

## Real Progress Getting Long Term Jobless Work



The Coalition Government got on with the job of helping unemployed Australians find work. Figures from the then Department of Employment and Workplace Relations show that the number of long-term jobless is falling – but there is still more to be done.

Long-term unemployment was at its lowest level in over 19 years and the number of people who have been jobless for 52 weeks or more has more than halved since the Coalition Government came to office. It was 72% below the peak of 329,800 in May 1993, when Labor was in power.

## Local Citizens are National Heroes



It was fantastic that five local community members were recognised for their wonderful service to their neighbours and society at large, with one receiving a Public Service Medal, on Australia Day. From helping victims of crime to providing support to parents of premature babies and from

"This was only possible because of the Coalition's strong support for small business and the responsible management of the Australian economy," Chris said.

"But the new Government can't afford to stand still. That's why the Government must ensure Australia's long term national interest by providing the economic management that brings about more jobs."

In the last Budget, the Coalition Government announced a new wage subsidy program called Wage Assist, which will provide a subsidy to employers for a minimum of 13 weeks and a maximum of 26 weeks. Up to 7000 Wage Assist places are available each year. There will also be an increased number of places in the Personal Support Program, which assists people with multiple non-vocation barriers to become job ready.

Work for the Dole, introduced by the Coalition Government, is also playing an important role in helping job seekers prepare for work.

"This is a practical way to make sure job seekers stay involved in our community while gaining practical experience – it all helps to get a job," Chris said.

saving lives in bushfires to volunteering countless hours to help out disadvantaged locals, our community can be proud of these selfless individuals. The one defining aspect of all these outstanding citizens is their community spirit and desire to go above and beyond their own needs for their fellow Australians. It can be argued we live in an era where we are often judged on what we own rather than what we give. So it is heartening when local community members remind us that our true reward is found in what we do for others, rather than what we do for ourselves.

## Parliamentary Sitting Dates for 2008

Chris thought you may be interested to know when he will be in Parliament House, representing our interests. The following dates are correct as of the date of publication.



### Winter (Budget) session

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>13 May</b>        | Budget, Both Chambers sit  |
| <b>14 to 15 May</b>  | Both Chambers sit  |
| <b>16 May</b>        | Only House of Representatives sits   |
| <b>26 to 30 May</b>  | Only House of Representatives sits, Senate Budget Estimates Monday to Thursday |
| <b>2 to 6 June</b>   | Only House of Representatives sits, Senate Budget Estimates Monday to Thursday |
| <b>16 to 20 June</b> | House of Representatives sits Monday to Friday, Senate Monday to Thursday      |
| <b>23 to 26 June</b> | Both Chambers sit  |

### Spring session

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>26 to 29 August</b>    | House of Representatives sits Tuesday to Friday, Senate Tuesday to Thursday           |
| <b>1 to 5 September</b>   | House of Representatives sits Monday to Friday, Senate Monday to Thursday             |
| <b>8 to 12 September</b>  | Non sitting days  |
| <b>15 to 19 September</b> | House of Representatives sits Monday to Friday, Senate Monday to Thursday             |
| <b>22 to 25 September</b> | Both Chambers sit   |
| <b>26 September</b>       | Only House of Representatives sits  |
| <b>13 to 17 October</b>   | House of Representatives sits Monday to Friday, Senate Monday to Thursday             |
| <b>20 to 24 October</b>   | Only House of Representatives sits, Supplementary Budget Estimates Monday to Thursday |
| <b>10 to 14 November</b>  | House of Representatives sits Monday to Friday, Senate Monday to Thursday             |
| <b>24 to 27 November</b>  | Both Chambers sit   |
| <b>28 November</b>        | Only House of Representatives sits  |
| <b>1 to 4 December</b>    | Both Chambers sit   |



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## Working for you in Aston

Authorised by Chris Pearce MP, Suite 4, Level 1, 420 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South, Victoria 3152  
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## Progress Report

March 2008

Working for you in Aston

## Letter from Chris

Dear Resident

Welcome to the first Progress Report for 2008.

I wish to place on record my appreciation to the community of Aston for re-electing me at the federal election last year. I will continue to represent our local community to the best of my ability, and I am honoured to continue to serve you.

The needs of Aston residents are always foremost in my mind. Whether in Government or in Opposition, I will continue to advocate strongly and passionately for our local community in Parliament and to the Government.

As I have caught up with our fellow community members in schools, hospitals, businesses, community groups and as individuals with concerns, I have received a clear message that we in Opposition are expected to keep the Government accountable.

It was in that spirit I agreed to become the Opposition's Scrutiny of Government Spokesman.

This role highlights waste and inefficiency in the federal government and amongst its agents. I look forward to further serving the local community and the nation in this important democratic role.

If there is any issue I can assist you with, please do not hesitate to contact me via the office details above.

Best wishes,

CHRIS PEARCE



## SOS – Save Our Knox Bowl!

Chris wrote to the Mayor of Knox City Council requesting a detailed analysis of the reasons which led Council to decommission the Knox Bowl at Lewis Park.

"Many passionate community members, particularly amongst our youth, have contacted me expressing their anger and dismay at Knox City Council for decommissioning the Knox Bowl.

"I asked Knox City Council to justify the



closure of this popular facility, which is of great benefit to many in our local community, and has been a popular site for years.

"It was my hope that Knox City Council would address these genuine concerns and reconsider their decision to permanently close the Knox Bowl at Lewis Park. I am pleased that the Council decided to consider this matter further at their February meeting."

Chris had called on Knox City Council to re-evaluate their decision to decommission this valuable public amenity, and was pleased the Council worked

towards meeting the needs of our local community.

"This issue is at the heart of what local Councils should focus on. Amenities such as the Knox Bowl mean the world to kids and their parents. A healthy, physically active and safe exercise opportunity located in the local community is an asset to be protected and renewed. It is wonderful that Council's leadership have finally listened to our passionate skateboard and BMX enthusiasts, and I heartily congratulate the local residents who stood up for their rights and ensured Council listened to the concerns of the local community.



"Local Government is about leadership and focussing on the real issues that matter to our local community. Importantly, leadership can emanate from the grassroots level and I am pleased that local community members were able to provide the leadership required to achieve a great outcome for all in the Knox Council area," Chris said.

Chris and his son Daniel meet with David Lalama (Save the Knox Bowl Spokesman), Nick Wakeling (MP for Ferntree Gully) at the Save the Knox Bowl community meeting.

## Chris Welcomes Funding Boost for Local Community Organisations

Chris has welcomed the announcement of a funding boost for the Home and Community Care (HACC) Program in Melbourne's Outer East.



The City of Knox, Knox Community Volunteers, Strathdon Community and Tabulam and Templer Homes will share in over \$3.6 million in HACC funding.

Particular emphasis has been placed on enhancing services such as personal care and respite services.

"HACC services allow frail aged people and young people with disabilities to remain in their own homes with the support of their family and carers," Chris said.

"We know the majority of people prefer to continue living in their own homes and HACC services can provide them with that option, as well as a higher level of independence.

"This financial year, the Australian Government's national allocation for HACC is more than \$1.06 billion, continuing the former Coalition Government's significant increase of funding in this area," said Chris.

## Chris Secures More Aged Care Places for Aston

Older Australians and their families living in our local community will benefit from the allocation of 23 new aged care places.



of the new aged care places. I wholeheartedly congratulate those organisations on their initiative.

"Aged Care is a service of fundamental importance. The service providers in our local community have a great responsibility. I encourage

"It's fantastic that several local aged care service providers in Aston have applied for an allocation

all local service providers, who treat our Senior Australians with the respect they have earned, to continue to come forward and apply for aged care places," Chris said.

## The Three Rs – Still the Key to Success

Every parent wants the best possible future for their children. That's why the former Coalition Government boosted funding for literacy and numeracy programs and introduced mandatory literacy and numeracy testing for every Australian child in years 3, 5 and 7.

"One of the most important ways to teach our children the basics is by respecting the crucial role of parents," Chris said.

"Children learn from their parents every day in so



many ways. It's well known that the more interest parents show, the better children perform – in primary and secondary school."

"We need to support parents in this important role in practical ways. I urge the Rudd Government to push for mandatory standards in every State and Territory," Chris said.

For more information on how parents can help their children improve literacy and numeracy skills, please visit [www.literacyandnumeracy.gov.au](http://www.literacyandnumeracy.gov.au).

## School / Community Visits to Parliament

Looking to visit Canberra this year? Want to see the House of Representatives and / or Senate in action?

Chris always enjoys seeing our local community groups and school students in our nation's capital. It is a great opportunity for all to see the workings of Parliament House. Further, Chris finds school students develop insightful observations and a greater appreciation of Australia's parliamentary



democracy after their visit to Parliament House.

If your community group or school is visiting Parliament, please let Chris know and he would be delighted to spend some time with your community group or school class. Please see the parliamentary sitting dates elsewhere in this Progress Report for when the House of Representatives and Senate sit.

## ANZAC Day nears

On 25th April, we pay homage to the men and women of our armed forces and celebrate ANZAC Day.

This day recognises the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. The term ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. The soldiers who made up the Corps took on the abbreviated title of ANZACs.

These soldiers created a proud legacy that lives on in both civilian and military communities. Australians come together and embrace 25th April as a day that unites and binds us as a community. Commemorative services are often held at dawn, which was the time of the original landing.

"On ANZAC Day we come together not to glorify war but to remember the



ultimate sacrifice made by our fellow Australians so that we may live in a free and democratic society.

This is a day of contrasts. Of solemn thought as we pause to think of those who have fallen, and of boisterous cheers for those service members marching down Swanston Street.



We see those who have served sharing laughs with their mates and we see those who have loved and lost those who have fallen shed a tear in remembrance.

More so than at any other time of the year, I believe ANZAC Day personifies the Australian spirit. I encourage all in our local community to attend a service on this very special day.

Let Us Not Forget," said Chris.