

# THE DENISON INDEPENDENT

ANDREW WILKIE MP - YOUR INDEPENDENT IN CANBERRA



## Housing affordability

**House prices have skyrocketed in Hobart which is great if you already own a property. But for first-home buyers or those trying to re-enter the market it can be tough.**

Eyewatering prices in Sydney and Melbourne have driven interstate buyers to Hobart and there is also increased competition from international buyers, who spent \$40m on Tasmanian residential real estate in 2015-16. The extra bidders and record low interest rates have caused strong growth which has pushed Hobart into 34th spot in the Knight Frank Global Residential Cities Index for property price growth.

Something has to give. Andrew believes governments need to consider all options to make sure home ownership does not become restricted to people on high incomes, or those lucky enough to be born in the right decade or have rich parents.

Some political parties have proposed axing or reducing negative gearing but this can't be considered in isolation and any reform shouldn't be retrospective. Capital gains tax should be also discussed, as well as introducing a foreign investors' stamp duty surcharge in Tasmania to make housing more affordable to locals. Other measures to cool the residential real estate market, like Singapore's additional stamp duty on investment properties, should also be studied and considered.

## Hobart needs a strategic plan

Hobart is facing an unprecedented number of big planning decisions including whether to allow a cable car up the mountain, how best to develop Macquarie Point, whether to invest in light rail, how high to allow buildings, further development at MONA, UTas's expansion into the city and how to reduce traffic congestion. Yet Hobart is the nation's only capital city without a strategic plan. Andrew is urging the State Government to restore the position of a State Architect to oversee a detailed strategy for greater Hobart. A greater Hobart city plan would help address urban sprawl, population growth and traffic congestion and set height limits to deal with high-rise developments. It would also improve Hobart's chances of securing federal support to fund light rail and the UTas STEM project.

Macquarie Point



Royal Hobart Hospital



Hobart light rail



STEM facility



## RHH rebuild

The Royal Hobart Hospital is struggling to cope with patient demand. The failure of the State Government to adequately resource the RHH is illustrated in the queues of ambulances waiting to access the overflowing emergency department and the loss of the hospital's accreditation for psychiatric medical training.

At least the rebuild is progressing. The first of two 120m-tall cranes is ready to help build the new ten-story inpatient precinct known as K-Block. The second crane was due to arrive as this newsletter went to print. This building will deliver 250 beds, seven more operating and procedure rooms, a helipad and a new hyperbaric chamber. Andrew secured \$340m in federal funds for the RHH redevelopment following the 2010 election and another \$325m for the Tasmanian health system in 2012.



100% Independent

## Andrew Wilkie on...



### Health

Medicare should be free and accessible. Much greater investment is needed in wellness, primary, allied and hospital services. The cuts to GPs, dental, optometry and pathology must be reversed in full.



### Education

Australia is a fortunate country and can afford to have the best education system in the world. The needs-based Gonski reform still needs to be implemented **IN FULL** and funding increased to \$5bn a year as recommended by David Gonski.



### Universities

The previous federal Labor government's \$4bn cut to universities must be reversed and this Liberal government's plan for higher fees and accelerated student loan repayments abandoned.



### Science and research

Hobart's reputation as a global centre of excellence for science and research must be safeguarded. A good start would be restoring the hundreds of positions axed at CSIRO and at the Australian Antarctic Division under this and the previous government.



### Jobs

Tasmania's unemployment remains stubbornly high, especially among our youth. Economic growth must be encouraged, including by further reducing transport costs across Bass Strait and ensuring Tasmania gets its fair share of defence contracts.



### Penalty rates

Andrew strongly supports penalty rates which are paid to some of Australia's lowest-paid and youngest workers for working nights, weekends and public holidays. Many people, especially young workers, rely on penalty rates to earn a living wage and removing penalty rates would push some into poverty.



### Government pensions and payments

Pensions and payments need to be increased to keep pace with the cost of living especially for students, unemployed, carers and the disabled. The Centrelink debt recovery program must be axed and replaced with one that is timely, accurate and fair.



### Older Australians

Older Australians deserve a better deal, including those on the Age Pension, self-funded retirees, Commonwealth and State superannuants and those on defined benefit pensions. Super changes must never be retrospective. And the \$1.2bn cut to aged care must be reversed.



### Light rail

Restoration of passenger rail from Hobart to at least Granton will link communities, reduce congestion, save money and help clean up the environment.



### National security

Governments have a responsibility to keep us safe. But decisions must be sensible, so our troops should be withdrawn from the Middle East and Afghanistan. And politicians must not overreach, as they have done with some security laws including mandatory metadata retention.



### Animal welfare

Andrew has attempted repeatedly in the Parliament to ban live animal exports because the trade is systemically cruel and not in Australia's economic self-interest. The cruelty in racing, pet breeding and industrial food production must also be cracked down on.



### Gambling reform

Andrew continues to push tirelessly for gambling reform and has introduced legislation into the Federal Parliament repeatedly that would establish mandatory pre-commitment and \$1 maximum bets on poker machines.



### Mental health

The mental health system urgently needs reform and much greater government investment. Indeed it needs the same level of funding as other areas of medicine but currently receives only about half in relative terms.



### Marriage equality

The legislated discrimination in the Marriage Act must be fixed to allow same-sex couples to wed. But churches should be allowed to continue to decide who they marry. Andrew has never supported holding a plebiscite or postal vote on marriage equality and believes that Parliament should simply amend the Marriage Act, just as it did in 2004 when it limited marriage to between a man and a woman.



### Asylum seekers

Australia must give protection to those people genuinely fleeing persecution. Andrew opposes the Labor and Liberal policies of mandatory detention, offshore processing and towbacks. He has asked the International Criminal Court to consider whether Australia's asylum seeker policy constitutes crimes against humanity.



### Housing

Federal funding for affordable housing should continue and the National Rental Affordability Scheme must be reinstated. There also needs to be sensible reforms to make purchasing a property more affordable for first-home buyers and those trying to re-enter the market. Negative gearing, capital gains tax and stamp duty rates all need to be critically reviewed.



### Environment

Andrew supports strong action on climate change, a permanent ban on fracking, effective protection for Tassie's forests, the banning of super trawlers and a moratorium on salmon farming expansion. A price should be put back on carbon. And Australia needs to be on a credible pathway to 100% reliance on renewable energy and net zero carbon pollution.



### Paying for all this

The Budget must be in balance over the economic cycle. To help achieve this additional revenue needs to be raised, for example with a super profits tax on rich corporations like the banks, and the winding back of fossil fuel subsidies. Wasteful expenditure, for instance offshore processing and doubling the submarine fleet, needs to be reined in. The tens of billions of dollars in proposed tax cuts for large corporations should be redirected into health and education.



## NDIS teething problems

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a historic reform that will improve the lives of thousands of Australians with a disability, empowering them to decide what support and equipment they need. However there are teething problems, with participants and their carers reporting an impenetrable bureaucracy that is leaving them at wits' end and out of pocket thousands of dollars.

To access funding, participants need an individualised NDIS plan. However people are hitting a bureaucratic brick wall and it's taking months to even talk to a NDIS planner, let alone to activate a plan. There's no back pay, so until the plan is activated participants have to go without or pay for their own support even though they've already qualified for the NDIS. Andrew's taken these concerns to the Minister for Social Services and the Assistant Minister for Disability Services who are aware of the problems and apparently working to improve things.

**Please get in touch with the office if you need help with the NDIS.**

## Bring back the AFP

There's no excuse for Hobart remaining the nation's only capital city airport without a permanent Australian Federal Police presence. Andrew continues to press for AFP officers to be returned and met the Prime Minister



last month to explain that the threat of homegrown terrorism makes it irrelevant that there are no international flights from Hobart Airport.

Hobart Airport is an iconic high-profile facility and it

beggars belief that the Federal Government thinks budget savings are more important than public safety.

Let's be clear: Australian security agencies are competent and Australia is a relatively safe place. But the decision to remove 30 AFP officers from Hobart Airport three years ago was wrong and has been universally condemned by Tasmania Police, unions, security experts and other politicians.

In the interim Tasmania Police should have a permanent presence at the Airport and the State Government's refusal to do this is shameful.

## Should I have prostate cancer screening?

Did you know in Australia prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in men and more than 3,000 men die from it every year? Symptoms include difficulty passing urine, blood in the urine or semen and pain in the lower back, upper thighs or hips.



The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia recommends that men over age 50, or 40 with a family history of the disease, should talk to their doctor and weigh up the benefits and potential harms of getting tested.

Doctors do not recommend screening all men for prostate cancer. The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) says this is because many prostate cancers that are detected are low risk and would never have caused harm, but testing for and treating these slow-growing cancers can cause harm.

The RACGP has a brief information sheet *Should I have prostate cancer screening?* to help you have an informed discussion with your GP. Visit [www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/prostate-cancer/](http://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/prostate-cancer/)

## Battle of Beersheba commemoration



One hundred years ago on 31 October the ANZAC Mounted Division took part in the Battle of Beersheba. The Tasmanian-raised "C" Squadron, as part of the 3rd Light Horse Regiment, along with the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, attacked and cleared enemy forces from the hill Tel el Saba which protected the township of Beersheba. This enabled the 4th and 12th Light Horse Regiments to successfully conduct a mounted charge against the Turkish entrenchments.

You're invited to the commemoration of this historic battle. After the ceremony the Tasmanian Light Horse Historical Troop will demonstrate Skill-At-Arms on horseback and will re-enact the charge of Beersheba. Collector groups and Defence Reserves will provide other static displays.

**WHEN: 4:30pm Tuesday 31 October WHERE: Hobart Cenotaph**

**Bring a picnic and seating. Weather allowing, the 1987 film *The Lighthorsemen* will be screened.**

# Community notice board



We're a long way from Queensland but we can still help stop the Adani coalmine that will add to climate change and the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef.

To be part of the solution go to [www.stopadani.com](http://www.stopadani.com).

Visit [www.facebook.com/ClimateActionHobart/](https://www.facebook.com/ClimateActionHobart/) to find out when the next Hobart #Stopadani honkathon is on.

Andrew is doing his bit. Last month he joined Adam Bandt and Cathy McGowan to vote to call on the Government to stop the Adani coal mine. Disgracefully the major parties voted to support dirty coal.



## Fix pension poverty

Many older Australians struggle to make ends meet on the Age Pension. The Benevolent Society will hold a community meeting about the adequacy of the Age Pension in Hobart later this year. It would also love to hear from people interested in joining its Fix Pension Poverty campaign, which will call for the establishment of an expert Age Pension tribunal to review pension rates and provide a fair and decent standard of living for older Australians.

To hear details as they're announced, register at [www.fixpensionpoverty.org.au](http://www.fixpensionpoverty.org.au)

## Neighbourhood Watch

Are crime prevention and community safety important to you? Would you like to make a difference in your community?



Neighbourhood Watch Tasmania.

Neighbourhood Watch Tasmania Inc is seeking motivated and skilled people to join the board of management which meets quarterly and supports all of groups in the state.

Please contact state president Jan Dunsby [nhwta@gmail.com](mailto:nhwta@gmail.com) or 0419 328 469.

## Enough is enough



Andrew continues to campaign to reduce the noise and pollution caused by vehicles on the Southern Outlet. He has met with concerned local residents who report the noise and pollution have become worse due to increased traffic. He has also lobbied state MPs including the Premier Will Hodgman and Opposition Leader Rebecca White asking them to commit to addressing the public health and safety matter before the state election. He has also contacted Tasmania Police suggesting a greater police presence and more speed cameras, and the Environment Protection Authority about the noise pollution.



## Keep me posted

Many service providers and banks have started charging a fee for posting customers' bills, tax invoices and statements. This accelerating trend puts a financial burden on the most vulnerable members of our community.

Andrew has introduced a Private Member's Bill that would ban companies from charging a fee for paper bills and switching customers to electronic bills without their consent. More than three million Australians are not online and the most digitally-excluded groups are older people, people with a disability, low-income earners and new Australians. Tasmania is the least digitally-included state according to the Telstra Digital Inclusion Index.

Join the campaign at [www.keepmeposted.org.au/what-can-i-do/](http://www.keepmeposted.org.au/what-can-i-do/)

## Protect human rights

The Tasmanian Human Rights Act Campaign is calling for human rights legislation to be passed in the next term of the State Parliament. It believes better protection of human rights will help build a more inclusive and prosperous Tasmania.

Andrew supports this campaign and also last month introduced legislation in the Federal Parliament that would enshrine a Bill of Rights in Australian law.



To get involved or learn more visit [www.tashumanrightsact.org](http://www.tashumanrightsact.org)

## Donate to keep kids in school

St Francis' Flexible Learning Centre at Chigwell is a registered secondary school for young people who have completely disengaged from mainstream education most commonly due to childhood trauma. It's seeking donations (which are tax deductible) and goods (such as clothing, sporting equipment, technology, curriculum resources etc) to support the amazing young people who have experienced significant life adversity. Please contact administration officer, Tracy, on 0427 249 286.

## Want to get in touch with Andrew?

- Feel free to drop by the office at **188 Collins Street Hobart**
- Phone **6234 5255**
- Email [andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:andrew.wilkie.mp@aph.gov.au)
- Post **GPO Box 32 Hobart 7001**
- See him at his **mobile office**
- Facebook at [www.facebook.com/andrewwilkiemp](https://www.facebook.com/andrewwilkiemp)
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[www.andrewwilkie.org](http://www.andrewwilkie.org)

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