

Helen Haines MP



INDEPENDENT FEDERAL MEMBER FOR INDI



Indi Newsletter

March 2020 | Edition 1

Rebuilding after the bushfires

The Upper Murray and Alpine bushfires were a frightening ordeal for many of us. I've been on the ground since the beginning of January meeting people affected by the emergency and who are now rebuilding.

In community relief centres I met hundreds of volunteers and people donating to help their neighbours. I witnessed the professional work of our emergency services first-hand.

BlazeAid and Australian Defence Force, service clubs and sporting clubs, among others, have helped in rebuilding fences and clearing trees. So many ordinary people did extraordinary things - and continue to do so.

The fires have had a big impact on our agriculture, viticulture, small businesses and tourism sectors. It's my top priority to make sure our community has what it needs to get back on its feet. I have been working with the federal government to secure:

- **\$1 million grants to Towong and Alpine councils, and additional \$200,000-\$275,000 grants to Alpine, Indigo, Mansfield, Towong, Wangaratta and Wodonga councils for bushfire recovery needs**
- **Access to the disaster recovery allowance (income support) for people in these bushfire-affected areas**
- **Access to primary producer grants of up to \$75,000, small business grants of up to \$50,000 and concessional loans of up to \$500,000**

In January, I hosted Health Minister Greg Hunt, where he committed extra funding for mental health workers in Corryong and the Upper Murray. In February, Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management Minister David Littleproud joined me to visit bushfire-affected Towong and Alpine shires to understand the reality of the fires' impact on the ground.

I have organised visits from the National Bushfire Recovery Agency, the first by Major General Andrew Hocking on March 13, and the next by Agency national co-ordinator Andrew Colvin on April 15-16, when he will meet with local councils, business, farming, emergency services and community representatives in our bushfire-affected areas.

The recent rain has given us great hope but there is much work still to be done.



TOP: Hearing from volunteers on January 2 about support for people seeking help at Corryong Relief Centre. **BELOW:** With Federal Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management Minister David Littleproud MP and Carol Fair on February 22 at the Fairs' Cudgewa Hotel – an impromptu relief centre for the Cudgewa community in the worst of the bushfire.

The National Bushfire Recovery Agency provides detailed information about disaster recovery help and how to find it. In Indi, the agency website should be your first point of contact to find help or support.

bushfirerecovery.gov.au

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ABOVE: With Trudi Ryan in Beechworth court house, where she authorised *The Beechworth Principles* petition as chief petitioner

Setting a bar for the Federal Integrity Commission

Millions of Australians are appalled by the 'sports rorts' scandal. It's no wonder that people think politics is broken, and that our political system can no longer solve the real issues.

If you feel this way, you understand why we need an Integrity Commission with teeth that can hold Government to account.

In February, in front of a 200-strong crowd, I launched the *Beechworth Principles*. This is a simple set of five principles that an Integrity Commission must meet.

I will do everything I can to make sure the Government's Integrity Commission meets these standards. We demand no less.

I need your help to show the Government what we want in a Federal Integrity Commission. You can sign the petition or visit my website to find out more. Better politics is possible.

Will the Government's model have:

- Broad jurisdiction?
- Fair hearings?
- Accountability to the people?
- A common set of rules for everybody?
- Appropriate powers to fulfill its purpose?

Sign the petition
helenhaines.org/issues/integrity

Helen's action in the 46th Parliament

52

Speeches

8

Questions
without notice

18

Meetings with
Ministers

8

Meetings with
Shadow Ministers

Received



15,030



1,004 letters

Parliamentary Committee appointments

Select Committee on Regional Australia
and Joint Standing Committee on the NBN

Parliamentary Working Group appointment

Constitutional recognition for
Indigenous Australians

Driven



29,572



ABOVE: At Albury Wodonga Health on November 22, where I called on the Government to bring forward capital works funding for specialist clinics and a new mental rehabilitation unit. Image: Mark Jesser / The Border Mail.

Albury Wodonga Health work fast-tracked

Just ahead of last year's federal election, the Coalition committed to fund a \$2.5 million specialist clinic centre and a \$12 million mental health rehabilitation unit at the Wodonga campus of Albury Wodonga Health. But the reality was this would not flow until after 2022 and would not be completed until 2025.

Late last year I worked with AWH to convince Health Minister Greg Hunt to bring forward the first \$2.5 million at its Wodonga campus. I wrote to and then spoke with Minister

Hunt in Canberra in November and then asked him about it on the floor of Parliament.

While visiting our bushfire affected communities with me on January 15, Mr Hunt answered my call and brought forward the first \$2.5 million. I'm now pressing the Government to confirm that it will also bring forward the \$12 million promise for the mental health unit. This unit is now more important than ever as we work through bushfire recovery in the North East.

\$13,510,788 flows to Indi

- **\$2.5 million** brought forward by three years for Albury Wodonga Health's new specialist clinics centre
- **\$2 million** bushfire disaster funding for Alpine and Towong councils
- **\$1.325 million** in united bushfire recovery grants to Alpine, Indigo, Mansfield, Towong, Wangaratta and Wodonga councils
- **\$500,000** for mental health nurse staffing in the Upper Murray
- **\$3 million** from the Drought Communities Program for the Rural Cities of Benalla and Wangaratta and Strathbogie council
- **\$150,000** from the Stronger Communities Program distributed to 14 projects across 13 communities in eight local government areas
- **\$122,238** from the Communities Environment Program distributed to eight projects across eight communities in seven local government areas
- **\$200,000** from the Local Schools Community Fund for 16 projects across 14 communities in eight local government areas
- **\$13,550** to support 21 Local Sporting Champions
- **\$200,000** Community Development Grant for Mansfield Armchair Cinema refurbishment
- **\$3.5 million** for Mansfield dual court stadium

In recent months, Indi community projects have been awarded:

\$485,788

from key federal community programs, including:

Stronger Communities Program

- **Alpine Shire:** Porepunkah Riverside Park shelter **\$16,000**
- **Indigo Shire:** Rutherglen Swimming and Lifesaving Club equipment, timers and marquees **\$2770**
- **Mansfield Shire:** Mansfield Soccer Club kitchen and fencing upgrades **\$18,182**

Communities Environment Program

- **Benalla Rural City:** Winton Wetlands turtle restoration pod **\$15,454**
- **Strathbogie Shire:** Warrenbayne Boho Land Protection Group paddock rescue works **\$14,318**
- **Towong Shire:** Koetong Landcare Pheasant Creek flora reserve mapping, pest and weed control **\$18,100**
- **Wangaratta Rural City:** Greta Valley Landcare southern pygmy perch farm dam refuges **\$13,637**

Local Schools Community Fund

- **Murrindindi Shire:** Kinglake Primary School cooking kitchen and garden **\$8296**
- **Wodonga City:** Wodonga Middle Years College Huon campus facilities upgrade **\$20,000**



NDIS: The Tune Review

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is one of my most common constituent concerns, with my office receiving about eight calls per week. The NDIS needs to deliver for people with disabilities, giving them control and choice over what they need to live full lives.

Last year I made a submission to David Tune's Review of the NDIS. I was the only parliamentarian to do so. The aim of the review was to make suggestions to improve the NDIS. I wanted to include the stories of the NDIS participants, carers and others who supported them.

One of these is Molyullah mother Lee Harris, whose son Taylor has a significant intellectual disability and requires 24-hour care. Lee told me that Taylor's NDIS plan incorrectly named him 'Andrew', and she has waited more than two years for bathroom modifications so Taylor can shower independently.

I'm pleased that the Tune Review adopted many of my recommendations, including a participants' service guarantee to empower participants to sign off on their plans. This is the most common suggestion I receive, and will now become law by July 2020.

The Tune Review has shown the Government what it must do to fix the NDIS - now it's time for action.

What's important for you and your community?

Issue [tick each of your priorities - then circle your top two]

- ☐ Federal integrity commission
- ☐ Renewable energy
- ☐ Bushfire funding and resilience
- ☐ Climate change
- ☐ Effective North East train service
- ☐ Better mobile and digital access
- ☐ More mental health support

What else is important to you?

Issue #1

Issue #2

What's best about living in Indi?

Please complete, cut off and post (no stamp required)

Your contact information

First name

Surname

Address

Town

Postcode

Mobile

Email



Community action



Walwa Bush Nursing Centre

I met Walwa nurse practitioner Sandi Grieve when she'd been working for 16 days straight. On December 30, 2019, fires bore down on the tiny Upper Murray community. All telecommunications, radio and electricity were lost. As the only place with generator power, the nursing centre rapidly became a relief centre for those defending the town. Funding for this vital service stops a few kilometres away on the NSW border. But health care has no border. I'm working with Sandi and her community so the service is well-funded and can help people both sides of the river.

With Walwa Bush Nursing Centre's Sandi Grieve and Corryong Health's Dominic Sandilands



National Broadband Network

Outdoor Education Group is a major, successful employer from its home base at Eildon in Indi's Murrindindi Shire. It provides challenging, hands-on experiences for school kids, building team and leadership skills in our high country. But in September 2019 this business couldn't communicate for seven days because its fixed wireless internet was down. OEG wasn't notified. There was no clear advice from NBN about when the disruption would end. I've worked with OEG and NBN to fix this – an example of issues that I take to the Joint Standing Committee on the NBN.

Outdoor Education Group's Richard Thornton and Ben Lovell sought my help to resolve NBN service concerns



Mansfield Armchair Cinema

Mansfield Armchair Cinema is a community social enterprise which has secured a \$200,000 federal Community Development Grant to upgrade and re-fit its facilities. My office worked with the MAC to ensure the federal government released 70 per cent of the grant funds in advance so it could buy new projection equipment. The grant also enabled the cinema to raise matching funds from the community so it can expand its role as a training facility for Mansfield Secondary College media and information technology students.

Mansfield Armchair Cinema's refurbishment includes new projection equipment and box office upgrade



Climate action

Climate change represents a serious threat to Australia, agriculture's viability and our rural communities. The House of Representatives' cross bench is working together to get the Government to develop strong national plans that will deliver a zero-carbon future, fund research, drive investment, support adaptation, roll out renewable energy and reward those who restore native vegetation and improve water quality. We're also working to ensure that progress towards these goals can be properly monitored and reported.

Fellow cross benchers Rebekha Sharkie MP and Zali Steggall MP supported my call on the Government to develop a national strategy on climate change and agriculture.

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Kinglake

National Police Remembrance Day commemorates serving officers who have lost their lives protecting our communities. I joined Victoria Police and members of the Kinglake community at St Peter's WWI Memorial Church on September 30 for the service, with Benalla acting Senior Sergeant David Gillespie.



Benalla

Benalla's Lily Butterfield is studying law at ANU. As a future public policy maker, she was selected for the Australian National Internship Program last year, working with me at Parliament House. Lily did some fine research on Home Care packages. The interns were recognised at morning tea with Speaker Tony Smith MP.



Myrtleford

It was great to welcome Myrtleford P-12 College students to the House of Representatives on November 25 – such a lively, curious group of kids with sharp questions. These are tomorrow's leaders and I've no doubt some will represent their communities at local, state or federal levels.



Wangaratta

Mount Bruno's Jan van Egmond made a generous gift of Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu* and *Young Dark Emu* to Wangaratta schools on February 14. Wangaratta's Auntie Betty Cherry-Hood with Jan and Borinya Community Partnership student Justin Leahy attended the presentation at my Wangaratta office.



Mount Beauty

I had a wonderful day out at Gather Festival in beautiful Mount Beauty on February 8. This inaugural music event brought high country communities together after a very challenging new year summer start. Ticket sales supported indigenous education scholarships through Yalari's boarding school program.



Mansfield

Mansfield rural educator Julie Aldous works to ensure and extend agriculture as a vibrant school curriculum subject in Indi and elsewhere. She's been appointed to the federal national agricultural labour advisory committee, shaping ideas to sustain an innovative, tech-savvy agricultural workforce.



Wangaratta and Stanley

Wangaratta's Christine Robbins achieved one of her ambitions when she visited Parliament while in session on November 26. Christine, who came to Australia from the United Kingdom as a young girl, was accompanied by Vicki and Herman Knopers, from Stanley, near Beechworth.



Euroa

I was so pleased to attend the opening of Euroa Men's Shed extension with Shed president John Korsten and Strathbogie council deputy mayor John Mason on January 31. Project co-ordinator Doug Morgan, Victorian Men's Shed Association director Stuart Marshall and members also attended. The project won the support of many local tradespeople.



Canberra

Indi-connected Capital Territorians who are studying or working in astrophysics, law, health, nuclear physics, digital technology, community energy and public service joined me for breakfast at Parliament House on February 5. If you would like to join us for the next gathering, please email helen.haines.mp@aph.gov.au.



Wodonga

Indi is home to a great number of serving Australian Defence Force personnel and veterans. I've been working with Hume Veterans' Information Centre leading advocate Wayne Taylor to help the Centre advance a \$5 million government commitment to develop its facilities and important support work.