



# A message from Michelle

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HIGGINS



When the Albanese Government came to office, renewable energy was 33%. It is now 40% and needs to accelerate to 82% by 2030. Our legislated emissions target is an investment signal, and the market is responding. After a decade of energy chaos and secrecy under the Liberals with 22 failed energy policies which overexposed Australia to fossil fuels, our energy transformation is finally underway.

We have **doubled renewable energy approvals** with a record 104 renewable energy projects in the pipeline. Our Environment Minister is the first in Australia's history to block a coal mine due to its impact on the Great Barrier Reef. ***The sooner we bring renewables online, the faster we retreat from fossil fuels.***

Our climate action is getting noticed. UNESCO delisted the Great Barrier Reef from being in danger; Australia has joined the **Climate Club**; our **Climate Pact** with the United States will enable greater sharing of resources and climate tech; our **climate diplomacy** is strengthening regional alliances. We have signed the **Global Methane Pledge** and joined the **Global Offshore Wind Alliance**.

## Climate action pillars

We have imposed **tough emission controls** on our heaviest emitters; tax breaks for electric vehicles and a **National Electric Vehicle Strategy** (with fuel standards coming) which have seen new car sales surge to 7%; funded **solar panels on apartments**; released **6 mega offshore wind zones** and pumped **\$40 billion into our energy transformation** including green hydrogen, solar thermal and geothermal. Storage will be delivered by **400 community batteries**, our **\$10 billion capacity reinvestment** scheme and getting **Snowy Hydro 2.0** back on track after its mismanagement by the Liberals.

## Climate action bottlenecks

With at least 5 coal fired power stations slated for closure by 2030, we need to overcome several bottlenecks to avoid energy disruption: **addressing our skills shortage, manufacturing goods and upgrading the energy grid.**

Go to [michelleforhiggins.com.au](https://michelleforhiggins.com.au) to sign up for my fortnightly e-newsletters on housing, environment, health and more ...

Our **\$20 billion Rewiring the Nation Fund** to upgrade the grid needs community backing. We are **mandating community consultation** because there is no transition without transmission.

Slogans are not part of our net zero transformation, but skills will be. We will need an extra 12,000 energy jobs by 2025. Australians have oversubscribed to our **Fee-Free TAFE program**. We have **10,000 subsidised energy apprenticeships** and aim to triple women in trade apprenticeships. Women in hi-viz should be the norm.

The world's net zero transition will run through our mining sector as outlined in our **National Critical Minerals Strategy**. Thanks to our **\$15 billion National Reconstruction Fund** we will be able to mine, refine and value-add to our minerals.

***Australian manufacturing and our defence program, powered by cheap green energy, will re-industrialise our nation and be the basis of our future prosperity.***

This is the intergenerational dividend I want to bequeath, along with **increasing housing supply**, reforms to aged care, the NDIS and healthcare, to put our Budget on a more sustainable footing.

The economic headwinds are moderating, with **inflation coming down**, the Albanese government delivering the **first budget surplus in 15 years**, the **highest job creation in Australia's history** with **record participation by women**, including **making the gender pay gap the lowest in Australia's history**, delivering the **National Anti-Corruption Commission**, and **lifting trade embargoes**. All of this achieved in just over a year should give us optimism for what we can do together.

We can submit to relentless negativity from the "industry of despair" or roll up our sleeves and get the job done – I choose the latter.

Thank you for your engagement with me. Warmest wishes till next time.

*Michelle*

**DR MICHELLE**



**ANANDA-RAJAH MP**

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HIGGINS

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# Higgins Update

## Housing

The cure to rising rents and housing affordability is supply. We have a broad housing agenda:

- An ambitious new national target to build **1.2 million** well-located new homes from 2024 through the **National Housing Accord**.
- A **\$3 billion New Homes Bonus** to incentivise States to build social and affordable homes.
- A **\$500 million Housing Support Program** for infrastructure like roads and sanitation for new homes.
- A **\$2 billion Social Housing Accelerator** to build social rental homes.
- Coordinating **nationally consistent rental rights** for the first time in Australia's history, covering wrongful eviction, limiting rent increases to once a year and minimum rental standards.
- Increasing the maximum rate of **Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 15%** for 1 million Australians.
- An additional **\$3 billion for more social and affordable rental housing** through the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation.
- Tax breaks to boost **build-to-rent**, increasing the number of homes by **150,000** according to the Property Council.
- Expanding eligibility for the **Home Guarantee Scheme**, which has helped more than **50,000** Australians buy homes.
- A **\$65.7 million** boost to homelessness services for the States.
- Developing a new **National Housing and Homelessness Plan**.
- A **\$1.7 billion** National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.
- **\$570 million** unlocked from the National Housing Infrastructure Facility, with houses already under construction.

**“If those higher rates of construction are sustained for a full decade, rents could fall by 8%, saving renters \$32 billion over those ten years.”**

- Brendan Coates,  
Grattan Institute, August 2023 about Labor's housing program

- Bringing forward the **Regional First Home Buyer Guarantee Scheme** which has helped get more than **6000** households into homes in just 12 months.
- Passed our **\$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund** to provide a secure pipeline of funding for housing into perpetuity, no matter the government.



*Bangs Street, Prahran Housing Development with the Premier, Prime Minister, and Minister Julie Collins*

Labor

## We're building, They're blocking.



✓	Climate Change Act; legislated emissions targets.	✗
✓	\$15 billion National Reconstruction Fund.	✗
✓	\$3 billion in energy price relief.	✗
✓	Coal and gas price caps.	✗
✓	A real increase to the minimum wage.	✗
✓	\$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund.	✗
✓	Secure jobs and better pay to help build financial security.	✗
✓	Tax breaks for electric vehicles.	✗
✓	Tough emission controls on our heaviest emitters.	✗
✓	\$20 billion to upgrade the electricity grid.	✗
✓	Sustainable super.	✗
✓	Increasing tax on fossil fuel companies.	✗

# Higgins Update

## Modernising the Workplace

- Nearly **500,000 jobs** have been created in just over a year, the fastest pace of growth under a new government in Australia's history.
- The gender pay gap has dropped to the **lowest level on record** under the Albanese Labor Government. We have made **gender equality** a goal, not an afterthought.
- Women's participation in the workforce is at an all-time high.
- We are implementing all 55 recommendations of the **Respect@Work** report, putting the onus on employers to eliminate sexual harassment and victimisation.
- We are **closing loopholes** that undermine pay and working conditions for casuals, gig workers and labour hire.
- Passed legislation to **publish gender pay gaps** of employers with 100 or more workers - transparency will help close the gender pay gap.
- Reforming the workplace relations system through the **Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill**. These reforms include making gender equality an objective of the Fair Work Act 2009, banning pay secrecy, reducing casualisation and making wage theft a crime.
- We have introduced **ten days of paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave**. Find out more on the Fair Work Ombudsman's website.
- Our **Women's Economic Equality Taskforce** provides advice to Government on how to support women's economic development.





**“The Albanese government is hardwiring gender equity into work and our culture by zeroing in on two things: pay equity and representation. This program is backed by record representation of women in our ranks. At 53%, it is the highest in Commonwealth history.”**

– Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP,  
Speech to Parliament, 22 November 2022

## Cost of living

- **\$3.5 billion to triple the bulk billing incentive** for GPs – the largest ever investment in bulk billing in Australia's history.
- **Price caps on coal and gas, plus energy rebates**, resulting in an approximate saving of \$555 for eligible households across Victoria.
- **58 bulk billed Urgent Care Clinics**, including one in Prahran based at the Alfred Hospital.
- A **\$100 million Community Upgrades Fund** for energy upgrades, including heat pumps for pools, lighting, and battery storage for sporting fields and council buildings.
- Delivered 60 days' supply of selected medicines instead of 30 days from 1 September, halving the cost of medicine for around **33,643 Higgins residents**.
- **\$4.7 billion** towards Cheaper Childcare, benefitting around **4,400 families in Higgins**. If your childcare fees remain excessive, please let me know.
- Increasing Paid Parental Leave to **20 weeks** from 1 July 2023, aiming for **26 weeks by 2026**.
- Removing cost barriers to skills with **480,000 Fee-Free TAFE places**.
- An increase in the minimum wage by **\$70.20 a week**.
- A **15% pay increase** for aged care workers.
- An increase of **\$14.6 billion** in social security benefits including JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, and Austudy, and **\$1.9 billion** to expand eligibility of the Single Parent Payment, benefitting around 355 people in Higgins.
- Launched National Anti-Scams Centre on 1 July 2023 in light of the \$3.1 billion lost to scams last year.
- **\$1.3 billion Household Energy Upgrades Fund** to help households reduce their energy bills through better appliances, double-glazing, and battery-ready solar panels, including \$300 million for social housing.
- **Closing loopholes for insecure workers**, including banning wage secrecy, providing new pathways to permanent employment, criminalising wage theft, and dialling down rampant casualisation.
- To decrease digital exclusion, we are providing **30,000 families** who do not have internet at home with free NBN. Please contact my office to nominate.
- **\$108 million cheaper energy package**, including solar panels for up to 5,000 Victorian apartments.

### Keep in touch

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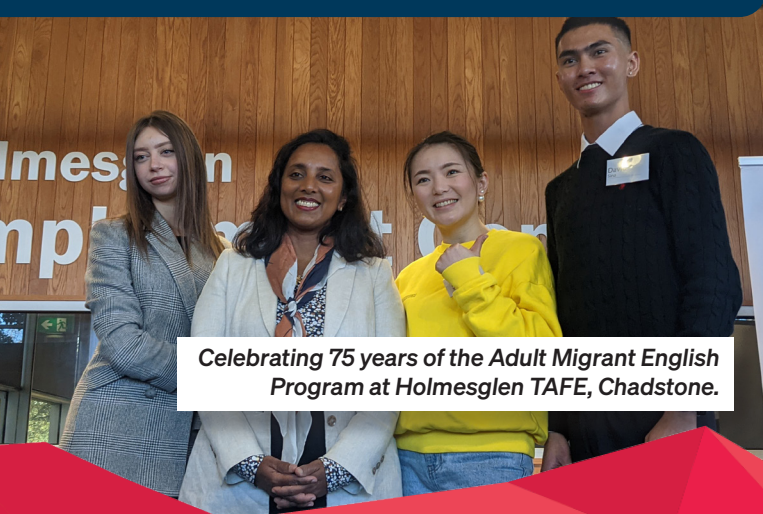
# Higgins Update

## Skills

- We have smashed our target of 180,000 Fee-Free TAFE places, receiving more than 214,300 enrolments including **128,580 women, 50,849 Jobseekers, 6,845 First Nations People, and 15,269 people with a disability.** We are creating economic pathways out of disadvantage and into participation.
- We are adding **300,000** fee-free places from 2024.
- We have released **28 micro-credential courses.** These are short courses designed to quickly upskill and reskill people.
- We are **wiping or reducing the HELP debts for doctors and nurse practitioners** that live and work in rural and remote Australia. Find out more on the Department of Health and Aged Care website.
- **\$95.6 million for 10,000 New Energy Apprenticeships** to get us to net zero.
- **Debt reduction for remote area teachers** of around **\$35,000.** Find out more on the Department of Education website.
- **\$436 million in the Commonwealth Foundation Skills programs** to improve literacy, numeracy, and digital skills for apprentices.

**“Skills are the bedrock on which we build our lives. When we think about Australia’s wealth, we often turn to the stuff we dig up. In fact, our wealth is staring back at me. Our young people, the pride of our nation.”**

– Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP,  
Speech at World Skills Australia, 20 August 2023



## Mental Health

- A **\$586.9 million investment in mental health,** addressing workforce shortages, extending critical services, and laying the foundation for future reforms.
- **\$91.3 million to address bottlenecks in the psychology training pipeline** and develop the mental health workforce.
- **\$17.8 million to upskill the health workforce** in mental health first aid, including nurses, midwives, and allied health workers.
- **\$253.6 million** for severe and complex mental illness, benefitting more than 18,000 people.
- **\$98 million** for a new Medicare rebate for GP consultations longer than 60 minutes, which are better tailored to people with mental illness.
- **\$50 million** towards Childhood Mental Health Research.
- We have launched the **National Eating Disorders Strategy 2023–2033** to better support people with eating disorders.
- **\$20 million** towards research into eating disorders.
- **\$136 million** towards mental health services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including **\$36 million** for refugees suffering trauma.
- **\$107.9 million** to establish new Head to Health Centres, including 15 Head to Health Kids Hubs for children aged 0-12 years.
- **\$7.2 million** for support services following natural disasters.
- Established **two peak bodies for mental health** lived experience with patients and families/carers

**“Attention to the drivers - whether it be insecure work, skills, housing, healthcare, domestic violence or addressing climate change - collectively puts downward pressure on the emergence of mental health issues. These social determinants are the wheelhouse of Labor governments.”**

– Dr Michelle Ananda-Rajah MP,  
9 June 2023

# Higgins Update

## Voice to Parliament Referendum

**Saturday October 14**

It is about Recognition, Listening, and Better Results. Cut through the noise and understand the actual statement you are voting on.

You will be voting for a permanent committee that will provide advice to the government and parliament on issues important to First Nations people like jobs, housing, education, health, and justice. The day the referendum passes is not the day the Voice is stood up. The parliament will take time to decide on what the Voice looks like and how it will operate.

**If you don't know, find out! Go to: [voice.gov.au](https://voice.gov.au)**



**“Voting NO leads nowhere. It means nothing changes ... Vote YES for Recognition. Vote YES for Listening. Vote YES for Better Results. Voting YES is a change for the better that all of us can make together.”**

– Prime Minister Anthony Albanese  
30 August 2023

**Want to stay across funding opportunities and upcoming events?** Sign up to my grants, schools and business bulletins.



## Upcoming Events



### Climate Forum

with Chris Bowen



**Scan the QR code to sign up!**

### NDIS Forum

with Bill Shorten



**Scan the QR code to sign up!**

### Scams Forum

with Stephen Jones



**Scan the QR code to sign up!**

# What I've Been Up To



At the Chinese Seniors Cultural Association, Ashburton.



Higgins Housing Roundtable with Minister for Housing Julie Collins.



At the National Institute of Circus Arts Prahran. NICA received \$300,000 from the Albanese Government.



With the Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek, announcing \$1 million for the Tooronga Park Wetland development.



Higgins Mental Health Roundtable with Asst. Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Emma McBride, Cabrini Hospital.



Opening the new toilet facilities at Glen Iris Primary School with \$42,000 from the Albanese Government.



Launch of the Paediatric Palliative Care National Action Plan at Very Special Kids, Malvern



Clean Air Forum, Canberra, bringing industry, science, and public health together.



Our Higgins Community Consultation Committee – this is how we adjudicate grants, for community, by community.