

STANDING UP

FOR HOTHAM

NEWS FROM CLARE O'NEIL MP

AUGUST 2020



Dear Resident,

I'm getting in touch during what is an extremely challenging time for Victoria. The health and economic crisis of COVID-19 has affected every part of our lives and every one of our families. And I know this second wave in Victoria has been a devastating blow.

I wanted to share some information with you about the work I've been doing over the past few months. When the families I represent are in crisis, I go into bat for them with everything I have. That's why I pushed hard for JobKeeper to be put in place, and then extended. For us to have paid pandemic leave, for JobSeeker to be increased, for fairer opportunities for young people coming out of the COVID-19 recession, for the free childcare that has been a lifeline for a lot of Hotham families.

I feel really humbled when I look at the work happening across Hotham. Families are looking out for each other in new ways, neighbours are making friends and caring for one another too.

We have a very large number of people and families on the front line. Whether one of our healthcare heroes caring for sick Victorians at Monash Hospital, our scientists working on a COVID-19 vaccine at CSIRO, an aged care worker supporting our vulnerable residents in Mulgrave or Springvale, a retail worker keeping food available in Oakleigh South or Clayton, or an educator in one of Hotham's outstanding local schools - thank you. We owe you all a tremendous debt of gratitude.

For those of you stuck at home with a bit of extra time on your hands during Stage 4 restrictions, I've included some puzzles on the back page of this newsletter. I hope you enjoy!

My job is to be there for you, so if I can help you in any way, or even if you just want to share what's happening for you and your family at the moment, I would love for you to be in touch. My email address is clare.oneil.mp@aph.gov.au, or you can book an appointment on 9545 6211.

Stay safe and well everyone, and let's keep taking care of one another during this difficult time.


Clare



All photography displayed is pre COVID-19

Health and Economic Crisis

As you know, here in Victoria we currently have a significant number of active COVID-19 cases. It's so important that we keep following the health advice.

The next challenge we will face as a community is the economic recovery from this crisis. This pandemic has highlighted a number of existing cracks in the economy, notably the issue of rising casualisation of the workforce and the impact of insecure work.

This pandemic has shown that, for too many Australians, employment has become insecure and precarious, particularly for women and young people. I've heard a lot of talk about 'returning to normal', but for these workers, normal isn't good enough. If we want to hit the ground running in our recovery from this pandemic, the issue of casualisation and insecure work must be addressed.

Connecting with Communities

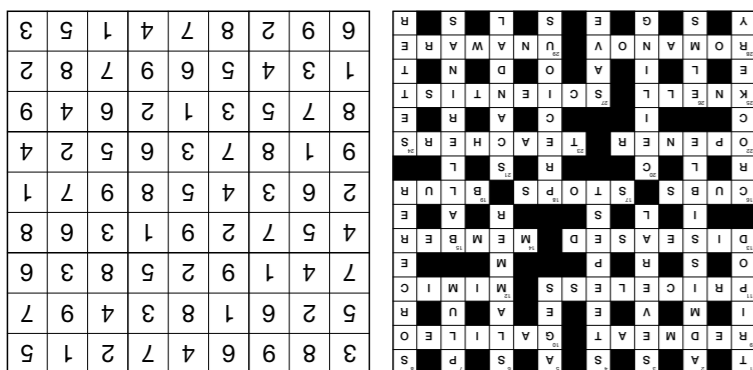
One of the things I love most about my electorate is the vibrant multiculturalism. The electorate captures a diverse range of wonderful cultures.



It's always important to me to listen to my community – even more so during these challenging times. It's been invaluable to have held virtual meetings with community organisations representing the Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Greek communities. I wanted to learn how their communities are coping and what we can do to support them.

It was inspiring to hear so many stories of great community spirit. These organisations are all providing extra support to their communities - especially for seniors and those in aged care - by helping them to navigate these challenging times.

These communities are rallying so admirably and it was moving to hear how much they are doing to look after one another.



- 5 Ages
6 Slammer
7 Plum
8 Sorcerer
15 Ballerinas
16 Crockery
18 Precious
20 Ceiling
21 Scandal
24 Setter
26 Elms
27 Save
- 19 Blur
17 Stops
16 Gubs
14 Member
13 Diseased
12 Mimic
11 Priceless
10 Galileo
9 Red meat
- 22 Opener
23 Teachers
25 Knell
27 Scientist
28 Romanov
29 Unaware
- 4 Steepest
3 Several
2 Admissible
1 Tripod
- Down**

Solutions

Early Learning Matters

There's a mountain of evidence that early learning gives our kids the best chance in life.

During visits to early learning centres across Hotham, I've seen for myself the high level of professionalism and enthusiasm displayed by staff working in these centres. Predominantly female workers, they are often underpaid and undervalued.



Recently, I was joined by the Hon. Amanda Rishworth, Labor's Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development, for an online Zoom Forum with staff at early learning centres. We heard from them what challenges they are facing and how we can help.

These workers often go above and beyond daily duties because of their passion for caring for our youngest citizens. We entrust them with this important task, so we need to make sure they receive the appropriate recognition.

Supporting our Young People

This pandemic has been especially tough for young people. We know that in recessions, it's young people who always experience the worst consequences and COVID-19 has highlighted this.

Young people are disproportionately affected by casual and insecure work which means they get less support from their workplaces in a crisis like this. They're also concentrated in industries like hospitality, where so many jobs were the first to go when this pandemic hit.

Recently I reached out to young people in my electorate through a survey to hear about their experiences during this crisis. What I found was that young people are most concerned about employment, their career prospects and their mental health, citing being laid off by their employers, and feeling their interests are being disregarded by government.

What I've taken from this survey is that so many young people are feeling sidelined, silenced and left behind through this crisis. I'm so grateful that so many young people in our community came forward to share their experiences. I will continue to advocate for them and their concerns in the Federal Parliament.



Our Hotham Schools



COVID-19 has been a huge challenge for parents with kids in school. But adapting to online learning would have been nearly impossible if not for our wonderful school principals and teachers.

As the mum of two young boys, my heart goes out to all the families suddenly faced with home schooling – I've certainly found that challenging!

When I visit schools across Hotham, I always admire the passion and commitment of the principals and teachers I meet. Providing a quality education for our children is fundamental to our aspirations for their future. Our hardworking principals and teachers are committed to supporting their students during this challenging time.

I was fortunate to be joined by the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Labor's Shadow Minister for Education, for an online Zoom Forum with our school principals. It was so inspiring to hear how hard they are working to overcome the challenges they are facing, and how rapidly they have adapted to new ways of teaching. And they are doing all of this with an amazing sense of optimism about the future.

Caring for our Seniors

One thing I have learned from the older people in my life is that we can get through anything, as long as we stick together.

Every family in Hotham is being impacted by COVID-19, but I'm conscious that the seniors in our community need extra care, love and support.

Sadly, they are the most vulnerable to this coronavirus.

I've written to our seniors a couple of times during this pandemic to make sure they know they can call on me if they need assistance.

With the help of a team of wonderful volunteers we also called over 6,000 seniors to have a chat about their concerns, and to let us know what support they needed.

It's amazing to me how resilient so many of our seniors are. Whilst facing the terrible ordeal of being isolated from friends and beloved families for extended periods, they manage to bounce back from adversity with humour and determination. There is much we can learn from our seniors about what is truly important in our lives.

We must continue to do everything we can to keep our seniors safe and well.



Supporting Business and the Community



Following pressure from me and my Labor colleagues, the government is extending the JobKeeper payments by six months until March 2021, but it'll be a bit different.

From 28 September 2020, the payment will be reduced from \$1,500 per fortnight to \$1,200 for employees working 20 or more hours a week. From 4 January 2021, the payment will reduce to \$1,000. For employees working fewer than 20 hours a week, a lower payment rate of \$750 per fortnight will apply from 28 September. From 4 January 2021, that payment rate will reduce to \$650.

Employers will be required to reassess their eligibility for JobKeeper, first on 28 September and then again on 4 January 2021. More information on JobKeeper eligibility can be found on the ATO website ato.gov.au/general/jobkeeper-payment/

JobSeeker is still available to support those struggling to find work. If you're 22-60 and pass the income and assets test, you may be eligible for income support. Different payment rates apply depending on your situation and income.

You can find further information about JobSeeker at servicesaustralia.gov.au and you can apply for income support through [myGov](https://my.gov.au). Otherwise, the JobSeeker information line is **132 850**.

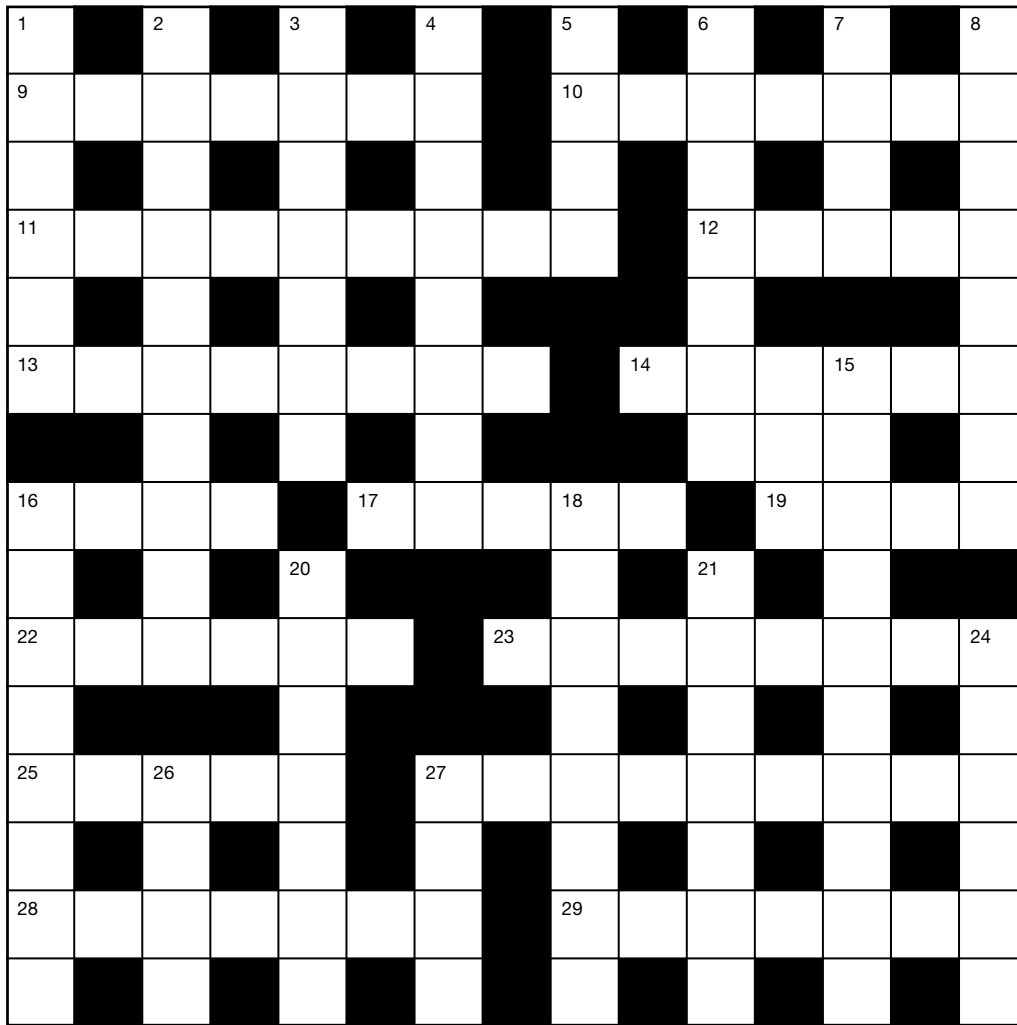
Shopping Local

This period has been incredibly tough for the whole community, but it has also been economically devastating for many local businesses.

If you want to help, one of the best things you can do for business in our community is to shop local. Many businesses have adapted to suit these extraordinary times - by selling products online, converting to takeaway or putting together meal packs for people to take home and cook.

It's not business as usual, but by supporting local traders, we can help them through this crisis. Show your support by joining campaigns like Back Local by the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia or Shop Small by AMEX.





Across

- 9 Beef or lamb, for example (3,4)
- 10 Italian astronomer (7)
- 11 Invaluable (9)
- 12 Copy (5)
- 13 Ailing (8)
- 14 One belonging to a group (6)
- 16 Young bears (4)
- 17 Halts (5)
- 19 Make indistinct (4)
- 22 Food tin essential (6)
- 23 Tutors (8)
- 25 Mournful sound (5)
- 27 Researcher (9)
- 28 Russian imperial dynasty (7)
- 29 Oblivious (7)

Down

- 1 Three-legged support (6)
- 2 Allowable (10)
- 3 More than two (7)
- 4 Most precipitous (8)
- 5 Matures (4)
- 6 Prison (7)
- 7 Especially valued (4)
- 8 Magician (8)
- 15 Female dancers (10)
- 16 Pots (8)
- 18 Cherished (8)
- 20 Overhead interior surface (7)
- 21 Public disgrace (7)
- 24 Long-haired dog (6)
- 26 Deciduous timber trees (4)
- 27 Rescue (4)

Sudoku

Fill in all squares so each row, column and each of the nine 3x3 square contains all digits from one to nine.

			1	8				9
				2	5	8	3	6
4		7			1	3	6	8
2	6			5			7	1
9	1	8	7			5		4
8	7	5	3	1				
	3			6	9			

Get in Touch Clare O'Neil MP

Federal Member for Hotham

Electorate Office 401 Clayton Road, Clayton VIC 3168

Mail P.O. Box 5295, Clayton VIC 3168

T 03 9545 6211

E clare.oneil.mp@aph.gov.au

W www.clareoneil.com

f ClareforHotham

t @ClareONeilMP

