



Dear Residents of the Berowra Electorate,

Last week on Australia Day, we had the chance to celebrate our country and the people living in it by welcoming new citizens and honouring Australians who have made an immense contribution to our country.

This week the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute released their [Mapping Social Cohesion Report for 2020](#). The Report shows Australians are united and optimistic about our future and have the highest level of trust in one another in more than a decade.

This is wonderful news. I am enormously proud to be Australian and the work we are doing together to fight coronavirus.

This newsletter includes updates about our community including:

- grant opportunities available
- people from our community who have received honours in the Order of Australia
- Vaccine information

Please feel welcome to share this newsletter with others who may be interested. I encourage you to follow my social media for up-to-date news too. 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).

If ever my staff or I can assist you in any way, please don't hesitate to phone my office on (02) 9980 1822 or send an email.

Kind regards,  
Julian Leeser

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## 10 million more Pfizer vaccinations

The Government is committed to providing safe and effective vaccines free to everyone in Australia.

In the last couple of weeks, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved the Pfizer vaccine for use in Australia.

This week, the Australian Government has secured an additional 10 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID 19 vaccine on the advice of the Scientific Industry Technical Advisory Group on Vaccines led by Professor Brendan Murphy.

Through the Government's Advance Purchase Agreement with Pfizer, this additional 10 million vaccines means Australia will now receive 20 million Pfizer doses in 2021.

We now have access to over 150 million vaccine doses, ensuring we remain a world leader in the fight against the virus.

The vaccination program remains on track for commencement of delivery in late February.

### Next steps

As the rollout begins, people who need protection the most will get the vaccine first. This includes aged care and disability care residents and workers, frontline health care workers, and quarantine and border workers.

Australia's vaccine roll out will be carried out through hospitals, General practices, state and Commonwealth vaccination clinics, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Pharmacies.

One of the first locations the vaccine will be rolled out from will be Hornsby Hospital.

The Australian Government is committed to providing access to safe and effective

vaccines for COVID-19, and the distribution effort will be one of the largest logistical operations in our country's history.

Expressions of Interest processes have commenced for general practices and community pharmacies to assist in the delivery of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

Further information about the Australian Government's COVID-19 Vaccine National Roll-out Strategy can be found at:

[health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)

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## Celebrating Australia Day

Australia Day is a day to celebrate our country and to be grateful for the privilege of being Australian.

Australia is a country that has allowed people from the four corners of the Earth to come and make it their home while maintaining Australia's own distinctive traditions and identity.

I am enormously proud to be an Australian.

This year, Rotary Club of Kenthurst put on a great Australian Flag Raising Ceremony and it was fantastic to welcome our newest citizens to the Hornsby Shire and Hills Shire in ceremonies at Pennant Hills and Castle Hill. They were some of the 12,000 new citizens welcomed to Australia on Australia Day this year.

It is a remarkable step to take to live your life in a new country.

Each will add their own distinctive story to the broader Australian Story and as new citizens, they help us to treasure those things we take for granted.



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## **Berowra's Order of Australia Honours List**

The Order of Australia is our highest national honour, introduced by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1975 to recognise Australian citizens and non-citizens who display outstanding achievement or service. In the past 46 years, more than 30,000 recipients have been received into the Order.

I would like to congratulate the recipients from my electorate of Berowra, who were recognised this year on Australia Day for service in a wide range of fields from education to music. Their level of service is inspiring.

Congratulations to:

- Professor Ronald Bartsch AM - Member of the Order of Australia
- Graham Ross AM - Member of the Order of Australia
- Francis Deane OAM - Medal of the Order of Australia
- The late Rita Little OAM - Medal of the Order of Australia
- Colin Llewellyn OAM (Honorary) - Medal of the Order of Australia
- Lynn McCrindle OAM - Medal of the Order of Australia
- David Rosenberg OAM - Medal of the Order of Australia
- Geoffrey Scott OAM - Medal of the Order of Australia

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## **Recognising the exceptional work of Australians in the COVID-19 response**

Australians are being encouraged to nominate those people, professionals and volunteers, who have displayed extraordinary service and achievement during the COVID-19 response and recovery, for an Australian National Honour.

Individuals recognised for their contribution, service or achievement relating to COVID-19 will feature on a dedicated COVID-19 honours roll as well as the official Australian honours database from the Queen's Birthday in June. More information can be found [here](#):

**[More information](#)**

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## **Skilled Migration in post-COVID Australia**

This week, as the Chair of the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, I announced an inquiry into Skilled Migration in post-COVID Australia.

Skilled migrants make a vital contribution to Australia. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 100,000 migrants entered Australia under the skilled migration program each year. These migrants play an important role in filling gaps in the Australian workforce and will continue to do so in future.

The COVID-19 pandemic gives us a chance to consider how current skilled migration settings are serving Australia's needs now and into the future.

The Committee will also consider how we attract entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and highly skilled migrants to make Australia their first choice to invest, establish businesses and create jobs.

Australia's excellent health and economic response allows us to attract great entrepreneurs and skilled people looking to relocate. We want them to see Australia as the best place to establish a business with our safe, highly functioning democracy, good health and economic systems and the rule of law.

Submissions responding to terms of reference 1(a) and 2 will be accepted until 1 March 2021, while submissions addressing the remaining terms of reference will be accepted until 31 March 2021.

For the terms of reference or to make a submission, please visit the link below. I have also included a link to the Sydney Morning Herald article on the inquiry launch.

**[Inquiry into Skilled Migration](#)**

**[Read Article in the Sydney Morning Herald](#)**

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## Parent visa applicants to remain onshore during COVID-19

Parent visa applicants are now able to have their new visa granted without leaving Australia as a temporary measure put in place due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The changes will apply to:

- Parent (subclass 103) visa
- Contributory Parent (subclass 173) visa
- Contributory Parent (subclass 143) visa.

These changes are to take effect in the first quarter of 2021. Those unable to depart should refer to the Department of Home Affairs' website for information about options for remaining lawfully in Australia.

The Morrison Government continues to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on visa holders and is actively reviewing the settings for various visas in response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 on an ongoing basis.

[More information on visa changes](#)

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## Telstra, Optus, Vodafone and NBN risking lives during emergencies

Emergency Management Minister David Littleproud this week made an appeal to Telstra, Optus, Vodafone and the NBN to make crucial infrastructure data available to emergency services across Australia, saying:

"Understanding the location and redundancy of telecommunication utilities and infrastructure is critical for emergency services personnel to prioritise their responses, deploy resources, and save lives during a natural disaster such as a bushfire, cyclone or flood."

Minister Littleproud expressed his frustration that Telstra has not fulfilled its commitments to him regarding providing essential information for emergency services.

"The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements recommendations 9.4 and 9.5 explicitly made clear the need for greater steps to create disaster resilient infrastructure, and for providers to coordinate with Government.

"Telstra, along with Optus, NBN and Vodafone owe it to our emergency services workers as well as to the broader community whose lives they are endangering to provide this critical data."

The Minister's frustration echoes the experience I have been having. Berowra is one of the many fire prone electorates across Australia and our own emergency services have had significant difficulty with telecommunications in the area. I have been fighting for this issue and will continue to fight until we get the telecommunications our community deserves.

If you have a Telstra story you haven't yet shared with me, I'd love to hear from you. If you need assistance with your telecommunications, please email me at [julian.leeser.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:julian.leeser.mp@aph.gov.au)

**Hold Telstra to Account**

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## **Australian Government Advocating for British pensioners**

For a number of years, I have been arguing the case for the British Government to treat British citizens living in Australia equally with British citizens living in countries like USA, Israel, Germany or the Philippines.

At present, if a British pensioner resides in Australia, the pension they receive is substantially lower than it would be if they lived in a long list of other places. Their



pension is “frozen” at the rate of the pension when they left Britain, but this rule is arbitrarily applied to only some countries.

The impact of this, is that British people who have made Australia home find it much more difficult to do so in their later years, and in some cases families are discouraged from remaining in the same country.

I have been raising this issue regularly with the Minister for Trade and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and last year, the Australian Government made a submission to the UK Government’s All-Party Parliamentary Group on Frozen British Pensions. The report from that Inquiry has now been released and it makes clear the Australian Government is critical of the policy and has been making representations to Britain about changing this rule for a number of years.

The Australian Government will continue to raise this matter with the UK Government and to advocate for British pensioners residing in Australia to receive fairer treatment.

I will continue to advocate for a better deal for British pensioners.

[Read the full report here](#)

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**Grants and awards programs open for applications**

## Stronger Communities Programme - Expressions of Interest Open

Round 6 of the Stronger Communities Grants Programme is still open for Expressions of Interest (EOI).

The programme funds small capital projects that aim to improve local community participation and contribute to vibrant communities.



For further details on eligibility criteria and how to apply [click here](#).

To be considered, please submit an EOI to my office before 5pm on Thursday 25 February 2021 using the link below.

[Submit an Expression of Interest](#)

## Recycling Modernisation: Boosting Recycling

The Australian and New South Wales governments are partnering together to deliver the \$190 million Recycling Modernisation Fund (RMF) to turbocharge recycling infrastructure in New South Wales.

More than 10,000 jobs will be created across Australia through the Recycling Modernisation Fund and over 10 million tonnes of waste diverted from landfill each year.

Companies can apply for grants through the link below.

Applications will remain open until March 26.

[Apply now](#)

## **Cyber Security Skills in Australian businesses**

In a difficult global environment Cyber Safety is becoming more of a issue for businesses and individuals. To help address this the government has established the Cyber Security Skills Partnership Innovation Fund provides industry and education providers with funding to deliver innovative projects that meet local requirements to quickly improve the quality or availability of cyber security professionals in Australia.

The fund will provide grants of between \$250,000 and \$3 million.

Eligible activities may include: developing and delivering specialist cyber security courses for professionals, retraining programs, professional development, apprenticeships, establishing new internships, cadetships, work experience and staff exchanges, and establishing cyber labs and training facilities.

Applicants must submit a joint application, with one eligible lead organisation which is the main driver of the project, and at least one other project partner.

The Cyber Security Skills Partnership Innovation Fund is part of the \$50 million Cyber Security National Workforce Growth Program, a key element of Australia's Cyber Security Strategy 2020.

**More information**

## **Seeking Australia's Unsung Heroes of Science**

The search is on again for Australians doing remarkable work in science, innovation and education, with nominations for the 2021 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science now open.

The Prizes recognise outstanding achievements in scientific research, research-based innovation and excellence in science teaching – with \$750,000 in total prize money up for grabs.

If you know of anyone doing amazing work in one of these fields, I would you to put them forward for one of these prestigious Prizes.

The full list of prizes include:

- Prime Minister's Prize for Science (\$250,000 prize)
- Prime Minister's Prize for Innovation (\$250,000 prize)
- Malcolm McIntosh Prize for Physical Scientist of the Year (\$50,000 prize)
- Frank Fenner Prize for Life Scientist of the Year (\$50,000 prize)
- Prize for New Innovators (\$50,000 prize)
- Excellence in Science Teaching in Primary Schools (\$50,000 prize)
- Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools (\$50,000 prize)

Nominations close at 5pm AEDT on 9 March 2021. For more information or to make a nomination, visit:

**The Prime Minister's Science Prizes**

## **Funding for the Arts performers**

The Morrison Government will support 30 arts tours across Australia during 2021, providing a major boost to artists and audiences, particularly in remote and regional communities.

The Government will invest more than \$3.6 million through the latest rounds of two touring programs: Playing Australia: Regional Performing Arts Touring Fund and the Contemporary Music Touring Program.

The programs will fund 30 projects in this round, to support tours spanning contemporary music, theatre, and dance to 268 unique locations nationally, with a focus on performances in regional and remote communities across Australia.

For information about grants and other opportunities available for the arts sectors, visit:

**Australia Council for the Arts**

## **Sustainability funding for arts organisations**

The \$35 million COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund, is designed to assist systemically significant Australian arts organisations which are judged to face a risk to their sustainability over the next 12 months due to COVID-19.

In 2020 the Australian Government announced almost \$800 million in additional arts and entertainment funding, on top of a record annual investment of around \$750 million in core funding, and on top of more than \$558 million provided to date through JobKeeper and \$110 million provided in cash flow payments to businesses.

The Sustainability Fund is still open and accepting applications. Applications will close on 31 May 2021 (5:00pm AEST), subject to allocation of funds.

**Arts Sustainability Fund**

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## **Supporting Veteran Mental Health**

Mental health providers, social workers and community nursing providers will receive more funding from February 1, as part of a \$94.3 million investment in the Budget, to support veteran mental health.

This investment will improve mental health outcomes and ensure high quality care for our older veterans and their families, and to better support their transition to civilian life by increasing fees paid to mental health, social work and community nursing providers.

For support, Open Arms — Veterans & Families Counselling provides free and confidential support for current and ex-serving ADF personnel and their families. Help is available 24/7 on 1800 011 046 (international: +61 1800 011 046 or +61 8 8241 4546) or visit [www.OpenArms.gov.au](http://www.OpenArms.gov.au)

More information on mental health support available through DVA is available at:

## Vale Mary Jo Reeve

Mary Jo Reeve, an essential part of the Beecroft community for a generation, passed away on 25 January.

Mary Jo was well-known for the restoration of Booth Park in Beecroft. Mary Jo became a local identity, passionate about the local community. She will be sadly missed.

I had the privilege to speak about Mary Jo in the Parliament, and you can listen to my speech here:



*Honouring Mary Jo Reeve of Beecroft*