

THE CLARK INDEPENDENT

ANDREW WILKIE - YOUR INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MP



Cost of living

Each year Andrew conducts a community feedback campaign where every house in the Clark electorate receives a reply-paid postcard. The response has always been terrific, with postcards returned regularly numbering somewhere between 500 and 1,000. This directly informs Andrew's work and helps ensure that his focus remains on the things that matter most to the community. Whereas most politicians are told by their political party what to think, say and vote, Andrew enjoys the freedom to listen to his community directly and to act accordingly.



It is clearly the case that many people in the Clark electorate, which includes Glenorchy, Hobart and Taroona, are under a lot of pressure right now from the soaring cost of living. For instance, home loan interest rates and rents are high, and groceries and insurance are exorbitant. Moreover, there are countless less obvious expenses, like the levies imposed on public school students, and the increasing gap payment to see most GPs. For many people there is still terrible poverty, people are waiting intolerable periods for medical care, and the housing situation is dire.

But none of this is irreversible. Australia is still one of the safest, richest and most clever countries in the world, and to be able to live here is to have won the lottery. The fact remains that there are solutions at hand, and politicians have choices. For example, choose apathy to the housing crisis, or to build more social and affordable housing, and to give tenants better protections. Choose indifference to banks and supermarkets profiteering excessively, or to implement better regulation? Or choose between inaction on people not being able to afford a GP, or to increase the Medicare rebate. Can the country afford a new direction? Yes, it can and it's what Andrew will continue to pursue.

Of course, you don't need to wait for a postcard to share your views with Andrew, so please never hesitate to stop him in the street or contact his office.

Protecting consumers

Consumers are not effectively protected in Australia and this needs to be remedied. So, consumer law needs to be updated to provide better protections from dodgy businesses and products. And the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission needs the power and resources to more effectively ensure compliance with Australian competition and consumer laws.

Protecting the community from scams needs to be a particular focus of further reform, and Andrew has long campaigned for banks and other financial institutions to be required to refund scam losses when they've failed to put in place effective safeguards. This is the case in the United Kingdom and is supported by consumer groups in Australia.

Reflections on this parliament

The 2022 election brought us a new Federal Government and an unprecedented number of independents. The Federal Parliament established the National Anti-Corruption Commission, something Andrew had long called for. It also enacted some meaningful reforms on climate change which, while far from perfect, were needed after nine years of inaction by the previous government. Other notable achievements include making the Stage 3 tax cuts fairer, reforming the aged care system, and making HECS indexation more affordable for students and those with debts.

Particular highlights for Andrew were legislating a date to end live animal exports, banning credit card use for gambling and seeing Julian Assange freed from Belmarsh Prison – all issues he has strongly advocated for over many years. Andrew also blew the whistle on several scandals, including secret drug testing within the AFL, shocking misconduct by Hillsong Church and fraud within Australia's coal export industry.

Andrew made history when he took to the Speaker's Chair as Acting Deputy Speaker to regularly oversee and manage parliamentary proceedings. This parliament is the first time independents have occupied the Speaker's Chair, which reflects the evolution of the Parliament as the major parties' vote decreases and support for more independent voices grows.

Andrew continued calling out poor parliamentary behaviour and pushed for higher standards of conduct. No wonder he was proud to be appointed to the Parliamentary Standards Committee which was established to oversee the behaviour of MPs.

Andrew remains determined to help fix the things that matter most to the community. In particular, he's focused on the soaring cost of living, as well as the housing and health crises, and is always keen to help people having trouble dealing with Centrelink, the NDIS and DVA.

Andrew can be depended upon to blow the whistle on misconduct wherever it occurs, and is pursuing political donation, media freedom and whistleblower reforms. He continues to be one of the strongest advocates in the Parliament on issues like gambling, climate change, animal welfare, asylum seekers and foreign policy.



Federal investment in Clark

It's great that Federal Government money is flowing into our city and to see some of the results of these significant programs coming to fruition.



Linking Clark and Lyons

The largest transport infrastructure project in Tasmania's history, the new bridge linking Clark and Lyons, is nearing completion and expected to be open for traffic this year. The Federal Government funding of \$628.8m is 80 percent of the project's \$786 million cost. More than a kilometre in length, the bridge joins the Brooker and Midlands highways and is supported by 46 piles, each weighing between 215 and 345 tonnes. One of the final piles to be constructed is believed to be the largest ever poured in Australia, reaching 88 metres below the waterline.

Tasmanian Transport Museum



Photo: Train driver and assessor Tony Coen shows Andrew around the restored M5 locomotive

The Federal Government's grant of \$100,000 to the Tasmanian Transport Museum in Glenorchy has resulted in the restoration of their recently unveiled M-class steam engine. This project, managed by Dana Burke, a highly experienced boilermaker and welder, involved intricate work to bring the steam locomotive back to its former glory. An estimated 5,000 hours of volunteer labour has enabled this majestic 1951-built locomotive to be restored and will ensure the people of Tasmania can continue to enjoy a sample of steam-era rail travel for many years.

The Transport Museum currently runs its trains on the former Hobart suburban line to Grove Road, with plans to reopen the line as far as Granton.

Upgrades to the KGV sporting precinct

The Glenorchy soccer community is welcoming new sporting facilities thanks to a funding boost from the Federal Government. The KGV soccer field has seen a new synthetic surface laid, new lighting and change rooms installed, and upgrades to the grandstand, allowing the facility to remain one of the main soccer fields in Southern Tasmania. The upgrade is funded under a \$12.8 million grant for improved soccer facilities in the northern suburbs.



The road ahead

As traffic congestion in Clark increases, it's refreshing to see the Glenorchy City Council receiving over \$5m in Roads to Recovery funding over the next five years, a boost of more than \$2m thanks to the Federal Government. The increased funding covers a range of new priority projects, including the Renfrew Circle upgrade in Goodwood and the Ashbourne Grove project in West Moonah.

Hobart is choking on traffic due to decades of poor planning and under-investment by successive governments. Many people rely on cars, so better roads and traffic flow are essential. But a comprehensive response should include improved ferry and bus services, a light rail system, expanded park-and-ride facilities and enhanced infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians.

Community notice board

Ten Lives

Ten Lives Cat Centre is busy, caring for 220 cats and kittens at the peak of kitten season, and urgently needs more foster carers. With 179 foster carers, they require 30-40 more to meet demand. Foster carers receive full support, including training, food, litter supplies and vet care. It's a rewarding opportunity to help the animal charity provide essential care throughout the year. Interested? Reach out via their website, socials or phone to make a difference for our furry friends. www.tenlives.com.au



No junk mail

Is your letterbox often filled with political and other material you'd rather not receive, including The Clark Independent? Andrew has raised this with Australia Post repeatedly and been advised that posties are required to deliver these materials, even if you have a 'no junk mail' sticker. His attempt to change the law, by introducing a Private Member's Bill to require Australia Post to respect residents' wishes, was rejected by the Liberal and Labor parties. Nonetheless, Andrew has produced stickers asking posties not to deliver political material. If you'd like one for your letterbox, please contact the office.

**PLEASE - NO JUNK MAIL
INCLUDING POLITICAL MATERIAL**

Pakastani cricket community

The Pakastani Australian Cultural Organisation (PACO) is proud to support and promote sports, cultural events and community engagement in Tasmania. They encourage participation in cricket and other activities to foster unity and inclusion within the multicultural community. If you missed their Tape Ball Cricket Tournament and Community Gala Day in January, keep an eye out for the Multicultural Eid Festival in Hobart during April.

The Link Youth Health Service

The Link Youth Health Services offers an Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs program. Recently, the program conducted well-received vaping education sessions in Southern Tasmanian schools, targeting high-school students with a focus on education and harm minimisation. For further information, please contact The Link Youth Health Service at 6231 2927 or healthhelp@thelink.org.au.

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania is the peak body for 35 Neighbourhood Houses across Tasmania, with houses located at Chigwell, Dowsing Point, Goodwood and West Moonah. Neighbourhood Houses are places where people come together and find support, belonging and purpose as they work together to support their local community and make a real difference in people's lives. Houses are run by the community, for the community and offer a wide range of programs and activities for local people. www.nht.org.au

YNOT

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) is the peak body representing young people aged 12-25 years and the non-government youth sector in Tasmania. They work with and for young people to ensure their voices are heard and considered by government and decision-makers, driving positive change on issues that matter to them. Whether you're a young person ready to make a difference, or know someone who is, they'd love to connect. Visit www.ynot.org.au, email tyf@ynot.org.au or call/text 0488 235 511 to learn more and get involved.



Want to get in touch with Andrew?

- Drop into the office at 188 Collins Street Hobart
- Post a letter to GPO Box 32 Hobart TAS 7001
- Phone 6234 5255 or 6234 5861
- Email andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au
- Ask for a meeting

www.andrewwilkie.org

