

A message from Michelle

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HIGGINS



Times are tough. Inflation, although coming down, remains high and its effects are being unequally felt. Young people, pensioners, mortgage holders, small business and low-to-middle income earners are being buffeted by the same economic headwinds that are sweeping the world.

The Budget we delivered had three main goals:

- 1. To provide targeted cost-of-living relief**
- 2. To lay the foundations for our future prosperity**
- 3. To put the budget on a more sustainable footing so that we can support the services Australians rightfully expect**

This budget will take the pressure off Australian households without adding to inflation. In fact, treasury forecasts that these measures will help bring inflation down. Whether it be energy bill relief; incentives for households and small businesses to improve their energy efficiency; a stunning tripling of the bulk billing incentive for children, pensioners and concession card holders; repair of the safety net; expansion of skills training; more social and affordable housing or green hydrogen - there is something for everyone. When inflation falls, we all benefit.

Against this pro-inflationary backdrop, a steady tempo of reform by the Albanese Government over the past year has laid the groundwork for a more resilient, future-focused nation.

Our energy transformation - encompassing a National Electric Vehicle Strategy, tougher emissions for heavy industry and upgrades to transmission supported by policy certainty with a legislated 2030 emissions target - is driving change.

Designed to revitalise manufacturing and fuel our race to net zero, the \$15B National Reconstruction Fund will invest in priority areas with decisions made at arm's length from Government. No colour coded spreadsheets in sight.

Addressing our labour and skills shortages will help repair supply chains and drive down inflation. Our newly established Jobs and Skills Australia will help us cultivate in-demand skills, as will our visa reforms. Fee free TAFE in energy, cyber, IT, construction and the care/community sector is already opening up career pathways for young people, while a formal review of our universities is underway.

Housing is a top priority and we await constructive suggestions from the Greens to help get our ambitious build-out of social and affordable rental housing underway - the need is urgent.

Removing the barriers that prevent women from fully participating in our economy is front of mind. Our massive investment in cheaper childcare will soon deliver much-needed relief to families, helping mums get back to work and boosting our economic productivity.

After a decade of wilful wage suppression, we are getting wages moving by reforms that will help prevent exploitation while restoring transparency and parity to the workplace. Safer, respectful workplaces free from sexual harassment will help our people realise their potential.

Overseeing the public sector will be the watchful eye of the National Anti-Corruption Commission. Never again will this country see the machinations of Robodebt, nor ministerial power grabs.

Medicare is getting a long overdue update with reforms focused on strengthening general practice with incentives to bulk bill, cheaper medicines and team-based care to better deal with complex, chronic health problems.

This Budget is tailor made to the times. It will help our nation navigate through this inflationary phase while making it more resilient and competitive in the greening future that is ours to seize. Higgins made this possible. Warmest wishes to you all.

Sincerely,

Save the trees! Stay up to date with my e-newsletter: michelleforhiggins.com.au

Budget Announcements

This budget puts Australia on course for the first budget surplus in 15 years - resulting in a \$125.9B improvement over 5 years. Debt will be almost \$300B lower by the end of the medium term, saving \$83B in interest costs over the next 12 years.

Health and Aged Care

- A \$3.5B boost to triple bulk billing – the largest increase in the history of Medicare – benefitting **nearly 44,000 people in Higgins**, including children, pensioners and other concession card holders
- Halving the cost of medicines for millions of Australians through 60 day prescriptions, **benefiting over 33,600 people in Higgins**
- 15% increase in award wages for aged care workers (\$10K for registered nurses, \$7K for enrolled nurses) as part of a total package of \$14B into the aged care sector
- Building 58 urgent care bulk-billed clinics to make seeing a GP easier
- A further \$445M to promote team-based care with doctors, nurses and allied health professionals for patients with chronic illnesses
- Banning non-prescription vapes and increasing the tax on tobacco



Cost of Living Relief

- \$40/week pay rise for more than 2.7 million Australian workers, including **around 54,600 Victorians**, employed under a modern award
- \$1.5B energy bill subsidy package, helping 5 million households save up to \$500 on their power bills
- \$40/fortnight increase for those on JobSeeker, Youth Allowance and Austudy, including **around 8100 people in Higgins**
- Expanding the higher JobSeeker rate for over 60s to over 55s, providing a \$92/fortnight increase for **around 510 people in Higgins**
- Increasing Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 15% - the largest increase in over 30 years - benefitting around **6500 households in Higgins**
- Expanding the Parenting Payment for over 57,000 families with children aged 8-13, including **around 355 single parents in Higgins**
- An additional \$2B for more social and affordable rental housing

Energy Efficiency

- \$1.3B to establish a Household Energy Upgrades Fund, including low-cost loans for double-glazing, solar panels and modern appliances for **more than 110,000 households**
- \$36.7M to expand the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme to help individuals find more energy efficient homes when buying or renting
- \$300M to support upgrades to social housing - saving up to 33% on energy costs for around 60,000 properties upon completion
 - Expanding the Greenhouse Energy Minimum Standards to help save businesses and households over \$140-\$220 per year



Foreign Affairs

- Investing in all aspects of statecraft, including diplomacy, trade and foreign investment
- Increasing DFAT capability by over 350 staff across our network - the highest workforce levels in over a decade

Budget Announcements

Strategic Industry

- A further \$4B investment in our renewable energy superpower plan
- \$2B to make Australia leading Hydrogen producer
- \$500M to grow Australia's industrial capabilities
- \$3B in infrastructure funding
- A further 300,000 fee-free TAFE and VET places
- \$54.3M to help apprentices complete training, **including 3200 in Higgins**
- \$101M for quantum and AI industry development
- \$950M to safeguard our national assets, like Trove and the National Gallery of Australia
- 5 year funding terms for the ABC and SBS
- \$112.3M to bring international investment to the Australian Film Industry

Local services

- \$200M plan to fund local projects and partnerships
- \$1.9B for First Nations' health, housing, education, employment and other essential services
- \$250M for a new Central Australia package to improve safety and youth opportunity
- Tackling scams with \$10M for an SMS sender ID registry

Education

- \$72.4M to retain and recruit more early childhood educators, including:
 - \$34.4M for professional development
 - \$33.1M to help 6,000 existing educators complete their studies
 - \$4.8M to help 2,000 student teachers to complete their placements
- \$4M towards a Workload Reduction Fund to help teachers maximise their time
- \$127.3M to fund additional university places for STEM to support AUKUS

Women

- \$590M in funding for the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children
 - \$6.5M to harmonise sexual assault and consent laws across Australia and make the criminal justice system less traumatic for victim survivors

Small Business

- Increasing the instant asset write-off threshold by \$20,000, benefitting **over 1 million small business across Victoria**
- Introducing a \$310M Small Business Energy Incentive to provide an additional 20% tax deduction for expenses towards electrification and energy efficiency
- An automatic \$325 payment in electricity price relief for **236,000 small businesses across Victoria**
- \$392M to help entrepreneurs commercialise their ideas



A message from the Treasurer & Finance Minister

This is a responsible and practical Budget that will help take the pressure off Australian families. After a wasted decade under the Liberals and Nationals, the Albanese Labor Government is working to provide Australians with security, while setting our country up for the future.

This is a Budget that delivers for Australians. From targeted bill relief to help families and businesses with rising electricity bills, to supporting single parents, to the largest investment in bulk billing in the history of Medicare – the 2023 Budget lays the foundations for a stronger and more resilient economy.

That's what Labor Budgets are always about: tackling today's challenges and building for tomorrow. Making responsible and disciplined choices that put our economy and our society on stronger footing. We know that households and businesses are feeling the pressure. We know there is a lot of work to do. We're getting on with the job.



Upcoming Events

Scan the QR code to sign up to events



NDIS Forum

The NDIS is a proud Labor legacy dating back to the Gillard government. Come to my NDIS Forum with Minister for the NDIS Bill Shorten.



Scams Forum

Join me for a Scams Forum with Minister for Home Affairs Clare O'Neil.



Australian of the Year

As a nation, we must do more to reverse poor self-image and disordered eating. Join me at my upcoming forum with Australian of the Year, Taryn Brumfit.



Climate Forum

The energy transformation is underway. Join me for a Climate Forum with Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen.



What We've Done

Young People

Promise, potential & possibility.

Young people and their multiple futures are at the centre of our thinking in Government. We want to clear their runway of barriers. And that's important because our young people have something older people do not, an unparalleled lifetime potential. We are laying the groundwork for an era of prosperity built on future focused industries that our young people will inherit.

Climate & Energy

The pillars of our energy transformation are decarbonising transport; industry and scaling up renewables. Since passing the historic Climate Change Act, the Clean Energy Regulator reported a 50% increase in renewable energy investment between 2021 and 2022:

- Key investments: 6 massive offshore wind zones; \$47.5M in green hydrogen; \$65M in solar thermal.
- We are imposing tougher emissions controls on heavy industry.
- We cut taxes on electric vehicles (EVs) last year and have just released the National EV strategy to coordinate efforts with the states around charging infrastructure and lifting fuel efficiency standards to international best practice. Have your say at cleanercars.gov.au.
- We established a High Speed Rail Authority to reduce our dependency on aviation for intercity travel.

“We need communities to help us cut delays and support transmission so that we can turn wind into green electrons and greener dollars”

– Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP,
Speech to Parliament, 20th March 2023



- » 180,000 fee-free TAFE places
- » Social and affordable rental housing
- » Our energy transformation
- » Bringing manufacturing back to Australia
- » A formal review of our university sector through the University Accord
- » Protections at work to end wage suppression, wage secrecy and sexual harassment
- » Requiring workplaces to pay super on pay day
- » We have an Office of Youth & a Women's Economic Taskforce
- » Public reporting of the gender pay gap by business
- » Providing \$15.2M for Y Careers Agency to help young people get back to work

Environment

After a decade of neglect, the environment is back on the agenda. We released the State of the Environment Report which the previous government suppressed because its contents were so shocking. That report has prompted the following key reforms to protect our environment:

- Halting biodiversity loss and repairing nature
- Establishing an Environmental Protection Agency
- A Nature Positive Plan which aims to not only save biodiversity but repair it too
- A Circular Economy Ministerial Advisory Group to tackle waste management and improve recycling
- A Nature Repair Market to encourage business investment in repairing and restoring nature
- Protecting 30% of our land and waters by 2030

Families

- Our changes to paid parental leave will kick off on 1 July 2023. Starting at 20 weeks with 2 weeks of “use it or lose it” leave, it will increase to 26 weeks by 2023 giving families flexibility and choice.
- Our changes to family law, will improve information sharing for cases involving domestic violence; separation processes will become simpler and safer and we will introduce an obligation for an independent child lawyer to ensure that children's voices are heard.
- From 1 July, childcare will become cheaper for 4,400 families in Higgins. Calculate your savings at startingblocks.gov.au.

What We've Done

Health

- The health system is in crisis after a decade of neglect with no investment in workforce, systems, mental health or general practice. General practice is our highest priority, noting that Higgins has the lowest number of bulk billed clinics in Victoria.
- Key reforms in general practice include:
 - Digital investment
 - Tam based care with diverse health professionals;
 - A blended funding model to supplement fee for service
 - Workforce, training and support with a National Nurses & Midwife Service
 - Increasing the services that other health professionals like pharmacists and nurses can provide
- I contributed to the Long COVID parliamentary report and chaired a national first Clean Air Forum in Canberra because indoor air quality needs better standards.
- We are investing \$26M in LGBTQIA+ health and a national strategy.
- We are rolling out Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain clinics across Australia and addressing the bias women experience in the medical system.

“Supporting hospitals is important, but let’s not forget that primary-care is actually the backbone of our health system.”

– Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP,
Speech to Parliament, 23rd November 2022



Arts

- Our artists were left behind in the early years of the pandemic. Our National Cultural Policy, Revive, is a \$286M investment over 5 years that elevates our artists to grow their talent and our national identity.
- The soon to be established Creative Australia will be governed by the Australia Council, ensuring decisions are independent and not done by colour coded spreadsheets.
- Creative Australia will comprise: a new First Nations-led body, Music Australia, Writers Australia, and a Centre for Arts and Entertainment Workplaces to look after this workforce.

Housing

- Our Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) is a \$10B investment in 30,000 social and affordable rental homes over 5 years and into perpetuity. The States and peak housing groups are desperate for the HAFF to be passed but the Greens are resisting in the Senate. We have released \$575M to get started now.
- The HAFF is supported by the National Housing Accord, an agreement led by the Treasurer to build 20,000 homes per year for five years with the States and institutional investors.
- We have agreement with the States to strengthen renters' rights and limit rent hikes.
- We are expanding eligibility to the Home Guarantee Scheme by relaxing the definition of “couples” to include friends or family rather than married or de facto individuals.
- We are incentivising construction in the build-to-rent sector with tax breaks which will triple the number of homes built to 150,000 over a decade.

“We have a country that is driven by inequality and intergenerational injustice, which has led to an entire cohort of young Australians being locked out of the housing market. It shouldn't have to be this way.”

– Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP,
Speech to parliament, 27th March 2023

What We've Done

Modernising the Workplace

- On current projections, the gender pay gap will take 26 years to close- too long for our Government that is 53% women. That's why we are banning pay secrecy clauses, making businesses with 200 people or more report their gender pay gap and making gender equality an objective of the Fair Work Commission.
- We passed the historic Respect@Work legislation to stamp out sexual harassment and victimisation at work.

“Central to progress for women is them actually reclaiming the economic narrative, which for too long has been dominated by men—in boardrooms, in chairs, all over this country. We're pretty impatient, and we're not going to wait 26 years”

– Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP,
Speech to Parliament, 29th March 2023



Higgins Community Grant Panel at work

Integrity

- The Hon Justice Paul Brereton AM who led the Afghanistan inquiry, will head our National Anti-Corruption Commission. Five appointments have now been recommended.
 - We are implementing recommendations from the Bell inquiry into the secret ministries scandal of the former PM to strengthen transparency and trust in government.
 - \$44.3M for the Office of Australian Information Commissioner to investigate large privacy breaches, such as Optus and Medibank

Manufacturing & Innovation

- Our National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) is a \$15B investment in bringing manufacturing back to Australia. It is focused on renewable/low emissions energy, medical science, transport, agriculture-tech and defence.
- The NRF will support our race to net zero by investing in battery manufacturing, wind turbines, solar, quantum, emerging technologies plus research and development. It will be independently managed with no colour coded spreadsheets in sight.
- SSN-AUKUS will deliver at least 8 state of the art submarines, made with Australian know-how. This collaboration is a long-term investment in our technical and defence capability which will boost opportunities in AI, cyber, design, manufacturing, engineering, nuclear science, computing etc.
- Innovation relies on fostering talent from the early years, school, higher Ed/TAFE to business and industry. We are helping business with:
 - 180,000 fee free TAFE places in IT, cyber, engineering and the community/care sector.
 - Jobs and Skills Australia, a statutory body to identify areas of demand before they become crises.
 - A formal review of our universities (the “University Accord”) to answer the fundamental question, “What do we want from our universities?”
 - Visa and immigration reform to make our businesses competitive in the global war for talent. The Liberal voted against it. It is focused on these priority areas: renewable energy, medical science, transport, agriculture, and defence.

“Our task is to boost our self-reliance and give our people careers – not just jobs. I hope to see this evolve in my lifetime, but hope is not a strategy. The NRF Corporation is.”

– Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP,
Speech to Parliament, 13th February 2023



What I've Been Up To



Back2Nettleton are devoted to improving and protecting our natural habitat.



I hosted an Early years roundtable in Malvern to inform our national strategy.



I chaired a Clean Air Forum at Parliament House to push for indoor air quality standards.



Our Electric Vehicle forum was a hit. Thanks to BMW, BYD, Nissan, Hyundai, Origin and the EV council for their insights.



Check out Connect Local, a free program for over 65s in Glen Eira to address loneliness. Call 1800 929 022 to find out more.



The Women in Leadership Forum was an evening of thoughtful discussion, truth telling and fun with the students at St Cath's, Toorak.



We are developing Australia's first ever Climate and Health strategy which kicked off in Higgins.



Full houses at our Voice forums with Linda Burney and Penny Wong



With the team at Lifeline Prahran, they are looking for volunteers. Call (03) 9051 1400