



ASHWOOD DISTRICT COMMUNITY NEWS

A message from Matt Fregon MP

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Ashwood District Community News. As we move swiftly through 2025, I'm excited to share with you the latest updates and developments happening within our community, along with the recent Victoria 25/26 State Budget announcements and exciting projects currently underway.

As you may have noticed, my electorate office has moved to **240 High Street, Ashburton**. This new location places us right in the heart of the Ashwood District electorate, amongst the lively Ashburton shopping strip. After experiencing significant water damage, our office has temporarily relocated while the landlord undertakes necessary roof repairs.

In the meantime, I've been fortunate to hold many constituent meetings in some of our wonderful local cafés. I'm incredibly grateful to the café owners and staff who've provided such welcoming spaces during this time.

If you'd like to meet to discuss a local issue or concern, please don't hesitate to reach out - I'm available and happy to arrange a time that suits.

In this edition, you'll find updates on local initiatives, funding announcements, budget wins and upcoming events to add to your diary - all right here in our local community.

Speaking of events, it was fantastic seeing so many familiar faces at this year's Ashburton Festival, where the Ashburton Trader's Association yet again showcased what makes our community so special.

I am committed to ensuring that our community continues to thrive, and I look forward to working together to create even more opportunities for growth and connection for the rest of the year.

As always, please get in touch with my office if I can be of any assistance to you or your family.

Sincerely,

Matt Fregon MP

25/26 Victoria State Budget Snapshot

In May, Victoria's first female Treasurer, Hon Jaclyn Symes, handed down the Victorian Labor Government's 2025/26 Budget putting forward a positive and prudent economic plan for the State, whilst continuing to take real action to support local households with the cost-of-living:

- ✓ Victorian Budget to return \$600 million operating surplus
- ✓ Free public transport for kids under 18 every day from January 2026 — saving families up to \$755 per year, per child
- ✓ Free weekend public transport for Seniors Card holders from January 2026 — saving older Victorians more than \$360 annually
- ✓ Period products stocked in all government schools, as well as the rollout of free pads and tampons across 70 public locations
- ✓ Expanded Pharmacy Pilot — offering free consultations and treatment for more common health conditions
- ✓ \$200 Get Active Kids Vouchers for eligible families to participate in sport
- ✓ \$400 Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund uplift for all eligible students
- ✓ Continued free zoo entry for all children under 16 to Melbourne Zoo, Werribee Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary & Kyabram Fauna Park
- ✓ Free Kinder for all 3 & 4-year-olds — saving families up to \$2,600 per child
- ✓ Ongoing Smile Squad Dental & Free Glasses/Vision Screening in Schools
- ✓ Return of the Power Saving Bonus — \$100 vouchers for eligible households
- ✓ Stamp duty concession extended for off-the-plan homes
- ✓ New funding for food relief, mortgage stress support, and targeted aid for households under pressure, including young people

**MATT IS
DELIVERING
FOR THE EAST**

**WHAT'S
HAPPENING
IN YOUR
COMMUNITY?
DATES FOR
YOUR DIARY**

Electrify Boroondara Expo25

Sunday 12 October
10:00am - 4:00pm
Hawthorn Arts Centre

Boroondara Hard Rubbish Rehome

Saturday 18 October
10:00am - 2:00pm
Spring Community Market - Camberwell Library Precinct

DELIVERED!

- ✓ **Syndal South Primary New School Learning Hub**
- ✓ **\$400 School Savings Bonus**
- ✓ **70,000 Kinder Kits for 3 and 4 Year old kindergarten students**
- ✓ **Ashwood School New Senior Secondary Building**

BUDGET 2025/26: Local Wins for the Ashwood District

\$75,000 FOR A NEW DIGITAL SCOREBOARD AT JORDAN RESERVE

The Allan Labor Government is delivering \$75,000 to install a brand new digital scoreboard at Jordan Reserve, the home of the Monash Demons All-Abilities Football Club, Chadstone Football Club and Mount Waverley Uniting Cricket Club. This investment is a huge win for sport in our community. The Monash Demons are a vital part of our local sporting landscape, offering players of all abilities the chance to participate, compete, and thrive in a supportive environment.

The new digital scoreboard will make a huge difference on game day, improving the experience for players, coaches and spectators alike.

We know that local sport does more than just keep people active, it brings people together. Whether you're pulling on the boots or cheering from the sidelines, Jordan Reserve is a place where community spirit shines.

FUNDING ALLOCATED TO MOUNT WAVERLEY NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mount Waverley North Primary School has secured funding for planning future school upgrades, thanks to the Allan Labor Government's ongoing investment in education.

The school will share in \$10 million of state-wide funding to support planning for future upgrades and refurbishments to improve learning spaces for students, teachers and the broader school community.

This funding will support planning and preparation for improvements to school, recognising the vital role MWNPS plays in our local community.



\$100,000 TO BOROONDARA COUNCIL FOR WARNER RESERVE MASTERPLAN

The Allan Labor Government is investing in the future of our open spaces, with \$100,000 allocated to Boroondara Council to support the development of a Masterplan for Warner Reserve, home of the Ashburton United Football Club.

This funding will help guide the long-term vision for Warner Reserve, ensuring it continues to meet the needs of our growing and active community. The Masterplan will provide a roadmap for future upgrades, improvements to facilities, and ways to enhance accessibility, safety, and environmental sustainability.

Warner Reserve is a much-loved local space used by families, sporting clubs, and community groups. This investment is about making sure it continues to serve the community for generations to come.

Education

ASHBURTON PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT Q & A

In April, Matt Fregon MP visited Ashburton Primary School to meet with the Year 5 and 6 students and share insights into his role as a local Member of Parliament.

The visit sparked a lively and engaging discussion, with students asking thoughtful questions about Parliament, leadership, the Suburban Rail Loop, and Matt's journey before entering public office. Their curiosity, enthusiasm, and interest in his role were genuinely inspiring.

Matt was delighted to see such engaged young minds and welcomed the opportunity to connect with the next generation.

He looks forward to continuing these meaningful conversations with students across the electorate.



EMPOWERING STUDENTS WITH REAL-WORLD SKILLS: MINI WOOLIES OPENS AT ASHWOOD SCHOOL!

In March, Matt Fregon MP had the honour of attending the opening of the first Mini Woolies in the Ashwood District, located at Ashwood Special School. This exciting initiative gives students the opportunity to develop real-world skills in areas such as numeracy, literacy, and communication through a hands-on learning environment.

During his visit, Matt joined student Sienna for a shopping experience, selecting her favourite ingredients!

Special thanks go to the team from Woolworths Ashwood, who generously supported the project by helping set up the Mini Woolies and sharing their knowledge with the students.

Matt looks forward to visiting again soon to see how students are enjoying this new addition to their school. Congratulations to Ashwood School on delivering such a valuable and engaging learning opportunity for their students.



PREP BAGS

Each year the Allan Labor Government provides every Prep student attending a Victorian government school a Prep bag to celebrate this momentous milestone in their education journey.

This year's theme 'Ready, Set, Prep!', highlights the transition from kindergarten to school for young learners. In each bag, Preps receive 5 specially chosen books, a range of learning resources, sports activities and information and resources regarding health and well-being. These goodies are designed to nurture curiosity and help set Preps up for the best start for their school journey.

Matt Fregon MP has had the privilege of attending a number of our local schools, including Pinewood Primary School, Syndal South Primary School and Mount Waverley North Primary School to present students with their Prep bags during the start of the school year. Matt truly appreciates the opportunity to be involved in a small way in celebrating this milestone with some of our youngest learners.

Syndal South Primary School



Pinewood Primary School



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALICE - SELECTED FOR THE AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS DEBATING TEAM

In exciting news, local student Alice Liberman from Korowa Anglican Girls' School has been selected for the Australian Schools Debating Team.

This is an outstanding achievement which is a testament to her dedication and talent. Matt Fregon MP had the privilege of meeting Alice in June before she set off to Mexico City and Panama City to represent Australia at the World Schools Debating Championships.

Well done, Alice!

Local Schools Updates

SYNDAL SOUTH PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNING HUB OFFICIAL OPENING

Matt Fregon MP had the honour of attending the opening of the new learning hub at Syndal South Primary School. Joined by the Minister for Education Ben Carroll MP and the Member for Glen Waverley John Mullahy MP, the hub was supported by a \$4.462 million investment from the state government.

Syndal South is an incredible local school in our community and the new learning hub is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all who worked hard to bring this building to life.



ASHWOOD SCHOOL NEW SENIOR SECONDARY BUILDING OPENING

Matt Fregon MP had the honour of being part of the official opening of Ashwood School's new senior secondary building. This is a fantastic new space designed to support students in reaching their full potential.

It has been inspiring to see the dedication of the school community, particularly Principal Karen Overall, former Principal Helen Hatherly and Vice Principal Sue Boyd-Graham in bringing this vision to life. Congratulations to everyone involved in this important milestone for Ashwood School.



ANNUAL ASHWOOD DISTRICT PRINCIPAL'S LUNCH - BRINGING TOGETHER LOCAL EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP

The Annual Principal's Lunch, hosted by Matt Fregon MP at Miss Ash in High Street, once again brought together local school principals to discuss key issues, share ideas and celebrate the leadership that drives Ashwood District's schools, some of the best state schools in Victoria.

The lunch provides an informal opportunity for principals to come together outside the school environment. This year's gathering focused on educational priorities, student well-being, and upcoming government initiatives, reinforcing the commitment to providing high-quality education.

ESSEX HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL MUSICAL SHOWCASE

In November, Matt Fregon MP attended the annual musical Showcase performance by the students of Essex Heights Primary School! Well done to the student performers who did an amazing job, and the parents and teachers involved in organising this event.



ASHWOOD SCHOOL STUDENT ARTISTS

Matt Fregon MP would like to extend a special thank you to the talented students of Ashwood School for their wonderful contributions to the 2024 Ashwood District Christmas card designs.

This was the second year student artists from Ashwood School submitted their artwork. The creativity, imagination, and festive spirit that filled each design truly brought joy and Christmas cheer to our community.



PARKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL GARDEN REJUVENATION!

Thanks to the Victorian School Gardens Program, young learners from Parkhill Primary School had the opportunity to explore sustainable gardening, discover the importance of healthy ecosystems, and engage in interactive planting activities. Matt Fregon MP joined the students in getting their hands dirty and rejuvenating the garden beds at Parkhill Primary School as part of the VSGP's free garden incursion program, bringing hands-on environmental education to local students.

A big thank you to the dedicated teachers and staff at Parkhill Primary School for creating such a meaningful experience, and to James McLennan from VSGP for sharing his expertise — teaching students how to plan, plant, and protect our environment for the future.



HUNTINGTOWER ANZAC DAY CEREMONY

On ANZAC Day eve, Matt Fregon MP had the honour of attending Huntingtower School's Special ANZAC Day Assembly. The student leadership team ran the assembly brilliantly alongside musical performances from the school's ensembles. Matt Fregon MP was proud to deliver a speech commemorating the courage, sacrifice, and enduring legacy of our service people. Let's not forget.



HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP Q&A

Matt Fregon MP had the privilege of joining the Grade 5 students at Holy Family Primary School earlier this year to talk about leadership and how we can all be leaders. He was truly impressed by their insightful questions on leadership, Parliament, law-making, and our state. Their curiosity and the level of engagement they brought to the discussion were exceptional. It's clear these young minds are already thinking critically about the world around them and have the potential to make a real difference in the future.



MOUNT WAVERLEY SECONDARY COLLEGE 60 YEARS ANNIVERSARY

Last year, Mount Waverley Secondary College celebrated an incredible milestone—60 years of excellence in education! For six decades, the school has played a vital role in shaping young minds and contributing to our local community.

Matt Fregon MP was honoured to be part of the celebrations, joining students, teachers, and alumni to mark this special occasion. It was a fantastic event that showcased the school's rich history and strong community spirit.

Congratulations to Mount Waverley Secondary College on this achievement—here's to many more years of success!



NORM GIBBS AWARDS 2024

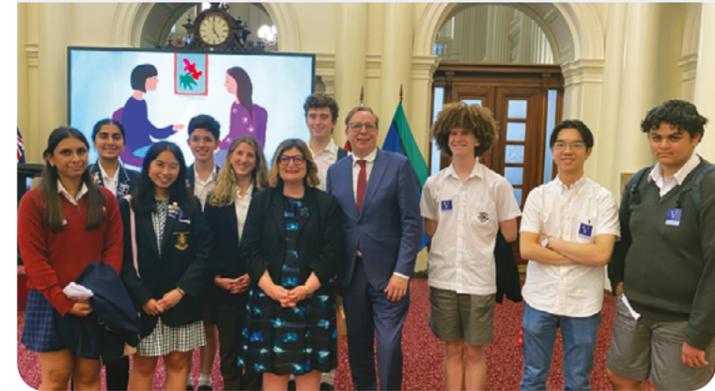
In late 2024, Matt Fregon MP had the pleasure of attending many of our wonderful local schools to present students with the Norm Gibbs Award. Norm Gibbs is the perfect example of someone who is always looking for ways to give back to his local community. Norm has spent his life volunteering with numerous community organisations, brightening the lives of so many in our community. The Norm Gibbs Award is awarded to one student from each school who embodies the values of Norm within their school community. Matt thoroughly enjoyed attending all of the ceremonies to speak about Norm and to present the award to the worthy recipients.

Congratulations to all the recipients of the 2024 Norm Gibbs Award, including: Christos Giakoumatos (Salesian College), Scarlett Palmer (Syndal South Primary School), Anique de Mel (Mount Waverley Primary School), Cecilia Younane (Holy Family Primary School), Alyssa Barnes (Glen Iris Primary School), Amelia Lee (Mount Waverley North Primary School), Max O'Reilly (Essex Heights Primary School), Harley Collett (Camberwell South Primary School), Navaeh Bodiatis (St Scholastica's Primary School), Julian Zsolt (Solway Primary School), Eloise Howe and Jordan Swansborough (Ashwood School), Ada Wilson-Phillips (Parkhill Primary School), Chloe Davies (Huntingtower School), Georgia Kaminis (Mount Waverley Secondary College), Noah Rostan (Ashwood High School).



YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE VISITS PARLIAMENT

To wrap up the 2024 Ashwood Youth Advisory program, the students visited Parliament to meet with Minister for Youth Natalie Suleyman MP and representatives from the Department of Education to discuss their policy ideas. Throughout the year, the committee met monthly to discuss issues that impact them as young people in Ashwood and beyond. The group narrowed down their focus to respectful relationship education given the epidemic of domestic violence in Australia. Drawing from their own experiences and perspectives, the group worked tirelessly to explore this issue, developing thoughtful recommendations on how education can play a key role in facilitating change. Their dedication and passion demonstrate the power of young voices in shaping a safer, more respectful future for all.



Free PT for Under 18s

The Victorian Budget 2025/26 will make public transport free for everyone under 18, everywhere in Victoria.

From 1 January 2026, hundreds of thousands of families will save up to \$755 a year per child. This is a massive investment to put money back in the pocket of local families.



Health

ASHWOOD WOMEN'S HEALTH FORUM

Last year, Matt Fregon MP co-hosted the inaugural Ashwood Women's Health Forum with John Berger MP and special guest, Kat Theophanous MP, the Parliamentary Secretary for Women's Health. The event had a fantastic turnout where attendees were able to hear from five speakers who are experts in the field of women's health and had the opportunity to ask them questions.

Professor Beverley Vollenhoven, a long-time clinician at Monash IVF, kicked off the presentations, addressing issues such as infertility, PCOS, eating disorders, and menopause. Emily Gang from '1800 My Options' and Fiona Sharkie, acting CEO of Women's Health East, followed, each providing valuable perspectives on women's health services and available resources. Rita Butera, CEO of Breast Screen Victoria, discussed her role in breast cancer screening, her experiences with Safe Steps Family Violence Response, and her contributions to esteemed health organisations, including Women's Health Victoria, Beyond Blue, and VicHealth. The final speaker, Dr Romi Goldschlager, a psychiatrist and PhD candidate at HER Centre Australia, shared her ground breaking research on biological treatments for anorexia nervosa, highlighting innovative therapies like Transcranial Brain Stimulation (TMS).

Attendees left with insights into services, tools and resources that empower women to take charge of their health. The forum served as an excellent opportunity for the community to come together to engage meaningfully and have open discussions regarding women's health topics.



FREE PADS AND TAMPONS FOR VICTORIANS

The Victorian Government is committed to improving access to essential health items in public spaces. In November 2024, stage one of the Free Pads and Tampons Program was launched, delivering on that commitment.

As part of this initiative, 50 free period product vending machines are being installed across metropolitan Melbourne, with 16 already up and running. Ashburton Library and Chadstone Shopping Centre have also been announced as two of the 90 locations across the state that will offer free products as part of this rollout.

This program builds on the successful delivery of free period products in all Victorian public schools and is another step toward making sure no one misses out on opportunities due to lack of access to basic necessities.

To learn more and find vending machine locations, visit: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/freepads-and-tampons



BLACKBURN PUBLIC SURGICAL CENTRE EXPANDS TO PROVIDE BETTER CARE

Thanks to significant investment and reform by the Allan Labor Government, the most urgent surgeries are being delivered faster in Victoria than in any other state or territory, ensuring people get the critical care they need, when they need it.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas was joined by Matt Fregon MP, Paul Hamer MP and John Mullahy MP who recently visited the Blackburn Public Surgical Centre established to slash surgery wait lists - to announce an additional two theatres are now open.

Taking the centre to a total of four theatres, the new spaces are providing further capacity to deliver more surgery and help cut surgery wait times.

The two new theatres at Blackburn will help dedicated staff to undertake procedures across a range of specialties including same day endoscopy, orthopaedics, plastics, gynaecology, urology, and ear, nose and throat.

It comes as the Labor Government also announces two new grants programs as part of ongoing, long-term reform to how planned surgery is delivered in Victoria.

More than \$4 million has been delivered to 16 health services to expand access to same day surgery - helping reduce wait times by allowing for a higher volume of care without compromising quality and safety.

This expansion is a significant investment in accessible, high-quality healthcare for the community.



EXPANDED PHARMACY PILOT — OFFERING FREE CONSULTATIONS AND TREATMENT FOR MORE COMMON HEALTH CONDITIONS

Big news in the Victorian Budget — The Allan Labor Government is making the successful Community Pharmacy Pilot permanent and expanding it even further. This means Victorians can skip the GP appointment and head straight to their local pharmacy for fast, accessible healthcare and treatment. The program currently supports services like pill repeats, UTI treatment and travel vaccines.

Soon, it will expand to cover asthma, diabetes, ear infections, allergies, smoking cessation, minor wound care and more. Best of all, the Victorian Government is covering the consultation fees — making these services free for everyone across the state.

A big thank you to our local pharmacists for the work they do every day supporting our community. For more information, visit: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/community-pharmacist-pilot



Transport

Free PT for Seniors on Weekends

The Allan Labor Government is focused on what matters most — easing the cost of living by reducing the cost of public transport.

The Victorian Budget 2025/26 will make public transport free on the weekend for Seniors Card holders, state wide.

It's a change that means seniors can visit family, enjoy a day out with the grand kids, or experience all our state has to offer — without the extra expense.

From 1 January 2026, more than 650,000 seniors who use public transport will be able to catch a train, tram or bus for free on weekends — saving seniors who travel more than \$360 per year.

PROGRESS ON THE SUBURBAN RAIL LOOP EAST

At the end of March, Matt Fregon MP joined Minister for Planning and Suburban Rail Loop, Harriet Shing MP, along with colleagues John Berger MP and Sonja Terpstra MP, for a tour of the Burwood SRL East site. It was a great opportunity to see first hand the progress of this transformative project, which will deliver more transport options, more housing, and more jobs for our community.

The SRL station will deliver a direct train connection to Deakin University for the first time and open up destinations across Melbourne for Burwood locals.

Exciting progress has been made in Burwood as preparations continue for the launch of tunnel boring machines (TBMs). Located at the corner of Burwood Highway and McComas Grove, this site will play a key role in building the tunnels for SRL East. TBMs will be launched from here toward Glen Waverley. Construction of the site compound began in June 2023, marking a major milestone for the project in Burwood.

Nearby, work is also progressing at the Network Support Facility at the corner of Highbury Road and Sinnott Street. Works began in July 2024 and will be complete by the end of the year. Installation of underground conduits—pipes that protect important cables and services—is continuing in Sinnott Street and will run through to late 2025. Utility relocation has also been underway along Sinnott Street and Highbury Road to support future works.

For more information, visit: <https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au>



THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK ON SRL BURWOOD

Matt Fregon MP would like to thank everyone who engaged with the feedback process on the draft structure plans for the neighbourhoods around the new SRL Burwood station. These contributions help shape our community now and into the future. Overall, the Suburban Rail Loop Authority received more than 800 responses and 93 local submissions, about housing, density, building heights, zoning changes, green space and more.

Housing

A FAIRER GO FOR RENTERS

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams joined Member for Ashwood District Matt Fregon MP and local renters Taylor and Aaron to announce that renters will soon have an easier way to resolve landlord disputes.

Launching last month, Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria (RDRV) is a new dispute resolution service to help settle disputes over bonds, compensation, repairs, and excessive rents.

Victorians can access RDRV by phone, online, or in person. Experts are available to:

- provide information
- contact the other party to seek a resolution
- and support both renters and rental providers throughout the process.

The free service offers a faster, more accessible pathway to a fair outcome, and is available to anyone experiencing a rental dispute.

It provides an alternative to more costly options, such as Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) hearings. **Anyone involved in a residential tenancy dispute can access the free service by calling 1300 017 378 or visit the RDRV website to learn how they can help.**



PLANNING FOR MORE HOMES CLOSE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT, JOBS AND SERVICES AROUND 60 ACTIVITY CENTRES ACROSS MELBOURNE

The Victorian Labor Government wants to provide all Victorians with the choice of a well-designed home, at an affordable price, in a place where they can thrive. That's why we're planning for more homes in and around 60 train and tram zones across Melbourne, encouraging more than 300,000 new homes to be built around train and tram lines, jobs and services by 2051. In the Ashwood District and surrounding suburbs, this means more housing opportunities in areas like Malvern East, Darling, Gardiner, Tooronga, Holmesglen and Ashburton — neighbourhoods with strong public transport links and local amenities that are already great places to live, work and raise a family.

The Department of Transport and Planning is engaging with communities on the next 25 activity centres. These centres are grouped together for consultation, making it easier for you to get involved and share your views.

Many have already shared their views in Phase 1 of Activity Centre Consultation and have signed up to be a part of the Community Reference Groups.

The Department of Transport and Planning will engage on the final 25 activity centres, which includes Ashburton, later this year.

Our Community

TEMPORARY OFFICE RELOCATION

As you may already be aware, Matt Fregon MP's office has been relocated to 55 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne temporarily. Unfortunately, the office has experienced significant flooding damage, meaning the team is unable to work in the space until repairs are completed. It is business as usual from the temporary office, so please feel free to give the office a call if you require any assistance with State Government matters. Matt Fregon MP and the team will keep the community informed of when we are returning to the Ashburton location.

ANZAC DAY 2025

On ANZAC Day, Matt Fregon MP had the honour of attending the Glen Waverley ANZAC Day Dawn Service to pay his respects to the courageous men and women who have served, and continue to serve, our nation in times of war, conflict, and peacekeeping. The ceremony was a moving occasion, drawing a large crowd of local residents, veterans, families, and young people who gathered in the early morning to remember the sacrifices made by the ANZACs. It was a powerful reminder of the strength, courage, and mateship that define our national character.



SYNDAL COMBINED PROBUS CLUB AGM

Matt Fregon had the pleasure of joining the Syndal Combined Probus Club at their Annual General Meeting. During the event, he extended his best wishes to the incoming committee for a successful year ahead and expressed his continued eagerness to support local community groups in any way possible. A special thank you was also given to the outgoing committee for their dedication and hard work throughout their term. The ongoing success of community organisations like Syndal Combined Probus is made possible by the tireless efforts of its volunteers. Matt looks forward to working with the new committee to further strengthen the club's impact in the community.



GREAT NEWS - RUTH IS BACK!

For those who've been following the story - Matt Fregon is excited to share that Ruth, the much-loved Parkhill Primary School crossing supervisor, is back at her crossing! Ruth has been a familiar and friendly face in our community for 29 years, helping keep families safe on their way to and from school. After some recent uncertainty about her role, Monash City Council has confirmed that Ruth will continue doing what she loves. A big thank you to everyone who showed their support—through letters, messages, and community spirit. We're so glad to say, "Welcome back, Ruth! See you at the crossing!"



ASHBURTON COMMUNITY FESTIVAL CELEBRATES ITS SECOND YEAR

The Ashburton Community Festival returned for its second year on February 23rd 2025, bringing together locals for a fantastic day of entertainment, food, and community connection. Matt Fregon MP and Minister for Small Business Natalie Suleyman attended the event, showing their support for the vibrant Ashburton community. A huge thank you to Ashburton Village Traders Association for organising the festival, with special recognition to President Bob Stensholt, Event Coordinator Alex Hume, and Karlene Coker for their dedication and hard work in making the event such a success. Events like these help bring our community together and celebrate the diverse and welcoming spirit of Ashburton.



WAVERLEY WEST SCOUTS CELEBRATE 60 YEAR MILESTONE!

Last year, Matt Fregon MP joined the 1st West Waverley Scouts to commemorate their 60th Anniversary. The celebration drew over 200 attendees, ranging in age from 5 to over 80, marking a wonderful tribute to the spirit and achievements of the scouting group. The event featured a range of activities and displays that highlighted the rich history and significant contributions of the scouts over the past sixty years. Participants took the opportunity to reminisce about their experiences, sharing stories that underscored the positive impact the scouts have had on their lives and within the community. The 60th Anniversary celebration served as a reminder of the value of community, friendship, and the essential life skills that scouting imparts to young people. It also recognised the dedication of the leaders and volunteers whose commitment has played a crucial role in shaping the experiences of young scouts.



PROGRAM AND CAPACITY BUILDING COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

Matt Fregon MP recently took part in the Program and Capacity Building Consortium discussions, an important gathering of local organisations working to support the community. This Consortium brought together incredible groups representative from The Craig Family Centre, Power Neighbourhood House, Alamein Neighbourhood & Learning Centre, Eastern Community Legal Centre, Uniting, Good Shepherd, St Vincent de Paul Society, and many others. These organisations play a critical role in supporting the community by addressing issues like mental health, financial hardship, homelessness, and more. The discussions were also joined by Dr. Carina Garland's office and local councillors, further strengthening the collaboration between community organisations and local government. These conversations are crucial in helping to build stronger connections, break down barriers, and ensure that support is effectively reaching those who need it most.



EXPLORING THE NEW COMMUNITY SPACE AT MOUNT WAVERLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

It was an exciting occasion as members of the community gathered to check out the new bi-fold doors and alfresco community space at the Mount Waverley Community Centre, made possible by the Living Local Fund grant. Matt Fregon MP alongside Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkenny MP were thrilled to attend. They were fortunate to have front-row seats to the 'Golden Age' group's weekly table tennis competition, witnessing first-hand the joy and enthusiasm of participants enjoying the refurbished space. Sonya Kilkenny MP even joined in on the fun of the table tennis competition.



LAUNCH OF YOUTH NAV

In September Matt Fregon MP was present at Parliament House for the launch of the new online website for young people, Youth Nav! This initiative has been led by the Minister for Youth Natalie Suleyman MP, and has been over 12 months in the making. It was co-designed with young leaders from the Victorian Youth Congress, a diverse group of impressive young people aged 12-25, as well as the Centre for Multicultural Youth and Youth Affairs Council Australia. The YouthNav site is a one-stop-shop for information on topics relevant to young people such as resume writing, moving out of home, managing money and getting around town. It is part of the existing broader YouthCentral online hub, which provides young people with other information on study, rights and safety and general news for young people. You can access YouthNav at www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/youthnav.




Australian Breastfeeding Association

Looking to meet other local mums and access support to meet your parenting goals? The Australian Breastfeeding Association has been supporting mums to breastfeed for 60 years. Boroondara Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 10am to midday in the Craig Family Centre, 7 Samarinda Ave, Ashburton. Meetings are informal, involving a group discussion on parenting topics (such as: sleep, self care, the first 3 months) followed by morning tea. All are welcome to drop by and share a chat over a cup of tea/coffee. No bookings necessary. Trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors are available to answer any breastfeeding questions. We look forward to welcoming you to our next meeting. For more information please email: aba.boroondara@gmail.com Facebook.com/ABAmelbourneeast <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/group/boroondara-group-vic> 24/7 Breastfeeding Helpline: 1800 686 268

Our Multicultural Community

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

The Mid-Autumn Festival, celebrated on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month, marks the time when the moon is at its fullest and most beautiful. It is a festival that brings people together to appreciate the harvest and enjoy the beauty of the full moon.

Last year (2024), Matt had the pleasure of joining two wonderful cultural associations, Vietnamese Senior Cultural Association (VSCA), the Golden Flower Chinese Friendship Association (GFCFA) and Chinese Professionals Club of Australia (CPCA) to celebrate this special occasion with our local community.

While those groups celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival with unique traditions, the spirit of the festival remains one of unity and appreciation for culture. The Vietnamese community celebrates with songs and vibrant processions, where participants carry brightly coloured lanterns and sing together as they tour in the Ashburton community centre. Meanwhile, the Chinese community holds festive lantern displays, mooncake sharing, and gatherings with loved ones.

It was truly heart-warming to see the next generation from our communities actively participating in preserving these rich traditions. The involvement of young people ensures that these cultural celebrations continue to thrive in our community for years to come.



Vietnamese Senior Cultural Association (VSCA)



Golden Flower Chinese Friendship Association (GFCFA)



Chinese Professionals Club of Australia (CPCA)

ASHWOOD DISTRICT DIWALI CELEBRATION

Diwali, also known as the “Festival of Lights,” holds distinct meanings and traditions across cultures, including Jainism, Sikhism, and Hinduism. In our community, it has become a time to celebrate unity, hope, and the power of light.

Last year, Matt Fregon MP, together with the Ashwood and Glen Waverley offices, proudly and jointly celebrated Diwali together for the third year. The celebration brought together nearly 20 local community groups, representing diverse cultures including Jain, Tamil, Sikh, Nepalese, Fijian and Sri Lankan heritage. It was a vibrant display of unity, with communities coming together to share, celebrate, and honour their unique traditions. Thank you to Shavan’s Indian Restaurant in Pinewood Shopping Village for their hospitality.



Through this celebration, Matt Fregon’s office continues to strengthen understanding, respect, and collaboration among the region’s diverse cultural groups.

The event provides a wonderful opportunity to connect, share, and appreciate the rich diversity that makes our community unique. Looking ahead, these celebrations will remain an integral part of Ashwood’s cultural fabric, ensuring that the spirit of unity and respect continues to thrive.



MONASH AUSTRALIA DAY CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY

Matt Fregon MP was honoured to welcome our newest Australian citizens at the City of Monash’s Australia Day ceremony. Becoming a citizen is a significant milestone, marking a commitment to Australia’s values of diversity, inclusivity, and community spirit. It was a joy to witness so many people from different backgrounds embrace this new chapter, and we wish them all the best as they make Australia their home.

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

2024 marked a significant milestone for two local groups—Victorian Tamil Senior Citizens Benevolent Society and Chinese Seniors Education & Skill Development Association – as they celebrated their 10th anniversaries. Matt Fregon MP was honoured to be invited to both groups to witness these wonderful moments.

These organisations have been integral in supporting seniors, creating spaces where they can connect, participate in activities, and celebrate their cultures. Offering workshops, group activities, traditional performances, and cultural festivals, these foster a strong sense of belonging among seniors in the community.

Their dedication over the past decade is an inspiring reminder of how organisations like these contribute to our society’s well-being. It’s truly heart-warming to know that these groups will continue to enrich the lives of seniors and inspire future generations.



KNITTED SUNFLOWERS IN ASHBURTON



If you’ve been passing by Joe Frank on High Street, you might have noticed the lovely knitted sunflowers brightening up the space. These cheerful, handmade flowers are bringing smiles to everyone—whether they’re walking by or grabbing a coffee. The staff at the café mentioned they were made by someone in our community, who so far remains anonymous!

It’s a simple, thoughtful gesture that’s brought a little extra warmth and happiness to our neighbourhood. A big thank you to the person behind this beautiful display for spreading such a lovely touch of creativity and community spirit to Ashburton.



FAROS GREEK SENIOR CLUB CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP PARTY

The Faros Greek Senior Club wrapped up the year with a festive Christmas break-up party, bringing together members for a celebration filled with food, music, and community spirit. The event was a fantastic opportunity for attendees to connect, share stories, and reflect on the year gone by.

Matt was pleased to join the celebrations and provide the raffle prizes—one of the highlights of the party, as excitement built around the lucky winners. The event showcased the club’s strong sense of togetherness, and Matt looks forward to many more wonderful gatherings in 2025!



KOREATOWN AND KOREA FESTIVAL OPENING

As part of the Month of Korea, Matt was honoured to attend two significant events celebrating Korean culture, heritage, and community spirit.

On 17 May 2025, he joined community members and Minister for Small Business Natalie Suleyman at the official opening of Koreatown in Melbourne. The following Saturday, Matt had the honour of representing the Minister for Multicultural Affairs Ingrid Stitt at the Korea Festival — a vibrant and captivating celebration of Korean music, cuisine, and traditions.



Both events were hosted by the Consulate-General of the Republic of Korea in Melbourne. This year, the festival organisers formed a strong partnership with Netflix’s Squid Game team. Matt enthusiastically participated in the Squid Game experience alongside other attendees and, lucky for him, he made it through without getting “eliminated”!

Ashwood District, home to a growing Korean-Australian community, shares a meaningful and vibrant connection with Korea. These celebrations highlight the cultural diversity that enriches our district and underscore the importance of fostering strong international friendships.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Matt was proud to support a number of clubs within the Ashwood District in 2024, including:

- The Burwood Tennis Club
- Waverley Hockey Club
- The Ashburton Willows Cricket Club
- The Monash Demons Football Club
- The Waverley Blues Football and Netball Club
- Saint Mary's Salesian Football Club
- Ashy Red Backs
- The Ashburton Bowls Club
- The Mount Waverley Bowling Club
- Waverley Basketball Club
- Australian Youth Band
- Monash Concert Band

If you have a local group that is looking for support, please reach out to Matt Fregon and the Ashwood District Office.

MOUNT WAVERLEY RESERVE UPDATE

Exciting times at Mount Waverley Reserve. Matt recently visited the site to see progress on the Reserve's Masterplan and is pleased to report on the developments. Work is well underway on the building of new cricket nets, and construction of the new two-storey pavilion, at which Matt had the honour of participating in the sod turn last year, is almost complete. The new pavilion will better accommodate the needs of existing users, including the Waverley Blues Football/Netball Club and Mount Waverley Cricket Club.

The oval redevelopment has left the reserve grass in mint condition, and the goalposts now have nets behind them for the safety and convenience of everyone around. Matt is also happy to note the completion of the upgraded children's play space at the Reserve. New play equipment now accompanies some of the much loved features of the play space, including the dinosaur footprints. Families will also be able to enjoy the new walking track around the ground to access the play space, as well as a sheltered area and public barbecue.

The Masterplan for the Mount Waverley Reserve is funded as a joint venture by the Local, State and Federal Governments. The Allan Labor Government committed \$2 million to the Masterplan and early works, and the project has also benefited from generous community funding from the Federal Government and Monash City Council



THE WILL TAYLOR CHARITY CUP

The inaugural Will Taylor Charity Cup was a heartfelt day for the community to come together to honour, celebrate and remember the life and legacy of Will Taylor. Held in early February, Matt Fregon MP was honoured to attend, joining Will's family, friends, and community members to pay tribute to his memory and acknowledge the positive impact he had on those around him. The Will Taylor Cup serves as a meaningful tribute to Will's passion for sport and his deep connection to the community through Ashburton United SC and Mount Waverley City SC.

The event not only celebrated Will's love for the game but also raised crucial funds for TeamSports4All, who help to support children from financially disadvantaged backgrounds so they too can experience the joy and benefits of playing team sport, just like Will.

Thank you to Nick, Denise and Anthony Taylor for allowing the community to join you in honouring Will's memory.



ASHBURTON BOWLS CLUB IS READY FOR SUMMER

In January, Matt Fregon MP had the honour of opening the new shade structures at Ashburton Bowls Club. Nine new umbrellas are now installed, ensuring there is adequate shade from the sun and rain for bowlers and spectators alongside the main green. This is perfect particularly given the unpredictability of Melbourne weather!

A huge thank you to Club President Liz Kortum, Doug and club members for their dedication to this project, made possible with a \$48,000 investment from the Victorian Government's Community Support Fund. Ashburton Bowls Club is a fantastic local sports club, providing a place for members of the community to socialise while keeping active. These new shades will only add to the great facilities and atmosphere of the club. If you are keen to participate or find out more about this club, visit their website <https://ashburtonbowls.com/home>



MONASH DEMONS BIG FREEZE RAISES OVER \$5,000 FOR MND

The Monash Demons Football Club took the plunge for a great cause last month at their inaugural Big Freeze event at Jordan Reserve, raising over \$5,000 for FightMND.

Organised by local legend Peter Willoughby, the day saw players, volunteers, and supporters – including Monash Mayor Paul Klisaris and local MP Matt Fregon – brave the cold in support of MND research.

A huge congratulations to Peter, the Demons, and everyone who helped make the day such a success!



MOUNT WAVERLEY BOWLING CLUB CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Back in September, the Mount Waverley Bowling Club celebrated their 60th anniversary, marking six decades of bringing the community together through sport and friendship.

Since its establishment in 1964, the club has been a cornerstone of the local area, providing a welcoming space for people of all ages to stay active, enjoy a friendly game of bowls, and foster strong social connections. The club marked the momentous occasion with a masterclass from former World Champion, Steve Glasson OAM, followed by a celebratory dinner.

The Mount Waverley Bowling Club continues to be an integral part of the local community, welcoming new members and ensuring the spirit of the game lives on for future generations.

If you are interested in joining the club, please visit their website at www.mwbc.com.au.

Here's to many more years of success!



BENWERRIN KINDERGARTEN VISIT

In June, Matt Fregon MP was joined by the Minister for Children, Lizzie Blandthorn and Councillor Daniel Griffiths for a visit to Benwerrin Kindergarten in Burwood East.

Earlier this year, Benwerrin Kindergarten received a Building Blocks Grant under the Inclusion stream. This funding will support important upgrades that Benwerrin can use to upgrade their facilities and to purchase equipment to provide safe and more inclusive environments for children of all abilities.



ASHWOOD MEMORIAL KINDERGARTEN OPENING

Matt Fregon MP had the honour of opening the newly refurbished Ashwood Memorial Kindergarten alongside the Minister for Children, Lizzie Blandthorn and the Mayor of Monash City Council, Paul Klisaris.

Thanks to \$1.59 million in funding from the Victorian Government's Building Blocks Program, Monash City Council has been able to upgrade and expand the kindergarten to include an additional 33 place kindergarten room.

This project is a testament to the Victorian Government's ongoing commitment to improving access to quality early childhood education in our community.



Environment

ELECTRIFY BOROONDARA EXPO SUCCESS!

The Electrify Boroondara Expo 2024 saw another fantastic turnout, with over 45 stallholders showcasing innovative sustainable design solutions. EB Chair Mark Cubit kicked off the event with a panel discussion and Q&A session where Matt Fregon MP had the pleasure of joining Minister for Energy, Climate Action and the SEC Lily D'Ambrosio, Dr. Monique Ryan, John Pesutto, and City of Boroondara CEO Phillip Storer on the panel to discuss the gradual transition to energy-efficient households.

Over 1,100 visitors took part in the event, which included valuable insight into induction cooking, electric vehicles, solar systems, heating and cooling, insulation and draught proofing.

A special thank you goes to event coordinators Sophie Torney, Carolyn Ingvarson, and the entire EB Team for their hard work in making the event a success.

Save the date! This year's expo will be bigger and better than ever, and is scheduled for October 12th 2025.

For more info on Electrify Boroondara's work and their upcoming events, visit <https://electrifyboroondara.org>



POWERING UP BOROONDARA: VISITING ELECTRIFY BOROONDARA HOMES WITH MINISTER LILY D'AMBROSIO

In March, Matt Fregon MP and Minister for Energy, Climate Action and the SEC, Lily D'Ambrosio were welcomed into the homes of two Electrify Boroondara members to discuss their journeys with solar energy. Russell and Jenny, in their own homes respectively, have been transitioning from gas to electricity for a more sustainable future.

Matt thoroughly appreciated seeing first-hand how these households are reducing emissions, cutting energy costs, and embracing energy-efficient technology, thanks to initiatives from the Allan Labor Government.



CELEBRATING FOUR YEARS OF THE BACK 2 NETTLETON FRIENDS GROUP

Matt Fregon had the pleasure of joining the Back 2 Nettleton Friends Group for a morning tea to celebrate four years of their outstanding work in March.

This dedicated group of volunteers has been instrumental in maintaining and restoring Back Creek and Nettleton Park, making a lasting impact on the local environment and community. Their ongoing commitment continues to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of these vital spaces.



ASHBURTON CREEK BIODIVERSITY CREW

ACBC are a fantastic local community group that work to sustain the old Ashburton Creek Reserve (North of High St from the Alamein train line to Ferndale Park). They are a subgroup of the KooyongKoot Alliance.

The group meets every Wednesday at 8:30am to undertake weeding and revegetation to care for this local green space. Through doing so, the group aims to encourage beneficial small birds to return to these suburbs by providing them with appropriate vegetation to thrive from.

For more information and to join this great group, call Graham on 0407 046 358 or email kooyongkootalliance@gmail.com

Where to see our work
We operate along the former Ashburton Creek, where it now flows underground beneath Ferndale Trail. Listen for it after a rainy day - there are a number of raised vents where you can still hear it flowing underground! Our area currently extends from Ferndale Trail at the park entrance on Ferndale Road to the area below Summerhill Park Kindergarten.

The ACBC is part of the KooyongKoot Alliance (KKA): an independent, incorporated, not-for-profit, registered charity made up of over 20 friends groups working in the Gardiner Creek (KooyongKoot) catchment.

Get in touch
Email us to tell us what you like or get involved: kooyongkootalliance@gmail.com

Find us for more information: kka.org.au

\$100 Power Saving Bonus for eligible Victorian Concession Card Households

With a \$50 million investment, the Government is providing real cost of living help to eligible pensioners and concession card holders with a \$100 Power Saving Bonus.

The one-off \$100 payment will be available **from August**, in time for winter energy bills.

Households with an eligible concession card will be able to apply by visiting the Victorian Energy Compare website.

If you require assistance with processing an application, please contact Matt Fregon's office from August for assistance or call into the office with your latest electricity bill in person.

FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK ANNUAL PLANTING EVENT

In May, Matt Fregon MP and his son Sam rolled up their sleeves and joined the Friends of Damper Creek for their Annual Planting Day.

With blue skies above and fresh air all around, it was the perfect chance to get closer to nature, share ideas, and lend a hand to the amazing locals who care for this beautiful spot.

A great day out and we're already looking forward to the next one!



SECOND ROUND OF GREEN LINKS PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

Minister Harriet Shing joined Member for Ashwood Matt Fregon MP at Scotchmans Creek Reserve to announce the opening of the second round of the \$10 million Green Links Grants Program.

Green Links funds revegetation projects along urban rivers and creeks, enhancing biodiversity and providing Victorians with more beautiful and sustainable environments to enjoy. Harriet and Matt got to make this announcement with members of the Friends of Scotchmans Creek and Valley Reserve, including President Sally Walker.

The Friends of Scotchmans Creek and Valley Reserve group do amazing work to maintain and restore green spaces for the Ashwood Community, so that everyone has access to natural spaces for recreation and relaxation.



COMMUNITY RECIPE

Crustless Quiche - by Sue Hollingworth

Ingredients

- 1tbs butter
- 1 onion diced
- 6 eggs whisked
- ¾ cup self-raising flour
- 1 cup / 250 mls thickened cream
- 1 cup / 250 mls milk
- 1 cup ham or chopped bacon
- ½ capsicum seeded and chopped
- ½ cup shredded tasty cheese
- 1tsp wholegrain mustard
- 1tbs chopped flat leaf parsley

Instructions

1. Preheat oven 180 degrees. Grease a 29cm pie dish.
2. Melt butter in a frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook stirring for 5 minutes or until the onion softens. Transfer the onion to a bowl.
3. Add the egg, flour, cream, milk, ham or bacon, capsicum, cheese, mustard and parsley stir until just combined.
4. Pour egg mixture into the prepared dish and place on a baking tray. Bake for 30 minutes or until filling is just set.
5. Set aside for 5 minutes to cool before serving.



JOHN BERGER MP FOR ALL OF US

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN MELBOURNE

Albert Park • Ashwood • Bentleigh • Brighton • Caulfield • Hawthorn • Kew • Malvern • Oakleigh • Prahran • Sandringham

A message from John Berger MP

Following a historic election win for the federal Labor Government and the release of the 2025-26 State Budget, we have plenty to report on for the Ashwood electorate and its surroundings in the Eastern suburbs. From investment in education, housing developments and infrastructure upgrades, the Allan Labor Government is supporting Victorians today and for the future.

Consultations for the activity centres along the Glen Waverley line have already begun. Residents and business owners around Tooronga Station, Gardiner and Glen Iris Stations, Darling Station, East Malvern Station, and Holmesglen Stations have been invited to have their say on these upcoming planning changes. Residents and business owners in these areas have been invited to share their views to help shape these activity centres, so that the final activity centre can better reflect the needs and the priorities of the community, as well as the unique circumstances of each individual location. Consultations for the Riversdale and Willison Stations as well as the Ashburton Station Neighbourhood Activity Centres will begin later this year.

These planning changes will bring much needed housing supply to our suburbs, in areas which already have the public transport and road infrastructure to accommodate. This will help make it possible for young Victorians to buy a home near infrastructure, near jobs, near services, near shops, and near the areas where they grew up.

In other housing news, construction is set to begin later this year on a new development in Glen Iris which received fast tracked approval from the Minister for Planning last year through the Development Facilitation Program due to the quality of its planning and due to ten percent of the dwellings being affordable housing. The development is across two sites: one five storey building with a Woolworths on the ground floor at 173 Burke Road in Glen Iris, and an adjacent three storey building at 28 Hope Street. In total, this development will deliver a new supermarket and sixty homes along the Route 72 tram line and near Glen Iris Station. Construction is expected to be complete by 2027

It was great to see in May's State Budget that Malvern Primary School is set to receive nearly half a million dollars from the Capital Works Fund to refurbish senior student facilities, including building a new toilet block. This is a much-needed upgrade for this school. Investing in, upgrading, refurbishing, and modernising our schools is an important part of our broader education investments. That is why the State Government has invested \$18.5 billion over the last eleven years in school infrastructure, making sure that all Victorian students can receive the education they deserve, wherever they live or whatever their circumstances might be.

The Allan Labor Government has also funded upgrades to local early childhood education facilities, including improvements to bathrooms and learning spaces at Early Years at Phoenix Park, which were completed earlier this year, and the construction of a new shaded play area at Sunnyside Kindergarten, set to be completed later this year.

For those who are regulars at Chadstone Shopping Centre, last year the State Government provided a \$100,000 grant to the City of Stonnington to build a raised pedestrian crossing from Stonnington Sports Centre to Chadstone Shopping Centre, an important road safety initiative. Additionally, earlier this year, the State Government announced that Chadstone Shopping Centre will be one of 90 locations across Victoria to soon offer free period products. This follows a successful trial across 30 venues and the state wide rollout of free period products in all Victorian public schools.

Works continue on upgrading the Hawthorn East Retarding Basin, increasing water storage capacity to ensure safe drainage and reduce flooding risk to surrounding homes.

The Allan Labor Government is supporting youth-led projects through Youth Fest 2025. Ashwood High School is the successful recipient of one such grant to run an inclusive arts event.

Other works set to be soon completed include the Glen Iris Wetlands Rehabilitation along Gardiners Creek (Kooyongkoot) which was funded last year through the State Government's Green Links program. This project comes as part of the broader Glen Iris Wetlands and Gardiners Creek Biodiversity Project. This will remove invasive species from the wetlands and promote a healthy and diverse ecosystem, while also delivering a new wildlife protection fence-benefiting both the local environment and local residents who frequent Glen Iris' green spaces.

There's always plenty happening across Melbourne's eastern suburbs — and whether it's education, housing, the environment, or other key issues, the Allan Labor Government is focused on delivering what matters most to the local community.



John Berger MP

Get in touch?

If we can assist you with State Government or community matters, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.



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