

ESSENDON COMMUNITY NEWS

ISSUE 9 - SPRING 2019



Firstly, I would like to thank everyone in the Essendon electorate for giving me the opportunity to continue to work as the Member for Essendon. In November 2018, I took a number of promises to the election, and on 27 May the Andrews Government delivered its fifth Budget which has delivered on these promises. Once again, the Victorian State Budget has provided great improvements in education, sport and recreation, public transport, roads and waterways for the State District of Essendon.

Working together, we are delivering programs across Victoria including; Free TAFE, half-priced solar, free dental care at all government primary and secondary schools, the Royal Commission into Mental Health, baby bundles, universal three-year-old kinder, the Suburban Rail Loop, Airport Rail and the North-East Link.

Thank you to all residents, community leaders and organisations who continue to work with me and the Government to build a better community here in Essendon. Locally, the 2019-20 State Budget has delivered a new arts, science and physics building at Strathmore Secondary College. We are upgrading facilities at Kensington Primary School and improving safety and grounds at Flemington Primary School. We are establishing planning controls to prevent waves of overdevelopment in the Moonee Ponds Activity Centre. We are constructing a new cycling path on Woodland Street. We are constructing pedestrian lights across the Essendon electorate and funding a plan to improve safety at the Moonee Ponds Junction and Bus Interchange. We will also create a new Pocket Park and a new dog park in the Moonee Valley municipality. We are protecting the future of our waterways through the Waterways of the West Plan.

We have more work to do and I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with everyone in the community. As someone who lives in the community and has chosen to raise my family here, I will always fight for the things that will build a more resilient community where everyone is given the opportunity to succeed in life, and that means better schools, better transport, better jobs, better housing and better neighbourhoods.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO MENTAL HEALTH

The Royal Commission is the first of its kind in Australia to address our broken mental health system. It will map out a plan of action that drives major changes to the state's system to support those Victorians with a mental illness, including those at risk of suicide.

Every year, one in five Victorians experience mental illness. This Royal Commission is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to fix our broken system and ultimately save lives. All Victorians deserve access to quality mental healthcare, no matter their background or where they live. Our submission highlights how and where our system is broken, so we can build a better one.

The stepped-care model is about building better connections between mental health services so people don't fall through the cracks, like so many do right now. The Government's vision is for an accessible, flexible and responsive mental health system that provides the very best care and treatment, free of stigma and discrimination.

If you or someone you know is in crisis or needs support call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or BeyondBlue on 1300 224 636

COMMUNITY EVENTS

ROUNDTABLE ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

In March I had the honour of organising a roundtable with the Hon. Gabrielle Williams, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and a number of community organisations including Moonee Valley Legal Service, Farnham Street Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Wingate Avenue Community Centre and Moonee Valley City Council. I would like to thank everyone for attending and for the ongoing hard work and commitment of these organisations in our community.

IFTAR DINNER

During May an open invitation was extended to all residents of the Essendon electorate to share a meal and learn more about Ramadan at the Flemington Community Centre. The evening was informative and an enjoyable cultural experience, attended by a wonderful cross-section of our community.

Ramadan is an Islamic month of fasting for 30 days, refraining from eating from sunrise (fajr) to sunset (maghrib). Iftar is the meal eaten at the time of sunset (maghrib) during the month of Ramadan. Fasting is to teach patience, modesty, spirituality, self-restraint and purification.

ENGLISH CONVERSATION CLASSES

Conversation is an amazing tool and for many a simple conversation can be daunting. Residents of our community may need support and assistance but do not have the confidence in their language skills to seek help. In partnership with Farnham Street Neighbourhood Learning Centre, both Flemington and the Sam Merrifield Libraries offer free conversation classes. I attended these classes recently to engage with people, instigate conversation and offer the opportunity for discussion in a relaxed setting. These weekly classes are a great way to practice your English and meet new people.

This program is aimed at adult learners. Classes are free of charge and no booking is required to attend.



ESSENDON YOUTH COUNCIL

The Essendon Youth Council (EYC) is a forum for young people aged 15-25 years old who are living in the electorate of Essendon, including the suburbs of Strathmore Heights, Strathmore, Essendon, Essendon North, Moonee Ponds, Ascot Vale, Flemington and Travancore. The EYC meets with me on a monthly basis at my Electorate Office, and provides young people in our electorate with a voice and an opportunity to speak to me directly about the issues that matter to them. If you are interested please let me know by calling 9370 7777 or emailing me at danny.pearson@parliament.vic.gov.au.

ENERGY FORUM

A free information session was held recently at the Moonee Ponds Bowls Club to assist residents to find the best deal on their gas and electricity. Those who attended were encouraged to bring along their recent energy bills and were assisted in comparing providers.

Seven out of ten people can typically save \$330 per year by comparing and making the switch. If you would like to quickly compare all of your electricity, gas and solar offers available in your area please go to [www.vic.gov.au/victorianenergycompare](http://www.vic.gov.au/victorianenergycompare).

WHAT WE ARE DELIVERING FOR YOUR COMMUNITY



## BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

Grassroots organisations strengthen our community, protect our environment, keep us safe and keep our bodies and minds healthy. The Andrews Government is supporting these organisations and the dedicated people who run them.

### POCKET PARK AND DOG PARK

I am working to secure a place to enjoy and unwind with a pocket park in the Essendon electorate. Local families and their four legged friends will also have a new place to stretch their legs, with the Andrews Government delivering its promise for a brand new dog park for the Moonee Valley municipality.

### BETTER SPORTING FACILITIES FOR EVERYONE

The redevelopment of Riverside is moving along as the next stage of the rebuild of the driving range commences. This is required to meet safety requirements and reinvigorate the facility. The netball and tennis facilities are now operating and are successfully accommodating coaching, social, training and competitive matches. The shrieks of delight from the girls and boys training on the new courts was indeed a huge tick of approval.

Strathmore Bowls Club will also be able to upgrade their heating and cooling system.

### WATERWAYS OF THE WEST PLAN

Our community is fortunate to have close access to both the Moonee Ponds Creek and the Maribryong River. In more recent times, the water quality and the habitat of these environments have improved markedly but we know that more can be done.

I remember being thrilled to see the Traditional Owners of the Land, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations, stand on the floor of the Legislative Assembly in 2017 to speak about the importance of having proper environmental controls for the Yarra River and I want to make sure that the Maribryong River and the Moonee Ponds Creek are similarly protected.

As part of the Waterways of the West initiative, the Andrews Government is improving access to the Moonee Ponds Creek, as well as enhancing the public open space surrounding the creek. Like so many of you, I want the community to be able to enjoy this natural asset.

Specifically, we will focus on improving recreational access to the creek by unlocking open space and allowing access to the creek from adjoining suburbs and streets.

The project will create open space for community recreational use and will include the construction of pathways and stairs, fence modifications and the installation of picnic tables, seating, wayfinding signage and vegetation.

The recreational access project is currently being designed and we are looking to kick off work in late 2019.

### SOLAR HOMES

In addition to the initial commitment for this financial year that Solar Homes will support 49,000 installations, including 42,000 rooftop solar systems on 40,000 owner-occupied homes and 2,000 for rental homes, a further 23,000 Victorian households are set to benefit from solar rebates in the 2019/20 financial year. The rebates for solar panels will be released each fortnight to ensure the program is allocated fairly, rolled out safely and provides certainty for the solar industry.

Rebates for solar hot water systems will also continue to be available for those who haven't already accessed a rebate through the program – with 6,000 allocated this financial year. No-interest loans for solar panels will also be available to further drive down up-front costs.

More than 32,000 households are already saving on their electricity bills through the Solar Homes program – while also doing their part to tackle climate change and create new jobs in the solar industry. If you wish to receive further information on the Solar Homes program please visit [solar.vic.gov.au](http://solar.vic.gov.au)

## BUILDING THE EDUCATION STATE

### UNIVERSAL THREE-YEAR-OLD KINDER

The Andrews Labor Government is determined to make sure all kids are ready for primary school and set for life. We are delivering on our election commitment to begin the statewide rollout of universal three-year-old kinder. An \$882 million Budget investment will ensure that every three-year-old has access to at least five hours per week of subsidised kinder by 2022, increasing to 15 hours per week. Additionally, a quarter of Victorian families who are struggling with the cost of living will not pay additional fees.

### INCLUSIVE EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

The 2019-20 State Budget includes \$38.5 million to ensure every Victorian child can access inclusive early childhood education, giving everyone the very best start in life, which will be allocated as follows:

\$33.6 million for local councils and providers to expand, build and improve facilities at kindergartens to increase inclusivity and accessibility

\$3.4 million to support children with a disability or development difficulties. This includes providing therapy, special education and assistance to access kindergarten and childcare services.

\$1.6 million to meet the needs of children with a significant disability, as a part of the existing Kindergarten Inclusion Support program.

### FREE DENTAL CARE IN SCHOOLS

Students across Essendon and Victoria will have a brighter smile, thanks to the Labor Government's rollout of free dental care at all public primary and secondary schools. This year's Budget enables the rollout, investing \$322 million and delivering on our promise to bring back dental vans. This investment will save families around \$400 a year per child as well as reducing the stress of taking time from work to arrange appointments.

### FREE TAFE

We are building the Education State so every member of our community can have access to quality further education.

The Labor Government's \$172 million Free TAFE program allows 30 priority TAFE courses and 20 pre-apprenticeship courses to be tuition fee free. The most popular courses have been: Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping, Diploma of Nursing, Diploma of Community Services, Certificate IV in Education Support and Certificate IV in Cyber Security.

Free TAFE for Priority Courses reduces the financial barrier for eligible students wanting to study in high demand fields that lead to jobs with Victorian employers. Students can save up to \$2,500 for some pre-apprenticeship courses, up to \$5,000 for Certificate IV courses and for Diplomas, students can save up to \$10,000 through the Free TAFE initiative.

To ensure we can train the kinder teachers of the future, the Labor Government has also added the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, and Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care to the Free TAFE list.

### POLICE ASSISTANCE LINE 131 444

Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville launched the \$212 million Police Assistance Line (PAL) and Online Reporting Portal (OLR) for non-emergency matters. This will free up the 000 emergency number for urgent situations.

Residents can now call 131 444 or visit the Victoria Police website to report non-urgent crimes such as theft, lost and located property reports, property damage, noise complaints, neighbourhood disputes and other general enquiries.



## DELIVERING FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS



### Ascot Vale Primary School

This project included the modernisation and upgrade of classroom blocks and toilets, internal refurbishment, replacing the school oval and playground equipment, a sensory garden, providing new fences and landscaping.

### Strathmore Primary School

A new competition-grade sports stadium with exterior courts and specialist spaces for arts and community activities.

The refurbishment of the administration and junior learning building to support contemporary learning practice by replacing existing cellular classrooms with connected spaces that offer staff and students a variety of learning environments.

### Strathmore Secondary School

Ongoing modernisation and upgrade of existing facilities along with a new three storey building with general purpose classrooms and specialist facilities. Construct a new Arts, Science and Physics Building.

### Moonee Ponds West Primary School

A new toilet block was completed in the junior section of Moonee Ponds West Primary, a vast improvement on the old building and an essential upgrade.

## BUILDING BETTER TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Victoria is expanding and our state requires new infrastructure so our transport system can keep people moving. We are building Melbourne Metro, building the Suburban Rail Loop and Airport Rail Link, building the North-East Link, upgrading roads, removing level crossings and adding public transport services where the capacity allows.

### SAFER ROADS FOR ALL ROAD USERS

New pedestrian lights will be installed in Ascot Vale to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Mt. Alexander Road, Grice Crescent, Shamrock Street Intersection Signalling works to improve safety and traffic flow.

Funding a plan for the Moonee Ponds Junction upgrade to improve the operation safety and accessibility of the Moonee Ponds Junction and Bus Interchange.

Planning and construction of a new cycle path on Woodland Street will ensure more people can get around on two wheels.