

STANDING UP

FOR HOTHAM

NEWS FROM CLARE O'NEIL MP

SUMMER 2022



Dear Resident,

Happy New Year to you and your family and I hope you had some downtime over the Christmas period.

Whilst there is much to look forward to this year, 2022 is off to a bit of a rocky start. A great many of our community are in furlough, or have contracted COVID. Supermarket shelves aren't always stocked, and you cannot find a Rapid Antigen Test in Melbourne's South East for love nor money. That's not good enough.

If COVID has taught us anything so far, it is that we can do extraordinary things by working together. And that's the community spirit I know we will see in abundance as the year unfolds.

2022 will be a Federal Election year, so you will have a choice about who represents you in Federal Parliament.

I go into the election period with clear goals for our country's future. They are informed by the thousands of conversations, phone calls and meetings I have had with you all over this last term.



You want to see better planning for COVID. There will be more waves to come beyond Omicron. What we need from Canberra is competence (ordering enough vaccines and RATs would be a great start).

Hotham voters want to see action on climate. Labor's climate and energy plan is all about building the jobs of the future and doing the right thing by the environment.

Political integrity matters. I want to see a real National Integrity Commission that can help clean up politics.

There is much more to come, but I want to take this chance to wish you the very best for 2022.

If I can help you and your family with dealings with federal government, please be in touch.

With warmest regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clare".

Clare O'Neil MP

P.S. In some personal news, 2022 will be our first year as a family of five (or seven, if you include our beautiful pups Blossom and Clover).

Last year, we welcomed Baby Greta. She has brought us so much joy, and my two older boys are enamoured with their little sister. You can see some more pics on page 5 of the newsletter.



I recently conducted a survey of the Hotham electorate and I am so grateful that hundreds of local residents took the time to respond.

The priorities identified in your responses were:

- Health and Aged Care (57%)
- Action on Climate Change (55%)
- Create Secure Jobs (38%)
- Political integrity (35%)

If Labor is elected, we will take action on these key priorities by:

- ✓ Establishing an Australian Centre for Disease Control; ending the neglect of older Australians in aged care; and defending our public health system and Medicare.
- ✓ Taking strong action on climate change. Labor will build community batteries for household solar; deliver 10,000 New Energy Apprenticeships; and write the 2050 net-zero target into law.
- ✓ Creating more jobs and making work fair by funding \$15 billion for new and secure well-paid jobs; fix the Fair Work Act to make jobs more secure; support Australian manufacturing and our businesses by buying Australian.
- ✓ Putting integrity back into politics by creating a National Anti-corruption Commission with teeth; and putting a stop to Government rorts.

I will be your voice in the Parliament to ensure action is taken on these critical priorities.



Aged Care in Crisis

Since being appointed the Shadow Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, I've been shocked by the disgraceful neglect of Senior Australians using our aged care system.

Older Australians helped build this country. They worked hard, paid their taxes and raised their families. They rightly expected that the Federal Government would support them in their frailer years.

But the government has consistently let these Australians down.

It's almost a year since the Report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care graphically highlighted the result of this neglect, including the shocking fact that up to two thirds of aged care residents are malnourished.

But, despite that shocking Report, little has been done by the Government to fix the problems – older Australians and their families have not seen any meaningful improvements.

Omicron has made the problems even worse. Many Aged Care providers don't have access to Rapid Antigen Tests or proper protective equipment. There's a chronic staff shortage and no surge workforce.

I'm fighting every day to get the system fixed. We need to do so much more to ensure that Senior Australians get the quality care and respect they deserve.



Community Spirit and Leadership Awards

School students have had a particularly hard time over the past two years. But that hasn't stopped many of them doing amazing things to contribute to the community.

Recognising community spirit is really important to me. There are lots of awards for kids who are good at academics or sport, but sometimes the children going that extra mile to care for those around them don't get enough attention.

Each year I award a Community Spirit and Leadership Award to an outstanding young person from each school in my community. These young people are starting school recycle programs, raising money for charity, protecting kids in the playground, showing incredible kindness to others, and everything in between.

These are some seriously impressive young people and they deserve all the recognition they can get.



Religious Leaders Roundtables

Recently I've been meeting with local religious leaders to discuss the government's proposed Religious Discrimination Bill. Thank you to all the communities who have participated.

The Bill raises some really critical issues and I'm grateful, as ever, to have such a thoughtful group of leaders with which to discuss these issues.

Stronger Communities Grants

It was a privilege to award some fantastic, hardworking community organisations grants in the latest round of Stronger Communities Grants. These grants will go towards small infrastructure and facilities upgrades to support the amazing work they do in our community.

- Coatesville Bowling Club - \$20,000
- Clayton District Cricket Club - \$6,000
- Endeavour Foundation - \$8,744
- Food For Change - \$9,000
- Fronthitha Care - \$5,000
- Glen Eira Moorabbin Softball Association - \$3,000
- Lighthouse Foundation - \$12,500
- Moongala Women's Community House - \$5,500
- Oakleigh Bowling Club - \$4,000
- Oakleigh District Football Netball Club - \$17,480
- Oakleigh Tennis Club - \$10,000
- PEASER - \$2,500
- Rotary Club of Oakleigh Clayton Huntingdale - \$15,000

- South East Community Links - \$15,000
- South Oakleigh Bowling Club - \$10,000
- Wheeler's Hill Tennis Club - \$6,200



Noble Park Aquatic Centre

I was recently joined by Catherine King, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, and Regional Development, Julian Hill, Member for Bruce, and Mayor Jim Memeti, for a visit to the Noble Park Aquatic Centre.

Catherine had some amazing news for the area. Sometimes there are gaps in our local facilities – many are ageing or just not up to scratch.



Catherine announced that Labor has committed to \$20 million to bring major upgrades to our much loved local swimming spots.

That includes the Noble Park Aquatic Centre which will be receiving funding for a brand new learn-to-swim pool, and if you're a parent, you'll know just how valuable it is to be able to find local swimming lessons for your kids.

Visit to Noble Park

Noble Park is such a vibrant, welcoming part of my electorate. And it's grown so much since I served on the council for this area, 16 years ago.

I visited Noble Park recently with Councillor Sophie Tan to talk about the big issues facing locals – road safety, housing affordability, and local jobs. Local businesses throughout my electorate have had it hard through the pandemic.



Australia is now facing a shortage of skilled workers, including a 40% drop in the number of apprenticeships available in Hotham. That's meant fewer good jobs in this area.

I'm committed to delivering free TAFE training to help make sure locals have the skills they need to find good jobs.

And that will help businesses rebuild after the pandemic, boosting local recovery and getting us ready for the future.

Vale Merle Mitchell AM

Some sadness in 2021 was the loss of my friend and mentor, Merle Mitchell, who was well known for her tireless community work across the Hotham electorate and beyond.

Merle has a lifetime of achievements and consistently showed outstanding and sustained involvement in community life. Merle helped establish new schools and kinders across the Springvale area and was key in laying the groundwork for the thousands of families who would soon make Springvale their home.



As 30,000 people from migrant and refugee backgrounds began their lives in Australia, it was Merle who helped set up what is now known as South East Community Links.

At the Australian Council of Social Services, she spoke from the heart when fighting for better social welfare, and for the rights of people in aged care.

She was a lifelong, tireless advocate for our community in the South East, for migrants and for those living in poverty. Later in life, she became a powerful spokesperson for the aged, especially those living in aged care.

My community simply wouldn't be what it is today without Merle's incredible compassion, her advocacy, and her unwavering sense of justice.

Vale Merle Mitchell.



New addition to our family

2021 brought a new addition to the Hotham family: the birth of our beautiful baby girl Greta.

Greta has already joined me for some sitting weeks in Canberra and on some local visits in the community.

I hope you enjoy these pics.



St Kilda Mums

St Kilda Mums started as a small seed of community goodwill in 2009. It was just a tiny group of volunteers helping families in need get access to kids' clothing, books for school, booster seats for cars, and other essentials.

They opened a warehouse in Clayton in 2013 and their great work expanded. Often near-new items, instead of being discarded, can provide many more families years of use.

I was joined by Tanya Plibersek, Shadow Minister for Women, on a visit to their Clayton warehouse.

Dozens of amazing volunteers spend hours and hours every week to make sure that families in need get access to these essentials.

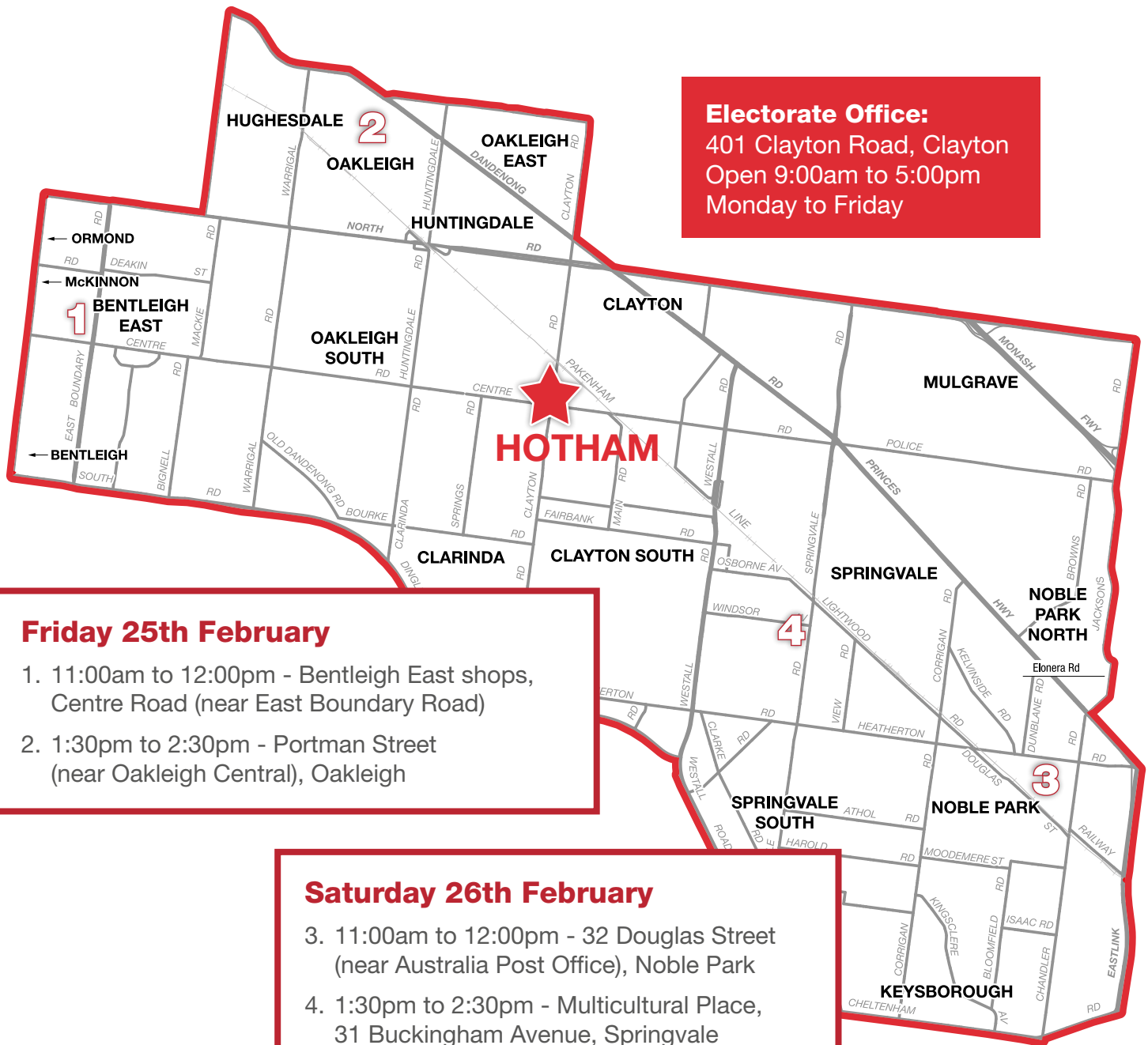
They keep lots of families on their feet when they're going through some of their toughest moments.

It is completely run by volunteers who do everything from planning, sorting, packaging and distributing these important items to families. Tanya and I were privileged to get to spend some time with them to learn more about what they do.



MOBILE OFFICES – FEBRUARY 2022

Come and meet Clare at one of her upcoming mobile office locations. Dates and times below. No need for an appointment.



Friday 25th February

1. 11:00am to 12:00pm - Bentleigh East shops, Centre Road (near East Boundary Road)
2. 1:30pm to 2:30pm - Portman Street (near Oakleigh Central), Oakleigh

Saturday 26th February

3. 11:00am to 12:00pm - 32 Douglas Street (near Australia Post Office), Noble Park
4. 1:30pm to 2:30pm - Multicultural Place, 31 Buckingham Avenue, Springvale



Get in Touch

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