



9th of August, 2019

Hi there,

Here's an update of what I've been doing during the past month in Parliament and across the electorate of Northern Metropolitan Region, and how you can get involved in community activities.



Public hearings into a spent convictions scheme

This week I traveled to Heywood in regional Victoria for a public consultation on country for the Legal and Social Issues Committee's [Inquiry into a Legislated Spent Convictions Scheme](#). It was an extraordinary experience and I would like to

acknowledge that it was held on the lands of the Gunditjmarra and pay my respect to their elders, past present and emerging.

President of the Legislative Council, Shaun Leane and I were warmly welcomed by Elders of the [Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation](#) and representatives from [Woor-Dungin](#) before travelling out on country with both organisations, as well as representatives from Woor-Dungin's [Criminal Record Discrimination Project](#) and the [Victorian Aboriginal Children and Young People's Alliance](#).

As part of the visit, we were treated to a brief look at the gorgeous Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), located 350km South-West of Melbourne. Established as an IPA in 2003, Tyrendarra's beautiful landscape was transformed 6600 years ago by an ancient Aboriginal settlement who built an extraordinary aquaculture system which has been in continuous use ever since by the Gunditjmarra people, recently added to the [UNESCO World Heritage list](#).

We then spent the afternoon hearing people's stories and how having a spent conviction scheme will influence a better outcome in employment and out-of-home carers.

I'd like to sincerely thank the people who joined us to tell their story and I hope that once a spent conviction scheme is introduced, we can take some serious steps towards addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal people in our justice system.



Homelessness Breakfast

This week was Homelessness Week and I spent yesterday morning with the wonderful team at [St Mary's House of Welcome](#) in Fitzroy, a community support service which helps people who are experiencing homelessness, poverty and mental illness.

I helped serve a lovely breakfast of porridge, toast, sausages, fruit and yoghurt. Almost all of the food they provide is donated or recovered.



The Parliament of Victoria's Legislative Council recently voted for a committee to inquire into the 'State of homelessness in Victoria' and will report back with some solid approaches and findings towards diminishing this crisis across our state.

If you've ever had a lived experience with homelessness, then the committee would greatly benefit from hearing your story. Keep an eye open for how you can contribute to the inquiry [here](#).

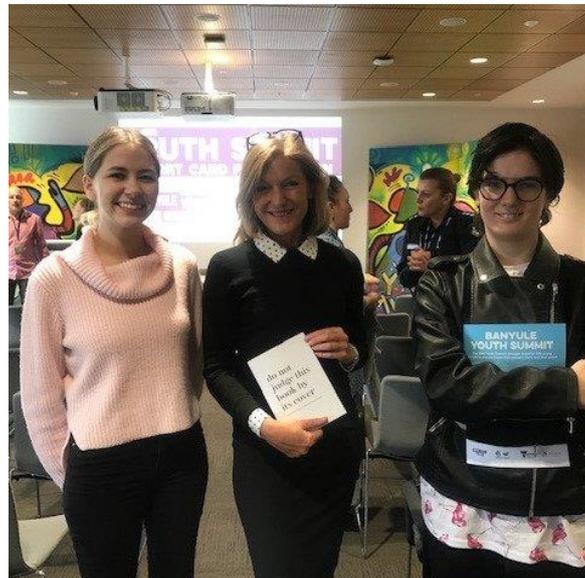
Thank you to CEO Robina Bradley and the team for having me.



Banyule Youth Summit Report Card

Every two years, the [Banyule Youth Summit](#) is held, bringing young people in Banyule together to discuss the issues that matter most to them and to formulate recommendations to [Banyule City Council](#) to address them. In the alternating years, they get together to assess how the council is dealing with their recommendations.

To the council's credit, they had taken clear steps to addressing the key asks of last year's summit and as much as possible, have included young people's input in how they were delivered.



It was particularly good to see the production of a book entitled 'do not judge this book by its cover' (*in photo above*), which challenges gender stereotypes by sharing experiences of young people who can be themselves without stereotypes or who do not identify with the gender assigned at birth.

Watch the [video](#) to get more highlights of the report card.



Mental Health Walk

📷: *Dr Ruth DeSouza and MP Fiona Patten being interviewed by Rebecca Thorpe during the #CroakeyGO. Photo by Dr Tess Ryan*

[North Western Melbourne PHN](#) brought people from a range of backgrounds together to walk and talk about mental health. We followed in the footsteps of a patient trying to navigate the mental health system - which can be like a maze and that's certainly what it felt like.

We started at [Victorian Aboriginal Health Service](#), down Nicholson to [St. Vincent's Hospital](#), across to [Drummond Street Services](#) and back up Rathdowne St to [Carlton Family Medical Centre](#).



Thanks [Marie McInerney](#) for the snap! (*above*)

We listened to people's experiences on the ground - patients, carers and service providers and the challenges they deal with every day. It was great to listen and make connections with other people with an interest in mental health, because the only way to make improvements to the mental health system is with a coordinated approach.



Upfield corridor public forum

Thanks to the Upfield Corridor Coalition for hosting an excellent community forum to discuss how we might help achieve their vision for the elevated rail along the Upfield line.

I was very impressed with the amount of work that has been done to present a united community vision, along with their own design proposals. Missing from the meeting was the member for Pascoe Vale, Lizzie Blandthorn and Kevin Devlin, CEO of the Level Crossing Removal Authority.

Unfortunately, many of the group's questions remain unanswered. This is a genuine community group trying to engage with decision makers and who are bringing considered and thoughtful proposals to the table.



Precinct Pulse



Revitalise Nicholson St - Traders and Residents Meeting

I attended a meeting with traders and residents alongside Yarra City Councillors Misha Coleman, Jackie Fristacky and Bridgid O'Brien at the Empress hotel to discuss local concerns and some ways we can improve things for 'Nicholson Village', the stretch of Nicholson St between Alexandra Parade and Brunswick Road.

We discussed the high number of vacant shops, graffiti/amenity of the area, speed limits and tram works providing for accessible stops. The area has seen a significant change in the retail mix over the last five years and this has had a big impact on how the area gets used.

I look forward to taking some of the things we discussed to parliament to seek action from the government on a few things which will compliment what council is doing to improve the area.



Carlton North Farmers Market

It was fantastic to get out and about with constituents at the Carlton North Farmers Market last weekend to chat to people about ... whatever they wanted to chat about!

Being available to talk to while people are going about their Saturday is a great way for me to get a sense of how people are going and what matters to them. I find that when people have a bit of time to stop and have a conversation, they often do and really great things can come from having those conversations.

If you attend a farmers market in Northern Metro you think I should visit, [email me](#) and let me know!

Join me at upcoming events:

Is it time to legalise drugs? **Join the Discussion**
Melbourne Town Hall Sept 9

With Antony Loewenstein, Mick Palmer, Julian Burnside, Greg Barns

Host **Jon Faine** **Fiona Patten** **Laura Turner** **Derryn Hinch**

The image is a promotional poster for a discussion event. It features a yellow background with a red banner at the top left containing the text 'Is it time to legalise drugs?'. To the right of the banner, the text 'Join the Discussion' is written in bold black, with 'Melbourne Town Hall Sept 9' below it in red. Underneath, the names of the speakers are listed: 'With Antony Loewenstein, Mick Palmer, Julian Burnside, Greg Barns'. At the bottom, there are four portraits of the speakers: Jon Faine (labeled 'Host'), Fiona Patten, Laura Turner, and Derryn Hinch. Their names are written in red below their respective portraits.

Is it time to legalise drugs?

Join me and ABC Radio host Jon Faine as he heads an all-star panel of community leaders and public figures, for a no-holds-barred discussion about legalising drugs at the Melbourne Town Hall on Sept 9.

Panel Guests:

- **Fiona Patten** – Politician and head of Parliamentary Cannabis Inquiry
- **Antony Loewenstein** – Author new book Pills Powder and Smoke
- **Derryn Hinch** – Media personality, ex-politician and journalist
- **Julian Burnside AO** – QC, human rights lawyer and Greens candidate
- **Laura Turner** – A Senior Channel Nine journalist and Odyssey House Ambassador
- **Mick Palmer AO** – Former Australian Federal Police Commissioner
- **Greg Barns** – Barrister, author and Political Commentator

Guest Speakers:

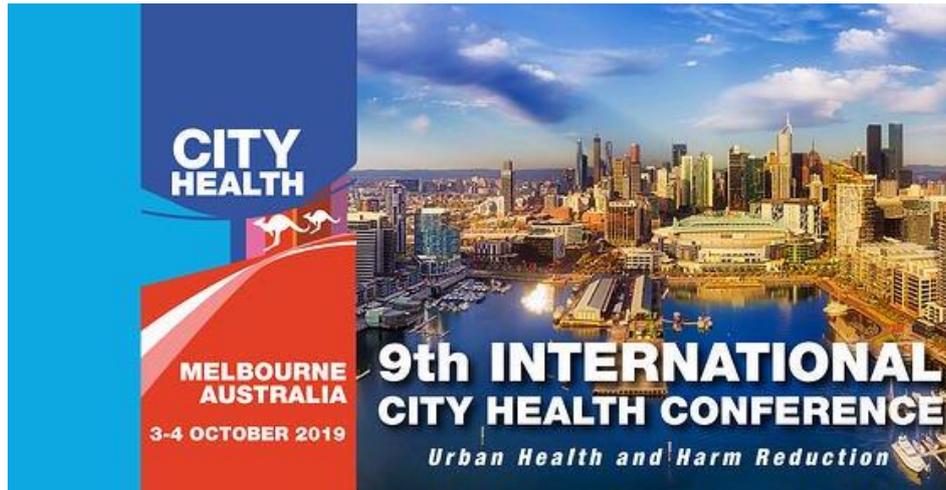
Antony Loewenstein, the internationally bestselling author, will speak about legalising and regulating drugs, the premise of his new book, Pills, Powder, and Smoke: Inside the Bloody War on Drugs.

Laura Turner, Senior Channel Nine award-winning journalist, will tell her story of personal loss due to the war on drugs.

[Tickets Available NOW!](#)

There will also be audience Q&A, book sales, book signing and information tables from Australia's leading Alcohol and Other Drug NGO's including the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, Odyssey House and many others.

Join us at the Town Hall for a fascinating insight into this urgent issue.



City Health International: major harm reduction conference comes to Melbourne

This October, I'm excited to be welcoming over 200 health, policy, legal and consumer experts and advocates to Melbourne for the ninth [City Health International conference](#), where I'm honoured to be delivering the keynote, alongside speakers including Geoff Gallop, Alex Wodak, Rebecca Ruwhiu-Collins and David Swenor.

You know I'm a proud campaigner for the benefits harm reduction brings individuals and communities, whether through my work on the [Medically-Supervised Injecting Centre](#), or on [improving Australia's policy on drugs](#) and [safer nicotine products](#).

During the packed [programme](#), we'll debate a range of ideas, from the ethics and politics of harm reduction, to the use of take-home naloxone, indigenous harm reduction in smoking, and reducing binge drinking.

It all takes place on 3 – 4 October at the Citadines on Bourke St, Melbourne. Hosted by the [Progressive Public Health Alliance](#), delegate places are available from \$175 for NGOs, students and consumers.

[Book tickets here.](#)

Have a wonderful weekend,

Fiona Patten MP

Connect with Fiona



fionapatten.com.au

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