



Dear Residents of the Berowra Electorate,

I would like to wish you and your family a Happy New Year. The end of 2020 was harder than we hoped, however the strength and determination of Australians to fight COVID-19 has been shown in response to the latest outbreaks.

To stay up to date on the latest restrictions for Sydney go to:

[Latest COVID-19 Restrictions](#)

Yesterday, the **Stronger Communities Grants Programme** opened and we are now accepting Expressions of Interest. In the past, the Stronger Communities Programme has given funding that has brought to life many great projects in our community. If your organisation has a vision for a project in our community, I would love to hear from you. You will find more information below.

This newsletter also includes other updates about our community.

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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## **Stronger Communities Programme - Round 6**

### **Expressions of Interest Open**

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

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

In the past the Stronger Communities Program has helped to fund and bring to life many great projects in our community. These include the renovation and repurposing of a building to provide a new day service for maturing clients at Inala in Cherrybrook, the purchasing of a new van for the Hills Community Op Shop, the renovation of Studio ARTES' performance space in Hornsby and many more.

This round of the programme will support Australia's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. For this special round, the grant funding for each project will be up to 100 per cent of eligible project costs, except for grants to local councils where grant funding will be up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs.



Grants will be available between \$2,500 and \$20,000 for successful applications.

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

In the past we have delivered projects with scouting groups, Lifeline Asquith, Streetwork, churches, school P&Cs and RFS brigades, among others.

Examples of eligible projects include fit out, alterations and/or extensions of community spaces, upgrades of sporting facilities and fields such as new scoreboards, or the purchase of musical instruments, sports equipment and uniforms that remain the property of the organisation.

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

The EOIs will go before a community panel and the best projects will then be invited to formally apply for funding.

If you have a vision for a project in our community, I would love to hear from you.

[Submit an Expression of Interest](#)

## Australia's COVID-19 Vaccine Roadmap

Scientists across the world over the last 9 months have engaged in a global race to find a vaccine for COVID-19. 2021 brings with it good news with numerous vaccines now being rolled out across the world.

Australia is in the final stages of approval for two of these vaccinations.

The vaccines will be voluntary, free and universally available and are a key part of Australia's recovery.

National Cabinet has adopted a vaccine roadmap for the roll out of the vaccination.

The Roadmap will ensure the Australians who need it most get access to the vaccine first.

With approval of the Pfizer vaccine expected late January, high priority groups including quarantine and border workers, front line health care workers, and residential disability and aged care residents and staff, are expected to have access to the vaccine by mid to late February.

Our medical experts have been moving swiftly and safely to approve vaccines here in Australia, whilst following the strictest of medical guidelines.

The vaccinations have gone through Australia's rigorous approval processes.

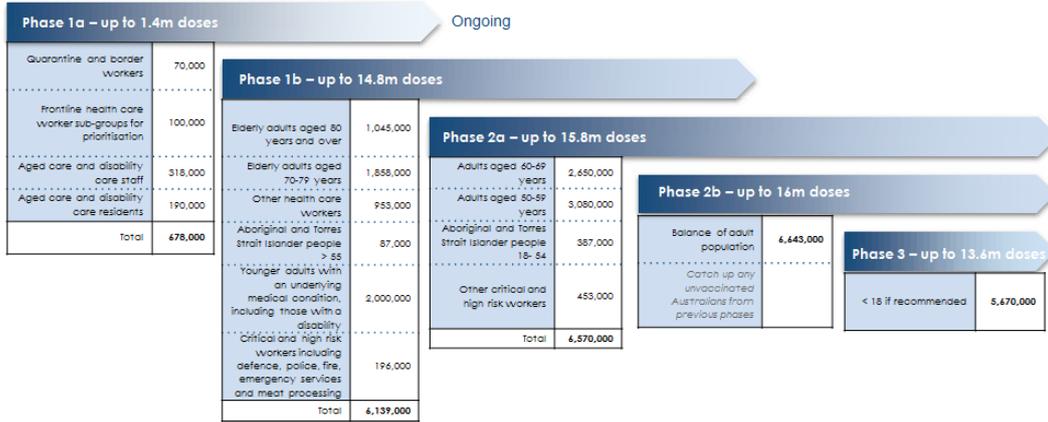
The AstraZeneca vaccine is expected to be approved in February, after which there will be a further four phases of priority populations we work through over the course of this year to administer the vaccines.

These vaccines and the public take-up will be critical to Australia's fight against the virus. Both vaccines will require two shots—the second shot three or four weeks after the first.

Australia has been one of the most successful countries in the world in dealing with this virus and we're one of the great vaccination nations in the world. Australians should be confident in the approval processes for the vaccine.

Vaccination is not a silver bullet. Once the vaccination starts, COVIDSafe practises do not end. They continue. Physical distancing, hand hygiene, using the COVIDSafe app, and getting tested and self-isolating if sick. These must all continue.

For more information on the Vaccine Roadmap click on the link below.



Population numbers are current estimates for each category.

[More information](#)

## Results are in on NorthConnex

Locals keep telling me that the change to Pennant Hills Road traffic has exceeded their expectations, and now we have statistics on just how much of a difference NorthConnex has made.

New stats released late last year show that a trip on Pennant Hills Road during peak hour is now more than 40% faster because of NorthConnex.

More than 37,000 vehicles are now using NorthConnex each day, including 6,660 heavy vehicles.

This is fantastic news for our community and for 2021.

To watch the full Seven News feature about the impact of NorthConnex, click below.



*Talking to Seven News about NorthConnex.*

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## Pre-Budget Submissions

The next Federal Budget will be delivered in May, and I am fighting for funding to go to areas that are most important to our community.

As the Morrison Government prepares for this Budget, I encourage people and community groups in the Berowra electorate to make a submission to this process. 2021-2022 Pre-Budget submissions are open until 29 January 2021 to individuals, businesses and organisations in our community.

This is a great chance for you to put forward your views about what will strengthen our community further, in 2021 and beyond. I would also love to hear from you if there are projects you think would make Berowra an even better place to live, work and visit.

[More information is available here](#)

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## Support for Eligible Students and Apprentices

Following a difficult 2020, aspiring students and apprentices can access support now for 2021 academic year via Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY or Austudy.

This will give students more time to prepare for the next exciting chapter in their lives.

Claims can be made online up to 13 weeks before your course or apprenticeship begins.



Youth Allowance provides financial support for young people aged 24 and under who are studying an approved course or doing an apprenticeship, and Austudy is for those 25 years and over.

For more information about support for students and Australian Apprentices, visit:

[Services Australia](#)

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## Indigenous Affairs

### **Community input must be at the heart of The Voice process**

I have had a long term interest in improving the lives of Indigenous Australians. Prior to becoming a Member of Parliament I was engaged in the process of constitutional recognition and helping design some proposals that I hoped could win the support of both Indigenous Australians and constitutional conservatives. Since the 2019 election I have been the Chair of the House of Representatives Indigenous Affairs Committee.

The gap between the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians and other Australians is far too wide, whether on health, employment, education, incarceration or life expectancy. We can keep wringing our hands about it or ask ourselves some questions about why, time and again, smart people of goodwill from both sides of politics fail to shift the dial.

The truth is there is such a gulf between what seems like a good idea in Canberra, in a university or think tank, and the reality of life in community. Too often no one really speaks to those in community to find out how to change things on the ground.

Recently the government has released a report from Indigenous leaders Tom Calma and Marcia Langton on how bodies might be established to consult Indigenous people on the policies and laws that affect them.

This report was commissioned in response to a parliamentary report that Senator Pat Dodson and I led back in 2018.

I believe more work is needed on how we engage Indigenous people on the ground in their communities.

If we are going to shift the dial and improve outcomes for Indigenous Australians we need to ensure they are having input into the policies that affect them. To fail to do so is to continue to repeat the present problems.

I remain committed to constitutional recognition of The Voice but we have a lot more work to do.

Today I had an opinion piece published in The Australian and I thought you might be interested in reading it.

[Read the Op Ed Here](#)