

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



STEPHEN BATES MP
MEMBER FOR BRISBANE ▲

Good afternoon,

We're already charging into 2023, so I wanted to give you an update about what my team and I have been working on since my office re-opened in January.

We've had a very busy start to the year both in the community and in Parliament. In this edition of my newsletter, I'll cover our **community survey results**, some reflections and new dates of my **pop-up offices** and a run down of what's been happening in **Federal Parliament** including crucial housing and climate updates. This is among a broad range of other activities and updates that I hope you'll enjoy reading.

I'm excited about the year ahead and what we can achieve together, and look forward to catching-up with you at a pop-up office, free community BBQ, or public forum soon!

Community Engagement

ELECTORATE OFFICE

My team has now advocated for more than 750 community members who have been struggling with immigration, Centrelink, housing, aged care, health, education, development issues, and more.

We've also personally responded to over 3,300 constituent queries. I'm also proud to announce that I have formally been appointed by my Party Room colleagues as the Lower House Whip for the Australian Greens.

POP-UP OFFICES

We've held six pop-up offices in January across the electorate from Hendra to Paddington. Brisbane residents are incredibly concerned about the housing availability and affordability crisis, with rising rents and costs of living becoming out of control with no real respite in sight. They're reporting that they cannot find affordable or available GPs for essential medical care, or can't source a mental health professional for months at a time. They're sick of being impacted by excessive levels of flight noise. And they're tired of overdevelopment in their own streets and suburbs

with no commitments to public amenities like parkland and green space.

It's clear that we need government interventions to supply affordable and public housing and cap rent increases. We need to reduce the costs of living through measures like introducing dental and mental health into Medicare. We need to make our communities liveable by introducing flight caps and curfews (bringing Brisbane Airport to the same standard that Sydney and Gold Coast airports operate to), and provide ample green space and parkland like building a new waterfront park at Skyring Terrace and creating a community hub at the Stafford Bowls Club (instead of BCC's proposed racing club with pokie machines).

These issues are not just impacting the Brisbane community - they're clear examples of the systematic failures of government to put everyday people first. I've been using my position in Parliament to speak on many of these issues, and to amplify these very real experiences straight into the halls of power. You can find my speeches and more detail about the work the Greens and I have been up to in Parliament in the Parliament update.

On that note, I'll be down in Canberra for three weeks of Parliament in March, but I've still managed to squeeze in a couple pop-up offices if you missed me in January:

28TH
February

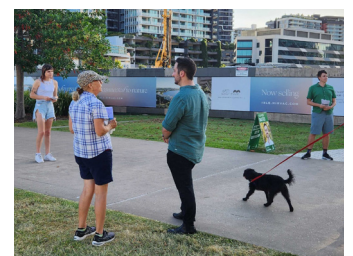
Tuesday, 4:30PM – 5:30PM

Lores Bonney Riverwalk,
Kingsford Smith Drive,
Hamilton.

18TH
March

Saturday, 9AM – 12PM

Kelvin Grove Markets,
Blamey St & Musk Ave,
Kelvin Grove.





COMMUNITY SURVEY

Our community survey received over 700 responses and we are proud to feature them in this digital newsletter update [here](#).

It was heartening that 66% signed up to volunteer during a natural disaster, which is a beautiful reminder of the strength and camaraderie of the Brisbane community.

STRONGER COMMUNITY GRANTS

Expressions of Interest are now open for the Stronger Communities Programme 8 for the Federal Electorate of Brisbane.

The Stronger Communities Programme supports the delivery of eligible small capital projects that encourage and support participation in local projects, improve local community participation and contribute to vibrant and viable communities.

We have \$150,000 available for community groups in the Brisbane Electorate, with between \$2,500 and \$20,000 available per project.

Applications for the Stronger Communities Programme will take place in three steps:

- ▶ Expression of interest (EOI) should be submitted to my office via the [google form](#) by 4pm, 21 March 2023
- ▶ Following consultation, selected applicants are then invited to complete their application process online
- ▶ Notification of successful applications and grant agreements will be issued in early July 2023

This Grant has strict eligibility criteria - Please read the [full programme guidelines](#) and FAQs before submitting your EOI. You can also contact a service run by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources with any questions you may have via [email](#), [telephone](#) or [webchat](#).

Stronger Communities Grant Funding

**OPEN NOW
FOR EOI**

Community Highlights

INVASION DAY

My biggest highlight since the last digital update was participating in the Meanjin Invasion Day rally, march and fair. It was incredible to witness First Nations community and power, and I felt privileged to be allowed into this space for the day.

The 26 of January is a day of mourning; a day to remember and acknowledge the resistance, struggle and survival of First Nations people and culture. Sovereignty was never ceded by our First Peoples, we all live, work and play on stolen land.

I was proud to see Queensland Greens volunteers, supporters and MPs providing an impactful contribution, including sound systems, marquees, water stations and food for thousands of protestors at our free community BBQ.

SYDNEY WORLDPRIDE

I had never attended a Sydney Mardi Gras before and was thrilled to be part of WorldPride in Sydney over the weekend. Pride has radical and activist roots, beginning as a protest led by trans and lesbian women of colour against police brutality at the Stonewall Inn.

While I was only down for a very short time, getting to celebrate the progress that LGBTQIA+ communities have made over decades was a very special and humbling experience.

Someone once told me that you cannot be what you cannot see. Pride is a time to be yourself and inspire others. May we all recommit ourselves to solidarity with all members of the LGBTQIA+ community. We all have the right to live our lives free of prejudice and discrimination.



Local Campaigns

STAFFORD BOWLS CLUB

In 2019, a 20-year lease was issued to Crushers League Club for the Stafford Bowls Club site, but by 2022 they indicated they were no longer able to proceed with their development, nor fulfill the conditions of the lease agreement. This included a failure to maintain the site over this three year period resulting in it becoming unkept and increasingly dilapidated.

The LNP-dominated Brisbane City Council (BCC) should have then gone back to tender for the site, but instead in October 2022 they voted to transfer the lease to Brisbane Racing Club (BRC) in a closed-door deal, without tender or community consultation. It was great to see our Greens Councillor, Jonathan Sriranganathan, fiercely oppose this decision in the Council Chambers, alongside four others.

BRC plans to install 76–78 pokie machines on this publicly-owned land within a vulnerable community. In Stafford and Stafford Heights, there are 636 government owned and managed social rental housing as of 30 June 2022, so this is not an appropriate location for a gambling club.

Local residents, namely the [Stafford Community Hub not Race Club](#) group, have done an incredible job opposing this development and demanding better for their community. Their most recent tactic was [a petition to BCC](#) and with our promotional support they were able to garner more than 900 signatures before it closed.

BCC has argued that the lease is positive for the community as BRC will be investing \$200 000 per year in the local community. However, [Stafford Community Hub not Race Club](#) has called this out,

To understand why this isn't a win for the community, let's do the numbers. Each machine is capable of earning around \$97k per year, that's \$7.3m in gaming revenue across the proposed 76 machines. A \$200k contribution back to the community is just 3% of this revenue. Brisbane Racing Club's strategic plan is to use community clubs as a diversified source of revenue to help pay down debt and invest in racing infrastructure. That means the revenue from these machines will "leak" out of the local economy.

On 9 February I wrote to [BCC](#) and the [Queensland Government](#), amplifying residents' concerns and calling out our governments' gambling problem, including advocating for the Queensland Attorney-General and Office of Liquor and Gaming (OLGR) to deny BRC a gambling license for this site.

On Thursday, I received a [response letter](#) from the Attorney-General, which stated that the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming determines applications for gaming licenses independently, and she has "no role in the decision-making process." So, my question is: If the Minister responsible for gaming regulation won't advocate for the community against damaging gaming licenses, who will? More alarmingly, I'm now hearing reports from the community that the Commissioner might waive the usual requirement for gaming license applicants to submit a 'Community Impact Statement', as well as advertising requirements seeking community comment.

Unlike the Greens, Australia's major parties have accepted more than \$9 million in donations from the gambling industry over the last two decades. In fact, political donations from the gambling industry amounted to \$2.165 million in the last year alone, representing a 40 percent increase on the previous year. Only a fortnight ago in Parliament, it was reported that the federal Labor Communications Minister who is responsible for gambling regulation, Michelle Rowlands, accepted a \$18 960 donation during her election campaign from gambling giant Sportsbet (and failed to disclose it).

This is legalised corruption, and it's caused Australians to have the world's worst average gambling losses, about \$1 000 per adult each year, leading to greater amounts of suicide, domestic violence, financial distress and financial crimes. So it's understandable that the Stafford Community feels absolutely betrayed by the LNP Council and Labor State Government regarding this site.

I'll be continuing to support local residents who want a better outcome for the Stafford community, as well as fighting to clean up our democracy. We urgently need to ban donations from dirty industries like the gambling sector, and tighten disclosure laws so people can see in real-time exactly who is pulling the strings of the parties they are voting for. I'm also calling on any residents who share our concerns about the pokies on this site to contact the [Attorney-General](#) and [OLGR](#) to advocate for a rejection of BRC's application for a gaming license.

SKYRING TERRACE PARK



More than 1000 residents have now signed my petition for a new riverfront park at 17 Skyring Terrace, Newstead.

The site is currently occupied by Riverside Industrial Sands, and was recently sold on the private market. The transfer of the property from one private owner to another should not discourage the community from fighting for this site.

My office will be keeping a close eye on any proposed plans or development applications, and will continue applying pressure on the decision-makers at all levels of government.



If you haven't already, please consider adding your support to this campaign by signing our petition [here](#). We are calling for:

- ▶ At least 50% of the site remaining undeveloped as public parkland, especially along the riverfront;
- ▶ Any development must include the completion of the Riverwalk, providing a vital active transport link between Newstead Park and New Farm Park;
- ▶ Private car parking for any development is heavily restricted, given the heavy congestion in the area and limited accessibility of the road network to this peninsula.

COMMUNITY CANTEEN

Local not-for-profit Community Canteen held a successful fundraiser on Saturday 21 January raising over \$1,700 for meals for the homeless. Hosted by Luke Furness and Gough Kettle in Newmarket, the community came out in strong support of the charity that has been operating for over a decade.

I attended as the guest speaker and spoke about the need to support the not-for-profit sector and the importance of grassroots organisations to service the areas that the government will not reach.

Mike Andreotti, a founding director of the organisation and long-time community advocate also spoke, pointing out how the organisation can make a three-course meal for \$5, so any donations really go a long way.

Community Canteen operates out of the Wesley Mission on St Pauls Terrace and the Newmarket Community Centre on Ashgrove Avenue. They prepare around 600 meals per week for domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters and community centres.

Right now, Community Canteen are calling for new volunteers to join their cook-ups at both Fortitude Valley and Newmarket, and you can also support them by donations, sponsorships, and workplace grant programs.

Further details here: communitycanteen.com.au



FLIGHT NOISE FORUM



Last Thursday night around 100 local residents attended my Flight Noise Community Strategy Meeting at the Breakfast Creek Hotel.

Thank you to everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to join our discussion, including volunteers from BFPCA, and especially Marcus for his update and presentation. I am grateful for the high level of engagement and commitment shown by our community around this serious issue.

There was consensus on the night for a protest action to be held in June as a next step in our campaign, but there will need to be further consultation with BFPCA, and our neighbours in Griffith and Ryan about the details. I will be sure to provide an update on these conversations in coming weeks.

We also recorded the evening for anyone who was interested but was unable to attend, please get in touch and we would be happy to send it to you.



Parliament Update

Right now, there are two particularly important bills the Greens are negotiating with the Labor Government about – **the Safeguard Mechanism and the Housing Future Fund**.

Over the next fortnight all households in my electorate will be receiving an update in their mailboxes about these bills, you can also get an early preview [here](#).

VOICE TO PARLIAMENT & FIRST NATIONS JUSTICE



The Greens are proud to support a Voice to Parliament and were the first party to support the full implementation of the Statement from the Heart. We are committed to Truth, Treaty and Voice.

Our Federal Party Room unanimously agreed to continue our strong campaigning for Truth & Treaty and hold the Government accountable to deliver the Statement in full, as well as the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the Stolen Generations “Bringing them Home” report. Our pressure has already secured funding to a Makaratta-style commission, and it was recently announced that the Government will start work on a Truth-Telling and Treaty Commission.

The Greens have also affirmed our support of legislation to enable a referendum for a Voice to Parliament. The Voice referendum will be an important opportunity for the country to show its support for progress for First Nations people, and the Greens will participate in the ‘yes’ campaign to deliver a strong ‘yes’ result.

We will closely scrutinise all legislation that the Government puts to the Parliament regarding a Voice. We will work with grassroots First Nations people to make sure First Nations people and their communities are consulted during this process.

On a personal note, I am also sharing the heartbreak of Lidia Thorpe departing our Party Room. She has made an extraordinary and fearless contribution to the movement and to First Nations justice in this country. I am looking forward to continuing to work with her to pursue First Nations justice and climate action in Parliament. I also welcome Senator Dorinda Cox, Yamatji-Noonjar woman and strong advocate for social justice in her community locally, globally, and nationally, into the First Nations spokesperson role for the Australian Greens.

You can see me speak on a range of topics in Parliament here:

- ▶ Lowering the Voting Age
- ▶ Raising Income Support Above the Poverty Line
- ▶ Water Safety
- ▶ In Opposition to Extending Offshore Detention on Nauru
- ▶ Access to Bulk Billing GPs
- ▶ The Rental and Housing Crisis
- ▶ Paid Parental Leave
- ▶ Housing ‘Future Fund’ Bill

LOWERING THE VOTING AGE

I introduced the first private member’s bill into the House of Representatives for 2023 to give 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote. It also happened to be my first ever private member’s bill.

We’re seeing record numbers of young people suffering with serious mental health issues because they feel frustrated and hopeless about the most pressing issues facing our nation. 16 and 17 year olds are facing a lifetime without affordable or accessible housing, healthcare and education, and they will experience the worst consequences of government inaction on the climate crisis.

Young people have proven that they are engaged by taking to the streets in protest in unprecedented numbers. Right now, they have no other option to make their voices heard. Meanwhile, public confidence in our democracy is reaching an all-time low. The 2022 federal election had the lowest turnout in a century, dropping below 90% for the first time since compulsory voting was introduced.

Studies and examples from around the world show that lowering the voting age to 16 has improved civic engagement, providing young people with a lifelong drive to participate in democracy. It’s their future at stake, and they deserve the right to hold their government accountable.

If you support this campaign, make sure you sign my petition [here](#).



OFFSHORE DETENTION

The Greens introduced 'the Migration Amendment (Evacuation to Safety) Bill 2023 into the Senate in response to Labor's extension of offshore detention of refugees and asylum seekers on Nauru.

This bill offers a solution to bring those still in offshore detention to safety and provide them with the medical care they need. Every person in offshore detention without an adverse security determination under the ASIO Act will be given the opportunity to come to Australia, where they will receive support until a durable third-country solution is secured.

The Bill has been designed specifically to fit within Labor's policy settings, and avoid the toxic refugee politics of the past two decades. But most importantly, it offers a way forward for people seeking asylum who have suffered so much for so long. Labor supported us when we moved Medevac a few years ago, and now they have a chance to work with us again to finish the task that we started.

This bill is a compassionate and practical solution to the ongoing crisis of offshore detention. It will ensure that people seeking asylum are finally treated with dignity, respect, and given the chance to rebuild their lives in safety and freedom.

We cannot ignore the plight of people seeking asylum any longer. For more than two decades, people seeking asylum have been subjected to unspeakable physical and mental trauma while in offshore detention. It is a disgrace that people are still suffering and in need of medical care. The Greens have urged all Members of Parliament to support this important piece of legislation and put an end to this suffering.

Our policy is to abolish Temporary Protection Visas and reintroduce Permanent Protection Visas for refugees, giving people the chance to rebuild their lives in Australia and putting them on a pathway to citizenship. We would end offshore detention, increase Australia's humanitarian intake to 50,000 per year, and ensure that people had the support they need to establish themselves in the Australian community.

We would also allow Australian citizens, permanent residents, and organisations to sponsor the resettlement of refugees. We acknowledge the need for ongoing, secure funding for public and community sector organisations, including

migrant-specific services, so that they can deliver effective and timely support, like education, social security, health, legal, and interpreter services, as well as post-trauma counselling when requested. You can find out more about our immigration and refugee policy [here](#).

The Australian Greens and I will continue to fight inside and outside Parliament until the camps are closed and refugees are welcomed and supported.

Add your voice to close the camps and end offshore detention now.

DONATIONS DAY

Every year on February 1st, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) releases all donation data from the previous financial year in one large chunk - with no information about which sector a donating corporation works in, or whether an individual donor represents a corporation. Some donations aren't recorded as donations, and others are split through different subsidiaries. This means that we don't know who is donating to political parties during critical times like election campaigns.

For nearly a decade, the Australian Greens have maintained the **Democracy For Sale** website to shine a light on these donations, revealing the extent to which money is running politics. From Clive Palmer's \$17M donation to himself, to the \$2M poured into the major parties by the fossil fuel sector, to a government that backflipped on big fines for bankers while donations from consultants were repaid with millions in contracts - the system is clearly broken.

\$230 million in corporate donations have been given to Labor and the LNP since 2012, including from property developers, the private health industry and fossil fuel giants. As long as the major parties continue to accept millions of dollars in donations from these industries and private corporations, they will keep putting the profits of their cashed-up donors ahead of everyday people and the planet.



The Greens introduced the Banning Dirty Donations Bill which would stop all political donations from industries with a track record of seeking to influence decisions: the mining, banking, gambling, alcohol, pharmaceutical, defense, tobacco and property development industries. It also caps all other donations at \$1,000 per year, so wealth doesn't buy influence. Until those bans and caps are in place, the Greens would also require all donations above \$1,000 to be reported to the public in real time so people can see who is influencing decision-making.

The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters review of the 2022 election presents a critical opportunity to get big money out of politics once and for all. We'll be keeping up the pressure to drag Labor across the line on much needed donations and electoral spending reforms.

As you can see, my team and I have been hard at work representing our community. As always, if you have any questions, concerns or issues that require advocacy, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are here to help.

With best wishes,
Stephen.



STEPHEN BATES MP
MEMBER FOR BRISBANE ▲

DROP BY OR GET IN TOUCH!

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