



*11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2021*

Hi there,

The recent unexpected lockdown of Victoria has taken a toll on both individuals and businesses in our community. The fact that our lives are so wildly changed in the course of one Victorian Government press conference is unsettling.

Of course, Victorians saw it coming the days prior to the announcement. Word was rumbling around the city and state for everyone to ready themselves for some bad news, and whilst that may have braced some for the shock that was to come, it doesn't make it any easier.

Locking down isn't fun, but as we saw from the initial quick infections it was something we simply had to do. The nature of this virus is unpredictable and until we have high levels of vaccinations in our community, restrictions may occur again – I hope not though.

I had my vaccination as soon as I could. I encourage everyone who is eligible to do the same. It's the way we will, one day, get back to normal.

**COVID-19 UPDATES:**

Check [here](#) for the most up-to-date information and advice from Victoria's Chief Health Officer.





## Use of Cannabis Inquiry

The Inquiry into Cannabis Use in Victoria has been hearing from a multitude of organisations with a wide variety of views in the last few months. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs, La Trobe University, Victoria Legal Aid, the Health and Community Services Union, the National Drug Research Institute, Drug Free Australia, the Departments of Education and Training, Health as well as Justice and Community Safety.

The ACT is the first and only jurisdiction in Australia to legalise cannabis possession, so it was great that members of the Legal and Social Issues Committee got to hear from ACT Labor backbencher [Michael Pettersson MLA](#) who introduced the historic legislation, and Devin Bowles from the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association, about the territory's laws which regulate the personal use and cultivation of cannabis.

Put it this way – the sky hasn't fallen in in the ACT following the introduction of these laws. You keep update to with the inquiry and see transcripts [here](#).



## Make a nomination for Victorian Senior of the Year

It's time to nominate for the Victorian Senior of the Year! These awards are our chance to say thank you to older Victorians who volunteer and make tireless contributions to their community.

The awards also recognise community organisations or businesses that create age-friendly communities through inclusion and active ageing.

You can fill out a nomination form [here](#).



## Bail Laws Need Urgent Reform

For Reconciliation Week at the end of May, nearly 40 human rights and legal groups sent a damning letter to the Victorian government over Indigenous incarceration rates. The called for urgent reform of our draconian bail laws, which are among the most punitive in Australia.

In April, a record 44% of prisoners were on remand — that is — they had not been

found guilty of the crime they were arrested for. The overrepresentation of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters in the justice system is a national shame.

I spoke about it in Parliament for National Sorry Day. You can see it [here](#).



## Facebook Live with Andrew Denton June 18

Ahead of the anniversary that will mark two years of Voluntary Assisted Dying in Victoria, tireless VAD advocate Andrew Denton will join me to discuss and reflect on Victoria's laws and the wider VAD movement across the country.

Join in the conversation on Friday June 18 at 11:15am on my [Facebook Page](#).



## Be a Good Friend Will Ya?

[Friends for Good](#) is volunteer-driven charity assisting Australians who are experiencing loneliness. At the moment, they need more volunteers to join their FriendLine phone service team in Northcote.

If you love a chat and have 2-3 hours per fortnight to spare please get in touch with them



via [admin@friendsforgood.org.au](mailto:admin@friendsforgood.org.au) or for more information on how you can get involved visit [www.friendsforgood.org.au](http://www.friendsforgood.org.au)



## Banyule Grants

Each year Banyule Council runs a grant programs to help local groups, individuals and businesses deliver projects that will make Banyule a better place to live.

Whether you've got a bright idea to connect community members, create a more sustainable municipality, bring artworks to the neighbourhood or need help to repair and maintain equipment and facilities for the community to enjoy, you'll be able to pitch for a cash injection to help you bring your idea to life.

Find out what grants are open [here](#).



# Yarra Council Extends Temp Outdoor Dining Until October

Yarra City Council has approved an extension to its temporary outdoor dining program until the end of October.

The temporary program has received an overwhelming approval rating of 95 per cent from residents and business owners, with local traders recognising the positive outcomes it provides as part of our COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

Since the temporary outdoor dining program was introduced, Yarra has created over 485 additional outdoor dining spaces including 150 new footpath trading areas, 200 extensions to existing footpath trading, 130 on-street parklets and 8 large-scale outdoor dining spaces created through road or laneway closures.



## Short Stories in Moreland

Creators of all ages are invited to enter the 2021 Moreland City Libraries Short story competition. Submit an entry that is written in 500 words or less, recorded or filmed in 5 minutes or less, around the theme 'Escape from Lockdown!'

Entry forms are available at all Moreland City Libraries More info [here](#).

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## National Homeless Collective Raffle

Have you got your ticket yet for National Homeless Collective's Raffle? Net proceeds of the raffle will be in support of National Homeless Collective to create solutions to complex issues arising from homelessness, domestic violence, and social disadvantage.

Tickets are strictly limited, so click the link below for your chance to WIN this amazing prize!

- ✎ Return Airfares to Townsville from your nearest major capital city
- ✎ Scheduled helicopter transfers ex Townsville, for two guests
- ✎ 5 nights North Beachfront Suite accommodation
- ✎ All gourmet meals
- ✎ Selected wines, beers, spirits, and soft drinks
- ✎ All-inclusive minibar and gourmet snacks
- ✎ A daily curated Orpheus experience – snorkeling, fishing, island cruise or nature-based guided activity
- ✎ Unlimited use of motorised dinghies, paddleboards, kayaks, catamaran, snorkeling equipment and light fishing gear
- ✎ Dining with the Tides dinner, for two guests
- ✎ \$200 Gwandalan Day Spa credit

Plus there are 10 runner-up \$350 Coles Myer Vouchers to be won! Get your tickets [here!](#)

*I want to wish you all a safe and enjoyable long weekend. Stay safe, wear a mask and I'll speak to you soon!*

Fiona Patten MP