

STANDING UP

FOR HOTHAM

NEWS FROM CLARE O'NEIL MP

JUNE 2021



Dear Local Resident,

2020 was a difficult year for Victorians, and I sincerely hope that for you and your family, 2021 is turning out to be more stable and less stressful.

COVID is still with us, and it seems clear that we will continue to face lockdowns around Australia until we have a vaccination program that is working, and an approach to quarantine that is fit for purpose. These are measures I am heavily involved in fighting for in Canberra.

A critical issue is the recovery of our economy. I'm thrilled to see the unemployment rate back down again, but concerned about the patchy nature of the recovery. The Federal Budget was released about six weeks ago. It showed that over the coming four years, the wages of Australians are likely to go backwards. This is a huge concern.

There is no sector where this problem is more evident than in aged care. Our aged care system in Australia is in crisis. Aged care residents are not getting the care they need. The workers who look after them are poorly paid, highly casualised and profoundly understaffed - all while doing some of the most important work in the community. This is going to have to change if we want to see Senior Australians getting the care they deserve in those later years of life.

One of the best things about 2021 so far has been that I have been able to engage with you all face-to-face in a way that wasn't possible for much of 2020. One of the best parts of the year for me has been the amazing response to my invitation to have a 'Cuppa with Clare'. I met with hundreds of my wonderful constituents to discuss whatever was important to them in cafés around Hotham. As always, I learned so much from these conversations.

My job is to be there for you, your neighbours and your family. If I can help you in any way, if you would like to share your views about politics, or let me know what's happening at the moment for you and your family, drop me a line anytime.

With warmest regards,

Clare



OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Listening to my Community

Early this year I invited everyone in the electorate to join me for a cuppa and a chat.

Hundreds of people I represent in the Parliament took up the offer and we caught up in small groups around the electorate.

The conversations I had with my constituents were just amazing. We talked about religion, ageing, leadership, racism, mental health, sexual assault, work, and many other issues that affect life in our local area.

Some constituents told me of the hurdles they were facing in relation to pensions, aged care, NDIS, and more. I'm delighted that we were able to assist many people by smoothing these pathways for them. I learned so much from these conversations, and it was great to hear what matters most to the people I represent.



Caring for our Seniors and Elderly

We know that seniors did it really tough in 2020. So often they couldn't see their families or friends. I hope our seniors have been enjoying catching up with their beloved families and friends over the past few months.



Since being appointed the Shadow Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services early this year, I've been shocked by the lack of support for our elderly and the aged care sector by the Morrison Government over many years. This is why the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was called 'NEGLECT'.

I am focussed on the 148 recommendations from the Royal Commission. I have visited many aged care facilities around Australia and here in Hotham. I've met with dozens of service providers and other stakeholders and have listened to aged care workers and the elderly they care for. There needs to be change.

We need to do much more to ensure that our vulnerable elderly are cared for and treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

ANZAC Day and our veterans

I always find Anzac Day really emotional – I think of the young men and women who went off to war as teenagers, and how terrified they must have been. So many never came home.

2020 was a tough year for our veterans – they couldn't gather for landmark days like Anzac Day. But the RSLs in Hotham did everything possible to provide support to our veterans.

I felt so privileged to attend the Anzac Day commemorative service at the Oakleigh-Carnegie RSL. I had the chance to meet and thank servicemen and women, and their relatives, from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq, and Afghanistan. It was a poignant and moving service.



Our local heroes

COVID and the events of 2020 highlighted that we have thousands of heroes in our community: our health workers, disability workers and aged care workers. Those who look after and educate our youngest in childcare and kinder, and all our educators.

And the marvellous volunteers that work in our community.

My Hotham electorate spans four Councils and I'm happy to congratulate those who received Council awards this year.

City of Monash Sir John Monash Awards

Phil Ryan was recognised in the Monash City Council Sir John Monash Awards and received the Award for Outstanding Leadership.

City of Kingston Citizen of the Year

Daniel Maitland was recognised as the City of Kingston Citizen of the Year.

City of Greater Dandenong Citizen of the Year

Selba Luka was recognised as the City of Greater Dandenong Citizen of the Year.

City of Glen Eira Citizen of the Year

Gwen Fitzgerald was recognised as the City of Glen Eira Citizen of the Year.



New Citizens

I had the honour of welcoming a fantastic group of new citizens at the City of Monash citizenship ceremony.

I am so proud to represent such a culturally diverse part of our country. Hundreds of nationalities call our community home, and Australia is richer for it.

We certainly are lucky that these incredible people chose to make Australia their permanent home.

Monash Health Foundation

Some of you may have heard of Richard Lim or have visited Lim's Pharmacy in Springvale.

Richard also does marvellous work in support of the Monash Health Foundation and recently sponsored an event to raise funds for a project for the Monash Children's Hospital.

Funds raised will help complete the new dedicated emergency department at the hospital and supply state of the art equipment and more beds, which will allow more children to be treated.

You can also donate if you wish by going to:
<https://monashhealthfoundation.org/form/>

or contact Monash Health Foundation:
Email: Foundation@monashhealth.org
Phone: 9594 2700



Greek Orthodox Easter

Representing my electorate comes hand in hand with representing thousands of Greek families – just a part of the large Greek community that live right across the city of Melbourne.

I was grateful to be invited to experience the joyous celebration of faith, family, and food that marks Orthodox Easter.

My thanks to the Greek Senior Citizens St Athanasios Parish of Springvale for hosting such a terrific event.



Mackie Cricket Club

Established in 1954, the Mackie Cricket Club has a long legacy of community sport.

I was so delighted to join the fabulous people who run the club and their women's team for their Pink Stumps Weekend event.



It's not just the talent in the big leagues that is helping women's cricket reach new heights – it's the local sporting clubs like Mackie Cricket Club that are doing so much.

I can report that the women's team won the premiership!

Centenary Park Tennis Club

Along with so many local community organisations, the Centenary Park Tennis Club has re-emerged as a thriving hub of community activity and participation – thanks to the invaluable efforts of volunteers who put in so much towards making the club an enjoyable and welcoming place.



I joined in for the Club Championships weekend for a few warmup hits on the court, and to check out the new fencing. Last year I was very pleased to be able to offer the club a \$17,500 grant to replace the old 1960s fencing and it was fantastic to see the completed project.

Westall Primary School Young Leaders



It was such a pleasure to have the opportunity to present the Leadership Badges to the young leadership team at Westall Primary School.

Leadership is important - especially as we grow up and take on new responsibilities. It's such an important role in school life and I met some truly amazing young leaders at Westall Primary School.

Joan Bush's birthday bash

This wonderful woman is Joan Bush, who turned 109 this year.



I was lucky enough to be invited to join Joan, her family, and carers to wish her happy birthday at her aged care home in my electorate.

Joan's amazing life has seen her move to India from England at age 22, then onto Australia in 1947, and the arrival of three children and ten grandchildren.

Joan is an avid reader, and up until recently, enjoyed daily exercise classes with her fellow aged care residents.

Seeing the love for Joan from her family and the amazing staff supporting her was a great privilege.

Goodstart Early Learning

It was a joy to visit Goodstart Early Learning in Springvale South, along with my colleague, Amanda Rishworth, the Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education and Development.

This fantastic centre offers a culturally diverse service in terms of educators, children and families. We really enjoyed spending time with the wonderful educators and children at the centre.



Families in Hotham know how expensive childcare is. In Australia we pay some of the highest childcare costs in the world, and just in the last 8 years those costs have gone up by 35%. Labor has a plan to reduce the cost of childcare by increasing the childcare subsidy for over 1 million families.

Waverley Industries

People gain so much satisfaction, independence and fulfilment from work, from being part of a team in the workplace. For this reason, it's so important that jobs are available in our local community for every person seeking employment.

On a visit to Waverley Industries, I met with many terrific workers with special needs who are participating in the supported employment programs offered on site at Notting Hill.

Over 330 adults with special needs are employed in programs ranging from packaging and assembly, to catering and gardening. It's fantastic to see the work they are doing, and the opportunities provided by the Waverley Industries team.



NDIS Update

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is one of the most crucial services run by the Federal Government. While the NDIS has huge potential to sit alongside Medicare as a great Australian social reform, today there are many issues with the scheme which affect our neighbours in Hotham.

One of the key issues at the moment is the Morrison Government's attempts to introduce independent assessments as a way of reducing the cost of the scheme. It's a process that doesn't have the support and trust of NDIS recipients and their families. I am working closely with local families to fight this change.

Advocating for those in Hotham with a disability, and their friends, carers and relatives, is something I take very seriously. If you'd like to be kept informed when we are having NDIS forums or if there is specific advocacy occurring, let me know by email at clare.oneil.mp@aph.gov.au or 9545 6211.



About Clare

As your MP, I have the honour of being your voice in Parliament. I take that responsibility very seriously.

I've been the Member for Hotham since 2013. When I was elected, my eldest son was 8 weeks old. Today, my husband and I have two beautiful boys with a new baby on the way shortly. And we share our Oakleigh home with our two lovely dogs, Blossom and Clover.

If I can help you with anything, or you want to let me know your views about what's going on in politics, please don't hesitate to be in touch. I value the opinion of every one of my constituents, and I'd love to hear from you anytime.

Get in Touch

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