



NEWS FROM FIONA PATTEN MP

December 14th, 2021

THE GOOD TRUMPS THE BAD & THE UGLY

Hi there,

Hello, festive season greetings and welcome to my final newsletter of the year.

With Parliament in summer recess and covid vaccination rates in excess of most other places, it's great to be able to get out and talk directly with people throughout the community, to visit some of the projects and spaces that make things better and fairer. I'll come back to that.

What a gruelling year it has been for everyone. And it came after an absolute shocker in 2020, as the catastrophic pandemic began cutting its cruel swathe across the world.

LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO GET A BIT BETTER. THANK YOU.

But there is reason to be optimistic as we crest 2022. Because of you.

Yes, there have been some disappointing, dangerous protests in recent weeks, fuelled by extremists and by misinformation, some of it put about and shamefully encouraged by politicians, as the Parliament put in place proper

legislation to prevent the Government from repeatedly extending a state of emergency.

I am proud to have driven – with a few other members of the crossbench - that imposition of transparency and accountability on the Government.

I am sad, though, that some people saw fit to make death threats, rape threats, sniper threats, and to vandalise my office, abuse my staff and menace me in the street.

That is not ok. That is not us. With rights come responsibilities.

That aberration is dwarfed by the community spirit and effort behind the vaccination surge that gives us cause to be optimistic.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Here's a quick wrap of the stuff I've been doing, in and out of Parliament, since I last wrote to you.

KEY MEETINGS:

- With [First Step](#), a not-for-profit addiction, mental health and legal services hub in St Kilda;
- Met with [St Kilda Gatehouse](#), which provides spaces of belonging and safety for women involved in street based sex work in St Kilda, and with young women and girls affected by sexual exploitation. Many of these people are experiencing addiction, homelessness, mental illness, poverty, domestic violence, abuse or social isolation;
- Attended end-of-year event for the [Health and Community Services Union](#), an integral part of the pandemic frontline to which the community owes so much.
- Toured the fantastic facilities of the State Netball Centre and hearing how netball can play a crucial role in the community's recovery.
- I also caught up with a range of organisations interested in the Loneliness portfolio, including the AMA.
- Online international summit of UNITE – the Global Parliamentarians Network to End Infectious Diseases. Twenty international organisations;

110 speakers; more than 150 policymakers and representatives from 12 parliamentary networks.



PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES

- [Equal Opportunity \(Religious Exceptions\) Amendment Bill 2021](#)
- [Casino and Gambling Legislation Amendment Bill 2021](#)
- [Windfall Gains Tax and State Taxation and Other Acts Further Amendment Bill 2021](#)

MEMBERS STATEMENTS

- [Pill testing](#) (to minimise harm caused by organised criminals profiteering from the back market caused by blanket prohibition of some substances);
- [Save our scene](#) (to congratulate the Save Our Scene group, which recently secured \$20 million in support to save live music in Victoria and in Northern Metropolitan. I was happy to champion this cause directly to the Minister for Creative Industries);

ADJOURNMENT MATTER

- [Women's sexual and reproductive health](#) (seeking the Minister for Health, to widen the scope of the 2021–25 Women's Sexual and

Reproductive Health plan to include surgical abortion and treatment for menstrual issues, endometriosis and menopause).



LIFE SAVERS. THANK YOU.

News media, by definition, presents a distorted view of the world – news is mostly reported precisely because it is not the norm.

The truth is that most people get up each day and treat themselves and others with kindness, honesty, and respect.

And so it was with the collective response to the pandemic, which is now becoming a manageable epidemic, rather than an unshackled mass-killer.

Death rates in other international metropolises have been up around 2000 per million. Here, that was about 35 per million. Take, if you will, a moment to think of that and feel pride in your role in saving so many lives, in sparing so many families from loss and grief.



I FEEL AN ELECTION COMING ON

We're heading into an election year. If your elected representatives are to truly serve you - to genuinely focus on public interest rather than personal, factional, party, vested or even corrupt interests – the battle for your vote should be a contest of ideas.

Not a series of populist scare campaigns and misrepresentations. Not a litany of rorts and vote-buying. Not a petty personal popularity competition. Not a whatever-it-takes fight driven by a self-serving lust for power.



FOR THE RECORD

The free market for ideas is ultimately about public policy, about making the joint a little better and fairer.

So, I want to, very briefly recap public policies I've delivered or been key to since I was elected:

- [Justice Inquiry](#)
- [Foster care leaving age raised to 21](#)
- [Pandemic-specific legislation](#)
- [Health Care Workers' pay rise](#)
- [Lower covid fines for children](#)
- [Spent convictions scheme](#)
- [Sex work decriminalisation](#)
- [Reform of Victoria's anti-discrimination laws](#)
- [\\$20m for live music to help the industry survive the pandemic](#)
- [Equality of religions – reform pending](#) (Government's commitment to me) to replace the Lord's Prayer with a more secular and inclusive start of Parliamentary sittings in both houses
- [Assisted dying](#)
- [Abortion clinic exclusion zones](#)
- [Safe injecting spaces](#)
- [Cannabis Inquiry and likely drug law reform](#)
- [Government support for a dedicated portfolio for loneliness](#)

FOR THE FUTURE

It's better to show than tell – and the record above shows the Reason Party and I honour our responsibility to work with the government and opposition to produce public-interest legislation. We do so without fear or favour.

Here's a taste of our agenda, should you place your trust and faith in me to push for your wellbeing for another four years:

1. [Sensible Drug Reform](#)
2. [Serious About Mental Health](#)
3. [Accountable Honest Politicians](#)
4. [Transparent Taxable Religion](#)
5. [Bold Business and Innovation](#)
6. [Sex and Censorship](#)
7. [Modern Criminal Justice](#)

8. [Positive Ageing](#)
9. [More Affordable Housing](#)
10. [Tackling Homelessness](#)
11. [Delivering on Energy Affordability](#)
12. [Delivering on Environment Protection](#)
13. [Aboriginal Affairs](#)
14. [Healthy Children](#)
15. [Youth at Risk](#)
16. [Mature Political Dialogue](#)
17. [Efficient Public transport](#)
18. [Removing Barriers to Equality](#)
19. [Secure and Safe Society](#)
20. [Future Focused Schools](#)
21. [Education for life](#)
22. [Outer Suburban Liveability](#)
23. [Tackling Poker Machines](#)
24. [Priority Walking and Cycling](#)
25. [Real Public Health](#)
26. [Vibrant Accessible Arts](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read an integral part of my transparency and accountability to you. Those two principles guide everything I seek to do, inside the Parliament and throughout our community. Always will.

And I thank you for your support and wish each of you a gentle and safe holiday season. I hope, with some good reason, to share a better year with you in 2022.

Fiona
