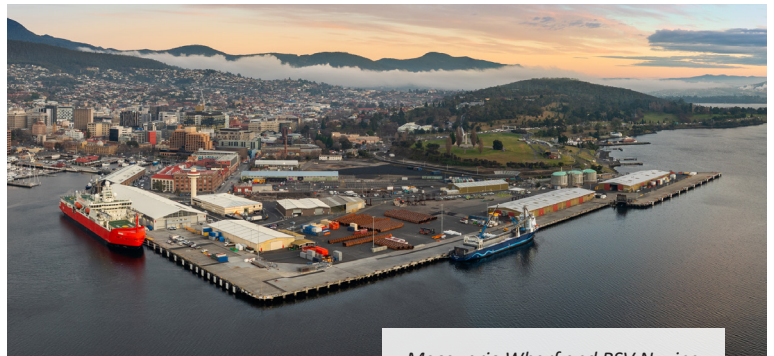
However, as always, the devil is in the detail. It's very disappointing that the Federal Government didn't agree to a higher share of the SRS, that the Tasmanian contribution allows for some four per cent to be pilfered on non-learning expenditure, and that full funding won't be achieved for five years.

## Wharf funding

The Federal Government has agreed to provide \$188 million to upgrade Macquarie Wharf 6 and provide access for the RSV Nuyina for the next 30 years. This is something Andrew has long campaigned for, having lobbied the Prime Minister and Federal Environment Minister personally to convey his concerns about the future of the Australian Antarctic Program in Tasmania.

Improved wharf facilities will provide long-overdue certainty that the icebreaker, the RSV Nuyina, can continue to be based in Hobart.

Tasmania has the best Antarctic and Southern Ocean scientists in the world and the Antarctic sector is also a key pillar of the Hobart economy. Reaching this agreement is a welcome development which means Hobart can remain Australia's gateway to the Antarctic and a centre of important Antarctic and climate science for many years to come.



Macquarie Wharf and RSV Nuyina  
Credit: City of Hobart



## Housing woes

One of the hot topics raised with Andrew by the community remains the housing crisis. And rightly so, because it's appalling that we have so many people struggling to find or afford housing in one of the richest countries in the world.

Federal, state and local government responses so far have been underwhelming and entirely lacking the fresh mindset and funding to sort the problem out. Examples of what's needed are more crisis and supported accommodation, more public housing, reform of negative gearing and capital gains tax, rent-to-buy programs, better managed land releases and development approvals, and better protections for tenants.

## Supermarket mischief

With the cost of living soaring, Andrew welcomed the news that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission was looking into Coles and Woolworths for allegations of misleading consumers through dodgy discount pricing. It's appalling that the supermarket giants continue to make staggering profits while Australians choose between rent and food. And they can keep getting away with it largely because of ineffective regulation and enforcement mechanisms.

Andrew has argued for laws to rein in the supermarkets, including by improving regulation and enforcement measures. Divestiture laws are also needed to break up the supermarket duopoly.

# Getting in Andrew's ear



Andrew is always keen to hear about the important issues facing the community to help guide his work as the Federal Member for Clark. He was pleased to receive a wide range of responses to his recent postcard campaign encouraging people to tell him what was on their mind. Some of the big issues included concerns about the proposed Macquarie Point stadium, the crisis in Tasmania's health system, the soaring cost of living and the state of our environment.

Andrew has taken note of the concerns raised in the postcards. Being an independent, Andrew enjoys good access to whatever party is in government and regularly takes community concerns directly to the Prime Minister and Ministers. These concerns will inform his work as the Member for Clark and he will look to help in any way he can.

## Push to combat gambling harm



Faith leaders call for a conscience vote on gambling advertising

Andrew, along with Independent Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie, has been leading the push in Federal Parliament calling for a full ban on gambling advertising. It's been more than a year since the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs released its report into online gambling and its impacts on those experiencing gambling harm. However, the Federal Government hasn't responded to it or enacted any meaningful reforms to combat gambling advertising. Of course the issue of gambling, and in particular the behaviour of the gambling companies, is closely aligned with faith and morality. That's why Andrew joined with prominent faith leaders recently to call on the Federal Government to allow Members of Parliament a conscience vote on whether or not to impose a full ban on gambling advertising.

Andrew introduced his *Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Amendment (Making Gambling Businesses Accountable) Bill* in Federal Parliament recently for the third time. The Bill puts a positive obligation on gambling companies to report to AUSTRAC if they have reason to suspect a person is paying for a gambling service with money they've obtained illegally. It also enables the Federal Court to order a gambling company to financially compensate the victim of the crime, where it's found that someone has placed a bet using money they have stolen.

Andrew joined Tasmanian Independent MP Kristie Johnston and NSW Independent MP Helen Dalton to launch a campaign to introduce similar bills in their respective parliaments, which would require gambling companies to return gambling losses that were originally proceeds of crime to the victims of that crime.



NSW Independent Helen Dalton and Tasmanian Independent Kristie Johnston joined Andrew to introduce similar bills

Reports that the Tasmanian Government is considering backing down from implementing a nation-leading cashless pre-commitment card for poker machines are very concerning. This reform would be the first of its kind and set a precedent for all states and territories. Current poker machine arrangements in Tasmania are taking a shocking human toll. Thousands of addicts are losing more than they can afford, the result often being poverty, homelessness, relationship breakdown, ill health and even suicide. The State Government must not buckle to the demands of the gambling industry. To do so would be a disgraceful betrayal of the community and show total disregard to people experiencing poker machine harm.

# Community notice board

## Nepalese Football Club

Congratulations to the Nepalese Football Club of Tasmania for hosting the third Dashain Cup at Cornelian Bay. This event brought together community, culture and football in an exciting event that honoured the spirit of the Dashain festival.



If you would like to get involved or support the Nepalese Football Club in Tasmania, you can contact them via Facebook or Instagram at NFCT.

## Claremont Post Office has moved

The Claremont Post Office has opened its doors at their new trading location of 1/29 Main Road Claremont. If you hold a PO Box address, this is now where you can go to check your mail.

The previous post office at Claremont Plaza Shopping Centre is no longer in operation.

## Colony 47 gets a new name

Colony 47 has revitalised its brand, renaming as Home Base in October 2024.

Started in 1973 by Jim Coville, Home Base is a Tasmanian youth charity providing essential services for young people across the State. The new name and brand were developed in collaboration with young people and symbolises a safe, welcoming space and a strong foundation for those striving for stability and independence.

To access support or to get involved with Home Base, go to [homebasetas.org.au](http://homebasetas.org.au) or call 1800 955 700



## Diwali

The community recently gathered to celebrate a Diwali festival hosted by the All Indians Association of Tasmania at the Montrose Bay Yacht Club.

The festival was a sea of colour with cultural delicacies, music and dancing to enjoy. Diwali is about fostering social cohesion and connecting with the community.



Oshika Rao and Ameta Mamidipalli



Yukta Nagarajan

## Become comfortable at public speaking

Rostrum provides local public speaking training in Hobart. It is an enjoyable way to improve confidence, public speaking, online presence and leadership skills. Meeting times and locations vary. To get involved visit [www.rostrum.com.au](http://www.rostrum.com.au)



## 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 TAS 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)

## Full steam ahead at the Transport Museum

The M5 steam locomotive at the Tasmanian Transport Museum has been fired up once again. Volunteers have worked tirelessly since 2019 to return the M5 to service, and it looks set to be back on train ride duty in early 2025.



## Financial assistance available for cancer patients

The Cancer Council Tasmania's Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) aims to assist Tasmanians diagnosed with cancer when they are undergoing treatment or receiving palliative care if they are experiencing financial hardship. The program offers a \$300 payment for an unpaid telephone or power bill.



For more information and to explore other financial assistance available visit the Cancer Council website at [www.cancer.org.au](http://www.cancer.org.au) or phone 13 11 20

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