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G'day Eastern Victoria

I hope this update finds you well.

As always there is lots happening in Eastern Victoria. The State Government has been active even though the parliament has been in a winter recess.

I did get a chance for a small break and I'm feeling refreshed and ready to tackle the run to the end of the year.

Parliament is back this week and there is lots of advocacy I am continuing with for our region. The priority for me continues to be housing and industry transition, along with supporting individual groups on more specific issues or projects.

Voice to Parliament

Momentum is building for the referendum which is now likely less than 3 months away.

Mornington Peninsula Yes 23 organiser Kayla and I caught up to discuss the campaign. Kayla is optimistic about the Voice to Parliament and I offered my support to the local organising efforts.

I also met with Marg Lynn from the South Gippsland Yes 23 organiser at Manna Gum Community House in Foster where she had organised a planning workshop with local volunteers.

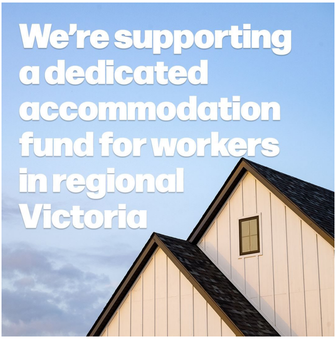
This passionate group of volunteers will be out talking to people about why we should meaningfully recognise First Nations people in our constitution through the Voice.

Kayla and Marg along with all the Yes 23 volunteers are an inspiration!

If you are interested in getting involved in the campaign jump on

https://action.yes23.com.au/

Commonwealth Games


We're supporting a dedicated accommodation fund for workers in regional Victoria

This month, the State Government announced that Victoria will no longer host the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

This is big news that does have an impact on the whole state, and particularly Eastern Victoria. Gippsland was selected as one of the host cities for the games.

The reason for this decision has been outlined elsewhere. It comes down to the costs, which were increasing, and the benefits, which were going to be substantially less than the cost.

The main reason we agreed to host the Games was to deliver lasting benefits in housing, tourism and sporting infrastructure for regional Victoria.

This part of the Games plan will continue with a $2 Billion package to support those projects and more.

This will include:

- $1 billion for a new Regional Housing Fund
- $550 million to deliver every one of the permanent new and upgraded sporting infrastructure projects planned as part of the Games.
- $150 million for the Regional Tourism and Events Fund
- $40 million for the All Abilities Sport Fund
- $60 million for the Regional Community Sport Development Fund
- $150 million for the Regional Worker Accommodation Fund

While the news is disappointing for local athletes, their families, and fans, I am confident that this package can deliver similar or greater benefits to the region than the games.

Gambling Reform

We're introducing new rules to reduce gambling harm.
VICTORIA
State Government

This month new reforms were announced to reduce gambling harm at venues with electronic gaming machines (EGMs).

All EGMs in Victoria will require mandatory pre-commitment limits and carded play
Load up limits – how much money an individual can put into an EGM at a time will be capped at $100, down from the current limit of $1,000

By mid-2024, mandatory closure periods will be enforced for all gaming machine areas in a venue, except the casino, between 4am and 10am.

The Government will also make it mandatory for all new EGMs to spin at a rate of three seconds per game, slowing the pace of the game down and limiting the amount that can be lost.

I am proud the government is acting to protect people from gambling related harm.

Anyone affected by their own or someone else's gambling can call Gambler's Help 24/7 on 1800 858 858 to access confidential and free advice, support and referral.

Downer Pakenham Train Maintenance Facility

The new metro Tunnel will mean the 70 trains that run on the Sunbury and Pakenham lines, including the new High-Capacity Metro Trains made in Newport and commissioned and maintained in Pakenham, will not have to travel through the city loop, opening capacity for the whole network (including V Line!).

It takes technology, investment, and an incredibly skilled local workforce, including some of the apprentices we met, to ensure the best possible public transport for Victoria, and you could see that on display at the facility.

There is so much work coming together on our public transport networks - the investment in the metro Tunnel (which is now running test trains!), local manufacturing, training apprentices, level crossing removals, fairer VLine fares, and supporting our suburbs and regions with better and better liveability!

New Ambulance Stations

EMERGENCY
PARA

Bruno and Joe showed me around Mornington Ambulance Station's new state-of-the-art 24-hour facility.

The new building is two stories and features a four-bay garage for ambulances, four rest and recline areas for our hard-working paramedics to recuperate, training facilities, a fully equipped kitchen and improved security and car parking to make sure paramedics are safe.

The team are enjoying the new home base which is making their jobs easier. This means they can focus on doing what they love, looking out for people on the Peninsula.

I also dropped into the brand-new Foster Ambulance Station which is taking shape! I checked on construction and it is well into its build.

And, Gerry, Deb, and Jamie showed me around the current Paynesville Ambulance Station.

They were excited about the new multi-million-dollar station they will receive that will feature a three-bay garage, two rest and recline areas, training facilities, a fully equipped kitchen, and improved security and car parking.

This will certainly be a welcome upgrade for the team and the local community.

These are just a few of the new Ambulance stations in Eastern Victoria. There are also new stations planned or in progress at Yarram and Mallacoota.

AMBULANCE
1HJ 3OM
1EC 9NY

New Local Funding and Initiatives

This month, I am pleased to tell you of funding provided to local priorities through several programs. This includes:

Victoria's Resilient Coast Grants, Coastal and Marine Management Plan Grants & Sea Country Grants to protect our coasts where up to $210,000 has been awarded to projects on the Mornington Peninsula, as well as up to 285,000 in South Gippsland.

8 business and traders associations received $15,000.00 through the Small Business Victoria Small Business Wellbeing Grants program. These include:

- Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
- East Gippsland Marketing Inc
- Float Inc
- Lakes Entrance Action and Development Association
- Metung Business and Tourism Association Inc
- Paynesville Business and Tourism Association Inc
- Stratford Community Association Inc
- South Gippsland Shire Council

Two $150,000 Building Blocks Planning Grants were announced for new Early Learning Centres in Gippsland at Sale and Mirboo North.

This is part of the $14 billion Best Start, Best Life reform to Early Education which includes major upgrades to kindergartens, kinders on school sites to get kids ready for school and reduce drop offs for parents, and free three- and four-year-old kinder.

The network for electric vehicle charging continues to expand across Victoria, including through investment by the Victorian Government in charging infrastructure.

This month the Flinders Charging Station was officially opened thanks to the Destination Charging Across Victoria program. There are several charging stations across Eastern Victoria that were funded through this program including:

- Mallacoota
- Buchan
- Lakes Entrance 1
- Lakes Entrance 2
- Bruthen
- Paynesville
- Maffra
- Heyfield
- Foster
- Mirboo North
- Meeniyan
- Leongatha
- Korumburra
- Loch
- Flinders
- Rosebud
- Portsea
- Bairnsdale
- Sale
- Yarram

Local Media

This month I joined Tony, Richard, and Amanda for an interview on Gippsland FM radio show Our World this Week.

It was a chance to introduce myself to the Gippsland FM audience and chat about the important things happening in Eastern Victoria including industry transition.

I also went back in to see Deniese at Radio East Gippsland and have a chat about NAIDOC week, the new Paynesville Ambulance Station, and other local matters.

I am making a habit of dropping in at TRFM after a trip to Gippsland to record some of the visits I have made, report on good news and make comment on what is happening in the region.

On the Ground in Mornington

Mornington Power Saving Bonus

YUMMO
Tom McIntosh MP
STATE MEMBER FOR EASTERN VICTORIA REGION
$250

I was lucky enough to get a cracking July day for a session handing out Power Saving Bonus flyers at Mornington's Wednesday Main Street Market.

Tens of thousands of people on the Peninsula have taken advantage of the $250 bonus to help with bills and get the best deal for their energy, and over 1.6 million Victorians have used the program to date!

If you have not used it yet jump on to the Victorian Energy Compare website to claim your $250 and make sure you are getting the best deal by August 31.

Mornington Community Support Centre

Good Shepherd
No Interest Loans
For essentials you need now.
No fees. No interest. No catch.

The Mornington Community Support Centre (MCSC) has reopened after refurbishment following floods last year.

The Centre has been supporting the community for 40 years including with housing, which is an issue that I continue to hear from constituents about.

I will continue to work with MCSC CEO Ben Smith and other services so that we can better support the community when they need it.

Mornington Community House

The new Mornington Community House is in a brand new facility at the Mornington Hub. The new hub is a light filled space with big open rooms and great new facilities.

The new hub was supported with over $2 million from the State Government through the Growing Suburbs Fund.

Mornington Community House offers people the opportunity for social connection, learning, and to make a contribute to the community.

I was fortunate enough to be there at the same time as the free weekly Chatty Cafe!

Politics in the Pub

DIEU ET MON DROIT
MORNINGTON
Yes
PENIN

Politics is about people and the local community. That is exactly what was on show at the first Politics in the Pub event in Mount Martha.

Community solutions were proposed to some of our pressing challenges including climate and housing. These were debated at the table over a drink between community members of all ages and backgrounds, and you could feel the energy.

This was a great initiative that I was happy to support, and this is the kind of thing we should all be doing more of.

On the Ground in Gippsland

Korumburra RSL

Dave, Hugh, and a large group of members were kind enough to put on a delicious morning tea for me at the Korumburra RSL when I dropped in to announce their $15,000 grant from the State Government's Veterans Capital Works Grant program.

This group work hard to ensure their building is open and accessible to the community and the grant to upgrade their building will help them welcome more people in the future.

Stratford Community Association

I dropped in to meet with Stratford Community Association President Shayne Hyman who has rejuvenated the local business and residents' association.

The group has received $15,000 to support local businesses through the Mental Wellbeing of Business Communities Grants Program, which they will use to tell stories of local business resilience, install a new noticeboard, and trial a coworking hub in Stratford.

Across Eastern Victoria there were several groups to receive this grant, including 6 associations in East Gippsland!

Gippsland Wild Foods and Lightfoot & Sons

I visited Lightfoot and Sons winery to meet with local food entrepreneur Dom Britten from Gippsland Wild Foods. Food and agribusinesses in Gippsland are sensational and there are so many ideas for how this can grow in the future.

Dom harvests wild deer locally and sells to local restaurants for specialty dishes.

Dom also works at Lightfoot and Sons and what a spot it was to look out and ponder the food and wine potential of Gippsland!

East Gippsland Winter Festival

the stables
est 1889
Gippsland
New Energy

I met Festival Directors Adam Bloem and Andrea Lane who told me all about this year's festival, their motivation for starting the festival 3 years ago, and the ambitious goals they have for the future.

The festival is right across East Gippsland and shows off the region's drawcards like the Gippsland Lakes, rivers, the rail trail, and walks into the bush guided by locals.

I highly recommend a follow of their Instagram @east_gippsland_winter_festival where you can see for yourself that there is something special building here.

The festival received $75,000 through the State Government's Regional Events Fund and is a great example of how far that money can go when it taps into a groundswell of authentic community energy.

Paynesville Bowls Club

PBC
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HONOUR BOARD
PAYNESVILLE ASSOCIATES
PAYNESVILLE

Paynesville Bowls Club invited me to join them for a drink and discuss their plans for the club.

A synthetic green will enable them to play through winter and reduce maintenance costs and I am working to help them find an avenue to fund it.

Club volunteers are training the next generation of up-and-comers from Paynesville Primary School, increasing participation, and passing on a lifelong love of the game. And as a bonus the kids are having great success, including a Gippsland Region Title!

NAIDOC March

I joined hundreds of local community members in Bairnsdale for this year's NAIDOC march.

The march through town had a great atmosphere and there was strong support from all corners of the community.

My favourite moment was when minibuses full of waving elders parted the crowd to raucous applause! Perfect for this year's theme for NAIDOC – For Our Elders.

Rosedale Neighbourhood House Pumptrack Committee

The Rosedale Neighbourhood House and local community are advocating for their local community to have a pump track.

The committee is made up of an enthusiastic group of young parents who have already done some impressive fundraising and I met with Kara Ross, the chairperson, to discuss their plans.

Gippsland Women’s Health

CEO Kate Graham generously took the time to go through some of the data relating to gender equality and family violence in Gippsland and talk about Gippsland Women’s Health mission, programs, and challenges.

We also discussed the State Government’s initiative to create 20 new women's health clinics at public hospitals. One of these will be at Latrobe Regional Health in Traralgon and there will be a mobile service for remote parts of the state.

Flotation Energy

I am continuing to engage with project proponents for offshore wind farms in Bass Strait.

The coast off Gippsland was declared the first offshore wind zone in Australia and I want to make sure I understand the industry as well as possible to maximise the benefits to the local community. This month I met with Flotation Energy.

Parliament Debrief

Boat Ramp facility upgrades at Shaving Point. Ramp renewal, new floating pontoon and fixed jetty.

July was a winter recess for Parliament; however, I did receive responses to some of the questions I have asked during previous sitting weeks.

I asked the Minister for Outdoor recreation about what the government is doing in Eastern Victoria to improve access to the water. You can read the response here – there are some fantastic upgrades underway to boating infrastructure both on the Peninsula and in Gippsland, including the upgrades underway at Shavings Point Boat Ramp in Metung pictured above.

https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publication-research/questions-database/details/53/21002

I asked the Minister for Agriculture about what the Victorian government doing to ensure that local workers, businesses, and communities have confidence in their future with the announcement about bringing forward the date of the closure of native Forest Harvesting. You can read the response here and the support is ongoing.

https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publication-research/questions-database/details/53/20729

I asked the Minister for Manufacturing Sovereignty about what the Andrews Labor government is doing to lead the way in transitioning to a net zero Victoria, and what are the expected benefits for Victorian manufacturers from this transition? This is particularly important when you think about maximising the benefits of the development of the offshore wind industry in Eastern Victoria. You can read the response here - the government is committed to local manufacturing, and this has been reaffirmed in this year’s budget.

https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publication-research/questions-database/details/53/20312

I asked the Minister for Climate Action about the Power Saving Bonus, specifically what the uptake has been on the Mornington Peninsula.

I was happy to see that over 43,000 applications had been from the Mornington Peninsula, showing households are getting support with their bills and checking if they are getting the best deal. You can see that here

https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publication-research/questions-database/details/53/20806

Finally, I asked the Minister for Community Sport about how the government is investing in the lifeblood of our communities and helping groups and local government areas plan for future growth and development. You can read the response here.

https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publication-research/questions-database/details/53/21163

This week I am back in Parliament ready for another sitting where the government is making important changes like the way pharmacists dispense medicine, especially the contraceptive pill and treatments for Urinary Tract Infections, making it them more accessible.

If there are issues you want raised in Parliament, please tell me and the team.

That's July!

That's it from me this month. Thanks for your continued feedback and support.

My office is always available to support you or your local community with assistance with State Government matters.

If you want to keep up to date more regularly then please come and follow my Facebook page here and my Instagram page here.

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