

A Strong Voice for Bendigo



Lisa Chesters MP, Federal Member for Bendigo

NEW CONTRACT FOR THALES BENDIGO

SECURING LOCAL DEFENCE MANUFACTURING JOBS



In May, the Federal Government announced we had secured local defence manufacturing jobs in Bendigo with a \$160 million contract to manufacture additional Bushmaster vehicles for the Australian Defence Force.

Bushmasters are integral to Australian Army operations. They protected and saved the lives of Australian soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and are currently protecting Ukrainian soldiers through Bushmasters provided to Ukraine by Australia.

The cutting-edge protected mobility vehicle built in Bendigo is one of Australia's best defence industry and export success stories.

The Federal Government is committed to regional industry and jobs, ensuring the production of Bushmasters in Bendigo at the Thales Australia facility.

The Thales Bendigo workers can be proud of the important contribution they make to providing a world-class capability for our soldiers and to strengthening Australia's national security.

Bendigo has a long relationship with Defence and a proud defence manufacturing history.

I'm proud to be a member of the Federal Government which is delivering jobs for Bendigo and supporting our local economy.



Lisa Chesters MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR BENDIGO



Lisa.Chesters.MP@aph.gov.au



(03) 5443 9055



Cheaper Medicines



The Federal Government is making it cheaper for people to get the medicine they need and rely on.

From September 1, some patients requiring routine medication will be able to buy two months' worth of medicine for the price of a single prescription.

Patients with a Medicare card will save up to \$180 a year if their medicine is eligible for 60-day prescribing and concession card holders will save up to \$43.80 a year per medicine.

These changes will mean fewer visits to the GP and pharmacy, saving time and saving money.

Constitutional Recognition and First Nations Voice to Parliament

Constitutional recognition through Voice is fundamentally about two things: recognition and consultation.

For 122 years our nation's founding document has failed to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and their more than 65,000 years of continuous connection to this vast land.

Locally, the Dja Dja Wurrung People have lived across this region and cared for country for thousands of years. They are the Traditional Owner Group who has fought to be recognised as the Traditional Owners of djandak, in Central Victoria.

Current policy making does not include a systematic process for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to provide advice, therefore, policy is often made for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people rather than with them.

Constitutional recognition through a Voice would enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to give advice to the Federal Parliament about laws and policies that will impact them through a simplified policy making process and structural change.

This means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are included in the law-making

process, rather than having bureaucrats and politicians deciding what is best for them.



Later this year the Australian people will have their say through a referendum to alter the Constitution to recognise the First Peoples of Australia by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in our Constitution is the best chance this country has had to address the injustices of the past and move Australia forward for everyone, and the best way to do this is to give people a voice.

It's time to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are finally recognised in our Constitution in a simple and meaningful way: through a Voice to Parliament that will ensure they are heard on the issues that affect their communities.

The 2023-24 Federal Budget delivers for local people.



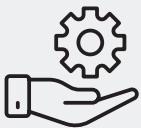
More bulk-billed GP services

From 1 November 2023, the Federal Government will triple the bulk-billing incentive that GPs will be paid if they do not charge a gap fee for patients who are children and Commonwealth concession card holders. An estimated **76,608 people in the Bendigo electorate will benefit**. This is one way we are strengthening Medicare and will help take the pressure off Bendigo Health's Emergency Department.



Help for Renters

The Federal Government is raising Commonwealth Rent Assistance for 1.1 million households across the country. This measure will **increase the maximum rate of rent assistance by 15%**, helping some households who are struggling with cost of living pressures.



Increase to Commonwealth support payments

The Federal Government is increasing the base rate by \$40 per fortnight to several working age and student income support payments like the JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance. From 20 September 2023, almost **7,000 people in the Bendigo electorate will receive this boost to their payment** helping them to pay their bills and put food on the table.

For single JobSeeker recipients aged 55-59, who are on payment for nine or more continuous months, we are extending eligibility for the higher rate – an increase of \$92.10 per fortnight.

We are also expanding access to the Parenting Payment (Single). Eligible carers will now be able to access this support until their youngest dependent child turns 14.



More Uni & free TAFE places

The Federal Government is helping more local people wanting to retrain or go to university by funding more free-TAFE courses. There will be 300,000 new Fee-Free TAFE places across Victoria to help people seeking new skills in priority areas.



Energy Bill Relief

The Federal Government is working with the Victorian Government to provide targeted electricity bill relief. **Eligible households can get an extra \$250** which your electricity provider will automatically apply to your electricity account. This will reduce the amount you owe on your next bill and be paid in instalments in 2023-24. You can check your eligibility here: <https://www.energy.gov.au/government-priorities/energy-programs/energy-bill-relief-fund>

Cheaper Child Care



From 1 July around 96% of local families with children in early education and care will be better off under the Federal Government's Cheaper Child Care Plan.

Making early education and care more affordable means children get access to critical early learning during a key time in their development, and parents – especially mothers – have more opportunity to go back to paid work if they choose to do so.

I know from talking to families in the Bendigo electorate, and my own experience with two children under 5, how expensive child care is. Over the last 8 years, child care costs increased by 41%. This expense has become a significant burden to many Australians struggling to make ends meet.

The Federal Government's changes to the child care subsidy will mean a family on the median combined income of \$120,000 with one child in early childhood education will save \$1780 in the first year of this plan. No family will be worse off.

For more information go to <https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/cheaper-child-care>

School Library Book Donations Program

There is no doubt that technology is changing the way our children learn, but I still believe there is nothing quite like reading a physical book. When I visit schools across the Bendigo electorate, children are still excited about reading and love to tell me what their favourite book is.

Since 2018 I have been donating books to school libraries across the electorate and this program has become a real passion project of mine.




Reading teaches children literacy skills, develops their imagination, and builds research skills for the future.





This year I have chosen to donate the books shortlisted for the 2022 Prime Minister's Literary Award Children's Literature category. These books were selected in recognition of the outstanding contribution they make to Australian literature and to the nation's cultural and intellectual life.



Many schools find it difficult to fundraise to purchase new books for their libraries and I am pleased to be able to donate these high quality books to our local schools for students to enjoy.

Get in touch

 Lisa.Chesters.MP@aph.gov.au  (03) 5443 9055  16 Myers Street, Bendigo 3550

 @lmchesters  Lisa Chesters MP  @lisachestersmp  lisachesters.org