



# MICHAEL SUKKAR MP

Federal Member for Deakin  
Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer



## SPECIAL CORONAVIRUS EDITION

### MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL

The past few months have been incredibly difficult for our nation as we deal with COVID-19, the greatest challenge Australia has faced outside of wartime.

It has brought devastation to those who have been ill or lost a loved one, financial difficulties for many and enormous disruption to the daily lives of us all.

But it is a great testament to the character of Australians to witness how we've responded to this challenge, including the support given to family, friends and neighbours who need it most. This newsletter outlines some of those stories, as well as providing some practical guidance on where you can find accurate information and assistance should you need it.

As the Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer, I have been working closely with the Prime Minister and Treasurer to put in place the financial support to help get Australia through this crisis. There is little doubt that the outcomes we have achieved in Australia are better than almost any other country, for which we should all feel collectively proud.

Nevertheless, the coming months will be tough for many people impacted by the health or economic devastation caused by COVID-19. We will see this challenge out like Australians have done many times before, and on the other side we will be stronger for it.

As always, if I can be of help to you or your family in any way, please do not hesitate to get in touch with my office.

**Michael Sukkar MP**

Federal Member for Deakin

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The Government's economic team putting the finishing touches to the JobKeeper package.

## ECONOMIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The Morrison Government's \$320 billion response is supporting Australian households, businesses and will save millions of Australian jobs. This unprecedented economic response is only possible because of disciplined budget management and will help cushion the blow from the severe economic impact of COVID-19. This support includes:

- ▶ JobKeeper payments of \$1,500 a fortnight for employees of Covid-19 affected businesses;
- ▶ Coronavirus Supplement payments of \$550 a fortnight;
- ▶ Stimulus payments to support households;
- ▶ Making \$20,000 available through the early release of superannuation;
- ▶ Delivering cash flow assistance of \$100,000 to small business;
- ▶ Tax concessions to support business investment.



## SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES

Eastland teamed up with retail partner Coles to donate and deliver food packages to two Victorian hospitals, helping to ensure that health workers on the front line have access to essential supplies while at work during the COVID-19 health crisis. The Eastland team and Coles delivered over 5,000 packages including break snacks such as muesli bars and fruit tubs to COVID-19 front line workers.



# Reaching out and supporting

## Helping the isolated

Locally, the Deakin community has been incredible in reaching out and supporting those that are isolated during this crisis, with many organisations adjusting their services to continue to assist those in need.

**Maroondah Community Assist** has changed from a face-to-face service to over the phone. Assistance includes support and a listening ear, information about what local help is available, and material help with things like food, prescriptions, and phone cards. Vulnerable people who have self-isolated, can ring MCA and arrange for a carer or family member to pick up food parcels, etc on their behalf.



The amazing team at **Glen Park Community Centre** held an emergency community pantry, providing food and household items to members of the community to help them through what is one of the toughest times we've seen. They've also been able to provide home cooked meals to the most vulnerable.



The wonderful volunteers at **Pinchapoo** in Bayswater North have been providing essential care packs for not only the most vulnerable in our community but also to our front line workers in the medical industry.

## Supporting those hardest hit

Churches, charities and other local organisations in our community have been supporting those affected by the crisis with food care packages and essential supplies.

The outstanding team at **Hope City Mission** are working everyday to sort the huge amount of donated food and essential items, for those who need them most.



The Sikh community at the **Sri Guru Nank Satsang Temple** in Blackburn provide over 250 meals for people in need within our community every day. Their generosity during this time extends to all those in need, including students, people engaged in health and essential services and senior citizens.

## Learning from home

I have been really happy providing information packs about Australia's Parliament and constitution to students learning from home, including Zoe, Kai and Blake pictured here. These packs include the Australian and Victorian flags, a copy of Australia's Constitution and portrait of the Queen. To obtain an information pack please contact my office.





# others in the **local community.**

## Toilet paper shortages!

Due to the coronavirus, people began stockpiling food and other items which caused a shortage on supermarket shelves, so Eastland were proud to team up with both the Maroondah City Council's Age & Disabilities Services and Maroondah Community Assist Program to provide community members in need with 2,000 toilet rolls.



## Supporting our local businesses

Many of our local businesses are struggling, but many are adapting by providing takeaway or delivery. If you are staying 1.5m away from others, you can still visit one of these local businesses, get take away food and support our local economy. **There has never been a better time (or excuse) to grab a takeaway meal!**



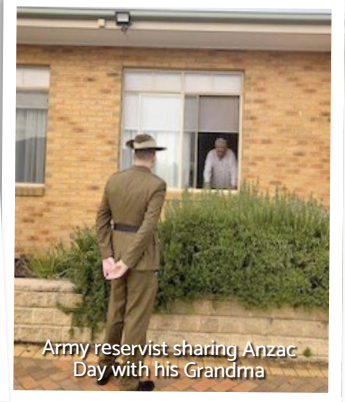
## Encouraging hand hygiene

Eastland provided a surprise for commuters and Ringwood Station, distributing free hand sanitisers and wipes for commuters. Kind gestures like these have gone a long way during this time.



## Commemorating Anzac Day

As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 social isolation measures, the commemoration of Anzac Day this year was a different and unique experience for everyone. However, we didn't let this stop us from remembering the Australians who have served and sacrificed for our nation in our own small ways. As a nation and as a community, we have a responsibility to ensure we will always remember the service and sacrifice of all those who have served our nation in times of war, conflicts and peacekeeping operations, even in these difficult times.



## SALT combating social isolation

SALT – Sport and Life Training - has announced a program of interactive webinar sessions to help Australians cope with the unique and difficult times that we are in. These are free online sessions held three times a week – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 1pm. These webinars will include topics such as: emotional agility, resilient thinking, overcoming stress and anxiety, having kids home 24/7, maintaining friendships and many, many more. **Like all SALT sessions, they will be positive, fun and interactive.**



# Work continues on **local projects...**

In these terribly difficult times, it's a small bright spot to see that many of our local projects, supported by the Morrison Government, have continued apace. Here is a snapshot of some of these projects.



## **TORTICE DR, RINGWOOD NORTH**

I am pleased to advise that the traffic signal works at the intersection of Tortice Dr and Wonga Rd, Ringwood North are due to commence. The works are expected to take approximately 6 weeks to complete, subject to weather, with the contractors ensuring the appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures to meet the Stage 3 restrictions in place for COVID-19.

## **WALKER PARK UPGRADE**

The Walker Park redevelopment is complete! Having kicked off this project in 2016, it is very exciting to see the very impressive facility that will be a new home to the Mitcham Football Club, Mitcham Cricket Club and Mitcham Junior Football Club. I am very much looking forward to visiting the new venue when sport returns on the other side of this pandemic.

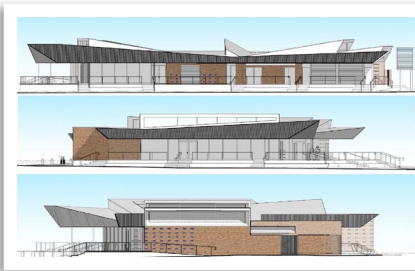


## **CHEONG PARK UPGRADE IN CROYDON SOUTH**

A \$500,000 funding commitment from the Federal Government will go towards the redevelopment of Cheong Park. The redevelopment will mean newer and bigger club facilities benefiting all players, spectators and supporters of the South Croydon Football and Cricket Clubs.

## **HE PARKER PAVILION REDEVELOPMENT**

I was very excited to see the progress at HE Parker Pavilion which I kicked off about 4 years ago. I look forward to seeing the clubs enjoy the benefits of this new facility when we get to the other side of this crisis.



## **HEATHERDALE PAVILION REDEVELOPMENT**

At the election I was proud to kick off the redevelopment of Heatherdale Pavilion with a \$2 million grant which will be a new home to the Heatherdale Cricket Club and Mitcham Eagles Junior Football Club.

## **SILCOCK RESERVE REDEVELOPMENT**

Here is an artist's impression of what the new facility, jointly funded by the Federal Government and Maroondah City Council, at Silcock Reserve will look like when completed.



## **\$75 MILLION FOR NEW TRAIN STATION CARPARKS**

Plans, designs and land acquisitions – where required – are well underway with the relevant local councils and rail authorities for the new carparking spaces at Croydon, Ringwood, Heathmont, Heatherdale and Mitcham train stations. Once completed, together these new facilities will provide more than 1,500 extra car spaces for commuters along the rail corridor.



# Providing a lifeline for jobs and businesses

As part of my role as the Government's Assistant Treasurer, I have been working closely with the Prime Minister and Treasurer Josh Frydenberg in Canberra on some absolute world-leading measures to help stabilise our economy and support Australians through this difficult time. We've delivered a range of initiatives that are injecting more than \$320 billion into the economy to help build a bridge to the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## JobKeeper wage guarantee

Key among these is the \$130 billion JobKeeper wage-guarantee. Providing a flat-rate payment of \$1,500 per fortnight, it is now available for full-time, part-time and long-term casual workers. Importantly, support is also available under the programme for sole traders and the not-for-profit sector, in recognition that the pandemic has impact every aspect of the economy.

By keeping the connection between employers and workers, we will help our economy bounce back on the other side of this.



We're also providing support for jobs and businesses through a range of other measures including: lifting the instant asset write-off and expanding its coverage, opening up lines of credit for small and medium enterprises and payments of up to \$100,000 to help boost small business cash-flow. These payments will assist with cash flow so they can keep operating, pay their rent, electricity and other bills and retain staff, and are also open to the not-for-profit sector.

For further information about the economic plans that we're rolling out, please visit [treasury.gov.au/coronavirus](https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus). Businesses looking to enrol their staff in the JobKeeper scheme should visit [ato.gov.au](https://ato.gov.au).



## Income support and Coronavirus Supplement

For impacted individuals who are ineligible for support through the JobKeeper scheme, we've temporarily relaxed some of the requirements for access to the JobSeeker programme. Together with the temporary Coronavirus Supplement, eligible individuals in need of income support are now receiving more than \$1,100 per fortnight – more than double what this payment had been worth previously.

## Reducing social security deeming rates

We have also **reduced the social security deeming rates by 0.25 percentage points**. This is on top of the previously announced 0.5 percentage point reduction in both the upper and lower limit rates.

As of 1 May 2020, the upper deeming rate will be 2.25 per cent and the lower deeming rate will be 0.25 per cent. These reductions reflect the low interest rate environment and its impact on income from savings, which will be of particular benefit to retirees at this time.

## Early release of superannuation

The Government is also allowing those experiencing financial stress as a result of Coronavirus to **access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation in 2019-20 and a further \$10,000 in 2020-21**. Eligible individuals can apply online through myGov and don't need to pay tax on amounts released, and the money they withdraw will not affect Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs payments.



## Health Response

The Government has also implemented a comprehensive \$2.4 billion Coronavirus health package to support our health system and protect Australians – particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly, those with chronic conditions and Indigenous communities – at this critical time.

Some of the key components of the package include:

- ▶ \$1.1 billion to ensure patients and critical health workers have access to face masks, surgical gowns, goggles, antibiotics and antivirals.
- ▶ \$500 million to pay for 50 per cent of costs incurred by states and territories in diagnosing and treating patients with COVID-19 or suspected of having the disease, as well as efforts to minimise spread.
- ▶ \$200 million for up to 100 dedicated respiratory clinics.
- ▶ \$170 million for a Medicare-funded pathology test for COVID-19.
- ▶ \$100 million to enable aged care providers to hire extra staff for residential and home care – helping to protect senior Australians.
- ▶ \$100 million for telehealth services to reach vulnerable Australians, including those living alone.
- ▶ \$58 million for remote community preparedness and retrieval: minimising remote communities' exposure to COVID-19, increasing capacity to evacuate early cases and responding effectively if an outbreak occurs.
- ▶ \$30 million for a communications campaign, delivering practical advice in up to 20 languages on containing the virus and staying healthy.

## COVIDSafe smartphone app

The COVIDSafe app is part of our work to slow the spread of COVID-19. Having confidence we can find and contain outbreaks quickly will mean governments can ease restrictions while still keeping Australians safe.

The new COVIDSafe app is completely voluntary. Downloading the app is something you can do to protect you, your family and friends and save the lives of other Australians. The more Australians connect to the COVIDSafe app, the quicker we can find the virus.



## Finding the right info about Coronavirus

It is important if you are concerned, that you seek out official sources of information when it comes to addressing your questions about Coronavirus.

Information is constantly being updated - to find the latest health advice and information on economic support visit:

**Australia.gov.au** - This website is regularly updated to give you the latest Coronavirus news, updates and advice from government agencies across Australia.

**Health.gov.au** - For all the latest health alerts and advice regarding Coronavirus.

**Treasury.gov.au** - For information on the Government's JobSeeker support package and other Government assistance.

**Ato.gov.au** - Information for businesses to register for the JobKeeper program.

**WhatsApp** - You can now get Coronavirus updates via WhatsApp by visiting: [www.aus.gov.au/WhatsApp](http://www.aus.gov.au/WhatsApp)

**Smartphone app** - You can also receive updates by downloading the 'Coronavirus Australia' app.


**1800 020 080** - You can use the National Coronavirus Helpline if you are seeking information on Coronavirus. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.


## My contact details

My office is still open. If I can help you during this time, please send me an email or call my office on **9874 1711**. I also provide regular updates via email which you can sign up to by sending me an email with your details.

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