



Dear Resident of the Berowra Electorate,

It has been a big couple of weeks of Parliament, however due to the COVID-19 lockdowns I attended Parliament virtually from Pennant Hills. This has also enabled me to speak more with community leaders and relay your message to colleagues in Canberra.

Last week I spent time talking to Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury, Streetworks, Hornsby Salvos, Hornsby Connect, Mission Australia, Fusion Sydney North and The Dish about the work they are doing in our community and the challenges they and our community are facing as more people reach out for their services.

Each are providing invaluable support to people facing difficult circumstances—many of whom have never found themselves in this position before. I want to acknowledge and thank all the organisations, their staff and volunteers who continue to provide critical services such as food, mental health support, crisis support and an important presence in the community despite the new restrictions and higher demands.

Please reach out to them if you need support. Their details are listed at the end of this newsletter.

**This newsletter contains information on the National Plan to transition Australia's national COVID-19 response, a vaccine update, some resources for parents and children during lockdown and information on the Final Report for the Skilled Migration Program I tabled this week.**

My team and I are still working hard to respond to your phone calls and emails however due to the NSW Public Health Order, my electorate office in Pennant Hills is currently closed to visitors. We can be contacted at [Julian.leeser.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:Julian.leeser.mp@aph.gov.au) or (02) 9980 1822.

Please feel welcome to share this newsletter with others who may be interested.

Anyone who wants to be added to the newsletter distribution list should email

[julian.leeser.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:julian.leeser.mp@aph.gov.au).

Julian Leeser

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## Vaccines and Lockdown

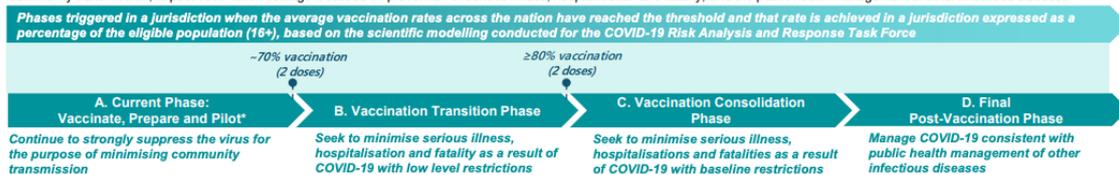
Last week National Cabinet announced that once Australia reaches 70% of the population fully vaccinated, we can then move to the next phase in the transition out of the COVID-19 pandemic where we no longer need lockdowns of the sort we are experiencing now.

You can read more about the details of each step and the targets we need to reach to get there here: <http://aus.pm/blfd>



### National Plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response

National Cabinet agreed to formulate a national plan to transition Australia's National COVID-19 Response from its current pre vaccination settings, focussing on continued suppression of community transmission, to post vaccination settings focussed on prevention of serious illness, hospitalisation and fatality, and the public health management of other infectious diseases



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## Vaccine Update

This week Australia reached 14 million doses which means more than 46% of the eligible population aged over 16 are protected with a first dose and almost 25% per cent have received a 2nd dose.

In the Berowra electorate the figures for our two health districts are even higher with between 56-57.6% of the eligible people having had their first dose and between 30-32% having been fully vaccinated. I am proud that recent media reports have listed our

community as having the second highest vaccination take up in Australia.

### **Moderna vaccine**

This week the TGA provided provisional approval of the Moderna vaccine for use in Australian adults.

The Moderna vaccine is an mRNA vaccine, the same vaccine type as the Pfizer vaccine, which is already in use in Australia and will require two doses to be administered 28 days apart.

A total of 10 million doses will be dispatched to Australia in 2021, with the first million expected to arrive in September, and a further 15 million booster doses in the first half of 2022.

Data to support the use of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine in younger Australians, aged 12 to 17 years, is being reviewed by the TGA and further decisions may be made in the coming weeks.

[More information about TGA's approval of Moderna](#)

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## **Regional Telecommunications Review**

Recently the Government announced the Review of Regional Telecommunications – this review can help achieve fundamental change for our community if enough people from our community share their stories with the Review.

The Review needs to hear about:

- the appalling mobile service in our community and why we need a Universal Service Guarantee for mobile services in peri-urban areas, such as ours.
- the problems people in our community are having with the NBN.
- how inaction by telcos puts people in our community at risk during fires, floods and medical emergencies.

- the problems you have had accessing mobile or broadband services at your home or business – especially during lockdown.

I want to be sure voices from our community are heard. That is why I am asking you to share your experience with the review. Those who have contacted me about telecommunications should have already received an email from me inviting you to contribute to this review.

Submissions must be received by 30 September 2021.

Just fill in your details and upload a word document or PDF telling your experience of poor telecommunications. You don't need to write a long essay – just tell your story.

You can tell your story to the review here:

[Submit to the Regional Telecommunications Review](#)

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## Reminder to complete your Census

On Monday night 6.2 million Aussie families sat around the dinner table and completed the 2021 Census, providing data on important topics such as populations, rent, mortgages, incomes, religion, languages, and housing.

The information you and I provided will help governments, businesses, researchers, not for profits and community organisations make informed decisions to improve the lives of Australians for generations to come.

**It is really important for you to complete the 2021 Census if you haven't already.**

There's a range of help and support available if you need assistance to complete your Census form including online and phone help.

[Complete your Census Form](#)

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## Australia's Skilled Migration Program

This week as the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, I tabled the Final Report for the inquiry into Australia's Skilled Migration Program. This report is about getting the Skilled migration program ready for Australia's post pandemic recovery – ensuring the program continues to serve Australia's needs.

We are doing this by:

- establishing a workforce plan to ensure government agencies work together to address skills shortages
- enabling skilled migrants to have a clearer pathway to PR and reducing red tape to enable businesses to fill critical shortages
- enabling the best and brightest international students to stay here and fill skills shortages.

The Government has already implemented several of the recommendations the Committee made in the Interim report in relation to helping business more easily meet skills shortages in the economy.

The Final Report was covered by some of the major newspapers and has been welcomed by numerous various peak bodies:

Jenny Lambert, Director of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's employment and skills, the nation's largest employer lobby, said "It's a smart move", in relation to the Committee's recommendation to increase pathways to permanent residency.

Business NSW welcomed the report Chief Executive Daniel Hunter said "Prior to the current COVID-19 lockdowns, access to skills was business' number one issue... Looking to the future, local training will only get us so far before we need migration to once more fill the gaps and ensure our economy bounces back."

Tania Constable, Chief Executive of the Minerals Council said the Report's "sensible recommendations to the skilled migration program will boost innovation and productivity

in Australian mining."

Phil Honeywood, chief executive of the International Education Association of Australia, said "As part of the COVID recovery, Australia needs to fill well-known skill gaps and the community has identified permanent residency as a way to fill the gaps and attract the right candidates."

[Read Mr Honeywood's comments in the AFR](#)

Universities Australia chief executive, Catriona Jackson, said the changes would benefit "exactly the kind of highly skilled, bright students who will make a big contribution to Australian life and productivity."

[Read more from Universities Australia and ACCI in The Sydney Morning Herald.](#)

[The Australian](#) also published an article on the release of the report.

I spoke to Chris Kenny on Skynews and Fran Kelly on ABC Radio about the recommendations in the Final Report, you can listen to these interviews here:

- [Skynews interview with Chris Kenny](#)
- [ABC RN Breakfast interview with Fran Kelly](#)

You can also watch my tabling speech below:



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## **This fortnight in Parliament**

### **Closing the gap**

The focus of the new Closing the Gap initiative is on partnerships. Partnerships are essential. They build connections between governments and our First Nations people and build opportunities across the country. We will continue to work to build those opportunities until we reach the day when children can grow up and, regardless of whether they are Indigenous or non-Indigenous, have the same expectations as any other Australian.



## **National Library address**

On Tuesday I thanked the House for the privilege of serving on the Council of the National Library of Australia for nearly five years. I have always wanted to serve on the National Library council and I regard the Library as one of Australia's truly great institutions.

The Library is something of which all Australians should be proud. We're more likely to think of Olympic athletes than libraries as being world beating, but the National Library is the Emma McKeon of Australia's cultural institutions. The Library is a world leader in digitisation and digital preservation.

Go online and visit the Library's amazing online collection that is Trove at [trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au). You will be amazed about what you can find out about your family, your neighbourhood, even your house. It is also a great research tool for school and university assignments.



## **Jim Tilley OAM**

British Pensioners in Australia will be saddened by the death of Jim Tilley OAM. I was please to say a few words about Jim in the House this week:

*Jim Tilley, who passed away recently, was a warrior for a just cause, the leading light in the British Pensioners in Australia organisation.*

*Jim fought hard for the rights of Australia's British Pensioners, determined to see them granted the same pay and indexation as British Pensioners elsewhere.*

*I first met Jim when I was running the Menzies Research Centre and I hosted the then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Ian Duncan Smith as a guest. Jim came to meet Sir Ian and put his case to him as he has so often done to me and others. While he didn't convince Sir Ian you could only be impressed with his advocacy.*

*I was pleased to be one of the people who nominated Jim for the Order of Australia he received on the Queen's Birthday this year.*

*British Pensioners in Australia uses funds raised via subscriptions to finance an International political and media campaign aimed at getting the UK Government to overturn its unjust position of freezing the pensions of the 4 per cent of British pensioners –who retired to countries where pensions aren't uprated.*

*The British Government needs to treat our British Pensioners – most of whom are*

*Australians Citizens - in the same way as they are treated in America, Israel, the EU, Turkey, Jamaica and numerous other countries, by indexing their pensions here as they do there.*

*As Boris Johnson looks to strengthen the UK Australia relationship indexing British pensions would be a tangible demonstration of his commitment.*

*In Jim Tilley's memory I will continue to fight for British Pensioners working alongside colleagues to see a better resolution from the Government of our oldest ally.*

In Jim's memory I will continue to campaign for the rights of Australia's British Pensioners to full indexation of their pensions as in other countries.

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## **Greater Childcare Support for Families**

This week Parliament passed legislation that will provide more affordable child care for around 250,000 Australian families and allow more parents to return to work or pick up more hours.

Families with more than one child aged under six in child care, will receive up to a 95 per cent subsidy on the fees for their second and subsequent child.

The \$10,655 cap on the Child Care Subsidy has also been removed, benefitting around 18,000 families.

The measures build on the \$10 billion annual investment in child care, and the Child Care Package introduced in 2018 that is still keeping out-of-pocket costs low for Australian families.

Our Government is supporting working parents, by reducing child care costs and giving them more flexibility if they chose to return to work or want to work more hours.

[Find out more](#)

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## Kidspot: National Science Week 2021

National Science Week is Australia's annual celebration of science and technology and will run from 14 - 20 August. It will give everyone an opportunity to meet scientists, discuss the hot topics, do science and celebrate its cultural and economic impact on society all from the comfort of home.

First held in 1997, National Science Week has become one of Australia's largest festivals. Last year about 1.1 million people participated in more than 1200 events, despite the global pandemic.

Families will have the chance to contribute to real scientific research from home by participating in the ABC's National Science Week project 'Hoot Detective'. Participants will listen to night-time audio recordings taken in owl habitat to see if they can identify Powerful, Barking, Boobook, Barn and Masked owls calls among other wildlife noises, helping scientists map where these beloved birds are.

In 2021 there will be more online events, virtual tours and experiences, DIY science and home-based activities held all around Australia to help us all through these difficult times.

[Get involved in National Science Week](#)

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## Helpful COVID-19 links

To keep up to date with the latest **NSW public health orders and restrictions** go to: [Public Health Orders and restrictions - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health-orders-and-restrictions)

It is also more important than ever to get your vaccine if you are eligible. **To check your eligibility and for information on how to book in for you vaccination**, go to: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-vaccine-eligibility-checker>

Australia.gov.au provides the **latest official coronavirus news, updates and advice from the Australian Government.**

The latest information on **NSW case locations and other COVID-19 alerts**, can be found here: [Latest COVID-19 case locations and alerts in NSW - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

For your nearest **COVID-19 testing clinics** visit <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others/clinics>

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## Mental health support

This is a difficult time for many in our community and our Government is committed to providing ongoing mental health support to Australians. In addition to the \$500 million in additional COVID-19 mental health supports since January 2020, is providing \$10.6 million to establish 10 pop up mental health support sites in and around Greater Sydney.

The Head to Health centres across NSW will offer a range of mental health services, including in person, video and telephone support options and will remain in operation until June 2022.

There are already many online resources available at <https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/>

Please remember should you, or someone you know need mental health support, I would encourage you to make use of the crisis supports available to you. You can call:

- Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800
- 1800 Respect on 1800 737 732
- Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636
- Suicide Call Back on 1300 659 467
- Headspace on 1800 650 890

## Community Organisation Contact Details

### **Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury**

<https://lifelineh2h.org.au/>

13 11 14 (as above)

### **Streetwork**

<https://www.streetwork.org.au/>

02 9419 7559

### **Hornsby Salvation Army**

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/hornsbygateway/need-help/>

### **Hornsby Connect**

<https://www.hornsbyconnect.org.au/>

0403 290 420 [info@hornsbyconnect.org.au](mailto:info@hornsbyconnect.org.au)

### **Mission Australia**

<https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/>

02 9480 2500 (Hornsby Hub)

### **Fusion Sydney North**

<https://sydneynorth.fusion.org.au/>

(02) 7228 9633 [sydneynorth@fusion.org.au](mailto:sydneynorth@fusion.org.au)

### **The Dish**

<https://thedish.uca.org.au/>

02 9487 2941 [dish@stjohnswahroonga.org](mailto:dish@stjohnswahroonga.org)