

Our Lyons Community

Issue 9, August 2021

Our Lyons Community is an electorate newsletter of Brian Mitchell MP, Federal Labor Member for Lyons. It is printed on newsprint made at Norske Skog in Boyer and delivered by Australia Post to letterboxes and post-office boxes throughout Lyons, which includes the municipalities of **Break O'Day, Brighton, Derwent Valley, Central Highlands, Clarence (Richmond), Glamorgan Spring Bay, Kentish, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, Sorell, Southern Midlands, and Tasman**. Authorised by Brian Mitchell MP, 53B Main Road Perth. Printed by Australian Community Media, 235 George Town Road, Rocherlea.



FIGHTING FOR PENSIONERS

Labor has established a Protecting Pensioners Taskforce, to fight for pensioners.

If you are affected by, or have an opinion on:

- cuts to pensions
- high deeming rates
- putting pensioners on the Cashless Welfare Card
- any other pension-related matters

then Brian and the Taskforce want to hear from you with your experiences.

Please send an email to pensionerstaskforce@australianlabor.com.au with your story. You can also find the Protecting Pensioners Taskforce on Facebook

• See stories, pages 7 and 24



Our amazing volunteers awarded

The sixth annual Tasmanian Volunteering Awards saw a number of Lyons locals recognised amongst the island's amazing array of 297,000 volunteers.

Community Care and Health

WINNER: Robert Thomas– Tasmanian Men's Shed Association

Bob has devoted a lifetime of volunteering across many different organisations. Starting out back in 1978, he remains an active volunteer with his continued contributions to the men's shed movement in Tasmania. Bob was the founding president of the Longford Men's Shed in 2008.

Volunteer Group

WINNER: Free2b Girls – North/East Tas Groups (accepted by Tani Langoulant)

Free2b Girls supports up to 60 pre-teen and teenage girls across the north and north-east. Free2b enables girls to have access to safe and creative spaces in their communities once a week after school, where they can develop a sense of belonging and identity, establish new friendships, eat good food, be creative and engage constructively.

Best Practice in Volunteer Management

FINALIST: Debbie Smith– Deloraine House Inc

As the coordinator of Deloraine House, Debbie recruits, trains and supports 85 volunteers from across the community. She runs an orientation program and supports the volunteers across the wide range of activities and programs Deloraine House provides across the Meander Valley community.

Emergency Services

WINNER: Wayne Doran– Volunteer Ambulance Officers Association of Tasmania

Wayne has been a Volunteer Ambulance Officer since 1993 and displays outstanding commitment to his Central Highlands community. The spirit he demonstrates through his volunteering and his continual contribution to providing strong advocacy for VAOs across the state is an inspiration.

MEDICUTE

'THE BIGGEST ATTACK IN DECADES'

■ DETAILS P3



• You buy some new specs and are pretty pleased with yourself and then the first thing your kids say is “you look like the old man from the movie ‘Up’”. So, who wears them better?



Brian says

We are 18 months into the COVID-19 pandemic and while the rest of the world has vaccination rollouts we have a vaccination strollout.

Australia's very low levels of vaccinations — dead last amongst developed nations — are due mostly to the Morrison Government failing to secure enough vaccines, despite being offered plenty of opportunities to do so.

The vaccination failure has been compounded by the Government's stubborn failure (until recently) to implement a fit-for-purpose national quarantine centre network.

Hotel quarantine was a good emergency fix at the start of the pandemic but it's frankly rank incompetence to still be relying on hotels which were not designed for this vital task.

We've had 26 disease outbreaks (at the time of writing) from hotel quarantine and there's evidence that people who did not have COVID when they went into a hotel actually caught it while they were there. That is just absolutely appalling.

Australians have sacrificed their normal freedoms to get on top of this pandemic and our record is enviable. There is nowhere in the world you'd rather be than Australia, and nowhere in Australia you'd rather be than Tasmania.

The fact is, the State Governments have done a very good job but they've been let down by a lazy and complacent federal Liberal Morrison Government.

In other news, the nation this year clocked up its first trillion-dollar debt (cough!) and the Parliament continues to grapple with the very disturbing allegations of a serious sexual assault occurring inside the ministerial wing.

In Tasmania, we've gone to a state election a year earlier than needed and the east coast suffered a massive economic shock from the closure of Tasman Highway, which has since re-opened (a big shout out to the workers who got it done so quickly!).

Personally, I've spoken on Bills, Motions and other matters more than 50 times this year, including presenting a major dissent report into Agriculture, have co-launched the Parliamentary Friends of Australian Spirits (and helped score a win for distillers in the Budget) and am getting out and about this magnificent electorate every chance I get.

See you soon!

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The Liberal legacy: 8 years of rorts and incompetence

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (16:06): It gives me great pleasure—no, actually it doesn't give me great pleasure—to stand here and speak to this Matter of Public Importance.

This MPI goes to this Government's failures, and it gives me no pleasure to talk about a government's failures. This Government has failed this country for seven successive years, and it is now in its eighth year of failing this country. Corruption, incompetence, cruelty—that's a trifecta that no government should be proud of, and this Government has all three.

I'll go to a few of these failures. The first is Robodebt—heartless and illegal. A government was actually stealing the money of its own citizens. And who are those citizens? The poorest people in the country. The Government didn't go to stockbrokers. It didn't go to day traders. It didn't go to the top end of town and steal their money; it stole the money of people who could least afford it.

That's the tale of this Government. The disaster of Robodebt has this Prime Minister's fingerprints all over it from start to finish. This is not like the chicken coop in the photo opportunities — we can say for sure that we know that this Prime Minister built Robodebt from the ground up.

Next is NBN. The Government now admits after 7½ long years

that Labor's NBN plan was the right one, after wasting billions and billions of dollars. That mistake is costing taxpayers billions to fix, and the opportunity cost is even higher.

Next is Leppington Triangle. In the scheme of things, when we're talking about the trillion-dollar debt that we're now running into, I guess Leppington Triangle is small beer, but it is so emblematic of this Government's manifest failures—a parcel of land bought from a Liberal donor for 1,000 per cent of what it was worth. They spent \$30 million on a \$3 million block of land.

There is no scandal that this Government won't enter into. The Budget is racking up \$1 trillion of debt—one thousand billion dollars—with nothing to show for it. There is no plan for the future—no jobs plan, no infrastructure plan and no energy plan. We've had 22 energy plans under this Government, and it hasn't landed a single one.

Home owners in Australia are still paying the price of a government that has rank incompetence, no ambition, no courage and no vision.

And there is sports rorts: \$100 million of taxpayers' money spent not because clubs had done the right thing and shown that they needed the money; this Government put the money where it was in its own political best interests.

Sports clubs did the right thing. They filled out the paperwork. They spent hours and hours filling out paperwork and meeting all the criteria, and it was all ignored, because in the Prime Minister's office he had coloured charts showing where to put the money based on the marginality of the seat. Corruption.

This Prime Minister and his former minister are blocking every chance at genuine inquiry, as the Senate has just found. They're inquiring into this scandal, and the Prime Minister and former Minister McKenzie are blocking it. If they have nothing to hide, why won't they provide the evidence?

This Government is holding people back, with 37,000 Australians stranded overseas. They've left behind aged-care residents, with nearly 700 dead because this Government refused to come up with a COVID plan. Even before the pandemic, the royal commission damned this Government's approach to aged care by titling their report *Neglect*. At every stage, this government fails. Corruption, cruelty, incompetence—it is not fit to govern and it deserves to go.

NOTE: Since this speech was delivered, another rort has been uncovered by the Australian National Audit Office, with \$660 million for carparks spent overwhelmingly in Liberal electorates, with no details on how the spending was in the best interests of the community.

Labor backs electric car choice

Australia lags the world on take up of electric cars. Just 0.7 per cent of cars sold here are electric — compared to a global average of 4.2 per cent, 11 per cent in the UK and the EU, and 75 per cent in Norway.

Many Australians say they'd consider buying an electric model as their next car but they remain unaffordable for most. There are no electric cars available in Australia for under \$40,000, and just five are under \$60,000.

A Labor Government will introduce an Electric Car Discount — to make electric cars cheaper so that more families who want them can afford them, and to reduce emissions.

• For more details on Labor's Electric Car Discount policy, visit alp.org.au



**8 years of
Liberal Governments**

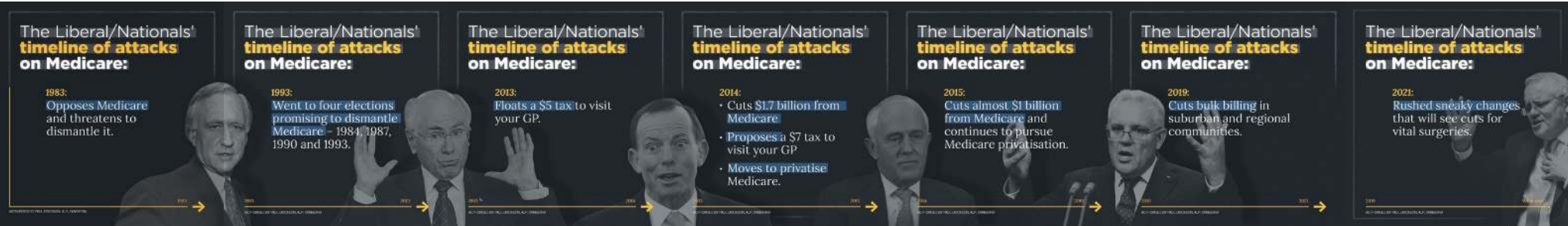
**and your wages
are going down.**

AUTHORISED BY PAUL, ERICKSON, ALP, CANBERRA

Only Labor can save Medicare



• Labor created Medibank in the 1970s. The Liberals privatised it. Labor created Medicare in the 1980s, and the Liberals have been undermining it ever since.



Albanese will criminalise wage theft

An Albanese Labor Government will legislate to criminalise wage theft.

Labor will consult and work with unions, States and Territories, and employer groups, and will not undercut or undermine existing State and Territory laws where they operate.

“Under the Liberals, if a worker robs a till they go to jail but if an employer robs a worker, it’s a slap on the wrist,” said Labor MP Brian Mitchell.

“Theft is theft, and should be treated the same. I am proud that Anthony Albanese is standing up for workers and their right to be paid their lawful wages.”

Since the exposure of the shameful practices of the 7-Eleven franchise six years ago, wage theft is being uncovered with such regularity and scale that it appears to have reached epidemic proportions.

Despite repeated announcements that he would act, Scott Morrison has turned his back on Australian workers.

The Morrison Government could have introduced a stand-alone wage theft bill but instead they cynically chose to include it with industrial relations legislation that would have cut the pay and conditions of Australian workers – something the Liberals knew Labor could never support.

When the Bill got to the Senate Labor voted to salvage the wage theft element of the Bill, but the Government, with One Nation’s support, voted to instead scrap their own wage theft laws.

For more information about Labor’s plan to criminalise wage theft, visit alp.org.au

The Morrison Liberal Government has radically overhauled the Medicare rebate system, leaving some patients with unexpected out-of-pocket costs for pre-booked surgery.

The shake-up includes more than 900 amendments to the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) – changing the way Medicare pays for important treatments and surgeries.

This is the latest in a long line of changes the Liberals have made to Medicare.

“Every time the Liberals make a change to Medicare, Tasmanians end up paying more for healthcare,” said federal Labor MP Brian Mitchell.

“As a result of rebate freezes I have GPs in my electorate no longer offering bulk-billing to healthcare card holders of working age. That means disability pensioners and anyone else aged between 16 and 65 faces a \$20 up-front fee to see the doctor.

“This is not the way Medicare is supposed to work, but it is being squeezed to death by this Liberal government.”

The MBS is a list of health services the Government subsidises with Medicare rebates. Simply put, the list details the amount the Government chips in to help cover medical costs.

Hundreds of items on this list changed on 1 July 2021, making it the biggest overhaul of the system in decades.

This latest round involves changes to:

- 188 cardiac surgery items
- 150 general surgery items
- 594 orthopaedic items

The changes are due to an ongoing review of the MBS.

In 2015, the Liberals started a review of the Schedule, and since 2016 they have been making changes to it.

The last major round of changes was in 2018 and included changes to how spinal surgery services were subsidised. Doctors were given only a short lead time to introduce the changes, which affected the costs of some peoples’ spinal surgery, or resulted in surgery delays.

How much you will be affected by these latest changes will depend on what medical services you require. But medical experts warn these changes will increase out-of-pocket costs – hundreds of dollars for some common procedures and up to \$10,000 for rarer conditions.

At the moment, it is unclear exactly how much these changes are going to cost patients – which is why doctors and patient groups asked for more time to review or implement the changes.

“When it comes to Medicare, the Morrison Government can’t be trusted to get it right,” Mr Mitchell said.

“It’s already bungled the vaccine roll-out, the most important public health program in a generation.”

These changes are just the latest Liberal attack on our universal healthcare system. They come on top of billions of dollars in funding that have been stripped away since 2013.

The Liberals are killing Medicare by 1000 cuts. Labor created Medicare and only Labor can be trusted to protect it.



• Brian at the launch of the Northern Midlands Recycling Trailer in Longford, with Mayor Mary Knowles and councillors Ian Goninon and Matthew Brooks.

Northern Midlands is on the recycling trail

A recycling trailer is now doing the rounds of the Northern Midlands, collecting recyclables that often don’t make it into the yellow-top bins.

The Northern Midlands Council Recycling Trailer is a joint initiative in conjunction with the Northern Midlands Local Recycling Committee, and the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management group.

It will visit schools, community centres, and events to raise awareness.

The trailer is designed for less common recyclables, such as batteries, which can do the most harm to our environment.

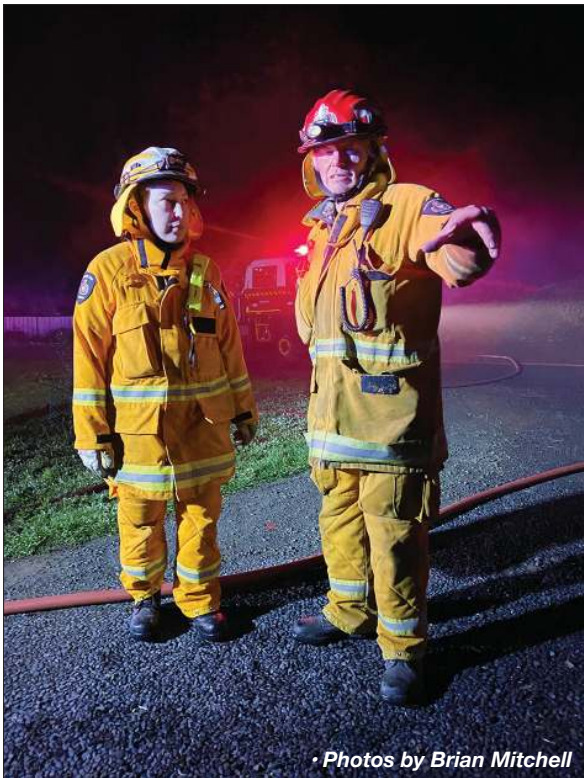
The trailer can take batteries, CDs & DVDs, glasses, X-rays, small electronic waste (E-waste), printer ink cartridges, mobile phones (and accessories), and bread tags.

Out in Our Community — Southern Midlands



Out in Our Community — Central Highlands & Richmond





• Photos by Brian Mitchell



Firies train in Dromedary

The Bridgewater Fire Brigade held a joint training exercise with the Broadmarsh Volunteer Brigade at Dromedary recently, and invited federal MP Brian Mitchell to tag along.

Brian was recruited to play the role of a homeowner who had to greet the firies as they arrived and tell them there was smoke and two people were missing. The brief was to act distraught and be a bit incoherent, so the firies could be prompted to ask the right questions and get clarity.

"It was a Logie-award winning performance, let's be clear about that," Brian laughed. "But it wasn't about me. It was fantastic to watch these guys go about their tasks with the utmost professionalism and dedication.

"Some of them are young, really young, and they are regularly giving up three or four hours a night to train and be of service to their community.

"And there are brigades like this all throughout Lyons. Amazing people. I'd visited the station to check out some bags that a volunteer grant had helped fund, and I was very happy to be invited along to this training session. It was a real privilege."

Frontline workers deserve secure jobs

'The Liberals have always sought to depress wages and conditions, and Labor has always sought to elevate them'

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (16:13): I rise to speak on the Fair Work Amendment (Supporting Australia's Jobs and Economic Recovery) Bill 2020.

In 2020, the workers of this nation—cleaners, nurses, aged-care and disability workers, retail assistants, truck drivers—kept us going through the depths of the recession and the pandemic.

Whilst praising these workers' efforts and sacrifices in speeches, Government members have behind the scenes been developing laws that threaten their pay and their job security.

The Bill before the House represents a gross and bitter betrayal of the men and women who have done so much to keep Australia safe.

In a nutshell, this Bill will make it easier to casualise jobs that would otherwise be permanent.

It makes it harder to bargain for better pay and conditions. It allows for wages cuts. It strips basic rights from high-vis workers on big projects. It weakens wage theft punishments in jurisdictions where wage theft is already deemed a criminal act.

This Bill should not be considered in isolation of the Liberal Party's wider agenda. It is simply the latest salvo in a long-running war between the forces that drive the Liberal Party and the forces that drive the Labor Party.

The Liberals have always sought to depress wages and conditions, and Labor has always sought to elevate them.

My mum was a hospital cleaner. When I was a boy she told me, 'Brian, it's Labor for the workers and the Liberals for the rich.' That was 40 years ago, and it's

as true today as it was then. Those opposite are convinced and have always been convinced that keeping wages low and keeping workers powerless drives economic growth.

They believe down to their guts that paying people less means employers will invest more and that this in turn will keep the economic wheels turning.

It's not that they hate workers; it's just that they believe workers are a means to an end, a cost item, a line on a balance sheet. For the Liberals it's all about the employers and lowering employers' costs. If that means lower wages, so be it; workers should simply be grateful they've got a job in the first place, no matter how little it pays or how bad or unsafe the working conditions.

• To read the rest of this speech, visit brianmitchell.com.au



Out in Our Community — Northern Midlands



STOP THE PRIVATISED CASHLESS PENSION CARD



Mr Morrison's Liberal government wants to expand the cashless debit card to include all pensioners.

That means 80% of your pension payment would be put on the privatised cashless card.

Unlike an ordinary bank debit card, it can only be used at shops approved by the government.

So they can limit and control where, when, and how you spend your own money. You might also have to use a special checkout.

If this card scheme gets through, pensioners wouldn't be able to:

- pay cash to buy cheap food at the local market
- buy second-hand goods
- pay for a meal or a beer at the RSL
- give money to their grandkids.

The private company that operates the cashless debit card can see how much money you have, and where you shop. Information about the balance of your account and the kinds of things you buy are reported to the government.

Across Australia, people are now being forced onto the cashless debit card. There are five main trial areas so far, and the Morrison government wants to expand it to become **"the universal platform"** (Minister for Social Services, Anne Ruston, 2020) in **"a nationwide expansion"** (Prime Minister Scott Morrison, 2019).

The Morrison government thinks it knows better than Australian people how they should spend their money. The vast majority of pensioners manage their money perfectly well. They know where every cent goes.

SIGN THE PETITION TO STOP THE PRIVATISED CASHLESS PENSION CARD

**We the undersigned
Australians call on the
federal government to
immediately:**

Apologise to Australian pensioners for the cashless pension control card plan.

Repeal all legislation that enables the cashless card and scrap the scheme.

Cancel the contract with Indue, the private company that runs and profits from the cashless card scheme.

Stop the further privatisation of Centrelink.

Please sign the online petition at www.stop-the-cashless-pension-card.org.au to put pressure on the Morrison government to abandon their privatised cashless pension card scheme.

"Front of the queue"

In November, the Prime Minister promised Australians that his Government's vaccine program would put "Australia at the front of the queue for a safe and effective vaccine". In mid-April, we were exactly 100th in the world for rate of vaccination, after missing our March 2021 target of 4 million by nearly 3.5 million doses.

How Australia's coronavirus vaccine rollout really compares with other countries

Israel, Chile and Bhutan are among those who are eclipsing Australia in administering vaccines



▲ Bhutan has administered more than 60 doses per 100 people in the few weeks since it started. Comparing Australia's progress to the total coronavirus vaccines administered by almost 180 countries highlights the slow rollout. Photograph: Upana Dahiya/AP Photo Images

Australia is 100th in the world for the number of Covid-19 vaccinations administered for every hundred residents and 44th in total doses administered, according to Guardian Australia analysis of data from Our World in Data.

COVID-19

Aged care vaccine rollout a shambles

• For more details about the botched vaccination rollout, and a shocking list of Liberal rorts, visit notonyourside.org.au

Moving Targets

The Prime Minister promised that every single adult in Australia would be fully-vaccinated – two doses for 20 million adults – by October 2021. That was high on impossible by the end of March 2021, when the Government vaccinated only an eighth of their 4 million interim target. The Prime Minister now won't even assure that our community will be vaccinated by the end of 2021 – jeopardising our chance at a normal Christmas and keeping the community and the economy in a constant cycle of lockdowns.

Scott Morrison abandons target to have all Australians vaccinated against COVID-19 by the end of the year

by political reporter Jane Norman
Posted Sun 11 Apr 2021 at 7:11pm, updated Sun 11 Apr 2021 at 8:18pm



Scott Morrison is all about announcement, not delivery.

That's why when things go wrong, he doesn't take charge. He disappears.

For more than 10 consecutive days in July, as nearly half the nation's population went into lockdown, he made not one public appearance.

But when things go right, he's the first to run in front of the cameras and steal the credit.

In November 2020, Scott Morrison promised you and your family that Australia was at the "front of the queue" for vaccines.

But it's not true. We're not even in the middle. We're right at the back.

Then, Scott Morrison promised you and your family that 4 million Australians would be vaccinated by the end of March 2021. They weren't – by the end of April barely 500,000 doses were provided, barely an eighth of what he'd promised.

Then, Scott Morrison promised to fully vaccinate all 20 million adults in Australia by October 2021. That won't happen either – and the Prime Minister now refuses to set another target.

The talk now is of "four

phases" and we've learned that in the 18 months since this pandemic started, Scott Morrison has not been working on an effective vaccine distribution system, so that when vaccines do arrive they can be sent out across the country and given to Australians as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

Scott Morrison is all announcement and no delivery – and it's you and your family that suffer the consequences of his neglect.

The re-opening of Australia's economy, our ability to travel again to see loved ones across the

country and across the world, is entirely dependent on people getting vaccinated.

The longer the wait, the more lockdowns we'll see, the more mutations we will have to deal with, and the more our lives will be impacted.

Frontline healthcare workers, vulnerable aged care residents and too many others are yet to be vaccinated. That is just incompetence.

Without a safe, fast and consistent vaccine program, Australians will be left in the lurch while other countries with effective

vaccine programs open up.

According to *The Guardian*, Australia's rate of vaccination in mid-April was 100th in the world. Shameful.

There's always an excuse with Scott Morrison, and it's always someone else's fault: the Ruby Princess, State Premiers, or the European Union. Just don't hold him responsible, because he doesn't hold a hose, mate.

The reality is Australia's shambolic vaccine rollout falls squarely at the feet of Scott Morrison and his incompetent Government, and he shouldn't be allowed to evade responsibility.



• Brian gets his first dose of AstraZeneca, which at the time was recommended for people 50+ (it has since been changed to 60+). Brian reports he had a sore arm for a few days but otherwise no side effects. Dose 2 is in September. "I'm a big supporter of vaccinations," Brian says. "Let's trust our doctors and when the Government finally gets the vaccine supplied to us let's all get jabbed so we can open up our country again."

Labor's 4 point plan for recovery

1 2 3 4

Build new quarantine facilities and expand existing facilities in every state and territory.

Labor's 4 point plan for recovery

1 2 3 4

Start a mass public information campaign to encourage people to get vaccinated.

Labor's 4 point plan for recovery

1 2 3 4

Fix the vaccine rollout and expand mobile and mass vaccination clinics.

Labor's 4 point plan for recovery

1 2 3 4

Begin manufacturing mRNA vaccines, like Pfizer, right here in Australia.

Out in Our Community — Sorell & Tasman





East coast pulls together

The sudden closure of Tasman Highway at Paradise Gorge due to rockfall concerns caused an economic shock for Buckland and east coast businesses, which reported drops in sales of between 30 and 95 per cent.

Most businesses were forced to

drop shifts and lay off staff. Brian and his team organised a show of support with a Labor Party dinner at the Buckland pub (and saw a bunch of locals there doing the same thing).

Brian also called for support for hard-hit businesses and

workers (the Government finally offered a package for business but unfortunately left workers behind).


The dedication of contractors and workers saw the highway reopen after 6 weeks.

Brian repeated the call he'd

made in February last year for Wielangta Road to be sealed, making it a permanent alternative route to the east coast. After dismissing the call at the time, the Government changed its view and said it would now seal Wielangta Road. We'll be keeping an eye on them to make sure the

promise is kept.

When the highway re-opened Brian asked the Tasmanian public to get down the east coast and put some money across tills and buy petrol in Buckland. It seems plenty did just that, with reports of a big weekend on the coast.



Labor's Secure Australian Jobs Plan.

Casual work properly defined in law.

We're on your side.

Labor's Secure Australian Jobs Plan.

A cap on back-to-back short-term contracts for the same role.

We're on your side.

Labor's Secure Australian Jobs Plan.

'Job security' explicitly inserted into the Fair Work Act.

We're on your side.

Labor's Secure Australian Jobs Plan.

Rights for gig economy workers through the Fair Work Commission.

We're on your side.

Labor's Secure Australian Jobs Plan.

Crack down on cowboy labour hire firms to guarantee same job, same pay.

We're on your side.

Labor's Secure Australian Jobs Plan.

Government contracts to companies and organisations that offer secure work for their employees.

We're on your side.

Labor's Secure Australian Jobs Plan.

More secure public sector jobs by ending inappropriate temporary contracts.

We're on your side.

Community resilience

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (16:24): I'd like to take this opportunity to recognise the resilience and strength of communities across my electorate.

This has been a tough year. If anyone had said 12 months ago that you need to self-isolate and remember to practise social distancing, you'd have received a funny look. It

would have been nonsense, but now it's part of our language and, for the foreseeable future, a part of our way of life.

What's come home to us is that social connection maintains both physical and mental health of people and communities.

I spent the week between sittings visiting towns and communities the length and breadth of my amazing

electorate.

The strength and resilience of organisations in my electorate and, indeed, all community groups across Australia, deserves to be recognised.

I thank the people and volunteers who work so tirelessly for the vital role they play in supporting our regions through this most difficult time.



• Malissa is a florist in New Norfolk who created the beautiful wreaths my team and I had the privilege of laying at war memorials across Lyons in April. Malissa is an armed services veteran herself and her son is in uniform now. It was wonderful catching up with Malissa at her shop and I am humbled by, and grateful for, her service, and that of her son, for our nation.

Out in Our Community — with Anthony Albanese



Albo has been a regular visitor to Tasmania for years, and has kept the special relationship going since he became Labor leader. And yes, he's a fan of our scallop pies!



Energy Apprenticeships

The world's climate emergency should be Australia's jobs opportunity.

As our trading partners embrace net zero emissions, Australia should be harnessing our natural resources and the skills and innovation of Australian workers to become a new energy superpower. But instead of delivering secure jobs for Australians, the Liberals have wasted eight years worrying about their own jobs and knifing each other over 22 climate policies.

The Liberal National Government's vandalism means Australians – particularly young Australians – are missing out on good, secure jobs building Australia's new energy future.

'Australia needs a Government that understands that new energy can create secure jobs in our suburbs and regions. Labor will invest \$100 million to support 10,000 New Energy Apprenticeships'

The Clean Energy Council highlights that Australia already faces renewable energy skills challenges, with "difficulties recruiting workers with relevant experience ... and existing training systems not meeting industry needs". For example, some training companies do not offer new energy training courses because they are expensive to deliver.

Three in four solar companies now say they have difficulty recruiting electricians, with "not enough candidates with specific experience in renewable energy" the leading barrier.

Despite this skills crisis, and almost \$100 billion of new spending, there are still 150,000 fewer apprentices than when Labor was in government.

Australia needs a Government that understands that new energy can create secure jobs in our suburbs and regions

An Albanese Labor Government will invest \$100 million to support 10,000 New Energy Apprenticeships

Businesses who employ apprentices receive substantial Commonwealth subsidies – but at the same time most apprentices don't get a cent from Scott Morrison. This lack of direct support for apprentices is one reason why many young

people don't complete their training.

To encourage apprentices to train in the new energy jobs of the future, and to provide the additional support they need to complete their training, an Albanese Labor Government will invest \$100 million to support 10,000 New Energy Apprenticeships.

Apprentices who choose to train in new energy industries will receive up to \$10,000 - \$2,000 on commencement, and \$2,000 a year for up to four years afterwards, including on successful completion. This will help to increase apprentice uptake, boost retention and improve completions.

Examples of eligible industries include rooftop solar installation and maintenance, large-scale renewable projects, energy efficiency upgrades to homes and businesses, green hydrogen, renewable manufacturing, and relevant agricultural activities.

10,000 New Energy Apprenticeships will be available over four years (2,500 commencements a year from 2022-23).

Labor will also invest \$10 million in a New Energy Skills Program

Eight years of Liberal cuts to TAFE have severely reduced the availability of relevant training pathways for new skills, particularly those that are not yet in the market at scale, or for experienced workers seeking to re-train or upskill in new energy industries.

To tailor skills training to the specific needs of new energy industries, Labor will also invest \$10 million in a New Energy Skills Program.

This will boost existing work by the TAFE sector to develop skills and build workforce capability.

As part of the Program, Labor will also develop a mentoring program in which experienced workers in new energy industries help to train and support new apprentices.

These commitments are a down payment on Labor's broader policies to reverse the Liberals' damage to TAFE and training, and to ensure the workers and communities who have powered Australia for decades continue to do so.

In Government, Labor will also work with industry, unions and regulators to ensure that new energy jobs are secure, with good pay and conditions.

Labor welcomes industry's recognition that it needs to do more to become an employer of choice and Labor will work with the industry to deliver that outcome.

• For more, visit alp.org.au



Brian's backing real jobs

Better Job Security

Australian workers will benefit from more job security, better pay and a fairer industrial relations system under an Albanese Labor Government.

Labor is on the side of workers.

Under Labor's workplace policies more workers will be able to plan for their futures with certainty. Being in secure work means people can get a bank loan to buy a home or start a business.

It means they can take leave when they're sick or need to look after their loved ones, without putting their jobs at risk.

It means they can have the

confidence to spend money to stimulate the Australian economy, boost growth and create more jobs.

The COVID pandemic has exposed the risks to workers and to the national economy of insecure work.

When the pandemic began, casuals - who account for about a quarter of the Australian workforce - lost their jobs eight times faster than those in more secure forms of employment.

A million casual workers were excluded from JobKeeper, forcing many of them into Centrelink queues.

When you add in other forms of insecure work – contractors, freelancers, gig workers and those on temporary contracts or working in labour hire - nearly half the workforce misses out on the many benefits of a permanent job.

If you're a woman, young or from a migrant background you're more likely to be stuck in insecure work.

According to the Centre for Future Work, the recent jobs rebound has been overwhelmingly comprised of insecure jobs.

That will act as a handbrake on Australia's recovery because people will not have the confidence to spend their money, fearing they could quickly lose their jobs again if there is another

Manufacturing Jobs



An Albanese Labor Government will rebuild the nation's manufacturing industry with a comprehensive plan to create jobs, boost vital skills, bring industry expertise back onshore and supercharge national productivity.

A Future Made in Australia – Labor's blueprint for local manufacturing jobs and skills – includes:

- A National Rail Manufacturing Plan to see more trains built in Australia by local workers and ensure every dollar of federal funding spent on rail projects boosts local jobs and industry;
- A Defence Industry Development Strategy to leverage our \$270 billion investment pipeline, develop sovereign industrial and research capabilities and build skills and expertise within the Australian workforce; and
- An Australian Skills Guarantee to give apprentices, trainees and cadets a foot in the door when it comes to work on major Commonwealth projects.

This will build on the jobs that will flow from Labor's plans for an Australian Centre for Disease Control and a social housing repair program to get tradies back on the tools.

Labor's National Rail Manufacturing Plan will undertake a national audit of

passenger train capacity and condition, develop our rail procurement and manufacturing strategy, assess how we can grow jobs, bolster research and development and collaborate with innovation initiatives and organisations.

Importantly, it will reinstate the important role of the Rail Supplier Advocate cut by the Liberals in 2013 – to help small and medium-sized businesses identify export opportunities and get a foot in the door with government purchasing bodies.

The Defence Industry Development Strategy will put Australian industry, workers and security first with a framework to maximise and publicly disclose local content for all major defence material procurements and local defence contracts.

Finally, an Australian Skills Guarantee will ensure that one in 10 jobs on major federally funded infrastructure projects are given to apprentices, trainees or cadets.

This work will be supported by Jobs and Skills Australia – announced by Mr Albanese last year – an independent body designed to bring together the business community, states and territories, unions, education providers and regional organisations to match skills training with the evolving demands of industry.

• *For more, visit alp.org.au*

Australia is falling behind

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (12:28): I would like to commend the Member for Bruce for putting forward this motion and for the important research he has done that puts hard numbers to what we all know.

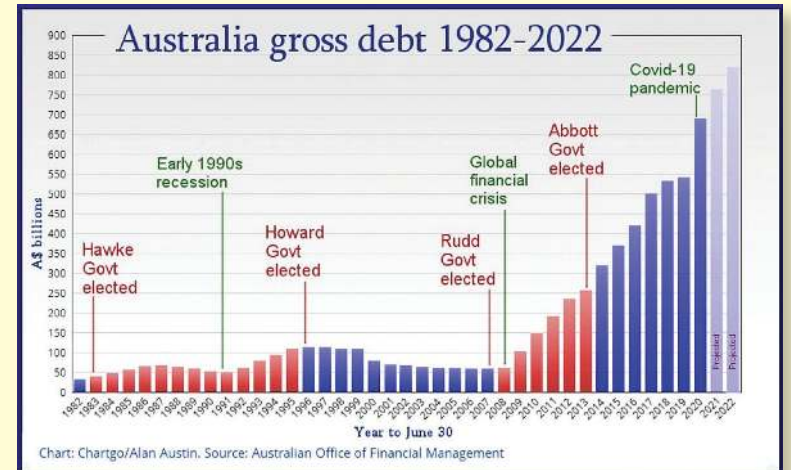
The numbers do not lie. These numbers show dispassionately, factually, without spin, without agenda, that Australia has gone backwards under eight years of Liberal government, eight years of Liberal mismanagement and gross economic incompetence.

The research exposes the Liberals as economic charlatans unfit to govern this country.

We already know that the Liberals are a party lacking in both moral and ethical leadership, drowning in rorts and scandals, and with a Prime Minister unwilling to act because his office sits at the centre of the entire stink.

Now, thanks to the Member for Bruce, we can also put hard figures to the argument that the Liberals are also lacking in economic credibility.

Despite the rotting stench that lies at the heart of this Liberal government, there are many in the community who, in the absence of this report, would hold their nose and say to themselves, 'The Liberals might be rotten, they might be cruel, they might be wrecking aged care and the NDIS, they might be literally stealing money from pensioners under Robodebt, but at least they can manage the economy.'



That's what people have been told for years—that the Liberals are the better economic managers and 'you can't trust Labor with money'. That's the mantra we've all grown up with. It's been driven into people's brains as truth, but it is fairytales.

The Liberals are not better economic managers.

The Australian economy did better under Labor. Australian workers and their families did better under Labor, and they will do better under Labor again.

Since the 2013 election Australian wages, under a Liberal government, have either stagnated or fallen. The only reason the gap between women's and men's wages has narrowed slightly is that men's wages aren't rising.

In real terms Australians now earn almost one per cent less than they did eight years ago. Think about that. Eight years ago you were earning a wage and eight years later you are earning almost one per cent less. It is unfathomable.

Australia, under the Liberals, is third-last of the 35 OECD countries on wages growth. What a record! Under the Liberals, Australia now has the third-most-unaffordable housing market in the OECD.

In Tasmania, my state, with the end of the National Rental Affordability Scheme we have pensioners literally being evicted this week and moving into cars and tents because there is nowhere to go.

It is an absolute disgrace that is happening under Liberal leadership here in Canberra and in Tasmania.

Under the Liberals, Australia is less productive. Micro-economic reform and productivity are the key to growth. Under this Government, Australia has gone backwards.

When Labor left office Australia was the 10th-most-productive nation in the OECD. Eight years of Liberal mismanagement has seen us slip to fifth-last. We need to do better.

entitlement schemes for annual leave, sick leave and long service leave for Australians in insecure work; and

• Ensure that workers employed through labour hire companies receive no less than workers employed directly.

And to improve the fairness of our industrial relations system, Labor will abolish the Morrison Government's Registered Organisations Commission (ROC) and the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), discredited organisations that have been used as political weapons against the union movement and workers, wasting many millions in taxpayers' dollars.

Labor's vision for more secure jobs with better pay stands in stark contrast with the Morrison Government's IR proposals, which would make job security worse and allow for cuts to workers' pay.

As always, the Liberals and Nationals think the path to restoring Australia's prosperity is through pay cuts and attacks on workers.

These IR commitments are just the first in a series Labor will make before the next election to deliver more secure jobs with better pay because Labor is on the side of workers.

• *For more, visit alp.org.au*

'If you're a woman, young or from a migrant background you're more likely to be stuck in insecure work'

crisis or downturn.

So, to improve job security, a Labor Government will:

- Make job security an object of the Fair Work Act 2009 so that it becomes a core focus for the Fair Work Commission's decisions;
- Extend the powers of the Fair Work Commission to include "employee-like" forms of work, allowing it to better protect people in new forms of work, like app-based gig work, from exploitation and dangerous working conditions;
- Legislate a fair, objective test to determine when a worker can be classified as a casual so people have a clearer pathway to permanent work;

• Limit the number of consecutive fixed-term contracts an employer can offer for the same role, with an overall cap of 24 months;

• Ensure a Labor government is a model employer by creating more secure employment in the Australian Public Service where temporary forms of work are being used inappropriately; and

• Use government procurement powers to ensure taxpayers' money is used to support secure employment.

To deliver better pay Labor will:

• Work with state and territory governments, unions and industry to develop portable

A future with forestry

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (16:31): by leave—Today I rise to make a short statement on the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources' report Aussie logs for Aussie jobs: Inquiry into timber supply chain constraints in the Australian plantation sector.

It is with great pleasure that I speak about this report, as the deputy chair of the standing committee.

The report hands down 10 bipartisan recommendations for how Australia's wood supply from the plantation sector can be secured

and grown. In particular, the report identifies ways in which government can take measures to assist.

The report recommends the adoption of a voluntary code of conduct which can both facilitate access to timber by Australian softwood processors and underpin and strengthen the relationship between plantation owners and timber processors.

This would ensure that cohesion between stakeholders in the timber industry can be had and that the growth of the industry can continue to occur.

Committee members

agreed that plantation forestry works best according to free-market principles but we are alive to the fact that processors have encountered difficulty in sourcing timber, even when prepared to offer comparable prices to offshore buyers.

There was broad agreement amongst members that if local processors are prepared to offer comparable or higher prices then the principle of "Aussie logs for Aussie jobs" should take precedence and that a firm signal should be issued to growers about this principle.

Ideally, of course, we would like to be in the po-

sition where plantation supply is sufficient to meet the needs of both local processors and a growing export market. The report also recommends that the Productivity Commission undertake a review of the regulatory settings relating to the establishment of plantations in Australia.

In doing so, incentives and barriers for plantation farmers could be identified.

I do note that prior to the May 2019 election, the Government promised a program to plant one billion trees over 10 years. Nearly two years later we are barely scratching the surface of that

promise and look nowhere near close to achieving even one-quarter of the goal unless drastic measures are taken. In short, the Government needs to do less announcing and more planting. I do urge Assistant Minister Duniam to put on his wellies, grab some seedlings and get to work.

Forestry has a long and proud history in Tasmania in particular. The recommendations in this report, if implemented by government, will help sustain industry viability for the future.

Plantation forestry is an industry we should be proud of. It provides jobs

and livelihoods for regional communities and a material that is natural and recyclable. Timber isn't just good for house frames and paper pulp, it can replace concrete in multi-storey projects and the millions of tonnes of fossil fuel-based plastics that bedevil our planet.

Imagine a world where everything that is plastic is replaced with a cellulose-based and biodegradable natural fibre. That's the promise of plantations—where our cities can take shape from timber and composites. The future is better with forestry in it. It is with pleasure that I commend the report to the House.

Out in Our Community — Break O'Day





• Brian is a life-long supporter of unions and the important role they play in our society, making workplaces safer and fairer, and advocating for stronger social justice in the community more broadly. He hasn't been able to attend May Day rallies in recent years because of a scheduling conflict with Agfest but this year he could do both. He's pictured above marching through Hobart, and with ACTU President Michelle O'Neill, who marched and spoke.



• Unions Tas secretary Jess Munday speaks on International Workers Memorial Day (April 26) at Launceston, marking the day each year when we remember workers who are injured and/or killed at work. Brian attends the service every year, along with union members and supporters, other MPs and Senators, and community members. Mourn for the dead, fight for the living!



• Brian visited IMAS (Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies) in Hobart with Caleb and Andrew to check out their research on aquaculture (including salmon, lobster, and Moreton Bay bugs!), While there he came across the rare and endangered Spotted Handfish. How this character, delightful as it is, survived evolution is a mystery. But let's do what we can to make sure he sticks around.

• In a show of tri-partisan support for the role the Jewish people have played and continue to play in Australia, Brian was invited to attend the Hobart Synagogue alongside Treasurer Josh Frydenberg, Liberal Senator Eric Abetz, independent MP Andrew Wilkie and state Liberal MPs Elise Archer and Madeleine Ogilvie. Brian has spoken in the parliament against Holocaust denialism and strongly denounced the rising tide of anti-semitism and growing far-right extremism in sections of the community.



Out in Our Community — Anzac Day

• Services were back for Anzac Day this year, and so were the crowds, paying respect to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation. Brian expresses his respect and admiration to every man and woman who puts on a uniform to serve. He also thanks his staff and volunteers who, despite Anzac Day being a public holiday, attend to lay wreaths at as many services across the electorate as possible.



Out in Our Community — Brighton



PRIORITIES MATTER! SECURE JOBS, AND A STRONGER ECONOMY



Brian Mitchell MP

Your Federal Member for Lyons

Need help with Medicare, Pensions, NDIS or other federal matters? Please feel free to contact me on (03) 6263 3721 or email me at Brian.Mitchell.MP@aph.gov.au



Out in Our Community — Brighton





Rebuild our regions, don't strip them!

Well, we tried but – in the end – it was to no avail.

Hundreds of St Marys residents signed our petition to try to convince the Commonwealth Bank to keep its branch in the town, but the petition was ignored.

We knew this was the likely outcome – big banks are not noted for listening to the needs of their customers – but we gave it a crack.

I'd like to extend my thanks to the hundreds of residents of St Marys and Fingal who signed the petition and who took the time to talk with me on the main street.

Unfortunately, it seems the St Helens-based Bendigo is also unlikely to decide to open a branch in St Marys, meaning this town, with many older and business customers, will have no bank branch at all from August, and will be totally reliant on Australia Post for banking services.

It is I fear a sign of things to come and I would not be surprised to see

bank branches in St Helens following suit in coming years, unless changes are made to corporate and government culture.

The fact is regional communities like St Marys have been let down by governments and big corporations for many years.

Services we used to take for granted have been chopped out and centralised into the big cities, or fully automated and taken online.

These decisions are good for the bottom lines of corporations and bureaucrats but they're not good for the communities that get left behind.

Hundreds of jobs have disappeared, many of them secure, well-paid jobs.

We need to get serious about rebuilding our regions, and that means getting serious about rebuilding regional services.

I'll tell anyone who stands still for 30 seconds that we need to get back to people-centred services, even if they cost a bit more to run, because they

make our lives better.

And we need to get government service centres back into regional communities.

Online services save money and have their place, but they should be in addition to people-centred services, not replacements of them.

I think it's frankly disrespectful to tell seniors to navigate the maze of information on a pensions website.

Seniors should be able to walk into a government service centre and speak to people without being shoved onto a phone or plonked in front of a computer.

This may seem off topic given we started talking about the closure of a bank branch, but it's all related.

We expect banks to behave better and treat regional customers with more respect - Government needs to lead by example.

This opinion piece by Brian Mitchell MP was first published in The Valley & East Coast Voice.

Make it here! That's Labor's focus

An Albanese Labor Government will establish a National Reconstruction Fund, to create secure jobs for Australian workers, drive regional economic development, boost our sovereign capability and diversify the nation's economy.

The COVID pandemic has exposed serious deficiencies in Australia's economy, in particular our ability to manufacture products and be globally competitive when it comes to innovation and technology.

Building new industries and boosting our existing industries represents an opportunity for Australia to recover from the COVID pandemic with a stronger economy. After 8 long years of policy drift presided over by consecutive Liberal leaders, this country needs a government with a vision to put the country back on a road to prosperity.

Labor's plan for a National Reconstruction Fund will allocate \$15 billion to partner with the private sector, including



superannuation funds to support investments which demonstrate they will grow the economy and increase employment.

From commercialising our historic capacity in science and innovation to boosting the development of medical devices and pharmaceuticals, through to reviving our capability to make cars, trains and ships, today's announcement will support the businesses in these industries to

secure the capital and investment to grow and prosper.

Australia must be a country that makes things, to have our own industrial and manufacturing capabilities.

If there is anything that COVID has taught us, it is the need for Australia to be a place which makes things – to have our own industrial and manufacturing capabilities – our own sovereign capabilities.

This will build on Labor's Future Made in Australia agenda to invest in Australia and Australian workers.

The Fund will be legislated and be governed by an independent Board using the successful model which Labor created through the Clean Energy Finance Corporation.

It will provide \$15 billion of investment through a combination of loans, equity, co-investment and guarantees. The Fund will be administered on the basis that it will achieve a return to cover borrowing costs, with an expected positive underlying cash impact.

Labor's plan to unlock investment opportunities is the first part of our national reconstruction agenda.

Australians deserve a government that is on their side.

• **For more information about Labor's plan for a National Reconstruction Fund, visit alp.org.au**

The National Reconstruction Fund will be legislated to demonstrate Labor's commitment to delivering a \$15 billion capital injection into Australia's prosperity, giving business certainty for the life of projects.

The mission of the National Reconstruction Fund is to:

- **create secure well-paid jobs**
- **build on our national strengths**
- **diversify Australia's industrial base**
- **develop our national sovereign capability**
- **drive regional economic diversification and development**

Out in Our Community — Meander Valley & Kentish



Out in Our Community — Derwent Valley



Janet and Darren call it a day

Janet Lambert and Darren Clark, who have been with Brian since his first election in 2016, have called it a day.

Darren resigned from the Bridgewater office in January to focus on consultancy, and he can still be seen around the electorate doing work for Rural Alive and Well, as well as his presidency of the Brighton Football Club.

Janet left Brian’s Perth office in late July but will continue in her valued role as a Northern Midlands councillor.

Both Darren and Janet have previously put themselves forward and run as candidates for Labor at state elections.

“I’d like to thank Janet and Darren for their invaluable contributions to my office and



their ongoing commitment to Labor,” said Brian. “Every MP depends on good staff and I’ve been fortunate to have some of the best assist me in this role.



“I wish them both all the best and look forward to continuing to catch up with them in their community roles, and as active members of the Tasmanian Labor Party.

Events bonanza in Lyons

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (16:04): One of the great pleasures of my electorate is the sheer number of events.

On Sunday was the Rural Flying Doctor Service and the Truck Owners and Operators Association truck run, which unfortunately I could not get to because I was on the plane coming here, where truck drivers and truck owners across Tasmania raised funds for the RFDS in its 60th year.

Many trucks converged on Longford in my electorate and more than 70 trucks from across the state took part, between them raising \$25,000. I was happy to make a small donation.

I was sorry I was not able to get to this great event. Some terrific people went along. Glenda and Mick Emerton from Sorell, which is near me, had heard about the truck run on Facebook and were delighted to be able to attend this wonderful event.

To all who participated in the truck run, congratulations. It’s a fantastic event to get behind. I’m looking forward to hopefully being there next year with parliamentary sittings notwithstanding and—touch wood—an election out of the way.

I look forward to hopefully getting along next year as the member for Lyons in 2022. On that note, in my electorate, with Bream Creek Farmers Market, Longford Market, Evandale market, New Norfolk Market, there are so many things to get around to. If anyone wants to take note of half-price flights, come to Tassie and have a great time.

Dibs on scouting

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (17:47): Speaking as a former cub scout and Army cadet for a short time—the Scouts have been around for more than 100 years.

The movement was first founded in the UK in 1907 by Lord Baden-Powell. Since then scouting has evolved into a worldwide movement of nearly 50 million young people and adult volunteers, and is welcoming to all genders. I must give a shout-out to my late mother. She was Baloo in my scout group.

Scouting provides young people, guided by adult volunteers, the opportunity to participate in programs, events, activities and projects that contribute to their growth as active citizens. Today, Scouts Australia is a 70,000-strong organisation. It is part of the 40-million-member world organisation of the scout movement.

Scouts Australia has a vision that by 2023 Scouts will be the leading youth development movement in Australia, empowering 83,000 young people to be resilient, self-fulfilled, positive change-makers in their community.

Scouting first appeared in Tasmania in 1909, just two years after Lord Baden-Powell. We’re first at everything! By the mid-1920s, there were some 1,000 Scouts of all ranks in the state.

In December ‘33, the organisation was confident enough to stage one of the first national scouting youth events held in the state: a Scout corroboree at Lake Sorell.

Membership of Scouting in Tasmania has always fluctuated. It reached a peak of about 5,000 in the early 1970s, but it’s still going strong. It’s quiet but strong.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend—with Senator Anne Urquhart—the Tasmanian Scouts AGM, with President Corey McGrath; Chief Commissioner Michael Hovington; and Chief Scout of Tasmania Kate Warner AC, our state’s wonderful Governor. It was a joy to watch this community come together from all around the state and descend on Bridgewater, in the south of my electorate, after what has been a very challenging year, for a number of reasons, and celebrate their achievements.

I would particularly like to acknowledge life-member inductees Maria Direen and Susan Hovington, and years of service awardees Marion Blight, for 30 years of service, and Denice Walters, for 35 years of service to the organisation. Also, well done to Australian Scout Medallion awardees Evan Eastman-Peck and Yumani Nevah, who are the next generation of young Scouts coming through; already they’re leaders.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Scouts Australia, Girl Guides Australia, and the world organisation of the Scout movement for continuing to provide an outlet for children to channel their desire for adventure, education and fun and for providing ongoing assistance around our communities. Dyb, dyb, dyb; dob, dob, dob!

Conservation efforts praised

Mr BRIAN MITCHELL (Lyons) (15:44): During the Morrison Government’s continued failure to maintain and improve our nation’s environmental protection laws, there are organisations that are still trying to do their best to protect our environment all while being undermined and/or ignored and under-resourced by this government.

In my electorate, I would like to recognise the Tasmanian Land Conservancy for its continued drive and dedication to nature conservation. The TLC is a not-for-profit apolitical and community-minded organisation whose ethos surrounds the important and growing challenge of preserving our environment for future generations to enjoy and appreciate and, importantly, it does it hand in hand with private landowners.

Just outside Buckland on Tasmania’s east coast, the Prosser and Back Rivers cut their way through a valley of grassy woodland. This 1,534-hectare reserve will protect threatened vegetation communities and 11 threatened plant and animal species as well as old-growth vegetation communities and freshwater ecosystems. It’s all made possible thanks to a very generous bequest by the late Mr McGregor.

It’s a wonderful piece of Tasmanian territory. The pre-European values of this land are amazing. It’s all done through private bequest, so the government’s got no part in it.

Also with the TLC, at Beaufront in Ross in my electorate, Julian

Under-resourced community groups go above and beyond

von Bibra for the last seven years has been working very hard with the conservancy to restore 190 hectares. He says, ‘Conservation now has a place on the farm balance sheet.’ There are people out there doing the right thing for conservation and the environment, because this government is not doing enough for them.

Another project in my electorate is the Derwent Catchment Project, which does amazing work in the Derwent Valley and the Central Highlands. They look after around one-fifth of the total area of Tasmania. The Derwent catchment’s a vast region with extraordinarily diverse landscapes. Members may recall that the Derwent and Central Highlands area was devastated by bushfire a few years ago, and areas of Tasmania that have never known fire for literally tens of thousands of years were burnt.

This of course is the contributing nature of climate change, a hotter climate with fires getting wilder and going to areas where they’ve not been seen in tens of thousands of years. A big shout-out to the Derwent Catchment Project for the incredible work they do.

It would be remiss of me not to talk about the failures of this Government when it comes to the environment without briefly touching on the Northern Midlands prison project in my electorate.

This is largely a state government jurisdiction, but it also touches on federal jurisdiction. The plot of land that the Tasmanian Liberal government has chosen for this northern prison site is just outside the town of Westbury and the land that it’s chosen was reserved under federal environmental law, using federal funding for environmental protection.

I don’t for the life of me see how a prison fits the values of environmental protection and wildlife protection, but we’ll see what happens. We’ve put a number of questions on notice to the minister on this very point.

We can have no confidence that this is the right site, because the decision-making process that the state government used to determine this site was completely flawed.

Briefly, Labor is calling on the Morrison government to introduce strong national environmental standards—not too much to ask. We’re asking the Government to establish a genuinely independent cop on the beat for Australia’s environment—not too much to ask—and fix the explosion in the unnecessary 510 per cent job and investment delays caused by the Government’s massive funding cuts over its term in office.

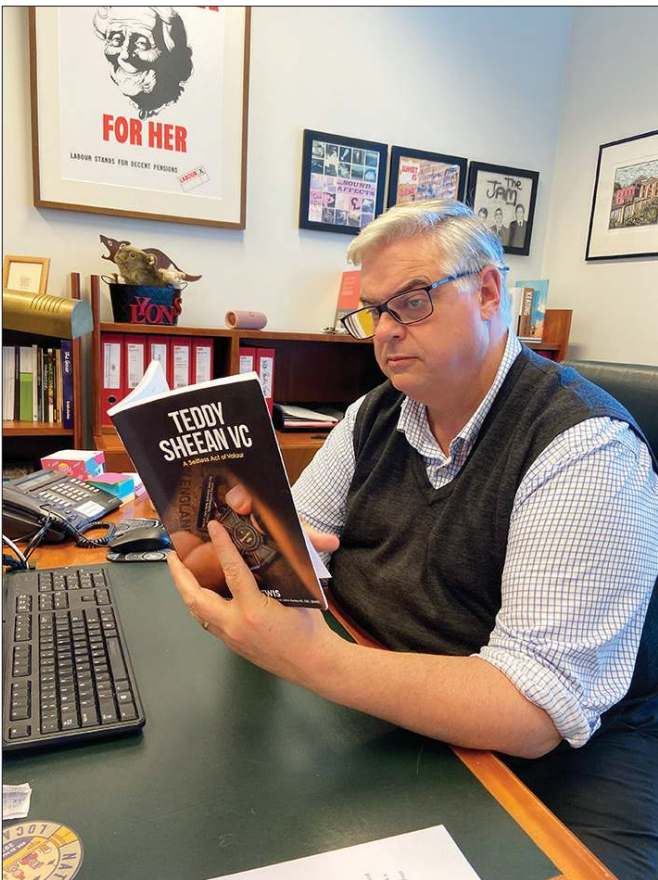
This Government is no friend to the environment and it should stop pretending it is.

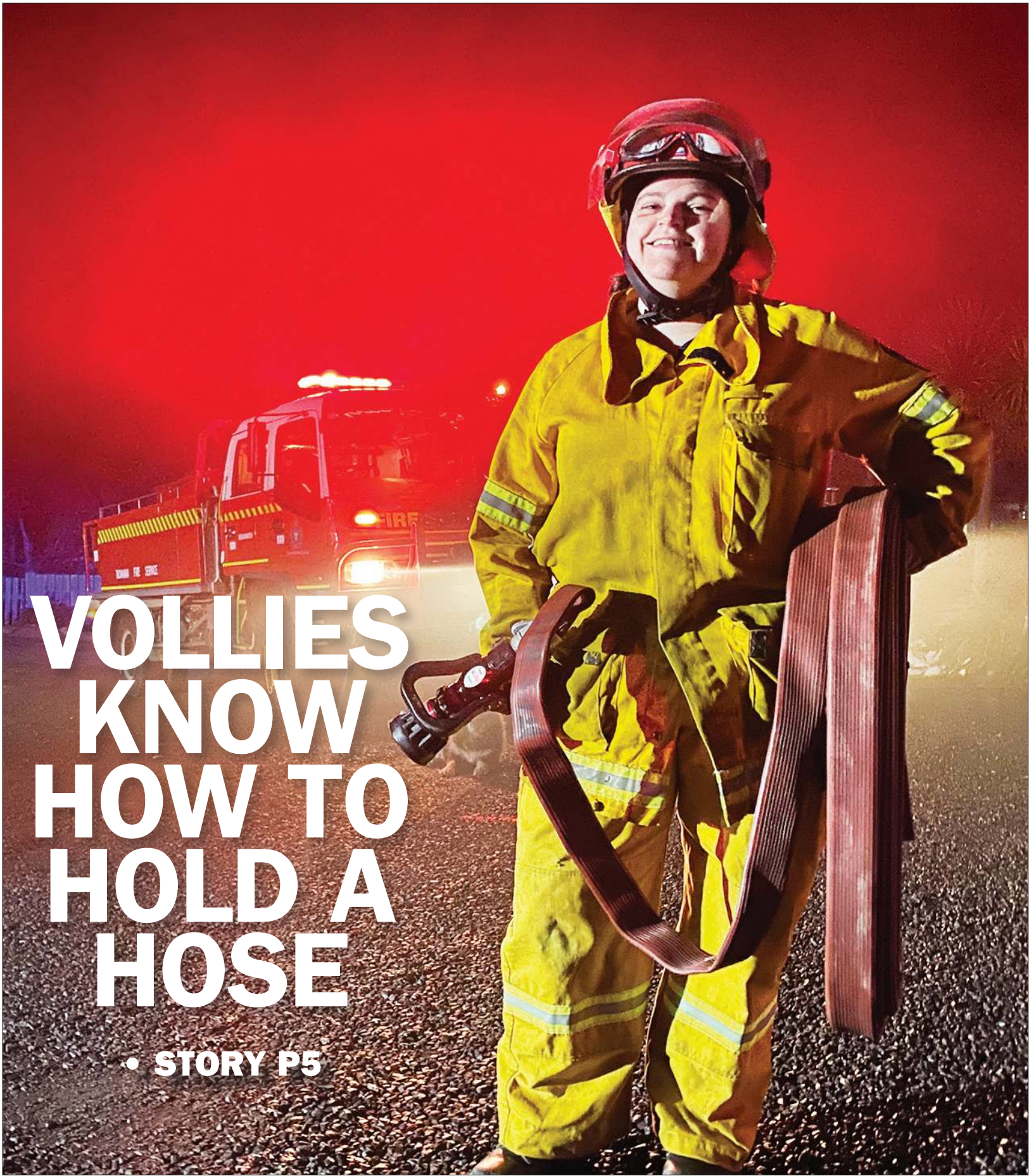
Out in Our Community — Agfest

It was terrific to be back at Agfest this year after last year's COVID cancellation. Congratulations to Rural Youth on a fantastic event. Crowds were down due to COVID limits but there was still plenty to see and do and we had some great conversations over 4 days. See you next May!



In Canberra





VOLLIES KNOW HOW TO HOLD A HOSE

• STORY P5

Let's stop the cashless pension card

• from page 1

Scott Morrison's Liberal Government wants to expand the cashless debit card to include all pensioners.

The Minister for Social Services, Anne Ruston, in a Channel 7 interview, said "we are seeking to put all income management onto the universal platform...the cashless debit card".

Under the Liberals' plan, 80 per cent of the pension would be put on a privatised, cashless card which limits where, when, and how you spend your money.

The Liberals believe your income from the Government isn't really your money, so they think they have the right to tell you how you get to spend it.

If the Liberals get their way, pensioners won't be able to buy cheap food at local farmers' markets, second-hand goods, a meal at the RSL, or give cash gifts to their grandkids.

The fact is, the vast majority of pensioners manage their money well, and know where every cent goes.

Labor believes pensioners have the right to make their own decisions about where they spend their money, and will fight to keep it that way.

Pensioners deserve to be treated with respect after a lifetime of working hard and paying taxes.

Labor will fight the Liberal Government's shameful plan to force pensioners onto the cashless debit card, and a Labor government will abolish the privatised card.

Brian Mitchell MP



LET'S REBUILD OUR REGIONS



Contact Brian:
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